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Teaching peace, transforming conflict? : exploring participants' perceptions of the impact of informal peace education training in Uganda

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Teaching peace,
transforming conflict?

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Teaching peace, transforming conflict?

Exploring participants' perceptions
of the impact of informal peace
education training in Uganda

Anika May

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*Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men
that the defences of peace must be constructed.*

(Constitution of UNESCO, 1945)

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Introduction

We are living in a violent world today. Since 1945 the world has faced 150 conflicts causing 20 million deaths and 60 million casualties (Deininger 2003). Whereas the actual number of violent conflicts has declined in most parts of the world since the end of the Cold War, the locations of battlefields are shifting and the very nature of conflicts is dramatically changing.

In the First World War, 5 percent of the victims were civilians, increasing to 50% in the Second World War. In current wars this proportion has grown up to 90%, half of them being children (Deininger 2003; World Bank 1998). Today's armed conflicts are characterised by active and deliberate targeting of civilians, widespread human rights abuses, the use of rape and other crimes of sexual violence as brutal weapons of war and the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. Globally we find twice as many conflict-induced internally displaced persons (IDPs) as refugees – 13 million on the African continent alone.¹

The growing number of civilian casualties in present-day wars is strongly related to the dramatic increase of internal conflicts during the 1990s. Whereas inter-state conflicts are declining and the axis of confrontation is shifting from formerly West against East to rather North against South or 'Western' against Islamic Culture, particularly since 9/11, conflicts within states have increased in

¹ Available from:
http://www.ochaonline.un.org/webpage.asp?Nav=humanissues_en&site=humanissues and
[http://www.internaldisplacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpRegionPages\)/B3BA6119B705C145802570A600546F85?OpenDocument](http://www.internaldisplacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpRegionPages)/B3BA6119B705C145802570A600546F85?OpenDocument); latest access on: 16th August 2006.

terms of both frequency and brutality.² This development is tightly inter-linked with an increasing number of non-state actors and warring factions, whose formation is further fuelled through the proliferation and easy availability of cheap, mass-produced small-calibre weapons (Bloomfield & Reilly 1998).

Even though conflict touches both poor and rich societies, the poor are hit hardest. 15 of the 20 poorest countries in the world have had a major conflict in the past 15 years (Sommers 2002: 2/3). If not affected directly, nearly every low-income country at least shares a border with a neighbouring country that has experienced breakdown and war. This contributes to an increasing regionalisation of conflicts particularly on the African continent.

Beside the economic disaster every conflict causes, the affected population is hit in various dimensions, related to security, human rights, and socio-cultural aspects. This aspect is underlined by Raphael (1998: 8) who states that “it is easier to rebuild roads and bridges than it is to reconstruct institutions and strengthen the social fabric of society.”

Some of the most devastating conflicts have lasted for several decades already, which means that whole generations are used to armed warfare and violence. In Africa especially, the situation has deteriorated within the past decade. By 2000, over half of the countries in Africa and 20 percent of the population were affected by violent conflict. The extent of conflict was greater than in any other region in the world (Bowden 2001).

As the nature of conflicts has changed during the past two decades the way conflict is viewed and the means used to confront it have also changed and are still in a continuous process of development. Seitz (2004: 13) describes how the focus of development policy during the 1990s shifted towards the impact of violent conflicts. Above all the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 made clear that violent conflicts not only involve immeasurable suffering for the population affected, but also that the achievements of development endeavours to date are destroyable in one fell swoop and can harm the future development opportunities in the long term. This in turn can increase the likelihood of conflict re-occurring.

Several authors identify the need for multi-level approaches, which view conflict and development holistically as inter-linked processes, and address various dimensions and underlying causes of conflict (Jenne & Verkoren 2005; Bloomfield & Reilly 1998; Sommers 2002).

Additionally, the United Nations state in a report on previous UN peace-keeping operations that “the United Nations and its members face a pressing need to establish more effective strategies for conflict prevention, in both long and short terms” (UN 2000: ix).

² Available from: http://www.un.org/news/ossg/sg/pages/sg_office.html; latest access on: 16th August 2006.

Additionally, a growing global confrontation since 9/11 with the dramatic deterioration in global security due to acts of Islamic terrorism on the one hand, the ‘war on terror’ being conducted by the USA and its allies on the other hand (Seitz 2004: 13), and lessons learned from previous failures in dealing with violent conflict contribute to a growing awareness for the need for alternative means of conflict prevention.

The UN Millennium Declaration calls for an international ‘Culture of Prevention’³ and peace and conflict issues seem to be gaining growing importance beyond the political sphere – expressed in mushrooming university programmes, publications, summer schools, workshops, lecture series and public events around the globe.

Education for Peace, or, as Harris & Morrison (2003: 1) call it, ‘education for a better world’ is among these ‘alternative means’; gaining increasing acceptance and popularity beyond the community of educationalists. Whereas peace education as a pedagogical discipline has been around for about three decades (Page 2004: 4), it currently seems to have become a ‘trendy issue’ among international institutions, national governments and NGOs working in the field of conflict transformation and peace-building. Among formal educational institutions from primary school to university level peace education approaches also find increasing recognition and often become part of the formal curriculum.

Purpose of the study

Within my work as a volunteer for the ‘United Network of Young Peacebuilders’ (UNOY), a global network of youth organisations active in the field of peace-building, and particularly as a member of the ‘PEACE IT TOGETHER CAMPAIGN’ team,⁴ a campaign that aims to promote the ideal of a global culture of peace, I have been dealing with peace education in different ways. The more I learned about it, the more interested I became in the ideas and visions behind it; but I also became more critical.

Does peace education really have the potential to change mindsets and actions, and thus to contribute to the creation of sustainable peace? If so, what are the necessary conditions? Isn’t it far beyond the capacity of any educational programme to address the reasons and root causes of a complex conflict setting and hence to contribute to the overcoming of long-term violence in countries plagued by conflict for decades? Or, to put it more bluntly, what do people do with the

³ Available from: http://www.ochaonline.un.org/webpage.asp?Nav=humanissues_en&site=humanissues; latest access on: 17th August 2006.

⁴ For more information about the network and the ‘Peace it together campaign’ please consider our homepage <http://www.unoy.org>.

knowledge and skills achieved in the classroom? Does participation in a peace education programme make any difference for personal perceptions on conflict and the ways to deal with it, perception of the ‘other’, and the structural causes of violence? Many questions still remain to be answered.

During my four-month research period in Uganda, I tried to gain insights into the opinions and perceptions of participants in one specific informal peace education programme for the conduct of this study. The so-called ‘Alternatives to Violence Programme’ (AVP) consists of peace education workshops of three days in length for participants from all over Uganda, both from conflict and non-conflict regions. They are facilitated by the ‘Civil Peace Service Project’, which is supporting the M.A. Programme in Peace and Conflict Studies at Makerere University, Kampala. The project hosted me during the period of my research and will benefit from my work by using my findings for the currently ongoing revision of the training manuals.

Who if not those considered as the beneficiaries of such programmes should be asked about its effects on them, its potential, but also its limitations? By using different qualitative research methods, namely semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and participatory observation I tried to not only elaborate on the participants’ perceptions on AVP, but to also link them to the Ugandan context and conflict setting and to analyse the potential, limitations and requirements of peace education in Uganda in general. Based on this multi-dimensional analysis and the voices of my informants I finally wanted to develop recommendations for AVP in Uganda and for the implementation of peace education programmes in this challenging context in general.

Research question

Based on the participant-focused nature of my study the main research question underlying this study is as follows:

How do the participants of the ‘AVP’ trainings evaluate the programmes’ impacts on their perceptions and practises and on the socio-political context in Uganda?

In order to formulate a nuanced answer to the main research question presented above and to sufficiently take into account the different dimensions illustrated in my conceptual scheme – namely the participants’ perceptions and practices, the conceptual framework of the AVP programme, and the conflict setting – I developed a series of sub-questions. These sub-questions will be presented and explained in detail in chapter four, which is dedicated to the methodology used in my research.

The study applied a holistic approach and examined not only the participants' and trainers' views on AVP, but takes various potentially influencing factors into account, e.g. personal conflict experience, personal views on Uganda's present (political) situation, ethnicity etc. Incorporation of the perspectives of different actors (participants of different levels – before, right after and long after their participation in the training – and former participants who are now active trainers) was particularly sought to improve the richness and the validity of the data. Various qualitative research methodologies (e.g. participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups) have been applied in order to analyse the information gained from different angles. Furthermore, the study was conducted from a multidisciplinary perspective; it incorporated theories and approaches from Educational and Political Sciences, Sociology, Development and Ethnic Studies.

Relevance of the study

Despite the growing number of programmes and projects that focus on peace education as a tool for violence prevention, conflict transformation and peace-building, the subject is still characterized by a lack of clear concepts and profound evaluation (Salomon 2002; Salomon & Nevo 2003). It seems that peace education has been generally assumed to be an unquestionably valuable instrument for conflict transformation and the achievement of a global culture of peace,⁵ based on the honourable motives and intentions behind it.

Several authors point out the difficulties in measuring changes of personal values, mind-sets, perceptions and principles through so-called 'value-based' education programmes, in which peace education can be included (Hirsland 2004; Harris 2000; Salomon 2002). According to them it is a challenging task to differentiate between changes caused by participation within a specific programme, and personal developments initiated through other life experiences. Particularly in an environment where the participants of a programme are frequently experiencing forms of violence, e.g. in countries where political conflict is ongoing, it might be difficult if not impossible to draw a clear line between learning effects from a training programme and from personal life experiences.

Any research on the effects of peace education by nature has limitations. Findings can provide insights into the perceptions of the participants of one specific programme in one specific cultural context. They may even allow readers to make assumptions about features that might count for other pro-

⁵ In 1999 the United Nations proclaimed the 'Decade of a culture of peace and non-violence for the children of the world', beginning in 2000 with the 'International year of a culture of peace'. The second of eight areas of action within the declaration to the decade is peace education, which might also have contributed to the increase in attention towards the subject (see UNESCO 2002).

grammes as well; following a similar design, taking place in a comparable context. But as every cultural setting has its specific characteristics, so every programme follows slightly varying objectives. Moreover, every participant has a different starting point and different expectations towards what he/she is going to learn.

By choosing a very flexible research design, using a variety of qualitative methods which give a lot of space to the individual voices of programme beneficiaries, I hope to do justice to the very different perceptions of the effects and value of peace education that might exist.

Uganda, the research location that I have chosen for my study, is an illustrative example for the changing nature of violent conflicts. The country is facing great social and economic disparities, caused by ethnicity-related issues, the colonial history and recent neo-liberal donor policies. Rooted in a history of violent conflicts between various armed non-governmental movements and the changing authoritarian regimes during and after independence present-day Uganda is additionally characterized by a strong legacy of violence in all sectors of society. These factors have contributed to the outbreak of numerous conflicts in different parts of the country. Moreover, Uganda has been facing one of the longest running intra-state conflicts on the African continent, the two-decade long war between the Ugandan government and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in the North of the country – a conflict that was largely forgotten by the 'international community' until very recently.

During the past two decades the country has received a great deal of attention for its economic development progress. As a so-called 'donor darling' the country has experienced broad support from international institutions and aid agencies, and has been praised as an example of successful economic transition and liberalisation (Broere & Vermaas 2005: 45).

In contrast, relatively little is known about the still extremely high level of poverty within large parts of the society and the devastating effects of the conflict in the North. More than 1.5 million, which means over 90% of the people living in the war-affected districts, are internally displaced (Broere & Vermaas 2005: 46; Otunnu 2002: 9).

International political interest in the ongoing war in Northern Uganda emerged only recently, when Uganda as a relatively stable country within the Great Lakes region was named as one ally in the 'war against terrorism' in 2002 by the United States. Humanitarian efforts were fuelled by an urgent appeal of the UN High Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Egeland, who named the war in Northern Uganda 'one of the worst forgotten human tragedies in the world' in November 2004 (see chapter 2).

Within the 18 months between my decision to conduct my thesis research in Uganda and my final departure to the field, the level of public and academic attention to peace and conflict issues in Uganda has grown enormously. From a starting point, where it was hard to find useful and relevant information sources the country's situation has transformed into an almost over-researched setting. This observation finds expression in the release of hundreds of policy papers and reports of various actors, and a growing number of academic studies written about Uganda, that could easily fill several shelves.

However, despite the growing presence of Uganda in current academic studies and literature, I believe that the lack of evaluation of peace education in the Ugandan context constitutes a real gap in the body of research. In this regard the Ugandan context does not differ from other countries or regions, where peace education and other forms of value-oriented education are gaining increasing popularity, but still lack clear concepts and thorough evaluation.

Despite all the limitations a Masters thesis naturally has in terms of sample size, length of research period, location and so on, I understand my study as an attempt to contribute to answering some of the urgent questions around the potential, challenges and limitations that exist in regard to peace education.

Structure of the thesis

Following this *introduction* I will present the conceptual scheme visualising the different dimensions of my research. In *chapter two* I will then provide the reader with some background information on the research location Uganda, including an overview of the emergence of violence in the country's past and an analysis of violence and conflicts in present-day Uganda. Furthermore I will briefly describe existing national initiatives towards peace. In *chapter three* I will develop the theoretical framework of my thesis. This includes a definition of the major concepts underlying the subject of peace education, a short history of peace education as a pedagogical discipline, and an introduction to some conceptual underpinnings and different models of peace education. In *chapter four* I will explain the sample researched in my study, present an overview of the qualitative methodologies I used within my research, and describe the research process, including some challenges and ethical considerations. *Chapter five* is dedicated to the analysis of my research data; which will be tightly inter-linked with the information presented in the theoretical framework and the background information about Uganda. In *chapter six* I will summarise and discuss my findings and formulate specific recommendations for AVP in Uganda, general recommendations for peace education programme development in Uganda, and recommendations for future research in the field of peace education. The final chapter will be

followed by a *bibliography* of sources used and an *annex*, which includes several maps, interview outlines and some other relevant information.

Conceptual scheme

The graphic below is a single visual representation of the concepts and the theoretical framework which formed the starting point of this study. It explains the factors that determine the conflict setting; and visualizes the potential relation between the conflict setting, the conceptual framework including the general AVP training setting and the role of the facilitators. Furthermore, it illustrates assumptions about the mutual influence of the different elements.

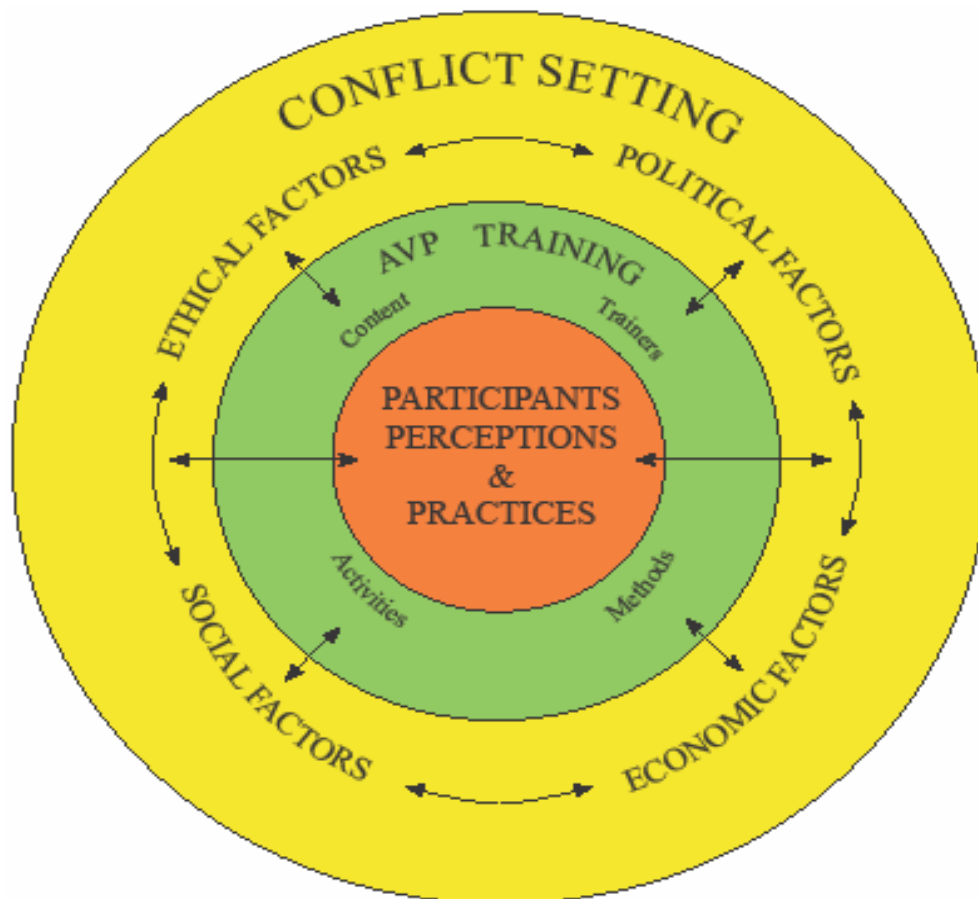


Figure 1.1 Conceptual scheme

Background to the research and research setting

The buffalos of poverty knock the people down

<i>The Democratic Party</i>	<i>... And while the pythons of</i>	<i>The war leaders</i>
<i>How does it differ</i>	<i>sickness</i>	<i>Are tightly locked in bloody feuds,</i>
<i>From the Congress?</i>	<i>Swallow the children</i>	<i>Eating each other's liver...</i>
<i>Ocol says</i>	<i>And the buffalos of poverty</i>	<i>If only the parties</i>
<i>They want Uhuru</i>	<i>Knock the people down</i>	<i>Would fight poverty</i>
<i>His brother says</i>	<i>And ignorance stands there</i>	<i>With the fury</i>
<i>They want Uhuru and Peace,</i>	<i>Like an elephant.</i>	<i>With which they fight each other</i>
<i>Both of them say</i>		
<i>They fight ignorance and disease!</i>		

(From the "Song of Lawino" by Ugandan poet Okot p'Bitek, first published in 1966)

Uganda, in Winston Churchill's eyes 'the Pearl of Africa' is a young country. The announcement of its creation and of its status as a British protectorate was published in the London Gazette in 1894 (Leggett 2001: 1). Unfortunately, most of the people who lived in the territory that was described to the world as being Uganda had never heard of the London Gazette, nor did a country called Uganda mean anything to them. Not surprisingly they felt no allegiance to an imperial creation whose borders cut across existing economic, political, social, and ethnic relationships. The creation of Uganda was therefore not the result of a gradual process of national integration. Since the country's 'birth', ethnic issues have played a major role in Ugandan politics and conflicts.

In order to understand the present conflict settings in Uganda, the strong ethnic, social and economic divisions and the widespread existence of violence in Ugandan society, it is essential to take a closer look on the country's history and the root causes of its current major obstacles, conflict and poverty.

This chapter elaborates on the historical, socio-economic, political and cultural context of Uganda – the context in which the analysed peace education programme takes place and hence an important influence factor on all dimensions of my research. After the provision of a historical overview I will emphasise on the different faces of violence in present-day Ugandan society.

Violence and conflict in the history of Uganda

Uganda is a landlocked country with a population of about 24 million¹ characterized by a huge ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity which is deeply rooted in its colonial history. The country is home to 53 officially recognized ethnic groups; the largest among them are: Baganda (17%), Ankole (8%), Basoga (8%), Iteso (8%), Bakiga (7%), Langi (6%), Tutsi (6%), Bagisu (5%), and Acholi (4%) (Broere & Vermaas 2003; 2005). The inhabitants of different regions speak languages that are to varying degrees mutually incomprehensible, e.g. Ganda or Luganda, other Niger-Congo languages, Nilo-Saharan languages, Swahili and Arabic. English, the language of the colonial powers, is the 'lingua franca'. Thirtythree percent of the population are Roman Catholic, another 33 percent are Protestant, 16 percent are Muslims and 18 percent follow indigenous belief systems.²

Historical roots of ethnic and social division

Disparities among the different ethnic groups in Uganda, particularly between the Baganda³ people and ethnicities from the North of the country, date back to pre-colonial times. Geographically, Lake Kyoga forms both an ethnic and linguistic marker. South of Kyoga is the so-called Bantu region; north of the lake are non-Bantu territories (Otunnu 2002: 10).⁴

Since the 16th century the political sphere was dominated by the four Kingdoms of Bunyoro, Ntooro, Ankole, and Buganda in the South-West of the country. Buganda emerged as the most powerful and richest among them. When the British colonizers proclaimed a protectorate in Uganda in 1894, they were impressed by the sophisticated organisation and administrative structure of the

¹ Available from: <http://www.un.org/esa/earthsummit/ngn-cp.htm>; latest access on: 18th August 2006.

² Ibid.

³ Whereas the kingdom is called 'Buganda' its inhabitants' name is 'Baganda' and their language is 'Luganda'.

⁴ A map of Uganda (including districts) can be found in the Annex.

kingdoms. By using the existing structures they could save effort and money. In exchange they agreed with the traditional chiefs and kings to leave their autonomy and rights, including the right of land-ownership, untouched. The districts outside the four kingdoms, particularly north of Lake Kyoga, were soon overthrown by the colonisers, who used members of the Four Kingdoms, mostly Baganda people, to run their colonial administration. (Broere & Vermaas 2005: 7 ff.)

Economic division under colonial rule

During the colonial era Uganda was divided into ‘economic zones’, which were not dictated by development potentials but by the economic needs of the colonisers. This practice led in the long run to large economic disparities between the North and the South (Otunnu 2002: 11). The fragmentation of the society was compounded by the ‘economic-cum-administrative policy’ that left the civil service largely in the hands of the Baganda people and the army largely in the hands of the Acholi people and other ethnic groups from the North.

Decade-long abuse of political leadership⁵

After independence on 9 October 1962 ethnicity remained a strong influence in national politics. The first president after independence appointed by the British colonisers prior to their departure was Edward Muteesa, the king of Buganda. In 1966 he was overthrown by his Prime Minister Milton Obote, who replaced a large number of high-ranking politicians, mostly Baganda, with people from other ethnic groups, most of them belonging to his own Langi tribe. He strongly cut the autonomy of the kingdoms, particularly of Buganda (Broere & Vermaas 2005: 13 ff.).

In 1971 Milton Obote was in turn deposed by his army commander Idi Amin. At first welcomed by the international community, who expected an improvement in the country’s political situation, Idi Amin soon proved to be no better than his predecessor. It was the starting point of another eight-year reign of terror (1971-1979) that killed between 300,000 and 500,000 people (Nyeko 1996: 6 ff.).

Idi Amin again exchanged the whole state apparatus, and helped many people from the West-Nile region (his place of origin) into political ranks. He expelled 70,000 people of Asian origin, who were the economic motor of the country, and distributed their businesses and industries to his cronies. Furthermore he is

⁵ I am aware of the fact that ‘abuse’ is a very eluse concept and term. Depending on their personal experiences and political orientation Ugandans might have differing perspectives on the good and wrong-doings of the political leaders at a time. However, the short historical overview presented in this sub-chapter reflects a ‘common sense’, that can be viewed as the ‘official version’ of Ugandan history, documented in most national and international publications.

known for the horrific atrocities committed by him and his forces towards other ethnic groups, particularly Acholi people.⁶

In October, 1978 Idi Amin ordered the invasion of Tanzania while at the same time attempting to cover up an army mutiny. With help of Libyan troops, Amin tried to annex the North Tanzanian province of Kagera. Tanzania, under President Julius Nyerere, declared war on Uganda and began a counterattack. On April 11, 1979, Amin was forced to flee the capital and went into exile in Libya (Broere & Vermaas 2003, 2005). Milton Obote (1980-85) again seized power by winning the presidential elections in 1980. The opposition accused him of rigging the elections (Alertnet 2004).

After another five years of cruel dictatorship Milton Obote was deposed by an Acholi-dominated army junta led by General Tito Okello. Only a year later Okello was himself over-thrown by the 'National Resistance Army' (NRA) of former Defence Minister Yoweri K. Museveni, which marched into Kampala in January 1986.⁷ Museveni became president of the country as the head of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) and has held this position ever since. He strongly supported the restoration of the privileged position of the Baganda within virtually every part of society (Kiplagat 2002).

His system of 'movement democracy',⁸ in place for nearly two decades, came in for increasing criticism by many Ugandans as well as the international community. Within a national referendum on 29 July 2005 92.5% of participating Ugandans voted for the installation of a multi-party system.⁹ The president himself had encouraged his citizens to participate in the referendum and to give their vote for political change.¹⁰

However, a majority of 52% followed the call for a boycott announced by opposition groups, who claimed that the referendum was only a strategic step by the president with the purpose of pleasing donors, but would actually not lead to real changes in the democratic landscape of Uganda.¹¹

⁶ During colonial times mainly Acholi people served as military forces; this was their traditional role within the colonial administrative system. The fact that they represented the military power of the colonisers still contributes to their marginalised position within their own country. (Source: <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9007180>; latest access: 19th August 2006.)

⁷ Among the NRA forces who invaded Kampala in 1986 several hundred children below 15 years of age were recruited as soldiers (International Crisis Group 2004: 12).

⁸ Also referred to as 'no-party-democracy', because other political parties beside the 'Movement' were forbidden. Oppositional activities were viewed as obstacles towards the process of national unification.

⁹ The text of the referendum was: "Do you agree to open up the political space to allow those who wish to join different organisations/parties to do so to compete for political power?"

¹⁰ Available from: <http://www.africanelections.tripod.com>; latest access 14th July 2006.

¹¹ Available from: <http://www.news.bbcc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/4726419.stm>; latest access: 16th June 2006.

On 23 February 2006 the long-awaited first multi-party elections in the history of Uganda were held. Despite a strong opposition movement, which was mainly supporting the Forum for Democratic Change's (FDC) candidate Kizza Besigye, Yoweri K. Museveni again won the presidency by a vote of 59.3% and is now ruling the country for another five years in his fifth term.¹²

The decades-long cycle of abuse of power and revenge, described above, was always characterised by ethnic dimensions, e.g. through the continuous replacement of key positions in the political, economic and social sphere with representatives of particular ethnic groups, according to the preferences and ethnic origin of the present leader at the time.

The long history of ethnic fragmentation and marginalisation, particularly of Northern Ugandan tribes such as the Acholi people, still has strong consequences on present-day Uganda. Ugandan society is characterised by a deep-seated division between the North and the South – a divide that has engendered a fear of being dominated by other regions or ethnic groups, and thus has served as a barrier to national unity (Finnström 2005). Many Ugandan citizens do not feel that they are Ugandans in the first instance, but instead build their identity on tribal origin. This is illustrated by the statement of a former senior government official, who said revealingly: “How many people view the country as one? If you ask people, what is Uganda, it is difficult to say. The conflicts are an issue of nationalism, because it [the problem of conflicts] is not viewed as a national issue really” (Refugee Law Project¹³ 2004: 10).

The legacy of violence in Ugandan society

The deep-rooted economic and ethnic divisions within Ugandan society and the manifold experiences with violent leadership contribute to a situation where perceived imbalance in distribution coincides with identity differences. It is this combination of potent identity-based factors with wider perceptions of economic and social injustice that fuels what is widely referred to as ‘deep-rooted conflict’ (Bloomfield & Reilly 1998).

Moreover, in the case of Uganda the continuous violent abuse of political leadership and the legitimised use of violence in various sectors of society have led to a high level of acceptance of the institutionalisation of violence. The following sub-sections will emphasise different dimensions of the legacy of violence in present-day Uganda.

¹² Source: Electoral Commission of Uganda 2006; cited in the Ugandan newspaper ‘New Vision’ on 28th February 2006.

¹³ The Refugee Law Project is an academically oriented NGO founded by former international law students, based at Makerere University/Kampala. Among their activities are applied research on human rights issues within Uganda and the regular publication of research and policy reports.

The present state of human rights and violence in Uganda

If there is some corner of the world which has remained peaceful, but with a peace based on injustices – the peace of a swamp with rotten matter fermenting in its depths – we may be sure that that peace is false. Violence attracts violence. Let us repeat fearlessly and ceaselessly: injustices bring revolt, either from the oppressed or from the young, determined to fight for a more just and humane world.

(D.C. Camara 1971: 33-34)

Presently Uganda, the ‘star of the class’ under former and recent neo-liberal World Bank and IMF programmes,¹⁴ seems to be one of the most successful developing economies on the African continent. After two decades of cruel dictatorship it has been praised by some authors as the “*main example of successful African post-conflict recovery*” (Collier 1999: 2) and made headlines with its successful national HIV/Aids campaign, which led to a drop in the infection rate from 14.6% in 2001 down to 6.1% in 2005.¹⁵

However, with a closer look at Uganda’s development performance, the present situation within the entire North of the country and its recent struggle for democratic change it becomes clear that the often cited hymns of praise present an incomplete picture. Despite the relatively high economic growth rates of 5.4% to 6.7% during the past five years (World Bank 2005 in Broere & Vermaas 2005: 45). Uganda is still among the twenty poorest countries in the world.¹⁶ Even though poverty rates decreased during the past decade, 38% of the Ugandan population still live below the poverty line (Broere & Vermaas 2005: 47). The GNP per capita is US\$240 (World Bank 2003). Life expectancy does not exceed 45.4 (men) and 46.9 (women) years, whereas the average age of the population is 14.8 years (Human Development Report 2005).¹⁷

In no other African country the disparities between different regions and between different groups of society are as high as in Uganda. Recent economic

¹⁴ Since the middle 80s Uganda performed economically surprisingly well under the guidance of World Bank’s and IMF’s Structural Adjustment Programmes. It developed in a short period of time to a country with relatively stable economic growth rates. Already in 1997 the Ugandan government had presented the ‘Poverty Eradication Action Plan’, a national development agenda which was taken as the basis for the Ugandan PRSP. Uganda was the first indebted country to hand in a complete version of a national PRSP in March 2000 and therefore received a release of almost half of its debt burden under the HIPC II initiative (VENRO 2003:1). The Ugandan PRSP was praised by the donor community as a document of very high quality.

¹⁵ Information from Human Development Report 2005; Available from: <http://www.hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2005/pdf.HDR05-HDI.pdf>; latest access on: 23rd August 2006.

¹⁶ Human Development Index: rank 144 out of 164 countries in total (Human Development Index 2005). Within the last year Uganda raised from rank 146 to 144, which means that shifted from the category of low developed countries to the category of medium developed countries (compare HDI 2004; available from: <http://www.hdr.undp.org/reports/global/pdf.HDR04-HDI.pdf>; latest access on: 23rd August 2006).

¹⁷ Available from: <http://www.hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2005/pdf.HDR05-HDI.pdf>; latest access on: 23rd August 2006.

growth has widened the development gap, leading to disparities in the Ugandan Human Poverty Index from 20.5% in Kampala up to 59.1% in Nakapiripit, the most Eastern district of Uganda (Human Development Report 2005).

The colonial ‘economic-cum-administrative-policy’ still greatly impacts the present situation, where the administrative and economic power is largely accumulated in the South of the country, whereas large numbers of people in the North are left behind highly militarily trained, but with a significant lack of job opportunities, and very limited access to social services or the means to sustain their livelihoods. In addition, the neo-liberal policies of structural adjustment implemented under World Bank and IMF guidance during the 1980s further widened the pre-existing economic and socio-political gap between the North and the South of the country (Reliefweb 2004). A growing urban elite contrasts with the majority of rural citizens living in absolute poverty.¹⁸

Over half of Uganda’s annual budget comes from international aid. Combined with a strong focus on coffee as the major export commodity, which value is strongly dependent on volatile world market prices, the economy is far from being sustainable (VENRO 2003).

Uganda’s current two major obstacles, violent conflict and poverty, have created a situation where a great part of the population – in some parts of the country the absolute majority – are denied their most essential human rights. These rights include security, means to sustain a livelihood, access to social services such as education and health care and the human desire to have a home. Furthermore, the living situation of Ugandan citizens depends to a huge extent on the part of the country where they are living and their ethnicity of origin. This situation provides a huge potential for conflict and is not acceptable for a country that claims to be a democratic state.

Contemporary Ugandan conflicts

Two current internal conflicts reflect the deeply rooted existing tensions and disparities, partly based on ethnicity, within the Ugandan society:

The 20-year long war between the Lords Resistance Army (LRA) and the Ugandan government in the North of the country, referred to as ‘Acholiland’ (Otunnu 2002), and the violent tensions between the Teso and the Karamojong ethnic groups in the Karamoja region in the North-East of Uganda.

¹⁸ Source: Ugandan Human Development Report.
Available from: http://hdr.undp.org/docs/reports/national/UGA_Uganda/Uganda_2005_en.pdf; latest access on: 23rd August 2006.

- The case of Acholiland

The war in Northern Uganda, referred to as Acholiland due to the ethnic group 'Acholi' who inhabit this area, has been a 'forgotten conflict' for the most part of its duration (Egeland 2004). Its roots go back to 1986, when two successive armed opposition movements picked up the remains of decommissioned Acholi fighters from Museveni's resistance movement. Initially known as the 'Holy Spirit Movement' and led by Alice Lakwena, evolved to become the Lords Resistance Army (LRA) under Lakwena's cousin Joseph Kony.

Kony claims to be possessed by spirit forces, which use him as a medium. According to its own statements, the LRA's aim is to force president Museveni out of his post, and to establish a government under the rule of the biblical Ten Commandments. However, the Commandment 'thou shalt not kill' seems not to figure among the LRA's guiding principles; extreme violence is used by them as a tool to coerce civilians into providing support and as a punishment for not obeying the laws set down by the LRA.

Children are in the centre of the conflict as primary targets of the LRA actions. An estimated 85-90% of the LRA's fighters are child soldiers abducted from their communities, brought to the training camps in South Sudan and forced to fight in the LRA's name against their own people (Dolan 2000; 2002).

After several failed peace initiatives the Ugandan government in March 2002 tried to put an end to the LRA's activities through military means. 'Operation Iron Fist', which aimed to attack the rebel camps in Southern Sudan, failed completely. In the year of the military intervention more children than ever before got abducted and the number of violent attacks to villages in the Acholi region heavily increased (BBC 2004: 3). This development led president Museveni to the decision to report the LRA's human and child rights violations to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in September 2003.

At the end of 2004, following an urgent appeal of the UN High Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland, peace talks between the Ugandan government and the LRA leadership were initiated, facilitated by the former Ugandan minister for Northern Ugandan issues and former World Bank officer Mrs Betty Bigombe. She was appointed by the Ugandan government, but said to be accepted by both sides. Meetings were several times postponed by both sides and led to no significant results: they were stopped in June 2005.

On 13 October 2005 the ICC finally proclaimed arrest warrants for the five LRA top commanders, among them Joseph Kony himself, his adjutant Vincent Otti and the three commanders Okot Odhiambo, Dominic Ongwen, and Raska Lukwiya.¹⁹ These arrest warrants would oblige all countries which have signed

¹⁹ Raska Lukwiya was killed on 19th August 2006 in a confrontation with the Ugandan military forces (information received from local informants in Kampala).

the Rome Statute constituting the ICC, among them Uganda's neighbouring countries Sudan and DRC, to surrender the suspects if they are found (newspaper article in NRC Handelsblad, 20 June 2006: 3).

Between April and the end of May 2006, the Ugandan newspaper 'The New Vision' reported repeatedly about a continuous diminishment in LRA activity in Northern Uganda. The number of active fighters was said to have decreased to an estimate of 900 individuals in May 2006, spreading over to Eastern Congo, were LRA fractions presented a major threat to the local populations through continuous village attacks with the purpose of looting food to sustain the LRA's existence and fighting capacity.

After two decades of lacking political motivation to put an end to the war in the North of the country there appeared a new chance for peace talks. This sign of hope was following a spectacular video message from Joseph Kony himself released in the end of May 2006 where he speaks to the public for the first time since the early days of the conflict, claiming that he was falsely viewed as a terrorist. Instead he considers himself as a freedom fighter ready for peace talks.

As a reaction to Kony's attempts for peace and possibly as a signal to the critical voices, who question whether the Ugandan government and army are truly interested in putting an end to the conflict, president Museveni responded by offering amnesty to Kony and his high-ranking followers if they stop their fight and finally leave the 'bush'. This action put him at odds with the ICC, which had meanwhile entered an important stage in the process of investigation against the accused. However, this time peace talks were delayed several times by the Ugandan government.

Within the past few months Uganda seems to have come closer than ever to a lasting solution to the conflict. On 28 June 2006 Joseph Kony gave his first-ever media interview to the British newspaper 'The Times' and repeated his claim for peace talks.²⁰ On Friday, 4 August, the LRA declared a unilateral ceasefire. On Monday, 7 August, the Ugandan parliament declared its willingness to add two ancient Ugandan reconciliation rituals to the national law the following week, which are viewed as a possible alternative to the ICC process, and are said to be accepted by both sides.²¹

²⁰ Available from: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/5162556.stm>; latest access on: 7th August 2006.

²¹ The rituals that are in discussion are:

Mapo Oput = A long ceremony of confession and forgiveness originating in Northern Uganda where elders decide compensation before both parties are blessed and share a symbolic drink of the bitter juice of a seed.

Gomotong (bending of the spears) = A ritual from Northern Uganda that was successfully used in 1979 after the fall of late dictator Amin and helped to ease the frayed relations between the Acholi and Amin's tribesmen. (Available from:

Since September, official peace talks, involving the conflicting parties, UN commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland, who joined the process in early November 2006, and civil society representatives are going on. The outcome was still pending at the time this chapter was finished.

One strong point of criticism on the negotiation process expressed by national and international women's rights and civil society organisations is that no single female person is representing the Ugandan women's views at the round table.²²

- The case of Karamoja

Karamoja is located in the Northeast of Uganda, bordering Kenya in the East, and Sudan in the North. It consists of the four districts Kotido, Moroto, Nakapiripirit, and Sironko, covering 10 percent of the country.

The name Karamoja originates from a group of people collectively called the 'Karimojong' who live in Moroto district. Now the name is widely used to refer to all of the peoples of the North-East who are primarily livestock keepers (Oxfam 2000: 10). Karamoja is considered as an extraordinarily fragile ecologically environment, which might make conflict to a certain extent inevitable, given the existing disparity between the availability of resources and the demands for them (Grahm 2005: 2 ff.).

As the only semi-nomadic community surrounded for the most part by settled agriculturalists, but also in contact with a host of other pastoral and agro-pastoral communities across the border in Kenya and Sudan, the Karimojong have always been involved in conflict. Mobility is an important part of their way of life and as they sought to map out the space for themselves and for their cattle this mobility brings with it the potential for conflict.

Historically they have always been involved in fights either with other Karimojong people or with neighbouring peoples, mostly over access to land and in competition for scarce natural resources such as water and grazing (Leggett 2001: 44).

However, through the increased proliferation of guns in Karamoja, especially since the end of the 1970s, these conflicts have assumed a different dimension by reason of the violence, loss and destruction that come in their wake (Leggett 2001: 47 ff.). Or, as one Teso from Soroti pointed out: "They have always been attacking us, there have always been fights. But then they used machetes, now they use guns. Guns kill so much faster than machetes; they are more efficient" (Informal conversation at the AVP training in Soroti; 21 March 2006).

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/KHII6SF9J4?OpenDocument&rc=1&emid=ACOS-635PRO>; latest access on: 7th August 2006)

²² Information received from employees of the Civil Peace Service Project at Makerere University in a phone conversation on 6th November 2006.

Major causes of conflict beside the scarcity of resources are the intricate clan structures and sectional loyalties and rivalries that characterise the Karimojong society. These rivalries manifest themselves in alliances created between clans and sections for purposes of war and cattle raids. Alliances between the different groups change regularly over time, fighting each other on and off in a never ending series of raids and counter-raids (Grahn 2005: 2 ff.).

Although in a sense there seems to be agreement on a number of factors as being behind the persistent conflict and insecurity in Karamoja, different people emphasise different causes, depending on whether the person speaking is a Karimojong or an outsider. Whereas outsiders such as the Ugandan government tend to see causes exclusively in the cultural sphere and the Karimojongs' obsession with the cow as a definition of wealth and status, the Karimojong themselves see the root causes for continuous unrest within their region as due to external factors rather than rooted within their own society.

A major explanation for this appears to be the political, social, and cultural isolation of the Karimojong from the influences and experiences that have changed the rest of Uganda over time. These factors have combined to marginalize the Karamoja and the Karimojong from the mainstream of Ugandan political, social and economic discourse (Leggett 2001: 44/45). The answer to the question of responsibility for this deep-rooted isolation and marginalisation hence depends on who is asked. Grahn (2005: 3) states that "since the colonial era, the communities of the Karimojong Cluster have been at best marginalised and at worst deliberately undermined by development planning and policy making."

Beyond the public eye – the issue of domestic violence in Uganda

Gender relations in regard to conflict analysis and transformation seem to gain in importance in recent academic research, policy-formulation and practice by development and conflict transformation organisations (ACORD 2005; Moser 2001; Jacobs 2000; Kabeer 1994).

However, despite this increase in international attention towards gender relations the issue of domestic violence²³ is still a field in the need for profound research (Koenig *et al.* 2003). Particularly women in developing countries who are suffering from maltreatment of their spouse have been and are still under-regarded by academia and policy makers (ACFODE 1995; Koenig *et al.* 2003).

This holds true also for Uganda. Research carried out within the past twenty years by national and international institutions focusing on women's rights has

²³ 'Domestic violence' is defined as "the range of sexually, psychologically and physically coercive acts used against adult and adolescent women by current or former male intimate partners" (Koenig *et al.* 2003: 1).

highlighted particular case studies from mostly rural communities. These case studies provide some first insights and allow tentative conclusions about the poor state of women within the Ugandan society, particularly in rural areas. However, easily accessible, profound and detailed general information on the issue is still missing, which in itself is a telling indication of the national priority agenda.

