

The quality of public primary education in rural Uganda:

An assessment using a Capability Approach



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Master's Thesis

May 2013



Utrecht University



The quality of public primary education in rural Uganda: An assessment using a Capability Approach

An examination of the constructs of implementation process of the Thematic Curriculum in Uganda and an analysis of the factors that support or hinder the teachers' and students' capabilities in rural public primary schools by using a School Development Index

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Master's Thesis

GEO4-3628

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Executive Summary

This research sets out to analyse the mismatch between the national primary education curriculum and the *classroom reality* in rural government primary schools in Uganda. I.e., the impact of the introduction of the Thematic Curriculum in Uganda in 2007 as a quality improvement intervention is examined. For this purpose, a Capability Approach School Development Index is explored to gain insight in the teachers' and students' capabilities that affect the quality of education. These capabilities are important because the previous understanding of the quality of education does not include the context and process of education. This holds that the possible additional factors that hinder the quality of education in rural areas are not considered. Among these traditional education quality indicators are input factors - e.g. enrolment rate, completion rate, pupil/teacher ratio and teachers' qualifications - and educational outcomes, such as test scores. These indicators do not take into account additional factors that could hinder educational performance; in this case the extra factors that hinder teachers' and students' capabilities. Examples of factors that hinder rural teaching and learning, but are not taken into account by education quality indicators, are: general poverty levels, teachers' housing conditions and the commuting distance between home and school.

This study has been conducted in Uganda from October 2012 to January 2013 and includes 35 semi-structured in-depth expert interviews, five group discussions and eight observation reports have been carried out. 20 of the interviews provide insights in Uganda's education system and the impact of the curriculum implementation process of the Thematic Curriculum. Additionally, 15 of the interviews, the group discussions and the observations support the case study on the area of Namasale Sub-County, Amolatar District, Northern Uganda. The data from Namasale Sub-County is supported with secondary data from a participatory needs assessment of DevEd - conducted in July 2012 - and consisting interviews and group discussions with 434 respondents from the Namasale Sub-County. The case study area is used to explore the use of the School Development Index to examine the teachers' and students' capabilities that support or hinder the quality improvement that is intended with the introduction of the Thematic Curriculum in 2007.

The results of this study show that the constructs of implementation are insufficiently fulfilled to achieve the intended quality improvement. The general profile of implementation of the Thematic Curriculum suggests that it is good in theory, but is not good enough in practice. The initiated changes that are part of the Thematic Curriculum are generally perceived as positive development, but in practice they are inadequate to address the challenges faced in public

primary education. Especially the rural areas are confronted with a complex puzzle of a lack of resources, unmotivated teachers and the absence of legitimate support to counter their challenges. Moreover, the input and outcome indicators of the quality of education show that the quality of education has not improved sufficiently since the introduction of the Thematic Curriculum in 2007. These indicators are analysed, but it is argued that large regional disparities are not taken into account. Subsequently, the application of the SDI to the selected research area – Namasale Sub-County – shows that the situation with regards to the teachers' and students' capabilities is genuinely poor. The selection of indicators for the capabilities, ranging from *basic survival capabilities* to *students' capability to access appropriate pedagogies*, is a debateable attempt. However, the attempt is also broadly supported and the explorative character of this research is recognised.

It is argued that a focus on the Millennium Development Goals – providing free access to primary education for all children - has increased enrolment to such an extent that the quality of education has come under pressure. Uganda is a fitting example for the trade-off between access and quality, with enrolment numbers that have more than doubled after implementation of Universal Primary Education in 1997. All in all, it is concluded that the quality of education in Uganda is under serious pressure: in short, the country is still trying to overcome the *access shock* caused by introducing Universal Primary Education. The traditional education quality indicators show that the quality of education is low in Uganda and Namasale Sub-County is an example of an area that is performing even below national average. The Thematic Curriculum aims at increasing the quality, but this research shows that the challenges in education, especially in a rural surrounding, are too large to be tackled through curriculum change. The additions of the SDI to examine the affects beyond traditional educational quality indicators are accepted to be important for the overall image of the quality of education. The capability indicators show that teachers' and students' performance is hindered to such an extent that the curriculum implementation and education quality not on the agenda in Namasale Sub-County: e.g., even basic survival capabilities – clean water and food - are not sufficiently fulfilled for teachers and students. This hinders the well-being and agency freedoms of the teachers and students and, thus, the quality of education.

Foreword

This document represents my effort to finalize almost ten years of studying. Following a bachelor in primary education teaching and a bachelor in human geography, this thesis concludes the research for the research master in Human Geography and Planning at Utrecht University. For this research I got the chance to live in Uganda for three months to conduct my field work, which has proven itself to be a tremendous experience; both on a personal level and on a professional level. From October 2012 up till January 2013 I lived in Kampala and Namasale Sub-County to gain insight in the education sector of Uganda and to the quality of education in this part of Northern Uganda. This period has brought a dualistic experience, on the one side it was a beautiful and enriching time, but on the other side being in an area without electricity and water was difficult at times. I learned that a breakfast of *matooke* and goat's offerings was a bit heavy for my taste. Moreover, doing research within a culture very different to my own was interesting, but the generosity and kindness of the people was beautiful. I especially want to emphasise the work of the teachers and head teachers in the area, the teachers that helped me with my research are often confronted with harsh living and working conditions and they still do their best to teach.

The research has been carried out with a lot of support of individuals, and in cooperation with DevEd. Both in the preparation phase and the executing phase they have been supportive from behind their desks in Geneva or in more than one way in Uganda. Especially, Jedidah Kaheeru has guided me in preparing my field work in Namasale and Richard Owachgiu who has joined me during my fieldtrip as driver, interpreter and assistant. Furthermore, I am grateful for all the assistance of the people that were willing to be interviewed by me and helped me deepening my insights through critical and open-minded meetings and discussions. Thereafter, I appreciate the email conversations with several people sharpening my theoretical frame (a.o. Sharon Tao and Hulya Kosar Altinyelken). Thereafter, I want to thank Maggi Leung for her supervision and guidance from the first thoughts on paper up to this; the process from the proposal up to this thesis took over a year. Her constructive feedback has helped me structure my ideas, angle and conclusions. Additionally, I want to thank my friend Maurits Spoelder for his insights into the utilization of the Capability Approach to Education and critical reading of my drafts. Also, the support of my family and friends during my research has been indispensable and, finally, especially the support of my girlfriend Afke in the long-winding process of writing a master's thesis has been great. Thank you.

René Vermeulen

Utrecht, May 2013

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List of Abbreviations

CA	Capability Approach
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CCT	Centre Coordinating Tutor
CDO	Community Development Officer
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DEO	District Education Office
DevEd	Developing Education <i>Organisation</i>
DES	Directorate of Education Standards
EDI	Education for All Development Index
EDP	Education Development Partners
EFA	Education for All
FENU	Forum of Educational NGOs in Uganda
FPE	Free Primary Education
GAR	Gross Attendance Rate
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GoU	Government of Uganda
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GWP	Government White Paper
HDI	Human Development Index
LC 1-5	Local Council, levels 1 to 5
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NAPE	National Assessment of Progress in Education
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
P1-P7	Primary school grade 1-7
PLE	Primary Leaving Exam
PTA	Parents/Teacher Association
PTC	Primary Teachers College
PTR	Pupil/teacher ratio
RDC	Residential District Commissioner
SDI	School Development Index
SMC	School Management Committee
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNEB	Uganda National Examinations Board
UPE	Universal Primary Education

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and context

Education is seen as an important instrument to achieve development, i.e. reducing poverty and stimulating economic growth (IOB 2011). According to the Global Partnership for Education [GPE], investing in education is the single most effective means of reducing poverty (GPE 2011). An influential development in international education has been the global push for Universal Primary Education [UPE], as is reflected in the Millennium Development Goals [MDGs] and the Education for All targets [EFA]. The EFA movement has come up since the 1990s and its strive for universal access to education gained momentum at global conferences on in Jomtien [1990] and Dakar [2000] (McCowan 2011). Within this movement the international community has committed itself to have all children attending fee-free primary schooling by 2015 (Robeyns 2006). Education is seen as a human right which has enabled a focus on access to school: every child has the right to Free Primary Education [FPE], as formulated in the second MDG. In addition to the MDGs, the EFA targets do not only strive for universal access to basic education but universal access to quality education and learning.

In line with global movements, the Government of Uganda [GoU] has followed through on a policy of UPE since 1997. The Constitution of Uganda stipulates that education is a fundamental right for every citizen. It is essential for the country to provide quality and relevant education to all its citizens, irrespective of cultural, gender, regional or social differences (UNEB 2011). The execution of UPE had numerous positive outcomes, especially with respect to enrolment: primary school enrolment more than doubled from 3.1 million in 1996 to 6.3 million in 1999, 7.5 million in 2007 and over 8 million in 2010 (Ssewamala et al., 2011; UNESCO 2012). Nevertheless, with regards to the overall educational attainments some challenges are recognised. Among these challenges are in the case of Uganda: high level of school dropout, much repetition by pupils, low completion rates and high pupil/teacher ratios (IOB 2008; Ninsiima 2007 and Ssewamala et al. 2011). These inputs and outcomes of education determine the quality of education and this raises concerns of the deterioration of the quality of public primary education (Nishimura et al. 2008; Wood 2008). Moreover, racing towards universalization of access has, in many low-income countries starting from a low enrolment base, been detrimental to quality standards (Barrett 2011). In other words, there is a trade-off between increasing access to education and the quality of education (IOB 2008).

Indicators of educational performance show that Uganda has done remarkably well on education access-related targets since the introduction of UPE in 1997. Whilst Uganda advances towards the goal of EFA, this initial success of high enrolment places greater emphasis on improving the quality of learning (Acham et al. 2012). In addition, numerous studies conclude that quality of rural schools is exposed to more pressures and there are more barriers to be overcome to achieve a good quality of education (Appleton 2001; Altinyelken 2010; Atchoarena and Gasperini 2003; Grogan 2009; Heneveld 2007). Consequently, taking up an approach that emphasises the context of education is important because this research focuses on a rural area. Through utilisation of a CA the factors and additional rural barriers that support or hinder teachers' and students' capabilities are analysed. This holds that the quality of education is determined in a broader way through capability indicators, which provides insides in additional factors that underlie the educational inputs and outcomes that have previously been the main indicators of educational quality.

This research aims at examining the impact of the introduction of the Thematic Curriculum in Uganda as a quality improvement intervention. This quality improvement is assessed with a School Development Index [SDI] beyond the standard education quality indicators in rural government primary schools. Among these traditional education quality indicators are input factors - e.g. enrolment rate, completion rate, pupil/teacher ratio and teachers' qualifications – and educational outcomes such as literacy and numeracy test scores. These indicators do not take into account additional factors that could hinder educational performance; in this case the extra factors that hinder teachers' and students' capabilities and consequently the quality of education.

1.1.1 Quality of education

Recently, the debate about the quality imperative has increased, especially with the year 2015 drawing nearer, when the MDGs should be achieved (see e.g. Alexander 2008; Tikly 2011; Tikly and Barrett 2010). According to Alexander (2008) the EFA debate has witnessed a broad shift of focus at international level. In general, this shift has taken place from an almost exclusive preoccupation with access, enrolment and retention, to a greater interest, first, in outcomes of education and thereafter in quality of education. This shift is nowadays part of mainstream EFA discourse, even though there is an inevitable time-lag between international commitment, national policy, professional culture and everyday practice. In the EFA goals, quality is at the heart of education and this should satisfy basic learning needs and enrich the lives of learners and their overall experience of living (Alexander 2008).

The global focus on, primarily, access to education is said to have resulted in a learning crisis. According to Winthrop (2011) this learning crisis has three dimensions: first, especially poor girls in rural areas are the most educationally marginalized, as well as children and youth living in conflict-affected zones. Second, those who are in school often do not master the foundational skills, including literacy and numeracy, which would enable them to successfully continue in school. Third, among those who are able to stay in school and proceed to secondary levels of education, many do not learn the skills they need for their future lives and livelihoods. Moreover, it is argued that, in line with shifting global targets, a shift is needed from focusing almost primarily on the problems of educational access to focusing on improving both access and quality simultaneously (Winthrop 2011). However, Alexander (2008) states that there is little consensus on what ‘quality’ actually entails, especially while moving away from the input and outcome indicators of quality, e.g. infrastructure, resources, teacher supply [inputs] and access, enrolment and retention [outcomes]. This debate on the consensus on what quality of education entails is subject of this research and the use of a more comprehensive Capability Approach [CA] to define the quality of education is proposed.

1.1.2 Capability Approach to quality education

The CA to education has increasingly gained prominence in recent years (Hoffman 2006; Hoffman, Radja and Bakhshi 2003; Saito 2003; Unterhalter 2009). Focusing on capabilities can explain what it might mean to be educated in the global era and how this relates to notions of ‘development’. The CA fits into the broader debate about education quality in terms of a focus on necessary capabilities and positive and negative freedoms that are required in order to enable learners to perform in school. Furthermore, they argue that the context and process of education is important to analyse and improve the quality of education and a school should not be perceived as a black box between inputs and outcomes (Tikly and Barrett 2010). According to Robeyns (2005b) the CA can be used as a descriptive tool to explain behaviour that might appear irrational according to traditional economic analysis, or revealing layers of complexities that a quantitative analysis can rarely capture. Therefore, the CA can achieve this by taking into consideration conversion factors, such as personal skills, social norms and logistics, which help to clarify extenuating circumstances that can affect a person’s ability to achieve certain *functionings*. Despite the additions to the debate about indicators for the quality of education, the CA also faces its own challenges.

The most important challenge that the CA faces is to not only define what different capabilities might look like at different levels of the system, but also how capabilities can be measured and

how the success of these capabilities can be evaluated (Barrett et al. 2006). Such a quantification of capabilities has proven to be a difficult task, because attempts to draw up a list of capabilities, are subject to an extensive debate between leading scholars within the Human Development and Capability Approach discipline (see e.g. Nussbaum 2000; Sen 2005; Robeyns 2005a; 2005b; 2005c). Although the attempts to convert the CA into a genuine list of capabilities are supported to a certain extent, there is also broad criticism on these attempts. Most importantly, *founding father* of the CA, Amartya Sen, is not supporting such a selection of capabilities. Moreover, Sen does not support any specific list of capabilities as he believes capabilities are specifically contextual and should be determined by people themselves (Sen 2001). Additionally, a general obsession with quantifying and comparing the quality of education is perceived as an important challenge with regards to agreement upon 'quality' (Alexander 2008). Nevertheless, Tao (2010) has suggested using the CA as a practical list of capabilities and indicators to analyse school improvement interventions. Tao (2010) proposes the exploration of a SDI to analyse the effect of selected school improvement interventions. In this research the selected school improvement intervention is the introduction of the Thematic Curriculum in Uganda in 2007.

1.1.3 Thematic Curriculum as 'school improvement intervention'

Following the implementation of UPE and its consequences for access to and quality of education, curriculum reforms have become part of the educational component of the structural adjustment packages in Uganda (Chisholm and Leyendecker 2008). Therefore, in an attempt to counter the challenges regarding the quality of education, the GoU has implemented the new Thematic Curriculum since 2007. The Thematic Curriculum was specifically introduced to contribute to improving the achievement levels of students in literacy, numeracy and life skills. This new curriculum for primary education has raised high expectations, because it was recognised that a literate and numerate population is imperative for sustainable development and economic growth in Uganda (Altinyelken 2010; UNEB 2011). Moreover, learning of basic cognitive skills, literacy and numeracy are considered vital to quality of education (Barrett et al. 2006).

Introducing a new curriculum has major consequences for the entire education sector, e.g. teacher training, inspection and supervision, examinations and assessment, financial requirements and learning materials all need to be reformed (Ward, Penny and Read 2006). Therefore, detailed study and debate prior to its launch as well as a well-planned and structured implementation stage is needed. When the implementation has not been well planned and structured, it may result in resistance to policy messages and unexpected outcomes (Altinyelken

2010). The introduction of previous curriculum reforms in Uganda have encountered multiple implementation problems, such as inadequate training budgets, only one week of training for teachers, schools did not receive their books in time and the introduction period was short. Consequently, it can be expected that this Thematic Curriculum will not be very effective in the first years (IOB 2008). Successful implementation of a curriculum is essential to increase school effectiveness and quality. Taneri and Engen-Demir (2005) suggest there are differences between the intended curricula defined by officials and the implemented curricula; how teachers translate the intended curriculum into practice. Furthermore, this could explain variation among schools and, therefore, a school-level approach to quality of education – as utilised in this research - is needed to examine variations between the curriculum and the classroom reality.

1.1.4 The geography of education

There is a strong relationship between education and social development. In order to improve rural areas' economic, social, and cultural circumstances, a quality of education should be provided (Taneri and Engen-Demir 2005). The geographical aspect of this research stems from the focus on the quality of education in a rural area and the expected presence of additional barriers that hinder the teachers' and students' capabilities. Thereto, Balfour, Mitchell and Moletsane (2008) suggest a generative *theory of rurality*. The purpose of such a theory would be, first, to enable researchers to analyze data emerging from projects in which there is a need to take into account the relationship between space, time and agency in the rural environment. Second, a *theory of rurality* can also account for the ability of people in space and time to sustain themselves; both as subjects and as agents able to resist or transform the environment, depending on the resources available (Balfour, Mitchell and Moletsane 2008).

Geographical research on educational curricula and school quality is a diverse and developing field of study. However, education has remained on the margins of critical geographical research, despite playing central roles in state-building, economic development, social reproduction and cultural politics (Hanson Thiem 2009). Nonetheless, over the last decade, geographers have shown increasing interest in the everyday spaces of education. This interest by geographers of diverse philosophical orientations with varied areal specialisms focuses on a variety of themes within the geography of education research (Cook and Hemming 2011; Holloway et al. 2010). Variances in access to education, and geographical variations in educational attainment, have been important themes in what might be considered inward-looking literature on geographies of education (Adedoken and Balschweid 2008).

In contrast to inward-looking research with sub-disciplinary confinements, Hanson Thiem (2009) suggests a decentred and outward-looking approach to geography of education with a commitment to contextualising education. However, Holloway et al. (2010) highlight the lacunas in Hanson Thiem's vision and argue that it is essential to complement her limited yet indicative agenda with another that is more fully informed by developments in social and cultural geography. Moreover, Holloway et al. (2010) argue that their agenda for geographies of education is one which transcends the inward-outward dichotomy. Their agenda engages with the ways in which education is bounded into and shapes wider social, economic and political processes and also considers how this is experienced by the students, families and educators in the spaces of learning that form key sites of interaction in their everyday lives. With regards to the sub discipline of the geography of educational outcomes, Zhang and Cowen (2009) argue that the inequalities of academic achievement across schools and between different geographical settings – i.e. urban, suburban and rural - remains an under-researched area.

1.2 Research objective and research questions

Summing up, a new curriculum is introduced in Uganda to improve the quality of education, which has been under increased pressure since introducing UPE. Additionally, the indicators for the quality of education that are generally accepted are not considering the context of educational inputs and outcomes. This means that understanding the quality of education is not done in the holistic way that is proposed with the CA to education. Additionally, the rural context of the case study for this research affects the teachers' and students' capabilities and these are neglected by previous indicators of quality. Therefore, this research aims at determining the impact of the introduction of the Thematic Curriculum in Uganda as a quality improvement intervention by utilising a CA-inspired SDI beyond the standard educational quality indicators in rural government primary schools. The SDI gives insight in the context of the quality of education in a rural district beyond scores in standardised examinations and other indicators like completion and survival rates. This CA-inspired index is chosen because it shifts the 'ends' of development [and education] from narrow input and outcome indicators to people's overall well-being and agency freedoms. The research is based on a fieldwork period of three months in Uganda from October 2012 up till January 2013 and focuses on Namasale Sub-County in Northern Uganda.

The aim of this research is formulated as follows.

This research aims at determining the success of the introduction of the Thematic Curriculum in Uganda as a quality improvement intervention. The level of success will be established on the basis of utilising a Capability Approach School Development Index beyond the standard education quality indicators in rural government primary schools.

This main objective is divided into three research questions:

1. Which preconditions [outside support, innovative capacity and practices] for successful implementation of the curriculum are (not) met in Uganda and to what extent does that hinder or support improvement of the quality of education?
2. To what extent do the education quality indicators represent the needs and the required capabilities of government primary school teachers and students in rural areas?
3. Which other barriers exist in rural areas that obstruct teachers' and students' capabilities?

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of seven forthcoming chapters. First, from the existing literature the thesis will elaborate upon the issues that have been addressed in the preceding introductory chapter. Thereto, the debate on the measurement and indicators of quality education will be worked out, followed by elaboration of the CA to education and the curriculum implementation theory and framework. This chapter is finalised with theoretical insights and expectations for additional barriers for rural education. Thereafter, in Chapter 3, the research methods, strategy, limitations will be addressed. Subsequently, the conceptual model will be presented and the main concepts will be operationalized and also the organization of the field work will be explained. Then, Chapter 4 will elaborate upon the background of education in the selected research area and the history and main characteristics of the education sector in Uganda will be explained. Afterwards, Chapter 5 and 6 consist the main analysis of the implementation process of the Thematic Curriculum in Uganda based on the three constructs of implementation; followed by the examination of the main input and outcome indicators of quality education. Subsequently, Chapter 7 entails the analysis of the case study in Namasale Sub-County, i.e. the main results and interpretations of the capability indicators selected in the SDI. Finally, the conclusion and discussion of this study are conducted in Chapter 8.

2. Literature review

This chapter will explore the theoretical fields to form a framework wherein this study can be placed. Therefore, the issues addressed in Chapter 1 will be explored in more detail. This entails discussing the debate on the selection of indicators to measure the quality of education, followed by a further exploration of the CA to education, the curriculum implementation theory and determining additional barriers for rural education.

2.1 Defining ‘quality of education’

The introduction of the Thematic Curriculum aims at increasing the quality of education in Uganda’s primary schools. Although, it is perceived that measurement of the quality of education purely based on test scores or other educational outcomes is a debatable issue (Alexander 2008; Barrett et al. 2006; Stephens 2003; Tikly 2011; Tikly and Barret 2010; Verspoor 2005). According to Stephens (2003) defining the concept of quality is like trying to define ‘motherhood’: it is clearly a good thing but elusive and likely to be dependent on the perspective of the person attempting the definition. For example, for parents ‘quality’ may relate to the learning outcomes; for the school manager or inspector quality may embrace improved general standards of reading or mathematics; for the teacher a definition of quality can link closely to improved conditions of service. In addition, it is argued that test scores provide a valuable measure of how well the curriculum is being learned and help indicate how well students perform at the main outcomes of the school system (Barrett et al 2006).

