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## *Youth, education and work in (post-)conflict areas*

*Empowering young talent to (re)build communities*

*Proceedings Summer School 2017*

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## **Preface**

Autumn is in full blow and rain hits the windows in Groningen. This seems just the right moment to bring back the memories of the summer school which took place in full summer including hot temperatures and tropical showers from 17 to 21 July in Groningen. The proceedings gain importance as we are investigating the possibilities of organising a follow up of the summer school in Gulu in northern Uganda, where the UNESCO chair 'Lifelong learning, Youth and Work' of Jacques Zeelen is based. We hope that the proceedings will feed into a second summer school on location including cooperation with Ugandan students and lecturers and fieldwork in this (post-)conflict area.

Just as the summer school itself, the proceedings of the summer school on 'Youth, education and work in (post-)conflict areas' are the result of a joint effort. Line Kuppens participated in the week and wrote a report of the presentations, discussions and group work during the week. Josje van der Linden, member of the organising committee, used the contributions and discussions to write a paper with the same title of the summer school, focusing on youth agency. On the Saturday following the summer school week, Jacques Zeelen, also member of the organising committee, held a lecture about the work of the network on Youth, Education and Work (YEW). The title of the lecture was: 'Overcoming the skills gap between education and the labour market'. We add the report of this lecture to the proceedings of the week, because it was this network that created the basis for organising the summer school. The report is written by Marit Blaak and Josje van der Linden.

The proceedings are primarily written for the participants of the summer school, but may be disseminated to others with the remark that the contents is to be viewed in relation to the summer school and its follow up. This is not a book and the contributions are not (yet) articles. It is a document to keep our expanding network alive and inspire new activities. Participants and lecturers will probably and hopefully work on publications informed by these proceedings and keep each other informed about these publications. As organizing committee, we will keep you posted on new initiatives and activities and hope to collaborate further.

Margaret Angucia  
Cuthbert Tukundane  
Jacques Zeelen  
Josje van der Linden (editor of the proceedings)

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## Foreword

From the 17th until the 21st of July, 36 participants (see Anexe 1) gathered at the University of Groningen to attend the summer school ‘Youth, Education and Work in (post-) conflict areas: Empowering Young Talent to (Re)Build Communities’. Participants came from all over the world, from Nigeria to New Zealand, and from all backgrounds, including researchers, students, activists and practitioners. They shared an interest in the role and agency of youth in (post-) conflict societies, and the ways in which access to (quality) education and work can help youngsters to unfold their potential as agents of change. The summer school was organised by the network on Youth, Education and Work (YEW), which is specialised in practice-oriented research such as needs assessments, evaluation research and action research to contribute to the construction of peaceful and sustainable communities.

During the summer school, participants gained new insights by attending presentations representative of a wide array of contexts, such as India, South Sudan and Colombia. Participants also cooperated in a week-long group work. Four groups were formed, each addressing a different aspect of the topic of the summer school: youth and work, youth and higher education, peacebuilding and life skills education, and youth and community relations. During the afternoon sessions, the different groups identified the major limitations, as well as the opportunities of their diverse topics. At the end of the summer school, the results were presented to the other groups in an innovative way, ranging from a play to making tree diagrams.

The summer school did not only enrich the participants, it also provided a new impetus, both to academics as well as to practitioners, to continue working (together) in this important field of study and to keep efforts going that help young people to unlock their agency and voice during, or in the aftermath of, conflict.

The current report presents the main findings and insights of the summer school. Presentations and activities are discussed in accordance to the schedule of the summer school (See Anexe 2). Each section covers a (group of) presentation(s). The sections are based on the presentations of the different contributors and therefore reflect their views only. To access the presentations, please visit: [http://www.rug.nl/education/summer-winter-schools/summer\\_schools\\_2017/youth\\_education\\_work/course-information](http://www.rug.nl/education/summer-winter-schools/summer_schools_2017/youth_education_work/course-information).

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## Introduction

*Introductory notes are based on the presentation of Prof. Dr. Jacques Zeelen, Chairholder of the UNESCO Chair on Lifelong Learning, Youth and Work at Gulu University, Uganda, and Professor of Lifelong Learning and Social Intervention at the institute of Globalization Studies at Groningen University.<sup>2</sup>*

Globalization has markedly impacted the world we are living in. Whereas it has created opportunities, the phenomenon has also given cause to new challenges. Important questions have arisen, such as (1) How to deal with the accelerating development in technology and digitalization?, (2) How to take care of the planet?, (3) How to transform our education systems to support lifelong learning?, (4) How to reduce growing inequalities within and between countries?, (5) How to deal with the frustrations and anger of those youngsters that feel left out and marginalized?, (6) How to deal with migration due to economic deprivation or due to conflict?, and (7) How to find new ways to secure democratization and stimulate bottom-up participation? Particularly youth are affected by these new trends and challenges. As of 2010, 357.7 million youth, for example, were not in education, employment or training, and the numbers continue to increase.

Faced with these new developments, a network was created to deepen our knowledge of the topic, and to identify new ways forward: the network on Youth, Education and Work (YEW). When working in the University of Limpopo, South Africa, Jacques Zeelen started to work on early school leaving as an alarming phenomenon in the province. Later, he discovered the phenomenon was wide spread. In 2007, the Early School Leaving in Africa research network was born, including also Uganda Martyrs University, Mzumbe University in Tanzania and the University of Groningen. This network evolved into the current YEW network. At the moment, there are collaborations with partners from India, Colombia, Israel, and the United States of America. Recently, Gulu University in Uganda was assigned the UNESCO Chair in Lifelong Learning, Youth and Work.

The summer school on Youth, Education, and Work is a part of the activities of this network. Through the summer school, the network aims to contribute to the body of research and share best practices to combat social exclusion of early school leavers, unemployed graduates, and other marginalized youth both in developed as in developing countries. More specifically, it pursues the following three goals:

1. To gain insight into the vulnerable position of early school leavers, unemployed graduates and other marginalized youth in education and the labor market;
2. To explore existing good practices tuned towards the improvement of the position of (potential) early school leavers and youth in education and the labor market;

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<sup>2</sup> To consult biographies of all the contributors, see Anexe 3.

3. To contribute to the development of policy proposals, prevention strategies, new trajectories and new programs in the field of transition from youth to work;

These goals can only be achieved if researchers and practitioners take the challenges of globalization into account. Moreover, new programs and policies have to be context-specific. Most importantly, however, they should not be about youth, but with youth. Indeed, youth agency is key.

## **The images of post-conflict youth and resilience in northern Uganda**

*This report is based on the presentation of Dr. Margaret Angucia, Associate Professor of Governance and Peace Studies at Uganda Martyrs University.*

Northern Uganda is marked by a history of conflict between the government and the rebel movement of Joseph Kony, the Lord Resistance Army (LRA). The LRA is renowned for its mobilization of child soldiers. Ten years ago, the LRA was defeated in northern Uganda, although the movement continues to exist in parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Uganda still faces many challenges however, including issues concerning land ownership and drug abuse: “even though the guns are silent, the war is still on” (Angucia, 17.07.2017). Indeed, the nature of peace in northern Uganda is negative, i.e. restricted to the absence of violence (Galtung, 1976). Whereas many ex-child soldiers have returned to their communities, it is unclear whether they have reintegrated well. In order to avoid a relapse into violence, it is very important, nonetheless, to reintegrate youth. This is very difficult given that these youngsters are broken citizens: they have dropped out of school and in many cases lost their parents. Moreover, they return to communities that are torn apart as well. An important question therefore is how ex-child soldiers in northern Uganda experience their (failed?) reintegration.

Many studies on the topic assume that youngsters are victims of conflict for whom we need to do something. The picture of victimhood has been very prominent since the 1996 Machel report. They are not always as vulnerable as they seem, however. Indeed, children can be very resilient (Sommers, 2006) and have a lot of competences to build on. Resilience refers to the skills, abilities, knowledge and insights that people accumulate over time as they struggle to surmount adversity and meet challenges (Van Breda, 2001, p. 5).

To approach youth agency in post-conflict areas from a new angle, Dr. Angucia has conducted two research projects to examine the living conditions, hopes and fears of ex-child soldiers in northern Uganda. The first research project focused on youth and peacebuilding in post-conflict northern Uganda, while the second analyzed youth and political participation in post-conflict northern Uganda. Rather than depicting youth as victims, the researcher assumed that youth have rights and assets, and that they can be both a threat to security as well as an agent of positive change. The concept of youth is difficult to operationalize in the northern Ugandan context however. In Uganda, a 35 year old man can be considered a child if he is not circumcised, while 16 year old girls can already

be mothers. It is also questionable to what extent child soldiers can still be considered to be children after all that they have experienced.

For the first research project, Dr. Angucia studied the ways in which youngsters contribute to building peace and justice in their communities through action research. The research involved out-of-school youth that had formed youth groups, such as associations of boda-boda drivers (motor cycles used as taxis), farmers, or artists. In a first step, the group members were interviewed to gauge their understanding of peace and justice. Peace, for example, was conceptualized by these youngsters as doing the right thing in their daily live. Peace agreements had nothing or little to do with their lives. She also asked how these youngsters lived peace and/or justice, of which bringing pregnant women to hospitals was an example. In a second step, the youngsters were gathered to attend a workshop. During that workshop, they were confronted with findings of the interviews, which they subsequently discussed together. This workshop allowed them to widen their understanding of peace and justice, and to find new ways of putting peace and justice to practice. Dr. Angucia concluded from her first study that youngsters clearly rejected the idea of victimhood. Although they face a mixture of challenges, including poverty, unemployment and stigmatization, there is no need to create programs to put youth to work. Instead we should create an enabling environment for youngsters that allows them to find their own job. Indeed, youth can use their own assets to create their own opportunities, for example by saving together to provide for loans, or by creating solidarity groups that support families with problems.

The second research focused on youth and political participation in the post-conflict context of Northern Uganda. In particular, Dr. Angucia wondered how youth are involved in politics since the end of the conflict. This time, she used Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), which later fed into a workshop (that at the time of writing still had to take place). She found that political participation meant much more to youngsters in Northern Uganda than only voting: it entailed the possibility to join civil society organizations and other networks. Right now, youngsters felt excluded from formal politics. They feel as if young people are used by politicians to push their own political agendas: Politics is a game for the gain of politicians. The boda boda groups, for example, are promised fuel if they lead the way for politicians during rallies, or when they provoke opponents. In times of elections, people would also not like to talk to boda boda drivers given that they would collect and share information about the people you talk to, or the places you frequented. Perceived exclusion and poverty, in combination with the knowledge that these politicians will forget them after the elections, push these youngsters to respond to such requests: “they want to eat today” (Angucia, 17.07.2017). What is more, youngsters perceived politics as a waste of money: Money is shared among politicians rather than used for community development. Instead of based on merit, politics would be based on connections and money, while party manifestos would be no more than wishful thinking. Hence, youth believe that “politics offer nothing” (Angucia, 17.07.2017), and that you can only build your life based on your own hard work. Hence, youth involvement in politics is very low. Participation is hindered by political patronage and intimidation by the state. There are some positive developments, nevertheless, such as peace clubs at school and informal political activities by youth –so far not considered as ‘politics’ however. From the above, Dr. Angucia concluded that future research should focus more on the resilience of youth, rather than their victimhood.

The presentation by Dr. Angucia was followed by a lively discussion. Questions were raised concerning the sample population (what about youngsters who have not returned?), the role of the government (What is the government doing to address these issues?), and with regards to concepts such as forgiveness (who needs to forgive who?), resilience (can we expect everybody to be resilient?), and victimhood (can the depiction of youth as victims explain the failure of many NGO interventions?).