The existing case studies illustrate a sad and alarming picture, which is supported through the statements of my female informants.²⁴ Domestic, gender-based violence is extremely wide-spread. Even though the literature identifies some potential risk factors, e.g. a low level of education, general deprivation or a conflict-affected context as in Northern Uganda and Karamoja (ACORD 2005; Tuhaise 1999; Uganda Association of Women Lawyers 1996; UNICEF 1989), my own research experience indicates that women from all levels of society are affected by violent treatment at the hands of their husbands or male partners. This violent treatment ranges from psychological assaults and verbal abuse to repeated beating, pushing and other physical attacks, often under the influence of alcohol. Also forced sexual intercourse, often referred to as ‘marital rape’ (Ellsberg 2001; Uganda Association of Women Lawyers 1996) seems to be a recurring issue for many Ugandan women.

Particularly among rural populations domestic violence against women seems to be very much an accepted phenomenon (Gulu University 2005); by men it is often openly justified as a natural male duty (“a man who does not beat his wife does not love her” – statement by a male AVP participant in Soroti during an informal conversation).

Women at least do not feel in the position to criticise these traditional patterns of behaviour. This observation is supported by a case study on domestic violence in the South Western district of Rakai, where 70% of the male respondents and 90% of the female respondents viewed beating of the wife or female partner as justifiable in some circumstances (Koenig et. al 2003).

Thinking of the peace education literature, that defines the subject as being about the establishment of “mutually supportive, nurturing relationships” (Page 2004: 10) and the repeated statements expressed by my respondents “Peace begins within the individual” I am left with a lot of question marks in mind. How can a country discuss nation-wide approaches to peace, when accepted acts of violence are still happening in hundreds of thousands of households?

²⁴ More information about domestic violence in Uganda will be brought up in chapter five within the analysis of my research findings.

Theoretical framework – peace education

“Every opportunity must be seized to educate people about the horrors of war and the blessings of peace.”

(Daisaku Ikeda in Galtung & Ikeda 1995: 68)

To understand the value and the impacts participants ascribe to a peace education programme, about it is necessary to clarify the underlying principles and characteristics of peace education as the theoretical framework in which my study is embedded. If we talk about education for peace, an education for a ‘better world’ (Harris 2003: 1) or education for value-change (Porath 2003; Page 2004; Hirseland 2004 and others) we first have to define what ‘peace’ going beyond ceasefire agreements actually means and how the peaceful society that peace educationalists have in mind as the ultimate goal of their pedagogical efforts looks like. Furthermore, it is important to know about the assumptions and theories on which peace education is generally based and the different concepts stressed by academia and practitioners in the field. Is there any universally applicable concept existing at all? And finally, how can effects of peace education at all be measured?

Within this chapter I will introduce the reader to the subject of peace education. In a first sub-chapter, I will examine existing definitions and ideas of peace and establish some characteristics of a peaceful society. In the second sub-chapter I will present a short history of the discipline and elaborate on some

underlying principles and conceptual underpinnings. This is followed by a presentation of some existing models of peace education and some criticism on the subject. Finally, in a third sub-chapter I will elaborate on the challenges and limitations of the evaluation of peace education impacts.

The ultimate goal: A peaceful society

“Peace is not a discipline, but a problem. In fact, the ultimate problem. And all academic fields ... can help provide solutions to that problem.”

(Leland Miles in Harris & Morrison 2003: 1)

In reference to chapter two of this thesis, which elaborates in detail on the state of violence and sources of conflict within the Ugandan society, the nature and theoretical foundations of conflict will not be touched upon in detail within this sub-chapter. Instead, I will emphasise on possible alternatives; on the philosophical, political and social underpinnings of peace and the concept of a peaceful society.

Defining peace

The English word ‘peace’ is derived from the Latin ‘pax’. Thinking and theorising about peace and its opponent, destructive, violent conflict is not an entirely new phenomenon of our time. Whereas the concept of peace is among the oldest notions of humanity, the way it is viewed and defined has changed over time.

Peace in the Roman Empire meant a cessation in fighting as well as rule over subject races (Bretherton 2003: 12). All of the great religions of the world – Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Taoism, and Islam – have considered peace an important part of their mission (Harris & Morrison 2003: 39). Boulding (2000) notes that every major world religion contains two strands, called the ‘Holy War Doctrine’ and the ‘Doctrine of Holy Peace’. In recent times, particularly in regard to the increasing confrontation between Islamic extremism and some parts of the ‘Western World’, the religious dimension of violent conflicts has gained increasing importance.

Asking a child to creatively express its images of peace, it might draw instruments of war, such as weaponry or a tank to then over-paint them with a cross. In many peoples’ minds ‘peace’ is manifested as merely the absence of war – a concept called ‘negative’ peace by the well-known Norwegian peace researcher Galtung (1976; 1996). This concept is criticised by O’Kane (1992 in Sandy & Perkins 2002: 2) as a “vacuous, passive, simplistic, and an unresponsive escape mechanism too often resorted in the past – without success.”

However, the concept of ‘negative peace’ is still significant in the military sphere and often characterises the view of countries on their relationship to their neighbouring states. This is illustrated by an example repeatedly stressed by the

Israeli author Salomon (2003, 2002, 2000, 1999) who describes the tremendous gap between the Israeli and the Palestinian perspective on peace: whereas ‘peace’ for the former would mean the mere absence of active fighting, to be achieved by use of military means, the latter understands it as the provision of equality, structural justice and fundamental human rights.

This example leads to another limitation of this approach. Although there may be an absence of armed hostility after settling an agreement between the warring factions, the foundations for the next war may be laid (Bretherton 2003: 12). This can be the case, when ‘peace’ is claimed to be achieved right after the signing of a ceasefire agreement, whereas the root causes of the conflict have not yet been addressed and still remain within the society in question.

Examples can be found in many African countries and regions, e.g. Sierra Leone, where decommissioned fighters of former armed movements have not been sufficiently reintegrated into the communities, and have not been able to find alternative means to sustain a livelihood. Quantities of marginalised youth, who do not see any positive perspective in life, are an easy target for leaders with military purposes in mind.

Because the negative definition of peace has significant shortcomings in the increasingly complex context of war and peace in our modern world by rather stating what peace is NOT, rather than what it IS, peace researchers developed more holistic explanatory models. These take a major step further by taking structural causes of violence, such as injustice, oppression, inequality, poverty and racism into account.

The perhaps most widely used and best-known concept refers to ‘positive peace’ as an extension of ‘negative peace’ (Galtung 1996; 1983). In Galtung’s definition ‘positive peace’ equals the absence of any form of structural violence. Another very similar definition pair of definitions was developed by the Swedish academic Lund (1996: 39), who uses the terms ‘cold’ and ‘warm’ peace, to describe the same characteristics as are indicated by Galtung’s ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ peace.

Depending on the individual’s experiences and personal situation, peace means different things to different people. To address these various, perhaps strongly contrasting perspectives can be viewed as the ultimate challenge of educators, who seek to agree shared notions and perceptions of peace and work towards their realisation within their programmes.

Be it a situation within the domestic sphere, the inter-ethnic tensions within a specific region or global confrontations – trying to see the world from the perspective of the other remains a difficult and disturbing task. “As has often been noted, one person’s terrorist is another’s freedom fighter” (Shapiro 2002: 2).

Defining a peaceful society

Based on the concepts and definitions of peace described in the previous section a peaceful society can be understood as one in which not only active war and politically motivated violent conflict is absent, but in which the root causes of conflict are addressed. A true, peaceful society would be one, in which positive peace exists, as defined by Galtung (1996, 1983, 1976, 1969).

At the most fundamental level, creating a peaceful society does not mean to avoid conflict by all means. It rather requires finding ways to transform conflict: solutions must “satisfy the fundamental needs and allay the deepest fears of affected populations.” (Kelman 1997: 197) A peaceful society then, is one whose characteristics allow this transformation to take place.

In reference to traditional models of African communitarianism a peaceful society would according to Ikuenobe (in Ukhun 2003: 77) make “a case for common good and interest, the concern for general welfare, and responsibility towards the well-being of every individual in the society as the underlying basis for social or political structure.” Additionally Ukhun (2003: 70) identifies the present neglect of traditional communitarian notions in contemporary African politics as an obstacle to the establishment of peaceful societies.

Ross groups characteristics of a peaceful society into three categories: structural elements, cultural elements, and inter-group elements (2004: 15). At a structural level, a peaceful society must implement norms of equal rights and opportunities for all groups constituting this society, as well as accepting and embracing collective identities. To be able to do this, society must be based on legitimate political institutions. Azar (1990: 151) takes the promotion of legitimate institutions one step further by postulating that institutions should not only be legitimate, but ideally also decentralised, as this permits local authorities control over social concerns and allows them to “increase the sense of identity, participation, and security (of individuals) in the broadest sense of these terms.”

This suggestion leads to another important point: a peaceful society should have at its core alternative dispute resolution mechanisms (Ross 2004: 16). In many societies traditional means of dispute solving such as elder-mediation, or reconciliation ceremonies are still existent. But it is not enough that these methods exist; society should whenever possible emphasise using these means of peaceful conflict resolution rather than military force or other violent means of handling conflict.

Finally, and particularly important with view on the history and the current state of political affairs in Uganda, a society in which there is positive peace should be able to reconcile the demands of state-making with demands for democratisation and human rights. Ayoob regards them as “mutually legitimising agents, with democratisation legitimising the greater concentration of authority in

the hands of the state and the concentration of power legitimising and facilitating the loosening of political controls and the guaranteeing of political and civil rights to the citizenry.” (Ayoob 1996: 48)

At a cultural level a peaceful society is characterised by minimal group cohesion at a sub-national level. Relationships between different groups are encouraged and valued, and not opposed through e.g. fuelling inter-group division by exploiting ethnical differences.

The seeking for social cohesion among diverse societies may not be misinterpreted as the maintenance and justification of a false status-quo for the sake of alleged unity, whereas deep inequalities remain. Rather, in a peaceful society people would experience a culture where cohesion is understood as a process with the ultimate goal of equality among different groups and not as an end in itself. This kind of cohesion would allow for empathy between individuals or groups, would enable people to take the perspective of the other (Kelman 1997: 199).

Regarding inter-group relations it is imperative that human needs be recognised in ways other than exclusively through structural institutions; in particular, through mutual respect between individuals of different backgrounds. From this perspective, every individual would equally contribute to the recognition of human needs and dignity. A peaceful society would then be characterised by the above stated equality between all individuals and groups, providing equal opportunities to all, which contributes to a state of inclusiveness for all members of society.

Education for peace: Using education to create a peaceful society

“Establishing lasting peace is the work of education; all politics can do is keep us out of war.”

(Maria Montessori 1972: iii)

Peace education is a fast growing pedagogical discipline around the world, gaining increasing importance and popularity beyond the scholar community and the sphere of the so-called ‘naïve’ pacifists. However, as often the case quantity does not necessarily equal quality, and as Galtung (in Salomon & Nevo 2002: xi) comments “there is more research on peace than peace action, but when it comes to peace education, the converse is the case: There is more action, all over the world and under all range of labels, accompanied by what appears to be insufficient scholarship.”

Additionally Salomon (2003, 2002, 1999) identified repeatedly the lack of clearly defined concepts and profound evaluation as obstacles towards peace education as an acknowledged successful tool for conflict transformation.

How has peace education as a subject evolved over time? Who are the current actors in the field and on which assumptions do they base their activities? In the following sub-chapter I will provide an insight into the current ‘state of art’ of peace education, taking equally into account its emergence and development, underlying concepts, presently used models and the criticism the discipline is facing.

A short history of peace education

While peace education has been acknowledged as an official educational discipline for about three decades, its roots can be followed back much longer. ‘Education in the service of human improvement’ is intertwined with the history of formal socialisation and in this role recognised by educators for centuries already (Burns 2000: 1).

- Education for human betterment – some first roots

The Czech author Comenius, the first acknowledged peace educator and founder of modern educational science, recognised as early as the 17th century that ‘peace’ is one way in which human betterment is interpreted. “If the whole human race were taught about the cosmos from the outset, they would be truly wise, and the world would be full of order, light and peace.” (Comenius, *Pampaedia* 16 in Seitz 2004: 48). Hermon (1988: 127) argues that there has been a 400-year long evolution of the “notion of orienting the public to peace through formal education”, stimulated by non-governmental organisations.

- Institutionalised peace education – the beginning of the 19th century

The 19th century witnessed the opening up of the world by and to Europeans through colonialism. This cruel period in history was characterised by grave exploitation through the colonial powers and deep suffering among the local population in the colonialisised regions.

In America this period of time witnessed the founding of so-called ‘Peace Societies’ (Boulding 1987: 321-322). The goal of these societies was to promote international understanding beyond individuals and nations and to challenge the acceptance of war and to build attitudes for peace. For this purpose they developed educational programmes. The work of these Peace Societies was still based on a concept of peace that was later labelled ‘negative peace’ by Galtung (e.g. 1969; 1976). Peace was defined as the absence of war and any educational attempts meant to encourage thinking about alternative ways of conflict resolution.

- World War I and its aftermath

World War I spawned several peace movements, among them the ‘League of Nations’, which established an expert sub-committee in order to co-ordinate efforts to train the younger generation for international co-operation (Burns 2000: 1). They developed an approach which combines the efforts of governmental, non-governmental and inter-governmental agencies and is still in practice today. Within this approach the notion of peace as not only a matter of inter-state relations, but also an issue concerning the responsibility of every individual, finds explicit expression. Peace education in this sense is meant to empower people and to strengthen their efforts in creating a peaceful society.

- The foundation of UNESCO in 1945

This sub-committee charged the “International Institute of Intellectual Co-Operation”, the precursor of UNESCO, with the international co-ordination of peace-education efforts, and this has been one of the tasks of UNESCO since its foundation in 1945. As defined by the Constitution, the purpose of the Organization is “to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations”.¹

Since then, both the UNESCO Headquarter in Paris and the growing number of country offices in all world regions have put their efforts into the development of educational guidelines and tools that meet the increasingly complex challenges of education towards a culture of peace.

- World War II and the dark side of education

In the period during and after World War II fascism and communism competed with all means, in the educational sector included. The term ‘Peace Education’ was often misused in order to promote the ‘right’ ideology.² Powerful youth organisations as the German ‘Hitler Jugend’ promoted values labelled as strengthening a sense of community and solidarity, but were in fact forceful

¹ Available from:
http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.phpURL_ID=6206&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html;
 latest access on: 29th August 2006.

² The ‘dark side’ or negative aspects of education have recently become a subject for intensive academic research, particularly in the attempts to explain the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and in relation to the increasing number of inter-state conflicts based on ethnic-identity factors (e.g. Seitz 2004; Davies 2004; Porath 2003, Saltarelli 2000). In the context of this thesis, however, they will despite their importance for the study of education in conflict settings not be further touched upon because it would exceed the framework of this thesis.

instruments to implant the Nazi-ideology in the minds of young people. Military exercises, and racist ‘science’ were parts of the schedule of these institutions.

- Some early origins of education for democratic values and critical thinking

After World War II, many educators – most of them Europeans – pioneered an effort to establish a humanistic theory and practice of peace education oriented in democratic values and theory (Porath 2003: 525).

Among the thinkers who paved the way for this stream was the German Hannah Arendt. Born as a Jew in Linden (today part of Hanover/Germany) in 1906, she had to flee from the Nazi-terror to Paris in 1933. During her years in French exile her strong political interest emerged (Breier 1992: 7 ff.). In 1941 she had to continue her forced migration to the US, where she settled in New York and received US-citizenship in 1951 and started to write for several newspapers. She also continued her academic study on totalitarian regimes and human nature itself in the light of political oppression. Her work was driven by her discomposure about the Holocaust and its aftermath and a strong will to “understand” (Arendt 2003: 9 ff.). In 1951 she published her probably most important book ‘The origins of Totalitarianism’.

Even though many view Hannah Arendt a philosopher she preferred to see herself as ‘political theorist’ (Breier 1992: 19). She was no educationalist by discipline and has actually not written much about education itself. However, her fundamental studies on the role of the individual in totalitarian regimes (Arendt 2003, 17 ff.; Arendt 1990; 1973; 1970), peaking in the development of the concept of ‘individual responsibility’ have strongly influenced the development of education for democratic citizenship (Gordon 2001; Levinson 2001; Smith 2001; Schutz 2001).

‘Education for democratic citizenship’ is by some regarded as separate from peace education, by some viewed as an important element, if not ‘the’ message of peace education. It is built on the Arendtian idea that the biggest and most important treasure of every human being is its ability for political thinking and judgement (Arendt 1990: 362 ff.). In this sense, educational efforts should aim at the enhancement of this critical and political thinking, by her named “education for judgement” (in Smith 2001), which can enable processes of empowerment (Knight & Pearl 2000).

A similar educational tradition has been carried forth into modern times by the thinkers of the ‘Frankfurt school’.³ The ‘Frankfurt school’ regarded itself as a

³ This school emerged at the ‘Institute for Social Research’ founded at the University of Frankfurt a.M. when Max Horkheimer became the institute’s director in 1930. It is hence not title of an institution as such, but meant to designate the thinkers affiliated with the institute or influenced by it, among them Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse and Erich Fromm.

school of neo-Marxist theory, social research and philosophy. Influenced by the experiences of Germany under dictatorship before and during Second World War and in the face of the silence kept by the German society about the committed atrocities it aimed at “responding to the intensification of unfreedom and irrationality in industrial, scientific and advanced capitalist society – culminating in facism” (Wiggershaus 2001: 9 ff.). Their ‘critical theory’ was understood as “a comprehensive, ideology-critical, historically self-reflective body of theory aiming simultaneously to explain and combat domination and alienation and help to bring about a rational, humane, democratic and socialist society” (Behrends 2002: 6-7).

This critical pedagogy turns to education to question how social forces impact upon the beliefs and ideals that motivate individuals. The ability to think critically can empower people to come up with their own concepts of social justice and gives them the conceptual tools to act upon those concerns (Harris 2003: 86).

Even though Hannah Arendt never belonged to the ‘Frankfurt school’ and documented contacts and exchanges are very limited both schools of thought – using different arguments – aim at the enhancement of critical thinking and view it as the individuals’ responsibility to constantly process in the development of its critical, political mind. In this sense they have strongly contributed to the formulation of some of the overarching goals of political (peace) education: critical thinking, awareness of responsibility and empowerment to act in this responsibility.

- ‘Lessons learned from Vietnam’ and the discovery of ‘root causes’

During and after the post-Vietnam, nuclear world of the 1970s, a new longing for peace appeared. This included new concerns about the nature of violence and its multiplying effects (Camara 1971).

In 1974 the UNESCO General Conference adopted its ‘Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms’. It both brings together a number of concerns about the future, and is legitimated by, and legitimates, action to address the issues. The growing awareness for the diversity of causes underlying violence is expressed in a recognisably widened scope of targets.

In development circles a more reflective approach called for analysis of the “root causes” in order to take more appropriate action. Education was seen as a necessary tool in order to solve the problems at the roots of the conflicts (Burns 2000: 2). Since then the field developed and became more and more differenti-

ated and broad in concept and achieved accordingly increased acceptance beyond the community of peace educators.

- From a ‘culture of war’ towards a ‘culture of peace’

The ever present threat of global and imperial warfare, the increasing number of violent conflicts and the continuing injustice of the misdistribution and exploitation of global resources led the UN General Assembly in 1995 to the declaration of the ‘International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children in the World (2001-2010)’ (UN 1995), which got renewed through the “Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace” (UN 1999), wherein peace education as an instrument for attaining a culture of peace plays an important role.⁴

Originally a study of the causes of war and its prevention, peace education has evolved into the study of violence in all its manifestations and aims to “counteract the war system by educating for the creation of a peace system; a peace system on both the structural and individual level” (Ardizzone 2001: 16; Harris & Morrison 2003: 29).

Peace educators endorse the power of education as a means of transforming society. By creating awareness of the links between structural violence and direct violence, these educators strive to create a means for a peaceful future (Reardon 1988). It is now widely acknowledged that the relevance of peace education derives not only from its perspective on outbreaks of violence in the form of war, terrorism, abuse, etc., but on its attempts to address long-standing and chronic threats to human security.

This acknowledgement is not only expressed in a considerable number of international documentations and resolutions dealing with the importance of peace education, but also through firm institutional commitment (Lopes-Cardozo 2006: 9). In 2000 UNESCO listed 580 peace research and training institutes around the world (Page 2004: 5). For academia and peace educators, mainly from the Northern hemisphere, the Peace Education Commission (constituted in 1972) within the International Peace Research Association (IPRA) is a forum to exchange ideas, materials and experiences.⁵

Peace education: Some conceptual underpinnings

Conceptualising peace education is not an easy task, given the various scholars and actors in the field who all follow different objectives and hence relate many

⁴ For further information on the decade see also UNESCO 2000: 1ff.

⁵ The Information about the IPRA Peace Education Commission is derived from informal conversations with some of its members at the biannual IPRA conference in Calgary/Canada in July 2005. (Information available from: <http://www.ipra.com>)

divergent meanings to it. Furthermore, as became clear from the historical overview, perceptions on and expectations towards peace education have changed over time and are, as is the subject itself, still in a continuous process of development.

- Struggle for definition

Various authors (Seitz 2004; Davies 2004; Simpson 2004; Salomon 2000; Salomon & Nevo 2002; 1999) have repeatedly criticised the lack of clear theoretical concepts and stress the importance of developing universally valid principles and guidelines. Moreover, there seems to emerge an argument in recent literature on how to use the term ‘peace education’.

Whereas some understand it as an over-arching category for any kind of programme that addresses in one way or another issues such as human rights, democratisation, non-violence, or mutual respect (Page 2004; Ardizzone 2002; Toh 2002; Fountain 1999); others plead for a stricter definition and separation between – in their eyes – different disciplines such as human rights education, citizenship education or peace education (Salomon 2002, 2000; Salomon & Nevo 2001, 1999; Porath 2003).

Proponents of this argument fear that the acceptance of peace education as an effective tool for conflict transformation becomes threatened through a continuous ‘watering’, mixing and mingling of numerous very diverse concepts. Indeed, as the field grows and becomes increasingly holistic in the various different issues it is supposed to address, it also grows in complexity.

- Differing practices of peace education

The actual practice of peace education varies throughout the world. What is presented in the name of peace education depends upon varying notions of security and peace, differing religious traditions, cultural values, and linguistic concepts (Harris & Morrison 2003: 65 ff.).

Even though teaching peace and peaceful behaviour in classrooms has a relevance in both so-called peaceful as well as post-conflict societies (Bretherton 2003: 12), it makes an essential difference if peace education is implemented in a region of tranquillity or intractable conflict; if it aims to change ways of perceiving and relating to a real collective adversary or a minority facing discrimination; or if it faces no real target for peace, as in most European societies. In the first case it is, as Salomon points out, more education about peace than education for peace with somebody else (Salomon 2002: 66).

- Three current schools of thought

Roughly, one can identify three current main schools of thought among the peace education scholar community. Each of them, according to their region of origin named the 'Middle-Eastern' strand, the 'Western' strand and the 'Southern' strand, is shaped by a specific spectrum of experience.

Education is always influenced by particularities of the society in which it takes place and hence reflects this society in many ways. Therefore, education can never be entirely objective. Every educator overlooks his/her discipline from a certain viewpoint, shaped and formed by personal experiences and the requirements, challenges and obstacles in his/her environment that he/she wants to address with educational means.

- A middle-eastern perspective

In the face of decades-long inter-ethnic tensions between Israelis and Palestinians peace scholars in the Middle-East view peace education primarily as a mean to overcome these tensions. They argue that peace education programmes are basically designed to educate for peace with a "real ethnic, racial or national adversary" (Salomon & Nevo 2001: 65). Such programmes face mutually exclusive collective narratives, anchored in painful historical memories that are accompanied by grave inequalities (Azar in Salomon & Nevo 2001: 65). Based on this definition Salomon identifies four main goals of peace education for regions of intractable conflicts as the Middle-East (2002: 5):

- accepting as legitimate the 'other's' narrative and its specific implications;
- willingness to critically examine one's own groups actions toward the other group and to acknowledge guilt;
- willingness to experience and show empathy and trust towards the 'other';
- disposition to engage in non-violent activities.

Authors belonging to this strand as Porath (2003), Bar-Tal (2002) and Salomon (2002) are also critical towards a narrow limitation of peace education programmes to the exclusively personal sphere and underline the importance of paying attention to the highly political nature of the subject, particularly in regions and countries facing violent conflict. They point out that peace education by nature deals with the problems that concern a society. It is thus imperative that peace education be related to concrete, current concerns and social issues. It must not only deal with values and behavioural principles on a general level but should also relate them to specific issues and cases that arise in a society.

Porath (2003: 533) summarises that 'peace education that is theoretically complete and practically applicable must, in sum, respond to the politics of war by comprising a contextual and effective definition of war and peace; it has to incorporate emotional aspects in addition to the social and cognitive ones; it has

to regard itself as a political project. Only critical, reflective, involved citizens can effectively support the alteration of the war culture, and help to bring about peace’.

- A western perspective

This rather narrow conception of peace education contrasts with a current trend that can be observed in the Western hemisphere, particularly in the USA, Canada and Western Europe. Authors belonging to this second, largest school of thought plead for a holistic view of peace education, taking into account every issue that might in the closer or wider sense have an influence on peace and conflict respectively. The range of topics may hence embrace human rights, the United Nation system, democracy theories and citizenship education as well as environmental aspects or non-violent means for conflict resolution.

Following the idea(1) of a broadly established culture of peace ‘Western’ authors such as Staub (2002) and Page (2004) assume that outer-peace starts with inner-peace and view everything that is happening on a common, political level as tightly inter-related with the role and perceptions of the individual. A common feature of this perspective on peace education is hence a strong focus on the individual and her/his innermost perceptions and values.

Peace education in this regard is a deeply personal issue (Harris 2002). It considers the encouragement of people to think about the type of world in which they would want to live and how they themselves could contribute to the creation of such a world as the overarching goal of peace education. This does not mean the exclusion of socio-political dimensions, as the wide range of possible issues to touch upon shows, but the societal context in which peace education takes place for many ‘Western’ educators inhabits a minor role in comparison to the strong focus on ‘intra-personal’ aspects.

- A southern perspective

The third strand shaped by a ‘Southern’ perspective can be considered as the youngest among the three. It has to be pointed out that due to the strong under-representation of peace education scholars from the ‘South’ this school of thought rather consists of academia and practitioners advocating for a ‘Southern’ perspective; and of very few individuals actually coming from developing countries.

The probably best-known representative of this school of thought is the Brazilian thinker and pedagogue Paulo Freire, who developed in the 1970s the concept of ‘conscientisation’ (Freire 1970: 17). His fundamental and most important work ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’ was written and published in exile. The visions and educational practices he developed were closely related to and

shaped by the situation of the Brazilian society at that time, but gained soon increasing popularity beyond the Latin American continent, particularly as a method of (political) alphabetisation. In developing his humanistic, liberatory, and revolutionary pedagogy he coined the term ‘Conscientização’ to define “learning to perceive the social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (ibid.).

Driven from his analysis of the nature and effects of oppression, Freire’s pedagogy stresses the need for the oppressed themselves to observe the situation of their oppression, thus enabling the consciousness-raising process to begin. This shift in awareness is necessary because “as long as the oppressed remain unaware of the causes of their condition, they fatalistically ‘accept’ their exploitation” (Freire 1970: 51).

Freire’s acknowledgement that society is dynamic rather than static and that individuals hence have the opportunity to influence society not only makes his pedagogy truly liberatory and transformational, but also provides further support for the practice of peace education in the era of globalisation. In this sense Freire’s achievements can be seen as the foundation of ‘education for social justice’, one important aspect of peace education.

Based on the theories of Freire present educationalists as Reardon (1999; 1988) and Haavelsrud (1996) view the task and responsibility of peace education as raising the critical consciousness of learners as a means for social change.

- From peace education to ‘peace-building education’

Based on these basic assumptions the American educationalists Bush & Saltarelli (2000: 23) developed the concept of ‘peace-building education’, which is viewed by them as an extension of peace education. “Peace-building education ... is seen to be the next step in the evolution of peace education” (ibid. 23). It is able to react both to overt violence as well as to the causes of violence and is characterised as follows: “Peace-building education

- would be a bottom-up rather than a top-down process driven by (war-torn) communities themselves, founded on their experiences and capacities;
- is a process rather than a product;
- is long-term rather than short-term;
- relies on local, rather than external, inputs and resources;
- seeks to create opportunities rather than impose solutions” (ibid: 27).

To conclude, I want to point out that the claim for conceptual clarity and the plea for concepts based on indigenous knowledge and driven by local experiences, as expressed in the different schools of thought must not necessarily be understood as contradictory. As Simpson (2004: 5) states “perhaps our goal in peace education must focus on providing a curriculum that shares common aims

while embodying flexibility in order to allow for the individuality that transpires in each of our classrooms”, communities, and cultures.

Models of peace education

As has been stated repeatedly peace education programmes and projects differ broadly depending on many factors, as e.g. the socio-political context in which they are implemented, the goals which the facilitators seek to accomplish or practical matters (see previous sub-chapter). There does not exist a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to peace education; a model which is appropriate and successful in one specific context, might be completely unsuitable in another setting. In the following I will briefly describe three major shaping factors for the practical design of peace education programmes.

• Child versus adult education

Among educators a lively discussion is going on about the ‘ideal’ age group to target with peace education. The promoters of ‘starting as early as possible’ favour the idea of a peace education approach that addresses children from primary school onwards. Hicks (in Simpson 2004: 2) argues that in the age of six and seven children often begin to define their own ideas of war. In this age they are in the midst of the development of their image-forming of ‘the rest of the world’ and begin to be able to look at situations from the perspective of others. Based on this observation he assumes that peace education could help children to develop their relationship with and conceptual understanding of peace.

Similarly, Reardon also emphasises the importance of peace education initiatives to start at primary level, because in her view this age is often bypassed when looking at sensitive and controversial issues (in Simpson 2004: 6).

Others support the introduction of peace education at secondary level, because in the age of 12-15 years children start to think reflectively and abstract reasoning begins (Piaget in Ansell 2005: 16). It is assumed that children in this age group benefit even more from peace education, since they will be able to critically reflect upon concepts like violence, war and peace.

Lowicki-Zucca (2005: 4) extend this argument by including youth and stressing the ‘risk-factor’; namely, that young people are the group in society most prone to become involved in violent conflict and war, and particularly in emergency situations are often overloaded with responsibility. Extended social, political and economic unrest affects the social fabric and culture of families, households and communities, all of which are important for young people’s development. The author claims that peace education in this age group can have an important impact and provide support to handle the challenges of adolescence,

but has suffered from a lack of attention, since only primary education is prioritised at the international level and most national levels (Lowicki-Zucca 2005: 1).

The subject of this research, peace education for adults, is an under-regarded issue in the current literature and the age group above 18 years under-represented in existing concepts; despite various peace activities carried out by adults around the globe (Harris & Morrison 2003: 78 ff.).

Chatwick (in Burns & Apeslagh 1996: 263 ff.) underlines the need for continuous efforts in education towards peace above school age, because most violent conflicts are still organised and conducted by adults. Furthermore adults, predominantly men, can be a source of violence in their domestic environment, as pointed out in chapter 2. Sommers (2001 in Seitz 2004: 63) argues in this line, that the exclusion of adults from peace education can cause an elementary dissonance between the values taught to children in school and at home, which might trigger angst and stress in them.

In conclusion it can be stated that there are important and considerable arguments for peace education in every age group, which might also be influenced by cultural particularities and definitions of 'childhood' and 'adulthood'. This again underlines the necessity for multi-level approaches, which do not limit themselves to a specific age group or sector of society, but address and embrace it in its various needs and multi-dimensionality.

- Formal versus informal (state versus non-state actors)

The current activities in the field of peace education can be categorised as either formal or informal education initiatives; by Carson & Lange (2004: 3; 1997) these are called the 'integrative' and the 'additive' approach.

Promoters of the integrative approach to peace education stress the importance of integrating peace education into the formal schooling system. The underlying idea is that the education system can fulfil an important role in creating a peaceful society, by using its authority, legitimacy, means and conditions to shape the citizens that can build such a society. Moreover, Bar-Tal (2002: 27) states that "schools are often the only institutions society can formally, intentionally and extensively use to achieve this mission".

Bretherton (2003: 15) identifies three possible approaches in the formal education system: as a separate subject in the curriculum, spread across the curriculum, or as a whole-school approach. Instead of championing one specific approach she views as preferable to embrace all three.

Supporters of the formal approach to peace education see a considerable role for the government. "A Ministry of Education can set the objectives for peace education, develop the curriculum, draw the contents for textbooks and other educational material, set guidelines for organising the political climate in

schools, add extracurricular activities, train teachers, instruct schools to show initiative, and oblige students to participate in the learning.” (Bar-Tal 2002: 27)

In many countries, however, the government and its institutions are not able or not willing to use their capacities for the establishment of broad peace education initiatives. Moreover, teachers themselves, who have to fulfil the challenging task of implementing what is dictated by policy, lack the required means, support and training. Most teachers in developing countries face other striking challenges, such as high student-teacher ratios, insufficient education and training for their general tasks and low wages, which force them into multiple jobs. It is questionable how many would be able to function as role-models and peace educators under these challenging circumstances.

Furthermore, in Uganda and many other African countries a strong focus of the curriculum on ‘measureable’ outcomes and a general orientation towards the frequent exams is prevalent in formal education. This causes obstacles towards the introduction of subjects which are hardly measurable in their effects and hence not suitable for the existing framework of formal education.

In contrast, Ardizzone (2001: 4-6) points out the advantages of non-state actors in peace education, because non-governmental grassroots organisations have more flexibility to design their own programme with fewer restrictions imposed by the government. Informal peace education can concretely react and respond to problems and circumstances present in the society where it takes place. The programme design of e.g. a workshop series can relatively easily become adjusted and the content revised, whereas a formal school curriculum takes long to be developed and is then fixed and uniform. A culturally-sensitive approach, taking regional particularities into account is hence difficult to apply in the formal school education system.

Moreover, as numerous examples in the recent history of peace education illustrate do formal peace education initiatives not necessarily follow the goals and objectives commonly understood as ‘peaceful’. In contrary, particularly formal approaches are prone to abuse and can become an instrument of indoctrination by the state apparatus (Davies 2005). In cases where this might happen, control mechanisms are difficult to develop and implement; if they exist it is questionable if they have the power to act and influence.

Stressing another final point I conclude that a combination of formal (integrative) and informal (additive) approaches would be suitable and preferable for most developing countries, because many children are still excluded from the formal education system be it due to poverty, illness, insecurity, forced displacement or other threats particularly prevalent in conflict-torn contexts. It is hence inevitable to develop approaches that do not further contribute to their marginalisation.

- Short-term versus long-term

The most often practised form of peace education taking place in the informal sector is the popular ‘workshop-approach’, where participants come together for a few days, sometimes repeatedly, as in the case of AVP; the programme analysed for this study. McCauley (2002: 247) judges this practice harshly by stating that “such workshops aim to change hearts and minds of participants, but typically offer very little support for behavioural change”. Achieving change in negative attitudes towards other groups requires, according to him, more regular, frequent contact, and above all new patterns of behaviour require continuous practice and repetition.

This argument is supported by the ‘contact-hypothesis’ of Allport (1954), who states that under specific circumstances interaction between members of opposing groups can lead to a reduction in prejudice, but that exposure alone does not necessarily show this effect – in order to maximise the chances for positive effects, frequent interaction would be required (Gleicher 2002: 90; Kadushin & Livert 2002: 120).

In this context it is important to mention another unintended side-effect of the workshop-model in peace education: the ‘re-entry problem’ (McCauley 2002: 255; Gleicher 2002: 90).

Usually, single members of communities are selected or sign up by themselves for the training. For them it might be difficult to bring their newly acquired knowledge back to their communities, where the old patterns of behaviour still prevail. An ideal programme should thus target not only the participants themselves, but their social environment, the larger community as well. Ideally, not only single participants but at least pairs or even better groups from a particular community should be encouraged to join a specific programme together. This interconnectedness between programme contents and the larger system in which peace education acts is often under-regarded (Sommers 2001).

With these briefly sketched limitations of short-term peace education programmes in mind, it is easy to identify the advantages of long-term intervention. Most peace education scholars seem to favour the latter, because it reflects in their view the ‘long-term’ investment of education for peace in a more peaceful society (Salomon & Nevo 1999: 4). “As a multi-disciplinary, international field, peace education calls for long-term responses to conflict ...” (Hicks 1988 in Ardizzone 2001: 2).

In this regard, the presently existent dominance of short-term approaches should not be assumed to reflect personal preferences or pedagogic convictions of their implementers. Rather, peace education, as all activities in the development and peace-building sector, is dependent on the (financial) good-will of donors and recent ‘trends’ in the field. Often, facilitating institutions simply lack

the financial and personal capacities to think strategically, particularly in regard to the unwillingness of many funding institutions to agree upon long-term support. A series of workshops is easy to implement and relatively cheap; hence often a pragmatic ‘better-than-nothing’ solution than a favoured approach. “National and international actors also need to commit themselves to peace education initiatives for a longer period in order to make the programmes sustainable and thus effective” (Bush & Saltarelli 2000: 27).

Criticism on peace education

Contrasting the wide-spread assumption that peace education does generally intend something positive and therefore should be promoted, its limited measurable success in sustainable conflict transformation raises the question: can peace education programmes achieve what their optimistic name promises? Does peace education really make a difference?

Beside all the positive intentions and goals of peace education, many authors express profound doubt and criticism. This is illustrated by a statement by Sommers (2001 in Seitz 2004: 64) who summarises that peace education “is popular but hard to define. Its values are widely embraced but its implementation inspires scepticism. It espouses universal ideals that are often interpreted according to Western cultural notions of universality. It preaches acceptance, communication and inclusion, while programmes relating to it may actively resist collaboration and coordination with each other. Its programmes are usually targeted at people who are already peaceful. And peace educators strongly endorse its expansion while claiming that its results cannot be easily assessed.”

Indeed, despite the increasing number of peace-education programmes and projects all over the globe, there is still very little in the way of research and evaluation results available to an international audience (Salomon 2002, 2003; Harris 2002; Harris & Morrison 2003).

Salomon ironically illustrates this lack of conceptual clarity and evaluation by suggesting that we “imagine that medical practitioners would not distinguish between invasive surgery to remove malignant tumours and surgery to correct one’s vision. Imagine also that although different kinds of surgery are practised, no research and no evaluation of their different effectiveness accompany them. The field would be considered neither very serious nor very trustworthy. Luckily enough, such a state of affairs does not describe the field of medicine, but it comes pretty close to describing the field of peace education.” (Salomon & Nevo 2002: 3)

Several authors such as Salomon (2002); Harris (2002) and Shapiro (2002) also indicate a lack of links from theory to practice in many peace-education programmes as a reason for potential failure. The underlying assumption is that if

the knowledge is not immediately transferred to the practical sphere of the participants it might get lost as soon as the participant leaves the classroom. Ideally, a student in a peace education course acquires both theoretical concepts about the dangers of violence and the possibilities for peace, as well as practical skills about how to live non-violently (Harris 2002: 22). This necessarily requires a certain level of awareness of the specific forms of violence an individual or a society in question is confronted with, in order to address these as concretely as possible through the programme.

In this context, Simpson (2004: 5) describes the phenomenon of ‘memorised routine’ she observed with students in a school-based peace education programme. These students were still able to repeat the slogans of the programme several months after participation, but completely lacked a practical use of them in everyday life, as they were obviously unable to activate their meanings.

Another repeatedly criticised phenomenon is the ‘Western bias’ (Seitz 2004: 56 ff.; Schell-Faucon 2001: 1; Ardizzone 2001: 16) in the academic literature and present concepts of peace education. Views from developing countries are extremely underrepresented; notions of indigenous knowledge and traditional concepts of conflict transformation hard to find in the training materials.

The works of the very few Ugandan scholars who have recently addressed the issue of peace/human rights/democracy education in their country are strongly characterised by unspecific notions of a culture of peace usually stressed by the ‘Western’ scholar community (e.g. Tuyzere 2003; Tuyzere 2003 II; Mugumya 2003; Kaahwa 2003). Visionary concepts, characterised by originality and a strong orientation towards their context of implementation are almost impossible to find.

This exclusive focus on Western perspectives suffers from fatal shortcomings; e.g. by emphasising on a Western and Christian concept of humanity, which makes any transfer to non-Western contexts extremely problematic (Sommers 2001).

The ‘Western bias’ becomes clear above all in the strong emphasis on the individual and on individual self-esteem present in many peace education programmes (Schell-Faucon 2001). Yet ‘self’ is a Western concept, a concept which is tightly associated with individualistic societies. The resulting fixation on the regulation of inter-personal relationships might be completely inappropriate in many contexts as the dynamics of armed conflicts are often determined by collective action and group identity (Seitz 2004: 64).

“When the only tool you have in your tool box is a hammer, all problems start to look like a nail” (Carl 2004: 2). According to Carl, this logic seems to characterise many conflict interventions of international actors, but ‘we do what we can’ does not necessarily mean what most needs to be done and can be valued as

an urgent request for more sensitivity in the process of implementation, in dealing with the target group and the real needs of the region and context where a programme takes place.

Addizone (2001: 1) outlines the importance of cultural and context sensitive approaches to peace education by stating that a “quick-fix or one-size-fits-all approach, which fails to account for specific contexts will not work”. Addressing the implementers of peace education programmes Sommers (2001) adds that peace education predominantly focuses on target groups who actually do not require peace education; its clientele is above all the (potential) victims and sufferers of violence, as e.g. inhabitants of refugee camps, while the perpetrators and actors are generally neglected. Finally, Bush & Saltarelli (2000) and Sommers (2001) identify a significant lack of coordination among the different actors, who in many cases either do not know what the others are doing, or even worse, compete for scarce funding, potential target groups and legitimacy.

A final point of criticism towards peace education touches upon another side of the coin: accuses of indoctrination expressed by official institutions and predominantly state-actors, who assume peace education as being propagandistic instead of forwarding ‘objective’ information on controversial matters. In the past peace educators have sometimes been verbally attacked for challenging mainstream views of security and national defense and their discipline has been condemned as being value laden (Harris 2002: 165).