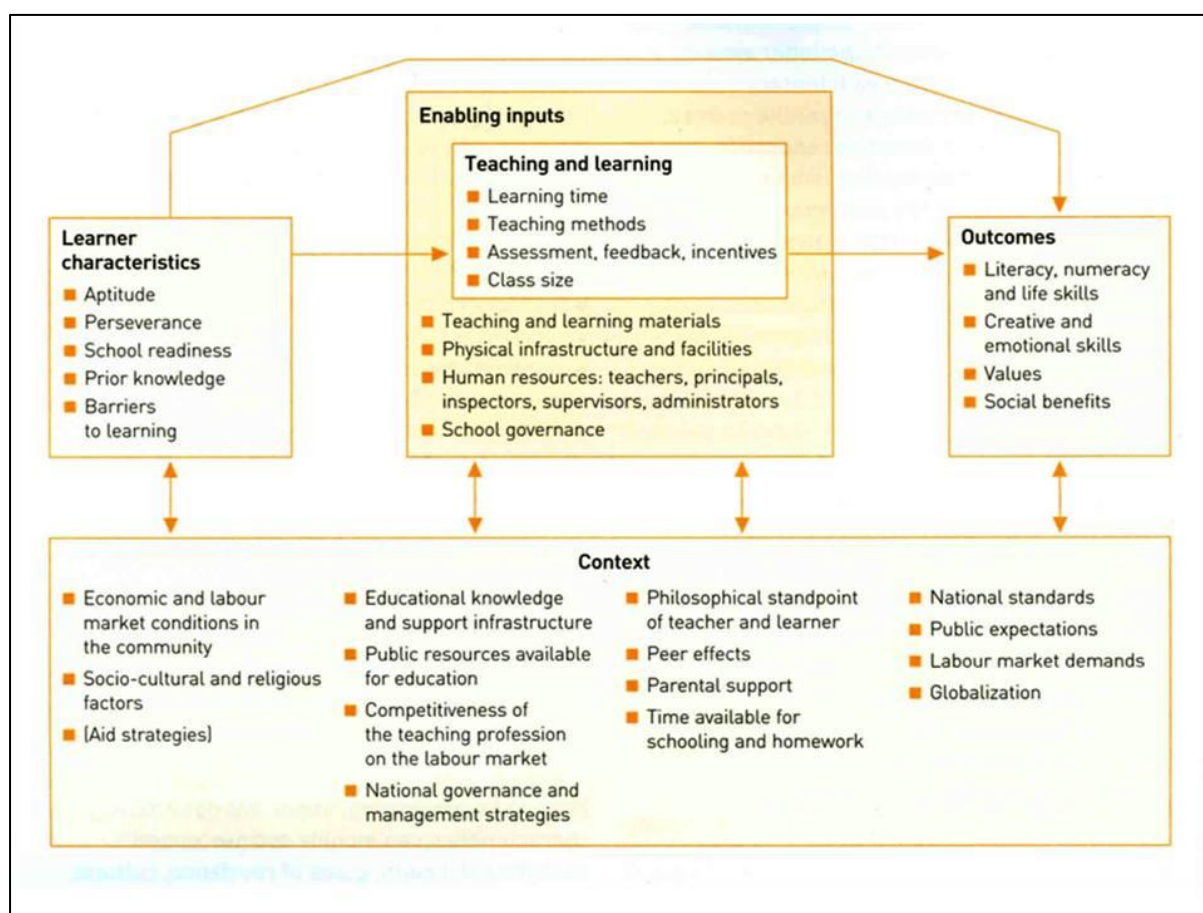
A main dilemma that confronts education planners in developing countries is the difficult task of improving schools in an effort to ensure that they are of a quality standard (Tao 2010). Part of this dilemma is rooted in the terminology itself as ‘school quality’ has proven to be a term with a very understandable connotation, as it has a much more vague definition. School quality is often defined and conceptualized with a strong epistemological and methodological shadow of its predecessor; ‘school effectiveness’. The ‘effectiveness’ paradigm was attractive to education planners and policy, because it frames education as consisting of inputs, and when these inputs are combined correctly, this results in greater effectiveness. However, the effectiveness approach is seen as insensitive to culture, context, belief systems and social structures within schools, which affect how and whether inputs are actually used. These problems can be overcome through emphasizing quality of education as a process (Tao 2010). Seeing education as a process, the ‘quality’ of a school is not judged on inputs or outcomes represented by examination scores, but rather on the processes that affect students and their ability to learn.

The process of teaching and learning remains territory which is either avoided as being too complex or is incautiously blundered into as apparently unproblematic (Alexander 2008). Additionally, Tao (2010) suggests the use of a CA to analyse quality as a process and to present theoretical and practical applications of CA that reframe current conceptions of school quality and procedures of how to improve it.

The indicators of education quality that are most commonly used by governments and international agencies, including completion and survival rates and scores in standardized tests, often lead to a narrow view of quality that does not capture the range of possible outcomes that may be required by learners (Tikly 2011). However, it is argued that the outcomes of education are only part of studying education quality. Understanding education quality in a comprehensive way entails also inclusion of other variables beyond solely education outcomes (Barret et al. 2006). For example, if two girls fail a Grade 7 test, they both 'function' the same but the context and their capabilities could be different. It could be that one of the pupils received teaching from a well prepared teacher, in a high class urban area, who is motivated by her parents. The other pupil could be taught in a rural area by an often absent, low motivated and overworked teacher with little teaching capacity and little financial and parental support. These factors affect the performance, but are overlooked by traditional standard indicators of quality (Nussbaum 2003; Spoelder 2009). Therefore, it is recognized that quality cannot be defined by an exclusive reference to inputs and outcomes alone: the pedagogical process and context must be engaged with as well in order to establish the quality of education (Alexander 2008).

One of the attempts to unify the understanding of the quality of education is undertaken by UNESCO. Quality education is understood from UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report of 2005 through the model as depicted in Figure 1 (UNESCO 2005). This broader holistic view on quality education that is embedded in a political, cultural and economic context is taken up by UNICEF. This framework for understanding, monitoring and improving education quality entails four variables. First, *learner characteristics*, such as: previous learning experience, socio-economic background, place of residence, health, cultural and religious background. Second, *context*, like societal values and attitudes, economic status and national policies for education. Third, *inputs*, or the availability of material and human resources. Fourth, *outcomes*: the measurable learning objectives through test and examination performance (UNESCO 2005 and Barrett et al. 2006). However, it is argued that the *learner characteristics* and the *context* are still largely ignored by educational stakeholders (Spoelder 2009).

Figure 1: UNESCO model quality of education



Source: UNESCO 2005

The conceptualisation of the quality of education is broadly addressed in the work of Leon Tikly and Angelina Barret (Barrett 2006; Barrett 2011; Tikly 2011; Tikly and Barrett 2007). Their papers set out a critical framework for conceptualizing the relationship between the concepts of social justice and CA and the quality of education experienced by disadvantaged learners in low income countries. Tikly and Barrett (2010) have proposed a framework founded on three dimensions of social justice and informed by Sen's CA. Their framework emphasises three inter-related dimensions of a good quality education: *inclusion*, *relevance* and *democracy*. In more detail, *inclusion* draws attention to the access of different groups of learners to quality inputs that facilitate the development of their capabilities, the cultural and institutional barriers that impact on the learning of different groups and priorities for overcoming these. Thereafter, *relevance* is concerned with the extent to which the outcomes of education are meaningful for all learners, valued by their communities and consistent with national development priorities in a changing global context. Finally, *democracy* considers how decisions about education quality are governed and the nature of participation in debates at the local, national and global levels. Summing up, their main argument is that a social justice approach can provide a new way of

thinking about education quality. It can provide an alternative rationale for education rooted in individual freedoms and the role education has in fostering capabilities that encompass, stretch and challenge previously important understandings from human capital and human rights-based approaches (Tikly and Barrett 2010).

All in all, setting up a system of indicators to analyse the quality of education beyond test scores or other inputs and outcomes has proven to be a difficult task. For the purposes of this thesis, the utilisation of a CA to quality education will be further explored in the next section.

2.2 The Capability Approach

This section will focus on the benefits of the CA for education and especially measuring the quality of education. For this purpose, first of all, the history and additions of the CA to international development policies in general will be explained. Subsequently, the additions of the CA to the conceptualisation of the quality of education will be analysed. Thereafter, the utilization of a capabilities-inspired SDI is explained and justified.

2.2.1 Capability Approach to education

The CA has become influential in international development in recent years (McCowan 2011; Robeyns 2003; Unterhalter, Vaughan and Walker 2007). With pioneering publications in the 1980s and 1990s by Martha Nussbaum (1997) and Amartya Sen (2001) the importance of this perspective on development is increasingly emphasized by the United Nations. The CA's emphasis on the human - i.e. social - aspect of development goes beyond the previously important notions of mere economic development. Since the 1990s, the Human Development Reports have assessed the quality of life in the nations of the world using the concept of people's capabilities, i.e. their ability to do and to be certain things they consider valuable, through the Human Development Index [HDI] (Nussbaum 1997).

The CA progressed from the initial ideas of Amartya Sen: "*development as freedom*" (Sen, 2001) which have been further developed into an utilizable approach for different sectors. For example, with respect to education, the CA is not only utilised to explain the different values education can have for human development (see Brighouse and Unterhalter 2010 and Figure 2) it is also subject to an attempt that explored the possibilities to convert the CA into a SDI, following the example of the HDI and its practice as measurement tool for development beyond economic indicators (Tao 2010). This shift in paradigm towards a more social development perspective is widely embraced and implemented. In general, the *founding thinkers* agree that

education is a foundational capability, i.e. an indispensable feature for the development of other capabilities. Moreover, capabilities regarding education operate on two levels: the capability to participate in education and the capabilities gained through education (Wood and Deprez 2012). Nevertheless, there are certain differences in the fundamental principles with regards to the creation of a list of capabilities, see Amartya Sen (2001; 2005) and Martha Nussbaum (2000; 2011). These fundamental differences will be addressed in section 2.2.3.

An extensive overview of the relationship between education and capabilities is provided by Elaine Unterhalter (2009). She explains that the role of education for achieving development, from a CA stance, contains three roles: it is instrumental, empowering and redistributive. First of all, the instrumental role has a social component: literacy fosters public debate and dialogue about social and political arrangements. Next, the instrumental role also has a process component in facilitating capacity to participate in decision-making processes. Thereafter, education has an empowering and distributive role in providing the ability of disadvantaged, marginalized and excluded groups to organize politically since, without education, these groups would be unable to gain access to centres of power and make a case for redistribution to begin with. Moreover, applying the CA to education puts emphasis on capabilities and not on outcomes of being educated (Unterhalter 2009).

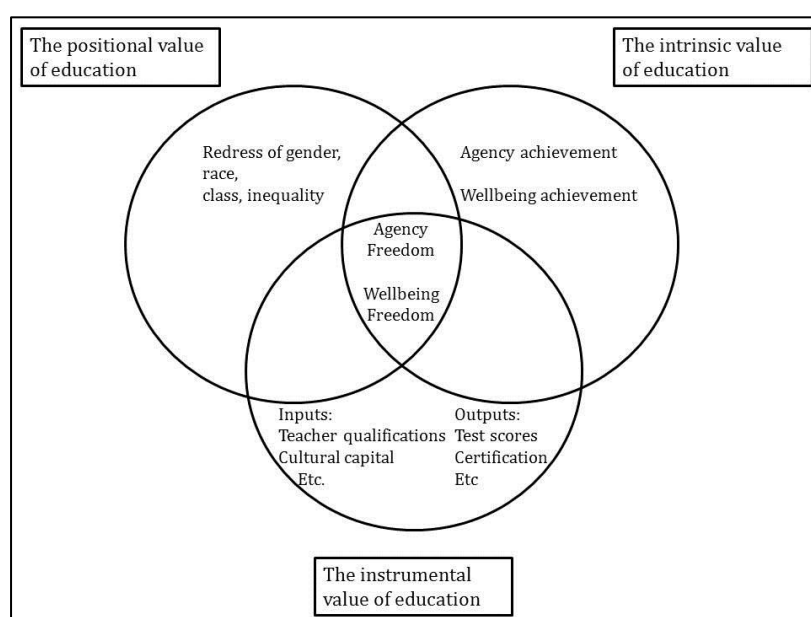
2.2.2 Capability Approach and quality of education

In an attempt to extend the bounds of the current debate, Tikly and Barrett (2010) state that one of the most important requirements is the need to develop the informational basis on which education quality is understood. Therefore, the challenge is not only to define what different capabilities might look like at different levels of the system, but also how they can be measured and how the success of education systems in developing these capabilities can be evaluated. In addition, they state that a focus on capabilities can assist in thinking through what it might mean to be educated in the global era and how this relates to notions of development. This redefines looking at quality education as developing capabilities which society and individuals have reason to value (Tikly and Barrett 2010).

Regarding the quest for a more practical utilization of the CA, the proposed framework by Brighouse and Unterhalter (2010) is a recent example [Figure 2]. This model builds on the attempts by several scholars to translate the abstract ideas of the initial CA, into a practical tool for policy making (e.g. Nussbaum 1997; Robeyns 2005b; Sen 2001). In the model by Brighouse and Unterhalter, there are three values of education distinguished, which aim at providing

insight beyond education merely as a right and, also, beyond purely looking at the economic value of education from a human capital theory perspective. The school quality indicators that are common in use only take into account one part of education: the instrumental value of education, i.e. its inputs and outputs. Moreover, they argue that separated approaches were not adequate in guiding policymakers in deciding what the content and distribution of educational opportunities should be; there is a need for a holistic approach. They argue that their model is better suited for this task, but it is still somewhat sketchy in its design (Brighouse and Unterhalter 2010).

Figure 2: Capability Approach: Values of Education



Source: adapted from Brighouse and Unterhalter 2010: 208.

The values of education in their model are explained as follows. First, the *instrumental value* – understood as schooling – helps secure work at a certain level and political and social participation in certain forms. In short, without some formal level of education one cannot live a life one has reason to value. Second, the *intrinsic value of education* refers to the benefits a person gets from education which are not merely instrumental. An educated person might have a better mental life, regardless of whether education helps her gain or keep employment. Third, the *positional value of education* depends on how successful a person has been relative to others. This refers to the context surrounding a person, for example: the location and reputation of the school, the level and motivation of the teacher and inequality on the basis of gender or race. Finally, central in the model of Brighouse and Unterhalter is the CA's concern with *well-being freedom* and *agency freedom*. These freedoms relate to the social conditions that secure instrumental, intrinsic and positional values through education. The model emphasizes the

processes of change over a cycle that considers children growing up towards agency freedoms (Brighouse and Unterhalter 2010). Additionally, an important element of the CA is its perspective on the individual level; CA is concerned with the capabilities of each and every individual. The ideas of Sen integrate securing and expanding intrapersonal and interpersonal freedoms: individuals and their opportunities should not be viewed in isolated terms. Therefore, education is understood to be a capability in itself that can stimulate the development of other capabilities (Walker 2006).

Adding to the debate on the way capabilities can be evaluated, Tao (2010) suggests a shift in the 'ends' - e.g. student achievements and test scores - of attempts to improve school quality, to the improved well-being of the teachers and students; in comparison to how Sen's CA shifted the 'ends' of human development from economic growth to human well-being. The proposition by Tao does not mean that student achievement and test scores are not important for education policy, but CA's expanded evaluations of poverty move beyond previous – economic - indicators, towards broader dimensions of health, knowledge and standard of living (Tao 2010). Finalizing, it is stated that the CA functions as an evaluative tool to execute a situational analysis. As a comprehensive and multidimensional model, the CA offers new potential to measure educational quality. Unlike other quality education measurements, the CA takes account of the contextual constraints to a quality education system from a personal, social, and environmental level. This provides a more holistic perspective on school quality and on the success of quality improvement interventions.

2.2.3 School Development Index

The CA has added a comprehensive perspective to education in an abstract and theoretical way, a further operationalization of the CA is said to be the most important challenge (Robeyns 2005b). An example of utilizing the CA to education is the result of the work of Sharon Tao (2010). She proposes a list of capabilities which could be evolved into an index. Such a SDI should enable the possibility to monitor school improvement, just as the general CA has been converted into the HDI to measure development beyond solely economic indicators. It is argued that the HDI is probably the best illustrations of the utilisation of the CA; it has had the largest impact on policy making, although it uses just a few functionings and it can be considered somewhat crude (Robeyns 2003). As a result, Tao (2010) argues she cannot help but generalise in the process of creating a SDI, which could be seen to serve a similar purpose: to bring issues of teacher and student well-being to the fore as an indicator of school improvement and development, and eventually to measure the quality of education. Comparable to the HDI, Tao

states that *“distilling such complexities of teacher and student well-being into a single index would prove difficult. Nevertheless, an SDI would have the positive effect of focusing policy makers’ attention onto teacher and student capabilities as a means of improving school quality and the transaction of teaching and learning”* (p. 14).

Currently, the main index being used to measure educational effects is the Education for All Development Index [EDI]. This EDI composites four out of six EFA goals: net enrolment ratios, student completion rates to grade five, adult literacy rates, and gender parity. The indicators *Early Childhood Care and Education* and *Learning and Life Skills Programmes* have insufficient data and are not readily conducive to quantitative measurement. Therefore, the SDI that is applied in this research, in essence, would serve as a more specific and illuminating indicator of what is going on in classrooms as opposed to using completion rates as the main educational quality indicator (Tao 2010). However, the problems suffered by the EDI bring a similar challenge for the SDI: quantification of student and teacher well-being within the modality of formal schooling is difficult. As Tao (2010) states: *“how does one evaluate seemingly non-quantifiable functionings, such as self-esteem, the ability to have a voice, and being free from fear?”* (p. 14). Concluding, the SDI could serve as a standardised measure for the monitoring and evaluation of school development between particular schools, within a particular region or, on a larger scale, between different countries.

The proposition to draw up a list of capabilities, thus to quantify the CA, is not accepted without debate (Nussbaum 2000; Sen 2005; Robeyns 2005a; 2005b). For example, Sen states that *“The problem is not with listing important capabilities, but with insisting on one predetermined canonical list of capabilities, chosen by theorists without any general social discussion or public reasoning. To have such a fixed list, emanating entirely from pure theory, is to deny the possibility of fruitful public participation on what should be included and why... public discussion and reasoning can lead to a better understanding of the role, reach and significance of particular capabilities”* (Clark 2005). The lack of commitment by Sen to a list of capabilities has been criticized by different scholars for not having specified which capabilities matter or for not giving some guidelines on how the selection of capabilities could be conducted (Nussbaum 2003, Robeyns 2005b).

According to Robeyns (2005c) the critique on Sen’s stance is most clearly voiced by Martha Nussbaum. Nussbaum’s widely supported attempt for a selection of capabilities is her proposition of a selection of ten *central human capabilities* (Nussbaum 2003). Nussbaum defends her list of central human capabilities as being the moral entitlements of every human

being, although, her proposition has also not been without critique on its legitimacy (Robeyns 2005b). The initial CA was left underspecified on purpose, because Sen believes that it is the role of those being affected by capability expansion to in fact have the freedom and agency to select the capabilities that they value worth expanding (Sen 2001). However, Sen has referred to the need for a selection of basic capabilities, which allow people the opportunity to do things that are necessary for survival (Tao 2010).

Subsequent to the legitimacy of a list of capabilities, Tao (2010) argues that the relevance of a CA to examine school improvement interventions is three-fold. First, it can be used as a tool for descriptive situational analysis in order to examine and evaluate current processes in primary schools. By using the CA as a descriptive tool, behaviour that might appear irrational according to traditional economic analysis can be revealed, or insight can be gathered into layers of complexities that a quantitative examination can rarely capture (Robeyns 2005a). Second, CA can be operationalized as a framework for improvement by utilizing participatory measures to identify capabilities to be subsequently expanded. In other words, a list of capabilities – that can be identified as important through the situation analysis - can be used to stimulate improvement in several of the capabilities that are considered to be important. Third and final, CA can be used as a measuring instrument to monitor and compare how well different schools are faring in their overall expansion of capabilities. This means that the framework of capabilities, i.e. the SDI, can be used to monitor the improvement of capabilities over time (Tao 2010). This SDI can be used to further implement and concretize the CA to education.

Utilising the CA provides an in-depth understanding of a situation and is particularly relevant to school improvement efforts, because the social process of teaching and learning are often not fully understood before intervention planning embarks. The overall goal of creating a SDI is formulated as: *“to recognise the constraints on the capabilities of teachers and students so that school improvement measures can reconcile such problems”* (Tao 2010). Ultimately, the SDI is reduced to eight suggestions for quantifiable indicators [see Table 1]. The first three capabilities in this list are the capabilities that overlap amongst teachers and students. The last five categories address teachers and students separately.

Table 1: Preliminary indicators for a School Development Index

Capabilities	Suggestions for creating a quantifiable indicator
1. Basic survival capabilities	Water, sanitation and shelter can be observed and ranked on a normative scale
2. Mental well-being, bodily integrity, social networks, respect and recognition, voice, freedom to act and freedom to aspire	These capabilities can be gauged using Alkire's (2002) focus group methodology to rank impactful qualitative functionings
3. Having a well-managed school with adequate resources	Resource availability can be observed and ranked on a normative scale or reflected in spending per pupil
4. Teacher capability to manage a class	Teacher workload can be extrapolated from pupil/teacher ratios and number of classes per day
5. Teacher capability of accessing in-service training	Enrolment ratio of teachers for in-service training sessions
6. Teach capability of being adequately remunerated	Teacher salary relative to cost of living
7. Student capability of parental support	Attendance and completion rates up to grade five
8. Student capability of accessing appropriate pedagogies	Alkire's (2002) focus group methodology to rank gender bias and other qualitative data

Source: adapted from Tao 2010: 15.