## Youth, Education and Work in Sudan

*These notes are based on the presentation by Abdel Rahman Adam, a Sudanese journalist who had to flee Sudan after being tortured, and who is now working as a EU Fund reporter and auditor in Stichting New Dutch Connections and as a contact person for newcomers in the municipality of Heuvelrug (Utrecht).*

Sudan has a population of 34 million inhabitants, which continues to grow at a rate of 2.8%. The country is rated among the lowest on the Human Development Index, and has a long history of violent conflict. The roots of the conflict date back to colonial times. Southern Sudan felt marginalized by the colonial regime: while there was a modern education system in the north, including even a university in Khartoum, there was nothing in the South. After independence (1955), these inequalities persisted under the newly independent, mainly northern, government – it felt to southerners as if colonial times had not changed. Fighting erupted which lasted until 1972 when the Addis Abeba peace agreement was signed and heralded a brief period of development – most of the current infrastructure was built at that time. In 1979, Sudan joined the Arabic world, in spite of the large Christian population in the South. Even the education system was changed to be in accordance with the Arab structure. When president Jafar Numeiri introduced Sharia law, peace ended.<sup>3</sup> In 2004, a new peace agreement, the comprehensive peace agreement, was signed in Navaisha, Kenya. The agreement was flawed, nevertheless, and fighting reemerged. Around the same time, a new conflict erupted in Darfur. In 2011, South Sudan eventually became independent of Sudan. Up to this day conflict remains in both countries however. Because of the persistent climate of conflict, many people flee Sudan, particularly people from Darfur, Nuba Mountains and the region of the Blue Nile.

The current education system in Sudan was introduced in 1990, just six months after the coup by the current president, Bashir. It consists of four to five years of pre-education (so-called khalwa, which aims to teach children the Koran), eight years of primary education, and three years of secondary education – prior to this system, there were six years of primary education, three years of intermediate and three years of secondary education. The language of instruction is Arabic. The system aims to raise students in accordance to the religious beliefs of Islam and to promote

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<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that Muslims did not want Sharia law either, which is why the president was overthrown. For a short period the country was ruled by Sadiq ElMahdi before the current president took over in 1989.

individual and collective behavior that is guided by the teachings of religion, and to instill social, economic and political values that are based on the teachings of God (Sufi). Moreover it aims to strengthen the spirit of national unity and build a self-independent country.

School dropout is very high in Sudan: the dropout rate in primary education is 35%, while only 37% of school-aged children is enrolled in secondary schooling. While school has been a victim of conflict, it has also contributed to conflict. School dropouts, for example, have been recruited by the warring parties. Policies need to be developed that help school leavers to live their life in dignity and without being stigmatized, and which stimulates them to participate in community life. Moreover, preventive policies should be enacted, such as making education accessible to all by lifting school fees.

## **Education and Development in the two Sudans: Youth Agency in (post-) conflict areas**

*These notes are based on the presentation by Dr. Josje van der Linden, who teaches educational sciences (lifelong learning) at the University of Groningen and math education at a university of applied sciences in Amsterdam/Alkmaar.*

The research presented by Dr. van der Linden examined how education can support youth to foresee in their own livelihood and to contribute to community development in the context/aftermath of conflict, focusing on youngsters' own agency. Her research focuses on the Sudan and South Sudan, more particularly on Tuti Island in North Sudan, and Koboko, a Ugandan town close to the border of South Sudan. Tuti Island is an island located at the intersection of the two Niles (Blue and White Nile). While the island used to be cut off from the capital city of Khartoum, it is now connected by a bridge. During a research on urbanization, the researcher found out that the literacy rate on Tuti Island was much higher than in the rest of the country, but that not everybody on the island had equal access to education. In particular the Fur people, who migrated from Darfur, seemed to be excluded from the education system. Moreover, university graduates on the island seemed to do nothing with their degree. Nevertheless, the island used to be known as the island of education.

Koboko, secondly, is a small border town in Uganda, where many refugees from South Sudan live. There, Dr. van der Linden conducted a study on youth and community development. In particular, she studied a local project that brought together a women's group, youth, and the diaspora, with each group playing their own role, whether as chairperson, coordinator, or funder. She examined how these groups cooperated with each other, and how they build on each other's strengths and capacities. Despite positive results, the local government did not show much interest in the project and did not recognize its potential.

The first study showed that the meaning of education in Sudan appears to be reduced to the availability of schools and universities, and that having a university degree is no guarantee to find a job. The second study was more positive, showing that education develops youngsters' capabilities to take a leading role in community development. What is more, through participation in community

projects youngsters can gain new knowledge. This demonstrates that we should look beyond formal schooling and seek for informal and non-formal opportunities to learn.

## **Education and Peace Building: A view from Colombia**

*These notes are based on the presentation by Gloria Almeyda Stemper, who currently works for the Office of International Programs of the Alamo Colleges District (San Antonio, Texas).*

Unemployment is a huge problem in Latin America, and especially in Colombia.<sup>4</sup> While the general unemployment rate in Latin America is 16.8% (2016), it reaches 20% in Colombia. There are important differences among Latin American countries with regards to employment. Whereas many men and women work in agriculture in Bolivia, only few men and even less women are active in agriculture in the Dominican Republic. Colombia is somewhere in between. While many statistics give the impression that young women in rural areas are inactive, these women are actually working, but they work in the informal sector. More generally, the share of youth active in the informal sector is very high in rural areas. Previous research (Dirven report) has shown that rural youth do not think on the long-term and believe that they are not capable to do anything else than working in the informal sector – they have a low self-esteem. Nevertheless, the share of youth in the informal sector is considerable in urban areas (40%) too. It is unclear whether youth end up in the informal sector out of necessity or because they want to.

After having been part of a USAID project on the reintegration of youth after conflict conducted by Georgetown University, Ms. Almeyda wanted to find out what conditions led to the successful reintegration of youth affected by conflict. She called four participants of the project (year of participation: 1989-1990): three women from El Salvador and one woman from Colombia. The project consisted of granting youth (18-19 years old) from (post-) conflict countries the opportunity to attend technical education. The interviewees explained that welcoming youth and making them feel part of the community are very important to foster reintegration. They also mentioned the need to provide psychological support to youth to help them deal with their trauma, and to increase their self-esteem. Furthermore, they noted the significance of taking youngsters' background into account, as well as their preferences: should youth be trained in agriculture, if they don't want to farm? Lastly, the women indicated that there is a need to rethink the system of certification: While they were offered technical education abroad, their certificate was not always valid in their home country.

## **Education and Peace Building: A view from Colombia**

*These notes are based on the presentation by Miguel Arturo Fajardo Rojas, Director of the Center for Studies in Solidarity Economics of the Universidad de San Gil-Unisangil.*

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<sup>4</sup> While there are other countries in the region that had conflicts (e.g. Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Chile), Colombia is the only country in Latin America that has been in conflict for more than 60 years.

For the past 64 years, Colombia has been the battlefield of different warring factions. Since 1966, the most important factions include the FARC-EP (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – Army of the People), ELN (National Liberation Army), EPL (Popular Liberation Army), and other armed groups. In the 1980s paramilitary groups appeared in addition. While a peace agreement with M19 was already signed in 1991, a peace agreement with the FARC was only reached at the end of 2016 (24/11/2016) after no less than 24 peace dialogues had taken place. The peace agreement, which actually consists of five different agreements, was negotiated in Havana and was the culmination of a dialogue of four years. The agreement foresees a reform of the judiciary system as well as a rural reform, and aims to create equal opportunities for all groups, particularly for peasants, indigenous people and people in poverty. It also caters for reparations for the victims of conflict. During the period of conflict, nearly 220 000 people died, among whom 81.5% were Colombian citizens and 18.5% combatants. Not all regions of Colombia were affected equally by the violence. The FARC was mostly active in 337 municipalities (out of 1116) in Colombia. Since the signing of the agreement, they have retreated to living in camps spread over 23 districts.

The FARC consisted mainly of people from rural areas (66% people with a rural background, 15% with an urban background, and 15% with a semi-urban background). Not all FARC members used to fight. About 55% of the FARC members were actually fighters, another 16% were in jail, and 29% were 'staff'. Most members were men from Colombian background, but there were also some female and foreign guerillas. While 90% of FARC members are literate, about 57% and 21% finished respectively primary and secondary school. Only three percent of guerillas has a degree of higher education.

The Havana peace agreement constitutes a great opportunity to reduce the violence in Colombia, allowing displaced people to return back home. Hopes are high that confiscated lands will be returned to their rightful owners and that the education and health care sector will improve. The ending of the violence will also stimulate development in the rural areas, which will likely reduce poverty levels. There is already a new program on overcoming poverty in the rural sector. Likewise, it can bring more democracy in the country. A new policy on planning, which took a participatory approach, is promising in this regard. Since most of the FARC members were youth, new opportunities will have to be provided that target youngsters, including opening up access to higher education or promoting entrepreneurship through training programs. Youth can become an agent of change by creating cooperatives and solidarity organizations for example. The FARC already set up one cooperative after the peace agreement.

Some challenges remain nevertheless. First of all, we need to ensure that education is relevant to youth. It is promising that three months ago, the Ministry of Education launched a reform process of the education system in rural areas, which seeks to make education more relevant, innovative and linked to employment. Second, more jobs need to be created. This will require substantial financial resources. Lastly, we need to make sure that youth are included in the policy making process in order to avoid estrangement.

Dr. Fajardo's own work can serve as a source of inspiration for the new policies. 45 years ago, he started a study on education in the rural area of Santander, where two special institutions were created. The institutions used flexible schedules that allowed farmers to carry out their work in addition to attending school, by, for example teaching only in the weekends. What he learned from his work is that it is very important to take the aspirations and needs of youngsters into account if we want them to take up a leading role in social transformation. Education needs to be relevant to them. Moreover, he found out that we need more creativity in dealing with education in rural areas.

During the discussions, participants expressed interest in the cooperatives, and how these can teach solidarity to pupils. Moreover, they were interested to know whether there were any parallels between the FARC peace process and other peace processes conducted with other warring factions. Also, many questions were raised with regards to the referendum on the peace agreement: how did youth vote? And why did people reject the peace agreement in the first place? According to Dr. Fajardo, youth did not vote in the referendum but did protest once the outcomes were announced, pressing the government to sign the agreement. The agreement, furthermore, would not have been rejected because people did not want peace, but rather because they were skeptical about certain elements in the agreement, such as financial compensation of the guerillas.

## **Conflict and Violence in Northeast India: the Role of Youth and Mother Torch bearers in Peace Building Process**

*These notes are based on the presentation by Dr. Jeebanlata Salam, who is affiliated with the School of Social Sciences, National Institute of Advanced Studies, IISc Campus, Bangalore, India.*

India is a multilingual and multicultural society where Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists and Yens are living together, each with their own religion, language and life style. Since Hindus represent 79.8% of the population, the dynamics between the majority group and minorities are of great interest. Currently, the Hindu culture represents the dominant culture in India and the party in power (BPP) is mainly representative of the Hindu population. Dr. Salam therefore warns for cultural violence against minority groups, which are perceived as 'the others'. While the constitution does protect minority rights, many people are not aware of their legal entitlements. Educating people on their rights could help rectifying the situation.

There are different types of violence in India. First, there are blatant cases of communal violence and violence against Muslims. In 1992, for example, a famous mosque was destroyed by Hindu armed forces, while there was a severe blast in Mumbai in 1993 which was claimed by terrorists in the name of Islam. This attack killed 257 civilians and injured 713 others. In 2002, next, there was a pogrom in Gujarat that targeted the local Muslim population: houses where Muslims lived were burned down. Also today, there is a lot of hatred towards the Muslim population, which are pejoratively nicknamed the 'beef-eaters' (cows are holy to Hindu) or anti-nationals. Secondly, there is caste violence. Casteism is a form of social stratification of the population based on religious criteria: The

untouchables (Dalits) constitute the lowest caste, while the highest caste is composed of Brahmins. Each caste has its own customs, food, colors, family names etc. Inter-caste marriage is prohibited. Interestingly, the northeast of India is a caste-free society since it was not colonized by Hindus. Although many people resent the caste system, it continues to exist. According to Dr. Salam, only education can lead the way out by empowering youth to fight this system. Thirdly, there are occurrences of Maoist violence –this type of violence is also referred to as naxal violence, named after a place in West Bengal where people used to be enslaved to work for land owners and colonists. The most vicious type of violence is ethnic (tribal) violence however, which takes place in the so-called tribal belt of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. This region is also known for its recruitment of child soldiers. While they are used most of the time as informers, sometimes they also act as combatants. Rather than ethnic, the underlying causes of this violence are structural, such as the lack of education and the blatant levels of poverty.

Two conflict areas were discussed in more detail: Kashmir and the northeastern region of India. At independence (1947), Kashmir, a predominantly Muslim society, wanted independence, yet it was divided over its neighbors, India and Pakistan. In 1965, Pakistan invaded the Indian territory of Kashmir. Ever since tensions are high between India and Pakistan, which periodically burst out into conflict. There are also occasions of violence on behalf of the separatist movement of Kashmiri Muslims, who denounce the neglect of the Kashmiri population and want their own state. Youth are an important part of this struggle.