For example teachers in peace studies classes might present a perspective that opposes traditional points of view that support peace through strength. Following the events of 9/11 peace activism in the United States has been defamed as being anti-patriotic and peace activists themselves who wished to see an end to all violence no matter from which side, including the bombing of innocent civilians in Afghanistan (Harris 2002: 165) or Iraq were by many seen as alternately weak and pacifistic, or as enemies of patriotism. As these recent examples illustrate peace education does not necessarily reflect wide-spread perceptions of ‘peace’ – in fact it might even oppose and question them and therefore be strongly criticised by official powers and majorities.

Evaluation of peace education – promises and pitfalls

“There is measure in all things.”
(Horace 65 – 8 B.C.)

As has been mentioned earlier the lack of evaluation is among the strongest critiques of peace education (Seitz 2004: 62; McCauley 2002; Fountain 1999: 31). Where evaluations are conducted, they often suffer from significant shortcomings, as e.g. a very short time-frame of analysis (Nevo & Brehm 2002: 274

ff.). Due to the large financial and personal resources they require long-term studies on the effects of peace education are seldomly conducted.

Moreover, the implementers of peace education, particularly in developing countries, are under continuous pressure for success from donors. If a programme does not show the intended and claimed effects, ideally right after the intervention when the report for the funding agency is written, further funding is at risk. Hence, there is a danger that evaluation – normally expected to a certain extent from those who sponsored the programme – becomes rather exploited and misused to show its positive value and necessity, rather than being used as a tool for critical reflection (Hirsland *et al.* 2004: 13-14).

Harris (2004: 2) defines good evaluation in the context of peace education as ideally containing both ‘formative’ and ‘summative’ elements. Formative evaluations concerning the delivery of a peace education programme can determine what activities were conducted, whom the intervention reached, the number of participants, the number of meetings, etc. Formative evaluation can hence lead to programme improvement. ‘Summative’ evaluation tries to document the specific impacts on the participants and attempts to assess learner satisfaction. Harris (*ibid.*) states that it can document cognitive changes, but loses its predictive validity in trying to assess emotions, dispositions and behaviours that may occur as a result of peace education instruction.

Ideally, an evaluation should also be comparative, i.e. a group of peace education participants should be compared with a group who did not join a peace education programme. This requires also pre- and post-tests (Hirsland *et al.* 2004: 26). Harris (2004: 5) raises the concern that such comparison groups are very hard to control. Two samples of people may appear similar; but their participation in peace education learning can be influenced by a wide variety of factors, including personal beliefs, religious upbringing, previous experience with conflict, external levels of hostility and many more. In order to provide valid research about how peace education really reduces violence, educators have to establish a causal link between the reduction of violence and the specific intervention provided by peace education. Such links are hard to establish in the field of social science because of many intervening variables.

The majority of existing peace education evaluations are qualitative, ‘formative’ studies, which can show positive changes and benefits, but stress narrow criteria and definitions for peace, e.g. in the case of school-programme evaluations, which demonstrate whether the programme had a positive impact on the children’s behaviour (Harris & Morrison 2003). However, neither do they evaluate long-term effects nor do they assess whether or not participants become active outside the classroom to promote peace and hence reduce levels of violence in the larger society.

Educational approaches towards peace in Uganda

“Peace is too grave a matter to be left solely to politicians.”

(Salomon & Nevo 2001: 64)

Democracy, peace and human rights, the three major subjects which are generally included in the literature under the term ‘value-oriented education’ (Hirse-land *et al.* 2004; Simpson 2004; Porath 2002) have so far not inhabited a specific role within the national curriculum and were widely under-represented within the formal education system. In Secondary schools, citizenship education has so far been an element of the subject ‘political education’, which is not taught at all schools. Also religious subjects contained some elements of citizenship education.

In the current academic literature on value-oriented education authors from the Southern hemisphere are extremely under-represented. In particular this counts for the African continent. The very few authors that have elaborated on value-oriented education approaches like peace education for the Ugandan context identify an urgent need for its introduction into the formal school curriculum (Tuyisere 2003; Mugumya 2003). In the face of decade-long abuse of political power and the wide-spread legitimacy of violence (see chapter 2) Tuyisere (2003: 75) states that “Uganda’s historical-socio-political background constitutes the basis for introduction of peace education in classrooms which would help learners to value lives of others who live in their environment irrespective of background. Peace education would underline political tolerance and coexistence as a necessity in our society.”

Possibly related to a general recognisable shift towards (multi-party) democracy within the past few years (see chapter 2) it seems that this will be changed soon. For Ugandan Primary Schools the curriculum development process is already completed and the new system will be introduced with the coming academic year. For Secondary Schools an introduction into the national curriculum is planned, but the process will not be finished before 2008.

The director of the National Curriculum Development Institute states that there are ‘contemporary issues’ existing in Uganda, which cannot be further ignored by the schools. Specifically, she names democracy, human rights, peace-related subjects, HIV/AIDS, ethics, water/hygiene, and general life skills. It is planned to combine subject-specific approaches, e.g. the introduction of a school subject called ‘humanities’ with general holistic approaches, where elements of the mentioned thematic areas will be introduced into the curricula of existing subjects.⁶

⁶ All information in this chapter is derived from an interview with the director of the National Curriculum Development Centre in Kampala/Uganda which was held on 10th August 2006. The interview was conducted by ISHSS-IDS student Susanne Rauh, who has conducted her field research

Despite various attempts to learn about other informal peace education initiatives than AVP in Uganda I could not find much information on this issue, neither while still being in the field nor through intensive internet-based research I came across substantial material. Information could be found about one UNHCR-run programme, where children and youth (primary school age⁷) living in Ugandan refugee camps can participate in twelve workshops of three hours length related to peace topics. This programme follows a very rights-based approach, focusing rather on the Declaration of Human Rights as a rationale for changes that need to be made than on changes of personal behaviour.⁸ It is coordinated by the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE).

To my best knowledge AVP is the only programme implemented in Uganda, which focuses its efforts exclusively on adults. If there should be other peace education initiatives, this certainly tells something about a significant lack of coordination of efforts in the field.

on the state of education for democracy in Kampala/Uganda between August and October 2006 and kindly shared her findings with me.

⁷ In Uganda seven years of Primary Education are compulsory; Primary School-age includes thus children and youth between 6 and 14 years of age.

⁸ Available from:

<http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR22/FMR2213.pdf#search=%22peace%20education%20Uganda%22>; latest access on: 22 August 2006.

Research methodology

“It’s good for thought to be shaped by experience.”
(Simone de Beauvoir)

The research which is subject of this thesis was conducted in Uganda between February and April 2006. Whereas my regular fieldwork location was the capital Kampala, where I was hosted by the ‘Civil Peace Service Project’ at Makerere University, I conducted my active research in four different locations, which will be described in the section explaining my choice of sample.

Even though my research contains elements and certain characteristics that are relevant in the context of an evaluation, as e.g. the focus on a specific program, a value-implying research-question, the formulation of recommendations for further development and improvement of AVP based on my findings, I understand my work in the tradition of critical social research and not as a pure evaluation.

Several authors stress different opinions about the definition of research versus evaluation. Hirsland *et al.* (2004: 20) differentiate research and evaluation strictly by defining the former as a method to get in-depth information about a certain issue, but without the aim of judging the information gathered. The latter is understood as a method to assess the output and outcomes and judge them against a set of criteria. In this regard evaluation attaches a value to something.

Rossi & Whyte (1983) identify evaluation as one type of applied research among descriptive and analytical research. They even combine both terms by describing evaluation research as aiming to study the effectiveness with which

existing knowledge is used to inform decision-making and guide practical action. Because of its practical orientation it can be treated as a specialist area of applied social research according to Babbie (1995).

However, some conditions of an evaluation, e.g. the pre-definition of fixed criteria and quality standards to measure the value and effectiveness of a specific programme are not included in my study. My research is hence rather explorative in nature because I wanted to leave as much space as possible to investigate the perceptions and opinions of those targeted by AVP.

Non-violence, diversity, human rights, and tolerance are all complex and multi-dimensional issues. Possible effects of programmes in this field can be very different for each individual participant and therefore in my view cannot be standardised or strictly pre-defined. Furthermore, I wanted to reflect not exclusively on the single programme I studied in-depth, but try to generate assumptions on the potential and limits of peace education in the Ugandan context in general.

My research is embedded in the epistemological tradition of 'Subjectivism' (Crotti 1998). The theoretical perspective is 'Interpretivism' (Giddens 1976). The design and methods of the research were influenced by the 'Participatory Action Research' approach. The basic tenets of PAR include respecting, honouring, and bringing into the foreground the lived experience and knowledge of those being researched. They aim to develop both critical consciousness of researcher and research participants, promoting sustained collective action, improvement of the research subject and hence the lives of those in the research process. Ideally, PAR contributes to the stimulation of empowerment processes (Altinyelken 2004; Gatenby & Humphries 2000). This theoretical stance is illustrated in figure 4.1. Due to reasons of practicality I divided my research into 'phases', as illustrated in table 4.1.

In the following sections I will present my research question and sub-questions, explain my sample, describe the research methods I have chosen to conduct this study, and explain the reasons for this choice. This is followed by an analysis of the limitations of my research sample. Furthermore I will give an insight into my research process, some challenges I faced while in the field, and some ethical considerations related to my research.

Figure 4.1 Schematic overview of the methodological approach

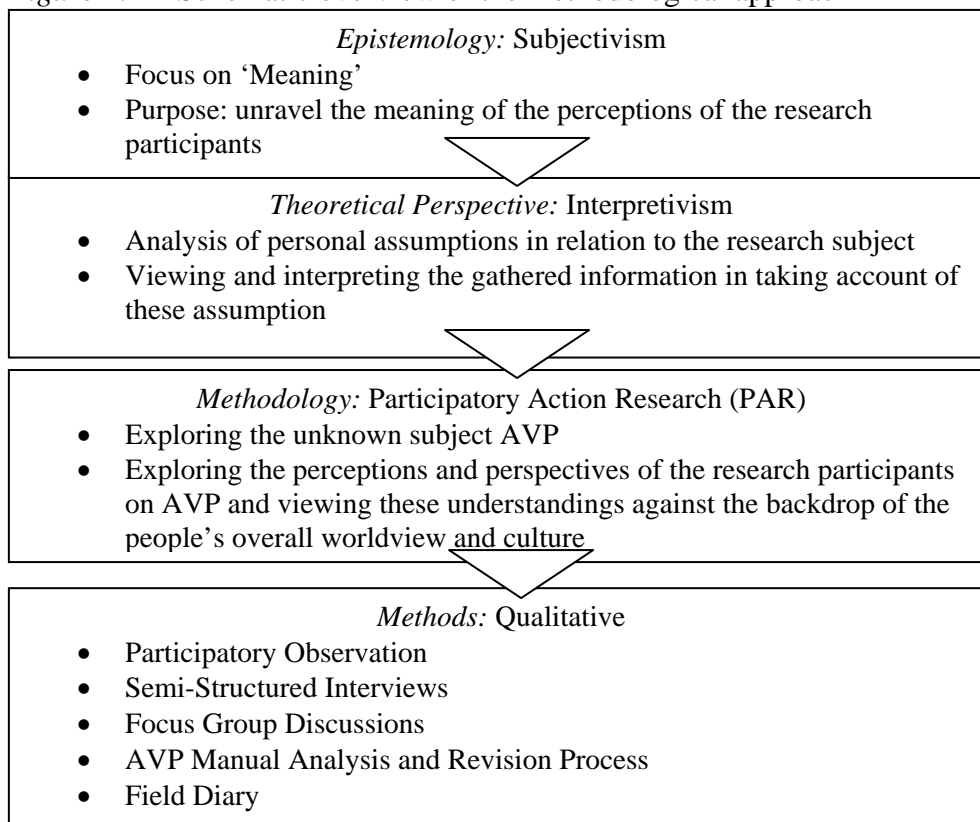


Table 4.1 Research phases

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Activity</i>
1	Amsterdam/The Netherlands	Theoretical framework and preparation for the fieldwork (research proposal)
2	Kampala/Uganda	- Rapid Appraisal - Semi-structured interviews with AVP trainers - Adaptation of interview questions/guide
3	Kampala/Uganda	- Semi-structured interviews with AVP participants before and after a Basic training - Participatory observation - AVP manual revision working group
4	Kampala; Soroti; Gulu; Fort Portal/Uganda	- Semi-structured interviews with former AVP participants - Participatory observation - Focus group discussions - AVP manual revision working group
5	Kampala/Uganda	- First analysis of data - Presentation of preliminary findings to colleagues from the ‘Civil Peace Service Project’ at Makerere University
6	Amsterdam/ The Netherlands & Paris/France	- Further analysis of data and thesis writing

Research questions

Due to the participant-focused nature of my study the main research question is as follows:

How do the participants of the 'AVP' trainings evaluate their impacts on their perceptions and practises and on the socio-political context in Uganda?

The answer to the main research question is derived by using the following sub-questions:

Conflict setting:

- How does the wider socio-political context influence the conceptual framework?
- How does the wider socio-political context impact on the participants?

Framework of the trainings (in the conceptual scheme 'theoretical framework'):

- What are the theoretical concepts framing the courses?
- What are the visions and intentions behind AVP trainings?
- Which knowledge, skills and strategies are used?

Participant perceptions and practices:

- Why do the participants join the courses?
- How have personal experiences influenced the perceptions of the participants?
- How do the participants evaluate the programme and what they have learned?
- To which aspects are the impacts participants acknowledge related?
- How do they transfer the knowledge into practice?

In relation to my research questions I want to point out that I understand these questions rather as a guideline that structured my research and hence my findings than as a 'to-ask-list' to tick one by one. Therefore, they will be answered implicitly, cross-cutting different areas in the analysis and discussion of my findings.

Sample

Forty people participated in the study as interviewees and/or focus group participants. Since AVP in its original version as it is used in Uganda addresses primarily adults the participants of my research were between 22 and 65 years old.

Sample distribution

In order to document potential changes in perceptions and behaviour of the participants, and to guarantee the highest possible validity of these findings it would be ideal to work with one sample over a long period of time, or at least the period of time considered as meaningful in terms of personal change and development. In my view, a peace-education programme should be followed up for at least one or two years, before any conclusions are drawn on measurement of its long-term impacts.

However, due to the time constraints of a short-term research project, I unfortunately was not able to fulfil this ideal. Instead I tried to develop a sample which provides insights on possible long-term effects based on the experiences of different “generations” of people participating in AVP.

My sample included a group of 16 former participants of AVP, who joined their last AVP training between six months and three years ago. Furthermore I interviewed five individuals both before and again right after their participation in an AVP Basic training.

Hirseland *et al.* (2004: 26) point out that it is useful if not necessary when researching the outcomes of value-based education programmes to gather information about the participants before and after a course or training. Potential objectives of programmes on the personal level like e.g. increased knowledge and skills or changes in attitude and behaviour are measurable only if the researcher/evaluator knows the participant’s ‘starting point’.

Finally I included a group of seven AVP trainers in my sample, who have passed all AVP levels themselves and conducted between one and twenty trainings.

AVP aims to enable people who have passed all three training levels to perform as trainers themselves. Hence, I believe that an inclusion of the views of several experienced trainers allows interesting insights on the effects of continuous repetition of AVP content through training others.

A table that provides an overview of my sample is included in the Annex.

Geographic distribution

For several reasons I decided to conduct my research not only in the capital Kampala, where I was based during the three months of my active research period and where most of the AVP trainings take place.

By nature the capital of a country is always patterned by specific characteristics that differ from rural areas and vice versa. These differences might e.g. be found in the access to social services like education, a different culturally-based perception on gender-roles, or different perceptions on societal hierarchies and interaction-patterns that might go along with them. Since I consider these charac-

teristics as potential influence factors on the perceptions of participants, I decided that it was important to extend my research location beyond the capital and to include rural areas.

Furthermore, the strong North-South division in economic, social and cultural terms, which is extensively described in the literature about Uganda and Ugandan history (see chapter two of this thesis) has to be taken into account if a researcher attempts to gain an impression of what “Ugandans” think about a specific topic, like in my case peace education and a particular peace education program.

Finally, in regard to the opinion of some peace pedagogues who state that it makes a significant difference if peace education takes place in regions facing violent (political) conflict or regions of relative tranquillity (Salomon 2002; Harris 2002), I wanted to include samples from both types of regions.

My research was therefore conducted in:

- *Kampala*, which provides the biggest sample due to reasons of practicality.
- *Gulu*, a town in the North of the country located in an area which has been distracted by war between the Ugandan government and an armed non-governmental movement for almost two decades.
- *Soroti*, a small town in the North-East of Uganda, which is due to its location between the two current major conflicts to a different extent affected by both.
- Firstly, Soroti district was the target of LRA attacks. People reportedly still live in fear of further attacks. Secondly, the violent conflict between the Teso and the Karamojong tribes and continuous cattle raiding performed by the latter is partly taking place in Soroti district.
- *Fort Portal*, a small town in the South-West of the country close to the Congolese border; an area which was a battle field for year-long conflicts between the Ugandan government and various armed rebel movements in the past.

In these four regions AVP trainings at all three levels have taken place as a part of the outreach program of the “Civil Peace Service Project” between 2003 and the present.

AVP trainings have also taken place in West Nile, the North-Western part of Uganda which was heavily affected for years by conflict between the Ugandan government and various armed rebel movements. Trainings were organised for former combatants of these groups and habitants of Uganda’s largest refugee settlement, Rhino Camp. Both groups would probably have provided interesting insights for my research, but due to security reasons¹ I could not visit the areas.

¹ Since the activities of the LRA have spread to North-Eastern Congo the West Nile region turned into a passing-zone for armed groups on their move from Southern Sudan and Northern Uganda to North-Eastern Congo. It is therefore strongly advised not to travel on several roads that cross the area, because this might lead to a confrontation with these groups.

The people I interviewed have been participants of one to three AVP trainings and originated from either the locations where the interviews took place or from places in up to half a day's bus journey from there. The workshops in Kampala are frequently booked by people working for NGOs in other parts of the country, who are sent by their employers.

Ethnic background

When I selected my interview partners I did not deliberately choose them by ethnic background, as it might seem from the table presented in this sub-section. For someone coming from Europe, particularly Germany, considering ethnicity as a criterion for research seems to be somehow inappropriate and made me feel uncomfortable when thinking about it theoretically.²

However, in practice during the conduct of my first interviews I found that often the first information my interview partners would tell me after their name was their ethnic origin, often going down to clan-level. As the historical background chapter of this thesis also reflects, ethnic/tribal origin often goes hand in hand with a specific state of well-being or even marginalisation. Moreover, choosing interview partners from different regions in Uganda naturally contributes to an ethnically-mixed sample. Therefore, I included ethnic origin as a category in my sample.

Educational background

The educational background of the individuals that participated in my research varied from six years of compulsory primary school education to holders of Master degrees and even one PhD holder. Two participants had enjoyed education abroad in the form of University degrees taken in the US and South Africa.

The educational background of a person might influence their perception of the training, e.g. the appropriateness of the methods chosen. Therefore I tried to include every possible level of education within my sample.

Gender-balance

Arber (2001: 60) states that in order to be representative a sample should reflect the given features of a certain population, in this case the AVP participants in general. In the case of my study this would have meant to choosing mainly male respondents, since the majority of AVP participants are men. However, I decided to develop a gender-balanced sample for mainly for two reasons:

² This is related to our own history, where ethnicity and 'race' played an important, fatal role in the 'Holocaust' during the period of National Socialism under Adolf Hitler. I assume that this context is known to every reader and hence does not require further explanation.

First, I wanted to find out if there is a difference in perceptions between men and women, both in regard to the content of the programme and in relation to the organisational structure of the trainings in general. Especially in relation to empowerment aspects of peace education programmes men and women might experience the effect and value of a programme differently, because they begin their 'journey' from different starting points. Also in relation to conflict resolution mechanisms and strategies used by men and women one might find significant differences between male and female participants. These might have an influence on the expectations of a programme and the learning effects.

Second, particularly in the rural context women are seldomly found in positions which allow them to participate in courses like AVP, e.g. as NGO workers. Therefore, I particularly wanted to invite women to express their views and thoughts on AVP. In this regard, the invitation to participate in my research might also have had an empowering effect on the female participants.

Research techniques

Multiple research techniques were utilised to collect the data for this study. The details of these techniques will be explained in subsequent sections. Initially it was planned to mix quantitative and qualitative research methods by also using questionnaires. This would have enabled me to enlarge my sample and is a frequently used strategy in social research (Pawson 1989; Clarce 2001); particularly in evaluative research (Hirseland 2004: 16).

However, questionnaires sent either electronically or via regular mail proved to be an inappropriate tool for research in Uganda. People in rural areas have very limited access to internet facilities and would hence have been excluded from parts of the study. Therefore, I decided against the use of quantitative techniques and limited myself to qualitative research.

Analysis of AVP manuals/manual revision

As a source of secondary data I bought copies of all three AVP original manuals. I read them before I participated in my first AVP training and regularly consulted the manuals throughout my research to gather additional information and hence a deeper understanding of the responses of my informants.

After the first few interviews conducted in the first two weeks of February 2006 the manual revision working group was founded by the 'Civil Peace Service Project', following the initiative of my research. For quite some time already the staff of the project had been thinking of revising the existing original AVP manuals, compiled in the USA in 1985. However, until I arrived and started my research, the idea had been delayed several times for different reasons and was not yet put into practice.

In the weekly meetings I had the opportunity to present the responses of the interviewees and my preliminary analysis of these findings. The group discussed the upcoming issues, suggestions and critiques, and took them as a starting point for the revision process. For me, these meetings and discussions provided a great opportunity to reflect on my findings.

Semi-structured interviews

Seventeen semi-structured interviews were conducted on a one-by-one basis. For each group of respondents (before the training, right after the training, former participants and facilitators) I had prepared interview outlines, which followed a specific systematic order along a number of thematic sections, but left space for the adaptation of this research instrument to the level of comprehension and articulation of the respondent (Fielding & Thomas 2001: 124).

Most interviews in Kampala were conducted on the Makerere University campus, either in lecture rooms or outside on a bench. The interviews conducted in other research locations took place in private households, cafés or offices. I always tried to find a place, where privacy and a quiet atmosphere were secured.

Before every interview I introduced myself, the nature and purpose of my research, assured confidentiality in using the data and asked for verbal consent to tape and later transcribe the interview. I explained the functions of my tape recorder and invited the respondent to stop the taping procedure whenever he or she felt uncomfortable with it.

In most cases the interviewee agreed to tape the interview; in a few cases female interviewees switched the recorder off when reaching the often brought up issue of gender-based/domestic violence. Unfortunately two interviews could not be taped due to technical problems. During and right after these interviews notes were taken and later transcribed into a detailed protocol.

The essence of the research interview is the 'guided conversation' (Lofland & Lofland 1994); my prepared interview-outlines hence helped me to follow a line through this genuinely free conversation, whereas the respondents decided about the specific issues to touch upon, the length of their answers and the depths of their insights.

I always started the interview with an introductory part where I asked for some personal information like age, educational background, family structure etc. in order to get familiar with the background history of the respondent and to allow some space for 'warming-up'. I then shifted to the main topics of the interview, which varied slightly according to the category of respondent. Most questions were related to personal experience with conflict, personal perceptions on contemporary conflict issues in Uganda, and on experiences with AVP; the latter being the major section. In the final part, when the respondent seemed to feel

relaxed and comfortable to talk, following a natural ‘interview-climax’ between informant and researcher (Gray 2004), I asked the participants to outline their view of the ‘ideal peace education programme’ for Uganda. The richness of proposed ideas and suggestions was impressive.

This way of ‘indirect questioning’ (Fielding & Thomas 2001: 127) in some cases allowed interesting insights to potential criticism towards AVP that participants did not express when asked for it directly. Furthermore, these responses are a valuable source for the design of peace education programmes in the Ugandan context, and will be dealt with in detail in chapter 6.

Very often in the course of the interviews I had to use ‘prompting and probing strategies’ (Fielding & Thomas 2001: 128) in order to encourage respondents to express their views in as much detail as possible. In some cases this meant to repeat a question several times in different ways (prompting), or I would probe the respondent through follow-up questions in order to receive a fuller response.

Mostly, this achieved the intended effect and respondents felt encouraged to extend their explanations. Sometimes, these strategies did not result in the intended effect and respondents would either ignore a repeated question or repeat the same short answer several times, instead of adding other aspects. In these cases, I accepted the respondents’ refusal, keeping in mind that one has to be sensitive not only to what is told, but also what is not, to unspoken attitudes and hidden resentments (Maslow 1973: 76).

Focus group discussions

Akin to the individual interview a focus group (Merton & Kendall 1946), also called group discussions or group interviews (Barbour & Kitziger 1999; Krueger 1994; Morgan 1993), enables the researcher to explore participants’ views and experiences on a specific subject in depth. Morgan (1988: 12) points out: “The hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group.”

However, a focus group is not a replacement for the individual interview. The type of data generated through focus groups is very different from that generated through individual interviews, because information is generated in a dynamic process of interaction between a group of people, which derives meaning not only in form of verbal contributions, but also as a process in itself (Cronin 2001: 166).

Although more focus group discussions were planned initially (at least one in each research location) I was only able to organise two, one was held in Kampala and one in Soroti, during or right after a three-day AVP workshop. The organisation of a focus-group discussion in Kampala in particular proved to be difficult,

contrary to my expectations and had to be postponed twice. Both times participants arrived either several hours too late or not at all. During the time of waiting never more than three participants were present at the same time, whereas the ideal size of a focus group discussion is defined as six to ten participants (Cronin 2001; Fielding & Thomas 2001).

Both focus groups took about one and a half hours. They both consisted of eight participants of the AVP training that was taking place at the same time. I tried to keep the groups gender-balanced. The fact that all of them despite their status went through the same programme experience secured a certain extent of shared identity, which is important for a successful group composition (Barbour & Kitzinger 1999). At both occasions I took notes and taped the discussion with the verbal consent of the participants. As a venue I used the meeting hall of a local guest house, which also hosted the AVP training and allowed for the calm and private atmosphere required. Refreshments were provided.

During the meetings I first explained the nature and the aim of my research. I assured the participants' that their contributions would be kept confidential and asked them also to treat other participants' contributions as confidential. Since the discussion was meant to allow me a deeper insight into the perception of Ugandans on conflict issues in the Ugandan context and peace education as a potential mean for the transformation of conflict, the following questions were used as a guideline through the discussion:

- What are current issues of importance related to conflict in Uganda?
- Which strategies could/should be used in order to tackle these issues/challenges?
- How should peace education programmes be designed in order to meet the needs of the Ugandan context?

I decided for a relatively high level of moderation (Cronin 2001; Morgan 1988) to ensure that many people in the group had the chance to participate in the discussion.

In the beginning it was difficult to start a real discussion among the participants. This could have been due to the very sensitive nature of the issues being discussed. Furthermore, although everyone was invited to talk as much as they wanted, the discussion was soon dominated by a few people, mainly men. These people would not really discuss with each other, but rather add their contributions one by one. In order to leave space to all participants, participants were asked repeatedly to take turns in talking. This might have further stimulated the 'one-by-one' character of the discussion (see also Krueger 1994). After some time, the participants seemed to feel increasingly comfortable and most of them contributed more actively. By then it was sometimes a problem to keep contributions reasonably short and to avoid long monologues of single participants. Most

women also opened up after a while; but throughout the discussion it proved to be difficult to keep the contributions gender-balanced.

The focus group provided an open forum for discussion of conflict, conflict transformation and peace education issues among participants. It might have facilitated greater awareness and broadened participants' perspective on their own personal experience, the viewpoints of others (e.g. other ethnicities) and current conflict issues in Uganda.

Participatory observation

During my three month of field research I participated in all three AVP levels. I joined a Basic and Training of Trainers Workshop in Kampala, and followed an Advanced Workshop in Soroti.

I did not only observe the trainings, but actively took part in the whole workshop cycle of each training level. Due to the nature of AVP, which invites and stimulates participants to open up themselves and to share very personal information and experiences I considered it as inappropriate to sit next to the workshop setting, passively observing and analysing the activities and contributions of the participants. In order to create an atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding, an important feature of qualitative, participatory research (Grey 2004), I had to put myself on the very same level as all the other participants.

However, it is important in this context to be also aware of certain 'risks' that go along with highly participatory research. The researcher is challenged to find a continuous balance between closeness and distance, and might sometimes face difficulties in keeping his objective position (Flick 2002). The study of several other evaluations of AVP that have been carried out in other parts of the world helped me to raise my awareness towards certain challenges (Nyongabo & Yeomans 2003; Philips 2002; Walrath 2001).

In order to secure the privacy and dignity of the AVP participants I introduced myself in the beginning of each workshop, explained the purpose and nature of my research and asked them for their verbal consent to my presence in the double-role as a participant and researcher. Without exclusion I was received very warm and open; people showed strong interest in my study and treated me as an equal participant.

Field diary

An ongoing field diary was maintained throughout the research period to note remarkable experiences, impressions, insights, observations, personal reflections and emerging questions. Throughout the research process these notes helped to adjust the research techniques e.g. the interview outlines, and in relation to the analysis of the collected data the documentation of my thoughts while still being

in the field provides an important and helpful tool for analysis. Information gathered from the collected data can be contextualised with the additional information noted in the field diary (Fielding 2001: 145 ff.).

Analysis and presentation

My data sources for the qualitative analysis included:

- Transcripts from interviews
- Summary notes of the interviews which were not taped
- A transcript of the second focus group discussion in Kampala
- Notes from the first focus group discussion in Soroti
- Protocols of the trainings I joined
- All flip chart papers used in the trainings
- My personal field diary

All taped interviews and the taped focus-group discussion were transcribed verbatim. The summary notes of the non-taped interviews were expanded and combined with transcriptions. Then, the entire document was classified into the subgroups introduced earlier in this chapter, namely participants interviewed before the training, participants interviewed after the training, former participants and trainers/facilitators. The text files were read for a general understanding of the data, emerging themes were identified and highlighted, and notes were taken on patterns, reoccurring themes, connections, similarities or contrasting view-points. Some of the tape-recorded and transcribed data is cited verbatim in the following chapter five, allowing the participants of my research to speak for themselves, and encouraging readers to draw their own insights and conclusions.

In the last week of my stay in Uganda I organised a public presentation of my preliminary findings on Makerere University Campus, Kampala. As part of my participatory approach I have invited informed experts to gauge local interpretations of my analysis. This allowed me to reflect on the comments of those people who have practical experience in peace work in the Ugandan context prior to receiving academic feedback from my Netherlands-based supervisors.

Limitations

My findings are aimed at adding to the understanding of participants' perceptions on the effectiveness, the value and limitations of AVP in Uganda and informal peace education programmes in general. However, despite all good intentions to make this study as representative as possible, the experiences and opinions of my informants cannot be expected to reflect the views of all AVP participants; let alone of participants of peace education programmes in general.

Due to the limited research period for a Masters thesis, my sample is relatively small. Despite all attempts to achieve a balanced geographical distribution of research participants in relation to urban/rural, conflict/non-conflict settings, the majority of my informants comes from Kampala or spent at least a number of years in the capital. This is due to practical constraints and security issues, as described above. Related to the matter of geographical location, It was also not possible to achieve a balance in the educational background of the research participants. The majority of informants completed tertiary education and might hence provide insights and viewpoints which do not necessarily reflect those of people with a lower educational background.

Finally, I am aware that the nature of my research is characterised by a certain, unavoidable degree of subjectivity which is part of every academic research (Mayer 2001: 303). As a researcher, one's own views and interpretations are always intertwined with those of research participants and should be kept in mind (Dei 2005: 276).

Social research is an active process involving heart and mind, which naturally does not stop as soon as the researcher leaves 'the field'. Experiences, encounters, and assumptions keep on working in the researcher's mind; connect, allegedly contradict and re-connect. Some questions I have posed a couple of month ago, I would probably formulate differently today. Therefore, in every research there will naturally remain aspects that were left untouched, or could have been approached differently, thoughts that could have been engrossed. These can be seen as short-comings, but also simply as an indication of the elusive nature of social research, particularly the subject of peace education.

The research process – challenges and ethical issues

There are a number of possible challenges and ethically sensitive issues to be borne in mind when doing research in a developing country; particularly a country like Uganda affected by violent conflict. A high level of insecurity and suddenly occurring incidents can present potential stumbling blocks or even make parts of the research impossible. In my case, this limited my research to certain secure locations.

Furthermore peace education goes far beyond theoretical concepts. Peace educators go right to the core of a person's values, such as respect for others, open mindedness, empathy, concern for justice, and commitment to human rights, to mention a few (Harris 2002: 22).

Hence, what people experience in peace education trainings and which changes of perception and practice it initiates, might be information of a very personal nature and hence for some people difficult to share or to put into words. Moreover, touching upon sensitive topics such as 'conflict', 'reconciliation' or

‘peace education’ in interviews during or soon after phases of conflict can be offensive to local communities.³ Talking about these issues in interviews or group discussions requires a trustful atmosphere. It is within the researcher’s responsibility to create this atmosphere.

In addition, a situation of conflict is always characterised by a highly politicised context. People in Uganda might feel uncomfortable to share their views and perspectives related to issues around the conflict setting, particularly in such tense periods as the time around presidential elections as in Uganda at the time of my research.

People would sometimes use the interview as a platform to express their views and opinions about the current government, or the electoral landscape in general. This was particularly the case in interviews with members of parliament.

Another important ethical issue related to social research is the recognition of possibly unequal power dynamics that might occur in the interaction between me as a researcher from a European university and Ugandans as ‘subjects’ of research and the matter of reciprocity (Scheyvens *et al.* 2003: 139). The informants share their personal opinions, feelings and stories with the researcher and contribute an extensive part to the outcomes of the research. In many cases the researcher gains much more out of the research than those who are participating in the research, be it in form of data, knowledge, through recognition after the study or career opportunities, that might occur related to the subject of research (Bulmer 2001: 45 ff.).

By leaving the research results with the ‘Civil Peace Service Project’ at Makerere University, which is using my findings for the revision of the AVP manuals I hope to extend the level of reciprocity. Furthermore, I hope that participants and former participants might benefit as well through intensive reflection on the value of what they have learned during and after their participation in an AVP training (Scheyvens *et al.* 2003); at least some informants have affirmed this personal reflective effect after giving me an interview.

These intentions are closely related to a moral imperative in development research stressed by Madge (1997: 114; in Scheyvens *et al.* 2003: 139) who asserts that “ethical research should not only “do no harm”, but also have potential “to do good”.

Finally, in every conflict setting various historiographies and versions of ‘the truth’ exist, depending on who is asked. Literature on conflicts, policy papers and media sources are often biased in their way of reporting; related to the author’s, institution’s, or nation’s own position and objectives.

³ Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE): Good Practise Guides for Emergency Education. Available from: <http://www.ineesite.org/edcon/peace.asp>; latest access on: 11th August 2006.

I am conscious of potential shortcomings of the summarized nature of the historical/political overview of Uganda presented in this thesis. However, I hope I have done justice to the different perspectives and historiographies existing in Uganda; and sufficiently managed not to take sides.

Analysis of research data

“Be vigilant. But do so from a position of strength. From a position of knowledge ... Be reflexive, provisional. Undo your own expectations. Get comfortable with the principle of contingency ... like a potter making a vessel whose shape he doesn’t know yet.”

(Giles Foden)

The following chapter is dedicated to the analysis of my research data. First, I will describe the history, design, and practice of the researched peace education programme, ‘Alternatives to Violence’ (AVP). Then, I will briefly explain some particularities of the participant/trainer differentiation underlying this study. A third sub-chapter will focus on the informants’ perceptions of the contemporary situation in regard to conflict in Uganda and related issues. This section reflects the ‘conflict setting’, the outer dimension of my conceptual scheme presented in chapter one (Introduction) of my thesis. It can be understood as a potential influencing factor on the participants’ perceptions. A fourth sub-chapter focuses on the participants as the most important element of my research. After the analysis of some general opinions about different aspects of AVP and its applicability I will present the analysis of the participants’ perceptions of the impacts of AVP. The different categories I have developed for this analysis were derived from a) the in-depth analysis of literature on peace education and on the Ugandan socio-political context and b) re-occurring themes and issues brought up in the interviews and focus group discussions by my informants. This section is hence strongly driven by the beneficiaries of peace education themselves, illustrating the participative nature of my research.

One size fits all? The alternatives to violence programme (AVP)

The evaluative research which is subject of this thesis is focused on one specific peace education programme currently practised in Uganda: the so-called 'Alternatives to Violence Project' (AVP) trainings.

The concept of AVP was initially developed in the USA in 1975 by local members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).¹ Their religious principles are based on simplicity, pacifism and inner revelation. Throughout the centuries, Quakers have always played an active role in the protest against and combat of social injustice and threats towards peace and unity. Quakers were e.g. very active in the fight against slavery. On the official Quaker homepage it is assumed that "on a per-capita basis, Quakerism probably contributed more in the promotion of tolerance, peace and justice than any other Christian denomination."² Nowadays, Quaker groups, who gather on a regular basis in spiritual group meetings, can be found in many countries all over the world.

In 1975 a group of inmates at Green Haven Prison (State New York/USA), who experienced a high level of violence in the daily interaction with their fellow inmates, approached the regularly visiting members of a local Quakers group for help. Some of these inmates also took part in a mentoring scheme, where they worked closely together with youth, who had repeatedly come into conflict with the law and were in danger of long-term imprisonment. They requested advice on how to conduct non-violence trainings for both these youths and the prisoners of Green Haven. This led to the development of the first AVP training scheme.

The success of the first workshop quickly generated requests for more; first among other prisons, later by external institutions and groups – AVP was born. Since its very first days the framing structure and content have hardly ever profoundly changed. Groups all over the world are now working with the same manuals, created in 1985. The latest official revision was conducted in 2002 by the AVP Education Committee in the USA. All people involved in the creation, implementation and further development of AVP work for free and on a volunteer-basis. This is considered as one of the major principles of the AVP system.

AVP trainings are experiential workshops of threedays in length,³ primarily addressing adults and youths. Concerning the content and goals of AVP its title is programmatic: the over-arching goal of AVP is verbally speaking to develop

¹ This religious society was founded in Britain in 1660 by George Fox. Their faith is based on Christianity, but in contrast to traditional Catholic or Protestant church streams the Quakers are convinced that there is no need for a special ceremony, an institutionalised church with its hierarchies or houses of worship. Rather, they believe that an element of God's spirit is implanted within every person's soul. This element is called 'the seed of Christ' or 'the seed of life'. This adds a mystical component to Quakerism.

² Source: <http://www.quaker.org>; latest access on: 31 August 2006.

³ An exemplary AVP training scheme can be found in the Annex.

alternatives to the use of any form of violence in conflict resolution. By enhancing successful personal interactions and the transformation of violent situations AVP aims to reduce the level of violence within society. The teaching and training content is hence focused on the personal development of alternative, non-violent means of conflict and dispute resolution, the questioning and long-term change of personal perceptions and mind-sets related to ‘the other’ and conflict situations in general, and – as a special feature of the underlying philosophy – on the discovery and effective use of one’s inner ‘Transforming Power’.

The mystic element ‘Transforming Power’ is meant to be the heart of AVP, and is according to the Education Committee of the Alternatives to Violence Project the hardest element to describe and understand.

“[...] There are as many interpretations of it as there are AVP participants, and each of these interpretations is one that its owner has thought deeply about, lived with, and experienced, sometimes transcendently. As definable concept of it remains elusive; no one definition has ever proven satisfactory to everyone, despite endless discussions of it in the AVP community.”⁴

In reference to the principles of Transforming Power given in the AVP Basic manual (see also the Annex) it can best be described as “a power existent in every individual, that is able to transform violent and destructive situations and behaviour into liberating and constructive behaviour and cooperative behaviour” (AVP Basic manual 2002: B 2). It is hence understood not as something humans can use, but rather something that uses people. A necessary pre-condition is that they are open to it and willing to lay aside habitual assumptions that violent or destructive solutions to conflict are the only ones possible. This includes the belief in a win-win solution and in the ‘good’ within the opponent. The discovery and effective use of Transforming Power within and for oneself is hence one of the desired major achievements of successful AVP completion.

Based on the principle of learning through participation and interaction the learning process within the workshops shall use the personal life experiences of the participants as a learning resource, drawing on that experience to deal constructively with the violence in people themselves and their lives. A minimum of trainer input should be given and theoretical lecturing is to be avoided. Instead, participants should rather be stimulated and encouraged to personally contribute to the content of any training through sharing of personal experiences.

Participants can take part in three up-building levels, namely Basic, Advanced, and Training of Trainers (ToT). AVP is designed as a ‘self-sustaining’ system – it is presumed that participant who have completed all three levels will be able to function as facilitators themselves and will hence be able to pass the knowledge and skills on.

⁴ Cited from the AVP Basic Manual 2002: B-3.

In the Basic training, participants are familiarised with the concepts of conflict and peace, and with the principles of AVP as a method of non-violent conflict resolution. The Advanced training is meant to deepen the achieved knowledge and skills through theoretical repetition of the AVP principles, plus various practical exercises. During ToT, finally, participants receive an introduction to teaching and training methods, and are asked to guide one Basic-training simulation. This is done by dividing the participants into small groups who conduct single sessions. This 'dry-run' is followed by intensive reflection and constructive criticism by the trainers and the other group members on the performance.

Participation is supposed to be voluntary, as this is considered as a major precondition for personal opening-up and internalisation of AVP's content and principles. After successful completion of the three levels participants are allowed to train other people and can be recruited as workshop facilitators.

Trainings are always facilitated by a group of four to six (depending on the group size) voluntary trainers, who may receive, at most, a small allowance. It is considered as important to form gender-balanced trainer teams.

Despite their own Quakers-background the initiators of AVP view it as non-denominational and universal, which they understand as not patterned and shaped by any particular cultural influences. To my best knowledge, no profound adaptations to any local context going beyond translations into other languages such as Spanish or French have been conducted ever since the programme's initial creation.

During the past two decades AVP has gained increasing popularity and is presently practised in a number of Latin American and African countries, among them conflict-affected countries such as South Africa, Sudan, Rwanda and Uganda.