Following the selection of indicators, Tao emphasises the preliminary phase wherein the development of the list of indicators resides. These are very preliminary suggestions for indicators and much work has yet to be done in finalising an overarching list of indicators that can apply to all schools, creating data collection methods that are reliable and cost-effective, and applying appropriate statistical and aggregation methods. Furthermore, she argues that a demarcation between 'ideal' and 'pragmatic' capabilities still needs to be created and delineation of the rigorous coverage of all relevant dimensions. These last two steps should be grounded in the conditions, contexts and people in which the interventions will be applied. Concluding, Tao (2010) states that she believes *"this proposed framework for school improvement is no doubt an experiment that will prove to be problematic, difficult and in need of further exploration. However, this study has created a new nexus—one that rethinks the paradigm of school improvement, and challenges top-down views of development in education."* (p. 16). Therefore, this study explores the use and relevance of each of the proposed capability indicators within the conditions and context of this research.

2.3 Curriculum Implementation

Following the analysis of the SDI concerning school improvement interventions, this section focuses on the introduction of the Thematic Curriculum in Uganda in 2007 as an example of a school improvement intervention. It has already been stated that the quality of education in Uganda has been under pressure due to primarily emphasising access to education following an access shock after introduction of UPE.

2.3.1 Thematic Curriculum as school improvement intervention

In essence, the introduction of a new primary education curriculum in Uganda is aimed at increasing the quality of education. Several studies have investigated the quality of education and the success of curriculum implementation in Uganda. These studies raised questions about the quality and fitness of a previously existing curriculum in accordance with the *classroom reality* (Penny et al. 2008; Ward, Penny and Read 2006). The appropriateness of the curriculum that preceded the Thematic Curriculum was doubted following a report of a special Task Force. This report (see Read and Enyutu 2005) concluded that the overall performance of students at primary level had not significantly improved, and that literacy levels in English and in local languages were unacceptably low, especially outside Kampala and in rural areas. Furthermore, the report suggested several reasons for the lack of quality improvement: the curriculum was overloaded, it emphasized the acquisition of facts in various subjects, and the teaching and learning focused mainly on recall of these facts and other lower cognitive skills. Moreover, teaching skills in literacy and numeracy in lower primary grades were seriously inadequate. The students' failure to develop early literacy skills led to poor performance in all curriculum subjects, which subsequently led to loss of interest by both parents and students with high dropout rates as a result (Read and Enyutu 2005). In addition, Altinyelken (2010) identifies several underlying causes of low quality primary schools in Uganda. She highlights several causes, for example: lack of qualified teachers – especially in rural areas - inadequate lesson planning, overly large classes, lack of basic materials and high teacher and head teacher absenteeism. Despite the good intentions of the Thematic Curriculum, it is not a one-on-one match with the situation in the classrooms, especially in the remote areas. The previously mentioned factors are important to examine the process of implementation of the curriculum from the desks at NCDC in Kampala to the classrooms.

2.3.2 Process of implementation

Developing new curricula has been a popular undertaking in many countries around the world and, generally, these curricula are well-designed and possess praiseworthy aims. Nevertheless, it is claimed that the policy makers involved with developing these curricula are engaged with creating the policies, but “*seldom look down the track to the implementation stage*” (Rogan and Grayson 2003). Moreover, it is argued that large-scale changes often neglect the process of implementation and, likewise, low outcomes of educational changes are mainly the result of “*poor implementation of what was essentially a good idea*” (Verspoor 1989). Overall, the developing world has witnessed many examples of well-intentioned and well-designed curriculum reform programmes that have failed to take root on the ground. One of the principal reasons, thereto, appears to be a lack of clearly worked-out implementation strategies that take the national and local context into account (Rogan and Grayson 2003). There is now a common understanding that policy makers need to consider and plan for the implementation stage for reforms to be successful (Altinyelken 2010). Often, the general way of thinking about curriculum implementation has been rather top-down and according to Chisholm and Leyendecker (2008) there is a critical link between *the big idea* and changing actual classroom practice that must be recognized.

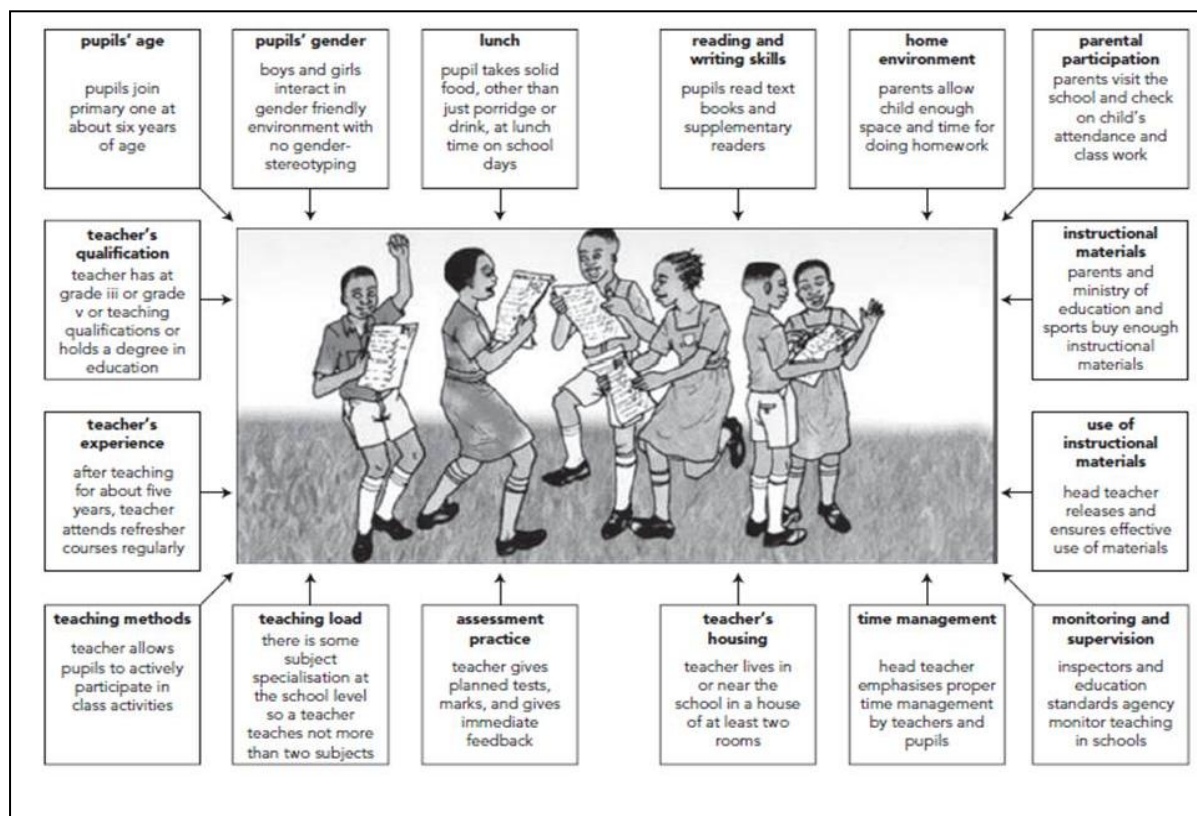
One of the striking features of curriculum change and implementation is the perceived mismatch between the intended curriculum and the *classroom reality*, i.e. a disparity between policy and practice (Rogan 2007b; Chisholm and Leyendecker 2008; Bantwini 2010). Chisholm and Leyendecker (2008) examined the gaps between policy and practice in relation to curriculum change and argue that, while there is agreement on the aims of reforms, there is evidence of divergence in practice. They argue that in practice ideas are often recontextualized and displaced and, therefore, they are often unable to meet the social development goals demanded of them. Likewise, in the most successful cases a firm national commitment to change was combined with an acceptance of diversity at the school level, an insistence on school accountability and an effective mix of dissemination strategies. Furthermore, Verspoor (1989) claims that the diversity in schools needs to be taken into account to implement large-scale changes. Therefore, Sergiovanni (1998) proposes a continuum of forces of educational change. These changes consist of, on the one side, *top-down [or external]* end of the continuum and on the other side, *bottom-up [or community-based]* end of the continuum. In contrast to the superficial top-down changes, the community-based changes are likely to be deep and enduring (Rogan and Grayson 2003). Therefore, it is important for the curriculum implementation

process that sufficient attention is paid to the bottom-up changes that are needed for curriculum change to take root on the ground.

The extent to which educational change is top-down or bottom-up is one dimension along which notions of educational change differ. However, as Fullan (2001) suggests, it is not just a question of selecting top-down or bottom-up approaches, one to the exclusion of the other, but it is about carefully selecting those forces that are likely to be most effective in the situation at hand. Curriculum planners at the school level should be allowed to take into account the context and capacity of their school, and they should be encouraged to select a route in working towards a meaningful implementation of the proposed changes (Rogan 2007a). Depending upon where on the continuum the change is located, different kinds of change forces will be invoked and hence different kinds of changes are likely to occur. It is argued that certain rather simple structural changes might need to precede the introduction of deep changes (Rogan and Grayson 2003).

Bottom-up educational changes are said to be most effective, although there are numerous external forces that can prove to be challenges (Sergiovanni 1998). Consequently, Kellaghan, Greaney and Murray (2009) advocate the use of a chart prepared by UNEB [Figure 3]. This chart highlights the challenges that schools and teachers are facing with regards to students' achievement. In this overview of factors it shows that professional development and assessment practices are particularly important. They argue that a school should be guided in developing strategies on school effectiveness, teacher effectiveness and the role of homes and communities in supporting students' learning if a national assessment does not identify specific courses of action. On the one hand, some factors are under the control of schools and teachers. For example, more time devoted to particular topics in the curriculum, more careful attention to analysing students' homework, and more emphasis on providing feedback. On the other hand, other factors are under the control of parents. For example, encouraging better school attendance or ensuring that homework is completed (Kellaghan, Greaney and Murray 2009).

Figure 3: Factors affecting pupils educational achievement in Uganda



Source: Kellaghan, Greaney and Murray 2009: 123.

Additionally, in order to allow an education quality improvement intervention to be successful, many influential factors have to be taken into account. Therefore, not only education outcomes are important, but also pupil, household and regional characteristics need to be addressed. For example, poor education outcomes may be due to the low quality of the inputs of a schooling system - teachers, teaching methods, materials - to underfunding or to factors beyond the education policy. Consequently, an unbiased assessment of the effects of an intervention on, for instance, enrolment must take into account the effects of the size, remoteness and poverty status of households, as these factors may also affect enrolment rates. In the case of Uganda, the neglect of these unobserved selection effects has led to unrealistically high expectations and subsequent disappointment about achievements and wrong policy conclusions (IOB 2008). Thus, curriculum implementation is not a straightforward top-down or bottom-up strategy. For this reason, a broader model of implementation needs to be considered and, therefore, Rogan and Grayson (2003) have developed a theory of implementation which emphasises a broad analysis of the implementation process that takes contextual factors into account.

2.3.3 Analytical framework of curriculum implementation

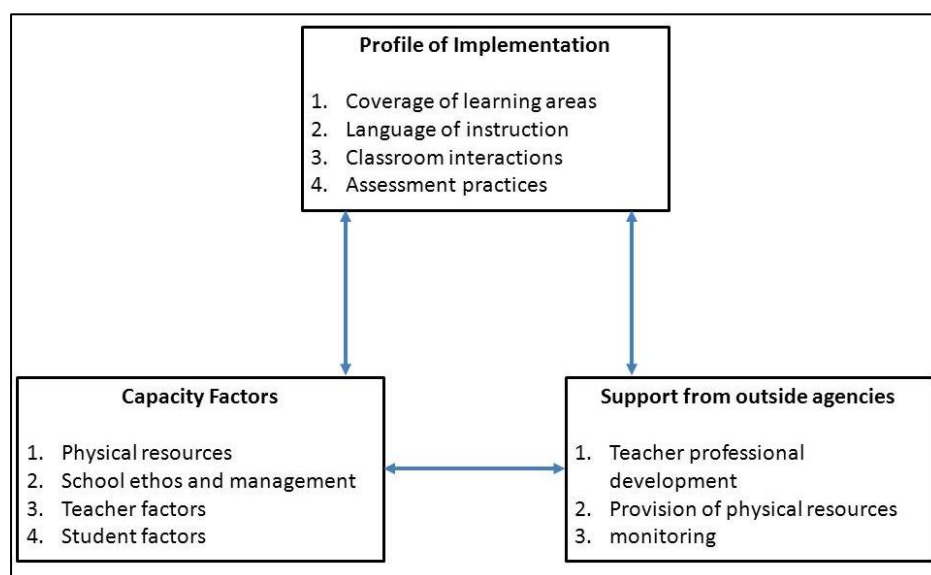
Probably the most influential and holistic attempt to categorize curriculum implementation is undertaken by Rogan and Grayson (2003). In their work they build upon previous efforts to create a theoretical framework for a differentiated strategy. Among these endeavours are attempts by Beeby (1966), Verspoor and Wu (1990) and De Freiter et al. (1995) although, the limitations and shortcomings of these earlier theoretical undertakings need to be recognized. According to Rogan and Grayson (2003) one of the main shortcomings is that these earlier models generally tend to advocate an unsatisfactory approach to curriculum change: they identify weaknesses and try to remediate them. Another limitation is that these models imply a linear view of curriculum change, moving up from one stage to the next. But, according to Altinyelken (2010) these models underestimated the complexity of an educational system and focused only on the role of teachers, without making reference to other aspects of the school context. Hence, these shortcomings tend to obscure the complex and idiosyncratic nature of the implementation process (Rogan and Grayson 2003).

In developing their theory of implementation, Rogan and Grayson (2003) refute the aforementioned implications. Instead, they argue that there is a need to acknowledge the existing classroom reality and then build on the strengths of teachers, pupils and the school's environment. Subsequently, their *Profile of Implementation* allows strengths to be identified and progress to be made by building on these strengths, in comparison with only identifying weaknesses. They state that “*since different schools may begin with different strengths, and wish to develop in different directions, the profile is neither remedial nor linear in its nature*” (Rogan and Grayson 2003: 1176). The adaptation of the theory of Rogan and Grayson into an analytical framework of curriculum implementation by Altinyelken (2010) is further explored.

The theory of implementation, developed by Rogan and Grayson (2003) is based on the role of science in the curriculum changes in South Africa and Altinyelken adapted this theory into an analytical framework with regards to Uganda's introduction of a Thematic Curriculum in 2007. In Altinyelken's research - conducted in primary schools that were part of the pilot project for the Thematic Curriculum in Uganda's capital Kampala - she embraces the suggested constructs of implementation. Additionally, she has converted these constructs of implementation into a model [Figure 4]. This framework will correspondingly be used as base for the analysis of curriculum implementation. The *Framework of Implementation* consists of three main constructs: *the Support from Outside Agencies*, *the Capacity to Support Innovation* and *the Profile of Implementation*. These constructs share three important characteristics: first, they can be

measured using designated indicators; second, they are broad enough to encompass a number of related factors; and third, they are narrow enough to include one main idea (Altinyelken 2010).

Figure 4: The analytical framework of curriculum implementation



Source: adapted from Altinyelken 2010: 153.

First, the *Support from Outside Agencies* can be explained as the kinds of actions undertaken by outside organizations, such as departments of education, to influence innovation and practices, either by support or sanction. In the context of many developing countries, among outside agencies, international development agencies and local or international NGOs and unions may also be involved. The sub-constructs of this support can be made up of both material and non-material support. Material support may include facilitation of physical resources such as buildings, books, or apparatus, and direct support to students; for example through school-lunch programmes and the provision of safe, quiet places to study outside of class time (Rogan 2007b). In addition, non-material support is mostly provided in the form of professional development and is possibly the most visible support that can be given by outside agencies to bring about change in schools. Outside agencies can also exercise pressure through, for instance, monitoring practices. These sub-constructs can be converted into three indicators that measure the support from outside agencies: *teacher professional development*, *provision of physical resources* and *monitoring* [Figure 4].

Second, the *Capacity to Support Innovation* is concerned with factors that are likely to support or hinder the implementation of new ideas and practices in a system such as a school. Therefore, it is important to recognise that schools differ in their capacity to implement a given innovation to

the same extent. Some examples of indicators to measure this *Capacity to Support Innovation* are split up in four groups: *physical resources*, *school ethos and management*, *teacher factors* and *student factors*. In more detail, *physical resources* are certainly a major factor that influences capacity: limited resources and poor conditions can hinder the performance of even the best of teachers and undermine learners' efforts to focus on learning. Thereafter, the *school ethos and management* are two different aspects, but are considered together as they are closely intertwined, particularly in schools in developing countries. If the school is in disarray and not functioning well, innovation cannot or will not be implemented. The leadership and management role of the head teacher is critical in reform implementation. Then, the *teachers* are the ones eventually executing the policy in the classrooms; their role is considered essential in reform processes (Shawer 2010; Chan 2010; Bantwini 2010). Factors such as their background, training, subject matter knowledge, motivation, commitment to teaching, and attitudes towards proposed innovation influence their capacity and willingness to implement change. Finally, the strengths and constraints of the *students* are also essential for change to take place in the classroom. The background of the students influences their capacity to learn. A range of issues influence student attitudes to learning and ability to respond to changes, such as their home environments, parental commitment to education, health and nutrition, and proficiency level in the language of instruction.

Finally, the *Profile of Implementation*, in essence, contributes to understanding, analysing and expressing the extent to which the objectives of the curriculum are put into practice. It assumes that there is at least a vaguely defined notion of what constitutes 'good practice' and what this looks like in the classroom. The sub-constructs of the *Profile of Implementation* are: the *coverage of learning areas*, the *language of instruction*, *classroom interactions* and *assessment practices*. In addition, it also recognizes that there can be different levels at which implementation might be said to occur: there will be as many ways of putting a curriculum into action as there are teachers teaching it (Altinyelken 2010; Rogan and Grayson 2003).

This analytical framework for curriculum implementation suggests to take into account the critical link between 'the big idea' and changing actual classroom practice. Curriculum changes are believed to work best when curriculum developers acknowledge existing realities, classroom cultures and implementation requirements. This requires understanding and sharing the meaning of the educational change, providing for adaptations to cultural circumstances, local context and capacity building throughout the system (Chisholm and Leyendecker 2008). Nevertheless, according to Altinyelken (2010) many aspects of implementation processes were not yet well understood when she conducted her research. Consequently, there was limited

information available where policy makers can draw upon. Therefore, there is an urgent need for research that focuses on the implementation process in order to improve knowledge on the actual processes of change, the potential problems and issues that can emerge, and methods of addressing them. Thereto, this study will address the implementation processes with, both, the analytical framework of Altinyelken and the SDI inspired by the CA. The latter approach will be used to provide insight into the context in which the classroom realities of primary schools and the possible challenges regarding curriculum implementation in a rural area in Uganda. It is generally understood that education quality in rural areas is lower and that teaching and learning face more challenges than urban schools, therefore, the next part will explore the additional barriers for rural education in more detail.

2.4 Additional barriers for rural education

2.4.1 Education in rural areas

With increasing global urbanisation, the rural areas of countries tend to be somewhat left behind. Considering education, the UPE policy - which has been adopted and implemented by many developing countries - should make sure that all children attend school. Therefore, also children in remote rural areas have a right to attending basic education, but it has been argued that the quality of education in remote areas has become challenging. Zhang and Cowen (2009) investigate factors associated with the spatial aspects of academic achievement gap and explore the geographical inequalities of public school choice in South Carolina. They found that public schools with large minority enrolments and concentrated poverty are more likely to be labelled as 'in need of improvement' regardless of urban, suburban, or rural locality. However, it needs to be taken into account that their study has been conducted in the United States of America.

In reflection of the targets of global education policies, Zhang (2006) argues that improving schooling in rural areas poses a serious challenge in less developed countries, but it also presents a valuable opportunity for national and international initiatives to increase educational access and provide better learning environments for all children. The challenge lies in the distance that needs to be travelled by many of the world's less developed countries in order to meet the EFA and MDG educational goals. Moreover, the reality of rural schooling in most of the less developed countries is even further away from the targets. Nevertheless, Zhang (2006) adds that improving the learning needs of rural children might be crucial in achieving the EFA en MDG goals, because of the large rural populations of many less developed countries. Seeing the rural areas as an opportunity for educational change to improve the overall EFA goals is emphasised by Tayyaba (2012) on the basis of her research in Pakistan.

Contrasting to the traditional assumption that rural students are disadvantaged in terms of quality of education, Tayyaba (2012) claims that her results prove otherwise, at least as reflected in their performance on four standardized tests. Even though her study, also, reveals substantial cross-location variation in achievement and student, teacher and school characteristics. In general, the students attending rural schools came from families with lower levels of socio economic status, had less educated parents, fewer study aids at home, belonged to large families and had low parental involvement with school achievement. Urban students, generally, were in larger classes and had better equipped schools in terms of physical and academic resources. Her study in Pakistan shows that rural students' performance was at the same level as their urban counterparts in the government schools (Tayyaba 2012).

Additional examples of rural-urban differences are found in effects of UPE and other investments in education. The study by Grogan (2009) analysed the effects of school fee elimination under UPE. She claims that the positive effects that are found are particularly pronounced for girls in general and also for children living in rural areas; these groups were already named as the most educationally marginalized (Winthrop 2011). Furthermore, Deiniger (2003) states that investment in education is estimated to be systematically lower in urban areas than in the rural areas. To a large extent, rural areas have been neglected in development policies. Likewise, the rural part of basic education in most developing countries was largely overlooked during the 1990s. Consequently, changes in educational improvement are expected to be higher in rural areas. This suggests that a possible bias against investing in rural education, which might have reduced investment incentives in the past, is likely to have been eliminated by the policy reforms that have been undertaken since the early 1990s (Atchoarena and Sedel 2003). Contrastingly, Ekaju (2011) refutes the findings by Deininger by arguing that the claims that UPE is most beneficial for the poorest or that UPE is reducing inequalities might need to be revised: *"we should begin to ask how and why the UPE policy is failing poor children, instead of how poor children are failing under UPE"* (Shaeffer 2010, cited in Ekaju 2011). Although, the consequences of an absence of investment will be the continuation of the existence of regional poverty and educational inequalities. In this regard, certain progress has been made in Uganda but, much more needs to be done (Ekaju 2011).

2.4.2 Rural education in Uganda

The reason that rural education – and rural development in general – is an important issue, is that over 85 per cent of Uganda's population still lives rural; out of a population of 33 million in 2010. Another important number of Uganda's population is the population growth, which is

projected at 3.2% per year. This might double the population in 20 years and could be a major threat to the country's development (IFAD 2012).