The conflict in the northeast of India spans eight states. These states, with the exception of Sikkim, are part of India, but are only connected to the rest of the country by a very small land bridge, or ‘chicken neck’, in between Bhutan and Bangladesh. It is a highly diverse region, where about 400 languages are spoken. It is, therefore, sometimes nicknamed ‘mini Asia’. Although these eight states are rich in resources, they have been disregarded by the central government. Regions, such as Nagaland and Manipur have been struggling for their independence for long. In response to these insurgencies the government implemented the Armed Forces Special Forces Act (1958), which allows soldiers to act in any event at any time in the name of security.

Although peace accords have failed, there are important movements fighting for peace, such as the mother torch bearers. This group comes together at night to light their torch and speak out against any type of injustice. This movement has existed since colonial times. Youth, who constitute 50% of the population,<sup>5</sup> have also played an important role in the peacebuilding process. In 2016, the Peoples’ Resurgence and Justice Alliance (PRJA) was founded. Its mission is to rebuild a self-sufficient and peaceful community that works towards establishing humane policies. Within this movement, youth act as agents of change that push for policies that create a better environment for youth employment and education, and that advocate for equal opportunities for all ethnic/religious/social groups of people in the region.

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<sup>5</sup> This percentage represents the Indian population below 25 years old.

The audience was very intrigued by these popular movements for peace. Questions were raised with regards to their use of social media, their means of mobilization, and the ethnic representativeness of this group. Additionally, people wanted to know what is taught by the Indian curriculum. According to Dr. Salam, Indian textbooks and curricula would reflect the dominant Hindu culture, excluding the socio-cultural periphery.<sup>6</sup>

## Student activism in Nepal

*These notes are based on the presentation by Neha Basnet, who is a PhD researcher at the University of Groningen.*

Neha Basnet's research is based on her own experiences as a child in Nepal. Born as a third child, she felt 'invisible' at home and had to speak up to be heard. As such, she felt she was born an activist. Right now, she describes herself as an 'activist at heart, a researcher in practice', or a 'pracademic'. Her life was marked by the 2008 student demonstrations in front of Tribhuvan University in Nepal, where she was studying Spanish. She witnessed the rampage of the university: offices were put in fire. The protests erupted after only 32 out of 605 students passed their exams, and lasted for weeks in spite of a police intervention. During that time, the university was closed. To end the manifestations, the students demanded a reevaluation of the exams, as well as a revision of the syllabus.

Compared to its neighbors, China and India, Nepal is a small country with about 28 million inhabitants. 40% of the population is between 16 and 40 years old. Traditionally, Nepal has been ruled by dynasties. There are two dynasties that stand out: the Rana dynasty (1885 to 1951) and the Shah dynasty (1951-2008). The Rana dynasty had a big impact on Nepal, opening up its borders and providing the general public access to education. The Rana dynasty clashed with the Shah dynasty however, and overthrew the former in 1951 to impose the Panchayat system (1960-1990). This was a very authoritarian system that did not allow any political parties, nor party meetings. Starting from 1972 students protested against this system. Instead of the Shah dynasty, they supported the manifesto of Mao and demanded democracy. As such, they are similar to the Tiananmen protests in 1989 against the communist regime in China. In 2008, new protests erupted.

Protests are illustrative of the agency of youth. Yet, what is agency exactly, Ms. Basnet asks. It is something that belongs to the individual? Does the individual need to be fully conscious of being an agent to have agency? Does the action need to be intentional? Ms. Basnet discussed these questions with the summer school participants. Together it was concluded that having agency means that you

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<sup>6</sup> I am grateful to Mari Gardner, student Political Sciences at Drexel University, for sharing her notes on this presentation.

are acting against dominant structures; that it does not need to be fully intentional nor conscious; and that the outcomes can be both good as well as bad. Agency in short is driving change.

## **The role of education in Peacebuilding: A synthesis on findings from Myanmar, Pakistan, South Africa and Uganda**

*These notes are based on the presentation by Simone Datzberger, who is a Marie-Curie Research Fellow at the Department of Human Geography, Planning and International Development (GPIO), University of Amsterdam. Her research focuses on the role of education in increasing civil agency and voice in the sub-Saharan African context.*

As a member of the Research Consortium on Education and Peacebuilding, Dr. Datzberger presented the structure, scope and aims of the network, as well as the results of a large-scale research project on the role of education in peacebuilding that was conducted between July 2014 and July 2016. The network is a partnership between UNICEF, the University of Amsterdam, the University of Sussex and Ulster University, and has a number of counterparts in the global South, including in Myanmar, Pakistan, South Africa, and Uganda. The research project focused on the role of education in peacebuilding, particularly examining three themes: (1) the integration of education into peacebuilding processes at global and country levels, (2) the role of teachers in peacebuilding, and (3) the role of formal and non-formal peacebuilding education programs targeting youth. Additionally, there were two transversal themes: (1) the impact of direct and indirect violence, and (2) gender roles.

The theoretical framework guiding the research project was developed by the main researchers involved (Novelli, Lopes Cardozo & Smith, 2016). It uses the so-called 4R framework, which stands for Redistribution (e.g. equal access to education, equal distribution of funds, etc.), Recognition (e.g. who is included in the textbooks? How are different groups represented?), Reconciliation (e.g. how can the education system contribute to reconciliation), and Representation (e.g. who takes part in the decision-making process?). This framework builds upon the insights by Nancy Frazer, who has worked extensively on social justice.

In terms of methodology, the study consisted of 4 in-depth country case studies. For each country, the consortium first conducted an extensive desk review, making use of existing research, studies, peace agreements, education policies, curricula, and textbooks. The second part of the study was based on fieldwork, and consisted of conducting Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and expert meetings (e.g. civil society, teachers, experts in education, representatives of the Ministry of Education, etc.).

The case studies included South Africa, Uganda, Pakistan and Myanmar. These countries were selected since they are representative of an alarming trend in conflict-affected countries: the more fragile a country is, the lower the years of education of its population. It is not surprising then that half of the world's out-of-school children lives in conflict affected societies. While conflict has ended

in South Africa, the country still needs to overcome the legacy of Apartheid and to address the blatant inequalities in access to education. Educational inequalities are rampant in all four case studies, even though education is largely free – additional school costs can limit access. In Myanmar, for example, nearly 50% of children did not attend primary school. In Pakistan the number would be even higher. In Uganda, then, 75.2% of the school-going population drops out of school before completing (in our study the share was slightly lower with 68%).

The outcome consisted of four separate country reports and one synthesis report. The latter report is discussed here. It is divided into four parts, discussing issues of governance, equality and equity, social cohesion, and reconciliation at school. It addressed two particular research questions: (1) How and to what extent is education integrated into broader peacebuilding policies and practices?, and (2) How and to what extent is peacebuilding integrated in education policies? A difference was made between explicit and implicit forms of peacebuilding through education: whereas explicit forms are intentionally designed to contribute to peacebuilding (think of peace clubs or peacebuilding teacher training), implicit programs contribute indirectly to social change (e.g. equal access to education, equal representation in boards of education, etc.).

In terms of governance, the research showed that across the four case studies, education is mainly perceived as a tool for economic development and as a way to ensure access to the job market. Educational policies and reforms therefore mainly seek to open up education to everybody by making access free. Educational investments were problematic in three out of four case studies – only South Africa meets the minima defined by the Education for All Agenda. The largest share of the educational budget goes to teacher salaries. While these countries receive international support to strengthen their education systems, funding distribution is often politicized and serves the political elites. It follows that those countries most in need, do not have the necessary funding available to strengthen their education system. By consequence, the education system cannot play any major role in driving social change. This is further inhibited as youth are not stimulated to take up agency and voice their concerns.

Second, in terms of inequalities and inequities, the consortium found that pupils' are denied equal opportunities in all four countries. There are important differences in quality of education between groups. There are also important differences in level of education depending on social class or wealth. Children from the poorest households are more likely out of school than children from richer households. There are also important inequalities in terms of gender.

Turning to social cohesion and the education system, there were two main findings. First, the consortium exposed a tension at school between embracing national unity and cherishing cultural diversity. In terms of language of instruction, for example, studies have shown that it is good to educate children in their mother tongue, especially at the primary level. Yet, many parents do not want their children to be educated in their native language because they feel that their children will be disadvantaged when they are not taught in English (cf. Uganda and South Africa). Second, they found that education contributes to the segregation of groups, particularly in terms of wealth. Religion too was found to be a factor of segregation in some countries, specifically Pakistan and

Myanmar. Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's), lastly, are also discriminated in terms of schooling, despite having equal rights on paper.

Lastly, in terms of reconciliation, there was only one country, South Africa, that commissioned a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and that incorporated its findings in the school curricula. In the other countries, such a commission was not used as a tool to create social truth and reconciliation. Policy makers in these countries believed that such a commission would spark new tensions and maybe even conflict.

The overall conclusion of the research project was that in all four country case studies, the focus on Redistribution is much larger than on the other Rs of the 4R framework. The underlying assumption is that processes of recognition, representation and reconciliation will automatically occur once issues of redistribution in education are tackled. In this way education is reduced to a tool to foster economic development and employment generation. So far, there is not enough focus on developing agency and voice among youngsters and on stimulating social change.

The presentation by Dr. Datzberger was well received and was followed by many questions. The audience was particularly interested in hearing best practices in terms of policies to keep children at school or to help them re-access the education system after dropping out. One way of attracting children is to make education accessible. There is a discussion, nevertheless, on whether education should be completely free or whether parents should contribute at least a little bit so that they will appreciate their child's education more.<sup>7</sup>

## **The role of formal and non-formal youth initiatives in peacebuilding in Uganda**

*These notes are based on the presentation by Simone Datzberger, who is a Marie-Curie Research Fellow at the Department of Human Geography, Planning and International Development (GPIO), University of Amsterdam. Her research focuses on the role of education in increasing civil agency and voice in the sub-Saharan African context.*

Uganda has one of the largest shares (78%) of young people under 30 in the world. Youth also constitute a large part of the unemployed population (64%). Most unemployed youth live in urban areas and are female. Although the level of education is linked to the quality of employment in Uganda, it is not related to access to jobs. Given that youth represent such a significant part of the population and given their dire situation, it is important that youth have agency. It is positive in this regard that Uganda has implemented a youth policy, and that there is a Ugandan Youth network. This network has developed two youth manifestos, and represents diverse youth organizations,

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<sup>7</sup> I am grateful to Constanze Vogel, student of law, for sharing her notes on this presentation.

including the Ugandan Scouts, the National Youth Council and the Uganda parliamentary forum for Youth affairs.

The current research project aimed to analyze to what extent youth in Uganda have agency, and how formal and non-formal peacebuilding projects in Uganda help youngsters to (further) develop their agency. In particular, it addressed the following questions: (1) To what extent do policies include a focus on youth agency for the realization of sustainable peace? (2) To what extent do formal and non-formal education initiatives focused on youth promote agency for the realization of sustainable peace? (3) What are youth's experiences and understandings of their agency in a (post-) conflict environment? These questions were investigated based on policy reviews, semi-structured interviews with representatives of civil society, the Ministry of Education, youth organizations, and other key actors, as well as based on three micro case Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in Gulu and Adjumani, and four FGDs on the topic of education and livelihood initiatives more broadly.

At the ministerial level, the interviews showed that the interviewees are preoccupied by the absence of a Ministry of Youth in Uganda. Currently, youth is a competence of the Ministry of Gender. Although they do good work, they do not have enough staff. More interestingly, ministerial representatives seemed to have a very ambiguous perception of youth: On the one hand youth are perceived to be vulnerable because they have no opportunities. On the other hand, they are seen as the bearers of hope. Rather than nurturing participation and voice, ministerial representatives believe the formal education system needs to be a tool to foster economic development, rather than to nurture political participation and voice, or to contribute to peace-building – most interviewees did not consider Uganda to be a post-conflict country.

Interviewees of civil society organizations considered it their priority to advocate and/or enhance youth agency and participation through non-formal education and leadership training programs. They pointed out that these programs often marginalize the less privileged youth however, particularly those with low levels of education living in rural areas. Beneficiaries of leadership programs usually have completed their secondary schooling, while others do not even have the skills to write an application to be part of the program.