In Uganda, the first AVP trainings were implemented in Bududa/Mbale district in the East of the country in 1995. In 1997, AVP was introduced in Kampala. The 'Civil Peace Service Project' at Makerere University overtook the implementation of the courses in 2003, when a German development worker, who knew and liked AVP, joined the project. Since then the project has trained more than 400 people from different sectors of society and from all over the country. Funding is received from different donor institutions per training, such as the German Development Service (DED) or the German political Friedrich-Ebert foundation.

Training cycles of all three levels are carried out around four times a year, mostly taking place in guest houses or conference centers in Kampala. Among the major participant groups have been NGO workers, M.A. students in Peace and Conflict Studies from Makerere University/Kampala and parliamentarians. The

project tries to give a number of former participants of the trainings the chance to use their newly-developed skills as trainers for further workshops.

By the Civil Peace Service Project AVP is considered as a very new, almost revolutionary approach in Uganda, because its participatory methodology is very different from the traditionally practised frontal style of teaching. It is viewed as enhancing the self-perception and self-reflection of Ugandan participants. By focusing on ‘themselves’ and their individual role and responsibilities in conflict situations they shall become aware of their abilities to solve them constructively. AVP is considered as valuable for the development of the participants’ communication and dispute resolution skills, and seen as filling a gap in education which cannot be filled by the present formal curricula. It is also assumed that AVP is particularly suitable for the Ugandan context, because its design is very simple and supposed to be universally implementable.⁵

Participants’ versus facilitators’ perceptions

Due to the programme design of AVP, the trainers usually do not receive extra training to prepare them for their tasks. Some of the participating NGO-workers have extensive experience in workshop-participation and use their own repertoire to mix AVP with elements learned from other trainings. However, this is rather the exception than the rule.

One side-effect of this characteristic of the AVP system, which was not known to me before I went to Uganda, is that it allows for comparison between people, who have only limited AVP experience and those, who are constantly practising it by teaching others. This is due to the fact that every person who now functions as a trainer has once been a participant of AVP. Therefore, I decided against a specific ‘trainer perspective’ and for the inclusion of their views in the general analysis of participants’ perceptions.

A challenging environment: Perspectives on Uganda

Looking back on a history patterned by violent conflict, the Ugandan society is characterised by an outstanding level of awareness towards these topics, combined with a lively interest in politics in general. Whenever more than two people come together, it seems as if within minutes the conversation becomes driven by politics-related topics.

This was particularly the case in the first few weeks of my stay, when the first democratic multi-party elections since independence were held in February 2006 and provided a welcome topic for frequent discussion. Moreover, almost every

⁵ Information derived from informal conversations with the German development worker based at the Civil Peace Service Project, who included AVP in the scope of the projects’ work.

Ugandan according to my personal impression from four months spent in the country is conscious about conflict, governance and the dynamics of reconciliation.

I deliberately used the word ‘challenges’ instead of ‘conflicts’ in the interviews and analysis, to give the informants as much space as possible to elaborate on their own definition of Uganda’s current major obstacles.

Participants’ and facilitators’ personal experiences with conflict

As pointed out in the introduction to this chapter violent political conflict is an ever-present issue in Ugandan history. Hence, unsurprisingly most of my informants look back on various personal experiences with conflict, which appear exceptional and shocking to an outsider from a peaceful place of origin like me, but seem to reflect a ‘normality’ for the ‘average Ugandan’.

Some informants would answer the question about personal experiences with conflict by saying they had none to share, or explain in great detail about a rather common study or work-related situation. Later, when the interview shifted to questions about Uganda’s major challenges or strategies for peace education development in Uganda they would refer in their answers to personal experiences or mix these with general descriptions of Uganda’s situation and obstacles. This illustrates again what a deeply personal and sometimes traumatic matter conflict experiences are and I am grateful to my respondents for sharing these partly traumatic experiences with me.

A remarkable difference was identifiable between the responses of people who originated from Kampala and its surroundings or at least spent most of their lives there, and those coming from one of the other three research regions. Informants from Karamoja, Gulu and Fort Portal, who had experienced long-term exposure to violent conflict in their region of origin, referred in almost all cases immediately to political conflict:

“In 1986, I was the first Iteso to join this government when I was nine years old. I have worked in the military combat operations, NRA [National Resistance Army]. I went up to Southern Sudan. I was abducted or forced by the army. By the NRA I was taken. So at that time, when I was P 2 [primary school level 2] I worked in operations. [...] I was eventually given permission to come back to school in 1993. [...] I still have some bullets in my body, some fragments.”

(Interview No. 7; male informant, pre-training, Kampala)

“If you come from this area [Karamoja] you have so many experience with conflict, it is constantly with us. My father, eventhough he didn’t want to, but these relatives forced him to come to the raiding in Teso.”

(Interview No. 21; male *informant*, former participant, Soroti)

“Well, I come from Gulu and that means that the conflict is part of my daily life. I am either a witness or a victim. I’ve been shot at three times. There was a time we were shot at with a rocket propelled grenade. I was not injured; I survived so I have got a lot of experience. I

travel a lot in Acholi area and I'm always intervening on behalf of people who are victims of conflicts. My work deals with both adult and child soldiers."

(Interview No. 23; male informant, former participant, Kampala & Gulu)

"On the political side we experience some conflict. The conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo is very close, so this conflict has destabilized this region for many years already. It made people move from their homes, they are now living in internally displaced camps, it is a difficult movement. You could fear living in houses, you could hear the bombings, really horrific. At least I have that experience."

(Interview No. 28; female informant, former participant, Fort Portal)

In many cases the informants referred to incidents that had taken place a long time ago, sometimes more than two decades back, or reflected childhood memories. However, in their description of these events and situations it sounded as if it was hardly a week had passed since then.

"There has been a lot of war in Western Uganda, particularly the area where I was born. Where I grew up from. It was luxury that it's the very first area, that our current president Museveni captured. An area that is near the Rwenzori mountains, where there are so many forests, so rebels really had the chance and laying in the forests, and we have been witnessing people dying. We never used to sleep in houses, every night we would run out of the house and sleep somewhere hidden outside. My brothers, my one brother has joined the army at a tender age, my other brother joined at 12 ... Of course they joined because they wanted to seek protection, because the whole society had broken down consistently at that time, really weird. In the 1980s, to be precise 1984/85, it was so terrible in Western Uganda. Some people died, our neighbours died, I saw a lot of people being shot, a lot of people being raped by the then government forces, the forces of Tito Okello, and even raped people of forces of Obote, the former president. This is what I saw. My own mother had a lot of problems. One day they wanted to do things to her. I was a child at that time. But still I saw everything. I could not help her at that time, that was a horrible experience. She somehow survived ... We are used to violence. Our house was next to a roadblock, where they used to beat and torture people. When you tried to pass the roadblock, they would beat you. Oh god, I saw so many things."

(Interview No. 2; male informant, trainer, Kampala)

Often these personal experiences with violence have influenced decisions related to the career of the informants. Some said that they had decided to conduct studies on conflict resolution and management, both in the form of tertiary education or informal workshops, because they wanted to find solutions to the problems Uganda and Ugandans are facing. One participant explicitly said that he wanted to prevent other people having similar experiences and therefore wanted to learn how to put an end to conflict and how to prevent violence.

In contrast to female respondents, who reported about many experiences with domestic violence, conflicts in the personal sphere, e.g. in school or in the domestic sphere was seldomly mentioned as an area of conflict experience by male participants – and not referred to at all by informants from conflict-experienced regions. Mostly they related these conflicts or a general atmosphere of aggression at home to the general living situation patterned by violence and insecurity. By building up these links they provided an illustrative and detailed

picture of the deep and manifold effects violent conflict has on the general well-being and livelihood of individuals:

“I have a lot of personal experience with conflict, quite a lot. One is growing up with it in this country ... I lived in Karamoja for instance and I was in my primary school and from time to time we could not even go to school, we always had these tribal conflicts. Sometimes we also had to shift from Karamoja, because it was too dangerous for us. You cannot imagine what it means if you have to leave your home, if you have to leave everything behind, and you don't know when you might be able to come back. There was always this insecurity ... I have so many violent memories from this time, conflict was always present. Someone who comes from a country which has peace all the time cannot imagine this. How it affects every day of your life ... it is not only about the attacks itself, about the fighting ... there is no peace in the families as well, if there is fighting around. Because the people are frustrated, and the men cannot help themselves but to be cruel to their wives and to their children as well, because they are so full of anger and frustration. I see many relations between this, I have been seeing this all the time ... yes, if you come from that region one can say you know conflict very well”

(Interview No. 14; male informant, trainer, Kampala)

In contrary, those male informants who came originally from Kampala or its surroundings in the relatively stable and wealthy district of Buganda mostly referred to experiences with conflict in school/university/work situations between fighting students or teachers and students. If political conflicts were mentioned they came up rather at the end of an answer and obviously were reported from an outsider's perspective. Facts were mentioned, and the general political context of that time described, more in the style of a history book rather than shaped by personal experiences and emotions. As the cited excerpts from interviews show, this was different in the case of people who had migrated to Kampala – even if the migration was a long time ago.

From the responses of all informants it can be concluded, that the use of violence and hence violent conflict is a very common phenomenon at all levels of Ugandan society. This applies particularly to the political and the domestic sphere – two major areas of crucial importance for the security of a human being.

Perceptions on Uganda's contemporary challenges

In order to develop ideas and formulate recommendations for the improvement of AVP in particular and the development of peace education programmes in Uganda in general, it is essential to gain a clear picture of the issues that are perceived by Ugandans as 'challenges'. These issues could then become considered as focal areas in the composition of programme elements and content, which would allow for relatedness to the life experience of participants. As has been illustrated in chapter 3 this is important to make the programme content relevant and to give meaning to what is taught for the programme beneficiaries.

In almost all interviews and group discussions the question about Uganda's contemporary challenges functioned as an 'opener'. From the Member of Parlia-

ment to the peasant my informants had numerous points to mention, varying from conflict issues over politics to livelihood insecurity, which are sometimes tightly inter-related. Most people seemed to enjoy explaining to me as a foreigner the various facets of Uganda's contemporary situation. Roughly, contributions can be divided into the following sub-categories, ordered according to the priority given to them by most informants:

- Conflict-related challenges

Conflict was regarded as a major challenge by almost all informants regardless their region of origin and background. In combination with the tightly inter-related issue of bad leadership it is viewed as the most urging problem in Uganda. However, in contrast to the focus on the analysis of root-causes presented by primarily academic informants from Kampala, participants from regions affected by active conflict pointed at conflict themselves as the major challenge for Uganda. This was the case in particular for people from Northern Uganda. One NGO worker who is dealing with people traumatised by wartime experiences of violence also warned of the aftermath of the conflict between the Ugandan government and the LRA if it should come to an end. As a consequence of their traumatic experiences during the war and the destructive effect it had on the social fabric of the affected Acholi society the problems of these people might not come to an end as soon as the peace talks are finished successfully and the active fighting stops:

“Since I am in Gulu, all the horrible things, the atrocities that have taken place. It's actually not maybe the end, when the rebels come out that this is also the end of the war. The war is more in the hearts of the people. I think it is more in the hearts of the people, to be able to forgive, to be able to make communication, to work, to live together peacefully. You know, counselling them, to mobilize them, to enable them to make conflict resolution. Towards reconciliation, also have a bit of skill in reconciliation, ya, and I prefer to see how people are working together. Are able to themselves to own the process of reconciliation.”

(Interview No. 24; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

The care for these people will to a certain extent be the task for NGOs working in the field of community support and conflict transformation and challenge the capacities of their work. Most NGO workers who referred to this point do not feel sufficiently prepared yet to address the needs of the war-affected and traumatised people. Another NGO worker from Gulu views the significant lack of coordination between the different actors in the field, that has also been repeatedly criticised by authors as Carl (2004), Sommers (2001), and Bush & Saltarelli (2000), as a challenge in regard to conflict transformation:

“We have the challenge that many people think ,we do it ourselves’. This stakeholder, this one, this one ... it is not very easy to coordinate, all the different peace-activities in this country.”

(Interview No. 23; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

- Politics/leadership

Most of my informants were very worried about the present political discourse in the country. However, there are significant differences recognisable in the way these are perceived and analysed. As mentioned before, Ugandans participated for the first time in multi-party elections in February 2006. What was widely welcomed by the international community and parts of Ugandan society was actually a strong reason to worry for some of the people I spoke to. They partly blamed the current political problems in the country on the move to multi-party politics:

“Maybe Museveni should not have allowed people to say ‘let’s go multi-party’ when he is the one in the driving seat. They [the people in Uganda who are critical towards change] are actually not happy with him because why did he allow to go on and start bringing people like Besigye and others to disorganise Uganda?”

(Focus group discussion Kampala; female participant)

The fear of the consequences of the sudden change was hence not only expressed in interviews, but also intensively discussed by focus group participants. Some people observe dividing effects within their own families, as expressed by one participant:

“We also have political conflicts; they have accelerated due to multi-party politics. Yes, they have been there but now now when multi-party was sort of brought back, there’ a lot of conflicts especially between FDC [Free Democratic Congress] and NRM [National Resistance Movement]. For example, if I went to my village and I said I am FDC, I will never drink water there. Even my father would not allow me in the house, because this is my home but if I came with a different political ideologogy they would say ‘you don’t belong here, what are you going to bring us?’ For them political parties they look at them as though they are bringing back those bad old days. So a person like my father and others say that us the young people want to bring the regimes which mistreated them when we were young. So there is nothing we know about multi-party, so there is nothing we should say about it. It has devided homes.”

(Focus Group discussion Kampala, male participant)

Another issue commonly referred to was the perceived abuse of power by many political leaders. Many informants stated that they have experienced political leaders as bringing new problems rather than solving problems. The position of many informants was hence characterised by a high level of mistrust and criticism towards the current forms of political leadership they experience:

“Power is kept with one person, until another comes and overthrows this person by using violence. There is never a power transformation that comes from inside. Often, there is involvement of the military, and of parties who so much oppose each other that they can be seen as enemies. Their rhetoric is also full of hate and they would never cooperate, but rather overthrow each other. That was always the case with regime changes in the past, and it is still the case to a certain extent.”

(Interview No. 2; male informant, trainer, Kampala)

All informants who referred to this point underlined that they would expect their leaders to set a good example to others. As long as the leadership of Uganda

does not change its style of governance, Ugandan society can not be expected to change significantly – or such was the assumption of most of my informants:

“You just have to listen to the leaders here. The citizens listen to the leaders. Dr. Besigye, Museveni, they talk about violence, don’t “mess with me”, “we can cause you trouble” things like that. The other reason, President Museveni did not invest in organizing the thinking of people so that they can accept alternative ways of resolving disputes. He always talk in terms of slaughtering by many means, finishing them, crushing them. His vocabulary has never changed. He had the opportunity to build a peaceful society, by telling the society that ‘Look; I want to be the last to have used machine guns to get into power. Let us find ways of resolving our conflicts.’ But he did not use this opportunity. Instead every party is calling itself a ‘brigade’.”

(Interview No. 23; male informant, former participant, Kampala & Gulu)

The informants who brought up the challenge of poor leadership saw strong linkages to the general acceptance of violence within Ugandan society. Moreover, since leadership in Uganda is often directly related to ethnic affiliation, by using the language of hatred against people and politicians belonging to another party and hence most likely another ethnic group, politicians are viewed as further deepening inter-ethnic mistrust and resentments, as the following statement expresses:

“Just look at the speeches of the politicians and what they state in the media. There is speech full of hatred and the words and phrases they use are full of violence. And then there is the mistrust between people of different groups, which leads to resentments and conflict. But this point is strongly related to what I have described before, because very often the people belonging to one party belong also to specific ethnic groups.”

(Interview No. 15; male informant, former participant, Kampala)

The multi-dimensionality of poor political leadership illustrated in the interviews and its consequences were brought up particularly by informants with a higher educational background:

“We have so many problems that are closely related to one another. The issue of bad leadership is closely linked to the problem of poverty that we have, and the general security situation. There is no security in this country, political security and security for the people, our situation is very unstable. And people live in poverty, they lack security, and the support of their leaders, who should rather focus on how to reduce poverty and increase the security for the people, instead of bothering about their political leadership and how to extend it. It is not only about being a leader, but about being a good leader.”

(Interview No. 6; male informant, trainer, Kampala)

The few research participants whose educational background did not exceed Primary or Secondary School rather focused in their analysis on immediate problems and challenges they experienced in their own lives, which they mostly did not link directly to supposed underlying root causes, such as failure in political leadership.

- Challenges related to ethnic division

Another challenge frequently stressed by informants was the issue of ethnic constraints and ethnic division within the country:

“If something happens in one part of the country they look at it as something that is in that part. Most Ugandans don’t have a heart as nationals. They lack a spirit of nationalism.”

(Interview No. 1; female informant, trainer, Kampala)

In this regard it is not the fact that Uganda is home to many different ethnicities that is viewed as problematic in itself, but rather the constant reference to ethnicity and the stereotyping about the different ethnic groups and the impact ethnicity had on the course of history:

“And maybe that’s one of the challenges for Uganda that people don’t identify themselves as Ugandans. So if you go around and ask ‘what are you?’ the higher chance is that the person won’t say ‘I am Ugandan’. They will still say like ‘I am a Lubara’ or ‘I am a Muganda’ before they say ‘I am a Ugandan’. So if they are divided like that, how will you bring them together?”

(Interview No. 4; female informant, trainer, Kampala)

“From what came out during the voting time it was obvious that the Baganda are very bitter with the Banyankole and then the Baganda are also bitter with where Obote comes from; and then they are also bitter with the Langis.”

(Focus Group discussion Kampala; female participant)

Statements like this made by a Baganda woman illustrate the impact of ethnicity on the situation of people from a specific region (Broere & Vermaas 2005; 2003) and the consequences this might have in the long term on the inter-relationship between the different tribes. Furthermore, these responses reflect the long-term ethnic division within Ugandan society as described by Ugandan (Otunnu 2002) and foreign authors (Finnström 2005). Several informants mentioned that many people would regard the miserable situation of for example the Acholi people in Northern Uganda as a natural consequence of the Acholis’ ‘warrior attitudes’ in the past:

“Or the Northern problem, what I call the Northern problem ... because ... the way the North is seen ... the people here are unaffected. They don’t have relatives there, the economy is concentrated in this side, there is a true divide in this country ... and many people here even think that it is these people themselves who is to blame.”

(Interview No. 4, female informant, trainer, Kampala)

Interestingly, all informants who referred to the issue of ethnic division as a challenge, regardless their own region of origin and tribe always excluded themselves from their observations and analysis. Rather, they would talk generally about ethnic groups, sometimes even their own one, but formulate their contribution as if they themselves were excluded from this phenomenon. The same counted for ethnic stereotyping, as a Baganda woman described:

“Part of it is the stereotyping. It’s open that everywhere you go and a Musoga is talking, say in Kampala, they will just criticise. They feel they are low people, something like that. There

are even proverbs that are related to this, they say ‘is it, a Musoga was earlier a witch or something, say somebody who doesn’t thank is either a Musoga or something like that. It’s something which looks light but it harms relationships.’”

(Focus group discussion Kampala; female participant)

On several occasions it then happened that in the course of the further group discussion or while answering another question these respondents themselves would make use of certain stereotypes (see below about AVP and ethnic division).

- Poverty/inequality

Another major challenge mentioned by almost all informants was the extreme level of poverty that characterises the lives of many Ugandans. Remarkably, this issue was brought up by people from all regions, regardless their own place or region of origin and regardless of their own well-being.

The majority of my informants have never suffered themselves from extreme poverty and hunger. Most of them have no problem sustaining their livelihood, enjoyed Secondary or even Tertiary Education, and are able to fund education for their own children. Still, a great awareness of the difficulties faced by the high percentage of poor people in the country was recognisable. Related to the issue of poverty most informants stressed the matter of great inequality within the country:

“The other one is sharing of national resources. Look at the regional imbalances. The East and the North are under-developed. Almost 60% of the population is poor compared to Central and West. So there is an unequal distribution of resources.

(Interview No. 9; female informant, pre-training, Kampala)

“Apparently ... in terms of the West and the central part of the country the people have jobs and are relatively well off, but the poverty is highest in Northern Uganda, where people often do not have work, and therefore the poverty margins are very high. The country is divided. The North is poor and people are living in camps, many people are dying, children are dying and the people are suffering from their living situation, from the poverty. Therefore, their security is also very limited; they have fewer chances in life than the people coming from other regions. You see, HIV/Aids for instance is a problem, which is very present in this country. But it is a problem that exists mostly in the North and in the East, in the more privileged regions of this country there are not so many cases of that, people don’t have the same problems and those living in the North.”

(Interview No. 15; male informant, former participant, Kampala)

The two regions most often mentioned in regard to worries about the present and also the future potential for development were overwhelmingly the North and Karamoja (Moroto/Teso district), which cover not only the poorest districts of Uganda, but also the two regions currently still suffering from the consequences of active, violent conflict (see chapter 2):

“In the Teso sub-region there is a lot of draught. People are in poverty, there is not enough food and there is famine. So look at Kampala here. Kampala has enough rain, food and there is almost all the social political activities. In future, we the Northerners are likely to lack

human resources, because most of our children go to primary schools, but cannot afford to go to secondary schools. So skills are necessary and they will not be there.”

(Interview No. 7; male informant, pre-training, Kampala)

Poverty and a lack of development opportunities were widely viewed as a direct and major cause of conflict both in the past and in contemporary Uganda:

“Poverty is our main obstacle. Poverty for sure. Poverty is the source of all problems that we have, even the conflicts. In my opinion it is poverty, because all the problems come out of people being poor. Someone who is poor and hungry can hardly care for peace. So if we want to bring about peace for Uganda we need to address this poverty issue first.”

(Interview No. 3; female informant, trainer, Kampala)

• Culture and modernity

Another challenge stressed particularly by older respondents and those originally coming from rural regions is the change of cultural values and traditions, stimulated by globalisation, migration within the country and other influences of modernity. Some informants saw a direct link between the loss of traditions which would enhance solidarity and friendship and modern influences from outside. In their view the latter played a responsible role in the diminishing of ancient rites and community mechanisms:

“So globalisation has also brought problems. For example in our culture we used to have what they call ‘omukago’, that is permanent friendship. That is, if I love you so much we would cut around the umbilical cord, I mix my blood with yours, and there should be nothing wrong happening. If anything bad happened to your child, I would also be responsible [...] even your education should know that you are in ‘mukago’ with this person. So children regard you as really blood brother. So they should not tamper. Should anything happen in your home, then these people should be concerned and say your brother is facing this problem. And now those things are dying out.”

(Focus Group discussion Kampala, male participant)

“I think of the values. Culturally is that in most cultures, if you killed someone you should sacrifice heavily. That was traditionally a role. But now you kill and go free with it. These days they would even disown you. So people feared the implications of killing. So you are either paying heavily or you are being disowned. And being disowned was a big thing. You wouldn’t go to any other community and fit there.”

(Focus Group discussion Kampala, male participant)

Again this point is closely related to criticism about the matter of poor political leadership, which in the view of many respondents has further stimulated the diminishment of traditional cultural control mechanisms and even encouraged the use of violence and killing to reach certain goals. Particularly the older participants above their fifties would differentiate in their responses between the ‘good, old times’, when community cohesion and control was still strong and the ‘modern, rather bad times’, where people inspired by poor role models would neglect these traditions and hence increase the level of violence in society through their actions.

How subjective and different cultural change is perceived and valued is expressed by two statements referring to the same issue: inter-tribal or inter-clan marriages. One older male participant of a focus group in Kampala, who originally came from Northern Uganda, showed grievance about the fact that arranged marriages are diminishing even in the rural areas of Uganda:

“The marriage aspect, where you have to strictly marry specifically from a different clan where you have no blood-linkages or relation. That was another element of peace; but now you find cousins marrying themselves, because they are being ‘modern’. So this has also created conflict. There is no attachment to our tradition.”

(Focus Group discussion Kampala, male participant)

According to him this had been a peace-enhancing mechanism that pacified inter-clan relations and hence hindered the outbreak of violent conflict, because one clan would not attack the other after having married a daughter to a member of the clan in question. In contrast, another, young interview partner in the beginning of his thirties saw the new phenomenon of inter-regional marriages going along with less strict regulations as a sign of hope for peace between the different regions and tribes:

“I think there is hope that things change. I have noticed a lot of inter-marriages in Uganda, so much. There are on a rise. For us, marrying someone from the North was formerly impossible. But these days, you don’t think about it, I think maybe it is a global phenomenon, global dynamics that are coming in or things with modernity or something ... it is really changing. Now people are marrying from wherever they can get a partner. Although there are some of those complications, but then, I think there is a lot of hope.”

(Interview No. 2; male informant, trainer, Kampala)

Participants’ and facilitators’ ideas for possible solution strategies

In direct linkage with the perceived challenges faced by Uganda and Ugandans from different backgrounds it is advisable to also reflect on people’s ideas for possible solution strategies. In the context of this study this might allow for valuable insights into the potential that informants see in educational approaches for conflict and societal transformation, but also into possible limitations in regard to issues that might go beyond the sphere of (peace) education.

As manifold as the views on Uganda’s major challenges were the ideas for possible solution strategies, which were in most cases directly linked to the challenges and obstacles they had described before. Again the issues are presented in the order of priority according to the informants’ statements.

- Peace education/educative sensitisation

Even though I asked these questions in the beginning of the interview when we had not even spoken about AVP or peace education yet, most informants – be it in the discussion groups or in one-by-one interview situations – cited peace education and other educational sensitisation programmes as the most important

strategic responses to Uganda's current problems. Obviously, many informants saw a great potential for addressing Uganda's problems and challenges with educational means.

However, despite the relative unity in the request for educational programmes for peace-building everyone described different issues that should be targeted. In this regard the community of my informants does not differ from the wider community of peace educationalists, as the ongoing discussions about the nature, definition and content of peace education presented in chapter 3 illustrates. One group discussion participant favoured a general sensitisation of the people on their right to hold their own opinions regardless of political campaigns and pressure 'from above':

"What I would also say about politics, I imagine sensitisation of the general population. People do not know that if I have a different ideology it's my right. They imagine that we should all be the same. I believe in this so the other persons should also believe in the same. So we somehow do not know that it's someone's right to believe in something different. People should know that believing in another party does not mean they should be enemies."

(Focus Group discussion Kampala, male participant)

Another informant stated that she understands peace education as a campaign to sensitise people favouring the use of violence, like the Karamojong, who still practise cattle raiding as a cultural tradition and a mean to sustain their livelihood:

"Like peace education, sensitising people ... I know for instance among the Sebei they used to hold circumcision very high as a virtue but now they are beginning to change because there has been some kind of education. They have been told about the things that are bad about this thing they held as very good. So I think even among the Karamojong, it is possible also. I don't know but I think it is possible although it may need longer time. But I think slowly, it's not something that happens in a day, but slowly it can begin changing."

(Focus group discussion Kampala; female participant)

It was significant in this context that some informants from the urban area in and around Kampala showed tendencies of arrogance towards people from other, rather rural regions of the country. Some seemed to perceive the presence of violence in some particular areas as a sign of backwardness and primitivism that could be addressed by sensitisation campaigns. They preferred to talk about 'them' and 'they' and as with the responses to the question about Uganda's challenges, they avoided including themselves or their own ethnic group into their description of the problem.

One participant from a rural area, who participated in the discussion group in Soroti also pointed at the need for sensitisation and human rights education. In contrast to the majority of people in his region of origin he had undergone Secondary Education and taken part in some further training in the form of seminars:

“There is also the aspect of human rights education is also vital, because you find here in Uganda particularly, people are not aware of their rights, they just live in this blank world, they don’t know anything until at least come into association with somebody who really knows his or her rights and tell them. So I think human rights education is necessary because it’s from the aspect that you don’t know your rights, ignorance of your rights that conflict also comes in. It worsens each time [...] something like sensitisation of human rights should also be used to reduce conflict.”

(Focus Group discussion Soroti; male participant)

Obviously, awareness-raising and sensitisation for people’s rights e.g. in form of educative programmes are widely viewed as a key to problem solving in Uganda. However, whereas most people generally acknowledge the value and potentials of educational efforts in this regard, it appears striking that the majority views it as important, but only for other groups of people. There seems to be a tendency particularly among highly educated people, to blame the people with the lowest level of education and ‘development’ for the use of violence. A general necessity for sensitisation towards the use of violence among all Ugandan citizens is not seen by a considerable number of informants.

- Strengthening of institutions and leadership

Directly related to previous responses pointing at poor political leadership as an obstacle many informants logically viewed a strengthening of political leadership and institutions as an important strategy to solve the existing problems.

The responsibility of political leaders and the government was seen in various dimensions. One important aspect stressed is its role in empowerment processes:

“The government should play a leading role and work with its partners. It should encourage everybody to participate. [...] They should empower the people, equip them with skills, knowledge and give them tools of analysis. So that these tools you use them to fight poverty and insecurity. So, the government should play a leading role.”

(Interview No. 8; female informant, pre-training, Kampala)

Another female focus group participant underlined the importance of strengthening existing institutions in place, which according to her was often overlooked. Existing institutions which could provide change in particular areas, enabling them to function more effectively:

“I think of the practicality of these initiatives. We can talk about human rights today but then it ends there, because I cannot relate it with the practical. Partly because also which is another bit that is strengthening institutions. You have heard of Ugandan Human Rights Commission for a long time, but still human rights are being violated. We had Uganda female lawyers and so on and every-day violence against women is still increasing. So it could mean that what institutions are doing is not practical, institutions do not have enough power to create change.”

(Focus group discussion Kampala; female participant)

A third aspect of the responsibilities of leadership that was raised by a male focus group participant in Kampala is its role in a national reconciliation process.

This point is related to the deeply rooted ethnic division within Ugandan society (Deininger 2003; Broere & Vermaas 2005; 2003), which hinders the development of a shared identity and hence presents an obstacle to combined efforts in development and conflict transformation in the eyes of many, as this statement illustrates:

“Maybe for the leadership in place, all those different stakeholders that can have a part or a say should try to enforce national reconciliation so that we start looking at ourselves as Ugandans, not as tribal groups from different regions.”

(Focus Group discussion Kampala, male participant)

In this context another male focus group participant stressed the importance and necessity of a shared identity and sense of solidarity between the different regions. It adds another dimension to the responsibility of the government and the political leadership, namely the role of every Ugandan citizen him or herself, which no one else has stated in that clearness before:

“Then again with the conflicts, I mean, we have this conflict ... the North is suffering the NRM, so it’s a problem from the North, so I think it should be a general reaction of the people from the country all those from the East, West, South, and Central should be able to say ‘these are fellow Ugandans, they are suffering like us’, not only to say ‘these are only Northerners suffering’. So it should be a concern for every one in the country ... for me, for you, for everyone.”

(Focus Group discussion Kampala, male participant)

- Fighting poverty/inequality

Another important factor mentioned in the context of possible solution strategies is the fight against poverty and existing inequality among Ugandans, which were viewed by many as a major threat to peace and security and hence need to be addressed in order to transform Ugandan conflicts:

“I am requesting that there be equitable distribution of resources and formative actions should be in place. So actions and strategic programmes should be designed to help these people come out of poverty.”

(Interview No. 9; female informant, pre-training, Kampala)

Except of one male participant of a focus group discussion in Kampala all responses to this point were strong in their request, but never pointed out clearly where they felt responsibility lay. This appears as striking against the background of the responses regarding Uganda’s major challenges, where many informants clearly pointed at the failure and weaknesses of political leadership.

- Strengthening of gender equality

In the light of the many experiences of domestic and gender-based violence the women I interviewed reported it appears surprising that only one male informant underlined the importance of gender equality and thus improved gender relations for a general improvement of the social climate:

“Like in the family, the husbands have more say over the use and decision-making in the household, which impacts heavily on the gender. So, if we approach it from the cultural, the relationship between men and women ... gender relationships can then ... I think it can have impact in our community. It should be more gender-sensitive.”

(Interview No. 7; male informant, pre-training, Kampala)

As mentioned before I will come back to this important aspect at a later point and therefore abstain from further comments here.

Participants’ perspectives on AVP

The following sub-chapters will be dedicated to the analysis of the participants’ perspectives on AVP as a programme and its potential impacts. In reference to the conceptual scheme presented in the introduction to this thesis this part forms the ‘heart’ of this study and hence my findings. In order to be able to analyse the perceptions of participants on AVP trainings it is important to first gain a clear picture of their reasons for participation and their expectations of such training.

A second major part of the analysis is dedicated to general opinions about AVP, before I shift to the analysis of participants’ perceptions on AVP’s impacts grouped in several areas within a third sub-section.

Reasons for participation

Next to personal interest, mentioned by almost every informant, very clearly three main reasons for participation in AVP can be identified: participants’ own experiences with conflict, a conflict-specific professional background, and the wish to empower others. The reasons for participation strongly differed between the research locations. Informants from Kampala mostly cited personal interest, or the desire to achieve further qualifications to improve their chances on the job market. In contrary, those interview partners coming from or working in conflict regions all named their conflict-related experiences as a main reason for participation:

“My background and my own surrounding is such that if you are not able to have skills and to be able to build peace with the AVP skills, then, ah, it can be very challenging. When you see the abducted children, in their mood of pain and sorrow. And then to look at the Acholi sub-region, where most of the fighting and violence takes place. To look at the revengeful attitude of the people, then to see how highly they are all trained in violence skills. Northern Uganda, Acholi is a region where the abducted lives together with the abducted, you know? How can they afford to live together? So that’s why I wanted to do it, to do something against it, to gain the skills to improve and change the situation.”

(Interview No. 24; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

A large number of informants mentioned their professional background as the motivating factor. They are either working for NGOs in the field of human rights, peace-building and conflict resolution, or are involved in counselling services within their home communities. This is not surprising since the organisers of

AVP in Uganda, the ‘Civil Peace Service Project’, publish the training announcements via their own networks, hence informing numerous partner NGOs about the training and the dates it is taking place. In many cases these organisations even send and sponsor their co-workers to join the training, or at least allow them to leave their work place for the duration of the training. Some organisations whose personnel have already participated in AVP now organise AVP trainings themselves for people in their own region of activity. This also explains the high presence of NGO workers among the participants.

“The reason that I took part is ... one of the responsibilities of this organisations is to ensure peace, conflict resolution good governance and all this. When you look at the content, the basis or the core of AVP, it works along those areas. [...] During the course of the training, I felt at home, because this was the issues, this is what I am trying to apply everyday in the work with my target groups and people. So basically that was the reason.”

(Interview No. 27; male informant, former participant, Fort Portal)

The people in organisations working in the field of peace-building and conflict transformation are often facing tremendous challenges in their daily work. This counts particularly for those organisations which are active in regions of acute conflict where they face the task of supporting people in extremely difficult living situations. Furthermore, a professionalisation in conflict transformation skills is a relatively new phenomenon in Uganda. This huge gap between the requirements of the challenges faced and the very limited professional skills available to address them to a certain extent explain the popularity of a programme like AVP, which from its original content actually focuses more on personal conflict resolution capacities than professional peace-building skills.

Some participants stated that they wanted to use the skills they would gain in the AVP training to empower others. Interestingly, this was mentioned equally by participants from Kampala, those who had lived at least for several years in Kampala, and those from conflict regions. All of them described a strong desire to help others and, similarly to those who named their professional background as a main reason, they felt limited in their present capacities to address the needs of the people whom they wanted to help.

“We should not learn and keep those skills to ourselves. We should learn and take these skills to the communities who are the final consumers. They are the ones who are affected; we should go and help them. We should not target the course to benefit ourselves; in terms of getting money, getting bigger jobs with the UN or someone saying ‘I want to take you to Canada for work’.”

(Interview No. 7, male informant, pre-training, Kampala)

One male interview partner particularly underlined the importance of supporting marginalised women through his newly gained skills:

“When you look at our society, especially Iteso where I come from, there is a lot of violence. Men always beat their wives, men always rape little girls, men always do not respect the rights of women and I believe in the concept that when you kick a woman then you are a

sinner, you kick against the most basic human rights. So I am behind affirmative action for women and I want to see that when, if I get the skills of this training, which we are about to start, I want to use that skill to bring out elements of the women in IDP camps, who are traumatised and probably share with them my knowledge, I want to learn to empower them, especially the women.”

(Interview No. 15, male informant, former participant, Kampala)

In some individual cases informants have stated other reasons for participation. Three times the fact that participants would receive a certificate after successful completion of the training was mentioned as a motivating factor to participate. In a similar context three informants named the improvement of their chances on the job market as their personal reasons for participation.

Advanced professional training in almost all sectors is still scarce in Uganda, particularly the possibilities for training which is affordable for people who do not have a donor-organisation behind them. Furthermore, in contrast to European experiences where exactly the opposite is the case, work placements within the huge foreign NGO sector, particularly the booming peace-building sector are among the best paid positions in the country. For this reason many people want to work for a foreign NGO after completing their studies. Therefore AVP was regarded as a chance to gain professional resources in the field of peace-building that might be beneficial for future job applications.

Several participants who heard about the training through Makerere University personnel stated that they understood it as compulsory, or at least feared disadvantages from their professors and the coordinator of their study programme if they would not participate ‘voluntarily’. This, however, strongly contradicts the AVP philosophy of voluntary participation and contributions. It is recommended that course directors re-check the participation modalities used for those participants ‘recruited’ among Makerere University students.

Expectations of participants before the training

Asked for their expectations of the upcoming training, most informants formulated their responses very much in line with their reasons for participation. Roughly, responses can be divided into two categories: expectations related to the style of the training and expectations related to its effects/impacts. Unfortunately the representativeness of this sample is limited in nature due to the fact that I have only been able to interview people in Kampala before a Basic training. Even though some of them originally came from other areas of the country, they had spent at least several years in the capital. In some ways, their responses might hence not be comparable to those that people from other regions might have given.

Again several informants pointed at their wish to forward the knowledge and skills gained from the training to other people. This was in almost all cases closely related to a general desire to positively influence the current conflict

situation in Uganda. Through participating in AVP they hoped to become enabled to have an impact on the current situation in some parts of the country.

In contrast to the common style of teaching in schools and universities in Uganda, which is rather frontal and teacher-focused, all my informants wished the training to be very interactive and lively. They wanted to become involved and encouraged to actively contribute. The aspect of having fun and a joyful interruption of their normal daily lives also seemed to play an important role for some:

“I hope it to be active. If I get a chance and presenters give me an opportunity to ... maybe they ask a question. And if they ask somebody to volunteer to speak about himself or herself, I will do that and be active, not passive. [...] I would like it to be very lively.”

(Interview No. 11; male informant, pre-training, Kampala)

“I want to go there and enjoy to learn, later on practise what I have been taught.”

(Interview No. 10; female informant, pre-training, Kampala)

Another expectation mentioned twice was to meet nice people and find new friends. AVP was seen as a welcome opportunity to get to know like-minded fellows. Only one participant mentioned an expectation regarding the trainers, whom he wanted to be knowledgeable, open-minded, inter-active and well-prepared.

General fulfilment of expectations after the training

Asked for the fulfilment of their expectations right after their Basic training all interviewed participants stated that AVP even went beyond their expectations and was very enjoyable:

“It was very interesting, educative, beautiful, and very different from all the other trainings that I have attended.”

(Interview No. 9; female informant, post-training, Kampala)

“It even beat my expectations actually.”

(Interview No. 10; female informant, post-training, Kampala)

The main reason for this was obviously the participatory, interactive style of AVP, which enabled everyone to actively contribute. People perceived this as very positive and contrasting to previous learning experiences. One female participant described what she had learned through the participatory approach and the activities that encouraged listening to one another:

“It went somehow beyond my expectations. I am someone who kind of over-talks, but at that time I couldn't really. I had to reduce on my talking and listen ... although, I don't know if I will always manage, so I am practising a bit. I hope I will. One of these days I try to talk less and listen more and that is something that I never had [...] I had a nice workshop, I have changed. I am going to be a good listener and they will say 'what a joke, she can't manage'. So I really liked the listening bit of it and I hope I will transform that; transformation is really taking place in me ...”

(Interview No. 8; female informant, post-training, Kampala)

General opinions about AVP

This sub-chapter provides some insights into the general opinions of participants about AVP, including both positive remarks and points of criticism. The questions that were meant to stimulate the informants' free expression of their opinions were formulated very openly. However, in the analysis of the responses it appeared that all remarks could roughly become subsumed under three main categories: the approach/methods underlying the AVP training, the content/message of AVP, and the conducted specific activities. After some general points of criticism these three areas will be presented separately.

- **General points of criticism**

Overall, AVP was viewed and described as a very good, enjoyable programme. When asked for their general opinion about their AVP experience, most informants, be it right after the training, or be it after a longer period of time, remarked on far more positive than negative aspects. Points of criticism indicated as such were – if expressed at all – rather related to structural matters, as e.g. the timing of the workshop-style training

The majority of participants in the open evaluation round conducted at the end of every AVP training agreed with this statement and considered a three-day workshop as too short for the huge volume of content. In contrast, both members of parliament who took part in AVP training and volunteered to be interviewed stated that three days were far too long. However, this was rather related to their heavy work load and their tight schedule as MPs rather than a criticism about AVP and its content, as they explained in the further course of the interview.

Another point of criticism raised by one informant in the interview, and several times stated by participants during AVP trainings, was the fact that normally participants would go home in the evening after the training and only come back the following day for the next training block. This was perceived as interrupting the group-building and learning process.

Additionally, one participant criticised the “African timing” of many participants. As they had to come to the training location every morning everyone would arrive at a different time, which disturbed the training schedule and interrupted those who arrived on time. This matched with my observations during several trainings. Sometimes it would take three hours, i.e. the entire morning session till every participant arrived and the group was complete. Surprisingly, this was never criticised or commented on by any trainer. The same went for delayed arrivals after the lunch-break, which had the same effect on the group work. Likewise, it was never mentioned negatively that people would leave the room whenever they wanted during sessions, to grab drinks, food, or receive phone calls.

A third frequently mentioned criticism was the fact, that the participants did not receive written materials to take home and repeat what they had learned:

“I do believe that there is need to have written background information. And I think AVP is very weak on what you carry back as a resource. I think every training should have a resource pack, which when you ... even when you are baptized you are given a bible as a present to show that’s your guide book. I think AVP hasn’t thought that after the training you need to go back home. For instance now I have nothing to refer to, refresh my mind, so I think that is a major weakness from my perspective.”