Uganda has done remarkably well on access-related targets since the introduction of UPE in 1997, but this has not been without effects on the quality of education. The enormous increase of enrolment did not only have a severe impact on the education system and infrastructure, but it changed the school-going population as well. Uganda offered poor, uneducated parents from remote areas the opportunity to send their children to school (IOB 2008). Furthermore, the low literacy levels in both English and a local language, were particularly low outside Kampala and in rural areas (Read and Enyutu 2005). Additionally, Altinyelken (2010) emphasizes underlying causes that result in a lower level of quality of education in rural areas, in comparison to the Uganda's capital Kampala. She highlights several causes, e.g. the lack of qualified teachers, which are critical especially in rural areas. The Global Monitoring Report [GMR] 2010 states that trained teachers are often concentrated in urban areas: whereas 60% of teachers in Kampala are trained, the figure is 11% in a rural district in North-western Uganda. Additionally, the northern regions were marked by pupil/teacher ratios in excess of 90:1; nearly double the national average (UNESCO 2010). Additionally, the GMR argues that trained teachers are more likely to choose to work in urban areas, especially in systems where their remuneration is linked to parental contributions. Likewise, opportunities for professional development are also more likely to be concentrated in urban areas. Furthermore, urban areas may be seen as preferable to rural areas for other reasons, ranging from the quality of housing, amenities and schools to the proximity of friends and family (UNESCO 2010). In short, the qualifications and motivation of the teachers can be important factors for the quality of education in a rural area.

Another factor which is affecting the performance and attendance in rural primary schools is poverty. According to the GMR 2012 globally, poverty is particularly concentrated in rural areas. Despite widespread urbanization, around 70% of the world's people living in extreme poverty inhabit rural areas. This rural poor population is heavily concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The probability of being poor is at least twice as high for the rural population in a country as, for example, Uganda (UNESCO 2012). Acham et al. (2012) suggest that – rural - poverty leads to underachievement of children at school. Moreover, poverty – combined with lack of commitment – makes the parents unable to provide meals for their children, which causes irregular school attendance. The lack of nutrition influences the performance at school, particularly in rural areas. Acham et al. (2012) additionally state that several factors influence performance, including: food insecurity, poverty and distance between home and school.

All in all, the educational quality outcomes are affected by more than just school inputs. This holds that the assumptions formulated in the introduction are confirmed: the quality of education is especially challenging in rural areas. These examples show that the quality of rural education is confronted with even more challenges than urban schools and it can be concluded that urban-rural differences create a layer of inequality (UNESCO 2010). It is concluded that rural areas in Uganda have to deal with more barriers in comparison to the urban areas.

2.5 Conclusion

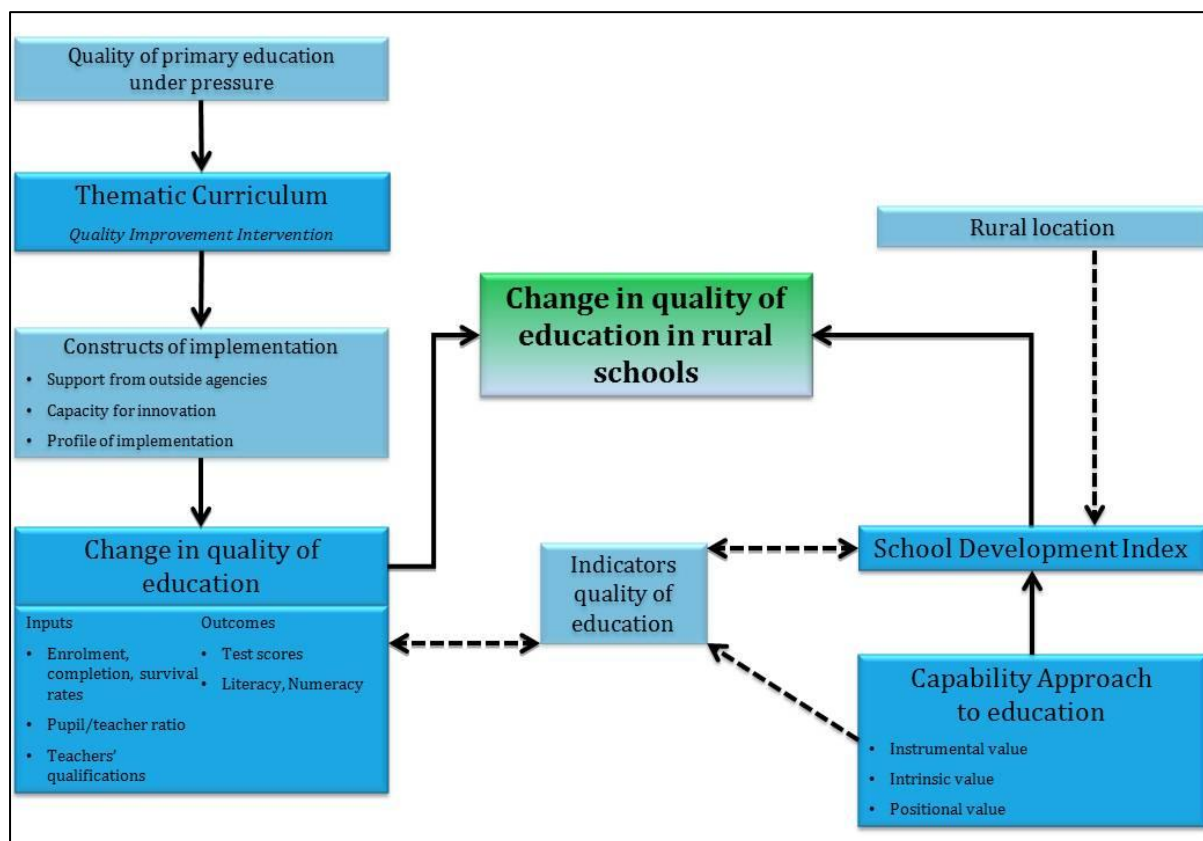
By way of conclusion, it is argued that there has been a trade-off between increasing access to education and the quality of education. The global push for access to education by means of the MDGs – followed by a UPE policy - has led to a doubling of enrolment in primary schools and consequently increased pressure on the quality of education in Uganda. In response, the GoU has attempted to increase the quality of education through implementing a new primary curriculum: the Thematic Curriculum. This curriculum has been in place since 2007 and is supposed to be rolled out throughout the grades of primary education after a stepwise introduction of one-grade-a-year from 2007 onwards. This *school improvement intervention* is used as subject of this research. Therefore, the implementation process of this new curriculum is analysed through the indicators for the constructs of implementation (Altinyelken 2010).

Furthermore, it is argued that the traditional indicators of the quality of education are providing a short-sighted indication of the quality. This limited focus on solely inputs and outcomes of education is extended by the CA to education, especially through the model of Brighouse and Unterhalter (2010). This model shows that the focus on inputs and outcomes is only part of the perception of the value of education. Therefore, the quality of education is in this research understood from a CA point of view; combining the intrinsic, instrumental and positional value of education to promote the agency and well-being freedom of students. Moreover, defining education with the traditional indicators of quality, limit the understanding of quality improvement interventions to inputs and outcomes; it is argued that the context and preconditions for education that affect the quality of education need to be included as well. In this case, the context is particularly important, because the rural location is expected to have an additional negative impact on the capabilities and the quality of education. Consequently, the practical implications of the CA to education are converted to the SDI proposed by Tao (2010). The SDI is identified as an instrument to indicate the teachers' and students' capabilities and the following impact on the quality of education. The SDI contains a foundation of eight suggested capabilities consisting of several - more or less - quantifiable indicators.

2.5.1 Conceptual model

The literature review that preceded has led to the development of a conceptual model. This model [Figure 5] visualizes the main concepts of this research and the assumed relations between these concepts.

Figure 5: Conceptual Model



Central to the conceptual model is the expected change in quality of education in rural schools. With increasing pressure on the quality of public primary education has come the need for a quality improvement intervention, in this case the introduction of the Thematic Curriculum in Uganda in 2007. The implementation of this new curriculum is analysed through the analytical framework of curriculum implementation (Altinyelken 2010). This framework provides insights in the impact the introduction of the curriculum had on the expected improvement of the quality of education. The Thematic Curriculum focuses on a change in the quality of education indicated through - generally accepted - input and outcome indicators of education quality. These indicators are used to indicate the change in quality of education since introduction of the curriculum.

Additionally, this research argues that the traditional indicators of the quality of education leaves out the context and underlying factors that affect the achievement of both the teachers and the students. Thereto, it is stated that a CA to education extends the understanding of the different values of education and consequently the indicators for quality of education. From a CA point of view, the inputs and outcomes of education are only part of the comprehensive definition of education: its instrumental value. Thus, the positional value and intrinsic value of education are added to better understand the context and comprehensive value of education. Subsequently, the CA to education has been converted into a utilisable tool: the SDI. This SDI, as proposed by Tao (2010), provides insights the underlying factors that hinder or support the capabilities of the teachers and the students in a rural district. The SDI consists of eight capabilities that are measurable in a either a quantitative or a qualitative way. Finally, it is expected that the rural location of the schools comprises additional barriers that affect the teachers' and students' capabilities and, consequently, the quality of education in rural schools.

3. Research Methods

This chapter provides more details with regards to the used data gathering methods of this research. First, the research strategy and data collection methodology will be justified, followed by a further explanation of the operationalization of the main concepts. Thereafter, the organisation of the field work will be elaborated upon. Finally, the limitations to this research will be taken into account.

3.1 Research strategy

The research methods that are used during the execution of this study are categorised as qualitative methods. The research strategy for this research consists of three main parts. The first part entails the desirable desk research, i.e. analysing the theoretical framework, collection background information and data gathering from the reports that consist the information on the education sector in Uganda. This desk research was needed to gain deeper insights in the education sector of Uganda and to understand the geographical background.

The second part consisted of the execution of semi-structured in-depth interviews with experts in Uganda's education sector. These interviews are conducted with different educational stakeholders, e.g. Ministry of Education and Sports, NCDC, UNICEF and other international and local NGOs. Through the selection of stakeholders from different educational angles a comprehensive representation of the education sector can be given. These interviews were supported by the use of a topic list, see Appendix 2. Another share of interviews has been conducted with educational stakeholders in the selected research area. This group of respondents consists of district and sub-county-level government officials, teachers and head-teachers. These semi-structured interviews have been chosen to get insight in the match between the realisation of the Thematic Curriculum and the quality and relevance of education in the rural setting. Furthermore, this method provided insight into the underlying challenges that are encountered in the rural primary schools. Finally, the proposition of the SDI provides insight in the teachers' and students' capabilities that affect the quality of education in the district. The length of these interviews varies between 25 minutes with one of the district officials and 1.5 hours with some of the experts. These interviews have been recorded with the use of a Voice Memo Application on an Iphone. Afterwards, the interviews were transcribed, analysed and coded with Nvivo 10 programme.

The third part of this research consists of group discussions and observations from the fieldwork in Namasale Sub-County. The group discussions have been conducted with a selection of teachers and students to get deeper insight in their values and needs for education. The group discussions have also been important for the desired indication of capabilities two and eight from the SDI, as these capabilities consist of an open suggestion of indicators. Through these discussions, the respondents could emphasise on the factors they valued most important for education. The group discussions were based on a specific topic list, see Appendix 3.

The methodology of this study can additionally be characterized as participant observation (Bryman 2006). This is due to the fact that the research will be executed from within the community in the district. The observation reports have been used as reflections of my interpretation of the situation in the research area, both in the town of Namasale and the schools in the sub-county. These observation reports are used to better understand the impressions I had when visiting the district and the comparison of several indicators that were striking when visiting the schools. The perspective of the researcher is a factor that needs consideration while drawing conclusions of the data (Smith 1998).

3.2 Operationalization of main concepts

Curriculum implementation

The implementation of the Thematic Curriculum intended an increase in the quality of primary education in Uganda, especially focused on literacy, numeracy and life skills. The process of implementation, thus the quality improvement, is influenced by the different constructs of implementation. These constructs are: capacity factors, support from outside agencies and profile of implementation. First, the capacity factors are indicated through physical resources, school ethos and management, teacher factors and student factors. Second, the support from outside agencies is designated through teacher professional development, provision of physical resources and monitoring practices. Third, the profile of implementation is made up of the coverage of learning areas, the language of instruction, classroom interactions and assessment methods. A more detailed explanation can be found in paragraph 2.3.3 and the interpretation of this concept can be found in section 5.3.

Input and outcome indicators for quality

The change in quality of education on this side of the model is analysed on the basis of the traditional input and outcomes indicators: i.e. enrolment, completion, survival rates, pupil/teacher ratio, teachers' qualifications and the provision of learning materials. For the

purposes of this study, the change in quality of education, on national and district level, will be measured on the basis of annual reports by the Ugandan National Board of Examination; the National Progress of Education Reports (UNEB 2011). Additionally, the reports on literacy and numeracy skills by Uwezo will also be included in the analysis. It should be noted that there are principle differences between the National Assessment of Progress in Education [NAPE] tests and the Uwezo testing methods. First of all, NAPE tests are only conducted in the schools, whereas Uwezo tests are conducted in households. Therefore, the latter include drop outs as well and this can explain a possible lower score on the Uwezo tests. In addition, Uwezo uses tests of P2-level to test children between 10 and 16 years old, NAPE uses tests P3 and P6 tests to examine children in the respective grades. Therefore, these tests can be seen as complementary to each other. The global position of Uganda's educational performance will also be addressed using the Global Monitoring Reports (2010 and 2012) and the Global Partnership for Education publication (GPE 2012). The discussion on selection of indicators for quality of education is addressed in paragraph 2.1 and the results for the research area can be found in Chapter 6.

School Development Index

The quality of education in the selected research area is analysed on the basis of the indicators of the SDI. Whether or not the capabilities for good quality teaching and learning are present in Namasale Sub-County will be analysed with designated indicators. These indicators are proposed by Tao (2010) and are utilised to examine the *classroom reality* in the government primary schools in Namasale Sub-County. The eight selected capabilities and the suggestions for quantifiable indicators are depicted in Table 1 on page 26. This *classroom reality* is defined as the perceived situation with regards to the quality of education and which preconditions and barriers are supporting or holding back the teaching and learning in the rural government primary schools.

The selected capabilities are more or less quantified, except for the capabilities two and eight. These capabilities are attempted to be made quantifiable by Alkire (2002) in relation to three projects in Pakistan. In her research, she attempts to create a ranking of the qualitative effects of these projects. Through focus group discussions, the qualitative impacts were ranked and later used to indicate the most significant effects of the projects as identified by the respondents (Tao 2010). Despite the subjective character of this methodology, in this study a mix of group discussions, observations and secondary data is used to analyse these capabilities and select indicators; although the qualitative methodology of this research needs to be considered. The

theoretical rationale behind the SDI is found in paragraph 2.2 and the analysis of the indicators is found in Chapter 7.

3.3 Description of data

The data for this research was gathered through 35 semi-structured in-depth interviews with government officials at national, district and sub-county level, employees of several NGOs and head teachers in the sub-county. Furthermore, the data set contains 5 group discussions and 8 observation reports. The overview of the respondents, group discussions and observations is depicted in Table 2 and is made up of the roles or positions the respondent holds, e.g. government affiliated respondents, international partners, civil society and district level government officials.. The tables with the descriptions of the individual respondents can be seen in Appendix 1.

Table 2: Description of primary data

Interviews	35
✓ Ministry of Education and Sports and affiliated	9
✓ NGOs and other development partners	13
✓ District officials Amolatar District	5
✓ Head teachers in Primary schools in Namasale	4
✓ Community Namasale	4
Group discussions (head-)teachers & students	5
Observation reports in schools and community	8

In addition to the three parts of the research strategy that resulted in the primary data, an amount of secondary data was included via a draft report of a participatory assessment of DevEd in July 2012. A research team of DevEd undertook this assessment in Namasale Sub-County and this data is made available prior to publication. This draft of the report by Jedidah Kaheeru - DevEd participatory assessment team leader - consists of worked out descriptions of interviews, group talks, observation reports and official demographic data of the Uganda Bureau of Statistics [UBOS]. In total, the number of respondents adds up to 434 head teachers, teachers, pupils, community members and district officials [Table 3]. Another factor that broadens the scope of this research is the fact that seven out of ten government-run primary schools in the sub-county have been visited. The research team visited three primary schools; I have visited four other schools during my fieldwork [see Table 4 in paragraph 3.4].

Table 3: Description of secondary data

Respondents per Gender	M=291	F=143	434
Head teachers in Primary schools in Namasale	8	0	8
Teachers in Primary schools	23	10	33
Pupils/learners of primary 6 and 7	130	85	215
Community	128	45	173
District officials	6	3	9

Source: adapted from Kaheeru 2012

3.4 Organization of field work

During the three month research period in Uganda, a 10-day field trip was organised to Namasale Sub-County in Northern Uganda. The field trip took place from November 13 to November 23 2012. The field work was organised with support of the DevEd organisation and especially with assistance of Richard Owachgiu; DevEd's project coordinator for the start-up project in Namasale Sub-County. He joined the field work and arranged the interviews with the respondents and also worked as interpreter during the group talks with the children whose English was not adequate: he translated from English to Lango and vice versa, in the single case [group talk with pupils] this was necessary.

Table 4: Primary schools in Namasale Sub-County

Primary School	Visited by	Date
Acii P.S. Seven School	DevEd research team	July 2012
Awikori P.7 School	DevEd research team	July 2012
Bangladesh P.S	René Vermeulen	November 2012
Burakwana P.S.	<i>Not visited</i>	--
Aninolal Parents School	<i>Not visited</i>	--
Namasale P.S.	René Vermeulen	November 2012
Aguludia P.S	<i>Not visited</i>	--
Nabweyo P.S.	René Vermeulen	November 2012
Olyaka P.S.	DevEd research team	July 2012
Wabinua P.S.	René Vermeulen	November 2012

Source: MoES 2013

The research area for the field work has been chosen because it has been part of the worst performing district of Uganda when it comes to literacy and numeracy: Amolatar District (Uwezo 2011). Another reason to focus this research on this area is the linkage to the participatory assessment of DevEd. The data set for this research is strengthened and deepened

through a combination of the primary data of this research and the secondary data of the participatory assessment draft-report (Kaheeru 2012).

3.5 Research limitations

During the process of gathering the data and conducting the research some limitations were present and these need to be taken into account. The research findings should be interpreted with some carefulness for several reasons.

The first issue that needs to be taken into account is the possibility that the results can be influenced by the fact that I was a Western [white] researcher in a remote area where no NGOs were present at the time. This could have affected the data, because the presence of a *mono/muzungu* [white person] was irregular (see Smith 1998). Furthermore, linking up to the participatory assessment of DevEd has resulted in a broader set of data, but this can also have influenced the response of the interviewees because of their possible expectations of the promised arrival of DevEd's education project. This could have influenced the response of the interviewees, because they possibly perceived my visit to the district as a promise of help with their challenges. This might have resulted in a probability of socially desirable answers and consequently a more negative reflection of the situation in the area. Another factor that possibly affected the data is the use of an interpreter with one of the group talks. The rest of the data has been collected without intermingling of an interpreter. Secondly, due to a combination of time and money constraints, and a possible research fatigue of the district officials, it was impossible to extend the field work for longer than ten days. A longer period of in-depth research, probably of ethnographic nature, could further deepen the insights of the indicators of school development of the SDI.

Furthermore, the application of the SDI indicators to analyse the quality of education has been of explorative nature and has not been undertaken previously, besides the pioneering proposition of the SDI by Tao (2010). This exploratory nature of the application of this research leaves some ends and conclusions open. Therefore, a more detailed execution of the SDI could be desirable. In addition, a more extended study could specifically attempt to quantify the indicators of the SDI. In this research, due to the limitations, the SDI indicators are interpreted on a qualitative research base. Therefore, an extensive study of the quantification of indicators can be an issue of further research.

4. Background to education in Uganda

4.1 Background research area

It is important to get insight in the context wherein this research has taken place, namely the education sector in Uganda and in specific in Namasale Sub-County. Within this area, there are several characteristics that affect the teaching and learning in the government primary schools. Although there are figures available with regards to the number of schools and children enrolled on the sub-county level, there is little other data available on sub-county level. Therefore, the available information on district and regional level will also be addressed in this section. Furthermore, this section will address the current situation in Uganda's education sector and will analyse what factors are promoting or hindering the quality of education, with a special focus on rural education, since putting into practice UPE.

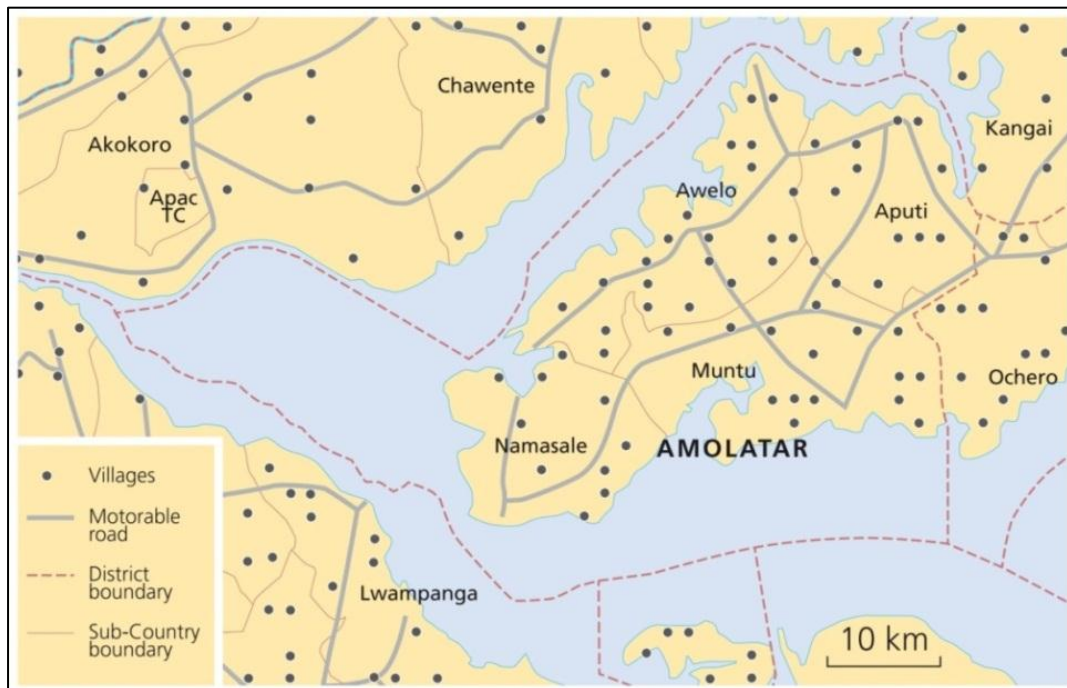
4.1.1 Geography of the research area

The area that has been selected for the analysis is Namasale Sub-County in northern Uganda, functioning as a case study for this research. Namasale Sub-County is part of Kioga County and belongs, administratively, to Amolatar District. This district is located on the southern fringe of Uganda's Northern Region and the Lango sub-region and is characterised as a peninsula within Lake Kyoga [see Figure 6]. The location of Namasale within Uganda is indicated [A] at the map shown in Figure 7. Namasale Sub-County consists of 7 parishes and 53 villages. The size of the population of Namasale is 11,842 male and 12,666 females adding up to a total of 24,508. The majority of this population [57%] is younger than 18 years (Kaheeru 2012).