All interviewees felt that education does not provide youth with the skills they need, as one participant explained: “what can you do after you studied modern physics...? I would not like my children to go through the same education system as me, it does not lead anywhere” (Datzberger, 19.07.2017). Nevertheless, Uganda has implemented diverse livelihood initiatives and educational programs in recent years to promote the economic agency of youth, such as the Business, Technical and Vocational Education Training program, the Uganda Youth Capital Venture Fund, or the Youth Livelihood Program. Major points of criticism mainly revolve around the implementation of these programs, their content, as well as around the structural barriers to education. Evaluations of the vocational and livelihood programs were more positive among ministerial representatives.

In terms of non-formal education initiatives, micro case studies were conducted on the war-affected training center in Gulu and the piggery project in Adjumani. These projects also aim to increase the

economic agency of youth. The first project was organized by a war-affected woman, the second by a young man. The findings show that these projects have a peacebuilding impact. Participants attested that they felt strengthened after participation and that it gave them a sense of belonging and inner peace. They were very positive about the training, which provided them with necessary skills. The perceived key of success is that these initiatives are context-specific. Yet, structural barriers remain: After participation, the participants still lacked the money to start a business for themselves.

It follows that youth agency is low in Uganda. In terms of political agency, youngsters have only few possibilities to participate in the decision-making process, and those opportunities that exist are mostly grasped by youth that is already quite privileged. Youth believe that their agency is hampered by their environment, including politicians, district officials, schools, unsupportive parents, or even their partners. With regards to economic agency, the environment remains hostile to youth. At the moment 400 000 young adults are competing for 9000 jobs. The more, there are issues of clientelism and misconduct. Many young adults therefore turn to the informal sector, especially in Kampala (Nasser Road). In rural areas, on the other hand, youth have created self-help groups to overcome the biggest challenges. New technologies and social media could be used to help youth find new opportunities. Concerning social agency, there is a gender gap in Uganda. On average, girls do not attend or complete secondary schooling – at the primary level, girls have caught up nevertheless. Girls also take less part in participatory decision-making processes.

The study concludes that the Ugandan education system, even after improvements in infrastructure, does not stimulate youth's agency, whether political, social or economic; that there are important structural barriers that continue to hamper education and livelihood initiatives; that youth are not given voice in the decision-making process; that the focus is on economic empowerment of youth rather than on political empowerment; and that so far micro-initiatives have been more successful than macro-initiatives.

## Peace Building Through Participatory Action Research

*These notes are based on the presentation by Victor Friedman, Izabel Ramadan and Michal Razer. Prof. Dr. Friedman is Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior and director of the Action Research Center for Social Justice at the Max Stern Yezreel Valley College, Israel. Ms. Ramadan is lecturer and practicum instructor in the M.Ed. Program in Inclusive Education at Oranim Academic College of Education, Israel. Dr. Razer is the director of the Department of Education Training and a Senior Lecturer in the Graduate Faculty of Oranim Academic College of Education.*

The conflict between Israel and Palestine has been going on for decades. Within Israel both groups are living together. About 20% of the Israeli population is Arab – Israeli Arabs are not to be confounded with Palestinian Arabs living in West-Bank and Gaza. Since primary and secondary education are largely separate, the first time Israeli Jews and Arabs meet is at university. Tertiary education, therefore, is a bearer of hope. Projects that try to bring both groups together at the lower

levels of education often fail due to opposition on behalf of the government or parents. The children are not interested themselves either. At university, on the other hand, the groups are mixed. For the past 30 years, Prof. Dr. Friedman, Dr. Razer and Ms. Ramadan have worked on diverse programs to promote and stimulate inclusive education mainly using action research.<sup>8</sup> Dr. Razer and Ms. Ramadan started, for example, a mixed-language course, teaching both Hebrew and Arab. At first, the administration of the teacher college refused classes in Arab. Yet, the program is now implemented. Arab students welcomed this change and now feel much more accepted and integrated in the college. Additionally, a course on empathy and inter-cultural narratives was added to the curriculum of the program on inclusive education. This course aims to develop students' empathic skills and discusses matters such as identity. At times this class stirred controversy, such as the time Ms. Ramadan expressed that she felt Palestinian, or the time a student commented: 'we came to learn teaching, not politics'. Prof. Dr. Friedman faced similar challenges in his teaching college: 'why do you make us talk politics, because we are all friends?'

These projects revealed a typical pattern: bringing Israeli Jews and Arabs together to talk about politically loaded topics is met with resistance. There is the idea among students that they form 'one big happy family'. This is a fantasy, however, since there are many underlying tensions. It is difficult to deal with this idea: If the fantasy is not challenged, the idea persists that relations between Israeli Arab and Jewish students are just fine. It denies the existence of conflict and silences all forms of inequality, injustice, and oppression that are caused by the conflict. Yet, when students' denial of the conflict is challenged, it may intensify their resistance. Indeed, students have the desire to maintain the 'happy family' perception and keep the conflict out of the classroom. The role of emotions is very important in this regard: emotions related to the conflict, such as fear, anger, resentment, hatred, constitute a strong barrier to developing open and healthy relationships among the students. While these emotions are not personal, they are present and thus need to be dealt with.

In what followed, the summer school participants participated in one of the exercises that the presenters use during their projects. The aim of this exercise is to change participants' (i.e. students') frame of the 'one big happy family' using reflexivity. Reflexivity invites the participants to look inside their selves by writing down their feelings and thoughts after hearing multiple narratives on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. When feelings are written down, the papers are anonymously collected and redistributed. After receiving somebody else's paper, you have to reflect on the feelings of the other person and write down what you think about his/her reflections. The summer school participants participated enthusiastically in the exercise and described it as an 'alternative way to open up', and 'a very safe and open process'. Here below, we capture the narratives of the three researchers that served as input to the summer school exercise:

Prof. Dr. Friedman is a Zionist Jew born in the United States. After participating in an exchange program to Israel at the age of 18, he decided to go and live in Israel. More than a religion, Judaism is

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<sup>8</sup> Razer and Friedman (2017) have published a book on inclusive education through action research: 'From exclusion to inclusive schools'.

a culture to him. As a Zionist, he believes in the right to self-determination of the Jewish people in the land of Israel. To him, Jewish have been living in Israel since more than 3000 years. Only in Israel, Jews can be a society, everywhere else in the world they are guests. He grew up with the idea that the conflict can be solved once the Arabs accept that they lost the war after the UN divided the land in 1948. Yet, at the same time, Prof. Dr. Friedman is opposed to war and is against the occupation. It was only when Prof. Dr. Friedman encountered a friendly Arab while hitchhiking that he understood there was something flawed about his narrative. Therefore, he decided to study Arab and travelled throughout the Arab world. Next, he studied education and ended up in research. As a university professor he tries to create a space where Arabs and Jews can meet and create an alternative world.

Dr. Razer was born in a Kibboetsk near Gaza, which belonged to Egypt at the time. Her father was a soldier at the border. She grew up with the idea that Arabs are the enemy, although she was not very conscious about being Jewish since her family was not religious. She lived totally apart from Arab Israelis given that schools are completely separated. Therefore, she believed that 'we' are the good ones and Arabs the bad ones, the ones who want to kill 'us'. She only met Israeli Arabs when she joined the army. Then she understood something was wrong with the prevailing view on Arabs. When she started working at her teachers' college, she noticed that none of the staff was Arab, although about half of the students were Israeli Arabs. Hence, once she became head of her department, she decided to include Arab faculty members.

Contrary to Prof. Dr. Friedman and Dr. Razer, Ms. Ramadan is an Arab Israeli that grew up in a small village in the north of Israel. As a child, she felt different from the other people in her village, who called her and her family 'the refugees' – even among Arabs she felt like a refugee. Her father had indeed fled his birth village in 1948 after it was destroyed by Jewish Israeli tanks. When she was in eighth grade, her teacher taught her to sing the Israeli anthem and asked her to carry the flag on Independence day. When she told her teacher that it was not her independence day, her teacher got very angry and punished her. Her parents, in turn, called her a troublemaker and said that she cannot defeat a nail: the weak side cannot confront the powerful side. From her relatives, she learned that Jewish are bad and that they are thieves that have stolen her homeland. In 1993, she participated in a protest against the murder of an Arab Israeli during which the police arrested her brother and uncle. At university too, Ms. Ramadan felt that Arabs were left out. After, she started teaching Hebrew in Arab schools. It was difficult for her to implement the Israeli curriculum, which totally neglects the Palestinian narrative. She was once more called a troublemaker when she wanted to talk about this. At last, she started working with Dr. Razer, which was difficult in the beginning. Yet, their relationship changed during the second war in Lebanon (2006). When Ms. Ramadan got very angry about what happened, Dr. Razer consoled her and let her express herself. At that point, she understood that there are good Jews too and that Jewish and Arabs can be friends.

## **Youth and Work in (post) conflict Sri Lanka: the Livelihoods Project**

*These notes are based on the presentation by Sally Angelson, program manager of Childfund, New Zealand and participant of the summer school.*

From 1983 until 2009 there was a bloody civil war in Sri Lanka between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil Liberation Fighters (Tamil Tigers). The fighting cost the lives of an estimated 100 000 people and caused major displacements throughout the country and the world. There has not been any Truth and Reconciliation Commission ever since. To make matters worse, there was the destructive 2004 tsunami. The education system was only reestablished in 2010, and up to this day people continue to live in temporary shelters.

In 2004, Childfund started working in the city of Batticalao, where mainly ethnic Tamils live. Batticalao was very much affected by the civil war, making life very difficult for youth in particular. Anojan, for example, is a young adult of 19 years old, who did not attend school because he has been supporting his family of eight since he was 13 years old. Childfund started a project to improve the livelihoods of youth like Anojan. The project looks at ways youngsters can gain an income by drawing on their assets since these youngsters are very resilient, in spite of all the troubles they have gone through.

500 youngsters took part in the project. They started with an asset mapping that consisted of drawing a person and analyzing each body part: the head represents the things the participant knows something about, and would enjoy talking about, or teaching to others; the hands stand for the practical skills the participant has and enjoys; while the heart symbolizes the values and things (s)he cares deeply about. Based on this mapping, Childfund started a micro-finance program that was steered by a youth driven central committee. Most participants were female since many men emigrated to another part of the country to make money. The program was very successful. Sujata, for example, attended a training on mushroom cultivation and built her own shed for mushrooms with support by her community.

## **La Comuna: an example of participatory budgeting at the community level in Colombia**

*These notes are based on the presentation of Anna Bednarczyk, an independent researcher and filmmaker from Poland and participant of the summer school.*

Participatory budgeting is based on a set of rules: (1) it actually means that citizens can take part in the decision-making process, (2) the decisions that are made have a visual impact, and (3) there are clear rules of participation. Citizens have to know what the budget is, who is responsible for what, and how the project will be conducted throughout its life cycle. Participatory budgeting is part of participatory democracy. So far, participatory budgeting has been mainly implemented at city level. The city administration consecrates a share of the budget to the citizens of the city, who can use the money for diverse projects that they would like to develop. Usually, the share is only small. In Medellin, for example, the participatory budget represents 5% of the total city budget.

To structure the decision-making process, local leaders are elected and form thematic commissions (e.g. commission on education, commission on sports, etc.). Within these commissions, leaders discuss the problems that the community is facing and look for ideas to solve those problems. All leaders together, then, decide what project proposals will receive funding. Once the decision is made, the commission members go back to their neighborhood to promote the new program. Prior to the next cycle of participatory budgeting, the commissions are renewed and elections are held. On average, the process takes about one year.

Ms. Bednarczyk studied and filmed the commissions behind participatory budgeting in Medellin. Examples of the community projects in Medellin include the founding of a small neighborhood newspaper, and the start of computer classes.

## **Brasil: Movimento Sim Terra**

*These notes are based on the presentation of Anna Rodrigues, who is currently pursuing a PhD in Spain and was a participant of the summer school.*

In 2011, Ms. Rodrigues came in contact with the movement Sim Terra, the movement of the landless. The movement exists since 1985 and denounces the huge concentration of land and production in Brazil. By occupying land, they try to resist the concentration of land by a few rich. Often, these lands serve no social purposes, but are used for speculation. In 2011, the movement occupied land in Pequeno Williams. Ms. Rodrigues contributed to the movement by providing services, such as education. Prior to her involvement with the movement, she had participated in manifestations against the rector of her university, who had used university finances for private purposes.