(Interview No. 23; male informant, former participant, Kampala & Gulu)

“I did not like so much that the course did not have written materials. Naturally I cannot remember everything I have learned there. If I had these materials I am sure I would keep reading them through even after the training.”

(Interview No. 12; male informant, former participant, Kampala)

Interestingly, this matter was most strongly criticised by people from Kampala and particularly those with a high educational background. From other trainings and from university they seemed to be used to receiving resource packs or booklets for personal usage. In areas, where written teaching material seemed to be a scarcity anyways, like e.g. Soroti, neither the participants in the training that I observed nor my interview partners ever asked for own materials. Instead, they would bring their own notebooks and write everything of importance to them.

It is a principle of AVP that only participants who have completed all three levels and hence can call themselves ‘trainers’ are allowed to purchase AVP manuals. This is explained by the practical nature of AVP, which aims rather at internalisation of basic, practical principles than theoretical knowledge. When the trainers were asked for materials and explained this AVP rule no one ever questioned it. It seemed to be accepted as a reason.

In Kampala participants are handed out photocopies of some AVP principles and rules during the training sessions, e.g. the principles of transforming power to take them home for memorisation. In Soroti, the trainers would point at the most important elements to make it easier for the participants to decide what to write down.

- Opinions about conducted activities

Overall, my informants had very clear memories of conducted activities. Even the majority of those whose last active training experience was several years ago could still describe at least one activity that they did and liked. As a reason why they could still remember very clearly almost everyone said that the very practical, experimental approach of AVP helped them to remember. Mostly, people not only described the conducted activities, but could also relate it to a learning experience. I could not identify any difference in the preferences of activities between the people from different regions.

The activities most often referred to were by far the role-plays, both by participants during AVP evaluation rounds at the end of a workshop and in the answers given by interview partners. Even if the training was conducted several years ago, informants who referred to the role-plays still remembered very clearly which situation was played and whom they acted. Several informants said that this was a new approach in Uganda, very different from the usual theoretical, frontal teaching style, which they liked a lot for its practical relevance:

“We used role-plays. They divided us into groups and each group was supposed to think of a situation and act it out. A violent situation and then how you can use transforming power to change it from a violent one to a non-violent one. This was very helpful to me. I can still remember those roles played and I know that I can use it if faced with violence. [...] I played a girlfriend, I had a boyfriend. We went out for a drink, after he wanted me to ... kind of force me ... it was like a rape situation, but then someone else came in and found us arguing and the person used the transforming power to help us solve the conflict.”

(Interview No. 17; female informant, former participant, Kampala)

In those cases where I observed role-play activities the participants were asked to divide themselves into groups and to choose a situation they either had experienced themselves in their lives or they could think of. By far the most often chosen situation were situations of domestic and gender-based conflicts. It was fascinating to observe the discussions that went on within the groups during the preparation phase. Very often, the group members would discuss deeply their perceptions on gender issues while designing and practising the performance of their scene. I will refer to this aspect in more detail in the sub-section about AVP and gender aspects.

Other activities frequently referred to were those explicitly aiming at the development of personal skills which are required in conflict situations. Harris (2003: 92) considers these as one fundamental element of wholesome peace education. People need to learn communication skills so that they may be prepared for the dilemmas around conflicts and may be enabled to solve disputes constructively. Such activities were highly appreciated. Several times participants referred to an activity which aimed to develop their listening skills:

“There is one aspect of AVP which has really changed me. Effective listening ... You know certain times if you don't listen to someone who may want to come to tell you something, you interrupt them or you really don't listen to them well, then you will help that person. But if you just listen, these days I don't interrupt when someone is trying to tell me something. I just listen, as I learned in AVP, and then later give my comment.”

(Interview No. 16; female informant, former participant, Kampala)

For this activity people grouped themselves into circles facing each other and in a specific amount of time tell each other short stories about life experiences, which they then later have to remember in as much detail as possible and report back to the group. This was followed by a reflection on what helps us to effectively listen and the creation of a list of rules to remember for future situations

where listening is required. In one of the observed trainings the participants themselves developed this list; in another one the trainers had already copied it from the AVP manual and presented it.

Harris (2003: 92) states that peace education as empowerment education imbues people with the hope to learn and to trust their own capabilities. He sees the key to this type of education as in the *process* and names affirmation exercises as one example of how to help students trust their own competence.

'Affirmation-exercises' are also a major element of AVP and were often mentioned by the people I interviewed. One of these exercises practised at least in every AVP Basic training is the 'affirmation in groups', where the participants group in pairs and tell each other for the length of one minute positive things about each other. A second affirmative exercise practised in every AVP training is the 'certificate'. At the end of the last training day each participant receives a certificate on which every other participant notes something positive about him or her. Obviously, all participants who referred to these exercises described them as very exceptional in the Ugandan context and saw a very positive effect in them:

"The other thing I liked so much was the affirmation exercise. You affirm yourself, you say something good about yourself. You know, in life it's very hard to know who you are and this really does help, because you don't need other people to say something positive about you, if you get to know who you are and the good in you. I don't know what exactly is wrong with us Africans, but we find ourselves concentrating more on the negative attributes of someone and even ourselves. When you look at someone the first thing you comment or attribute about someone is negative. So that negating is not healthy for you because it is what causes conflict and it is what makes you become violent when faced with a conflict. But I like affirmation because you will always find something good about yourself and find something good in the other person."

(Interview No. 13; female informant, former participant, Kampala)

"We had a challenge for instance about constructing a certificate. I found that to be quite useful because most of the time we focus on what we do not like about other people. [...] That activity, to me, is most memorable; affirming other human beings."

(Interview No. 23; male informant, former participant, Kampala & Gulu)

"I liked the affirmation posters. I think I liked it because I realised that there are some people who make things easy; you make someone feel good and you also want to hear the good about you. I really liked the affirmation bit of it most."

(Interview No. 9; female informant, post-training, Kampala)

All participants who referred to the affirmation exercises linked them to their importance in the Ugandan context, where people according to them rather tend to focus on negative aspects of each other than positive characteristics. Regardless place of origin, sex or profession everyone who mentioned this exercise shared the opinion that Ugandans should be more positive about themselves and one another. One female participant particularly mentioned the importance of

such exercises to improve the relationship between different ethnic groups. She, herself a Baganda, formed a pair with a woman from the Northern Acholi region.

What first seemed challenging to her turned out to be an important learning experience for her later, which she thought helped her to reflect and overcome prejudices by focusing exclusively on the positive sides of her exercise partner from ‘the other side’. The same effect was mentioned by another female participant from Northern Uganda in an evaluation round, who referred to the ‘adjective names’. In the beginning of every AVP training participants are asked to create themselves name tags with not only their personal name, but an adjective beginning with the same letter as their name, that describes their personality, e.g. ‘joyful Joseph’. What seemed to me rather childish and dispensable, was in the eyes of this woman a very important exercise: “For the first time you cannot tell from the name where someone comes from. These names make us all the same. They make us forget about differences.”

- Opinions about the approach/methods

Almost every interview partner referred to the extremely informal, *participatory approach* of AVP and underlined this feature as very positive:

“It was very participatory, that is what I liked the most.”

(Interview No. 22; male informant, former participant, Soroti)

It creates an atmosphere where everybody is involved and no one can exclude himself. I think there was really no one who did not participate, who did not like it.”

(Interview No. 25; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

This approach was experienced as very different from the classical teaching approach commonly practised in Uganda in several respects, such as the seating, the performance of trainers and the encouragement of interaction between the participants:

“We were seated in a circle; both the participants and trainers were seated in the circle. It is not like having a teacher standing in front of a blackboard to lecture you. There is no assumption that the participants are ignorant people who need to be taught. It is assumed that conflict is a social problem and therefore a solution has to be found together.”

(Interview No. 23; male informant, former participant, Kampala & Gulu)

Some of the participants working for NGOs gave interesting insights into the wide-spread ‘workshop-fatigue’, as they called it, of themselves and their fellow colleagues. They had participated in numerous workshops and named AVP in comparison an extra-ordinary experience:

“There is one thing that I remember about the Basic course; and that was the approach. You know, I have been doing a lot of workshops, and sometimes it was so boring, it was always the same. Sometimes you don’t like it, you get disgusted and something like that. But in AVP it is different. Everyone is at the same level; everyone is playing a role, and taking part. I found it quite interesting, the design of the workshops.”

(Interview No. 22; male informant, former participant, Soroti)

The for the participants unusual high level of active involvement and participation was not only described as an enjoyable and stimulating learning process, but by some described as ‘the’ learning experience itself:

“I learned from participating in the training that every answer is correct. There is nothing wrong. And you must learn to respect people’s opinion, and not look at yourself as the perfect one. Because every time somebody participates at least you learn something from that person. So I think you are doing socialisation.”

(Interview No. 8; female informant, post-training, Kampala)

Against the background of the Ugandan historical context and the current political situation, which is still widely characterised by a climate of aggression and intolerance, this statement unfolds its deep, multi-dimensional meaning. For this participant it was perceived as a learning experience in itself to be encouraged to openly express one’s opinions without fearing consequences and to tolerate those of others, even if they might oppose one’s own viewpoints.

- Opinions about the content/message

The AVP characteristic that all informants clearly liked most was its positive view on human beings and the overall message that everyone has something good in him or herself that is waiting to be stimulated and used. To most people who referred to this feature this appeared to be an innovative, almost surprising message contrasting with the Ugandan reality they are experiencing in their daily lives, which is characterised by a high level of violence and hatred:

“But despite this excessive use of violence everywhere, AVP says that there is still good in all people, and that it is about bringing this ‘good’ out of them. I like this. That it is so positive about us.”

(Interview No. 22; male informant, former participant, Soroti)

“What I have liked in what it has given us [...] you know in the society where we are living, the conflict is part of us. But how to deal with this? There are so many fighters in our society. But from a fighter, you can become a peace-builder! So that is what I have learned from there.”

(Interview No. 26; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

Several participants mentioned that the knowledge transmitted in AVP was actually nothing really new or innovative for them. AVP rather functioned as a reminder and raised their awareness and recognition towards capacities they had in themselves already, as one informant from Soroti describes:

“I learned that we have a lot of endowment that can bring out peace. That is something I learned. It is in ourselves. We only need to bring it out. And begin like this. That is the most important thing that I learned.”

(Interview No. 22; male informant, former participant, Soroti)

In this sense many former participants described AVP as very solution-focused in its approach, and felt encouraged by it to use their own capacities to think of possible solutions to conflicts and conflict-related problems:

“Rather than being dwelling more on problems I like the approach with as many opportunities, alternatives. You know, when I first went there I really thought, do they have for every problem an alternative?’ Certainly not. But I think the first and second time, when I went there I realized that to every problem, there is an alternative. When one is able to use the problem positively, the problem can be looked at positive ... I like it, that expression! Rather than looking at the problem and getting lost in your stubbornness!”

(Interview No. 24; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

Several informants from Gulu and Karamoja explained in this context that they often felt perceived as a ‘problem’ by organisations, the rest of the country and the outside world in general, e.g. the international community.

The past two decades have heavily affected the self-perception and self-esteem of those constantly affected by the consequences of the war. Well-meaning support programmes have in a way also contributed to the described feeling of being incapable of solving personal problems and thus being dependant on external support. Against this background they liked AVP for its strong focus on the capacities of people, regardless of their situation.

In this point these responses contradicted the commonly stressed point of ‘lacking relevance’ or ‘inappropriateness’ for the requirements of the local context often stressed in the literature (Carl 2004; Sommers 2001; Ardizzone 2001). Referring to Carl’s (2004: 2) statement “when people are dying, suffering the violence of hunger, disease and displacement, it hardly seems an appropriate time for participatory workshops, or promoting indigenous perspectives and capacities”, it has to be pointed out that obviously the people living in and closely experiencing the conflict situation are finally those to decide what is perceived as appropriate and what is not. In this specific case the ‘banality’ of the message of AVP seems to have given the participants in Gulu and Karamoja the feeling of ‘being just normal’ – despite challenging circumstances.

Another element several informants referred to was the so-called ‘heart’ of AVP: ‘Transforming Power’. As outlined earlier on the ultimate goal of AVP is to enable people to find the ‘Transforming Power’ in themselves and to use it constructively to transform violent situations. In the AVP manuals and by the trainers during the trainings the elusive nature of ‘Transforming Power’ is explained: it is a power that is within everyone, but that cannot be used by people, rather this power ‘uses’ them. Obviously, this was a fascinating thought for several informants:

“In life what stays with me is the issue of ‘transforming power’. It is a very interesting issue and when you grasp it, in any situation that you are faced with I can now use it to transform a situation to become non-violent. Transforming power is something that uses us. In life like you may find people confronted with conflict, a situation of conflict and then like what comes to you, on how to transform the situation. You let it use you.”

(Interview No. 17; female informant, former participant)

“What I remember about the training is that every one has the capability of transforming or everyone has the transformation power. All of us have something within us that can enable us to resolve a given situation.”

(Interview No. 12; male informant, former participant)

“I learned about power. Oh, I learned so much about power! How one can transform, one transforms himself to be powerful, how power can be used both positively and negatively. Power was the new content to me. I thought that I was looking at power in political terms, but there was power in economic power, social power, cultural power and power in institutions, and even power in ourselves, that I did not expect. So I went with the idea that power always belongs to the politicians. So that was something new.”

(Interview No. 11; female informant, post-training, Kampala)

The idea of a power, that is within everyone and just needs to be stimulated to initiate profound change in people and hence the overall situation seemed particularly appealing in the light of the Ugandan context, characterised by the actions of a lot of people, who obviously have not yet ‘discovered’ the ‘Transforming Power’ within themselves and have not yet ‘been used’ by it:

“I learned a lot of things; most importantly the art of transforming others, transforming power. You interact with someone and really know the goodness of the person, you are really trying to bring it out so that the person if he shares, if he lives in society and I realised that it is really possible for one to be transformed. Even the most violent, even people who have behavioural disorder can also be transformed in the long run. So, when I see people here saying that peace should come in the whole country, you would think it is a dream that cannot come true. But I know that one time we shall live through such a time and people look back and say ‘can you imagine, one time people used to fight.’”

(Interview No. 8; female informant, post-training, Kampala)

As much as many informants seemed to be fascinated by this idea, as much room it left for individual meaning and interpretation. This came out during several training sessions I observed. It was extremely interesting how many different things participants would clearly see within ‘Transforming Power’. Whereas several described it as a power that comes from God, one understood it as the spirits of his ancestors and yet another person would view it as invisible spirits that have to be kept in a good mood to function well.

When questions about ‘Transforming Power’ came up during the workshops they were always answered by hinting at its elusive nature and the information given in the manual, stating e.g. that everyone naturally would see something different in it.

Particularly in viewing the ability of the former participants to recall even after years the verbal descriptions of ‘Transforming Power’ given in the manuals and repeated by their trainers the memorised routine described by Simpson (2004: 5) comes to mind. In her observations of peace education programmes at high schools students were able to recall the slogans of the programmes a long time after participation – without being able to practise their content; without obviously being able to give them a meaning.

Similarly, the former AVP participants were fascinated by the concept of ‘Transforming Power’ and could repeat some of its definitions, but were hardly able to relate it to any concrete experienced real-life situation, as the following sub-chapter analyses.

- AVP and practical applicability

One oft-stated major criticism of current peace education approaches is that they fail to bridge the gap between what is taught during the training and what the participants actually experience and practise in real life situations (Salomon 2002; Harris 2002). It is assumed that if the participants do not feel the relevance of what is taught during the training and if this is not immediately transferred into practice they will later on fail to give meaning to the acquired knowledge, i.e. to use it. Harris states that “ideally, a student in a peace education course acquires both theoretical concepts about the dangers of violence and the possibilities for peace, as well as practical skills about how to live non-violently” (Harris 2002: 22).

The opinions of former participants concerning AVP’s practical applicability differed significantly in this regard based on different reasons. The two main judgement criteria were obviously the relevance of the content of the training and the appropriateness of its design. On average it seemed as the further in the past the training, the stronger was the participant’s impression that the application of the AVP knowledge was difficult. This was different in the cases of trainers: obviously, they had continuous opportunities to refresh their knowledge and hence felt still very familiar with it; even long after the completion of their own ToT training. Some participants considered AVP as strongly related to and driven by their own experiences, hence ‘relevant’ for their own lives in the strategies it suggested:

“AVP is not closed; it actually comes out especially during the role-plays. There are other exercises where you use real life examples you have been in or the other person has experienced, and then try to use the exercise to see how you would have come out of the situation. Many of these are actually relating to real life situations in AVP.”

(Interview No. 14; male informant, trainer, Kampala)

“It is very practical, because when they begin asking you about your personal experiences and relating them to what is being taught you find it more practical than theoretical. And as you go on advancing in the courses you discover it is even more practical again.”

(Interview No. 13; female informant, former participant, Kampala)

Obviously, some trainers encouraged the participants to bring in their personal experiences and situations of relevance to them into the activities. By then designing the conducted activities ‘around’ those experiences the participants felt a close proximity to their personal life and could relate what they had learnt immediately into practice, at least theoretically.

However, it is not only important to design the content of the training and the activities in such a way that they are close to the reality of the participants. It is required that the participants receive assistance in the ‘transfer’ of the ideal that is performed during the training activities and situations they might be facing in their daily lives. Several participants expressed that they would have wished more advice and guidance for the practical application of AVP skills in their daily lives:

“Of course they told us to use what we have learned in our own lives and in our communities. That is what they told us. But they did not tell us how to do it, they rather told us that we should try to find the best practices by ourselves, according to the situation.”

(Interview No. 28; female informant, former participant, Fort Portal)

“They leave you hanging in the air without knowing what would have been better in that situation. If there is one thing I could suggest, I would make it more concrete, and hence more relevant to the situations people are facing and struggling with in their daily lives.”

(Interview No. 13; female informant, former participant, Kampala)

These former participants wished for stronger guidance and clearer instructions. In these cases it was difficult to identify if their trainers provided less linkages and hence made it more difficult for them to relate and use what they had learned or if they themselves needed more guidance than others to build up these linkages with the help of their trainers.

In contrast one female participant from Fort Portal reported how her trainers had asked her and her fellow participants to directly apply what they had learned in neighbouring rural communities. By receiving practical advice and supervision in forwarding what she had learned she felt enabled to later on also do the same on her own initiative.

However, she was the only former participant reporting about a concrete exercise. The great majority of participants considered AVP as not applicable in their context, which will be further outlined in the following section about the cultural applicability of AVP.

From the responses of the informants no link between the educational background and the perceptions of a person was identifiable. Very striking was the fact that many informants, who had promised to use AVP in their daily lives, were then not able to mention any concrete examples of situations where it actually was consciously applied. This counted for all interviewed groups, regardless of the time span that had passed since their last training. Only two interview partners were able to describe concrete situations where they remembered having used AVP strategies consciously:

“I will give you a recent example from my own experience. I am teaching in different schools. There is one school, where the students for some reason were very rough and violent. You actually could not manage to calm them down. So whenever a teacher entered a classroom, they would push around tables and chairs and making all sorts of noises around. Then, whenever the headmaster detected or realised it, they would order the whole class and

pretend they had not done anything wrong. But that never stopped them. One day just recently, right after my AVP experience, when I entered the classroom, I would not scream at them, but keep calm. I just told them to wait a minute, and very calm I was looking at them instead of screaming to make myself heard. I looked at them and I said ‘you are all beautiful. You look forward to get better jobs and careers in the future than any of your family members. But you know, there are certain things we do unconsciously and they become a habit, so that at one time, maybe after finishing here and you pass very well, you dress smartly and you are called for an interview. Reaching there you are offered a seat ... and beside your smartness and intelligence, you make awful mistakes and behave wrong, because it has become a habit, it is inside you. So when you continue doing that, you are risking the opportunity of getting the job.’ At that moment they realised, and they never did it again. I think this is what I learned through AVP; affirming the good in someone, identifying the best even of the person who has committed an offence. That way you can reach very far, with this positive attitude even towards conflict.”

(Interview No. 11; male informant, post-training, Kampala)

“Usually when you travel by taxis there are people who shout at you. Many times we played these things in the role-plays in AVP and they usually say you don’t answer back, because these people have so many words to abuse you and embarrass you. But from those role-plays where we have practised that I realised and very often I have got to a point where I am almost going violently and I become now aware that I am just going to be like this taxi conductor. Then I take a deep breath and try to stay calm. This is different than it used to be before AVP.”

(Interview No. 14; male informant, trainer, Kampala)

In several cases where the participants could not remember having actively used AVP knowledge they named reasons for it or started to think loudly about possible reasons during the interview:

“But I think there is something missing. I think about the duration – repeatedly [...] about the training duration. It is really not enough, just a workshop here and there, if you really want to see change ...”

(Interview No. 24; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

“Well, to be very honest with you: It is difficult. I did this training only once, and I did not proceed on the Advanced level. I should have done this, but at that time I could not find the time to do it. You do it once, and then you think ‘oh, this is good’ and maybe think you will use it in your life. But then you tend to forget about, and your old habits come through again. I can remember some of it, but I don’t know when I use it. I assume when I would do this what I learned there more often, than I could remember and maybe use it, because then it would be internalised at one point and happen automatically. But as it is, one training was not enough for me. It generally needs to be more consistent, you know. This kind of knowledge should not only be taught in just one workshop. They should know that this is not enough. Consistency is important. And another thing is also that through my work I have been participating in so many different trainings of this kind, that I honestly cannot really remember what I have learned from where. It is all mixed up in my mind, and I cannot really say if this comes from AVP or another training. But I know that I liked AVP at that time, and this is not the case with every training I do.”

(Interview No. 25; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

These statements back-up the widespread opinion of scholars; namely that workshop-style training courses of very limited length necessarily have to have their short-comings. McCauley (2002), one of the critics of the workshop

approach, considers the expectations towards them as often too high. Instead of supporting long-term behavioural change, in his opinion they can – if at all – at the most provide ‘food for thought and reflection’. That these superficial reflections might really lead to profound, remarkable change is by him perceived as unlikely.

Two other informants not only reinforced these assumptions, but referred to another problem already described at an earlier stage of this thesis as one of the major points of criticism towards the workshop approach: the ‘re-entry’ problem (Gleicher 2002: 90). It is very challenging for a participant of a short workshop to come back to his or her family or community. He or she is expected to use his newly gained knowledge whereas everything and everyone around him or her remains still the same. Under these circumstances, which are the norm rather than an exception, it is very unlikely that new attitudes will overwrite the old habits. This was observed by one participant right after his training and confirmed by another one, whose training was about two and a half year ago:

“I see a challenge in putting what I have learned into every-day practice. That will remain a challenge. Not that I would say it is not applicable, but I will have to remind myself very, very often of what I have learnt; and I don’t know if I will manage in concrete conflict situations.”

(Interview No. 10; male informant, post-training, Kampala)

“I could have used it within myself or within my family, but it is difficult you know. It could be used, but that’s how it works with all this conflict resolution knowledge to learn from seminars and workshops. You go there and you think you will use it, but then again you have your habits and it’s really difficult to change old practices.”

(Interview No. 25; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

- AVP and cultural applicability

Closely related to the aspect of the practical applicability of the content of a peace education programme is the issue of cultural applicability. As has been mentioned in the sub-chapter about AVP itself as a programme it claims to be non-cultural, i.e. universally applicable.

Bar-Tal (2002: 34) states that “Peace education without a wider social campaign is fruitless and disconnected from social reality. Participants might soon feel that it is irrelevant to their life experience and might view it as an insignificant endeavour”. Bearing in mind what he and other authors (Simpson 2004; Harris & Morrison 2003; Harris 2002) have said about the importance of relatedness this claim for universality seems to be a contradiction in itself.

From the first sight, two countries could not be more different, could not face wider gapping social realities than Uganda and the United States. Having been designed and developed in North America and by North Americans a North American influence is undeniable. This does not necessarily mean that such

‘import’ would be impossible to implement, but beyond any discussion its relevance must – by nature – be limited to a certain extent.

The success of any peace education programme regardless of its place of origin and implementation depends to a huge extent on the meaning it generates for its beneficiaries. In this sense, an imported programme patterned by its own cultural context might have a limited capacity to derive meaning in a very different cultural context. It is thus also highly dependant on the ability of its facilitators to give meaning to its content for the participants.

This was strongly reflected by the opinions of my informants, who differed extremely in their perception on the cultural applicability of AVP in the Ugandan context. Within the trainings that I observed it was never openly criticised that AVP is an American programme, even though its origins were always explained in the introductory part and repeated again during the first session of upper AVP levels. Few participants from different research locations considered AVP as very suitable for their cultural context and did not see any problem in the fact that it was developed in and imported from the United States. One male informant interviewed several days after her first AVP training had a very interesting explanation for this:

“I think it is suitable in many ways. You know, I really think in Africa people had these AVPs even long time ago. Even before colonialism conflict had always been there and the elders have always been there to solve things. So I don’t think it was so new to Africa, although we did not have courts. I think it was then really an alternative to violence. It has really been part and parcel. If you study about our African background, history, inter-marriages etc., you would realise that these things may have been there. We just maybe didn’t discover or put it into perspective. [...] Again it is coming as it was totally new to us. Now we are kind of used to courts of law. But if someone would come and tell us ‘No, no, you don’t have to always go to the court, you go to an AVP center and solve these things’. It is now becoming like something new, yet I think it really has been there, the role of elders in the African society.”

(Interview No. 8; female informant, post-training, Kampala)

Obviously, many elements of AVP, its philosophy of non-violence, its search for alternative means of conflict resolution as e.g. the use of mediation reminded her of institutions and mechanisms that existed in traditional Ugandan societies. In this sense, it was not perceived as foreign or entirely new but rather as something old and familiar ‘in a new package’.

Several informants reported how their trainers had involved them in activities which were based on their own experiences in Uganda. One activity mentioned in this context was called ‘the ideal society’, which I happened to observe in one AVP Basic training in Kampala. Within this group exercise four to five participants came together for the length of about half an hour and were asked to either note down or draw everything they could imagine to be important in the ‘ideal Ugandan society’. All participants extremely enjoyed this activity and filled flip-

chart sheet over flip-chart sheet with their ideas, often accompanied by lively debates about the different levels of priority given to their suggestions:

“Then we talked about a society we would like to live in, and all those things are happening every day. We talked about a stable society, economically stable, and all those other characteristics, they are all there, here in Uganda.”

(Interview No. 8; female informant, post-training, Kampala)

By not only asking for ‘any’ ideal society, but for the ‘ideal Ugandan society’ the trainers gave particular meaning to this exercise for the participants. In the case that I observed a very experienced trainer afterwards even asked the participants to think about possible steps in order to realise these goals and possible personal contributions – in doing this he built the link between the idea(l) developed by the participants and practical action they could perform in reality.

Obviously, the issue of ‘societal change and transformation’ is of extremely high relevance to all participants, given the close proximity to the general elections and the overall Ugandan context in general. This was expressed both through the reactions to such activities as through the comments of informants on Ugandan challenges and possible solutions towards them.

Several participants attested AVP a local orientation, not explicitly differentiating between AVP in general and the contributions of their trainers in building these links to the local sphere:

“I found it very practically oriented because the biggest emphasis was trying to draw from the local perspective and from the local conflict and try to see how they can make it. [...] The ideas that were to be generated were those that are relevant to their local environment, so that’s how the local situation can be brought in and addressed.”

(Interview No.12; male informant, former participant, Kampala)

AVP’s participatory approach and the activities, which are often designed in a way that they invite participants to bring in their personal experiences and perspectives, enhanced local relevance in some cases. The sharing of personal experiences among fellow participants and with the trainers for some added a local perspective to the general AVP content:

“The content and the wider socio-political context in Uganda were related, I would say. I could see the link because it brought out the general feeling of the group, the majority of whom are actually Ugandans, and therefore naturally the workshop is also driven by their experiences. I saw, there was a lot of exchange, and people could share their experiences from their region. [...] At least I would say that now from the stories I heard from my fellow participants. [...] I would say it was not driven or imposed by the trainers, but rather brought in by the participants. They would give examples that reflected the situations and highlighted the varieties of conflict people have to deal with. It was not part of the training or focus of the training, but actually the participants brought it up.”

(Interview No. 10; female informant, post-training, Kampala)

One participant found relevance and meaning not only in the involvement of personal experiences, but in the fact that AVP focused on the personal aspects of any conflict:

“The link is there. First of all in Uganda we have different conflicts, both small and big ranging from rebellion against the government, tribal conflicts, robbery and many others. The link which is there is that any stage of conflict of the conflict you can get involved and do something about. [...] Resolving any conflict begins with you yourself being transformed, and this is regardless any cultural background.”

(Interview No. 12; male informant, former participant, Kampala)

For him the message of AVP was truly universal. Through its focus on the empowerment of individuals to constructively transform conflict situations, regardless of the actual nature of these conflicts, which might extremely differ from context to context he felt explicitly addressed by the neutrality of AVP’s message and not excluded. He perceived it as encouraging that AVP told people that every conflict starts with an individual and that individuals have the power to transform conflict.

As paradoxical as it may sound for an outsider: the ‘ignorance’ of the static AVP content to the Ugandan context had an encouraging effect for him, because he learnt from it that there is even hope to transform the Ugandan conflicts on the long-term – since everything goes back to changes in the mind sets of individuals. This point was also stressed by several other informants, who particularly liked the focus of aVP on the personal sphere, because in their view conflict transformation could only be performed by individuals.

One female informant interviewed shortly after her first AVP training formulated a rather uncritical, but very important perception, which certainly invites to have a closer look on how AVP is publicly reasoned and promoted in the Ugandan context:

“I think it is suitable. Or, I mean, actually I have not really thought about it, or questioned it. I mean, they brought this here to help us and to change things, so who am I to question this?”

(Interview No. 10; female informant, post-training, Kampala)

As has been stated in the introduction of this thesis it should be in the power of programme beneficiaries to judge about their relevance and impacts. In the context of this statement it should be added that it is inevitable for programme implementers to make participants aware of the importance of their personal opinion – in order to avoid a peace education programme, aiming at the development the empowerment of individuals, to become a farce of itself.

However, as the cited quote illustrates it is difficult for some people to criticize educational inputs and therefore their appropriateness. Against the background of educational tradition in Uganda this counts particularly for a context, where the formal school system and all educational efforts are focused on reproduction and the ownership of knowledge by the teacher. Hence, the challenge to implement programmes that in the first instance contradict the common notion and practice of teaching require a high level of sensitivity from the implementers’ side.

Nevertheless, the positive perspective on the cultural applicability of AVP was not shared by the majority of my informants. About three quarters of the people I spoke to mentioned profound doubts on AVP's applicability and relevance in the Ugandan context, based on different arguments. Much of the criticism referred to a missing relation to concrete Ugandan conflict settings and the given socio-political situation:

"If I should make it even more beneficial to us I would want in AVP these skills that are given to the participants to revolve a conflict for instance the one in Northern Uganda. There are different issues. They could be political, social, economical; but for me as one who did AVP I feel there is that other aspect of skills that are Africanised, skills that will resolve the conflicts here in Africa or Uganda, but not to use skills that will resolve the conflicts here in Africa or Uganda, but not use skills that were used in the US moreover to some conflicts in prison. [...] For example the content that is in the manual is basically having no relation with our current situation here in Africa and Uganda in particular; so it is not relevant to our everyday life; and maybe I would change some few issues in the menu and to at least be adjusted to fit in our society in order for it to be appropriate to Uganda today; for example issues in Northern Uganda, there is a need to have a component of political in the menu or in the design of AVP."

(Interview No. 13; male informant, former participant, Kampala)

"It would have become more practical using examples from the Ugandan situation and there are so many conflict issues in this country. It would help if it were linked."

(Interview No. 17; female informant, former participant, Kampala)

a lot more of the AVP skills and roles can be played in the war-conflict area. Of the West-Nile region, a little bit beyond the Acholi sub-region, where they suffer from the over-flow from the insurgency, you know? And sometimes you look at the rebels coming from the Acholi-side and that they bring the district suffering. It looks like ,it is Acholis bringing this on us'. AVP could adress this as well."

(Interview No. 24; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

The lack of concrete reference to the Ugandan context and the missing political dimension in the training was perceived as making AVP mechanical and static. Several participants wondered why it would be necessary to import a programme from another cultural context and explained that they considered AVP as not appropriate for their context and hence limited in its potential impacts:

"The question that I had and that AVP also could not answer was, and I am still trying to research ... why most of these concepts of democracy, freedom, poverty and so forth are still defined from the Western world and not in African context. I missed that in the course a bit, but maybe I expect too much. Now I am trying to build up this connection myself. Generally, it can be applied to the whole world, and particularly it can be applicable here in Uganda. But the point I am trying to drive is that the Africans have no independent minds. They always depend on the concepts of books written by the Western world. That is the challenge we have and that also counts to a certain extent for a programme like AVP that is brought from the Western world. Who's idea of peace is that we are following? Also, when we talk about free democracy, freedom of speech, human rights, we should also bring in the African concepts of those aspects. We should not depend on the Western world. Why does always someone from outside have to come to tell us how to do things?"

(Interview No. 11; male informant, post-training, Kampala)

It seems remarkable that even one experienced, female trainer expressed criticism on the lack of relatedness to Ugandan contexts and concepts:

“Maybe the training fails to put into context the situation on the ground. I don’t know if it’s because I have not been exposed to more facilitations. When I was doing it was for first year-students of the Master in Peace and Conflict Studies. We failed to find a common ground in maybe some of the role plays. This cannot be applied to our scenario, this is a Western concept. So that’s what made it more mechanical for me and I thought that maybe if the facilitators would come out and come up with a manual that’s maybe Ugandan, or African, that can be used for us, not using those foreign manuals ... that’s why I thought it would not work for us. That’s why I think it fails to be put into practise.”

(Interview No. 4; female informant, trainer, Kampala)

In this regard, AVP was perceived as a part of an inappropriate, imperialistic knowledge-transfer that imposes outside-solutions instead of acknowledging local capacities to respond to and solve local problems. Another participant pointed at traditional alternative means of conflict resolution, which he perceived as very similar to the strategies taught by AVP and could thus provide a local alternative to outside-knowledge:

“We in Uganda use normally a lot of violence to solve our conflicts. So there is a lot to address for AVP. On the other hand, in our tradition we have a lot of alternative ways of conflict resolution as well, like for instance the mediation through elders. If we would recall these traditions, we would actually not really need a programme that is coming from outside to address our problems.”

(Interview No. 25; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

As how far from the Ugandan reality some parts of the AVP approach were perceived by some of the participants illustrated this example given by a former female participant:

“What I found very surprising was when they talked about this thing called ... I mean when they said we need to talk about ourselves and our own feelings when we talk about conflict. I think they named it ‘I’ messages, because they begin with ‘I’. I am not sure about this ... actually, I think this is something far from the African or also the Ugandan way of thinking. As you might have experienced, community life here in Uganda is rather about ‘we’. Our whole life is structured around the community. I see it is changing nowadays, at least in the cities. But still, if you go to the villages, you will see that ... we learn not to think too much about ourselves, but rather to think about the community. So, I think this concept of ‘I’ ... I don’t know if this can work here to be honest.”

(Interview No. 13; female informant, former participant, Kampala)

As a rule for effective communication the AVP manual names the formulation of ‘I’ messages. What might be perceived as ‘normal’ and appropriate for someone from the United States or another ‘Western’ society did not make any sense, i.e. did not derive meaning in the Ugandan context – experienced as ‘normal’ by this participant.

This example refers to the repeated criticism on many peace education approaches which are shaped by ‘Western’ notions of humanity and forms of societal organisation (Seitz 2004; Schell-Faucon 2002). In communitarian

societies like Uganda exercises which stress concepts based on individualism can completely fail to derive meaning for those they seek to address.

Again, it also seems to strongly depend on the ability of the individual trainer to adjust the content of the manual to social rules valid in the local context: In a training session about effective communication that I observed in Kampala the trainer used these ‘golden rules of communication’ to explain differences in communication among different cultures. By explaining the explicit ‘Westernness’ of these rules he managed to derive meaning for his participants, who then started to loudly think about other differences in communication they had observed in contact with foreigners. As one example they told me for instance, that I would always look into their eyes when talking to them. This was considered as very ‘Western’ and actually not appropriate in most African cultures.

The assumptions drawn from AVP’s perceived inappropriateness differed significantly. Whereas some thought, AVP in its existing form could function as a basis and be partly adjusted to the local context, others voted for fundamentally new solutions, driven and shaped by local experiences and organised in a decentralised way:

I think that it is blended. We are blending the foreign with the local context. As I say, the very ... there are certain things which are in the AVP, which can be transformed to the local context. You know, they can be the foundation, they can be many things in the foundations. You know, you can maybe say, some people say ... it is the beginning ... it is the torch that some people might use to walk. The right direction is shown by the light. You know with the foundation many things can be brought in various contexts, you know. In America it is practised in the prison, it is a context of prison which we might not find here. But we are applying it into the context of insurgency, of insecurity. The people are prisoners of their own situation. I told you the story of the abducted that lives together with the abducted. How are they going to solve their conflicts? [...] AVP should try to address these things, the specific way they look like. That is so important! You know, the conflict in the North might not be as important as in the South. So if you are like in Karamoja, that is a different context again. This should also be considered.”

(Interview No. 24; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

“I think it would be far more applicable and useful if it was related to the Uganda-context. That is a problem with all these conflict trainings. How shall people use it if it is not about their own lives? We have problems abound here, we have actually not to make up problems in our minds, for role-plays or something like that. Why can’t a programme deal with our real problems? Then I think people could better use it. I think many of these programmes think that they are universally applicable, and maybe some parts of it are. But then again, each place has its unique situation, its unique problems, particularly Uganda, and the North here is even more extreme. I think if it was more suitable for our situation, people would get more out of it, it would be better. It is also a matter of education, you know. I have been living abroad; I have other experiences and education. But what if you bring this to villagers, who maybe cannot even write, and read, or have never been out of their village in their life? Are you going to tell them that this programme is coming from America – is it America where it is from? And then expect them to grasp it and even use it? I think that will not work, honestly. We have to find way to make it digestible to the people, by making it more suitable for their situation. Just look around here, and you will see so many things, so many problems you could refer to. Give us the means and we can make our own programmes that fit our

situation. For instance we live in a conflict region. I think we cannot ignore this when we are organising such kind of workshop, this is actually a strong influence factor.”

(Interview No. 25; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

In sum, it seemed that the more participants knew about AVP, i.e. after passing several levels, and the longer their AVP training was ago, the more critical was their position towards its relevance in the national and regional context. However, this does not include the responses from those former participants, who had continued to practise AVP frequently as trainers. Obviously, the continuous practice seemed to have helped them to give meaning to what they learned in the training, and by increasing their expertise as trainers some of them found ways to embrace the Ugandan context in the training content they would be teaching others.

- Personal applicability

As the chapter about the history of Uganda illustrated it is difficult if not almost impossible to talk about one Uganda as a unified construct. As my interviews progressed, the experiences of people extremely differ from context to context. Or, as one interview partner phrased it: “We are not talking about one Uganda – we are actually talking about many Ugandas, since this country is so different for everyone living in it.”

Almost everyone who expressed criticism about the cultural relevance of AVP immediately referred to the extreme differences between the regions and that it might hence also differ from context to context how AVP is perceived. According to them AVP would increase its relevance, if it is not adjusted to a national, ‘Ugandan’ context, which may in their evaluation not exist anyway, but directly to the requirements of specific settings.

Therefore, this section is dedicated to the analysis of AVP’s applicability to specific contexts that might be found in Uganda. These might be shaped by personal experiences, the socio-political setting and the capacities of each individual.

“But if it is in Uganda, here in Kampala, we should try to point out some of the issues that residents of Kampala are actually facing because of conflict. And if you are going down maybe to the East, you should try to find out the unique or particular challenges the people around that area are facing and then see how you can address it within the framework of AVP.”

(Interview No. 10; male informant, post-training, Kampala)

Particularly people from the conflict regions in Northern Uganda and Karamoja felt that the problems they were facing in relation to the conflict situation were not sufficiently addressed by AVP:

“At the moment there are so many negative aspects, how can a training deal with them all? Although we might learn a lot, it is impossible to find a solution to all our problems through just one training. And then there is also the problem that you have sometimes people who

went through extraordinary experiences, who have been tortured, who have tortured themselves, who are heavily traumatized. They have very special needs, how are you going to deal with that in a standardised training? To them it might even be humiliating to hear from people like us how to solve conflict in a better way, because we do not take into account their whole situation and what they have been through.”

(Interview No. 26; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

Several former participants who were working for NGOs in the conflict regions in Eastern and Northern Uganda did experience that AVP did not sufficiently prepare them for the challenges they were facing in the work with their communities:

“You know, some parts of Uganda may not be suffering. It is not the whole of Uganda, only some parts. You live in Kampala, do you see there people who are suffering? At least not from the consequences of conflict. When I am in Gulu, you know, of course there it is different. So this is maybe something to think about. Why do we offer the same programme to people who are experiencing completely different things in their lives?”

(Interview No. 24; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

“The mediation process that is needed should be done more exhaustively. It is attached in AVP one and also in AVP two, it is attached, but I see that in the sub-region the mediation process is quite a lot, that has been brought out to practise. So I think that aspect should have been emphasized on, mediation, reconciliation and alike, but in our own context, because this what is challenging us.”

(Interview No. 22; male informant, former participant, Soroti)

One participant related this not only to the setting pattern by ongoing violent conflict, but also to the strong traditions still prevalent in his region of origin, Karamoja, and the resulting resistance against change:

“Well, I have a bias sometimes like in relation to our community. You know, our community ... we somehow ... there’s that aspect of antipathy, to much resistance to change ... They take time, yet when like in terms of solving problems they always need immediate action. To me sometimes it becomes conflicting and always find it a problem. How can I relate it to our community, which always demands action and yet sometimes to use AVP ... There’s a soft approach in AVP and yet our community is very tough to handle.”