Within Amolatar District, Namasale is the sub-county located at the western point of the peninsula and therefore it is the most distanced from the district's main town, Amolatar. The sub-county can - by car - only be reached via one road from Dokolo and Lira, the bigger towns in the Lango region. At the time of research, it was possible to cross the lake from Nakansongola, but only with small motorboats or canoes. The modern ferry that can carry vehicles has only been opened recently and has been introduced with the following quote by President Museveni: *"you were cut off by Lake Kioga; now you have been liberated from isolation. I know the people of Lango are very hard working. I, therefore, urge you and the people of Uganda to produce more to sell to Kampala"* (Chimpreports 2012). Additionally, this quote shows the importance of Kampala for the entire country of Uganda. The new ferry will take approximately 45 minutes to cross the lake and this will decrease the journey to the country's capital Kampala by over 300 kilometres. This decrease means a reduction in relative travel time to Kampala of around 5 to 6

hours. At the time of research, the journey from Kampala to Namasale, around the lake via Nakansongola-Karuma-Lira-Dokolo, took over 9 hours. Furthermore, there was no active power system in Amolatar, but this is supposed to be put into practice in 2013 (Monitor 2012). These features make that the area has been characterised by the dean of Makerere University as *“the most remote place you will see”*¹. Although, it is also stated – by an experienced NGO worker who has worked in Amolatar for several years - that *“things are looking up in Amolatar, because of the power system and the ferry”*².

Figure 6: Map of Amolatar District and sub-counties

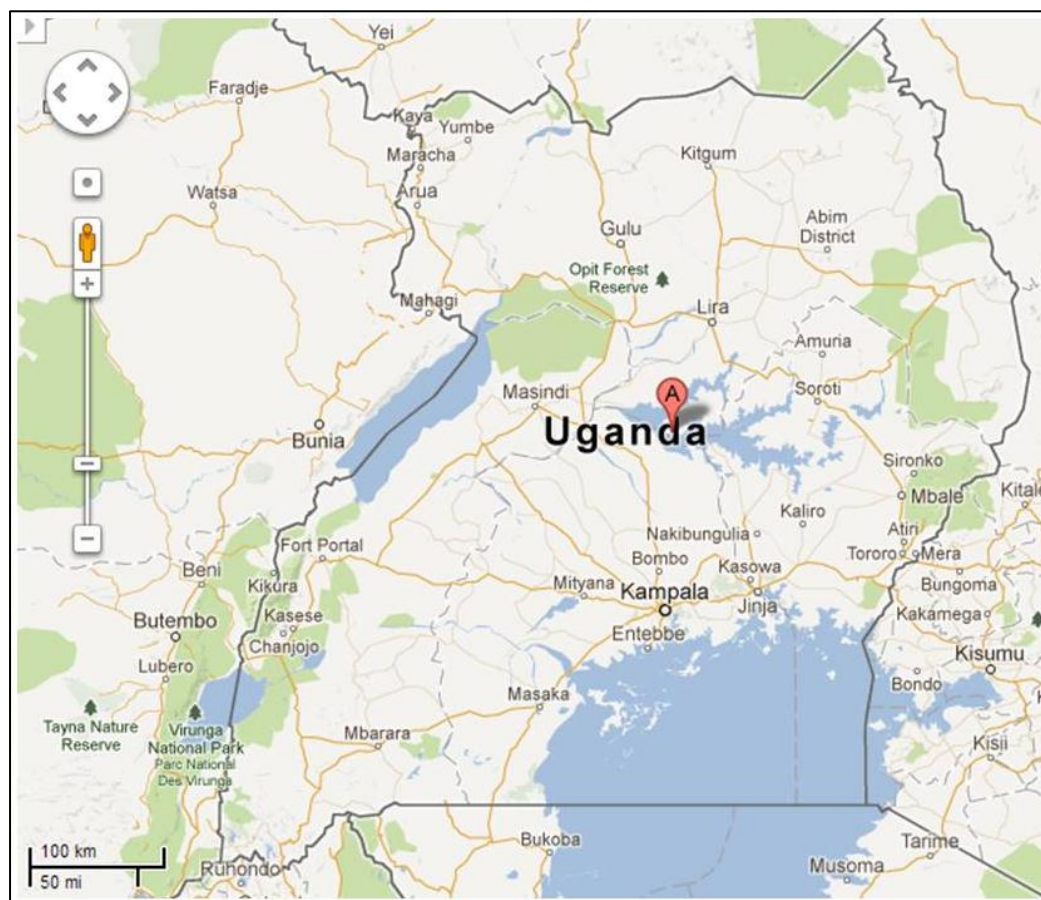


Source: adapted from IMU Kampala/OCHA 2008 © Geo Utrecht University

¹ Interview 4

² Interview 19

Figure 7: Map of Uganda and location of Namasale Sub-County



Source: Google Maps 2013

4.1.2 Education in the research area

In Amolatar District there are 63 primary schools, of which 50 are government-run primary schools and 13 are privately managed. There are ten government primary schools in Namasale, no privately-owned primary schools and there is one secondary school: Namasale Seed Secondary School. From the Annual Education Census 2011 (MoES 2013) the pupil/teacher ratio [PTR] in Namasale Sub-County is calculated at an average of 66:1. This census shows that the PTR in Namasale differs considerably per school; ranging from 36:1 to 94:1. The PTR for Namasale is relatively high compared to the average in Amolatar District [62.5:1], and is also higher than the average PTR in Uganda [51:1]. It needs to be taken into account that these official number might differ from the actual situation in the schools due to absenteeism of both students and teachers.

An important aspect of the Thematic Curriculum is the introduction of teaching in the local language in lower primary grades. Therefore, the language of the area is an important factor: Namasale belongs to the Lango sub-region and, thus, it is part of the part of Uganda where

Nilotic languages are spoken [see Figure 8]. The boundary between these northern Ugandan Nilotic languages and the southern Ugandan Bantu languages follows the course of the river Nile which divides Uganda from east to west. The Lango language consists of about 1.8 million speakers (Lewis, Simons and Fennig 2013). The Nilo-Saharan languages are not characterised as having a well-developed scripted tradition. These languages generally know a mere oral tradition and have encountered difficulties with the implementation of teaching in the local language. This is caused by an absent orthography; i.e. the lack of a conversion from spoken language to written language (Craig and Alexander 1996). Contrastingly, the Bantu languages do know a written tradition and are therefore performing better when it comes to oral reading and literacy proficiency in the local language [see paragraph 5.1.3].

Figure 8: Linguistic map of Uganda



Source: Lewis, Simons and Fennig 2013

4.1.3 Education in Northern Region

With Namasale Sub-County being part of the Northern Region of Uganda, it is important to stress the recent history of conflict in this area and its consequences for education. The conflict and the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army in the northern districts have had devastating

consequences for education, for example, due to school closures, parental fears over abduction and chronic teacher shortages. Some other reasons for educational marginalization in the northern districts are more cultural in nature. For instance, some districts in the north of Uganda are characterised by pastoralist populations. Also gender disparities are a main cause of a slow progress in education: early marriages and early pregnancies are traditional practices which are still present in northern Uganda. Moreover, these cultural factors combined with fears over the safety of girls attending schools in conflict-affected areas added to the situation. Furthermore, where poverty forces households to choose who goes to school, cultural attitudes lead many to express a preference for boys' education (UNESCO 2010).

The GMR 2010 addresses the need for analysing data beyond the national level, because strong national progress towards UPE has disguised large regional differences in Uganda. Especially in the north of Uganda the devastating impact of conflict and poverty is revealed by education data. Northern Uganda is considered the most deprived region within Uganda when it comes to *education poverty*. The GMR 2010 shows that 29% of the population of the Northern Region had fewer than four years of education, compared to 16.7% national average education poverty. Furthermore, this report shows that girls are worse off than boys on all the indicators presented (UNESCO 2010). The figures in the GMR 2010 are based on the Ugandan Household Survey of 2006 and the Household Survey of 2010 indicates some improvement in Uganda; on national level as well as in the Northern Region, although the Northern Region remains the most deprived region within Uganda (UBOS 2010).

4.2 Decentralisation of education sector

After having addressed the background to the research area that could affect the educational performance, the context of Uganda's education sector as a whole needs to be taken into account. Hence, focusing a case study on the local government level in Uganda is appealing, because Uganda's education system has experienced a decentralisation process since drawing up the constitution of 1995 and the Local Governments Act in 1997. Consequently, curriculum implementation has become a decentralised process, mainly because of the quest for better quality education. This decentralization of curriculum policy implementation has created interplay between multiple levels of government systems and has been characterized as a policy of devolution. The devolution process is described as one where the local government can take decisions in the field of educational management. The general conviction has been that decentralisation would lead to a more effective administration system and schools of higher quality (Chan 2010).

In Uganda, decentralization resulted in various positive developments: e.g. increased participation, transparency and accountability and improvements in capacity building (Winkler and Gershberg 2003). Nevertheless, it is also stated that capacity building at all levels - especially at decentralised levels - still constitutes major challenges (IOB 2008). The challenges of decentralisation emanate from several mistakes surrounding the implementation process of the policies. For example, insufficient attention is paid to the need to clearly redistribute authority and resources between administrative levels. In Uganda, the central government transfers still are insufficient, and the local governments are neither involved, nor even consulted on the national budget (Winkler and Gershberg 2003). In some cases, this lack of transfer of authority has resulted in increased disparities to the detriment of already disadvantaged areas and groups. At the same time, the ineffectiveness which characterised the central government's administration has at times simply been reproduced and multiplied at the local level. This has created challenges, in combination with a lack of strategies to develop the capacities of local actors and to gain the commitment of stakeholders (De Grauwe and Lugaz 2011).

4.2.1 Decentralised government system in Uganda

There is an extensive debate on whether or not the devolved government system in Uganda has been successful (Azfar et al. 2000, De Grauwe and Lugaz 2011, Winkler and Gershberg 2003 and Curley 2011). Although the Ugandan decentralization experience has earned significant international praise, it also has had its downsides. For example, the inadequate transparency of budgetary allocation: only a quarter of primary education grants actually reached schools and schools operated under perverse incentives to misreport enrolment and fee data (Winkler and Gershberg 2003). This presence of corruption and fraud due to the complexity of Uganda's education management structure, has been targeted by the GoU since 1995, but remains a problem up till now (Curley 2011; De Grauwe and Lugaz 2011).

Decentralization of government has not been limited to Uganda's education system, an overall political and administrative decentralisation has been a major objective of the GoU since 1986. This process led to the formation of a political and administrative structure called the Local Council [LC] system in 1997. This LC system is divided in a five-tier structure, namely: LC1 at the village level, LC2 at parish level, LC3 at sub-county level, LC4 at municipal level and LC5 at the district level. These five levels of councils have decision-making power and authority over wide-ranging local matters including budgeting and raising local revenues. The conviction within the GoU is that decentralisation stimulates a government which is closer to local needs

and interests and a government that is more effective. First, it increases achieving effective change through the delegation of budgetary and management responsibility. Second, it increases service delivery, providing greater accountability and increasing community participation in decision-making. Third, it will boost political stability (Ward, Penny and Read 2006). These factors should improve the performance of the government system, but in practice this has proven to be complicated.

Due to the devolved government system in Uganda, the districts are formally the executing bodies of government policies. Therefore, they are the most important institution when it comes to implementation of the primary education curriculum. The curriculum is created at national level at the National Curriculum Development Centre [NCDC], a corporate autonomous body of the Ministry of Education and Sports [MoES]. Through the devolution of educational government, the District Education Office [DEO] is in charge of the control, supervision and monitoring schools and the quality of education. The DEO plays a strategic role in the decentralised framework of Uganda's government system, as it links with the MoES, schools, the district level and other levels of government (De Grauwe and Lugaz 2011). The role of other actors involved in the educational policy implementation processes are explained in Box 1.

Box 1: Educational devolution in Uganda.

- At the central level, the MoES is responsible for defining policy and ensuring quality and achievement in primary and secondary education.
- The *Chief Administrative Officer* [CAO] is the head of the district and is the representative of government at the local level: he ensures that national policies are respected. The district council is an elected body that develops policies at the district level. The management of district staff, including teachers, is the responsibility of the district service commission.
- At the district level, the *district education department* is in charge of monitoring the quality of education, the use of funds received by schools and the implementation of policies. It reports to the local authority in the district and not to the ministry.
- At the school level, *School Management Committees* [SMC] are composed of representatives from the foundation body of the schools, teachers, parents, local authorities in the area and the education department in the district. It is a statutory organ that governs the schools on behalf of the government. Its funds come from a conditional grant transferred from the central level, since the implementation of UPE programme in 1997. *Parents/teachers' associations* [PTA] also participate in the daily management of the schools.

Source: De Grauwe and Lugaz 2011: 24-25.

4.2.2 Gap between MoES and district

Uganda's policy of devolution of government entails that in the education sector the DEOs are not functioning as extensions of the MoES, but are part of district authorities and they report to the district administration, not to the MoES (De Grauwe and Lugaz 2011). The devolution of education policy has resulted in a gap between the MoES and the DEOs and this has, thereafter, led to challenges with the funding of education. Another characteristic of a devolution model of decentralisation is the transfer of financial resources to the DEO and schools: in Uganda, the funds go from the central government to the district administration, which transfers the funds to the DEO, who transfers them to the schools. Important to note is that funds which are earmarked for education cannot be used for other purposes, this is different to other sector departments at district level (De Grauwe and Lugaz 2011). Although, educational funds hold a special place in the budget, it is argued that the decentralisation of government causes problems in the district: *"the MoES does not get to know local problems. Emergency problems, like sanitation issues, have to wait for the next financial year, as there is no way for the MoES could come in to help"* (De Grauwe and Lugaz 2011: 122-123).

From the division of functions of governments and their intergovernmental relations, it becomes clear that this has led to a scattered system. The division of powers makes the system not entirely transparent. For example, officially, the districts are responsible for providing primary and secondary schooling but they are also supposed to devolve primary education to the sub-counties and other local governments - villages and parishes - and schools. Another example of confusion of the division of functions is that districts are in charge of recruiting teachers, but teachers' pay is both determined and provided by the central government (Winkler and Gershberg 2003). Other examples of factors that could affect the quality of education and teachers' capabilities are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: Educational Devolution in Uganda

Function	Description
Teacher Compensation	Set nationally, administered regionally (district level) through conditional grants.
Teacher Recruitment	Regional level.
Principal Recruitment	Regional Level.
Allocation of Budget	Central transfer of funds to regions, sub-counties, and schools. Some school-level budget responsibility.
School Construction	Funded centrally, administered and overseen regionally, and implemented largely by schools.

Source: Winkler and Gershberg 2003

The gap between MoES and districts results in a situation where the actors are pointing at each other: officials within the MoES in Kampala feel that districts are not doing enough to combat teacher absenteeism and the misuse of funds; on the other hand, districts, have the idea that headquarters are silently recentralising and they complain of decreasing and inadequate budgets (IOB 2008). The budgets are insufficient, as the central government has abolished local taxes, but it has not increased the school grants. When Uganda introduced UPE, it also introduced a capitation grant system, which is calculated centrally on the basis of enrolment, but the funds are often late (Winkler and Gershberg 2003). These problems are associated to the problems of corruption and the abuse of funds at the district level. Through the subsistence of non-existing *ghost-teachers* and *ghost-pupils*, the bulk of school grants was captured by local officials and politicians. Although the situation improved drastically after the GoU transferred funds directly to school accounts and publicly announce the moment of allocation. Recent studies show that over 90% of the released funds reach the primary schools, compared to only 13% in the early 1990s (Ward, Penny and Read 2006 & IOB 2008).

An additional challenge in such a decentralised system is the role of the inspectorate. In the case of Uganda, the government inspectorate, district inspectors and the Directorate of Education Standards [DES] are understaffed or have a weak mandate (Ward, Penny and Read 2006). However, the inspectors lack the means to reach the primary schools as often as is needed. Therefore, the Centre Coordinating Tutors [CCT] are often deployed with tasks beyond their initial chores. The CCTs are supposed to focus on teacher training and provide pedagogical support to teachers. The system of CCTs is established to strengthen and train teachers who are already in service and the CCT is located closer to the schools than the district's officers or the inspectorate. In principle, there should be one CCT per resource centre and one resource centre per sub-county, but in practice this might not be the case yet (De Grauwe and Lugaz 2011). This support to in-service teachers is also an important aspect of the curriculum implementation process (Altinyelken 2010). The role of the CCT is thus to train the teachers, but due to their supposed closer location to schools, on the ground they are often also deployed to engage in inspection because there is a vacuum (De Grauwe and Lugaz 2011).

All in all, the decentralised system of educational policy implementation has resulted in several challenges that are present up to date and there is a probability that these are affecting capabilities and subsequently the quality of education.

4.3 History of curriculum development in Uganda

After determining the devolution of government and its consequences for the education sector in Uganda, another aspect to study is the history of curriculum development and implementation in Uganda. This part will analyse the history of curriculum changes in Uganda, followed by the introduction phase and the principles of the Thematic Curriculum. This Thematic Curriculum has been the most influential curriculum change in Uganda and was introduced in 2007.

4.3.1 History of the curriculum changes in Uganda

The primary education curriculum in Uganda has undergone several reforms over the past two decades (Wood 2008). The most prominent curriculum-related changes have been introduced by a Government White Paper [GWP] in 1992. This GWP resulted in the introduction of a new primary curriculum, in two parts in 2000 and 2002 focused on vocational subjects and a new language policy: the curriculum reforms recommended the use of local language in the lower primary grades [P1-P3] (Ward, Penny and Read 2006). This 2000/2002 curriculum reform encountered numerous problems in the implementation process, mainly due to inadequate planning, limited availability of text materials, little in-service training of teachers and unresolved issues related to the language of instruction (Wood 2008). These problems resulted in a new review of the primary curriculum, which was undertaken in 2004 and a *roadmap* for primary curriculum reform was adopted in 2005 (see Read and Enyutu 2005). This *roadmap* led eventually to the development and the implementation of the Thematic Curriculum in 2007 (Wood 2008). Before the Thematic Curriculum is explained in more detail, the findings of the 2004 Primary Curriculum Review give insights in the challenges that are faced in the curriculum implementation process in Uganda (Ward, Penny and Read 2006).

The most important issues with regards to implementation of the developed curricula in Uganda are addressed by Ward, Penny and Read (2006). Firstly, they observe that there was little ownership of the curriculum outside of NCDC on the part of the MoES and other major stakeholders. Although there were concerns over the number of subjects and the financial implications of the required learning materials, there was little concern on a detailed level over the implications of a new curriculum. For example, the lack of emphasis on reading and the development of literacy and the lack of clear attainment targets for English, Kiswahili and local languages. Additionally, there was no political resolution on the cost implications of the new curriculum, leading to little teacher support and limited availability of learning materials,

teachers' guides or other materials. Moreover, teachers received very little help to cope with new subject requirements.

In addition, there was no calculation of the implementation costs of the practical and vocational components of the new curricula, even though new vocational subjects were introduced. It was assumed that the UPE grants would be enough to cover the operational costs of these new subjects. However, the UPE grants were never going to be sufficient, with the result that the two subjects that had been introduced specifically to provide a practical and vocational component to the primary curriculum have been taught almost entirely as theoretical, book-based subjects. Furthermore, this was hindered by delays in the introduction of *continuous assessment* as examination instrument: without continuous assessment there is no way that practical skills can be assessed and thus there is little motivation to teach these subjects as practical subjects. Finally, the curriculum was launched into schools with no overall plan, no budget and no department or individual with responsibility for its launch. This resulted in a very late delivery of the curriculum documents to schools: e.g., textbooks and teachers' guides arrived up to three years late. Also, there was insufficient teacher orientation and training and there has been no plan or budget to revise the curriculum of the Primary Teachers Colleges' [PTC] syllabuses to support the new curriculum (Ward, Penny and Read 2006; Penny et al. 2008).

In general, the conclusions of Ward, Penny and Read (2006) and Penny et al. (2008) with regards to education sector reforms in Uganda are in line with the constructs of the analytical framework of implementation of Altinyelken (2010). From this framework it becomes clear that the three constructs of implementation have been clearly hindering the implementation of the curriculum reforms prior to the development of the Thematic Curriculum. Overall, it is concluded that the previous curriculum reforms have been launched within the worst of all possible scenarios (Ward, Penny and Read 2006).

4.3.2 The Thematic Curriculum

Subsequent to previous curriculum reforms in Uganda, the new Thematic Curriculum was introduced after an extensive development and field-testing procedure. This Thematic Curriculum was developed in reaction to the discovery that most of the children finishing their primary education were still largely illiterate. Moreover, the majority of knowledge that children were learning at school was "*knowledge for consumption, not knowledge to apply*" (Wood 2008). The 2004 Primary Curriculum Review concluded that the overall performance levels of primary school students had not significantly improved and that literacy levels were

low in both English and in local languages, particularly outside Kampala and in rural areas (Ward, Penny and Read 2006).