## **Nigeria: drivers of conflict and violence**

*These notes are based on the presentation of Murtala Adogi Mohammed, who works for UNICEF Nigeria and was a participant in the summer school.*

Nigeria is characterized by an important north-south divide: Muslims live mainly in the north and Christians predominantly in the south. At the moment, the country is struggling with three conflicts. First, there is the conflict with Boko Haram. This terrorist organization was founded in the northeast of the country, and has been very successful in recruiting vulnerable youngsters given the extreme levels of poverty levels in the area. Secondly, a conflict is lingering in Biafra, the southeast. In the early 1960s, there was a bloody conflict in Biafra after the region seceded from Nigeria. Third, conflicts thrive in the Niger delta, which are mainly related to oil.

To avoid future conflict, particularly among youngsters, programs have to be developed that focus on the recognition of young people and their right to participate politically. There are already some

promising trends in this regard, including the #NotToYoungToRun movement that seeks to decrease the age to become a parliamentarian.

## **Balancing theory and practice**

After the presentations of the practitioners, a small discussion was organized to discuss the (absence of a) relationship between theory and practice. The summer school participants reflected on those theories that had been of use to them, as well as on the challenges they encountered to translate research into practice.

Different useful theories were identified, ranging from theories of social psychology (e.g. inter-group contact), constructivism, critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970), and theories on social movements, collective action, and networking.

All participants felt that there is a disconnect between research and practice. They identified several challenges related to translating theory into practice: (1) easy solutions on paper can be hard to adapt to specific contexts, or can have adverse effects; (2) practitioners are too often seeking to legitimize rather than scrutinize their projects – they want to find what they are looking for; and (3) theories are often too universalistic instead of context-specific.

## **Group work**

*Every afternoon, the participants broke apart in four small groups to discuss specific aspects of Youth, Education and Work. The final session was dedicated to presenting the findings of the group work in an innovative and creative way.*

### **Youth and work: transitions to work and the future of work**

The first group work focused on youth and work, analyzing in particular the transition from education to work and the future prospects of work for young adults in (post-) conflict societies. The team presented their findings using an interactive presentation in which the audience was invited to think along. They identified two major issues that need to be addressed: (1) the lack of opportunities for youth in (post-) conflict settings, and (2) the lack of services in their communities. They concluded that these issues could be tackled by transformations in the field of higher education, education, and policy-making. Actors within the field of higher education, first, could study these communities to expose the challenges and opportunities that need to be addressed to improve the situation of youngsters in (post-) conflict areas. At the level of primary and secondary education, next, more focus needs to be put on vocational and technical training to provide youngsters with the necessary skills to find employment after graduating. Policy-makers, third, need to develop strategic development plans, especially for rural areas.

## Youth and higher education

This team analyzed the (hypothetical) failure of preparatory classes for refugees in the Netherlands: they outlined a situation in which a preparatory class was launched for refugees, which was very successful until many refugees started to drop-out. Using a Force Field Analysis the participants had to try to understand why the program was failing and what could be done to rectify the situation. The idea behind a Force Field Analysis is that situations are maintained by a delicate balance between forces that drive change and forces that resist change. To stimulate change, the driving forces must be strengthened or the resisting forces weakened. Hence the participants had to reflect on the elements that were pushing refugees to attend classes, as well as on the elements that prevent them from attending. They had to reflect hereon from different perspectives, including the perspective of the refugees, the teachers, and researchers. The results of the analysis can be found in anexe 4.

## Peacebuilding and life skills education

The third team focused on peacebuilding and life skills education using tree mapping: the audience had to identify the inherent challenges (roots of the tree) and opportunities (leaves of the tree) within three domains of peacebuilding and life skills education: educational curricula (which and whose identity and values are integrated in the curriculum?), the right to education (how can we reduce the number of out-of-school children and ensure the right to education for all?), and the purpose of education (how can we make sure that education leads to job opportunities?). The result of the tree mapping can be consulted in anexe 5.

## Youth and the community relations

The fourth and final group performed a play which visualized the relations between youth and their community. In the play, two youngsters moved from the village to the city to find employment. Their hopes were high as they already knew somebody in the city. Once arrived, they became boda-boda (motorcycle) drivers. It also visualized how youth stay in contact with their village through the use of technology and social media. The play was done in silence to symbolize the silencing of youth voices.

## **Youth, education and work in (post-)conflict areas**

*Draft paper by Dr. Josje van der Linden based on presentations and discussions in the summer school. This paper reflects my own processing of the summer school and can by no means be regarded as a full report. The responsibility for the ideas expressed is mine.*

### **Introduction**

‘Hope of the nation’ reads the text on the shirt of the ‘boda boda’ driver taking me through Juba in December 2012. A ‘boda boda’ is a motorcycle used as a means of transport for the people on the back of the vehicle and as a means of earning money by the drivers, mostly young men. In December 2012 Juba was still vibrant with hope and my companion from South Sudan, who used to live as an Internally Displaced Person (IDP) in the North kept meeting people who, just as he did, moved to the South after secession from the North in 2011. The secession followed a war of nearly fifty years between the North and the South. How different is the situation now: in December 2013 factions divided by tribal and political issues took up arms against each other and since then the situation in South Sudan has only changed for the worse. Thousands of people sought refuge in neighbouring countries or became internally displaced people. Recently, after ample considerations, my friend also decided to register as a refugee in northern Uganda. He is in his early thirties now and has been on the move since he was 6 when he travelled (on his own) from his home town Renk in what later became South Sudan to the North to seek education and work and above all a safe place to live.

From the story above it will be clear why the word ‘post’ has been put between brackets in the title of this paper: the instability of post-conflict areas makes them prone to new conflicts, also in times of relative peace. Young people play a crucial role in these areas. They embody the ‘hope of the nation’. Still, if they do not get the right opportunities, they may easily give up hope and refer to destructive ways to survive such as prostitution, drug abuse, or joining militias. Yet, only regarding youth as victims who missed education and decent work opportunities does not do justice to the experience and resilience they developed during their life in conflict situations. Their agency should form the base for interventions to create meaningful education and work opportunities for them to gain skills and an income, as well as self-esteem as they contribute to the community. The main question to be discussed in this paper is: How can education and work opportunities encourage and build on youth agency in post-conflict areas? Subsequently the following subquestions are going to be discussed:

1. What is the position of youth and youth agency in (post-)conflict areas?
2. What role can education play to support youth agency in (post-) conflict areas?
3. How can youth agency be strengthened and developed through work for individual livelihoods and community development?

The main concepts used throughout this paper derive from three sources. To critically evaluate the situation in post-conflict areas we make use of the concepts of ‘negative’ and ‘positive peace’, developed by Galtung (1976). Negative peace merely refers to the absence of violence whereas

positive peace refers to people living together in a sustainable form of peace, where there is no structural violence and conditions for war have been defeated. To understand ‘agency’ we make use of Giddens (1979; 1991), who discusses agency as opposed to but also interrelated with ‘structure’. Agency is the way in which individuals contribute to and directly promote social influences that are global in their consequences and implications (Giddens, 1991, p. 2). Finally, the capability approach of Nussbaum (2011) and Sen (1999) elaborates on the right of each individual to live a life worthy of living. Nussbaum views education as one of the central capabilities as it is not only a capability in itself, but also promotes other capabilities (education as ‘fertile functioning’).

This paper draws on contributions and discussions in a summer school on ‘Youth, education and work in (post-)conflict areas’, a combined activity of the research network on Youth, Education and Work (YEW) and the UNESCO chair of Professor Jacques Zeelen on Lifelong Learning, Youth and Work, based in Gulu University, Uganda. The network joins researchers (and practitioners) from all over the world, who are specialised in practice-oriented research such as needs assessments, evaluation research and action research to contribute to the construction of peaceful and sustainable communities (see for example Zeelen, Van der Linden, Nampota, Ngabirano, 2010; Blaak, Tukundane, Van der Linden & Elsdijk, 2016). They have a tradition in creating knowledge through (international) cooperation. The participants of the summer school were invited to join the network in this tradition and contribute to the development of knowledge on youth, education and work in (post-)conflict areas. Participants and lecturers from the five continents (!) joined the sessions to share research and practitioner experiences and develop new perspectives<sup>9</sup>. This paper reflects my own processing of the insights developed during the week and subsequently discusses each one of the subquestions. Throughout the paper a tentative answer to the main question will be formulated as a contribution to further discussion and as an attempt to develop policies and practices regarding youth agency in conflict affected areas. Finally, a point of reflection is the appropriate research approach for further research.

## The position of youth and youth agency in (post-)conflict areas

‘Broken citizenship’ is the term with which Angucia (2010) characterised war affected children in northern Uganda following her PhD research on the reintegration of those children in that area some ten years ago. Loosely using the UNESCO definition of youth as people between 15 to 25 years old, the children who featured in that research can now be labelled as ‘youth’. This section will discuss the position of youth and youth agency in (post-)conflict areas, based on research in Uganda (Angucia, 2017; Datzberger, 2017a), India (Salam, 2017) and Nepal (Basnet, 2017). Angucia states that the term ‘broken citizenship’ does not only apply to war affected children and youth, but to the whole community in northern Uganda (Angucia, 2017). The children who came back from abduction by the army of Joseph Kony, returned to towns and villages where citizenship had been destroyed and nowadays live as youth in situations where citizenship is still under construction. Sadly, this

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seems to be the case in nearly all (post-)conflict areas. People in areas like northern Uganda are at a loss because their social texture has been destroyed. Norms and values that normally lead interaction between people are lacking. This makes us understand why the word 'post' cannot do without brackets. Social cohesion has to be invented again. Peace in those areas can be characterised as 'negative' rather than 'positive' (Galtung, 1976). And the structure in terms of the conditions of the reproduction of the society that every social actor should know of (Giddens, 1979) is weak.

People have to use their own compass to guide the way they behave towards each other. This lays a heavy claim on the agency of the people in those areas. In (post-)conflict situations people have to (re)invent a social structure that fits all to prevent old or new conflicts from emerging. Children and youth who grew up during conflicts and have hardly any memory of living in a peaceful community need anchors to interpret and cope with the world surrounding them. In an environment like this it is hard to understand that youth can play a positive role to turn negative peace into positive peace as Angucia (2017) found in her research on youth and peace in northern Uganda. She found different forms of resilience, including community resilience. Also, Salam (2017) and Basnet (2017) discussed examples of youth agency and youth activism in India and Nepal, respectively. In India youth formed the Peoples' Resurgence and Justice Alliance (PRJA) in 2016. Their aim is to bring peace through love and dialogue (bloodless revolution). They have mobilised more than 5000 youngsters in a very short time (using social media). Basnet showed how 'soft' activism turned into violent activism on university campus. This may connect to the constraints faced by the youth as Angucia explains:

*We wanted to understand what peace and justice mean to the youth. We asked them how they were practicing peace and/or justice, and we brought this back to them in a workshop. They told us the things they did (e.g. bringing pregnant women to hospitals, working with metal), but also what they couldn't do. In the workshop they worked on the constraints that kept the youth from doing what they had not done so far. By the end of that research, all of them had either an expanded view of their projects, or some of them were going to do new projects (Angucia, 2017, oral presentation).*

In her research on youth and political participation Angucia found that youth are either excluded from formal politics or used by political parties in their campaigns. Yet, they show agency, organising themselves in informal ways such as youth clubs and saving groups which they themselves do not regard as political organisations. Also Datzberger (2017a) looked at youth agency in Uganda. She found factors hampering agency and factors encouraging agency and presented the following conclusions:

- a. *Improvement in educational infrastructure did not lead to increase in agency (political and economic) of youth at large – in part because secondary education is not entirely free;*
- b. *Structural barriers and indirect violence continue to hamper education and livelihood initiatives – importance of context;*
- c. *Lack of involvement of youth in planning and decision-making processes – involved youth are already privileged;*
- d. *Main focus on empowering youth economically rather than politically;*
- e. *Micro-initiatives more successful than macro-initiatives to promote conflict-resolution and reconciliation (Datzberger, 2017a, PowerPoint sheet 16).*

Tentatively, we could conclude that in spite of the background of broken citizenship, young people show agency towards positive peace. Their agency manifests itself in ways that are hardly appreciated and recognised and they meet constraints that may cause them to turn to conflict and violence, which would aggravate the situation.