(Interview No. 21; male informant, former participant, Soroti)

Interestingly, also many of the former participants from Kampala who perceived AVP as culturally inappropriate referred to rural and conflict-affected regions. According to them AVP failed to address those who in their view most urgently needed non-violence trainings:

“I was thinking if it was aiming at the rural population, because that is where most conflicts emerge from, and those are people who are more affected. If the AVP could reach down to the rural people, it would be very, very effective.”

(Focus group discussion Kampala; male participant)

In the eyes of several informants from Gulu and Soroti AVP was only suitable for people with a higher educational background. People without higher education would not be able to grasp the abstract level of AVP:

“In its current form I think it is not applicable in the whole country. So if I see my level for instance. I have a Masters degree, I have studied, I have education. Of course I can grip it, I can build up the links by myself. But if you take this course to people who are used to violence, in the rural areas, I doubt that they can really use it. There it has its limitations. It should be adjusted to suit the needs of the rural populations.”

(Interview No. 15; male informant, former participant, Kampala)

One woman from a village not far from Soroti town where the interview was conducted expressed her fear that AVP would exclude those people who are illiterate, which is often the case in rural communities in the Karamoja region. By using a lot of written means of expression, as e.g. flip chart documentations she felt that illiterate people would not be able to follow the training.

Several people mentioned language issues as another dimension of the problem. Because AVP trainings were so far exclusively conducted in English, people who are less educated and not capable of speaking English would be excluded and hence further marginalised. This counted to the same extent for illiterate people:

“If you are dealing with people who are not educated probably you will have to translate it into local language. I actually don’t know if AVP has done training in the local languages for people who are not literate. But if not, this would be something which is really necessary. Otherwise you might exclude the people who actually need it most.”

(Interview No. 17; female informant, former participant, Kampala)

“But now if you are teaching me from here, and I am going to attend all three stages or parts or levels of AVP, but I am going to stay here in the urban area, I will not be going to the rural area but just because of this aspect. Or I fail to understand my own mother tongue. So when I am asked in my mother tongue what course I am doing, I cannot even explain it. Imagine if your Dad who is illiterate asked you ‘which course are you taking at the university?’ Maybe you are like ‘I take AVP’. And he asks ‘What’s AVP?’ and you begin fighting to give him answers and then you begin giving him funny ideas. Then even the illiterate people should get attention. You can at least use campaign posters, because there are those who can’t read, so out of posters they can be made to understand; for example drawing a peaceful home and then a home, which is violent or not peaceful, and then you make them understand the impact of a peaceful home and a violent home. Try to explain to them, this can be very effective right now. But for me I may not have a big impact on the people, or I may not put the knowledge into practice.”

(Focus group discussion Kampala; female participant)

“Maybe putting the level of language from this very abstract level to a more understanding level. Like it would be better putting it from American English to Ugandan English. Sometimes they use words that we don’t use here for instance.”

(Interview No. 17; female informant, former participant, Kampala)

These statements add another aspect to the matter of applicability: next to the content it is important to choose methods and activities which make the content accessible for the participants. Obviously, ‘appropriateness’ in this sense might have a different meaning depending on the personal capacities and experiences of the participants.

It can be concluded that a clear majority of the people I spoke to raised doubts about the cultural and personal applicability of AVP. The more rural and the more conflict-affected the region of implementation, the less appropriate AVP was perceived.

Interesting in this regard was the fact that people never spoke for themselves, but always on behalf of someone else – be it in referring to other regions, be it other people from their own community. It was never stated that personally one would have problems to digest the content or to build up links to the personal situation.

There are several possible explanations for this phenomenon: first, again referring to the characteristics of communitarian societies like Uganda it seems to be perceived as less appropriate to talk too much about oneself and to put oneself in the focus of attention. Second, talking about others instead of oneself makes it easier to express criticism, without directly offending the opponent. Third, pointing at other when expressing difficulties or criticism allows the informant to put himself in a ‘better’ light. Finally, these indirect statements could make the evaluation of appropriateness partly more relative, as they are talking about assumptions instead of their own, real perceptions. It can be assumed, that the possible reasons for choosing an indirect approach to criticism differ from individual to individual.

- AVP and religion

As has been stated AVP claims to be non-denominational and despite its origins in Quakerism free of any faith-based content. However, several participants experienced religious elements of AVP differently and from different viewpoints. One informant reported about trainers, who would refer repeatedly to the bible when teaching AVP content, another one experienced a training where the participants were asked to speak (Christian) prayers before every session.

In this context it has to be mentioned that Christianity is a very vital part of Ugandan societal life. Most Ugandans belong to one of the Christian denominations and within recent years the so-called ‘born-against’, an extremely conservative evangelical movement has gained increasing popularity within many regions of Uganda. It is therefore a common phenomenon that people would wish to speak prayers before work meetings, conferences and other forms of reunion.

Therefore, the perceived ‘religiosity’ of AVP was experienced very different among those who referred to it. Three informants mentioned its religious orientation as points of criticism when asked what they did not like about AVP. In contrary, two interview partners stated that this was something they particularly liked about AVP and felt it could even be stressed in more detail. Also in

the evaluation rounds after AVP trainings I heard twice how participants highlighted the fact that it appeared to them ‘a faith-based programme’ as positive.

As has been described in the sub-section about AVP’s content and message the mystical element of ‘Transforming Power’, which invites to associate it with spiritual explanations was by many seen as God’s intervention into conflict or as a kind of ‘holy’ spirit that would intervene into conflicts and hence contribute to their solution by ‘transforming’ the involved parties.

Be it perceived as a positive or a negative feature depending on the own convictions of the individual: AVP trainings are not by every participant perceived as a denominational programme. Against the background of AVP, which originates in Quakers religious convictions and has been developed by Quakers the element of ‘Transforming Power’ in the description of the informants who referred to it indeed comes very close to the Quakers believe in the ‘seed of God in every human being’ (see chapter 5).

In the Ugandan context, where Christian faith is vividly practised by many people it is difficult to identify if AVP itself stimulates and enhances Christian elements in the trainings or if this is simply a cultural expression of common practices in the country. However, if religious elements in AVP trainings should be criticised frequently it would be advisable to reflect critically on some aspects of the trainings, e.g. ‘Transforming Power’.

• Evaluation of AVP

Evaluation of AVP takes place within the framework of the training. After every session formative evaluation is conducted, by usually asking the participant to indicate his/her satisfaction within pre-defined categories on a prepared sheet of paper.

Participants answer by either grading them ‘very good’, ‘good’, ‘fair’, or ‘poor’; or by drawing a face that shows the personal feeling about it (smiling, indifferent, unsatisfied, etc.). Areas of concern are:

- How did you like the workshop?
- How would you judge the relevance
- How did you like the trainers’ performance?
- How did you like the participants’ performance?
- How did you like the location/accommodation?
- Have you been satisfied with the time-keeping/time management?
- How did you like the food?

At the end of the workshop participants are asked to fill in either evaluation sheets with a number of formative/quantitative questions, or alternatively contributed to a common evaluation sheet on flipchart, containing similar questions as

stated above. Another practised form of evaluation was a ‘flash-light round’ where every participant pointed out one comment about AVP that came to his/her mind.

Within the interviews almost all informants mentioned the need for more evaluation as an important point of criticism towards AVP. In their view, it was not enough to perform an evaluation immediately after the training. Rather, they requested a long-term follow up and considered this as a way for quality-management within AVP. Several former participants expressed their surprise that none of the facilitators had ever asked them some time after their training experience how they were able to apply in practice what they had learned:

“I was wondering if they are doing evaluations or research [...] I think this would really help. They should first assess what people who have done AVP think about it, and also in the different contexts ... you know, what someone from Kampala might find helpful may be useless for someone from West-Nile and so on. So they should do this assessment to find out what the people really need and want. It is not only about a specific region I think, but rather about the group of people you want to train. A programme can only be adjusted depending on the participants and not the area where it is being conducted.”

(Interview No. 17; male informant, former participant, Kampala)

“I think also from a much higher level there must be something put in place to monitor and evaluate. You know, after people have undergone this, is there a follow-up what they do after this?”

(Focus group discussion Kampala; male participant)

Some former participants suggested regular follow-up meetings; for the participants to re-fresh their knowledge and share experiences with other former participants and for the AVP implementers to receive feed-back on the usefulness and practicability of the training content. This would also help them – so the assumption of several informants – to adjust the training to the specific needs of the people in the different regions:

“AVP organizers need to do one thing: Evaluate what happens to the knowledge and skills. What is used in practice, and what does the statistics say: Where are the people going to and apply the knowledge that they have won? And then we, people like me who have done all the stages, maybe we need to come back every now and then, always, and then maybe share experiences. Which of the practices is useful in solving another problem?”

(Interview No. 24; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

“We need to initiate an evaluation process, or meetings of some kind of nature. That would surely be an additional benefit.”

(Interview No. 27; male informant, former participant, Fort Portal)

This view was also expressed in several evaluation rounds at the end of AVP trainings. Some participants stated openly that they feel a need for more evaluation. They considered it as important to particularly assess whether the participants have been able to apply what they have learned in the previous training. One participant wished to have the opportunity for sharing experiences of using AVP techniques at the beginning of the Advanced and ToT training. Ideally, this

information should then be used to adjust the up-coming workshop and to build on these concrete experiences, as one participant suggested in a ‘flash-light round’ at the end of the AVP Advanced Training in Soroti: “I would expect them to find out if and how the people who came and attended the training used the knowledge to solve conflicts or different problems in his or her area.”

Participants’ perceptions on the impacts of AVP

As has been stated in the introduction to this thesis I believe that in order to allow for an evaluation of the impacts of peace education it is important to take the perceptions of the participants not only into consideration, but as the basis of any judgement on so-called ‘effectiveness’. In order to allow for a differentiated analysis of the participants’ perceptions on the impact of AVP I have developed different categories to classify them. These are derived from on the one hand goals and visions of peace education in general presented in the literature, the aims of AVP it claims for itself and on the other hand from the opinions of the participants themselves.

In a first step the participants have presented a detailed picture of the challenges the Ugandan society is currently facing and which could hence be considered as possible aspects peace education in the Ugandan context should address. It has also been reflected on the practical and cultural applicability of AVP, which might strongly influence the impacts of AVP.

In a second step, the following sub-chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the impacts of AVP within these categories; namely AVP’s impacts on perceptions towards violence and conflict, its potential to transform violent conflict, its possible impacts on ethnic division, its gender-sensitivity and potential to influence gender-relations, its impacts on conflicts within the domestic sphere and finally empowerment. In the beginning of each sub-section it will be explained briefly why this category has importance in the context of peace education in general and AVP in Uganda in particular.

- Changes in the perception of violence

As representatives of the ‘Western’ school of thought Harris & Morrison (2003: 93) believe that empowerment processes in peace education manifest themselves in the change of people’s perceptions of violence; when they acknowledge their own deep feelings about violence and the perilous nature of the world.

One of the major goals of AVP is to initiate such a change in personal perceptions of violence. Participation in AVP shall sensitise towards all forms of violence and based on this sensitisation seeks to teach participants alternative ways of conflict resolution. These goals are in line with the general ‘Western’, holistic notion of peace education and its potentials. Coming back to the

perspective presented by authors like Page (2004) and Staub (2002) the assumption that outer peace starts with inner peace justifies in the views of the programme makers a strong focus on the individual, intra-personal level. In this sense, programmes like AVP become a deeply, in the first sight apolitical issue (Harris 2002).

Obviously, AVP is successful in this goal: almost all informants, both right after AVP trainings and even after years it was stated by the majority of informants that participation in one or more AVP trainings had contributed to a change in perception on violence, regardless of regional or educational background:

“Ugandans have been living in a society of ignorance. We believe that violence is the only way we can achieve something, which is not the way. Such training can make us realise that there are also other alternatives apart from violence – at least I have realised these alternatives.”

(Interview No. 9; female informant, post-training, Kampala)

One former participant whose last AVP training was several years ago also confirmed a stronger awareness for violence in all its manifestations as a change initiated by AVP:

“AVP has changed my awareness towards violence completely – to such an extent that when I see a mother using violence against her child I sometimes even stop her. I did that several times, and some people even say ‘Is this a police man?’”

(Interview No. 24; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

By some other informants the recognised change in perception was described as a widening of perspective, as a new personal definition of violence acknowledging the various forms it can take and the personal involvement and responsibility of the individual in conflict situations:

“Yes, it changed my perception on violence. Usually, I mean before I did AVP, whenever I was thinking about violence I was thinking of physical violence; I only limited it to physical abuse. Therefore, I never thought of myself in a way when I thought about violence, because I was thinking ‘I don’t hit anyone, so I am not violent.’ But now I have a wider perspective in a way on this issue, I think. I can also be violent with words, or even violent to myself when I am too hard on myself or when I encourage or entertain some bitter feelings which hurt for a long time, not willing to forgive, not willing to talk to the other person. First, perhaps because of misunderstanding he did something I did not like. That changed my perception ... that actually forgiving the other person I am going to do good to myself, not only to the other person.”

(Interview No. 10; male informant, post-training, Kampala)

Several informants described in detail how they experienced this process of sensitisation and how it had changed their view on conflict in general and on their personal role in any conflict. For one former participant this meant a sensitisation for his personal responsibility in conflict situations:

“One thing that I learned is that we try to save ourselves from responsibility. We keep pointing fingers and saying ‘the conflict is on the other side’, but instead we are part and

parcel of the conflict. So I learned that before I start looking around where the conflict is coming from I must learn to look at myself. So taking care of myself to be able to contribute positively.”

(Interview No. 27; male informant, former participant, Fort Portal)

In this sense AVP had taught him a shift in focus on his own role in and contributions towards conflict situations. Through this shift in perspective he felt empowered to take action in conflict situations by starting with himself, because causes of conflict would no longer be seen as exclusively caused by outside factors. This view was shared by another former participant who realised through AVP that he himself had to start performing the change he wanted to see happening in his community:

“I learned that I can be a resource. I can be a resource. I learned that if changes have to take place, it has to begin from me. It is easy to talk about alternatives to violence with other people, but to really change something, I have to begin with myself. And I even see in my real live that it works, that I can give an example to my children ...”

(Interview No. 24; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

Since he had done AVP about two and a half years before the interview he was able to put this knowledge into practice at numerous occasions particularly in the domestic sphere. When asked for concrete examples he could not name one, but stated that AVP in this regard had changed his perception on conflict and his role in conflict.

One participant interviewed several days after his first AVP Basic training explained how AVP helped her to a new approach in analysing conflict; namely, to become aware of personal positions and feeling towards the issues underlying a conflict and the conflict itself, but also to acknowledge the feelings of the opponent. She assumed that this experienced sensitisation would help him to take in the other person’s perspective and would hence allow him to create win-win solutions in future conflict situations:

“What I learned from the AVP training is that conflict is a reality we cannot deny. We only need to identify the problem and also after identifying the problems, I need to identify or realise or recognise the feeling I have. How do I feel about myself so that we can emphasise the importance towards the other person or marrying the other person’s perspective in approached issues, so that I don’t really claim to my position, but also try to see things from the other person’s perspective.”

(Interview No. 10; female informant, post-training, Kampala)

One Member of Parliament explained a similar change in perception with an extraordinary example. He particularly appreciated the concreteness of AVP, which helped him to transform conflicts from an abstract level into practically solvable situations by gaining clarity about the other sides’ interests. This would then allow the conflicting parties to seek for common ground in their positions:

“Affirming people I disagree with is something I came up with. Secondly, the need to focus on interests other than abstract root causes. Those are the two things that I think have changed my viewpoint. So these days when I listen to Mr. Joseph Kony, I don’t ask what the

root causes are; I ask, ‘what does the guy want?’ [...] I cannot deny that the AVP training has contributed to broadening my perspective.”

(Interview No. 23; male informant, former participant, Kampala & Gulu)

Partly, the extremely positive opinions of the participants regarding changes in perceptions on violence and conflict seem contradictory to the doubts and criticism expressed in several interviews on the practical and cultural/contextual applicability.

In sum, most participants stated that AVP had contributed to a change in their personal perceptions on violence and conflict. As the previously cited statements illustrate some people were also able to act according to their AVP-sensitisation towards everyday violence or at least had the plan to do so.

However, the overwhelmingly positive opinions on AVP’s impacts on personal perceptions contrasts with the previously analysed viewpoints on and experiences with AVP’s practical applicability, particularly in cultural and personal terms. There seems to appear a gap between the notions on what participants have learned in the trainings i.e. the changes of mind-set they experienced through their participation on the one hand and their daily practices on the other hand.

This observation points at the missing linkage between theory and practice that has been widely discussed in the critical literature. Several authors, particularly from the ‘Middle Eastern’ school of thought (Salomon 2002; Shapiro 2002), criticised repeatedly the failure of programmes to build a bridge between taught well-meaning theory and its practical applicability.

In the view of some participants AVP managed to forward convincing messages to the participants, which lead to long-term changes on the theoretical/perceptual level. In contrast, for a reasonable number of participants it seemed to lack the provision of practical guidance, which could have helped to bridge the experienced gap between training content and the requirements of reality. McCauley (2002: 247) judges this practice harshly by stating that “such workshops aim to change hearts and minds of participants, but typically offer very little support for behavioural change.”

- AVP and conflict transformation

Building on the described impacts of AVP on personal perceptions towards conflict and violence the logical next step of analysis has to deal with the potential and actual impact of AVP on concrete conflicts. Against the heavily contrasting background of Uganda’s challenging social-political context on the one hand and AVP’s deeply personal orientation on the other hand two inter-related questions arise: first, does AVP have a potential to transform violent conflict in the long-term and second, is this potential limited to conflicts within the personal sphere of the participants, or is it capable of going beyond this limited radius?

In sum: the majority of informants believed in the potential of AVP to contribute to the long-term transformation of violent conflicts – not only within their personal, private sphere. They even assumed that AVP as a programme also could have an impact on socio-political conflicts in Uganda – for different reasons and under specific circumstances.

Asked why they think that AVP has the potential for conflict transformation beyond the personal sphere, people's opinions differed. The majority argued that every conflict is rooted in the use of violence by individuals. If every existing conflict, including political conflict, can be broken down to the individual level AVP's strategy of changing individuals' mindsets would in the long-run logically lead to a general transformation of conflict within the society:

“I mean, we have conflicts here all over. Very often people tend to put the blame on the circumstances, on the political surroundings, or even on their own neighbour. But AVP tells us that every conflict starts within, from an individual. So if we change the mindset and the actions of an individual, we also have the chance to transform conflict. Because if individuals decide not to fight anymore, who is then going to fight? The conflict is finished and there is no one to blame anymore.”

(Interview No. 22; male informant, former participant, Soroti)

Several informants from different research locations, i.e. both conflict-affected and peaceful regions shared this positive view of AVP's potential for conflict transformation, but acknowledged the fact that it might take a long time until profound change was really visible. A number of people also referred to the dimension of target-groups. For them the major point of importance was whom to address with AVP. Based on the assumption that also political conflict is also caused by individuals, they supposed that if AVP would target those involved in the cause of conflicts it would also be successful in contributing to their transformation:

“It is a matter of whom you target. I mean, also political conflict is made by people, right? It is always individuals using violence to solve conflicts, sometimes small-scale, sometimes large-scale. So these people should be targeted, and then conflict will diminish by the time. But it takes long, I suppose.”

(Interview No. 25; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

One Member of Parliament saw the greatest potential of AVP in its ability to change general perceptions towards violence. In reference to the prevalence of violence in all social spheres in Uganda, including the highly political level, he assumed that AVP could contribute to an overall reduction of violence and thus to the long-term transformation of all kind of conflicts:

“I believe AVP has the potential for really transforming conflicts, because it targets those who are involved. It starts with the assumption that conflict is part of life, but what we want to avoid is violence. So I think we have a critical mass of people who are committed to violence in Uganda. Even in the last elections you see most people are interested in associating with soldiers, that's why Dr. Besigye got a lot of support because people believe, he is capable of killing and shooting, he is a soldier, so he is the best alternative to Museveni.

Meanwhile people who are peaceful and committed to non-violence are seen as weak and so on. So the AVP programme is highly relevant in the Ugandan society. To lead to shift in this addiction to violence, by Ugandan society. In Uganda people think violence works, so it must be the best way. So it will take many years for people to mentally change and embrace non-violent alternatives.”

(Interview No. 23; male informant, former participant, Kampala & Gulu)

Another reason mentioned in this context was the simplicity of AVP, which makes it according to one informant interviewed after his first AVP training very easy to apply. Based on the fact that AVP trainings often gather people from different regions and backgrounds he assumed that this would have a multiplying effect also in relation to conflict transformation. Ideally, people who would go back to their region of origin would be able to apply AVP, put it forward and hence contribute to a reduction of conflict:

“I think the trainings have quite a lot of potential for conflict transformation in Uganda. I mean, first, it is very simple and practical. If everyone would always do what is told in AVP, we would not have the problems that we have right now in our country. Then second, the training is attended by people from all over the place. The people come from different regions and bring their knowledge back to these regions. I am sure, the knowledge spread in the different regions will be able to transform, and then a better society will come up and it will definitely reduce conflict in the region. So as we continue having more people trained, then we are transforming the whole society.”

(Interview No. 9; female informant, post-training, Kampala)

This argument was backed by a similar statement of a former participant from Soroti, who assumed that AVP could contribute to large-scale conflict transformation within the Ugandan society if it could manage to address more people:

“One element of AVP is that we have to make the conflict constructive, non-violent. Now, the more people get involved in AVP training, they are likely to turn the violent situation into a non-violent situation. And turn conflicts into constructive conflicts. So if I imagine that everybody in Uganda would take part in AVP, than the conflicts would come to an end. Then people would begin to focus and see the situation differently. They would then turn the non-constructive conflict, the violence, into a constructive conflict situation.”

(Interview No. 22; male informant, former participant, Soroti)

In his statement he touches upon a final important point raised by several informants, namely the already discussed changes in perceptions on violence and conflict initiated by AVP, as acknowledged by the huge majority of informants. In his view the underlying problem was not the fact that conflicts existed, but that many conflicts in Uganda on different levels are expressed violently and non-constructively. By transforming the mind-sets and perceptions of violence of as many people as possible, AVP could hence contribute to a general reduction in the use of violence and destructive conflicts. This effect is illustrated by a practical example given by a community worker from Gulu district:

“That is what I have been doing with them, I have been moving with them from camp to camp. Sometimes, after we have been training them, they wanted to go and talk to the communities. So what they have learned is, that they are not only a rebel, that they can

change. From a rebel I can be a peace-builder, change can happen. Because when you talk to the community, and those people they are just violent. They are convinced that there is only violence in them. But then it will be good if the rebels can convince them of the opposite, they can change and then go to communities and show them the change. This is hard work, but it can happen, it is possible. That is something which I have got during the training.”

(Interview No. 26; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

This extremely positive and outstanding experience was contradicted by several statements, which were rather critical towards the impacts AVP could have on conflicts going beyond the personal, individual sphere. In their argumentation they were strongly in line with the ‘Middle-Eastern’ and ‘Southern’ school of thought in this thesis presented as part of the theoretical foundations of peace education. Acknowledging the highly political nature of peace education and its many socio-political influence factors they came to the conclusion that the conflicts and inequalities that needed to be addressed go far beyond the capabilities of a workshop programme like AVP:

“We first have to see where these conflicts in our country come from. There is the issue of leadership, there is the issue of poverty. There is the issue of structural violence. All this is not addressed by a small training like AVP. That also needs to be taken into consideration. In order to resolve our conflicts.”

(Interview No. 14; male informant, trainer, Kampala)

“There is one major problem like for the case of Northern Uganda. It is very difficult to address such a complicated situation; you actually need the military to handle that, not only trainings. [...] There are so many issues which go beyond our own capacities. There are conflicts that are beyond my means, beyond the means of ordinary people. Like the political conflicts, or like war. That has to be addressed by the military, by the politicians, by the president or by the police, I think we cannot do much about this. [...] So what I wanted to say is, though we can learn things from AVP; there is a limit. There are so many things, that go beyond the sphere of AVP, that cannot be addressed easily, like structural violence, for example, or the conflict here in the North, or the problems that we have with our police forces, who are very violent.”

(Interview No. 26; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

According to these critics the challenges and obstacles Uganda is presently facing cannot to be solely addressed by peace education programmes like AVP. Profound and highly political issues like the problem of poor leadership, poverty and a strong legacy of violence in all sectors of society, including military forces, might indeed require as Bar-Tal (2002: 34) states “a wider social-campaign”.

In sum, it can be said that the optimistic perceptions of AVP’s potential for conflict transformation on a large scale were accompanied by several big ‘buts’. Consciously or unconsciously, many informants talked about possible future scenarios for AVP, and included different pre-conditions that need to be fulfilled in order to make AVP successful in its ambitious aim of large scale conflict transformation. Several major issues and challenges people experience in Uganda seem to go beyond the capacities of a programme like AVP. This very important

point will be further discussed in the presentation of the major research findings in chapter 6.

- AVP and ethnic division

One positive aspect of AVP, which is actually not included in the original goals and visions of AVP, but has been brought up by many former participants from all research locations, is its perceived contribution to overcoming ethnic division. Many primarily Middle-Eastern thinkers and peace educationalists (Salomon 2003, 2002; Salomon & Nevo 2002) have defined peace education as a means to reflect on existing perceptions of ‘the other’, and have acknowledged the capacities some programmes have to challenge and influence existing narratives. The fact that they met and learned together with people from different regions and diverse tribal origins within their AVP training(s) was strongly appreciated by the majority of informants. They considered this as one of their major learning experiences and were convinced that it had helped them to reflect on existing perceptions of other tribes and to reduce ethnically based prejudice:

“I will give you an example: I come from a place where there is tribal conflict and there is a lot of racial clashes. And I must admit that I myself I thought that’s how it should be. This is probably because I grew up knowing it that way. For example in Ntoro kingdom there are quite a number of tribes like the Bamba, Bakonjo and these two tribes are traditionally referred to or taken to be inferior to an extent that if you called me a Mukonjo I would see that as an insult. And I used to think it should be like that, but now I realised that we are all human beings. I have learned from them just like they learned from us. This is something AVP also teaches us, not only with the content, but also because it brings together different people from different groups.”

(Interview No. 12; male informant, former participant, Kampala)

“We had other ladies from the East of this country. And you know, they had a lot of experience they were sharing with us. And that kind of interaction ... and then you get impressions beyond your region. So the other members, my fellow participants come from various backgrounds. Acting, sharing, regarding different conflict experiences from all the different backgrounds on these issues ... so that sharing of experience and interaction was very important to me.”

(Interview No. 28; male informant, former participant, Fort Portal)

One very experienced trainer who has conducted numerous AVP workshops in many parts of the country shared two experiences which illustrated the impact common participation in AVP obviously can have on participants from another point of view:

“At the end of 2003 we went and trained in West Nile and what happened is that when we went there the participants were former rebels – they are a little bit older people, and mature people. They saw us as young people. They also saw us as people who looked more like people from Buganda and they felt we could not understand. These were things they told us in the end. They were telling us how we were coming from the other part of the country and so on. They were like: ‘we thought you wouldn’t understand, but we are really surprised’. And most of them still keep in contact. [...] Also in the West, we went to Mbarara and still

there was that kind of reaction, someone coming from the other part of the country and so on and so on. But eventually after few days you find that is different.”

(Interview No. 14; male informant, trainer, Kampala)

In these experienced cases he was the one coming from another, very privileged part of the country into regions heavily affected by poverty and conflict. Within several days of shared time and activities within the AVP framework, ethnicity-based prejudices and constraints could be overcome and the participants developed the feeling that the trainers had some understanding for their situation, even though the trainer might not share these experiences in his/her normal life. In the first example described, the fact that both sides still keep in frequent contact indicates that this positive experience was able to extend even beyond the safe, closed workshop sphere.

An important point was stressed by one informant interviewed shortly after his first AVP training. He referred to the fact that even though AVP obviously for many Ugandan participants had the effect of questioning ethnicity-based positions it did not do so intentionally. The shared experience by individuals from different ethnical backgrounds, and the overcoming of ethnic prejudices, in his view seemed to be rather coincidental side-effects than intended and initiated learning experiences.

In order to fully benefit from its potential to bring different groups together and initiate reflection processes on ethnic division, this aspect of AVP should according to him be acknowledged and purposefully used:

“Trainings like this one could really help to unite us as one people. I mean, in this workshop, there were people from all over the place, from many different communities and many different tribes. I think there could be established a link by approaching it from the point of view of what unites us all. But it has to be a topic, we have to discuss that openly, I think. It is maybe not enough just to share this training experience; maybe the training itself could focus more on the unity aspect. That would be really helpful for this context.”

(Interview No. 10; female informant, post-training, Kampala)

In doing this AVP could maximise its capacities in contributing to overcome ethnic division and enhancing unity between different ethnic groups in Uganda.

- AVP and empowerment/sustainability

As has been illustrated in the theoretical framework of this thesis it is assumed that peace education requires people to question the use of force in human affairs and provides options to create a less violent world, employing educational strategies to develop a peace consciousness that will help to construct a world that does not rely on violence to resolve human conflict (Harris 2003: 84). Peace education at its best means to ‘empower’ people to develop their own capacities to become active and effective citizens and agents of change – the change they want to see happening in their environment.

Or, as Young (in Harris 2003: 84) puts it: “Peace education has to that extent to be an empowering process – whether in a classroom or in the community; those who press for peace education have the responsibility of showing that ordinary people, children or adults, can do something effective about the problems that are raised – that they are problems created by human beings and can now be solved by them.”

AVP as a training system is designed to be ‘self-sustainable’. After three workshops of several days’ length, participants should ideally be enabled and equipped with the required skills to forward their knowledge to other people and hence multiply it. This system is based on a strong belief in the participants’ ability to implement such ‘doubled’ empowerment processes. In order to be able to forward what they have learned to others, participants need to have internalised not only the content, but also need to have the pedagogical, social and communication skills to train others.

A model developed by Harris & Morrison (2003: 92) suggests a democratic group setting, where students and teachers, participants and trainers are equals and learning is based on mutual dialogue. In this model the teacher/trainer serves more as a kind of ‘midwife’, helping the students give birth to their own ideas and inclinations:

“You know in class you just do theory, but the workshop really gave me the opportunity to see that I have an important role to play in society. We are really needed in this society. So, I learnt the transforming role and the practical bit of the course.”

(Interview No. 8; male informant, post-training, Kampala)

“I have learned a lot for example to approach conflicts differently and how I can bring non-violence to my community. And I learned a lot from those I attended with. I liked that it is always about you and what you personally can do to change the conflict.”

(Interview No. 12; female informant, former participant, Kampala)

“To me the intention behind the training is to empower ourselves to know that we have potential for violence, but we also have potential for non-violence. And it is only when we are aware of it that we can see the difference that is between the potential of being violent and the potential of being non-violent. We can then be able to approach conflicts non-violently or change our attitude towards violent conflicts.”

(Interview No. 14; male informant, trainer, Kampala)

In particular regarding the perceptions of my informants on the participatory approach and methods AVP can be understood as reflecting this model. An overwhelming majority of informants acknowledged the personally empowering effect of their AVP training(s):

“Personally I think AVP did quite a lot to me. Personally I used to be a very shy person, but eventually after AVP it became easier for me to share. I could not believe I could stand before people and talk to them. But now I train and I have trained many people. It has built my confidence and that was after the AVP course.”

(Interview No. 14; male informant, trainer, Kampala)

“I just wanted to have the position of ‘owning’ the activity. And I own it, I am quite sure.”

(Interview No. 22; male informant, former participant, Soroti)

Being supposed to function as ‘midwives’ to participants’ own ideas and solutions is a very challenging task after a preparation phase of ‘only’ three workshops. It is likely, that not everyone feels sufficiently prepared to train others after completion of the ToT workshop. Furthermore, the personal abilities and the talent of individuals to ‘teach’ might differ tremendously – everyone can lecture something, but fulfilling the role of a teacher as an ‘enabler’ remains the ultimate challenge.

How does the second element of this ‘doubled’ empowerment process, the training of others allowing for the self-sustainability of AVP, apply in practice? The underlying idea of the system seems to be well-regarded and appreciated – most informants named this as one of the positive features of AVP. They stated that along with its simplicity and the easy-to-implement activities it could be facilitated by everyone who has completed all three levels and hence multiplied within the communities. Everyone I interviewed immediately after his or her AVP training felt sufficiently prepared to function as a ‘multiplier’:

“I for one am ready to be used, am ready to go down and train and I am trying to find a way, what way I will see. Will I get the funding? That is the challenge now, how to call the people to come for the workshop is my problem. So in other words I am incapacitated in terms of funding and so forth. But it is a good project, a project that can and should be implemented by all loving citizens of peace.”

(Interview No. 11; male participant, post-training, Kampala)

The overall optimism of participants interviewed right after training about their ability to forward AVP knowledge was contradicted by many former participants, whose own training was between several months and years ago. These doubts about the practicability of the self-sustaining AVP system were almost exclusively raised by informants outside of Kampala. In this regard, the findings concerning the impacts of AVP on empowerment processes are closely related to the perceived level of practical and cultural applicability. Based on different reasons they acknowledged the idea behind the system, but considered the efforts as still too little to have any further impact:

“The efforts are still too little to have further impact. By this I do not only mean money, but also for instance training materials. If more people could be trained, if this knowledge could be transferred to other people ... now we have this knowledge, but if you don’t give it out it does not mean anything. That is a problem I think.”

(Interview No. 26; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

“Maybe it is limited in nature. We were made to do little trainings within the training. But the gap is ... I would love to see some additional training done, which can empower somebody, that he can even go beyond this borders. [...] Ok, we have the knowledge and skills, but there is no direction showing you that there is an opportunity you can move back to do that.”

(Interview No. 27; male informant, former participant, Fort Portal)

In their descriptions coming close to the picture of a 'black box' in which AVP knowledge disappears before it can be forwarded to the rural communities, some former participants presented a rather discouraging picture of the multiplication of AVP through decentralised trainings:

“What I am wondering is, there are people who have been doing all three levels of AVP. If I remember right, they should now be able to train other people by themselves. This system is great in theory, because it enables us to bring the knowledge forward, to spread what we have learned. But actually, I don't see that happening. I have not heard of any person who is an AVP trainer and has done trainings here. The people who organised the AVP trainings here in the prison, they were also from Kampala. If we could really use our knowledge to train others in AVP, it would be better.”

(Interview No. 25; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

The reasons for the failure to implement trainings and forward the knowledge in rural areas varied between the informants. Two former participants from Gulu had the impression that AVP efforts were so far focused on Kampala and its surroundings; a region which is calm and prosperous in comparison to other parts of Uganda, and hence does not present the most urgent need for non-violence training. Moreover, they felt that AVP was not fully exploiting its capacities due to focusing on the 'wrong' people; those who could have an influence on conflicts on the local level, e.g. village leaders and elders, were in their view not sufficiently addressed:

“I don't know if there is the opportunity for the AVP organisers to go down to some conflict communities, like Gulu, or Kitgum or ... and sit with the district authority. Maybe the other end is ... ah ... a little bit more NGO orientation. We need the participation, and then ... the government, members of the government, stakeholders. This is because of ... that is where the power and authority lies! I can go for instance to a NGO and say “AVP, AVP ...” but what the district leader will say about AVP ... will finally have far more relevance for the situation in Uganda.”

(Interview No. 24; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

“I mean, this AVP training, so far it has not trained very many people. It is good what they have done, but that is not enough. Why are these efforts always limited to Kampala? There are also leadership problems on lower levels, there are district leaders, village leaders, community leaders ... all these people need AVP training as well. Sometimes I think it is not necessary to blow horns for whatever you have done. It sounds great to say 'we have trained parliamentarians'. But people here, they don't hear about it, it is too far away of them. Even a principal here might not be aware of it. It has to go beyond and it has to be brought to the different levels, to make people aware of it. There are leaders here as well that need to be targeted. If it is only far away in Kampala it will not resolve our problems here, this AVP.”

(Interview No. 25; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

Two other statements refer to the unwillingness or inability of former participants to go to the communities in order to decentralise training efforts on the one hand, and the high expectations of potential participants on the other hand, as obstacles towards a decentralisation of training efforts:

“AVP is good, but not known in Uganda. To people who are engaged in it, maybe, but not to the many who really need this kind of training. So we have to make it known, make it

known. It should be extended to all the categories of participants, to all who may not have heard about it yet. There is a meeting culture in our culture here. We should use this, we should call people together and expect them to come and to contribute. But instead very often they are spoiled, if you call them, they expect a lot. They expect you to pay for their accommodation; they want you to give them an allowance. They actually want more than they are willing to give themselves. This is not the right way to do it. It should be kept simple, and people should lower their expectations. That would make it better working. Otherwise we will need a lot of resources, it will be very costly. And we will always keep waiting for the funds to pay for that. But that makes us dependent on donors. We should stay independent, and keep it simple. It is a very simple programme, and we should make use of it.”

(Interview No. 25; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

“There are very few people who are doing this, I think they are not there. At least in the North, there is enough done yet. In one training you can maybe gather five people from one district, but you would need so many more, maybe hundred or even more in order to cover a whole district. And then also the problem that some people who do trainings maybe don't want to go to the communities to forward the knowledge. That is the problem, you see. Last week I have been to one community not far from here, and the week before in another. I think it is important to go to the communities, instead of calling them. Because if you invite them, it will be far more expensive, and the number of people you can invite is very limited. But if you would go to the communities you could address so many more, it would be more efficient. So if they could improve in those areas, that would be great. This would mean to bring it closer to the people and to reach more.”

(Interview No. 26; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

Against the background of the many advantages of decentralised trainings mentioned by the former participants the urging question is: why do the newly trained facilitators not feel capable of implementing trainings themselves? The most often mentioned reason was by far a perceived lack of support:

“There needs to be some input into the communities, that other people can benefit from it as well. You know, actually we would have plenty of people to do it. But maybe we need more support, you know, and that kind of support would certainly help to increase the effectiveness.”

(Interview No. 27; male informant, former participant, Fort Portal)

Besides the perceived need for financial resources and the provision of training materials one former participant suggested organising a follow-up to the trainings in some form. He considered constant training as inevitable, in order to keep the knowledge fresh and to be able to apply it beyond a limited period of time after the training:

“They need to be strengthened. After doing the training? What happens next? What is the mechanism for follow-up? Every trained person needs more warm-up! [...] as for example, being a soldier. It is not a matter of the uniform, but of the every-day skills, that you train and practise continuously.”

(Interview No. 24; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

This view was supported by the reports of all trainers who without exception stated that the constant repetition of AVP through their activities as trainers was their key to a personal development process. They vividly described how every

training they facilitated for others had helped them to further internalise the AVP knowledge and skills.

In this sense Harris & Morrisons' (2003) description of empowerment as a long-term educational process comes close to the experiences of AVP alumni of different levels and from different areas, which obviously differ widely. At one extreme we find those from Kampala, who have regular opportunities to train others supervised by experienced co-trainers, because they are invited by the 'Civil Peace Service Project' to facilitate trainings. Logically they have far more chances for active revision of AVP knowledge and hence view themselves as rather advanced in their personal empowerment process. At the other extreme we find people facing far heavier demands and challenges in their region of origin where they want to forward the knowledge. The majority of this group does positively acknowledge an individual empowerment process to a certain extent, but in most cases is not able to experience the second part of it, namely forwarding the knowledge to others and hence sustaining it.

- AVP and gender relations/the domestic sphere

Whether observing distant countries or our own neighbourhoods, the public's eye easily focuses on the obviously dramatic and tragic while overlooking the rather mundane and common. When I started reading about Uganda and researching on the Ugandan context with regard to conflicts and violence, I actually had in mind the political sphere touched upon in numerous policy papers and academic articles published in recent times.

However, during my research period I was confronted with another form of violence, which is extremely wide-spread within the Ugandan society: the issue of domestic or gender-based violence. The majority of woman I interviewed for my study reported about experiences of violence, that can be included under this term; be it that they shared personal experiences of abuse by their husbands/male partners, or that they reflected on patterns of patriarchal hierarchy within their society. Gender relations was also among the major topics that came up in the observed AVP trainings. When participants were asked to perform role plays, household scenes or situations between couples were by far the most frequently chosen subject.

Despite their obvious relevance for the 'state of peace' within societies, gender relations are an under-regarded aspect of peace education. It is hard to find any literature explicitly referring to this issue, no matter in which cultural context the work of educationalists and their publications are embedded. Moreover, hardly any peace education programme seems to emphasise this matter. AVP is partly an exception in this regard. In the original AVP structure gender aspects are taken into account in the sense that the importance of gender-balanced facilitator

teams is underlined. Furthermore, gender relations are included in the manuals as one suggested topic that could be worked on within a training. In the last instance, it is up to the trainers themselves and the priorities set by the participants as to whether they choose gender relations as their focus topic.

Looked at with a gender perspective, two aspects turned out to be of specific interest in the Ugandan context: first, the impacts of AVP on participants' own gender-sensitivity as perceived by the informants; and second, the level of gender-sensitivity modelled by AVP itself in the Ugandan context.

A number of informants referred to the aspect of gender within their responses. Some saw AVP's strongest potential for impact in the sphere of gender-relations and within the wider domestic sphere. Interestingly, this was expressed both by participants interviewed before their first training who hoped that gender aspects would be touched upon, and also by informants who really have experienced impacts on their gender perceptions through AVP:

"I see the potential for gender relations, though it may take quite some time, because it [the role of women in the Ugandan society] is so much emphasised on determination and perseverance, and not giving up that attitude. I think if you approach it from that point of view, however difficult it may be, but I believe after some point in time it will have the impact, especially on the young generations. So the young generations should adopt some of the skills to share the experience."

(Interview No. 7, male informant, pre-training, Kampala)

Strikingly, the great majority of those who experienced AVP as sensitising them on gender-relations in general, and gender-based and domestic violence in particular, were male participants. About two thirds of all male former participants from all research regions talked about personal reflection processes on gender relations initiated by AVP and changes in their behaviour towards their wives and children after their participation in the training. In most cases, they illustrated this observation by giving concrete examples from the household sphere:

"Like gender sensitivity – you can say about our society that men are held in high esteem, that when men are talking women are really not supposed to disturb. So that is if they are talking they are disturbing. That is a social kind of background. So that we all respect each other regardless of our social, economical, or political background. Be it men, women or children. You find that often parents, or better men like me suppress children, suppress their wives and they forget that this is the beginning of conflicts. So I learned to humble myself, to be always open for learning also at home [...] I am not always the one who is right [...] so I cherish that aspect of learning."