Overall, the Thematic Curriculum has been well received and appears to address considerations about the lack of integration and relevant substance in previous primary curricula and the need to focus on literacy and numeracy to ensure overall competency is expanded. The curriculum includes a variety of teaching and learning materials: syllabi, teachers' guides, resource books in local languages, and learning materials for students. As Wood (2008) concludes: "*relevance in Uganda's education system is now being addressed.*" Moreover, she states that until recently the relevance of the curriculum has played 'second fiddle' to access in education. Additionally, Hoffman, Radja and Bakhshi (2003) argue that a national curriculum is a reflection of state objectives, beliefs and policies, which is reflected by Uganda's focus on UPE since 1997 and its consequences. The relevance of the curriculum needs to be determined in a way that promotes more opportunities for all citizens. With this new curriculum, relevance has become a priority, especially in terms of Uganda's need for a better skilled workforce (Wood 2008).

The Thematic Curriculum is centred on the interests and needs of young children with content relevant to their experience and country. The curriculum is structured in three phases: *lower primary* from P1 to P3; *transition phase* in P4; and *upper primary* in P5 to P7. In grades P1 to P3 and is based on a number of themes, instead of the previous focus on subjects. These themes should be familiar to children and some examples are: *home, school* and *natural environment*. The development of themes in the Thematic Curriculum is based on the idea that young children absorb information easier when the learning content is relevant to their daily lives and linked throughout the different disciplines. Some other new aspects of the new curriculum are the prolonged introduction of *continuous assessment*; a focus on *reading, writing, numeracy* and *life skills*; and the use of local language as the medium of instruction in the first three years of primary education. The latter resulted in English being taught as a subject in lower grades and being used as the medium of instruction in the upper primary grades [P5-P7]. Teaching in the local language in lower primary is chosen to better facilitate early learning and better embed literacy. At the end of P7 pupils sit for the Primary Leaving Exam [PLE] which is a national exam in English (Wood 2008). This matter of examination and the attempt to include *continuous assessment* in the primary education programme is referred to in more detail in paragraph 2.3.3.

After establishing the context in which the Thematic Curriculum has been introduced, the following chapter will analyse the current situation with respect to the implementation process. The Thematic Curriculum has been introduced in 2007 and that holds that it should be fully

implemented at the time of research. Chapter 5 will analyse and explain the level of success of the implementation according to the three constructs of implementation and its indicators.

5. Preconditions for curriculum implementation

This section of the thesis will focus on the analysis of the preconditions for implementation of the Thematic Curriculum in Uganda and to what extent this has proven to be a success in changing the quality of education. The implementation process is perceived as a more or less top-down procedure. Therefore, this process is analysed in general terms on the basis of analytical framework of implementation (Altinyelken 2010). This framework is divided into three constructs of implementation which provides the structure of this chapter. First, the *support from outside agencies* is analysed, second, the *capacity to support innovation* is addressed and, third, the overall *profile of implementation* is examined. The analysis is based on the in-depth interviews and focuses on the more general conclusions for curriculum implementation in Uganda.

5.1 Support from outside agencies

The *support from outside agencies* is divided into material and non-material support. There are three indicators selected to measure the level of support: *teacher professional development*, *provision of physical resources* and *monitoring*. The outside agencies that are included in this analysis are, on the one side, the government (affiliated) institutions, e.g. the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Directorate of Education Standards, the National Curriculum Development Centre, the Kibuli Primary Teachers College, Kyambogo University and Makerere University. On the other side, the non-governmental organisations that are included in the analysis are: a.o. the Netherlands Embassy, UNICEF Uganda, Aga Khan Foundation, ICCO Alliance, Uwezo Uganda, Forum of Educational NGOs in Uganda, Mango Tree Uganda and the Belgian Technical Cooperation.

5.1.1 Teacher professional development

The first indicator of support from outside agencies is the professional development of the teachers. The role of the teachers with regards to curriculum implementation is a crucial element: eventually, they are the one's executing the policy in the classroom.³ The Thematic Curriculum contains an element of *Continuous Professional Development*, which is aimed at helping the teachers handle the new pedagogical teaching methods and improve their overall performance. This professional development of the teachers is indicated as a crucial part of the implementation process, as is argued by the NCDC: "*Teachers should have that continuous*

³ Interview 3

professional development, to look at new methods, to get new skills of handling situations. Every time, things are changing and every time, the teacher must also learn to coop with the trend. But you find that, what they have learned in the school, in college is what they are still using. It has been overtaken by events. There is a real problem."⁴ Thus, the capabilities of the teachers to coop with the Thematic Curriculum are a challenge for implementation, which has to a large extent to do with the malfunctioning of the in-service training programme.

The in-service training programme is undertaken by the CCTs throughout the country, but it is concluded that the CCTs are not fit for this task. The CCT seems to be overburdened, because all programs that come focus on the CCT. Besides the workload of the CCTs, it is argued by the DES that they also lack the resources: *"For example, the CCTs would like to move in schools, but they cannot move towards the schools, they may not have the fuel. Secondly, they have large areas, you find somebody has 50 schools and each school has about 10 teachers, that's 500 teachers. There is no way you can work with a 500 teachers, that is a very big challenge."*⁵ Thus, the system of devolution of government has put a lot of pressure on the lower government actors, which are not fit for this task [see paragraph 4.2]. Furthermore, the current role of the CCTs with respect to policy changes is also seen as problematic by an experienced interviewee from the Education Development Partners [EDP]: *"The CCTs should be the ones to help the teachers with their lessons and their development, but those are the worst ones when it comes to old fashioned habits and practices."*⁶ When it comes to putting into practice new teaching methods, the current system of in-service training is not working and hindering implementation.

Another issue with regards to the teachers' role is the delay in changing the curriculum of the PTCs, which will be aimed at working with the Thematic Curriculum from February 2013 onwards.⁷ This change comes six years after the start of the Thematic Curriculum and up till 2012 pre-service teacher training was done in an old fashioned way. An interviewee from an EDP stated: *"The teachers are very important, but their training is old fashioned, out dated and just awful. We should get rid of all the bad practices and habits."*⁸ Additionally, another factor that influences the level of the teachers is that teacher education is free of fees. In combination with the admission requirement of an O-level degree to enter the PTC, this causes a lot of people to become teacher more by necessity than by conviction. This creates a group of teachers who are often not motivated to teach, they are often forced to go to a PTC because they failed something

⁴ Interview 1

⁵ Interview 3

⁶ Interview 25

⁷ Interview 26

⁸ Interview 25

else for which they need A-level. In most cases, teaching has been a last resort profession, so these are the kind of people who will always be looking for any opportunity outside of the school. People with some money, or an A-level degree, will take another education and people in teachers training are the poorer people.⁹

Concluding, many respondents agree that the professional development of the teacher is problematic. The current system of in-service training is not working and the pre-service training is not sufficient as well. But, although the situation in education is far from perfect, compared to other countries it still is better – argues an internationally experienced EDP: *“At least the teachers need O-level of secondary school to be allowed to join the PTC. That has made sure that the teachers have at least some level of secondary and take the two-year teacher training.”*¹⁰

5.1.2 Provision of physical resources

The second indicator of *support from outside agencies* is also considered challenging: the provision of physical resources, especially in rural areas, is problematic and often deficient. Physical resources can be classrooms and sanitation facilities, but also creation and distribution of learning materials. It is generally understood as mainly the government’s task to provide these physical resources, but although, this *hard component* of education is the focal point of the MoES, it is lacking capacity to reach out to all the schools. One of the main problems with the provision of classrooms and sanitation facilities is the corrupted building processes. This is explained by a respondent from Makerere University: *“The process towards building a new classroom is slow, caused by government procedures, the government’s focus is on the process (procedures, bidding process, and where they can eat some money) not on the product. That should change. It doesn’t matter what procedure is followed, as long as the product is of good quality.”*¹¹

The physical resources are needed to improve the quality of education, but up till now there is still pressure to improve this. For example, learning materials are scarce, therefore the GoU has to mobilise the resources and buy reading materials, teaching materials so that implementation of the curriculum reforms is properly done.¹² The problems with respect to the provision of physical resources are also recognised by the MoES: *“The materials we give to the schools do not come in sufficient amounts and sometimes they don’t come in time. For example, when we rolled*

⁹ Interview 2, 22 and 33

¹⁰ Interview 27

¹¹ Interview 29

¹² Interview 3

*out the Thematic Curriculum, materials took time to reach the schools, so the teachers did not have the materials in time to start implementing the new curriculum.”*¹³ Up till now, this is still observed to be a challenge.

An additional issue that has followed from the implementation of the Thematic Curriculum has to do with the introduction of the local language as a medium of instruction lower primary. The provision of new materials in different languages has been a problem since it is still unclear for some regions what the main local language is. Especially in war-struck Northern Uganda, there has been large movement of people from different tribes and linguistic backgrounds.¹⁴ This issue will be further explored as an indicator of the *Profile of Implementation* [section 5.3]. Other issues with regards to the provision of physical resources are addressed in section 5.2 within the indicator *physical resources* of the *Capacity to Support Innovation*.

5.1.3 Monitoring

In line with the theoretical expectations in paragraph 2.3.3, outside agencies exercise pressure through monitoring practices. In this thesis, monitoring and inspection of schools and their performance are understood as similar. The monitoring of education in Uganda is mainly done through the DES, but they are not capable enough for their task. Without monitoring or somebody coming over to check, there is nothing going on in a lot of schools.¹⁵ As formulated by one of the EDPs: *“the inspectors are crippled, they do not have the means to reach the schools they need to monitor, that demands or requires them to be there. So, you find that in monitoring, we still have issues to do with facilitation and logistics.”*¹⁶ It is proclaimed that the system of the curriculum implementation and monitoring of the process is totally not working.

Another challenge with respect to the failure of monitoring is the issue of corruption. The lack of capacity of the inspection, combined with the extra pressure on the CCTs [see paragraph 5.1.1], has caused corruption with the official school inspection reports. The absence of basic necessities for inspection, together with the large area the inspectors have to cover, caused leakages in the system. One of the EDPs stated: *“The inspectors say they don’t have motorcycles, they don’t have fuel, that means they cannot check certain places, so the head teachers report is taken as the gospel truth.”*¹⁷ This has caused the inspection report to become a commodity: *“There is a story, cited by the Permanent Secretary, about practices of schools paying an inspector*

¹³ Interview 28

¹⁴ Interview 25

¹⁵ Interview 22 and 23

¹⁶ Interview 2

¹⁷ Interview 2

to write a positive report, e.g. increase numbers of enrolment.”¹⁸ This statement is in line with previous experience that *ghost pupils* and *teachers* were a problem in Uganda [section 4.2.2].

The EDPs are working together with the government to increase the monitoring and inspection of education in Uganda. A joint monitoring effort is currently taking place, much to the likings of the MoES, which is proving to be successful: *“The EDPs are really doing a good job, they help us with monitoring. Sometimes we go out with them, in joint monitoring, and after joint monitoring, we sit and do a review to post practices that should be reviewed.”*¹⁹ Through these interventions the Education Development Partners try to increase the pressure on the government to do its job, although it is also indicated that during these visits sometimes, for example, head teacher absenteeism is observed, but the inspector does not file a report on this issue. One of the EDP respondents formulates that as follows: *“This becomes a critical issue, because the CCT are not in school, the inspectors are not in school, then you can expect that somebody is relaxed out there, and something is not going right.”*²⁰

All in all, the *support from outside agencies* is present in Uganda, but it is by far not sufficient for a decent implementation of the Thematic Curriculum in the government’s primary schools. The GoU is in charge of most of the parts of the implementation process, through the MoES and the autonomous bodies NCDC and DES, but their capacity is undoubtedly inadequate. The other strand of outside supporters, the NGOs are not in the position to hold the government entirely responsible for its inability to implement the curriculum and improve the quality of education.

5.2 Capacity factors

The second construct of implementation to be analysed is the *Capacity to Support Innovation*. This capacity is concerned with factors that are likely to support or hinder the implementation of new ideas and practices in a system such as a school. Among these factors are the available physical resources, the school management and teacher and student factors. This section starts off by following up on the provision of physical resources [paragraph 5.1.2].

5.2.1 Physical resources

Different to paragraph 7.1.1 this part described the present level of physical resources. Whereas the previous paragraph analysed the challenges with regards to the provision side of physical

¹⁸ Interview 34

¹⁹ Interview 28

²⁰ Interview 2

resources, this part analyses the current situation. Once more, physical resources is interpreted as both constructions and learning materials. The importance of the availability of physical resources for the quality of education is voiced by one EDP as: *“In some schools the learning situation is so bad, the curriculum isn’t even the issue yet.”*²¹ In general, the respondents agree that the level of instruction materials is very low and, also, the availability of sufficient school buildings is limited, especially in rural areas. Moreover, it is argued that these basic requirements are essential for quality education to take place.²² Most of the ratios indicating levels of physical resources are far off from the ideal numbers. For example, with regards to sanitation, MoES acknowledges: *“the ideal is 40 children per toilet stance, but our national ratio is about 50, which is high. Even when you consider that these numbers are even higher in some rural areas.”*²³

With regards to the physical resources in schools, DES has – together with UNICEF - developed a Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards list. These minimum standards indicate basic items which should be present in a school and these are the things inspectors look out for. These lists are sometimes perceived as shopping lists and are often used to analyse what is not present in a school. DES is trying to improve this by stimulating the SMCs to work with head teachers and the local education office to put these items in place and encourage parents and other NGOs in the area to help create more facilities. The respondent from DES described their attempt as: *“For example, one of the requirements that the children should have, they should be engaged in play. But when you move to the schools, the only thing you will find is a field and some schools do have a specific field, but there are no balls or the field is not maintained. So the SMC should work with the parents, and then they improve; they maintain the field, they put up trees to safeguard the environment and then they can buy the balls. And government sends some little money to schools to help SMC run the school.”*²⁴ It is expected that the establishment of SMCs can provide an answer to the malfunction of the education system in Uganda²⁵; this will be further explored in the next part.

5.2.2 School ethos and management

The school ethos and management are critical for implementation of educational reforms, therefore, with the implementation of the new curriculum, SMCs have been established on most schools. The SMCs is a statutory organ that governs the schools on behalf of the government

²¹ Interview 25

²² Interview 1, 23 and 35

²³ Interview 28

²⁴ Interview 3

²⁵ Interview 34

[see paragraph 4.2]. These committees are composed of representatives from the foundation body of the schools: teachers, parents, local authorities and the education department in the district. The SMCs are generally seen as the most important factor to improve community participation in the schools, but the formation of SMCs has encountered several hiccups.²⁶ These setbacks are often caused by a lack of management skills or the people in the SMC do not know what their role is. One respondent from the MoES formulated this as follows *“Many SMCs have not been sensitized on their roles, yet they are supposed to come in and help schools. Some of them don’t know their roles and others think they are just invited to meetings, they don’t know that they have to come to schools and monitor the day-to-day-running of the school and school activities.”*²⁷

The functioning of the head teacher is another issue concerning the management of schools. The head teacher is key person for motivation of teachers and implementation of proper policies: if he is not motivated or present, teachers don’t feel the urge to do so.²⁸ However, the people in charge of managing the school are often not properly trained to do so. Normally, people do not go for any other special training, which is emphasised as challenge by the NCDC: *“You simply train as a teacher, you stay in the classroom, you teach. Then, when you have spent 4 or 5 years they can pick you to lead the school. Now you will find somebody is leading the school without management skills, that is a problem.”*²⁹ For this reason, an in-service course for head teachers will be rolled out by the Ugandan Management Institution throughout the country, starting in the east of Uganda in 2013.

Concluding, the management of the school is a key issue in implementing policies and to make sure the school is functioning. Basically, the head teachers do not have specific management training, but if the head teacher is not there to check on the teacher, or to help the teachers improve on their teaching, the teachers do not feel the urge to do their work. Although, several other factors surrounding the performance of the teachers need to be taken into account. These factors will be analysed next.

5.2.3 Teacher factors

Without much doubt the teacher is pointed out as the most important actor with regards to the implementation of policies and providing good quality education. Although, there are several factors that affect the teachers’ ability to perform. In short, these factors equate to the teachers having a low motivation to do their job. Combined with little pressure from inspection or the

²⁶ Interview 6

²⁷ Interview 28

²⁸ Interview 19 and 22

²⁹ Interview 3

head teacher, this leads to a situation in schools where little teaching and learning are happening. Basically, the motivation of the teachers is suppressed by several factors. In short, it is generally accepted that the teachers' terms and conditions are still poor, e.g. little remuneration for their work, bad housing conditions, insufficient teaching aids, large classes and limited support from other actors.³⁰

An additional barrier for remote areas is the issue of teachers' living conditions: teachers often commute across long distances between home and school. Schools are lacking structures that can accommodate the teachers. The urban-rural difference is explained by the respondent from the NCDC: *"Mainly, the teachers are living away from school. They come either riding a bicycle or walk long distances to get to work and back. They don't have a classroom to teach from and don't have teachers quarters where they can live. Those are important factors; they affect output. But in Kampala, if schools don't have accommodation for the teacher, the parent will top up the salary."*³¹ This situation increases teachers' absenteeism in schools.³²

Besides the aforementioned welfare issues affecting the performance of the teachers, there are also issues regarding their overall capability to teach. Some factors are already addressed in the paragraph on the professional development of teachers [5.1.1]. As mentioned, the reason for most teachers to join a PTC is not a matter of loving the profession, but just to have a job. In sum, the major issues to work with the new curriculum is the failure of the in-service training program to reach all the teachers and also the delay in adapting the PTC curriculum to provide pre-service training based on the new curriculum.³³

5.2.4 Student factors

The fourth indicator of the *Capacity to Support Innovation* has to do with the ability to respond to the proposed changes and the factors that influence students' learning. This comes down to the background of the students and to what extent they are supported to go to school. An initial problem, in this regard, is the lack of support by the parents to send –and keep – their children in school. One respondent from the MoES explained this as follows: *"Absenteeism of students is rampant and it is caused by a lack of appreciation by parents. Some parents not yet have appreciated education to the extent of sending their children to school every day. During the raining season, children stay at home to do cultivation; planting and so on. Market days, some*

³⁰ Interview 2, 20, 28 and 30

³¹ Interview 1

³² Interview 2

³³ Interview 2, 26 and 33

children go to the market to sell some of the merchandise from the homes and also to buy goods. And also during harvest season, some children miss school, because they are busy harvesting and so on."³⁴ Thus, the attitude of the parents towards education results in the children doing domestic chores and labouring activities, which is causing children to drop out of school.

Another important issue that is also driven by the attitude of the parents, and is stressed by numerous respondents, is the occurrence of a lot of pupils going to school without food. This situation is explained as a misinterpretation of the UPE policy: parents reason that the government should provide all the requirements for the children while they are at school, which is not the case. This is triggered by a deficiency in sensitizing the parents on their role with respect to their children's education and also by politicizing education. The latter argument is given by politicians who are telling the parents that education is free of fees to win votes.³⁵ Altogether, the circumstances, in which the children are supposed to take their education, are far from ideal. When even a basic necessity as food or water is not available for a whole day in school, it becomes an even more substantial challenge to perform.

Another factor influencing the children's performance in school is of more cultural nature. Particularly in the north of Uganda, corporal punishment is a recurring activity. Officially, there is a corporal punishment ban in schools, a zero tolerance policy towards corporal punishment is active, but it is not working in practice. Yet again, it is argued by the EDPs, inspection and monitoring is failing, so there is no pressure to change teachers' activities.³⁶ It is argued that teachers think children need to be punished to learn and an UNICEF programme with alternatives to corporal punishment has been executed in Northern Uganda, which supposedly has led to a decrease. Preventing teachers beating the children and ensuring the rights of the children by punishing defilement are important issues for the government.³⁷

Besides corporal punishment, defilement of pupils is also a recurring activity which is affecting the safety of the school environment of children. There are multiple reasons for this activity to occur, but mostly it is due to cultural beliefs that, especially for girls, it is not too important to stay in school. In this study, early marriages and early pregnancies are issues that are present in Amolatar District. The resulting effects will be analysed in more detail in Chapter 7.

³⁴ Interview 28

³⁵ Interview 8 and 28

³⁶ Interview 22

³⁷ Interview 10 and 35

5.3 Profile of implementation

The third and final construct of implementation is the *Profile of Implementation*. This profile helps to understand and analyse the extent to which the objectives of the curriculum are put into practice. The most important changes that came with the implementation of the Thematic Curriculum sprout up in this section, namely: the *coverage of the learning areas* and the focus of the curriculum on literacy, numeracy and life skills; the *language of instruction*, which has opened a Pandora's box with regards to teaching in the mother tongue; changed teaching methods and other *classroom interactions*; and introduction of *continuous assessment* to measure the pupil's performance.