## The role of education in supporting youth agency in (post-) conflict areas

In (post-)conflict areas the educational infrastructure has suffered. Youth and children and many times also adults are left without any education. To tackle arrears we have to look at education in a broad sense, including non-formal education, including adult education and lifelong learning just as Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) reads: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. SDG4 not only focuses on access to education but also on quality education. This connects to Nussbaum's view on education as capability and 'fertile functioning' (2011). Education should be meaningful to the learners and to the surrounding communities. What kind of education is meaningful to support youth agency in (post-)conflict areas? To answer this question in this section I will make use of the contributions of Adam (2017) on Sudan, Van der Linden (2017) on the two Sudans, Datzberger (2017b) combining findings from Myanmar, Pakistan, South Africa and Uganda and Friedman, Razer and Ramadan (2017) on Israel.

Adam critically analysed the educational system in (North) Sudan, his country of origin. In his research on school dropout he found that dropout at basic level is 35% and only 37% enrolled at secondary level. By excluding children and youth, school fuels conflict through for example recruitment of school drop-outs as child soldiers (Adam, 2013). Van der Linden (2017) commented on the different roles of education in (North) Sudan and South Sudan (bordering northern Uganda). In Sudan she found educated youth waiting at home for a job whereas in northern Uganda they played a role in rebuilding the community by voluntarily cooperating in a community development organisation with a women's group (see also Van der Linden, 2014 and 2016). This is not representative for the two countries but it points at the different roles of education. Education does not necessarily lead to agency.

The research consortium on Education and Peacebuilding of which Datzberger makes part formulated four roles for education in peace building, together forming the 4Rs Analytical Framework. The first three Rs stem from the work of Frazer: Redistribution (equal access, equal distribution of funds), Recognition (language, curriculum, text books) and Representation (participation in decision making processes) (Frazer, 2005). The fourth R referring to Reconciliation is added by the consortium (Novelli, Lopes Cardozo, & Smith, 2017). The research consortium used this framework to analyse the contribution of education to peace building in Myanmar, Pakistan, South Africa and Uganda. Although the framework is certainly helpful to critically evaluate the way in which education supports 'positive peace' as discussed before, the way it is used to analyse the role of education somehow seems to take the educational system as it is for granted. Three remarks or additions can be made. The first is that one should look beyond formal education and also include non-formal education and lifelong learning. The second is that education contributing to sustainable peace is served by in depth analysis and long term processes in the primary process. The third is

about the goal of education: does it take into account the priorities of individuals and communities in (post-)conflict areas? Does it offer the skills and knowledge people need to survive and strength their communities? Van der Linden (2015) reflected on this when she analysed the (educational) activities of a community organisation in northern Uganda which united a women's group and a youth group. Also Datzberger seems to have run into this aspect when she concluded that micro-initiatives (are) more successful than macro-initiatives to promote conflict-resolution and reconciliation (Datzberger, 2017a, PowerPoint sheet 16).

In fact, Datzberger's conclusion formed a good upbeat to the work presented by Friedman, Razer and Ramadan (2017). In higher education in Israel Jewish and Palestinian students sit together in class. This is the first time in their lives for them to be so close to each other. Yet, when their teachers start discussing peace building in class, the students resist. The students see themselves as 'one big happy family' and although they do not mingle, they deny that the differences that play a role outside the university exist inside the university. Friedman, Razer and Ramadan work on inclusive education (Razer & Friedman, 2017) and view it as important to practice what they preach in their own classes. This means trying to understand why students from both sides maintain the 'happy family myth', opening up themselves about the myths they grew up with themselves, reframing what they first saw as resistance and breaking through it. This is a difficult process which includes struggling with the administration about the language of instruction, among others. The fact that Friedman, Razer and Ramadan stem from different backgrounds themselves (Jewish, born and raised in USA, Jewish, born and educated in Israel, Palestinian, born and educated in Israel) made this all the more impressive.

Summarizing, this section showed how education can play the role of fertile functioning in Nussbaum's terms in different ways. It needs a broad concept of education and a critical review of curriculums and approaches appropriate to the learners and their communities. Furthermore, restoring broken citizenship (Reconciliation) needs long term processes at micro level for people to reframe the beliefs which are part of the structure in which they have been brought up. A new concept to be introduced here to understand how education can play a role in change is the 'enclave' (Friedman, 2011). Education can form an 'enclave' where people can open up towards each other, work on reframing their initial feelings of resistance and experiment new behaviour.

## Youth agency and work for individual livelihoods and community development

At first sight there is work 'galore' for active youth in post-conflict areas. Angucia already described their resilience as a competence to build on. She found youth do not need 'programming for work', but they need an enabling environment. What would an enabling environment consist of? It would certainly entail more than the slogan 'Be job creator instead of employment seeker' implies making each person individually responsible for his success on the labour market (Scherjon, 2011). The contributions from Colombia (Fajardo & Almeyda, 2017; Bednarczyk, 2017) may help us. Peace with the guerrilla movement in Colombia is recent and fragile (not all guerrilla organisations signed). People from the guerrilla, mostly youth, have to be reintegrated into society. Almeyda consulted experts by experience in El Salvador:

*They said that when thinking about programmes to train youth to reintegrate them, we have to make youth feel welcome and feel part of the community. Secondly, they said that they need psychological support to deal with trauma, and thirdly, to increase their self-esteem. Moreover, one of the Salvadorian women said that we should take into consideration youth's experience during conflict (she took care of the wounded). We should also take into account youth's preferences. Do we want to train women in agriculture, if they don't want to do agriculture? Lastly, we need to recognise youth (their certificate): sometimes certificates from abroad are not valid in the home country (Almeyda, 2017, oral presentation).*

The work that is obviously there and needs to be done in agriculture, may not match the wishes of the youth. Their experiences as guerrillas should be taken into account. This may also feed into their self esteem. Fajardo pointed at the role of cooperatives and solidarity organisations. They support the agency of individuals. Participatory planning and budgeting supports these organisations at the level of districts and municipalities. Based on his experiences in the province of SantAnder, University of San Gil, Fajardo shared the following lessons learned:

- 1. Awareness of the aspirations and needs of youth and their leading role in social transformation;*
- 2. Need to create innovative work opportunities in rural areas;*
- 3. Education must be relevant to the needs and aspirations of the rural population;*
- 4. Institutional articulation to respond to the current challenges of human development in a scenario of globalization;*
- 5. Entrepreneurship for associative/solidarity enterprises as an alternative to generate self-employment;*
- 6. Early development of human capacities for life in: culture, citizenship, economy (Fajardo, 2017, oral presentation).*

What strikes in this list is that the contribution of the youth to social transformation is stressed. Bednarczyk (2017) showed how participatory budgeting is used to build and strengthen youth organisations in Medellin in Colombia. There are three important rules to participatory budgeting: the budget should be clear, decision making transparent and the project rules known. This is important to gain the trust of young people: they can actually see the effect. Participatory budgeting is part of participatory democracy. It is usually implemented at city-level. The importance of the community and the contribution of youth to the community was also shown in the contributions of Angelson (2017) on an asset based micro finance programme in Sri Lanka, Rodrigues (2017) on the landless movement in Brazil and Mohammed (2017) on drivers of conflict and violence in Nigeria. A useful toolbox (<http://work4youthinfragilestates.com/en/>) based on experiences in Burundi and South Sudan was shared by Van Bruggen (2017).

Summing up, research on the link between youth and community showed that there is potential in youth to contribute to positive peace in the community. If connected to funding this may lead to innovative jobs rather than just point at jobs that need to be done real time. This may complement the concept of 'enclave' necessary to develop peace at micro level. The enclave needs support and acknowledgement from the community (participatory budgeting; land rights). Youth agency and community show to be strongly related, whereby youth can play a role towards positive transformation.

## Tentative conclusion and discussion

The findings and insights discussed above have been collected in different settings. Each contribution started with a brief description of the context, which was important to understand the specific challenges to youth agency and the forms it could take. Still, bringing together the realities of the different places where conflict had dominated the recent past or still dominated, gave some 'food' to reflect on the main question: How can education and work opportunities encourage and build on youth agency in post-conflict areas? The joint knowledge production that took place contributes to the UKFIET subtheme 'developing capabilities for sustainable livelihoods', specifically for conflict torn areas.

Subsequently going through the subquestions that were discussed in the previous sections, I expose the knowledge gained and the issues identified for further elaboration. To start with the characterisation of post-conflict areas as areas of 'broken citizenship' help to understand how difficult it is to move from negative peace to positive peace. Positive peace involves social cohesion in which people participate and feel recognised. Just this is missing in many post-conflict environments. Although one may expect the opposite, there are people, including youth, who showed resilience during the conflict and afterwards commitment to the community. The agency showed is different from traditional ways of political participation that adults may expect from them (Angucia, 2017). Failure to recognise new ways of agency may result in adverse forms of radicalisation (Salam, 2017; Basnet, 2017).

Education can provide the necessary tools for participation in community building as the 4R framework developed by Novelli, Lopes Cardozo and Smith (2017) implies. As indicated in SDG4 a broad view on education including lifelong learning is necessary to make up for arrears (Adam, 2017; Van der Linden, 2017). To work on sustainable positive peace we have to look at what happens in micro settings like the class room. Sitting side by side does not automatically create deeper understanding. Framing and reframing to create this understanding is hard work for both teachers and learners (Friedman, Razer & Ramadan, 2017). It entails shedding light on unconscious patterns and raising awareness on collective and cultural wounds in order to stimulate positive peace. The 'enclave' formed by the class room can be helpful to stimulate change, but can only be temporary to allow education to play the role of fertile functioning as Nussbaum (2011) discussed.

The bottom line for peace to be sustainable is that people have to dispose of a sustainable livelihood. The relation between education and such a sustainable livelihood is not always that strong. This is an aspect to work on making sure that youth gain the competencies and skills they need to make a living and contribute to the community. Youth show agency forming groups and collectives (Fajardo & Almeyda, 2017), which could also be considered as 'enclaves'. These enclaves may challenge existing power structures (Rodrigues, 2017). They need conducive environments trusting their capacities (Bednarczyk, 2017) to get recognition and basic resources. In the end communities may benefit from the transformative power of the youth. This refers to the aspect of agency that engages in (re)shaping surrounding structures.

Looking back at our main question, before formulating an answer I would like to quote Miguel Fajardo from Colombia, who replied when I sent the report: Now we can review and make new reflections about the issues we talked about in the summer school. That is exactly why I call the conclusion an tentative one. It just reflects work in progress, for which fortunately the first joint steps are made. As a start, throughout the different contributions we noticed that youth agency should not be viewed in isolation from the surrounding structure. Encouraging and building on youth agency means creating enabling environments to which youth contribute as co creators of structure (in terms of Giddens, 1991). Education has to play its fertile role in this dynamic perspective. It should support youth in reshaping their environment to the benefit of themselves, their families and their communities. In terms of theory, this points at the interplay between youth agency and structure. Allow me to repeat the quote from the beginning of this text. Agency is the way in which individuals contribute to and directly promote social influences that are global in their consequences and implications (Giddens, 1991, p. 2).

Research comes in to accompany this dynamic view on youth agency. So far, I did not discuss the research approach used in the research presented. In most of the contributions statistics were used to show the urgency and scope of problems but when it came to in depth understanding more qualitative approaches were needed. The strength of the discussions in the summer school was in the interdisciplinary work jointly producing new knowledge. People from different countries, different educational backgrounds and with different experiences in conflict areas shared practice and research experiences linking theory to practice. We worked as ‘pracademics’ as one of the participants said ‘Activists at heart, researchers in practice’. Action research is an approach that concerts with this practice, though not used strictly as other types of (small scale) research may also contribute (Van der Linden & Zeelen, 2008). The participation of youth not only as respondents but as co-researchers is indispensable to bestow meaning on findings and work on framing and reframing, linked to innovation. Youth participation is an improvement to take into account for the next summer school, which will hopefully take place in northern Uganda. The venture to develop meaningful alternatives to youth in post-conflict situations is crucial to a peaceful future. That is why research is indispensable to reflect on the process and develop (new) knowledge by writing, discussing, developing and confronting experiences with other experiences and theories. ‘Hope of the nation’ with which this article started, should not be a sheer slogan. It should be a shared responsibility.