(Interview No. 27; male informant, former participant, Fort Portal)

"Mhh ... the knowledge ... I have used ... I use it quite often for my family, it helped me to sort out difficulties in the family, [...] I found it is a ... new attitude that I have approached through AVP, so I think it has been very useful. [...] This is the field where I apply it most and also my trainings had a focus on domestic conflicts, because a conflict begins from self, but I think that is one of the major things that we learned. There are many conflicts in the community, and the size of the community keeps on increasing and therefore also the

magnitude of the conflict. And other, it was very important to look at the conflict on the family level. That is why I am saying that, it has been useful on the family-level.”

(Interview No. 22; male informant, former participant, Soroti)

“There is a level of disobedience with children. I think the level of ... raise enough the voice ... is reduced, you know the times where you shout at them and ask them something to do. So that is something ... I think I changed the process myself.”

(Interview No. 24; male informant, former participant, Gulu)

“For instance in the family sphere, Very often, when you are confronted with naughty behaviour of your child you are tempted to easily loose patience and become loud and so on. But now I manage to breathe first, to think twice, and then to react more patient and less aggressive. This helps the whole family sphere, there is more peace in the house now.”

(Interview No. 15; male informant, former participant, Kampala)

One trainer described very impressively how the stories of the female participants, who presented violent domestic experiences from their perspective, had initiated learning processes within himself and made him question previous personal assumptions:

“Real life situations were brought up for instance the issue of domestic violence between a man and his wife. Actually, I have to admit that I was even surprised. I mean, I knew that this is an issue in some families, but I did not expect that it is happening in actually so many families. That was a kind of eye-opener to me. Also, that there are many situations where the man maybe does not really know that he is using violence. For me as a man I have to say it was interesting to hear the experiences and perspectives of these women. Sometimes I did not expect that they would see it this way ... that they feel this is violent, whereas someone maybe thinks it is just normal. [...] at some point after the involvement in a role play about violence between a man and his wife we were asked to give our views on how we would approach such a conflict. That was very practical, because it was someone’s real life experience.”

(Interview No. 14; male informant, trainer, Kampala)

Obviously, in the experience of numerous informants AVP provided a space for ‘gender-exchange’ and in doing so enhanced learning experiences in a secure setting, that would maybe not have taken place in the normal interaction between the sexes. In daily life, gender relations and hierarchies, the treatment of women and children was, according to the informants, not really questioned. Within AVP they had the chance to listen to the ‘other side’ and – far away from their normal environment, with support from trainers and other like-minded participants – to reflect on and question viewpoints they had so far taken for granted as ‘normal’.

These fundamental processes of attitudinal change obviously do not happen automatically. All participants who reported about AVP’s impacts on their perceptions towards gender and domestic issues pointed out that these learning experiences were initiated through AVP sessions explicitly dedicated to these topics and in particular through specific activities they performed. Since the AVP training programme, i.e. the specific topics touched upon as a focus are decided by participants and trainers together, it is in their interests if gender-issues are

part of the content. One female participant suggested that gender issues should be a compulsory topic in the Ugandan context:

“There is one thing I have been missing. I would have loved to learn about gender and violence, because there is a lot of gender-based violence in our society. In most conflicts women suffer the most, especially here in our country where we have a lot of gender imbalance. They should do this in every AVP training, because it is so important. I would have loved to try and even prevent it, on how to react in a situation where violence is based on gender. Often this exposure to violence is because women are the ones who have to look for food during war or cook while men go off to fight. And women are often picked during armed conflict.”

(Interview No. 16; female informant, former participant, Kampala)

As has been briefly touched upon in the sub-section about popular AVP activities, the exercise most often referred to as raising awareness for gender sensitivity was the role-play. Through acting scenes between men and women and family situations, participants got the chance to try new approaches and behaviours.

Despite the described impact of role-plays it also seemed to depend strongly on the ability of the individual trainers how the experience was later on evaluated and used as a basis for further discussion. All informants who referred to the role-plays positively mentioned how their experiences during these activities were used as a basis for discussion and how their trainers provided support in relating them to real life experiences, which would help them to draw conclusions and memorise possible solution strategies for future situations.

During the training I observed in Soroti performances were interrupted repeatedly or stopped without any obvious reason and conclusions almost exclusively drawn by the facilitators, who presented a very one-sided perspective on the performed situation. The play in question showed a family situation, where the father became an alcoholic and would beat his wife and children. When the neighbours recognised that he was drinking he felt so ashamed that he wanted to move away against the will of his spouse. A conflict situation arose. The female trainer responsible for guiding the group through the activity drew the conclusion that if the family would have done what the father as the head of the household wanted there would not have been a conflict.

This example provides deep insights into traditional gender-relations in rural Ugandan societies which profoundly clash with ‘Western’ notions of emancipation and my personal viewpoints as a young Western woman. In this specific case the role-play was rather used to confirm the status quo, rather than to initiate critical reflection processes.

One female informant from Soroti raised the important question if AVP in its existing form was at all gender sensitive in the Ugandan context. In her view, the AVP approach of requiring three consecutive training days, and the fact that both the team of trainers and the participants themselves were mixed-sex, would lead

to the exclusion of women in the rural, very traditional settings of Uganda. As an example she named neighbouring communities in the Karamoja region. Men would not allow their wives to travel to a three day training leaving their household duties alone. Moreover, the fact that men were present would cause suspicion and be another reason to prevent their wives from participating. Indeed, in the AVP training I observed in Soroti the huge majority of participants were men. The trainers backed up this observation, stating that it was always difficult to invite women to participate in AVP trainings in rural areas. They stated that so far no one had ever questioned the reasons for this – they assumed that this was a result of the traditional societal order which they perceived as very hard to change.

Conclusions and recommendations

In this final chapter of my thesis I will close the circle by coming back to the starting point of my study, by summarising the answer to the main research question:

How do the participants of the 'AVP' trainings evaluate the programmes' impacts on their perceptions and practices and on the socio-political context in Uganda?

which is derived from the responses of my informants, who willingly shared their most personal feelings and perceptions with me and hence made this study possible. Their answers in most cases showed that a clear-cut distinction between comments and criticism on AVP on the one hand and suggestions for change and further development of AVP in Uganda on the other hand is almost impossible. Most people I spoke to expressed critical remarks by pointing at what could and should be maintained, improved or changed completely. Therefore, I will follow the example of my informants and combine both aspects in one sub-chapter in order to avoid repetition.

Since peace education as a discipline is still in a very early stage of development in Uganda, as has been described in the theoretical framework of this thesis, this study can provide valuable insights and 'lessons learned' for the development of other programmes in the Ugandan context. This became particularly clear from the responses I received to the favourite question of most informants: "Imagine you were asked to design a peace education programme concept for the Ugandan context [...]." Therefore, a second sub-chapter will comprise recommendations for general peace education development in Uganda. Finally, I will conclude this thesis by giving some recommendations for further research in the field of peace education and its effectiveness.

Main research findings and recommendations for AVP in Uganda

In reference to the research question this study tries to answer the main findings are divided in three categories, namely impacts on personal perceptions, impacts on personal practices and in a wider sense impacts on the socio-political context in Uganda. These will be discussed in separate sub-chapters. A fourth sub-chapter will be dedicated to the discussion of existing limitations and obstacles causing these limitations. Based on the analysis of these factors in a second step (fifth sub-chapter), recommendations for improvement of AVP in Uganda will be formulated.

AVP's impacts on personal perceptions

The findings of this study reveal that AVP in Uganda according to its participants is a peace education programme which has significant impacts on their personal perceptions in several respects.

First, the majority of participants regardless of origin and personal conflict experiences attest AVP impacts on their personal perceptions on violence and conflict. These impacts are recognisable in a general raise of awareness towards the use of violence in its various manifestations in every-day life. Participation in AVP initiated reflection processes on their personal use of violence in different situations and made them aware of forms of violence in the personal interaction between human beings that they had not been aware of before their participation. Furthermore, AVP made them aware of the fact that in many cases conflicts, particularly those taking place in the personal sphere are nothing that just 'happens', but that they have an active influence on the course of a situation.

Therefore, AVP raised the awareness of many participants towards their own capacities for conflict transformation. In some cases, however, it made them also aware of limitations of their personal influence regarding factors which were perceived as going beyond the personal sphere, namely long-term political conflict, problems arising from poor political leadership, fundamental injustices such as poverty and the general state of human rights within the Ugandan society. This counts particular for participants from marginalised, conflict-affected regions in the North and East of the country. In this regard, some participants stated an increased awareness for deep-rooted, structural violence stimulated through their participation in AVP.

Second, participation in AVP trainings is by many participants perceived as having a positive impact on ethnic division within Uganda. By providing a secure space for interaction between members of different regions and ethnic groups, it seems to contribute to overcoming ethnicity-based prejudices and can stimulate relationships between different groups. In some cases these relationships were described as long-term – initiated within an AVP training that was jointly

participated. However, this impact seems to be a positive, but unintended side-effect and is not yet purposefully stimulated through e.g. particular activities or the open thematising of resentments between different groups or these personal processes.

Third, many participants perceived a strong impact of AVP on personal empowerment processes. The participation in AVP caused an increased self-esteem, stimulated by the participatory nature of the training and its affirmative elements. It helped them to become aware of the important role they play in society and provided them with communication and other personal skills. These were by many perceived as useful and helped them to transfer what they had learned in AVP trainings into daily practices.

However, empowerment was rather perceived as related to the private capacities of the individual and the personal sphere. Due to the non-political nature of AVP very few participants referred to impacts in terms of political empowerment, nor did they build up the link between personal empowerment and the 'politisisation of the individual' in the Arendtian tradition of citizenship education.

Fourth, a finding not surprising against the background of AVP's strong focus on the personal sphere, but striking in the light of the overall societal context in Uganda is the fact that the majority of male participants regardless their origin attested AVP a strong impact on their gender-sensitivity. In those cases where gender-issues were obviously problematised within AVP Trainings they seemed to have the capacity to stimulate reflection processes on personal positions and perceptions on gender realities and inequalities. Those male participants who referred to an increased personal awareness towards existing gender relations and hierarchies viewed this as their major learning effect. This included also the aspect of domestic issues and relations in general, e.g. the interaction between fathers and their children.

All spheres of impact mentioned by the participants were seen as long-term processes. Even though several participants reported about personal 'aha' moments, real learning effects would require time and even more frequent repetition. In this sense it is not surprising that the more AVP trainings participants had joined the stronger were the learning processes they described. This became particularly clear in the interviews with trainers, who very frequently repeated their AVP knowledge and skills by training others.

AVP's impacts on personal practices

Despite the overall very positive, optimistic opinions about AVP's impacts on personal perceptions its impacts on the practices of the participants were for several reasons generally viewed as rather limited. One exception was seen in the described impacts of AVP on the domestic sphere, where several former partici-

pants had observed changes in personal behaviour in conflict situations with e.g. their partner or their children. Overall, participants seemed to have difficulties to transfer what they had learned in AVP trainings into practice. Despite their conviction of the 'good' in AVP and their will to practise what they had learned, many participants either stated openly that they could not manage to apply their skills or could, when they were asked for concrete examples for behavioural change not refer to any situation they had experienced.

There are several reasons for the significant shortcomings in AVP's practical applicability. The major reason was seen in the fact that AVP is a concept which was not developed in Uganda, but in the USA, hence shaped by a very different cultural and socio-political context. The huge majority of participants perceived it therefore as mechanical and static and not sufficiently suitable for the Ugandan context. Whereas this point of criticism was raised by people from both urban and rural, conflict and non-conflict affected regions, the shortcomings proved to be more significant in the latter. Many people from and working in rural communities felt that AVP failed to take personal, local experiences into account. From various responses it became clear that AVP does not only lack relation to the Ugandan context, but that the experiences from the informants depending on their specific background were so different, that they would actually demand regional, if not community reference.

In both categories, practical and cultural applicability, it turned out that it obviously depended strongly on the personal abilities of the individual trainer in how far he or she was able to relate AVP content to the specific local setting people came from or in which the training was taking place. There seemed to be significant differences in how far trainers were able to adjust AVP content, methods and activities and in how far they were hence able to give meaning to the different elements.

Other challenges and obstacles towards the effective application of AVP were e.g. seen in its ignorance towards concrete political or large-scale conflict issues, its lack of gender-sensitivity in specific settings (e.g. very traditional rural areas), its general 'Westernness' and its overall format.

The latter refers particularly to the fact that AVP is a workshop programme and provides a maximum of three training blocks of several sessions to its participants. This was perceived as not enough to enhance fundamental change of practices. Many informants stated that they would need frequent training and practice in order to be able to really practise AVP techniques in every-day life. This again counts particularly for participants from rural and conflict-affected areas, who felt not sufficiently prepared for addressing the heavy demands of their regions of origin and hence failed in many cases to forward AVP knowledge to other members of their communities.

AVP's impacts on the socio-political context in Uganda

Whereas the previously discussed impacts of AVP participation on certain personal perceptions are widely acknowledged, the long-term impacts of personal changes on the general socio-political context in Uganda are heavily debated and overall rather regarded as limited to certain areas.

On the one hand it was widely assumed that conflict of any nature and scale is performed by individuals and that consequently individual change would form the basis for impact on the conflictual socio-political landscape on the long-term. In reference to AVP's impacts on personal perceptions it was thus acknowledged that individual changes of mind-set regarding the use of violence in general, ethnic prejudice, empowerment and gender-sensitivity could have positive long-term effects on the overall social climate within communities, regions and the country as a whole.

On the other hand, the majority of participants were convinced that the capacities of individuals to impact conflicts going beyond the personal sphere were limited and depending on numerous factors and pre-conditions. As the four major factors that could not be addressed by AVP in its existing form and hence not be influenced, informants identified the issues of poor political leadership/weak governance in basically all spheres and levels of society, large-scale political conflicts as the one in Northern Uganda between the government and the LRA, poverty as the most present form of structural violence in all its manifestations, and the general state of human rights within Uganda. The latter also included the unawareness of people towards their most basic, fundamental rights; which they could therefore also not claim.

Limitations were not only seen in outside-factors going beyond the influence sphere of AVP. During the interviews and focus group discussions numerous characteristics and shortcomings of AVP's framework were identified, which were regarded as obstacles towards a stronger impact within the Ugandan context. These will be discussed in detail within the following sub-chapter.

Limitations and obstacles towards AVP's impacts

Numerous factors and characteristics were identified as limiting AVP's impacts both on the personal and societal level. The most important aspect in this regard is again the perceived inappropriateness of significant parts of its content. In recognition of the facts that AVP is a programme designed and developed in the United States and that adjustments – if at all – are only made by the trainers themselves on an ad-hoc basis, the huge majority of former participants considers AVP as mechanic and static and only partly suitable for the Ugandan context. As has been stated this impression increases the more rural and conflict-affected the training setting is; thus further from AVP's original context of development.

The perceived ignorance towards political issues and hence the problems participants of AVP might be facing in their daily lives is regarded as heavily limiting AVP's relevance for people in Uganda and its potential impacts on individuals and the concrete situation they are facing.

This is accompanied by several practical matters and unintended negative side-effects of the static, unflexible design of AVP and its 'imported' nature.

First, AVP is in the view of many former participants too academic and complex in nature and therefore perceived as only addressing elites and highly educated people. This might appear as a very surprising finding against the background of AVP's stated simplicity (according to 'Western' eyes and minds) and the very practical and participatory approach. However, many informants expressed profound doubts that the use of e.g. flipcharts and huge items of written text and graphics would be an appropriate teaching method in communities with very limited access to education. In this context also AVP's language is by many perceived as too complex, too 'American' and hence not suitable for implementation in Uganda. In reference to particularly rural communities where many people are illiterate and are often not able to use any other language than their mother tongue, AVP is viewed as exclusive, i.e. addressing those who are already advantaged in comparison to other and further marginalising those who are already excluded from various aspects of societal life, e.g. the educational system or political participation.

A second aspect raised in the context of AVP's widely perceived exclusiveness is its choice of target groups. Criticism expressed in the academic literature on peace education to a certain extent also counts for AVP in Uganda: so far it majorly addressed those who are NOT responsible for the use of violence and hence NOT in 'most acute' need for peace education and non-violence trainings.

Reasons for this are partly of practical nature. Since the implementing institution of AVP trainings in Uganda, the 'Civil Peace Service Project', is located at Makerere University in Kampala training efforts have so far been rather centralised, i.e. most trainings took place in the capital. The majority of participants are students from the M.A. programme in peace and conflict studies at Makerere University and NGO and community workers, who were recruited through the projects existing networks – people who can be assumed as sensitised already towards peace and conflict issues; be it due to professional studies or extensive professional experiences.

Furthermore, the repeated criticism that AVP majorly addresses victims of violence instead of e.g. political leaders of all levels, who are held responsible by the Ugandan population for the use of violence on all levels of societal organisation, is very difficult to address. Even though the organisers of AVP in Uganda might be aware of this weakness it remains a very challenging task to

confront high-rank politicians or community elders with the shortcomings and failures of their actions and to convince them of the necessity to participate in a non-violence training to fulfil their responsibility as important role-models.

Single trainings which have been organised by the project in other parts of the country, e.g. for former members of non-governmental armed movements in West-Nile and a group of parliamentarians in Kampala are certainly first steps into the 'right' direction, but by the participants of this study considered as not sufficient yet. They perceive AVP's training efforts as still too limited to the center of the country and as too limited to certain target groups.

A third obstacle towards sustainable training impacts is seen in AVP's training system, which intends to enable participants who have passed all three AVP levels to forward their knowledge and skills by training others. This system is viewed as very useful for the Ugandan context in theory, because if it would work it could help to decentralise training efforts and hence spread the knowledge and skills beyond selected groups of participants.

However, as has been presented already in the analysis of the practicability of this system, not everyone feels sufficiently prepared for this heavy task, particularly in regard to the very specific demands of many Ugandan regions. Moreover, many participants perceived their own trainers as not sufficiently able to fulfil this challenge. The static teaching of AVP manual contents practised by many trainers does obviously not sufficiently prepare new generations of trainers, which consequently causes a vicious circle. This is only broken in some exceptional cases, where very experienced and creative trainers are able to view the manuals only as a basis and manage to adjust their content to the local context. Numerous cases have been reported where trainers read specific parts verbatim from the manual, which is by no means the intention of the AVP training materials.

Recommendations for the development of AVP in Uganda

The majority of informants regardless their sex, educational or regional background clearly stated that they liked AVP and perceived it as a valuable programme despite its significant shortcomings in some respects. The conclusion that can be drawn is hence not a general questioning of the implementation of AVP trainings in Uganda. Rather, it is strongly recommended to critically reflect on AVP in its existing form and to take its original design as a basis for further development and adjustment to specific requirements of Ugandan contexts, deliberately set in plural.

One of the major findings of this study is that AVP in Uganda does not only urgently require a 'Ugandanization' of training materials and practices. As this study reveals the circumstances and problems people are facing as well as their backgrounds and assets to face these differ tremendously depending on regional

origin and context. Hence, training efforts need to become strongly decentralised, implying adjustment to local, not only national demands.

In the first instance AVP needs to overcome its present limitation to the personal sphere. In order to be relevant for people in Uganda, who experience their lives in many regards as highly political, also AVP has to acknowledge the political nature of peace education and use its capacities to address the issues that really matter to people. Partly this does happen already, e.g. when very experienced trainers invite people explicitly to involve their own experiences or in activities like the described 'ideal Ugandan society'. However, in order to have more impact on the practices of participants and the socio-political context in which they act it is inevitable to transform the present 'exceptional case' into an obligatory rule. Or, as one informant in a focus group discussion stated: "Programmes should be designed for the needs of the people instead of hoping that the needs of the people fit into an existing programme."

The very important impacts on personal perceptions that have been discussed already could have a long-term impact beyond the personal sphere. In order to become more effective, AVP should become aware of its capacities and strengthen them purposefully instead of somehow 'trusting the coincidence' that consequences might follow.

On the practical level this plea for politisation, regionalisation and relevance does imply a shift from a standardised, static training design towards a high level of flexibility in all regards; including equally approach, structure, content, methods and activities. The original manuals need to be fundamentally revised and should be considered as a basis from where the content of a training can become flexibly adjusted to the given requirements of a specific training setting.

Successful adjustment to local requirements can only be implemented by trainers who are sufficiently prepared to handle flexibility. The training of trainers hence requires improvement.

Improvement in this sense could mean that trainers do not only learn how to implement AVP sessions by themselves within the ToT workshop, but that they learn how to analyse local requirements and how to translate these into appropriate training content. This includes next to practical matters such as the choice of trainers (female/male) or the length of the training also profound issues as the choice of language or training methods. One thinkable way could be to ask participants within ToT workshops to prepare a 'dry-session' for their own local, or a fictive rural community with certain predefined characteristics.

Last but not least AVP knowledge and skills need continuous follow-up, evaluation and refreshment. New AVP trainers should receive the chance for giving continuous feed-back on their experiences, as well as a forum for exchange with others. From the perspective of the new trainers it would be also

important to receive advice beyond the final training. Wherever possible, follow-up emails, phone calls or even (regional) meetings should be enhanced. Also for the implementing institution, the 'Civil Peace Service Project', regular evaluation on implementation experiences and impacts would be a valuable tool for further programme development.

All these efforts should follow the long-term perspective of truly decentralising AVP by further empowering and enabling people to carry its important messages on.

Recommendations for peace education programme development in Uganda

All participants in this study had numerous valuable ideas for the development and implementation of peace education tailor-made for the different Ugandan contexts. If one ever wanted to invest in peace education programmes in Uganda it would definitely not be difficult to form expert panels for local input. For the required conciseness of concluding comments I will limit the discussion of recommendations at this point to a summary, divided in the three major areas: target groups, approaches and programme content. However, in order to do justice to my creative informants I will include some of the most important responses as verbatim quotations in the Annex of this thesis. Anyone involved or in any way interested in peace education programme development in Uganda is invited to have a closer look at them.

Recommendations for target groups

In contradiction to the common target groups described in peace education literature, namely children and youth particularly at Primary school and Secondary school level, my informants strongly recommended a focus on adults in the first instance. Against the background of Uganda's violent history (see chapter 2) and the legacy of violence still prevalent in most sectors of society (see chapter 2) adults are perceived as the main 'cause of the problem' and hence should be the primary focus of peace education efforts.

Furthermore, it is assumed that a change in the mindsets and practices of adults will be automatically beneficial towards children as well. Be it in the domestic context, be it in school or any other institutionalised context, children are dependent on adults as role-models. If the content of peace education is separated from what children learn and experience at home and what they observe in the behaviour of adult people around them any peace education programme is limited in its impact. Holistic peace education approaches have to view society and all its elements as a system and may not ignore the inter-dependent relationship between them.

- Addressing leadership

Among the first and most important target groups that should be addressed through peace education programmes are, according to the majority of the informants, leaders at all levels of society. This includes the community level, where community leaders, elders, and religious leaders could be addressed, as well as district leaders, high-ranking politicians, members of parliament and even the president himself. According to the numerous people who identified people in a leadership role as the most important target group, they were most likely to use violence; hence it would be only logical to address them in the first instance.

Furthermore, it was stated that leaders on the one hand carry a huge responsibility and are expected to give an example to others, but on the other hand often lack awareness of their wrong-doings and the forms of structural violence which they – perhaps unknowingly – support. Therefore, a sensitisation for violence in all its existing forms would not only help to reduce the overall level of violence caused through poor leadership-performance in different sectors of society, but also give an example and signal towards the society as a whole.

Other groups considered as leaders that need to be addressed according to the participants of this study are the army, police personnel, judges and school personnel, both headmasters/mistress and class teachers. The latter are seen as particularly important in the context of integrated peace education approaches, which form part of the formal school curriculum. It is assumed that a peace education programme implemented by a teacher who uses violence in the interaction with his students sends contradictory messages and is hence worse than useless.

- Addressing parents

Based on a perspective on the family as a system embedded in a specific societal context a second important group that should be addressed through peace education are parents.

Regardless of the local urban or rural context it is widely perceived that parents or the family as a whole are the most important social influence factor for a child. Peace education approaches addressing children are very limited in their capacities if positive experiences and changes in behaviour do not go beyond the classroom and are not multiplied in the child's closest surroundings. This accounts even more for children who experience their family as a victim of grave structural violence such as poverty or internal displacement, which seem to exceed the capacities of the individual and cannot be solved by using the skills taught in a training programme.

- Addressing children and youth

In order to change the overall social climate in Uganda in the long term, it is also considered as important to address the young generation, including the leaders of tomorrow. Similar to the arguments for or against specific age groups brought up in the literature (see chapter 3) there are many factors that could be taken into account in the decision when to start teaching peace to children.

In Uganda there is a strong tendency to prefer approaches that primarily address older age groups; targeting youth at Secondary School level or above. This is partly based on the fact that youth constitute a significant part of the Ugandan population in quantitative terms.

Furthermore, it is assumed that the cognitive abilities in adolescence are sufficiently developed to ‘digest’ the serious content of peace education. Also, it is assumed that youth are a major target for armed groups and movements. Therefore, particularly in conflict-affected regions it is viewed as vital to address this volatile and vulnerable age group to prevent them from opting for violence, by helping them to find meaning in their life and to sustain peaceful livelihoods.

Another approach favoured by some voices, particularly in urban settings, is a start ‘as early as possible’. Of course the content would have to be specifically designed for the capabilities and stage of development of the target group, but even children who have not yet reached school age could become used to peace-terminology by reading stories to them or singing songs and performing dramas which have a ‘peace content’.

- Addressing the society as a whole

In order to maximise the impact of peace education and against the background of the manifold violence-related obstacles Ugandan society is facing, it might be advisable to favour multi-level approaches, which do not focus exclusively on one specific group, but address society holistically on different levels. All sectors and groups of society are tightly related to one another and closely inter-linked. Therefore a focus on a particular group, be it based on age, social or professional criteria might be counter-productive and limited in its capacities. Instead of thinking in vertical ‘top-down’ or ‘bottom-up’ categories and hierarchies, holistic peace education approaches would view society with a horizontal perspective, where ideally all groups are addressed by tailor-made programmes addressing their specific needs.

- Acknowledging cultural particularities in the choice of target groups

In the same way as the content and course design of a peace programme is ideally adjusted to the specific local needs, also the target group itself should be chosen carefully. This is a very sensitive matter, since local perceptions are not

necessarily in line with ‘Western’ or Ugandan urban views on a specific conflict setting. Informants from Karamoja for example repeatedly underlined the importance of targeting women through peace education, because women were in their view those responsible for the cattle rustling of their spouse. This viewpoint might not be shared by the women of the communities in question or by outsiders; nevertheless these opinions cannot be entirely ignored if programmes are expected to be widely accepted and valued.

Taking indigenous voices seriously in the development of peace education programmes in this sense is a challenging process of mutual learning. In any way efforts and further approaches should go beyond ‘we teach you what is good for you by using participatory methods.’

Recommendations for possible approaches

As this study reveals many different aspects have to be taken into account in order to address the needs of a specific target group in a particular region or community. Therefore all efforts in peace education should be truly decentralised and locally oriented. As has been pointed out this involves not only a national perspective, but even regional or community-level approaches towards peace education.

- Request for needs assessment

In order to design trainings that suit the needs of the people in a specific context, it is essential to invest in needs assessment and to work very closely together with the target group, who should know best what is required in order to address existing conflict issues and who should also be the most capable informants with regard to practical matters, such as location and timeframe of trainings, that support the invitation of participants instead of excluding them unconsciously (e.g. female participants in rural, traditional communities).

Furthermore, educational programmes and trainings require continuous follow up and evaluation of their effectiveness, in order to allow for further adjustment and the maximisation of potential impacts. Existing forms of financial support, e.g. project-related funding hardly allow for the development of long-term strategies and quality management, because the support seldom extends beyond the actual period of implementation.

- Trusting and strengthening local capacities

Against the background of existing inequalities within Uganda and the very different living situations and challenges people from different regions are facing, it is important to involve local capacities not only in the development, but also in the implementation of programmes.

In some cases, as in trainings that address a specific community setting, it might be advisable to choose facilitators who come from the same region as the participants and hence have a shared identity and similar experiences. Even though some AVP trainers reported positive experiences regarding trainings they facilitated in other regions, there is a danger that people from marginalised, conflict-affected communities might feel offended by someone coming from the wealthy, peaceful centre of the country telling them how to solve their conflicts non-violently.

In regard to the positive effects of mixed trainings on participants' attitudes towards other ethnic groups, it can be again stated that an 'ideal', ever-suitable approach towards ethnic criteria does not exist. A high level of sensitivity is required to make a choice for what comes closest to the needs of a specific community or target group. In any case, people 'on the ground' should own the process involving the assistance of outsiders – not the other way around.

- Formal and informal approaches

The advantages of formal and informal approaches to peace education have been discussed extensively in the academic literature (see chapter 3). They are also valid in the context of Uganda, where both approaches are not yet widely implemented but hold an enormous potential.

Due to significant changes in social policy and a strong shift in investment strategies towards the educational sector within recent years, the majority of Ugandan children nowadays have access to the formal school system. As has been laid out in chapter 3, some first steps towards peace-enhancing education are currently being planned. If these attempts could be widely supported and taken forward they can help to address a huge number of young Ugandans through the formal teaching institutions. A whole-school approach is the favoured model for most participants of this study.

However, there are still many regions and cases where a limitation to formal means of implementation would further contribute to the marginalisation and exclusion of whole groups of society, as for example in the North of the country, where in some regions more than ninety percent of the people are internally displaced. Moreover, people who did not have access to the formal schooling system are likely to be illiterate and hence need specifically designed approaches.

A well-thought-out combination of both approaches, in each particular case carefully chosen following the needs-assessment, might thus be an advisable strategy to involve and include as many Ugandan citizens as possible.

- Involving traditional institutions

No peace education programme would need to start from scratch. Ugandan society, particularly those communities where traditional structures are still prevalent, possess various means of community organisation, as e.g. dispute mediation through elders or community leaders' councils. Although it is important to be aware that these mechanisms are sometimes very exclusive and might not necessarily be in line with existing idea(l)s of participation and gender equality, they can provide valuable support or form the basis for some approaches, and therefore their involvement should definitely be seriously considered.

Also, religious institutions are in most parts of Uganda widely accepted and have a strong influence on community life. Again potential exclusion needs to be carefully examined. However, regardless of their faith base they could have a strong influence on the minds of many people and hence become involved as acknowledged authorities and mediation mechanisms.

- Support of long-term strategies

Taking the various demands of different Ugandan backgrounds and regional specifics into account it is impossible to favour either formal or informal approaches as the 'ideal' solution for Uganda.

However, even if a workshop approach is considered as the most appropriate means to target for example a rural community with limited access to formal schooling and very little time to attend non-violence training due to the heavy demands of sustaining their livelihood, sustainable and effective training requires long-term effort. As has been stated in the academic literature by authors of all schools of thought and traditions (see chapter 3), and as this study reveals, a single training or a set of workshops does not seem to be enough in order to allow for fundamental change of personal mindsets and practices.

In order to be effective, strategies for training need to be seen as long-term efforts aiming for long-term changes. The more fundamental the challenges faced by a community or group of people, the more inappropriate workshops, which try to address 'everything' within two or three days, appear.

Long-term approaches are difficult to implement in the framework of existing dependency on outside support, which financially does not allow for processual thinking and planning. This again underlines the importance of focussing on the development of local, decentralised structures, which can act independently according to the needs of people instead of being driven by what the funding allows for.

Recommendations for content

Logically, besides the definition of target group and the choice of approach the content of a peace education programme is the third important element that requires a high level of flexibility and adjustment to the local context. Several elements are considered as inevitable or important for the design of programmes in and for Uganda. These include both aspects and skills that are generally applicable, as e.g. awareness for all forms of violence and communication skills and those that need to be adjusted to the local context of implementation.

- Skills for constructive conflict resolution

Regardless of the cultural and local context of implementation practical skills for non-violent dispute resolution should form an essential part of peace education. This includes communication skills, called by some informants ‘peace language’, as well as means and strategies to analyse conflict situations and solve them without using verbal, psychological or physical violence. These practical skills form the equipment of every peacebuilder.

Naturally, guidelines and rules need to be adjusted to the local context, because rules for respectful and effective communication differ from culture to culture, as the example of ‘formulating ‘I’ messages’ or the rule to keep eye contact while talking in AVP showed. In some cultures, as in Karamoja or Acholi land in Northern Uganda, it might be more appropriate to consider mediators as for example elders for dispute resolution. However, even in these cases effective communication skills are useful and can contribute to a constructive solution process.

- Involving and strengthening cultural values

The cultural context and particularities of a specific setting should form the basis and starting point for any choice of content. People who are to be addressed through peace education have to find themselves, the life they are living and the challenges they are facing reflected within the programme, otherwise the programme will lack meaning and hence relevance for them. If people do not feel understood and taken seriously by the implementers of a programme, it is very unlikely that they will open up and share their most personal experiences and values.

Without the deep willingness not only to understand the underlying root causes and driving forces of conflicts, but also to respect them as for example the reasons for cattle rustling in Karamoja, dialogue between two equal partners – implementers and target group – is impossible. This does not mean blind acceptance of any cultural notion in the sense of traditional relativism. Rather, it

implies a continuous process of exchange and critical reflection involving both sides as equal partners.

- Drawing from conflict experiences

In a country like Uganda that is full of violent conflicts at various levels of society in many different regions, there is absolutely no need for importing scenarios which are theoretical, static, and far from the daily reality of the target groups. Rather, any peace education programme should do everything within its capacity to involve the concrete experiences of its participants. It is within the responsibility of the facilitators to not only give space to the participants to share their experiences, but to support them in finding solutions towards their problems.

Through strengthening their confidence in their own capacities and keeping the content of the programme as close to specific realities and hence as relevant as possible, peace educators can contribute tremendously to individual empowerment processes. The closer the content of a programme is composed to the context in which it takes place, the higher the chances that participants can manage the transfer from theory into practice – often one of the weakest points in existing peace education programmes.

- Rights-based approaches

Being relevant for the people in Uganda can, depending on the specific region, involve addressing highly political issues. For people heavily affected by structural forms of violence such as poverty, hunger, displacement, or the denial of other fundamental human rights it can be humiliating if a programme ignores these grave matters within its content. Even if the capacities for impacts and change of a programme itself might appear limited in awareness of the many external factors involved, it is still important to embrace these aspects.

People who are not aware of their rights cannot claim them and are an easy target for exploitation and the abuse of political leadership in form of manipulation. A rights-based approach has not only to address basic rights such as the right to sufficient nutrition or education and health care, but also each person's right to hold and express their own political opinion. In the long-run, this will lead to the development of societal mechanisms to control the abuse of leadership positions, but also to increased acceptance between the different ethnic and political groups – and therefore to a strengthened foundation for peace on all levels and in all areas of society.

- Education towards the development of a shared identity

One of the most urgent issues that could be addressed through peace education is the lack of a shared Ugandan identity, going beyond the maintenance of a status quo characterised by deep inequalities and injustices. This includes the reduction of ethnicity-based prejudice as well as the enhancement of a common ‘sense of suffering’. Shared identity in this sense does not only involve acceptance and tolerance among the different ethnic groups and regions, but also the willingness and ability of the privileged groups to feel and sympathise with those who are disadvantaged and marginalised. Moreover, empowerment would not be exclusively understood as an individual, but also as a societal process, where people become active and want to do something against existing grievances even if they are not personally affected.

- Request for regional exchange

Last but not least, it might be worthwhile thinking about the implementation of a ‘peer-group approach’ for peace education, both on governmental and on civil society level. In regard to development efforts and general conflict issues within the Great Lakes region this approach is already practised. Also in the field of peace education it could be very valuable to exchange experiences and share ideas for possible strategies and approaches, because all countries in the Great Lakes region are facing similar problems in some regards. Exchange visits, but also regional working groups of educationalists, might provide fora which allow for reflection taking into account viewpoints and experiences going beyond the individual, regional, or national sphere.

In comparison to Uganda, the development of peace and tolerance education in Rwanda is relatively advanced and in a process of constant development, thanks to strong financial support from the international donor community for well-known reasons. Instead of calling for ‘experts’ from Europe or other ‘Western’ countries, an exchange between neighbouring countries could provide affordable, meaningful insights into practices which might also be transferable to some Ugandan contexts.

Recommendations for future research

As discussed in the introduction and in the theoretical framework of this thesis: peace education is an active field in the need for research. This is one of the major messages of the opinions and ideas of my informants shared within interviews, focus group discussions and informal conversations during four months of field research. As has been shown through the analysis of one specific programme this conclusion does not count exclusively for peace education in general, but includes every single programme no matter where it is implemented.

Hence, research in this sense should not be understood as an attempt to fill more shelves with theoretical literature about assumed potentials and endless discussions about the 'right' definition of what peace education actually means.

As this study revealed, peace education is a deeply personal, but at the same time highly political matter. It can not be analysed and understood separated from its context of implementation, because both are linked in an inter-dependent relationship. Educational attempts are always shaped by the society in which they take place and in its best form education influences societal processes. Therefore, as several authors (e.g. Simpson 2004; Sommers 2001) have already stated, a 'one-size-fits-all' definition or model hardly exists and logically could only be applied to a limited extent as the example of AVP in Uganda illustrates. This applies equally for Uganda as to any other cultural and socio-political context in the world.

Instead of calling for quantitative or theoretical research, I would therefore like to underline the importance of concreteness. As the case of Uganda has shown concreteness can imply not only taking a national cultural context into account, but also acknowledging and addressing the specific needs of every single community and every single target group.

The first step of any programme implementation should hence be a profound analysis of the circumstances and particularities of the place where they take place, of the needs of the people they aim to target. This necessarily implies involving people, and listening to those who should be the beneficiaries of any peace education attempts. To conclude with the statement of one former participant:

"I believe in the good of these programmes. But programmes need to be focused on these specific needs of these people, otherwise they are useless. We really have to sit and think about 'What do these people really need?', maybe it would be best to do that together with these people, or at least some of them."

(Interview No. 26; former participant, Gulu)

In this sense the research for and development process of a peace education programme itself can be viewed as an example of the empowerment process it aims to initiate.

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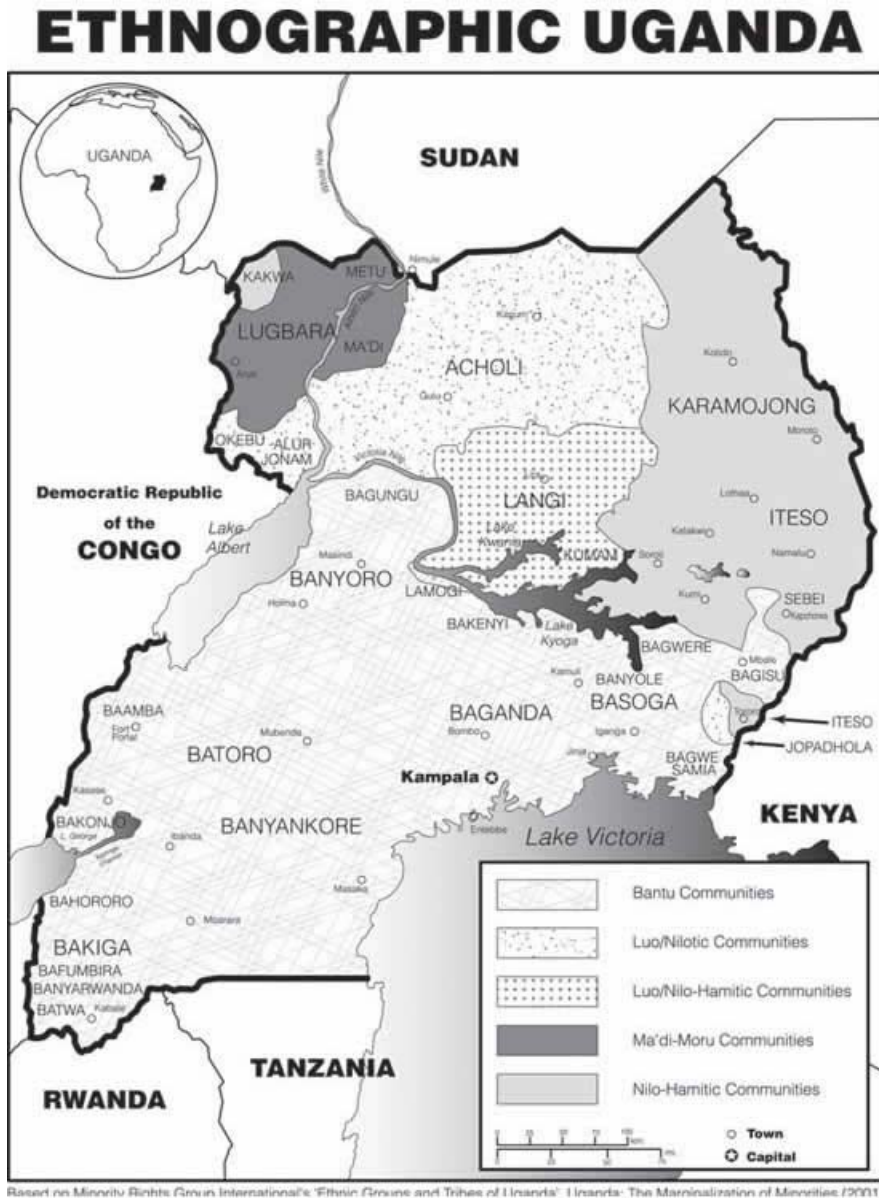
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Annexes

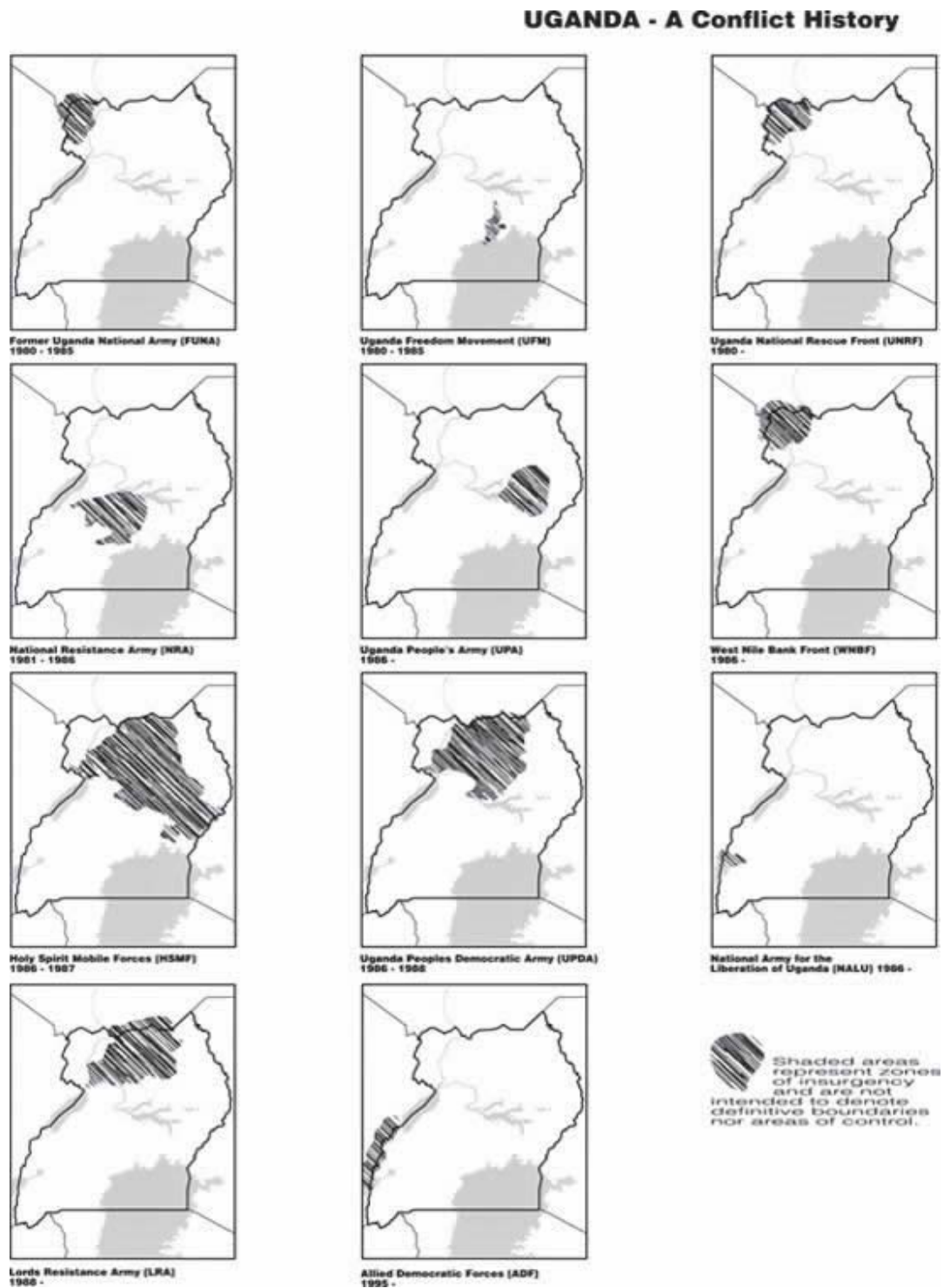
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2) Map of ethnic groups in Uganda



Source: Conciliation resources, London. Available from:
<http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/northern-uganda/maps2.php>;
 latest access on 31st August 2006.