5.3.1 Coverage of learning areas

First, the Thematic Curriculum has changed the content of primary education from teaching different subjects to teaching in several selected themes, or learning areas. These changes have been described throughout as being good changes. An example of a theme is *our school* or *our home* and within that theme all the other elements are being taught. This teaching in themes is perceived as making it easier for teachers to handle the large groups where they are often confronted with. It is increasingly based on the direct environment, than merely from books that are often not – or insufficiently – present. However, it is also argued that the teachers in the field lack the knowledge and the capacity to handle this new situation. That is probably a consequence of the insufficient training that has been provided – both in-service and pre-service – to execute these new methods.³⁸

The most influential changes introduced by the Thematic Curriculum have taken place in the lower primary classes [P1-P3], but also in the upper primary classes [P5-P7] and the transition class [P4] changes have been introduced. It is argued that there are some fundamental problems with the profile of implementation that originate in the transition phase of primary education. For example, the introduction of teaching in the mother tongue is generally accepted as improving the understanding of the content by children. However, the transition of teaching in local language to teaching in English is not arranged sufficiently. Moreover, it is stated by several experts that knowledge is believed to be embedded in English, and not in a local language.³⁹ Thereafter, when the most important exams remain to be taken in English, teaching in local language loses its proficiency. This exam-oriented teaching is also a problem when it

³⁸ Interview 24 and 34

³⁹ Interview 24, 25 and 27

comes to the introduction of continuous assessment. This contradiction is explained by the NCDC expert: *“the challenge we are having is that those subjects that are not examined at the end of the cycle, are often not taught. The teachers want to teach what comes back in examinations; not better the child as a person. There is also local language, which is not taught in P4 upwards. There is no examination in local language, so this is eventually not taught.”*⁴⁰

5.3.2 Language of instruction

One problem with the provision of learning materials is the language issue in the lower primary grades. The teaching in local language is generally understood as a positive development for children’s attainment levels to increase, especially at a young age. Using the mother tongue in lower primary makes learning more responsive to the environment and the children become more interested in learning and get more understanding of what they are learning.⁴¹ Moreover, as stated by the respondent from the NCDC: *“reports show that access has been accelerated by the new curriculum. The interest and participation of the learners has all improved and even the parents have come to embrace learning in local language.”*⁴²

Nevertheless, the introduction of the local language as medium of instruction has proven to have consequences like the opening of a Pandora’s Box. According to the Civil Society respondent, the only argument that policy has is that children learn better in their mother language or area language than in a foreign one. In addition, the main arguments against using mother tongue as language of instruction are summarised with this statement from a Civil Society Organisation [CSO]: *“That is against a million reasons, someone tells you: look, if this child is learning in this language, but you are examined in another language. The argument that you are introducing the language mid-way, defeats itself. You introduce it mid-way and you use it to measure, logically it doesn’t work. And then of course, comes in the preparations: you don’t have books, you don’t have teachers. Finally, it gets to the problem of everyone wanting their language to be there, including dialects that are not languages.”*⁴³

The consequences of introducing mother tongue education are numerous. First of all, Uganda contains a diverse array of languages. For several regions, it is not entirely clear which language is the dominant mother tongue. For instance, the Northern Region has a recent history of war, unrest and displacement which has led to mixing of tribes. Besides that, it is also brought

⁴⁰ Interview 1

⁴¹ Interview 27 and 28

⁴² Interview 28

⁴³ Interview 24

forward that the Nilotic languages in the northern part of Uganda are difficult to convert from a predominantly spoken languages to scripted languages. On the contrary, the languages of southern Uganda have a more written tradition [see section 4.1.2].⁴⁴

Besides the difficult initial situation wherein implementing the local language policy was executed, the follow up of putting it into practice has also been not ideal. The teachers do not have the competency to teach in the local language and for many languages the instructional materials have not been developed or are sent to those schools in a different language.⁴⁵ This makes implementation of the policy difficult and many schools, tented to approach the new curriculum in a different manner: e.g. they only use the local language and leave out English completely, even though English is supposed to be taught as a subject in lower primary. Like one EDP respondent summarized: *"The ministry didn't see the full challenge they were facing with implementing this new curriculum and in Kyambogo University they don't understands how to teach the local language instead of English. The lessons in local language learning often have the same structure as previously the English lessons: a lot of repetition of words and very rote styled."*⁴⁶ The hope for improvement is pinned on the PTCs that have started training teachers in the local language competency and the development of instructional materials.

Another reason for the longwinded implementation of the local language policy is that the examination system of Uganda's education is entirely carried out in English. It is claimed that this attitude is changing gradually, according to the MoES: *"At first, the parents wanted their children to learn English, but now they have come to appreciate that children get information from school which is relevant to home and learning becomes faster. Those are some of the reasons why we came up with the thematic curriculum."*⁴⁷ Furthermore, the transition from teaching in local language towards teaching in English is also quite a challenge. Especially, when children's performance is measured with tests that are in English, the parents tend to find it more important that their children learn English. The performance of children and schools is entirely indicated through an exam-based merit system and the educational opportunities are fully based on that system.⁴⁸ The Thematic Curriculum also introduced a change in the examination of the children; this *continuous assessment* will be addressed in paragraph 5.3.4.

⁴⁴ Interview 25

⁴⁵ Interview 28 and interview 20

⁴⁶ Interview 25

⁴⁷ Interview 28

⁴⁸ Interview 34

5.3.3 Classroom interactions

Studied as third indicator of the *Profile of Implementation* are the interactions that take place in the classrooms. The introduction of the Thematic Curriculum brought a child-centred approach to the fore with several new pedagogical teaching methods. This learner-centred approach is characterized as being effective in the thematic curriculum, because the children can interact more freely, which will encourage teaching and learning processes.⁴⁹ Teachers have realized they need to change their teaching, but the challenge there is to design what learning activities they can use. This is more challenging in rural areas, because of the lack of materials at hand. The NCDC realises these challenges: *“You find somebody has got a crowded class and there are no materials, so you find it is difficult to adopt these other interactive, new methods of teaching.”*⁵⁰

Contrastingly, the new approach and using it in large classes is explained as a valuable and good development. The new teaching methods are also helpful for the teachers who have to handle large classes, as formulated by an educational expert: *“if you have 100 kids in front of you without books, without a roof over their head and so on, it’s much better and easier to teach them if you divide them up into smaller groups of tens and scatter those groups around and supervise the groups. That is much easier and much better. The only thing is that the teachers are not trained, they are not prepared at all to use these methods.”*⁵¹ The pedagogical teaching methods are required from teacher training in the PTCs. However it is also argued by the NCDC that *“they learn how to handle a certain class, depending on the age, and even how to handle large classes, but when they reach the schools they don’t have the motivation to deploy all those methods.”*⁵² Thus, the methods are perceived as a good accomplishment, in practice they are difficult to implement because of the lack of training of the teachers.

5.3.4 Assessment practices

A challenge that has risen after implementation of the Thematic Curriculum has to do with the large classes and the introduction of new assessment practices. Several challenges originate from the advocating by the new curriculum for *continuous assessment*. In short, the introduction of continuous assessment is recognised as a challenge by NCDC: *“You find a teacher, who has between 50 and 120 children and they are expected to teach the child, assess the child, assess learning and support the children with learning difficulties as well. Because there are different*

⁴⁹ Interview 2 and 28

⁵⁰ Interview 3

⁵¹ Interview 24

⁵² Interview 1

competences that need to be taught, things they can be able to do, but they can't achieve everything at the same time. Supporting each child, when you have 120, 80, 60, that's very difficult."⁵³ Furthermore it is argued by several respondents that continuous assessment is sometimes understood as continuous testing. Consequently, considering the time given to all these tests, little time is left for actual teaching.⁵⁴

Another challenge with continuous assessment is that it is competence-based; therefore, the tests do not result in comparable marks. The focus is shifting from 'what content do you know'-style tests to testing of intellectual capabilities. Comparable to the parents' attitude with regards to the implementation of local language, the parents are solely interested in public exams. They are not interested in how teaching is done, because they are interested in the score their children achieve at the end of the primary cycle.⁵⁵ As voiced by respondent from the MoES: *"Is it 50 out of 100? Is it 70? But with continuous assessment we are more interested in what can the child do, can this child read? If this child can read, how many words? So that is the competence-based assessment with its challenges."*⁵⁶ According to the respondent from DES, assessing competences has proven to be difficult.⁵⁷ Concluding, this focus on exams affects teaching and learning, i.e. the quality of education: *"the focus should be more on the process of learning to give students the capacity and capability to handle learning instead of repeating content."*⁵⁸ This last statement by an EDP respondent proves the need to focus on the process of learning and the capabilities of students, instead of the inputs and outcomes of education. For this purpose, the SDI approach is utilised in Chapter 7 to study the capabilities and the process of learning of the pupils in Namasale Sub-County.

5.4 Conclusion

Concluding, most of the constructs of curriculum implementation and their indicators are far from fulfilled in Uganda. The *support from outside agencies* is present, but their actions are far from sufficient to support the proper implementation of the curriculum. All three indicators of outside support are insufficiently maintained: the teachers' professional development has proven to be ineffective to reach all teachers, both pre-service and in-service; the provision of physical resources is almost completely inadequate, especially in rural areas; and the monitoring practices are poorly executed, the inspection of schools lacks basic resources to fulfil

⁵³ Interview 1

⁵⁴ Interview 3 and 31

⁵⁵ Interview 29 and 35

⁵⁶ Interview 28

⁵⁷ Interview 3

⁵⁸ Interview 35

their task and leaves room for corruption. The *capacity to support innovation* is also characterised by many shortcomings to support implementation of new ideas in schools. In short: physical resources are scarce, school infrastructure and learning materials are not enough; school ethos and management are not fit for their task, SMCs are introduced without sensitization; and the circumstances of the teachers and students are not benefiting the quality of education, embodied by dreadful living standards combined with low motivation. Finally, the overall *Profile of Implementation* is generally perceived as good in theory, but bad in practice. For example, the focus on improvement of literacy, numeracy and life skills; the introduction of new pedagogical child-centred teaching methods; the establishment of local languages as medium of instruction in lower primary; and the change towards continuous assessment are broadly supported and praised by the respondents in this research. However, it is also broadly emphasized that the introduction of these elements is confronted with many challenges in the daily practice in Uganda.

6. Quality of education in Uganda

This chapter focuses on the consequences of introducing UPE in 1997 for the quality of education. The quality of education in this section is determined by means of the inputs and outcomes of education. These indicators are perceived as being only part of the overall analysis of the quality of education, but are important for comparison with other countries and insights in progress over the years. First, the consequences of UPE on the inputs of education are established. Among these inputs are: enrolment, drop-out, completion and survival rates; pupil/teacher ratio and teachers' qualifications. Second, the outcomes of education are indicated through nationwide performance in literacy, numeracy and oral reading, measured in the NAPE reports (UNEB 2011). Finally, these national results are compared to the Uwezo reports on the quality of education in Amolatar District.

The overall quality of education is indicated with the EDI. This index provides an overview of overall progress of national education systems towards EFA. This is currently, the main index being used to measure educational effects. Hence, EDI composites of four of the six EFA goals: net enrolment ratios to assess access, student completion rates to grade five as a proxy for quality, adult literacy rates, and gender parity. In the progress towards reaching the EFA targets, Uganda was in 2010 ranked 104th out of 120 countries [EDI 0.771] and found itself in the category *Low EDI*. This position is an improvement compared to 2007, when Uganda was ranked 108th out of 128 countries [EDI 0.761] (UNESCO 2010: 286).

6.1 Universal Primary Education

Uganda has been one of the first countries in Africa to have eliminated school fees for primary education. Uganda has had a sleeping UPE policy from 1987, although this was not fully implemented until the country's relative stability in 1997, when UPE was introduced as part of the presidential election campaign (Grogan 2006). The implementation of the UPE has been mainly executed through a FPE policy. Executing FPE did have positive outcomes, e.g. improved literacy rates and increased government spending on education, although also challenging outcomes are recognized (Ssewamala et al. 2011). Some of these negative outcomes are caused by the way FPE was implemented. The FPE policy in Uganda was executed through a *big bang approach* which caused an *access shock*: i.e. the elimination school fees created an instantaneous large increase in school enrolment. In the first year of implementation enrolment in primary education in Uganda increased by 58%. This resulted in overcrowded classrooms; double and triple shifts; over-age enrolment; and shortages of teachers, textbooks, and materials. All in all,

Uganda's system was not geared up for the logistical implications of FPE (Avenstrup, Liang and Nelleman 2004).

Another consequence of FPE has been, according to Ssewamela et al. (2011), that the quality is unsatisfactory due to several factors, such as limited instructional materials. Up to date, Uganda is trying to overcome the consequences of this access shock in primary education. Thus, the implementation of UPE in Uganda had, on a national level, both positive and negative outcomes. According to Deininger (2003) the inequalities in enrolment related to gender, income and region were substantially reduced due to implementing the UPE policy. However, there might be important differences between poor and rich people, urban and rural living people and private and public schools. Therefore, the factors *enrolment*, *drop-out rate*, *survival rate* and *pupil/teacher ratio* are analysed.

6.1.1 Enrolment

Since the introduction of UPE the number of children enrolled in school has increased drastically: primary school enrolment more than doubled, from 3.1 million in 1996 to 8 million in 2010 (Ssewamala et al. 2011; UNESCO 2012). Although, it should be noted that the net enrolment rate – based on administrative data – could differ from the net attendance rate – based on household surveys. In the case of Uganda, the attendance figures in the household survey are over 10% different from the administrative data (UNESCO 2010).

Enrolment differences poor-rich

The large increase in enrolment has particularly been benefiting the poorest children (Deininger 2003). The poorest children are much better represented than they had been: enrolment of the poorest quintile is almost on a par with the richest (Avenstrup, Liang and Nelleman 2004). The increased access by the children from the poorest households mean that these households, whose children were previously out of school, have to spend some of their meagre income on non-fee costs of education. The richer households, whose children were already in school, could reallocate the money they saved by the abolition of school fees, to cover other costs. This led to the situation that their children's schooling advantage maintained, or even further widened: it resulted in an increased vulnerability for the poorer households, as household poverty and vulnerability go hand in hand. Children from the poorest families are more likely to be out of school. Around 25% of children in the poorest quintile are out of school, compared to around 5% in the richest quintile (UNESCO 2012). Small economic shocks, e.g. drought, unemployment or sickness, can force parents to take their children from school. Girls

are often the first victims, because climate-related shocks resulted in far more girls being taken out of school than boys (UNESCO 2010). See 6.1.2 for further exploration of the drop-out rate.

Differences urban-rural

Grogan (2009) suggests on the basis of household surveys that the elimination of school fees in government-aided schools might be expected to have a greater impact in rural areas. In rural areas, nearly 92% of children who have attended primary schools attended the government-aided schools. In urban areas, only 62% of urban students attend government aided school, the remainder attend private schools. Furthermore, Grogan (2009) claims a significant positive effect of school fee elimination on, especially, the timely enrolment of girls and children living in rural areas of Uganda.

The Results for Learning Report 2012 (GPE 2012) gives insight in the Gross Attendance Rate [GAR] and the differences for poorest people and rural versus urban people. From this report it becomes clear that both the urban poorest quintile and the rural poorest quintile have below-average GAR, with urban poorest quintile being just below 100%. The rural poorest quintile GAR and average GAR are above 100%. This means that GAR among the urban poor are lower than among the rural poor and this is of particular concern because of increasing urbanization. It is seen as a challenge to provide sufficient schools for the growing urban population (GPE 2012). In addition, the national average repetition rate in primary schools increased from 9.5% in 1999 to 10.8% in 2010. The total repetition in Uganda's Northern Region was – with 15,9% - the highest region, compared to a national average repetition of 10,2% (MoES 2011).

Enrolment per gender

According to the official number by the MoES (2011) the amount of boys and girls enrolled was almost similar, with slightly more girls [50.1%] than boys [49.9%]. With regards to gender, it is striking to find that in all years more girls are enrolled, except for P7 where fewer girls are enrolled than boys [see Table 6]. Moreover, enrolment differs per grade from over 1.8 million in P1 to just over 500,000 in P7, a difference of 71%. In government schools the difference of enrolment in P1 and P7 is -72%, in private schools the difference in enrolment is -64%. In government schools, the major differences in enrolment are between P1 and P2 [over 30%] and between P6 and P7 [over 38%], with a striking difference per gender in the latter: in P7 there are over 40% less girls than in P6; compared to 36.5% less boys.

Table 6: Enrolment in Uganda in 2011 per grade, gender and school ownership

Grade	Gov't			Private			Overall
	male	female	total	male	female	total	total
P1	807,081	801,495	1,608,576	116,008	115,130	231,138	1,839,714
P2	546,545	549,138	1,095,683	87,927	88,900	176,827	1,272,510
P3	546,301	549,330	1,095,631	85,417	85,069	170,486	1,266,117
P4	555,640	565,298	1,120,938	77,362	78,086	155,448	1,276,386
P5	462,631	472,663	935,294	65,441	68,041	133,482	1,068,776
P6	363,721	367,491	731,212	54,361	56,470	110,831	842,043
P7	230,896	218,299	449,195	40,403	43,033	83,436	532,631
Total	3,512,815	3,523,714	7,036,529	526,919	534,729	1,061,648	8,098,177
Percentage	43.4%	43.5%	86.9%	6.5%	6.6%	13.1%	100%

Source: MoES Education statistical abstract 2011

Enrolment is an important indicator of the effect of UPE in Uganda, however, since the aim of the UPE policy was primarily to increase the overall educational attainments of children, it is important to examine the impacts of the policy beyond solely school enrolment (Nishimura 2008).

6.1.2 Drop-out ratio and survival rate

After establishing that enrolment has increased drastically after implementation of UPE, it became clear that in Uganda a lot of children do not finish primary school. For example, the drop-out rate in Uganda has increased from 61.8% in 1999 to 68.2% in 2010. Children dropping out do so increasingly in the last two years of primary school. This is reflected by the *survival rate*: the survival rate to grade five remained at 57% between 1999 and 2009, but the survival rate to the last grade [seven] decreased from 38% [1999] to 32% [2009] (UNESCO 2012).

Differences urban-rural

With regards to drop-out rates, there are important differences between urban children and rural-living children. Grogan (2009) points out that 11% of *attendees*, i.e. children going to school, live in urban areas, whereas only 4% of *non-attendees* live in urban areas. This means that non-attendees are far more likely to reside in rural areas: 96% of *non-attendees* live in rural areas, against 89% of school-going children.

According to Okumu et al. (2008) the probability of a child dropping out from primary school reduces as one moves from rural to urban areas. Probably, this can be attributed to the fact that

it is easier to access schools in urban areas as compared to rural areas. Furthermore, the probability to drop-out decreases with age between urban and rural areas. This implies that at older ages, the influence of urban or rural locality to the probability of a child dropping out of school reduces. Considering the gender of pupil in the rural-urban dimension, the only significant difference Okumu et al. (2008) found was in the age group 13-17 year old girls. This is attributed to the higher chances of girls to marry, get pregnant or be married off by parents as they grow older in rural areas as compared to urban areas. With respect to boys, the probability of dropping out differed 6% between urban and rural setting in the age group of 5-8 year old boys. Additionally, the odds that a pupil will drop out of primary school increases with a further distance a pupil has to move to school: pupils traveling long distances to school are more likely to drop out of school. Whereas they conclude that distance was found to be insignificant in influencing drop-out for urban households, it was generally significant in rural areas. This could be attributed to the easier access to schools in urban areas as compared to rural areas (Okumu et al. 2008). Therefore, drop-out ratios are important indicators of the differences between urban and rural access to primary schools. Moreover, the factors influencing drop-out are generally perceived as being larger in rural areas than urban areas.

Poverty causes drop out

Another consequence of vulnerability through poverty that hurts education is child labour. According to the Global Monitoring Report 2010, there are an estimated 166 million child labourers in the world. Many of these children are locked in a losing battle to combine work with education (UNESCO 2010). A recent report by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE 2012) gives insight in the reasons why children in Uganda missed school. To miss school days because of 'work' accounts for 11%, but when divided into income categories differences increase: 'work' accounts for 25% of missed days in the lowest quintile; compared to only 9% in the highest quintile. The same goes for 'lack of materials' as reason to miss school: 12% overall, but 17% in the lowest quintile, 12% in the highest quintile. Overall, children missed about 14% of all school days. The GPE report concludes that, on the basis of a household-survey in Uganda, the most important reason for children to miss school was 'illness'. These numbers indicate factors that could be more likely to hinder rural and poor areas in teaching and learning.

6.1.3 Pupil/teacher ratio

The PTR is another factor that influences the quality of education. The previously ascertained *access shock* has put pressure on the PTR: the amount of teachers and schools increased by 41% between 1997 and 2004, while the enrolment increased by 171% (Nishimura et al. 2008).

However, later on the national ratio in Uganda decreased from 57:1 in 1999 to 49:1 in 2010 (UNESCO 2012). Nevertheless, it is important to note that national average PTR can conceal large regional disparities. A recent review showed that, in Uganda, the northern regions had PTR larger than 90:1, almost double of the national average ratio (UNESCO 2010). Uganda's northern regions are affected by conflict in recent years, which might be an explanation for the higher PTR. In part 4.1.2 of this thesis the PTR for Amolatar and Namasale is handled and proves to be above average. The combination of these high ratios and irregular pay are a main cause of teacher absenteeism.

Absenteeism is a serious problem for the quality of education, because it not only affects the quantity and quality of schooling, but also on pupils' attendance and dropout rates (IOB 2008). This is stressed by the GMR 2010 as an example of large pockets of regional marginalisation in Uganda: high rates of teacher absenteeism reflect underlying problems. Many schools lack teacher housing, so teachers have to commute long distances, sometimes along insecure routes. Teacher income also tends to be far lower than in more prosperous areas, partly because poverty reduces the supplements households pay (UNESCO 2010). Unfortunately, there is no reliable data on the rate of teacher absenteeism. However, the Directorate of Education Standards' Annual Report (DES 2012) indicates that 74% of teachers were absent on the day inspections took place. Which is of major concern, as only around 55% of districts showed evidence of follow-up on teacher absenteeism.

After studying the challenges that Uganda still encounters in the quest to improve the quality of education, with regards to the input factors, the next section will analyse the progress of the outcomes of education in recent years. Based on the indicators of the major focal points of the curriculum – literacy and numeracy – the progress of the quality of educational outcomes in Uganda will be determined.

6.2 National Assessment of Progress in Education

The most important subjects in the attempts of the GoU to improve the quality of education are: literacy, numeracy and Life Skills. The UNEB annually assesses the achievement of primary school pupils in Uganda in numeracy, literacy and oral reading. The most recent version of this report analyses the achievement of primary school pupils in 2011. This report gives a good overview of the general performance in numeracy, literacy and oral reading in primary grade 3 [P3] and primary grade 6 [P6]. In short, the performance in P3 on numeracy was quite good, but P3 pupils' performance in literacy was not good. Additionally, the performance in P3 on oral

reading was weak. The performance in P6 in both subjects was unsatisfactory. Additionally, teachers performed well in numeracy and literacy. However, their performance in oral reading was also weak (UNEB 2011). Subsequently, these indicators will be explained in more detail with regards to the overall performance in both grades. Moreover, the proficiency will also be studied regarding the possible differences between urban and rural performance and a possible gender difference.

6.2.1 Literacy

The proficiency levels in literacy in P3 and P6 show peculiar progress from 2007 to 2011. The percentage of pupils in P3 rating proficient in literacy in English increased from 45.5% to 47.9% from 2007 to 2011. A small decrease in 2008 [44.5%] was followed by a large increase to 55.9% in 2009 and 57.6% in 2010, after which the level dropped to 47.9% in 2011. In P6 the percentage fluctuated between 49.6% [2007], 47.8% [2008], 48.1% [2009] and 50.2% in 2010 to decrease sharply to 41.3% in 2011 [Table 7]. Thus, the proficiency in literacy in English increased overall in P3, but it decreased in P6. In both grades there was a large decline between 2010 and 2011 and it is unclear what could have caused this development.