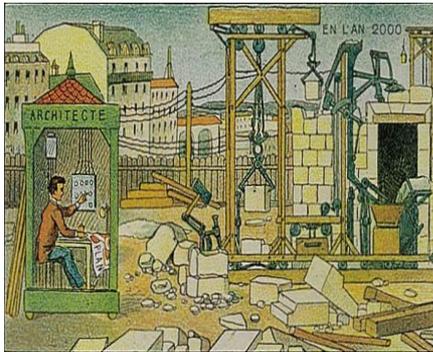


## Overcoming the skills gap between education and the labour market

*This part of the proceedings is based on a presentation by Prof. Dr. Jacques Zeelen<sup>10</sup> in a meeting of the network Youth, Education and Work (YEW) on the Saturday following the summer school. Jacques reflects on the summer school and celebrates the new connections made. Today we welcome YEW members and new colleagues who are interested in joining our network.*

### Background to the innovation project in vocational education in Groningen

Jacques introduces a new project running in Groningen and explains how it is embedded in the field of youth, education and work and our longer-term research programme.



Around 1900 a postcard depicting work in the year 2000, full of automation, no manual labourers needed. In their vision on education, books were transformed into a mechanical system connected to the heads of learners. In actual sense, Jacques identifies three key transformations in our globalised world:

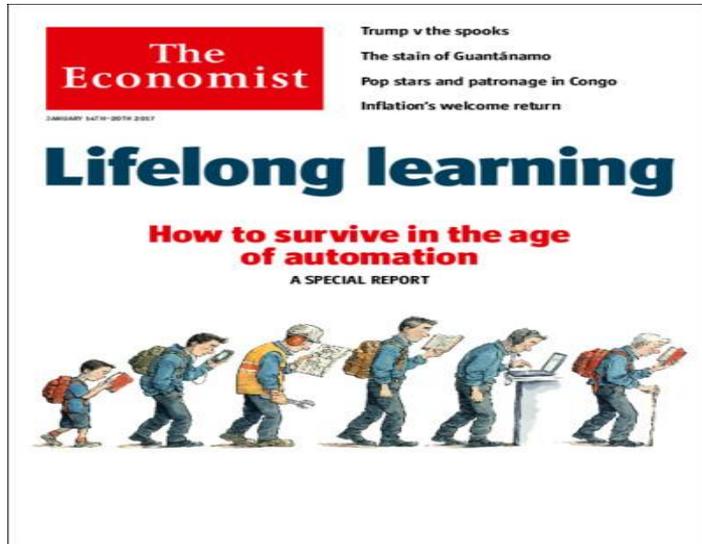
1. From mechanical to digital work processes
2. From exploiting our planet to nurturing sustainable development
3. From initial education to lifelong learning

These transformations are reflected in the skills gap between education and the labour market in developed and developing countries across the world as appeared in YEW studies and discussions:

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<sup>10</sup> Correspondence concerning this presentation should be sent to [j.j.m.zeelen@rug.nl](mailto:j.j.m.zeelen@rug.nl)

1. Lack of match between companies demands and skills graduates
2. Outdated technical skills
3. Poor entrepreneurial skills
4. Weak social skills



Growing attention for lifelong learning in policy and media, but implementation lags. When dealing with the above-mentioned transformation, we need to take into consideration:

**By the time students have graduated, the labour market may have changed.** This is why it is relevant to gather the views and expectations of all relevant stakeholders on the future development of the work sectors and the labour market

**How 'specific' or 'general' (future) graduates should be trained and educated?** Graduates who are only trained for a certain job, requiring very specific skills and expertise, run the risk to become unemployed when the specific job is not available anymore. Do we train people for jobs or for a profession? Should entrepreneurial skills be part of all educational programmes?

**To what extent should educational programmes not only be purely functional, but also transformative?** In other words: should educational programmes only respond to the needs of the labour market narrowly defined as 'what is needed now given the current state of affairs'? Or should they also actively promote broader perspectives, critical thinking and new developments, for instance in the sense of introducing renewable energy technologies and taking community involvement and regional development into account?

The fostering of innovation power, autonomy and team work competencies of professionals is needed to deal with the accelerating digital and unpredictable developments. We need **reflective practitioners**.

**Creative combinations of learning and work** should be developed. Just as new combinations of formal, non-formal and informal learning. Not only for new graduates but also for current employees.

As a research group, we have a history of researching these dynamics in different countries. Establishing a dialogue with other actors in the field is not a straightforward process, research to transformation is a complicated process. Around 2009, as a research group we started asking what is happening in the Netherlands?

Gideon de Jong explains how this was initiated. In 2009, the Noorderpoort College was discussing youth-at-risk and early school leaving in their institutions. Issues like drug addictions and mental health problems were recognised and interventions were discussed to help these at-risk youths. He then proposed to the Director to look beyond outcomes and do a process evaluation of these interventions. One example was one-on-one coaching, to help with personal needs. Another was Rebound, availing extra assistance to students who were struggling. Lenneke Docter-Jansen conducted her master's research, interviews with coaches, students, programme implementers etc. Finally, from the different perspectives the interventions were analysed which was disseminated in a workshop with other stakeholders.

Jacques uses this example to illustrate how the network started small on these practical problems from the field through student research. Through this approach linkages with the field were established which was beneficial at the research programme level. Gideon adds that a key to success was developing strong partnerships with key decision makers. Since then, several researches were conducted on early school leaving and related issues. Connecting to young people through ethnographic and qualitative research. Some studies in vocational schools, others in companies such as the port in Rotterdam and FrieslandCampina.

*Research into early school leaving and vocational education in Groningen and Drenthe*  
*De Jong, Docter-Jansen & Zeelen, 2011*  
*Elsdijk, Docter-Jansen, Zeelen & Hoekstra, 2013*  
*Todorovic, 2014*  
*Research in companies: Van Belle, 2013 (Port of Rotterdam)*  
*Elsdijk, 2015 (Metal Industry)*  
*Smit, 2016 (Food Industry)*  
*Elsdijk, Todorovic & Zeelen (ICT and Industry)*  
*Elsdijk et al, 2016: How to give wings to vocational education?*  
*Elsdijk, 2017. Building a project with vocational students abroad*

Frank Elsdijk adds observations from the research he did in close connection to a coach who worked with the students in the vocational college. Throughout the years he has conducted several studies and organised meetings. One of those took place in the Ministry of Education in The Hague.

Summary of research findings:

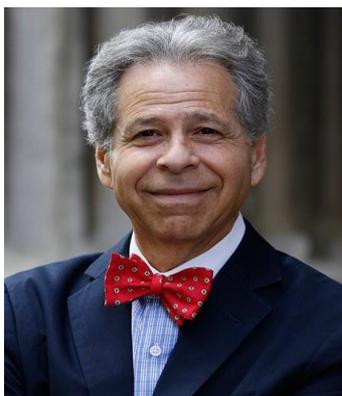
1. Learners in vocational education should learn. Just sitting at school to obtain a diploma should be avoided. From the beginning, the realities and opportunities of the labour market should be visible in the educational activities.
2. Although developments in the labour market are not easy to predict, training learners mainly in general competencies (for instance social skills, problem-solving and communication) has its shortcomings if there is no direct link to real work activities.
3. The national and provincial policies and programmes in the Netherlands are beginning to bear fruit in the reduction of early school leaving. Slowly the numbers of early school leavers are going down. However, the out of school youth is not brought into the picture sufficiently

4. In terms of regional collaboration, further strengthening of the links between educational institutions, city and provincial services and care institutions is needed.
5. The integration of new generations within work situations is sometimes problematic. Expectations of newcomers and the views of human resource departments of companies differ. For instance, the younger generation perceives the tuning between work and private life differently from the older generations.
6. Weak points: internships and tuning between supervisors at school and supervisors at the workplace.
7. The overall frame of thinking about the prominent role of initial education in school institutions as the main preparation for work and active citizenship deserves rethinking.

Through these different studies a variety of stakeholders like employers, policy makers, employers etc. got engaged. There was a growing debate over the years on the future of vocational education in the Netherlands. Influencing from the case, to regional to national levels. An emerging theme is ICT trickling through all professional domains. Any student with a research idea fitting into this wider problem is welcome to join. All this prepared the ground for the innovation project.

## About the Technical Sustainable Craftsmanship Project in the Installation Sector in the North

Inspired by a project of Arthur Langer, Columbia University called the Workforce Opportunity Services. It was difficult to integrate youth of the Bronx and Harlem in the workplace. This is why and how a training programme was developed with coaching and workplace learning. The programme starts with the needs of the companies and translates this into a training programme. Part of the programme is aimed at improving working conditions, so not just fitting in the youth. Arthur shared his experiences with stakeholders in the Netherlands and Dutch students studied the programme in New York.



Arthur Langer  
Columbia University



Innovation project  
New York

In 2011, a network of partners started planning on how to set up a similar intervention in the Netherlands. Amidst economic crisis in the province hard to bring companies on board who became resistant towards innovation. Advice of Arthur was to talk directly to CEOs who could look beyond

the horizon. With an improved climate and strengthened partnerships, 4-5 companies signalled their problem of acquiring digital and socially literate employees. Now with provincial support and cost-sharing of the companies towards the training of the students, the programme is ready to launch.

Characteristics of the Technical Sustainable Craftsmanship project in the installation sector in the North of the Netherlands project:

- Inspiration from WOS Project New York (guest lecture 2011 plus research (Klatter and Ijdens, 2013))
- Five companies who join plus a big vocational school
- On the basis of ongoing action research the development of an innovative approach with intensive participation from lecturers, employers, coaches work supervisors and young people themselves.
- Integration of technical, digital and social skills
- The developed innovative approach could be used as a prototype which could be applied by other educational programmes and companies.
- Sharing data and experiences with our research partners at Columbia University in New York (and our partners in YEW network!)
- Companies, a Vocational College, NGO's and the University develop together, supported by action research, a new trainings programme for Technical Engineering
- The project is financially supported for four years by the OTIB Fund and the Provinces of Groningen and Drenthe

After a starting conference in March 2017, Arthur and his team trained local team on the methods to support contextualisation of the programme. Attached to the programme is a PhD programme to study the process and outcomes. Maaïke Zijdeveld is the PhD candidate who will carry out this research. A master student already documented needs in different companies involved.



Starting conference in one of the beautiful rooms of the University of Groningen



Flyer to recruit students for the new innovative course in technical engineering.

When recruiting learners, pictures are used to reframe vocational education. We present a profession which encompasses innovative **technical**, **digital** and **social** skills to reframe the old image of a blue collar worker. Some parents were happy to hear that the university is associated to the project, 'TVET is not only for failures'. Among the 26 learners, there are two girls which is unique in the installation branch. The students will be engaged in the design and development of the programme through an Action Research. In addition, other social science studies used, such as good



practice research. Knowledge sharing and collective learning with actors to develop a theory of practice. Elements of the research are:

- Good practices research
- Workplace analysis
- Learner reports
- Knowledge sharing in the region and beyond
- Working on a Theory of Practice
- Combinations of different types of social science research
- All integrated in the concept of action research at programme level

Overall the research is inspired by action research philosophy and also underlying theoretical concepts of craftsmanship, quality and sustainability:



Craftsmanship



Quality



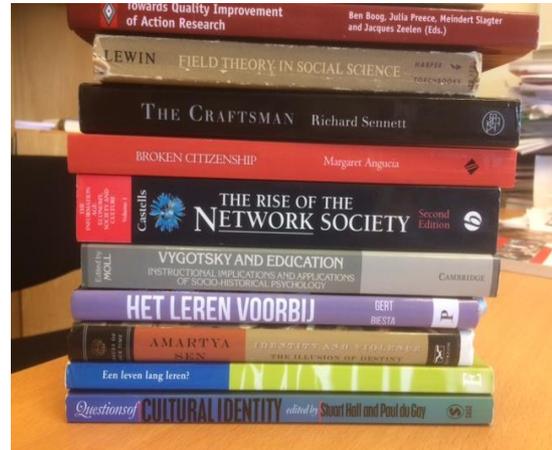
Sustainability



Cooperation



The research will make use of theory and feed into theory as the diagram illustrates:



## Reactions to the presentation

In Israel, there are no vocational institutions anymore. When working with early school leavers, the interventions seem to focus on those who drop out. Are there any programmes targeting the system to prevent drop out?

- There is a risk of stigmatization in these interventions for early school leavers. WOS is focusing more on capabilities rather than challenges.
- The education system differentiates from first year of secondary school. The vocational streams are looked down on by some.

How do you discover capabilities of an individual?