3) Map of (former) conflicts in Uganda



Source: Conciliation resources, London. Available from: <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/northern-uganda/maps3.php>; latest access on: 31st August 2006.

4) Table of interview sample

No.	Interview location	Sex	Age	Ethnicity/ Tribe	Educational background	Occupation	AVP level & date of completion	Interview category
1	Kampala	Female	27	Munyankole	M.A. (in progress)	Officer in a Peace Project	ToT (?/03)	Trainer
2	Kampala	Male	30	Ntoro	M.A. (in progress)	Officer in a Peace Project	ToT (11/03)	Trainer
3	Kampala	Female	26	Muganda	M.A. (in progress)	student	ToT (11/03)	Trainer
4	Kampala	Female	25	Lubara	M.A. (in progress)	student	ToT (?/04)	Trainer
5	Kampala	Male	31	Muganda	M.A. (in progress)	student	ToT (09/04)	Trainer
6	Kampala	Male	33	Mukiga	M.A. (in progress)	NGO worker	ToT (11/03)	Trainer
7	Kampala	Male	28	Iteso	M.A. (in progress)	student	Basic (03/06)	Before/ after training
8	Kampala	Female	22	Muganda	B.A.	teacher	Basic (03/06)	Before/ after AVP training
9	Kampala	Female	24	Ntoro	B.A.	no current position	Basic (03/06)	Before/ after AVP training
10	Kampala	Female	29	Iteso	Business Training	shop-owner	Basic (03/06)	Before/ after AVP Training
11	Kampala	Male	33	Iteso	B.A.	teacher	Basic (03/06)	Before/ after AVP training
12	Kampala	Male	28	Ntoro	B.A.	No current position	Basic (07/05)	Former participant
13	Kampala	Female	25	Munyan kole/ Munyororo	M.A. (in process)	student	ToT (01/05)	Former participant
14	Kampala	Male	33	Luo (West- Nile)	M.A.	NGO worker	ToT (?/98)	Trainer
15	Kampala	Male	35	Bagisu	M.A.	Member of Parliament	Basic (11/05)	Former participant
16	Kampala	Female	26	Baganda	B.A.	Parliament Officer	Basic (11/05)	Former participant
17	Soroti	Female	24	Iteso	Secondary School	NGO Volunteer	Basic (?/04)	Former participant
18	Soroti	Male	38	Iteso	Secondary School	NGO Volunteer	Basic (?/04)	Former participant
19	Soroti	Female	65	Iteso	Primary School	Retired farmer	Basic (?/05)	Former participant
20	Soroti	Male	42	Karamojong	Primary School	farmer	Basic (?/05)	Former participant
21	Soroti	Male	25	Karamojong	Diploma	NGO Volunteer	Basic (11/05)	Former participant

22	Soroti	Male	40	Iteso	Secondary School	Farmer/Businessmen	Advanced (10/05)	Former participant
23	Kampala/Gulu	Male	38	Acholi	Ph.D.	Member of Parliament	Basic (11/05)	Former participant
24	Gulu	Male	36	Luo (West-Nile)	Secondary School	Social Worker	ToT (01/03)	Former participant
25	Gulu	Male	30	Acholi	Secondary School	Businessmen	Basic (?/03)	Former participant
26	Gulu	Male	28	Acholi	Diploma	Social Worker	Advanced (?/03)	Former participant
27	Fort Portal	Male	40	Ntoro	Business Training	NGO Worker	Basic (08/03)	Former participant
28	Fort Portal	Female	30	Ntoro	B.A.	Journalist	Basic (08/03)	Former participant

5) Interview outline participant interview pre-training

The interviewee was informed about the topic and nature of research conducted by the interviewer. He/she was assured that all information received within the interview would be treated confidential. No names will be mentioned in documents, which will be presented to a wider public. Furthermore the interviewee was informed about the intention of the interviewer to document the interview via dictaphone and written transcripts. The content of the interview may be used within the research and may be documented within the final thesis of the interviewer.

Length of interview: Approx. 30-45 minutes.

Personal information

- Name/Age/Sex
- Place of origin
- Ethnic origin
- Family structure (siblings, size etc.)
- Level of education
- Occupation (other than being a course facilitator)
- Parents education/occupation

Context-related information

- Can you characterize the Ugandan society from your perspective?
- What are Uganda's major challenges/obstacles in these days?
- How can these challenges/obstacles be met?
- What is your perspective on the country for the coming few years?
- Do you have personal experience with violence or violent conflict?

Training-related information

- What does peace education mean to you?
- Why are you participating in the AVP course?
- What are your overall expectations?
- What do you hope to learn from it?
- What do you want to do with the knowledge you might gain?
- How do you see your own role as a participant?
- How do you see the teachers' role?
- What do you expect from the teachers?
- What do you expect from the other participants?
- If you were asked to create the framework for a new peace education programme, how would it look like? What would you like to teach people? Which elements would you consider as important?

6) Interview outline participant interview post-training

The interviewee was informed about the topic and nature of research conducted by the interviewer. He/she was assured that all information received within the interview will be treated confidential. No names will be mentioned in documents which will be presented to a wider public. Furthermore the interviewee was informed about the intention of the interviewer to document the interview via Dictaphone and written transcripts. The content of the interview may be used within the research and may be documented within the final thesis of the interviewer.

Length of Interview: Approx. 30-45 Minutes

Personal information

- How did you like the training?
- What did you like in particular?
- Is there anything you did not like?
- Did you miss anything?
- If you could change anything, what would that be?
- Did the training experience meet your expectations?
- Do you want to proceed with upper AVP levels or eventually become a trainer yourself?
- How did you like the group structure/atmosphere?
- How did you like the trainers' attitudes, practices, and strategies?

Course-related information

Personal evaluation

- What did you learn from the training?
- Was the content entirely new for you?
- What do you think can be used in practice? *Examples*
- How do you want to apply it? *Examples*
- Do you think the course changed your perceptions on violence and conflict?
- If yes, how? *Examples*
- Do you think the course had an impact on your own practices? *Examples*

Context-related

- Did you recognize a connection between what you have learned in the course and the wider socio-political context in Uganda? *Examples*
- If not, did you miss a clear link?
- How could this link be established?
- Do you think AVP courses have a potential to transform conflict in Uganda on the long-term? Why and how? Why not?
- In the pre-course interview you said that the ideal peace education course for you should be [...]. Do you still agree with that, would you add or change something of your initial statement?

7) Interview outline former participants

The interviewee was informed about the topic and nature of research conducted by the interviewer. He/she was assured that all information received within the interview would be treated confidential. No names will be mentioned in documents, which will be presented to a wider public. Furthermore the interviewee was informed about the intention of the interviewer to document the interview via dictaphone and written transcripts. The content of the interview may be used within the research and may be documented within the final thesis of the interviewer.

Length of Interview: Approx. 30-45 Minutes

Personal information

- Name/ Age/Sex
- Place of Origin
- Ethnic Origin
- Family Structure (siblings, seize etc.)
- Education
- Occupation
- Education/Occupation of Parents
- Any personal experience with conflict?

Course-related information

Personal

- When did you participate in the AVP training(s)?
- Which levels did you complete?
- Why did you take part at that time?
- Where was the course held at that time?

Course-related

- Do you remember the structure of participants (rural vs. urban, well-educated vs. less-educated, gender structure, age structure etc.)?
- What was the training all about?
- Was it rather theoretically or practically oriented?
- What was the intention behind it according to you?
- What do you remember most clearly of the training?
- What helped you to remember it? Or: What could have helped you to remember it?
- What did you particularly like about the training?
- What did you not like about the training?

Personal evaluation

- What did you learn from taking part in the training? *Examples*
- Was this ever useful to you? *Examples*
- How do you apply what you have learned from the training? *Examples*
- Did you receive any assistance or advice on how to apply the knowledge into practice?
- If yes, how?
- If you do not use the knowledge anymore, why do you think is that? What would have helped you to apply it?

Context-related

- Do you see any link between what was taught and what you have learned in the course and the wider socio-political context in Uganda? *Examples*
- Looking back on your experiences after taking part in the training: Is there anything you are missing or you would consider as an important addition?
- Do you think the courses have a potential to transform violent conflicts in Uganda, which go beyond the entirely personal sphere? Why? Why not? *Examples*
- Would you again take part in AVP trainings or advise others to take part? Why? Why not?
- Is there anything you would like to add about AVP that I did not ask yet?
- If you were asked to design the framework for a new peace education programme, how would that look like? What would you like to teach people? Which elements would you consider as important?

8) Interview outline trainer interviews

The interviewee was informed about the topic and nature of research conducted by the interviewer. He/she was assured that all information received within the interview will be treated confidential. No names will be mentioned in documents which will be presented to a wider public. Furthermore the interviewee was informed about the intention of the interviewer to document the interview via dictaphone and written transcripts. The content of the interview may be used within the research and may be documented within the final thesis of the interviewer.

Length of Interview: Approx. 30-45 Minutes

Personal information

- Name
- Age
- Sex
- Place of origin
- Ethnic origin
- Family structure (siblings, size etc.)
- Occupation (other than being a course facilitator)
- Parents' occupation

Context-related Information

- Can you characterize the Ugandan society from your perspective?
- What are Uganda's major obstacles/challenges in these days?
- How can these obstacles/challenges be faced?
- What is your perspective on the country for the coming few years?
- Do you have any personal experience with conflict?

Training-related Information

Personal

- How and why did you become a trainer?
- Since when are you working as a trainer?
- How many workshops did you facilitate so far?
- How do you see your role as a facilitator?
- What are the major challenges of being a facilitator?
- Which strategies do you use to deal with them?
- What was your most difficult course setting so far?

Context-course relation

- What is, according to you, the overall aim of the courses?
- How and in which way is the course design influenced by the wider socio-political context? Where do you see the link between the two? *Examples*
- Which potential impact of the courses on the participants do you identify? *Examples*
- What are, according to you, the major benefits/skills/practices that the participants gain from the courses? *Examples*
- In which way do you think the participants can apply their new knowledge and skills in practice? *Examples*

Course design

- What are according to you the most important elements of the courses?
- Do you think there is anything missing?
- What do the participants usually like most?
- What do you yourself like about the courses?
- Is there anything you don't like?
- Would you change anything and if yes, what would you change?
- Is there anything you would like to add on AVP that I did not ask you yet?
- If you were asked to create the framework for a new peace education programme, how would it look like? What would you like to teach people? Which elements would you consider as important?

9) Exemplary AVP basic training scheme:

Session I	Session V
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opening talk - Agenda preview with names of the team - Introduce team - Introduce everyone: go around circle with name and 'one thing I hope to get out of this workshop' - Adjective name exercise - Affirmation, in twos - Light and lively - Brainstorm and discussion: What is violence? - Evaluation and closing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agenda preview - Gathering: 'I feel good about myself when [...]' - Introduction to role-plays - Role plays (in small groups) - Evaluation and closing
Session II	Session VI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gathering: Name of favourite food - Agenda preview - Concentric circles - Light & lively - Sharing: A conflict I solved non-violently - Listening exercise - Evaluation and closing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agenda preview - Gathering: 'A hiding place I had as a child' - Empathy - Light & lively - More role-plays - Trust circle and/or trust lift - Evaluation and closing
Session III	Session VII
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gathering: A sport I really enjoy - Agenda preview - Transforming power talk - Light & lively - Power 1,2,3,4 - Evaluation and closing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agenda preview - Gathering - Recap: Learning from role-plays - A cooperative planning and action exercise (e.g. building a new society, coalition exercise, strategy exercise) - Light & lively - Who am I? - Evaluation and closing
Session IV	Session VIII
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agenda preview - Gathering: 'What transforming power means to me' - Principles of transforming power - Light & lively - Broken squares (group exercise) - Cooperative construction (group exercise) - Evaluation and closing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agenda preview - Gathering - Reflection exercise - Discussion: 'Where do we go from here?' and unanswered questions - Affirmation posters - Evaluation of entire workshop - Graduation - Closing circle

Source: AVP Basic Manual 2002: D-7.

10) Recommendations of research participants for peace education programme development in Uganda

Recommendations for possible target groups

“Well, you should start with Museveni and his family. Why doesn’t the AVP go make a representation to the cabinet?”

(Interview No. 23; former participant, Kampala & Gulu)

“I would really encourage the leadership. First of all political leadership. Those ones who take decisions, like the ministers, the president, the army, the police, the prisons, all persons involved in leadership should be given time to come and attend these kinds of training. Because if those people I have mentioned are trained, then they will know that, yes, here we have been doing good, here we have been doing wrong, and then they can correct accordingly or adjust according to what they have learned. [...] if we could from the leadership and from there spread it broadly, people would not resort to violent conflicts, people would not be resorting to going to the bush, getting guns and fighting and so forth. In other words, we need to bring all the people, all able persons, as long as you are a human being, for peace trainings.”

(Interview No. 11; post-training, Kampala)

“What I have remembered: Charity begins at home. Imagine parents are the best teachers; if it begins from home, so children go to the schools. If parents can enlighten them about peace education from home then I think we would be successful in using it.”

(Focus group discussion Kampala; male participant)

“I would not straight away talk about a national level; maybe that is aimed to high. In Uganda we say ‘charity begins at home’. This is where people first get disciplined and where otherwise the relations, I mean personal relations are most tense. Therefore, I think definitely the target group should be the family, even the family as a whole. Because a family is like a system that works together; and you can not only repair a part of this system, if the rest also does not work properly. This is a picture for the family, and the reason why I would really involve the whole family.”

(Focus group discussion Kampala; female participant)

“Which parent spends more time with the children now? Definitely it is the mother. I am not saying fathers do not do much for their education, but it is the mother who begins the aspect of carrying the child, the breast-feeding, the everything. The child will listen. You know, the child will fear the father, all he says is probably ‘hello and morning’; he only comes at night and find the child sleeping. [...] Looking at a certain population, I think you should look at the women. It could be a better population, because she can find a way to fodge [? Unclear] around and talk to her husband in whatever aspect, and she can even talk to her child. She is the best person who can get to her child to have more impact. Other than when you go to men, because a man may say ‘if I tell my wife about this, she will not listen to it’. I think the best is the women population.”

(Focus group discussion Kampala; female participant)

“I would address first of all teenagers from 16. They have conflicts with their bodies as a result of biological development and their perceptions towards life need to be polished. Secondly those people from 15 to 30 years are the people in Uganda who are the main players in most of the conflicts we have. They need to be directly addressed, if we ever want to find an end to this exposure to violence.”

(Interview No. 12; former participant, Kampala)

“I would not refer to the ones 19 years and below, because things to do with peace education and other things there is a way youth tend not to feel very interested in those kinds of things; because they feel they have other things to attend in life, that wouldn’t interest them at all and they would not receive what you are trying to put across. [...] very old people I would also not refer to them because their contribution is maybe limited now; and would like to take it on and on.”

(Interview No. 13; former participant, Kampala)

“But also there’s need to put focus on organisations that are dealing with the grass roots population down there. We even have some. You find in villages groups of youth for instance, playing football or something, [...] and there is a way they organise themselves. Now when you target such groups then there’s a way you have some effect on a particular group.”

(Focus group discussion Kampala; male participant)

“For me I would target women first. You know I can give example in a family a woman is a hope of happiness and sometimes a source of sorrows. Like when I give you an example. In context of Karamojong women are the bigger player of conflict. Why all these things happen, its not like those days when people used to own cows for prestige, and material purposes. Those days I understand, women were not much involved, but now these days in Karamoja, when a woman sees other men, bringing cows she’s going to abuse her husband; she can call him a dog, tell him how she does not take milk, how she couldn’t [...] is suffering, how her neck is dry because there is no butter. And all these will force a man to go and raid the cows.”

(Interview No. 21; former participant, Soroti)

“I think it is important to address different groups of people. That means first of all the practical things that we are doing and that you find as you look at the group of people and others, the prisons, the judiciary and the police, you only look at the offenders and many times the victim is usually always over-shadowed. Even when they go to court [...] later the victims are put on shame, the woman faces the shame of being raped, the shame of facing everybody and then everyone get’s to know you and so on and so on. So if we could find a way to address these issues, to maybe sensitise all the groups and institutions involved, that would be good.”

(Interview No. 14; trainer, Kampala)

“To be effective our peace education should look at things, look at society from a holistic perspective and not only at one group or the other. Maybe the training at some levels only touches a certain group of people, like those who have gone to school. But there are people who are greatly affected by conflict, many of them are out there and it is very hard to attract them to come to such trainings. Partly it is because communication is hard, but if you get real local leaders to attend to these people or deal with them, like the disabled, people who are really close to them who can talk to them in their own way. Then I think that peace education would do well.”

(Interview No. 14; trainer, Kampala)

“I would start at primary school level, even earlier. It may not be all concrete, but at least songs and drama have a great impact on people’s lives. We can go through this, and through songs and drama they can learn so much of these things already at an early age.”

(Interview No. 14; trainer, Kampala)

“Now, there are different groups. The leadership, and then what is called the civil society. They need to be addressed [...] so even in the training, I mean this AVP programme, I cannot say that in such a programme, in such a short time [...] I cannot expect that it addresses all the problems in just three days. So we need to address leadership and civil society, but on a longer perspective. Also school children, but first the leaders. You need to

address these leaders, because they are mainly responsible for what is happening in this country nowadays. They are often the cause of the violence. It could be a means to adjust the behaviour of the leaders to the needs of the people. I would address almost everyone. You have those top-leaders, you have the students, you have the children. I see we can address three main levels. But first the people who make the decisions. Who have the greatest responsibility in the society. The so-called leadership. And then the students, the leaders of tomorrow. So you prepare a peaceful future generation of leaders. And then you also challenge the whole of the society [? Unclear] so you have three main trunks.”

(Interview No. 15; former participant, Kampala)

“Every conflict starts with an individual. If there are conflicts in this country, there is no way of addressing them, but addressing the individuals involved in them. Everyone, the government representatives, the military, all these people have to become convinced that any kind of violence is no solution to problems. I would train these people with non-violence training, I would train the government, the politicians, the soldiers, everyone, and then one day when everyone is trained we maybe have a country which is free of conflicts. And then there are also the schools; we need to bring these trainings to the schools, and to teach the students, that they also learn to be peaceful and to refrain from fighting and violence. I think if we could manage to train all these people, a programme teaching non-violence and peace could be the missing link, definitely. I then would make no difference between personal sphere and political sphere, because also the bigger conflicts are fought by individuals.”

(Interview No. 22; former participant, Soroti)

“I would mostly address our leaders. They sometimes have a lot of contribution, through politics, if so I would first of all target the leaders. They make policies that can bring out peace-building, Then it kind of trickles down. But sometimes politics [...]sometimes they make policies just because they have the power to do so, and maybe they even know that people won't welcome it, but they still do it. They should listen to the people, so that is why I would target leaders first of all. Then after that I would trickle down to maybe specific areas that have conflict, maybe like Northern Uganda, areas that have armed conflict and then I would start thinking of others.”

(Interview No. 17; former participant)

“There is need to involve all the stakeholders. There are so many parties to involve; here in Karamoja for instance the local leaders, the elders, the people from the local government, the civil society, the religious leaders, the peace organisations, to name just some of them. Ahm, there are also opinion leaders and for the case of Karamoja the warriors leaders, the clan leaders, all these groups need to be addressed, and the design should be more or less like the AVP design. The design to me is more appropriate for the Teso sub-region and our situation here. So I would think that should be the best way forward.”

(Interview No. 22; former participant, Soroti)

“You should target leaders at all levels; you should target the military, the police. Why should the police have to shoot at civilians? Shooting should be the last resort and should only be where the life of the police officer is in danger. So that will create a demand. When you target leaders at all levels, then you will create a demand for peaceful solutions. But as of now there's more demand for violence than peaceful solutions.”

(Interview No. 23; former participant, Kampala & Gulu)

“All the different categories of people, including the political leaders. That is very important. You should contact them and call them for a training, because these are often the sources of our problems; we definitely have a problem of bad leadership, on many levels. That is important.”

(Interview No. 25; former participant, Gulu)

“And the target, you know, that is the youth. Because they, the youth, and maybe some elders, because the elders they sometimes talk to the youth and they can lead them. Ya, I mean the main target will be the youth, and the elders will talk to the youth. And, you see, giving like [...] examples. This will help, the elders will be involved, but the main area will be the youth.”

(Interview No. 26; former participant, Gulu)

“I see community leaders and [...] you know, we have local council leaders. Because normally when issues come up in the communities, people run to local leaders, and ask them to resolve the conflicts. But sometimes the way they approach it, the advices they give, sometimes they are even funding the conflicts, not knowing that they are contributing negatively. So the local leaders need to be involved. [...] I would actually say everybody, but it is important to involve the community leaders. Yes, people in leadership positions, even in schools, we have head masters, or teachers or prefects. I would start from there, and then you eventually spread.”

(Interview No. 27; former participant, Fort Portal)

“And then of course our farming communities, even they could contribute something to conflict resolution. You know, they don't know their rights, they don't know their responsibilities as citizens. Others misuse them, others take even advantage of that ignorance and do harm on others. So I would also look into that dimension, of these specific community groups and design something for their purposes.”

(Interview No. 27; former participant, Fort Portal)

“I see community leaders and [...] you know, we have local council leaders. Because normally when issues come up in the communities, people run to local leaders, and ask them to resolve the conflicts. But sometimes the way they approach it, the advices they give, sometimes they are even funding the conflicts, not knowing that they are contributing negatively. So the local leaders need to be involved. Even church leaders, even students in secondary schools, because that is the level of understanding then. I would actually say everybody, but it is important to involve the community leaders. Yes, people in leadership positions, even in schools, we have head masters, or teachers or prefects. I would start from there, and then you eventually spread.”

(Interview No. 27; former participant, Fort Portal)

“I would choose the youth, because they are the biggest group of society, second because they are the easiest group for conflict. I mean if there is a political up-rising the youth are the easiest to convince and to recruit for rebellion. And again they are the future leaders. And they are easy to learn and to train anyways, you also would not try to train an old dog, you would choose a young one. They are the future leaders, but many of them are disorganised and aimless. But if you have an aim, a purpose in life, as peace-makers, to solve conflicts peacefully [...] I would target the youth.”

(Interview No. 28; former participant, Fort Portal)

“I wish that all our politicians would also be trained in this, in alternative conflict-resolution, and the community leaders.”

(Interview No. 28; former participant, Fort Portal)

Recommendations for possible approaches

“Some incorporation of wider aspects of international relations. So because, ahh, our local environment is that we are learning from here, we are relating with the close proximity. We need an exposure to say ‘the situation in Rwanda is like this’, ‘the situation in DRC is like this’, and at some point there should be arranged some exchange visits, too.”

(Interview No. 27; former participant, Fort Portal)

“So I would design a programme tilting towards leadership. Because sometimes conflicts emerge when we mishandle certain aspects. This would help us to appreciate these aspects. Leadership and management aspects, I would take care of it.”

(Interview No. 27; former participant, Fort Portal)

“If you are to plan peace education, from the first step that is planning or even needs assessment, you have to look at the needs of these people. You cannot come from some level to think that you can identify with them or identify with their problems.”

(Focus group discussion Kampala; female participant)

“First of all, I would do a lot of research first. I would go and first talk to the people to get their views of what they themselves think are the issues that cause conflict within them, in their social setting. Then I would start from there to see what can be done to build peace such as those conflict issues as the starting point.”

(Interview No. 17; former participant, Kampala)

“I think peace education is a really good idea. But what impact does it have on the message to others? And what is the people’s reaction towards it? You cannot just wake up and say I am going to do peace education and then come and teach. You have to make a follow-up and know what impact it has and how they reacted to it and maybe see where you can try to adjust and people understand it better. That’s how I think peace education can shift, but it’s really a good idea.”

(Focus group discussion Kampala; female participant)

“I think it is about mixing all that, I mean things that are universal, because they belong also to everyone else, but also respecting the culture of the people; and that means involving them. In Uganda they say we have about 72 tribes [the literature speaks about 56], that means 72 different designs, because we have different values. So that way you involve people. They will know that if we do this there could be the effects.

(Focus group discussion Kampala; male participant)

“Why don’t we have programmes which are found by the people themselves? [...] But for instance if you are able to get people from those areas, and they are able to appreciate it and then they go back and do it themselves in their own way using their social ways of coming together. Then after some time you can monitor and evaluate, see the effect. I think it has more impact than if you come from here, go and handle the workshop in Kabarole.”

(Focus group discussion Kampala; female participant)

“The school is one institution. But there are other ways, because at the moment the minority of people in Northern has at all access to education. Most of these people live in camps, they are excluded from education and would then again be excluded, we have to keep that in mind. So maybe a combination of different strategies according to the specific context would be good.”

(Interview No. 25; former participant, Gulu)

“I would first make an assessment to analyse the factors that lead to the use of violence, involve as many different groups of people as possible and ask them for their needs and views, and then model this programme according to their needs. And then we need to distribute this kind of efforts, such a programme should be done in all parts of the country, not only in the capital. In all parts of the country, it should be implemented, but always tailored to suit the specific needs of the people in that region, in the North, in the South, in the East, in the West. But the assessment [...] we really need to put the analysis first, and then act according to it, not the other way around by making a programme and then seeing how it fits the people.”

(Interview No. 15; former participant, Kampala)

“I would think of monitoring and evaluation. Would take people who make peace education programme, each time we have peace education during it I would monitor what people are doing and then after some time you evaluate and see how far and what’s people’s reactions and what have they done after the training? Have they gone to pass the message or have they just kept quiet and go with it.”

(Focus group discussion Kampala; female participant)

“Normally, like if you go to Teso there’s no one who is going to listen to you. Like maybe I can come here and we can understand each other, but if you come to rural people there, they will never understand you. It is better when somebody from that very place – or somebody of their soil as they always say – comes and talks to them. That way they will understand and say all if our person from this soil can pick. [...] That will make them understand it better.”

(Focus group discussion Kampala; female participant)

“Someone understands his or her tribe mate better like when you go to Soroti there is no way you will begin speaking Ateso, you will kind of find it difficult. They will really have this notion in them that if somebody from our soil, someone who has really experienced what we have gone through, can come with an idea that we should listen to it. They will oppose to you a question, like ‘what do you know about what we are experiencing here?’ And there is no way they will understand you. But if an Iteso goes there they will say he has gone through what we have gone through and he knows what we are experiencing. There is no way a person outside them can come and talk to them, because he does not know what they face and what they experience; and who felt like when they were in that condition. They will understand it better if an Iteso is talking to them and try to put themselves in a certain position and situation, and see the way forward.”

(Focus group discussion Kampala; male participant)

“I think my strategy would be incorporating with the curriculum right away from primary level to secondary level then to university level. And this has to be something compulsory, you have to strictly take it. In addition to that other than taking it as a subject it can also be introduced to all other subjects and to also target the informal sector. Because, myself I have a life example: I did history because I wanted to pass. Actually, I don’t know much about history, because I did it to pass. So it can also be the case with peace education, because they want to pass. Because they want to pass exams, so they write and cram, and by the end of the day they have passed an exam but it is not within their hearts. But if we can also put it into the informal sector [...] let us target maybe the churches. Anything we can air out this, so that its everywhere in society that it may be able to target different groups and different age groups.”

(Focus group discussion Kampala; male participant)

“I would first look at the follow-up, how are we disseminating the information. Who is taking the information? If we gate it through the priest and the sheikh, people will listen to the sheikh rather more than they will listen to any other person. They will even carry it forward knowing that God will not be happy with them, if they don’t take it into consideration. Starting from the grass-root like the village people. They will rather go to the church than they will go to a seminar called by who? If they say we are organising a peace conference, people will not come. But going to church and it’s the priest who has said they should come, I think they would come.”

(Focus group discussion Kampala; male participant)

“I would maybe organise something for the people at our church. I think we should teach there something about alternatives to violence, because sometimes people think there is nothing bad that happens in church, but sometimes bad things happen in the church. And the skills are important for church people as well, we don’t have to go only into the bible and

find all solutions in there, no, you need also the skills, and if you don't have any skills, also the bible cannot help you in solving this."

(Interview No. 9; post-training, Kampala)

"Then say the religious institutions. There's a way they bring people together. When people have problems they go to those institutions, [...] they are very important in the communities. [...] However, that is having a road block; for us here when we think about such initiative we are thinking about money. You see after that, you need to organise the workshop you need money. For everything you need money. But if you find people who are already engaged with these people, who could say 'let's thing melodies, what does this and this in there mean to you?' for instance. As they are doing football they are doing something related to peace and unity already. If you stress on these aspects, it begins making more sense."

(Focus group discussion Kampala; male participant)

"Because I would realise that most of the conflicts have been inclined in rural areas up-country, so the government should be very vigilant and carry on those pre-current sensitisation programmes in regard to peace education."

(Focus group discussion Kampala; male participant)

"I would see peace education programme, we have community level, that's what I would look at and target at. It would be designed in a way that even the person who did not go to school should be able to understand the programme. Because at the end of the day it is those people who are causing more conflicts as a result of ignorance. So my peace education programme would consider so much the illiterate, to make sure they understand the programme just like the literate, and empowering them on how to avoid conflicts."

(Interview No. 12; former participant, Kampala)

"I think there are people who are more close to those kind of people, who are with them directly every day and those people have greater impact on influencing them than other peace trainers. When you come to an area as a peace trainer, they look at you for the first time, they also look at you in a different way. But people who are close to them will do it easily, because they know them. We have such people like 'Mothers' Union', small groups that do counselling and bring people together. Now, through such groups you can deliver your peace education programme, then it would have bigger impact. There are other groups who can talk to women who have emotional conflicts. It is very hard to come from somewhere and decide to give them peace training. But if some people who can deal with them directly to appreciate the training, to go on with it, it would be more practical and more meaningful."

(Interview No. 14; trainer, Kampala)

"I would first make an assessment to analyse the factors that lead to the use of violence, involve as many different groups of people as possible and ask them for their needs and views, and then model this programme according to their needs. And then we need to distribute this kind of efforts, such a programme should be done in all parts of the country, not only in the capital. In all parts of the country, it should be implemented, but always tailored to suit the specific needs of the people in that region, in the North, in the South, in the East, in the West. But the assessment [...] we really need to put the analysis first, and then act according to it, not the other way around by making a programme and then seeing how it fits the people."

(Interview No. 15; former participant, Kampala)

"Maybe I can say, it needs to develop some nature of networking with some of the stakeholders. If you look for example in Northern Uganda, you have for instance the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative, you have what we call the Reconciliation Commission. All these initiatives should be linked up and work together, rather than saying we do it all alone. It is better to do networking! What do we have to put in, vis-à-vis what is already on

the ground? That's very important. But the potentiality is there. But because of the complexity, of the situation, you know, the churches, the NGOs, it [...] that needs a lot of networking. So, AVP in the peace process. AVP in the peace process, with the districts."

(Interview No. 24; former participant, Gulu)

"I would like to take it out of the schools. Cause in the schools they receive already training in some way, they are already somehow civilized. But those who are out of schools, they are really in trouble and they need somebody to care for them and to hold their hands, so I would target those ones. I know that they are very difficult to handle, but I know if we would succeed, then they would contribute something good to the society. They would be trained to live peacefully. Then I would organise workshop and I would call them "Peace out of School". Of course this might also be interesting for those in schools, but those out of school are in a greater danger for the society."

(Interview No. 28; former participants, Fort Portal)

"But also when it comes to planning you have to involve them. They feel detached from it. That's why today we even have culture workshops and seminars looked at as a source of money. And if any are attending they know they are going to get transport refund back and so on and so on. They don't go there to get the peace education, but they go there for the money. And if you don't pay them today, tomorrow they will not come. So in the end we are not going there for education, we are going there for something else."

(Focus group discussion Kampala; female participant)

Recommendations for programme content

"In would teach them conflict transformation skills, all issues to do with conflict resolution and different skills that can be used to resolve conflict. And I would also teach them how to prevent the conflict even before it happens."

(Interview No. 17; former participant, Kampala)

"I would like to teach them [the women] the knowledge of trying to convince their men, to appreciate and not go for cattle wresting even if he has one or two let him. Appreciate and not go for cattle rustling. In Karamoja, there if a man has one cow, for him may not get the pressure but the woman will keep reminding him that he's a poor man and that's she cannot stay with him. Like for them now a woman can have like five men. For example if she influences them all negative this would be bad because then five men would go and fight, only because of her pressure. But then if you would convince her to teach all these five of her men peace, then they would not fight anymore and in the end there would not be fighting anymore."

(Interview No. 21; former participant, Soroti)

"The first thing, the content of the programme should first be to appreciate oneself. Until you don't appreciate yourself, and therefore appreciate your neighbour there is no way out of conflict situation. So it is very important that with a problem one appreciates one another. It must be central in all of us, because if you for instance appreciate the Karamoja situation. There are very harsh conditions. There are very scarce resources, there is no water. Even the cows [...] I mean, you know, generally, development has not taken foot in Karamoja. So sometimes it is these harsh conditions that make people to go out and fight, and sometimes it is also an element of the culture. You know in Karamoja the tradition is that when you are marrying a wife, you are doing it with several tens of cows. Maybe fifty or a hundred, you know and in this culture you are not given those animals by your parents you are supposed to find them. So you really have to appreciate that difficult situation in that the person is. Unless, not until you are not appreciating the situation in which a person, somebody is you may not be able to get that person out of that situation, by giving him alternatives.

Sometimes when you appreciate it you can say ‘yes, I can see your problem and the alternative should be ABCDEF [...]’ and the person begins to see and can pick one of them.”

(Interview No. 22; former participant, Soroti)

“I would design a programme that draws from a local conflict which I look at how were the problems solved, what were the failures and achievements. Then I build a programme and then I would add the cultural aspect, because there are those believe in their culture and if I could do that then we would be able to encourage or adopt the good culture and discourage the bad one. Then the people would see the training in a more relevant way; people would understand since everything is from their every day situations.”

(Interview No. 12; former participant, Kampala)

“Then the other thing is that Karamoja [...] I don’t know what the international world is thinking about Karamoja. In the design of the project it is aimed at bringing peace between the Karamoja and its neighbours. There must be massive investment in Karamoja, in terms of economic development, to bring them out of that poverty, and then they would begin to listen. [...] So it also has to be able to address economic aspects. Because it is very difficult for a person to think of peace when this person has nothing to eat. This person has no peace with himself, he is hungry. Whatever he is doing, he will always, every second think of his hunger and how he can find something to eat. He has no security to feel. He has no clothes, no shoes, but so many worries. You know, it is very very difficult.”

(Interview No. 22; former participant, Soroti)

“Its very important that our kids are taught to overcome the prejudices even if you go now to the streets and begin asking kids ‘what do you think of the Banyankole?’, ‘What do you think of the Acholi?’ Some of the things they will say will shock you. We all have our people conceptions and prejudices about those who are different from us. And most of those prejudices are really false and they have no basis, I do believe that a strong curriculum should start dealing with those prejudices when people are still young before they grow and become obsessed with other wrong perceptions.”

(Interview No. 23; former participant, Kampala & Gulu)

“There are a lot of ethnic groups in Uganda. A lot of different types with different languages. So there should definitely the try to unify all these different people. In other countries people at least speak the same language. So any programme should start with teaching people about the importance of a shared identity as Ugandans. We have to teach people to feel as one nation, and to identify with this nation, and not only thinking in ethnic categories, as people tend to do here. Because that is causing a lot of our problems. That is the major point according to me. And many other issues are related to that, it is the source of many problems. People relate themselves to a certain ethnic group, which they tend to see above all the other groups then. Like now, there are people who still think that there is peace, people living in those parts of Uganda where there is no war going on at this time. They not identify with the situation of their brothers and sisters in the North of the country, even though it is only some hours drive from them, and they read and hear about it almost everyday. But one day, it could be the other way around, the situation can change quickly, as we know from our history. Any day it could be all of a sudden another group who is targeted, who is suffering from conflict. We should know, these things can always happen. So this is the most important thing, they need to be enabled to suffer with these people, and this happens through a shared identity; they need to identify with what is happening to the other group, even if it is not the own tribe who is affected. This is my dream. Like between you and me. I am a black person, you are a white person. We still respect each other, and this is the goal. Respecting each other, regardless of ethnicity or tribal heritage or whatever. So every training should contain those ideas.”

(Interview No. 25; former participant, Gulu)

“Peace education, I look at it as bringing awareness of having a free environment, an environment without conflict and violence. Of course we cannot avoid conflict. So we need to have peace education at all levels to send to our population the importance of peace.”

(Interview No. 9; pre-course, Kampala)

“So non-violence, I would think of conflict-resolution, cultural values. They are aspects targeted at maintaining peace. Then I would consider peace language.”

(Focus group discussion Kampala; male participant)

“But also there are certain things for instance which I regard as cultural values. There are those things we had. For example, a kid is not supposed to carry a stone, these were supposed to help the kid to look at carrying the stone as bad. The kid is not supposed to sit on the fire stone because the mother will die. But it is not to make you sad, but to feel happy. I think if we are able to include this, I mean we have to bring them out and see those values come out. But also there are bad cultures that we have to be sensitive about, so that’s where the globalisation would come in like talk about human rights.”

(Focus group discussion Kampala; female participant)

“The content would be mainly things dealing with all the levels of the community. For instance we have violence at individual level, family life and at different levels, like community levels. It is important for us to realise that partly you cannot deny conflict and violence because it is part of us, but also we need to understand that we cannot basically end and say ‘that or this is how we shall live’. But if we can change our attitude [...] we cannot change all of it, but we can change some of it. Then we can live in a more special way than the way we are living. I think the most important thing would be to make people acknowledge and understand. Many times people are violent without even knowing they are violent.”

(Interview No. 14; trainer, Kampala)

“You know in Uganda our issues are lots of poverty and unemployment. Yet in Europe it is probably different from that. So I would try because all these issues bring about conflict. Like if people are poor they behave differently from people who are rich. So I would really fist of all think of issues that affect people and issues here in the Ugandan context can bring out conflict and then start from there.”

(Interview No. 17; former participant, Kampala)

Another thing is [...] the project should be so much trying to bring people to stay together.”

(Interview No. 22; former participant, Soroti)

“Group work is a very good teaching method. [...] You group people together and they talk to each other, then they share with the bigger group at the end of the day. That kind of experience makes someone to come out. You express yourself even when you don’t want to. Like for example, when they put us into groups, you would tell someone everything, and then it opens up, someone easily opens up. There is some lady in our training who [...] I think she was about to mention something that has really tormented her, but she just broke down. But I was thinking, if she had more of these workshops, if she continued, I am sure she would come out and mention that thing and she would get a healing. You know when you talk, you get better afterwards.”

(Interview No. 8; post-course, Kampala)

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