- Vocations should be speaking to individual preferences, this is different for male and female students.
- Women are treated badly in the workplace, they are bullied at times. Company recognised men couldn't handle women, so it was okay that they have left.
- You need to train companies as well to help them create an environment for learners, such as female learners.
- Companies want to transform in this regard, want more women.
- In India women would perform specific tasks in the workplace and men would feel like doing double work.

Amazing and important work. Using resources of an academic institution to tackle a real life problem is a great model. The story is important. In Europe there is a lack of workers; worldwide jobs are changing and it is hard to get qualified people. Is it skimming off at the top, the highest potential of the group? Is there another level that is still missing out of the good jobs?



- What about the sustainability of jobs in the energy sector? Is another learning loop needed?
- We start at a certain level, work closely to jointly identify new opportunities for employment and training.

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## **Anexe 1 List of Participants**

1. Abdel Rahman Adam
2. Maaïke Smulders
3. Ana Rodrigues
4. Maaïke Zijderveld
5. Anna Bednarczyk
6. Mahalaxmi Bhobe
7. Bethan Manton-Roseblade
8. Margaret Angucia
9. Christina Schnelker
10. Mari Gardner
11. Constanze Vogel
12. Marit Blaak
13. Cuthbert Tukundane
14. Michal Razer
15. Doutsen Punter
16. Miguel Arturo Fajardo Rojas
17. Femke Bijker
18. Murtala Adogi Mohammed
19. Frank Elsdijk
20. Nathalie Beekman
21. Gideon de Jong
22. Neha Basnet
23. Gloria Almeyda Stemper
24. Robert Jjuuko
25. Izabel Ramadan
26. Sally Angelson
27. Jacques Zeelen
28. Simone Datzberger
29. Jeebanlata Salam
30. Thuur Caris
31. Josje van der Linden
32. Victor J. Friedman
33. Julia Swierstra
34. Willemijn de Jong
35. Line Kuppens
36. Wouter van Bruggen



## Anexe 2 Programme of Summer School

Time	17 July	18 July	19 July	20 July	21 July
9:30 – 11:00	Welcome and introduction by Joost Herman and Jacques Zeelen, University of Groningen, and Cuthbert Tukundane, Uganda Martyrs University Introduction of participants	Miguel Fajardo, University of San Gil, Colombia, and Gloria Almeyda, Colombia: Education and Peace Building: A View from Colombia	Simone Datzberger, University of Amsterdam: Research on education and peacebuilding; Case study Uganda	Introduction to panel discussion by Cuthbert Tukundane Groups prepare question for the panel discussion	Group discussion: Balancing theory and practice Set up flip-overs/ material needed for the presentations
11:00 – 11:30	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
11:30 – 13:00	Margaret Angucia, Uganda Martyrs University: Images of conflict, youth and youth resilience in post conflict northern Uganda	Jeebanlata Salam, India: Conflict and violence in Northeast India. The Role of Youth and Mother Torch Bearers in Peace Building Process	Victor Friedman, Max Stern Yezreel Valley College, Israel, Michal Razer and Izabel Ramadan, Oranim Academic College of Education: Peace building through Participatory Action Research Lunch	Presentations by participants: Sally Angelson, Anna Bednarczyk, Ana Rodrigues, Murtala Adogi Mohammed Lunch	Group presentations Lunch
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
14:00 – 15:00	Introduction Group work	Group work	Continuation	Group work	Evaluation Awarding certificates Closure of the week
15:00 – 15:30	Break	Break	Break	Break	
15:30 – 17:00	Abdel Rahman Adam: Education and conflict and the Sudanese youth (in and out of Sudan) Josje van der Linden: Education in the two Sudans: Youth Agency in (Post-) Conflict Areas	Neha Basnet, University of Groningen: Youth activism in Nepal	Group work/plenary	Group work	

## **Anexe 3 Biographies of lecturers**

**Abdel Rahman Adam:** is a Sudanese journalist who has a great interest in research related to education, migration and relief work. During his study time in Juba university in Khartoum (1999 -2005), Abdel Rahman was a political and human rights activities. After graduating from university he continued his work on human rights both as an activist and as a professional through his work with Norwegian Church Aid- ACT/Caritas in Darfur and through his work as a humanitarian worker with Sudan Social Development Organization (SUDO). Later he joined Free Press Unlimited and worked for Radio Dabanga as the Sudan Field Coordinator while continuing his work as a journalist and reporter. Mr. Rahman and his team were arrested for the work they conducted and Mr. Rahman was subjected to torture in prison for a long period of time. After joint efforts of human rights activist, NGOs and INGOs, Abdel was released. He then moved to the Netherlands where he continued working with Free Press Unlimited. Later he attained a master degree on Social Policy for Development with special focus on education and poverty from the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus Rotterdam University. Currently, he is working as EU Fund reporter and auditor in Stichting New Dutch Connections in a project called "The Future Academy" which is targeting young refugees between the ages 16 to 29 year. Moreover, Abdel works as a contact person for newcomers in the municipality of Heuvelrug (Utrecht).

**Gloria Almeyda Stemper:** is currently at Alamo Colleges District/Office of International Programs (San Antonio, Texas) collaborating with international training in workforce development. She has over fifteen years of international development and over twelve years of experience with youth workforce development in Latin America as regional and senior coordinator with the Cooperative Association of States for Scholarship (CASS) and Scholarships for Education & Economic Development (SEED) programs funded by USAID and managed by Georgetown University – Center for Intercultural Education and Development (CIED). Ms. Almeyda was also the manager of the Indigenous and Afrolatino Scholarships (IALS) Program financed by the IDB for youth from Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru that built the capacity of local academic institutions and integrate traditional excluded youth to tertiary education. Ms. Almeyda is a gender specialist and has participated in a variety projects to mainstream gender. She conducted research for the IDB, World Bank and IFAD to assess the capabilities of local financial institutions to provide adequate financial services, particularly to rural and urban poor women. She conducted additional microenterprise and rural microfinance international assignments for USAID, Peace Corps, Sustainable Banking with the Poor Program (WB), the Swedish International Development Agency (Asdi) and the Spanish International Development Agency (AECI). Ms. Almeyda holds a MS in Financial and International Business from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**Dr. Margaret Angucia:** is an Associate Professor of Governance and Peace Studies at Uganda Martyrs University. She obtained her PhD at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands, which examined the social reintegration of formerly abducted children in northern Uganda. Ever since, she has continued to do extensive research on post conflict reconstruction in general and post conflict youth in particular in the same region.

**Dr. Simone Datzberger:** is a Marie-Curie Research Fellow at the Department of Human Geography, Planning and International Development (GPIO), University of Amsterdam. Her current research focuses on the role of education in increasing civil agency and voice in the sub-Saharan African context. Previously, she worked as a post-doctoral researcher (research associate) at the UNESCO Centre – Ulster University (School of Education), where she was part of a research consortium in partnership with UNICEF on Education and Peacebuilding. During that time, she acted as the lead researcher for the country case study on Uganda. Dr. Datzberger holds a PhD from the London School of Economics and Political Science (2010–2014) in International Relations. Prior, she worked for the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in New York (2007–2010), conducting research and in-depth analysis on several countries in transition from conflict to peace.

**Miguel Arturo Fajardo Rojas:** is the Director of the Center for Studies in Solidarity Economics of the Universidad de San Gil-Unisangil (Santander, Colombia), former president of Unisangil, university professor, founder of several cooperative and social organisations in Colombia.

**Prof. Dr. Victor J. Friedman:** (B.A., M.A., Ed.D. from Harvard University) is Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior and director of the Action Research Center for Social Justice at the Max Stern Yezreel Valley College, Israel. His life's work is helping individuals, organizations, and communities learn through "action science" – theory building, experimentation and critical reflection in everyday life. He has co-authored books including "From Exclusion to Excellence: Building Restorative Relationships to Create Inclusive Schools Demystifying Organizational Learning". He serves as Associate Editor of the Action Research Journal and has published over 50 academic papers/book chapters.

**Izabel S. Ramadan:** is lecturer and practicum instructor in the M.Ed. Program in Inclusive Education at Oranim Academic College of Education, Israel. She is also the Coordinator of "Sanad" a program to prevent dropping out and promote inclusion for Arab students, K-12, in Israel. Ms. Ramadan holds a B.A. and M.A. in Educational Counseling and is currently an advanced doctoral student at AM University in Poland.

**Dr. Michal Razer:** is the director of the Department of Education Training and a Senior Lecturer in the Graduate Faculty of Oranim Academic College of Education, where she founded the M.Ed. program in Inclusive Education as well as the Shaveh Center for Equity and Social Inclusion. She has published extensively on inclusive education and in-service training in inclusion, in addition to developing and leading school intervention programs to enhance inclusive practices in education. Dr. Razer holds a Ph.D. in cognitive psychology from the Technion, Israel institute of Technology.

**Dr. Jeebanlata Salam:** has a Master's Degree in Sociology from the Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi, and obtained her PhD degree in Sociology at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Her PhD thesis "State, Civil Society and Right to Education" is the outcome of her participatory journey in educated related policy issue of the government of India. Dr. Salam is currently with the School of Social Sciences, National Institute of Advanced Studies, IISc Campus, Bangalore, India. In her current research, she focuses on Vocational and Higher Education in India. Other areas of interest include the protection of child rights, educational reconstruction during and in the aftermath of emergencies, promotion of quality education, and social exclusion and education of underprivileged children, youth and women in India.

**Dr. Cuthbert Tukunande:** is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Arts and Social Sciences at Uganda Martyrs University. He received his PhD in Behavioural and Social Sciences from the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. He also holds a Master's degree in Development Economics and a Bachelor's degree in Development Studies. His research interests are in the areas of vocational skills development, youth and the labour market, social exclusion/inclusion, action research, livelihoods management and poverty reduction. He has published several papers in international journals on the subject of youth, education and work.

**Dr. Josje van der Linden:** worked as a lecturer/researcher in institutes for higher education in the Netherlands, in Sudan and in Mozambique. Currently, she teaches educational sciences (lifelong learning) in the University of Groningen and math education in a university of applied sciences in Amsterdam/Alkmaar. She recently defended her PhD thesis on Ensuring meaningful lifelong learning opportunities for groups at risk. Her research includes the specific educational needs of groups at risk in (post-)conflict areas and the ways in which these needs can be met.

**Prof. Dr. Jacques Zeelen:** is a social scientist with a long experience in Adult Education and Social Intervention. He obtained a Bachelor's degree from the University of Amsterdam in Psychology and a Master's degree from the Free University in Berlin in the same discipline. At the Free University he also completed his PhD research on an action research project in Mental Health. For a longer time he headed the research program "Rehabilitation issues in mental health of the department of Adult Education (Andragogy)" at the University of Groningen. In 1997 he was invited as a visiting professor at the University of the North (now called University of Limpopo) in South Africa and was appointed full professor of Adult Education in 1998. After resuming his duties at the department of Pedagogy (section Lifelong Learning) at the University of Groningen in September 2004, he combined research in the Netherlands with research in Sub-Saharan countries. Together with colleagues from different African countries, he initiated the international research and development project Early School Leaving in Africa (ESLA). Due to the growing urgency of research on early school leaving and vocational education worldwide, the ESLA project was renamed more generally Youth, Education and Work (YEW). In April



2014 Jacques Zeelen was appointed full professor on 'Lifelong Learning and Social Intervention in the context of Globalisation' at Globalisation Studies Groningen, an inter-faculty institute positioned in the Faculty of Arts of the University of Groningen. From 1 January 2017 onwards he holds the UNESCO Chair "Lifelong Learning, Youth and Work" at Gulu University in Uganda.

## Anexe 4 Group work: Force Field Analysis

Table 1. Force Field Analysis

Driving forces	Restraining forces
Teachers' perspective	
To pursue goals and dreams	Gap between expectations and practice
Because they want the skills	Interferes with other activities
Because they want to become part of the society	Might not feel they need it to survive
	Stigma
Students' perspective	
They want access to education	They do not see the actual future benefit
	Feeling anonymous
	No sense of ownership over the course
	Busy
	Frustration for being in new place
	Other needs not met (trauma)
Researchers	
More Research Need To Be Done	More Research Need To Be Done



## Anexe 5 Group work: Tree Mapping

### Curriculum: Identity, Values & Emotions



### Right to Education (Out-of-school children & non-formal education)



### Purpose of Education (Job opportunities, hope)