Table 7: Percentage of proficiency in literacy in English in P3 and P6 from 2007 to 2011

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
P3 boys	43.8	43.8	55.2	57.9	47.3
P3 girls	47.2	45.3	56.5	57.3	48.5
P3 all	45.5	44.5	55.9	57.6	47.9
P6 boys	48.2	47.9	47.9	49.7	42.1
P6 girls	50.8	47.8	48.2	50.7	40.6
P6 all	49.6	47.8	48.1	50.2	41.3

Source: adapted from UNEB 2011: 47 and 93

In 2011, the location of the school has an important influence on the performance in literacy in English: significantly more of the P3 pupils from the urban schools [70.9%] were rated proficient compared to only 40.8% of those from the rural schools. In P6, the proficiency in literacy in English was also significantly different: 75.2% in the schools in urban and only 31.3% in rural schools. Moreover, the gap between urban and rural pupils is larger in P6 than it is in P3, mainly caused by a decrease in proficiency in rural schools of almost 10%.

With regards to the difference in gender – girls in P3 score slightly higher than boys – the differences, in both urban and rural schools, were not significant. In P6, slightly more boys than

girls were rated proficient in each location, but the differences were also not significant. Therefore, gender is not a significant factor in performance in literacy in primary schools in urban as well as rural setting.

6.2.2 Numeracy

Looking at the progress of the primary school pupils in numeracy in recent years, it is striking that the percentage of pupils that is rated *proficient* increases drastically between 2007 and 2008 in both P3 from 44.7% to 74.6% and from 44.1% to 53.5% in P6. In 2008, 2009 and 2010 the percentage remains more or less equal, but in 2011 the percentage drops in both P3 and P6, to 63% and 45.6% respectively [Table 8].

Table 8: Percentage of proficiency in numeracy in P3 and P6 from 2007 to 2011

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
P3 boys	46.3	74.6	72.8	74.1	65.0
P3 girls	43.3	68.1	69.7	71.6	61.0
P3 all	44.7	71.4	71.3	72.8	63.0
P6 boys	45.9	58.8	58.7	57.9	49.6
P6 girls	37.2	48.4	48.1	52.1	41.7
P6 all	41.4	53.5	53.3	54.8	45.6

Source: adapted from UNEB 2011: 33 and 75

An important factor for the performance of P3 and P6 pupils is the location of the school. From the report it becomes clear that pupils from urban areas perform significantly better in 2011 than those from rural areas in both P3 and P6. The proportion of P3 pupils in the urban areas rated proficient in numeracy was 76.0%, in comparison to 59.1% of those in the rural areas, which was significantly lower. The proportions of P6 pupils rated proficient from urban and rural schools were 71.0% and 38.1% respectively. The difference was significant and, compared to the P3 result, the gap between urban and rural is even bigger.

Furthermore, the difference between the genders is not affected significantly by the school's location in 2011 in both P3 and P6. Additionally, boys reach higher proficiency levels in P3 and P6, but this rating is only significant in P6, not in P3. This indicates that also the gap between boys and girls increases between P3 and P6 (UNEB 2011).

6.2.3 Oral reading

The progress in oral reading is only tested by NAPE in P3, not in P6. Therefore, the difference between lower primary and upper primary cannot be compared. The report shows the average percentage for 2003, 2007 and 2011 [Table 9], from which it becomes clear that the proficiency of oral reading in P3 has increased from 23.4% in 2003, via 34.6% in 2007 to 46.2% in 2011.

Table 9: Percentage of proficiency in oral reading in P3 in 2003, 2007 and 2011

	2003	2007	2011
P3 boys	23.7	32.8	45.6
P3 girls	23	36.4	46.9
P3 all	23.4	34.6	46.2

Source: adapted from UNEB 2011: 61

In rural schools 39.2% of the pupils were rated proficient in oral reading in 2011, in comparison to 68.9% of the urban pupils, which is a significant difference. In both rural and urban schools girls were rated better than boys, but the differences were not significant.

An important factor that has come to play with regards to all three subjects tested in the NAPE 2011 is the introduction of using the local language as a medium of instruction in lower primary education. In some districts, the P3 pupils were assessed in reading in the local language. The performance of P3 pupils in reading in the local language varied. The main local language of the research area [Lango] was tested in the NAPE 2011 and only 34.9% of P3 pupils rated proficient on this test (UNEB 2011). One of the reasons for this relatively low score on reading in Lango, and also the other tested local languages of northern Uganda, could be that the Nilotic languages in northern Uganda do not have a clear scripted history; in contrast to the Bantu languages in southern Uganda [see section 4.1.3].

Concluding

Among the variables that affect the achievement of primary school pupils are several factors that sprout up from the NAPE 2011 report. For example: the pupil's gender, the pupil's age, the school's location, school ownership and a number of teacher-related factors. First of all, the variable 'gender' affects the performance in numeracy in particular, P6 boys performed better than the girls. That is maybe explained by the few role models the girls had, as only 8.2% of the female teachers in the sample taught numeracy in P6. In literacy, P3 and P6 boys and girls performed at about the same level. Furthermore, the age of the pupils affects the performance, as younger pupils of about 8 years in P3 and 11 years in P6 performed best. These are the appropriate ages for these year levels. Possibly, the difference is due to learning difficulties or

the involvement of older pupils in non-academic matters, e.g. work or getting pregnant. Additionally, 'school ownership' is an important variable with pupils in private schools performing better than those in government schools, particularly in P6 literacy. Moreover, the school's location is also an important variable: overall, pupils in urban schools performed better than those in rural schools. This is probably caused by a higher rate of teacher- and student-absenteeism in the rural areas (UNEB 2011).

6.2.4 Teachers' performance

Another factor that affects the quality of education in primary schools is the level of the teachers. The NAPE report 2011 tested the teachers' performance as well and this indicates a challenging situation, especially, with regards to teachers' performance in oral reading. To sum up, teacher in rural schools performed better than the teachers in urban schools when it comes to numeracy, but this difference was not significant. But, the performance of P6 teachers on numeracy was significantly better than the performance of the P3 teachers. On the literacy tests, the teachers in urban schools performed – not significant – better, also there was a difference in performance of P3 and P6 teachers, with the latter performing better – again not significant. Finally, the teachers' performance in oral reading showed that urban teachers performed better than their rural colleagues, although not significantly better and only around 40% were rated proficient. In both urban and rural schools, the P6 teachers performed better than the P3 teachers, the difference was significant in urban schools and not significant in rural schools. However, teachers in government and private schools performed at about the same level, implying that if the challenges of shortages currently facing government schools are addressed, teachers in such schools are capable of having their pupils perform just as well as those in private schools. This implication shows that the performance of the teachers needs to be increased and that both government and private school teachers have the same level of skills on literacy, numeracy and oral reading (UNEB 2011).

In conclusion, a final factor that could have affected the pupil's performance is the introduction of the local language as medium of instruction in lower primary education. This could be an explanation for the better performance in numeracy in P3. Pupils' weak performance in literacy [in both P3 and P6] could have been caused by the insufficient level of teachers' skills to teach, particularly reading. This is reflected by the teachers' weak performance in oral reading; implying that they might not have been taught reading skills themselves. Another likely drawback for the performance of the pupils is the insufficiency of instructional materials (UNEB 2011).

6.3 Quality of education in Amolatar District

The quality of education in Amolatar District is expected to be low on the basis of the previously analysed indicators. These input and outcome indicators, showed that it is particularly difficult to increase the quality of education in the rural areas of Uganda, of which Amolatar District is a fitting example. There are limited figures available on the sub-county level, therefore the numbers on the district-level are used. First of all, primary school enrolment will be studied. Therefore, the number of children enrolled in primary education is depicted in Table 10. This table shows that in Amolatar District the total number of enrolled girls is almost equal to boys. The number of enrolled boys and girls is fluctuating, but the difference is comparable in the first six grades. In comparison, there is a relatively low enrolment in P7. This could mean that children drop out before they are able to join the PLE in P7 or they are forced to help their parents in the household or they need to go working, both on the land and on the lake. Another striking feature is the fact that there is a large difference in enrolment in P7: the number of enrolled girls is only two-third of the number of enrolled boys; in the other grades the differences are much smaller and in grade P2 to P5 there are even more girls enrolled. This could indicate that girls drop out quicker, due to a gender bias that favours boys or other cultural factors like early marriages. These findings are in line with the national numbers as depicted in paragraph 5.3.1.

Table 10: Enrolment per grade in Amolatar in 2011

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total
Male	3,618	2,676	2,897	3,260	3,145	2,659	1,551	19,806
Female	3,430	2,866	2,985	3,448	3,377	2,565	1,039	19,710

MoES Annual Statistics Abstract 2011

Additionally, considering the drop-out rate, there is a gender bias: 68% of the girls drop out of primary school, compared to 53% of boys [Table 11]. Contrastingly, boys are faced with a higher retention rate than girls: respectively 49% and 32%. One reason could be that girls do not get the chance to repeat a class, instead they drop out completely.

Table 11: Amolatar retention and drop-out rate

Average retention	41%	Average drop-out rate	59%
Boys' retention rate	49%	Boys' drop-out rate	53%
Girls' retention rate	32%	Girls' drop-out rate	68%

Source: adapted from Kaheeru 2012

Overall, the quality of education in Amolatar District has proven to be a challenge: the district ranks among the lowest districts when it comes to the *Primary Leaving Examinations Performance Index*. A low performance indicates that few pupils passed their exams in proper grades in relation to the number of candidates that sat the exam (MoES 2011). Additionally, the Uwezo Annual Learning Assessment Report 2011 ranked Amolatar District 79th out of 80 researched districts (Uwezo 2011). Amolatar can be named as worst scoring on literacy and numeracy, because the 80th district was excluded from the assessment due to contaminated data.⁵⁹ Table 12 shows the percentage of pupils scoring *complete competence* in English Maths separately and added up. With regards to all three indicators, Amolatar District scores far below the national average. Although, in 2012 the district ranked 75th out of 79 districts in Uganda (Uwezo 2012). However, the detailed country report is not yet published, thus the progress on the separated subjects cannot be determined.

Table 12: Competence in English and Mathematics, Amolatar and Uganda compared

	Amolatar District	Uganda
Complete competence in English	15.0%	34.3%
Complete competence in Maths	41.8%	51.1%
Competence in Both	10.2%	27.7%

Uwezo summary report 2011

In addition to the national performance of Amolatar District, when compared to performance of all districts in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, Amolatar in 2012 ranked 316 out of 320. Only 20.3% of the tested children - between 10 and 16 years - passed the requirements for the numeracy test questions and the literacy test questions (Uwezo 2012). The findings of Uwezo are in line with the findings of the annual NAPE of the last years (UNEB 2011). The results of this report for Amolatar District are shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Percentages of proficiency on NAPE tests 2011 in Amolatar District

NAPE test	Percentage proficient
P3 numeracy	47%
P3 literacy in English	26%
P3 oral reading	15%
P6 numeracy	11%
P6 literacy	12%

Source: Adapted from UNEB 2011

⁵⁹ Interview 20

In P3, the percentage of pupils rated proficient in numeracy is, at 47%, relatively high in comparison to the results for literacy in English [26%] and oral reading [15%]. This may be explained through the implementation of teaching in the local language. Using the local language as medium of instruction in lower primary, possibly affected the pupil's understanding of numeracy positively. Furthermore, the decreased attention for English has probably caused the understanding of English literacy and oral reading. In P6, the results of the NAPE are alarming: only 11% proficiency in numeracy and 12% proficiency in literacy. These results mean that over 90% of the pupils in P6 in Amolatar District do not rate proficient on the P6-level tests. As an indicator of educational quality, this shows that the quality of education in Amolatar District is disturbingly low.

6.4 Conclusion

All in all, it can be concluded that the indicators of the quality of education show an alarming situation. Overall, the input indicators show that enrolment has increased rapidly since abolition of school fees, but consequently a lot of pressure is put on the quality of education. The access shock resulted in large drop-out and pupil/teacher ratios in combination with low survival ratios, i.e. a lot of kids go to school but they often do not reach the end of primary level. These challenges are up to date a challenge for Uganda's education quality. Furthermore, the outcomes of education in Uganda are also not satisfactory: the National Assessment of Progress in Education shows that the levels of proficiency of pupils in P3 and P6 in literacy in English and numeracy are worrying. Thereafter, also the teachers' performance is proven to be inadequate. In addition, there are substantial differences between urban and rural schools with the latter being worse. The case of Namasale Sub-County and Amolatar District shows that both the inputs and outcomes of education are below national averages and, therefore, it is concluded that the quality of education is particularly low. To understand the processes behind this conclusion and to expand insights in the changes in the quality of education in rural schools, the next chapter elaborates on the results of the SDI in the research area.

7. Capabilities in Namasale Sub-County

The quality of education is under pressure in Uganda and especially in rural areas. As Chapter 6 showed, the proficiency in numeracy and literacy is decreasing or, at least, not progressing as was intended with the introduction of the Thematic Curriculum in 2007. This part of the thesis will include an analysis based on the capabilities selected with the SDI. This school-level SDI will be analysed to determine the success of the Thematic Curriculum as quality improvement intervention beyond the inputs and outcomes indicators of the quality of education. Whether or not the capabilities for good quality teaching and learning are present in Namasale Sub-County will be analysed with designated indicators [see Chapter 3.2]. The proposed SDI consists of eight *capabilities* that make up the desirable preconditions for education, i.e. the process of teaching and learning. These eight selected capabilities, and the indicators to measure these capabilities, are analysed on the basis of the interviews with the stakeholders in the sub-county in combination with secondary data of the DevEd assessment report (Kaheeru 2012). The result of the exploration of the SDI to the educational situation in Namasale is summarized in Table 14. These results are further explained in this section and therefore it is split up in three parts: first, the overlapping capabilities for teachers and students are stressed, i.e. *the basic survival capabilities, well-being freedoms* and *the school management and resources*; second, the *teachers' capabilities* are addressed; and third, the *students' capabilities* are worked out. Through the analysis of the general process of implementation of the Thematic Curriculum and the quality of education in Uganda, it is expected that the preconditions and capabilities to enable quality teaching and learning in Namasale Sub-County are poorly provided for.

Table 14: Interpretation SDI indicators

Capabilities	School Development Indicators	Interpretation/Result
1. Basic survival capabilities	✓ Clean water	- Borehole present at schools, serves entire community
	✓ Sanitation	- Not enough and in very bad condition
	✓ Shelter	- Not enough and in bad condition
2. Mental well-being, bodily integrity, social networks, respect and recognition, voice, freedom to act and freedom to aspire	✓ Fear of violence	- Corporal punishment present
	✓ Discrimination	- Not observed
	✓ Harassment by (head)teachers	- Not observed, teachers help each other
	✓ Able to work without feeling hungry, tired and ill?	- (Often) no food provided by school or parents
	✓ Respect and recognition	- Little respect for teacher profession - Child labour present + domestic chores
3. Having a well-managed school with adequate resources	✓ School Management	- SMC in place, but need training
	✓ School infrastructure	- Not enough and in bad condition
	✓ Learning materials	- Very low Book-Pupil Ratio
4. Teacher capability to manage a class	✓ Teacher workload	- Very high Pupil-Teacher Ratio
5. Teacher capability of accessing in-service training	✓ Enrolment ratios of teachers for in-service training sessions	- Little training provided (in schools) or distance to the tutor centre is too far
6. Teacher capability of being adequately remunerated	✓ Teacher salary relative to cost of living	- Salary has been increased, but still too little to support family - No other remuneration
7. Student capability of parental support	✓ Completion rates	- Completion and survival=low. Very high drop-out rate - Drop-out increases in higher classes
	✓ Parental support	- Little support by parents
8. Student capability of accessing appropriate pedagogies	✓ Child Centre Pedagogy: new teaching and learning methods introduced	- Some new teaching methods are used
	✓ Gender equity	- Gender bias against girls

7.1 Capabilities for teachers and students

7.1.1 Basic survival capabilities

The presence of the *basic survival capabilities* is indicated by the availability of water, sanitation facilities and shelter. First, drinking water was present on all the schools, mainly in terms of a borehole at the school grounds. In most of the cases in Namasale, this borehole was the water source for the entire village, which has been indicated as a challenge for the pupils to access this facility.⁶⁰ Second, the sanitation facilities were in all cases far from sufficient. The number of toilet stances per school [latrines in usable condition] was between five and ten. With enrolment number going up to 1100 pupils per school this creates an alarming challenge and numerous stances were out of order due to collapsed floors.⁶¹ Collapsing of toilets is a main challenge that becomes more difficult because of the structure of the soil in Namasale. Due to the peninsular location of the area, the loose soil makes it extra hard to construct new sanitation facilities. The sub-county Chief states: *“We may construct a toilet here today, then in something like six months when the toilet is not yet full, it collapses. And then, you know how hard we have passed through in order to construct that, so it may not be easy to construct another one immediately, so that is a big challenge in some of the areas.”*⁶² Furthermore, it is stated that pupils are compelled to go into the forest as an alternative. This is a major challenge, especially for girls. The drop-out level of girls will increase when they do not have the opportunities to wash themselves while being on their menstrual period. Already, the culture of the region is not characterised by a genuine equity between boys and girls.⁶³

⁶⁰ Interview 15

⁶¹ Personal observations

⁶² Interview 13

⁶³ Interviews 7, 8, 13 and 18 and Kaheeru 2012

Figure 9: Toilet stance out of order due to termite hill



Another problem with construction of toilets is the lack of funding there is available and the slow release of funds to construct new facilities. The formal devolution of the education system makes the process to apply for funding very longwinded. The sub-county officials state that the slow process of applying for funding makes it more difficult for them to work on the construction of sanitation and other required facilities: application for funding can only be done for the budget of next financial year and then it remains to be seen if the money is being made available.⁶⁴ This is contrasting to the stated GoU's priority on the *hard component* of education.

Third, with regards to *shelter* there are problems comparable to the sanitation challenges. Most schools that were visited in the area clearly lack sufficient and good quality buildings. There have been some government funds that have tried to address this issue, and also development partners have executed projects, but this has not been enough to improve all the school buildings and classrooms.⁶⁵ The observations show examples of situations with, for example, over 100 children on the floor of a dusty classroom with only a few rocks to sit on, classrooms' roofs that are eaten by termites and classrooms without walls [see Figure 10, 11 and 12].

⁶⁴ Interview 11, 12 and 13

⁶⁵ Interview 13

Figure 10: Classroom reality



Figure 11: School Building in Namasale Sub-County



Figure 12: Picture of a class through a hole in the wall



An additional issue that comes to the fore in analysing the situation in Namasale is the large presence of poverty. Considering the basic survival capability, the level of poverty has a number of consequences that affect primary education in the area. For example, the high drop-out rate can be largely attributed to poverty: children need to go fishing or do other labour to sustain the income of their household, or children are not able to eat at school or buy the required scholastic materials to enrol in school. This is a major issue and it puts enormous pressure on the education in the area.⁶⁶ Another reason for the children lacking basic survival capability in school is the parents' little support for their children's education, which is further addressed in 7.1.5.

7.1.2 Freedom to act and to aspire

In comparison to the basic survival capabilities, this second capability is less straightforward to interpret. The aim of analysing the *mental well-being, bodily integrity, social networks, respect and recognition, voice, freedom to act and freedom to aspire* is to gain insight in the freedoms the teachers and students have to function. In other words, they should be able to function without fear of violence, without discrimination or harassment by (head) teachers, without feeling hungry, tired or ill and with respect and recognition. In sum, the analysis shows that accomplishing this capability is also challenging.

A first indicator that came to the fore as a major issue in Namasale, is the absence of food during school days for the pupils and often for the teachers as well. This causes absenteeism of teachers and also it makes an already high drop-out rate to further increase after lunchtime. There are two main reasons: first, the entire community is considered to be under the poverty line and second, the misunderstanding by the parents of their role after introduction of UPE, formulated by the Community Development Officer [CDO]: "*they are Museveni's children now*"⁶⁷ [see 7.1.5]. Therefore, food should also be taken up as a basic survival capability that affects all other capabilities.

Secondly, cultural traditions result in challenges for the students to function well, e.g. another challenge that is striking is the presence of corporal punishment in the schools. Although there has been a policy opposing this activity, it is still not ruled out completely and has been observed in the primary schools in this research. Another issue that comes to the fore is the existence of early marriages and early pregnancies in the area, which is brought forward by

⁶⁶ Interviews 12 and 16

⁶⁷ Interview 4 and 12

different respondents.⁶⁸ This exists as a practice which is embedded in the culture of the area, combined with late entrance of girls in Primary School: *“Girls are just not bothered for in the local culture and are often seen as a source of wealth. Marrying off a girl delivers a dowry in terms of cattle.”*⁶⁹ The existing gender bias is stressed in more detail in 7.1.5

Furthermore, the profession of teacher is, not genuinely seen as a good profession. As already concluded in Chapter 5, being a teacher is not the first choice for many people. Especially in an area that is as remote as Namasale, all the disadvantages and challenges of working as a teacher add up. In sum, low pay, bad housing conditions, no support from parents and limited career opportunities add to the inadequate provision of the basic survival capabilities. This ensures that teachers as well as students do not have the desired freedom to act and freedom to aspire. The issue will be further explored in the analysis of teachers’ capabilities [7.1.4] and the students’ capabilities [7.1.5]. The teachers’ freedom to act and aspire is further exemplified in Figure 13. This figure shows the difficult working condition for a teacher in one of the schools: this female teacher is holding her few-weeks old baby during teaching, because there is no other solution. Furthermore, the picture shows that the presence of desks and books and an acceptable pupil/teacher ratio are not the only challenges for teachers; these preconditions are fulfilled in this classroom.

Figure 13: Example of teachers’ freedom, teacher with her baby in class



⁶⁸ Group discussions 1, 3 and 5

⁶⁹ Interview 7

7.1.3 School management and resources

The third capability that is analysed is to have a well-managed school with adequate resources. In paragraph 5.2.2 it was established that these factors affect the quality of education. With regards to the school management, the installation of SMCs has been the most important development. These SMCs are, together with the PTAs, responsible for the daily management of the schools. It is argued that the installation of the PTAs needs a change of attitude by the parents, which is signalled as problematic by all interviewees in the district and sub-county.⁷⁰ This need for change is indicated by one of the district officials as: *“they are part and person of the communities. They are the parents around the schools, they are the communities around the schools, they are the people from whom we feel are not participating in school programmes.”*⁷¹ In contrast, all the respondents agree that the installation of the SMCs has been a good development. The SMCs have contributed to increasing the support for education by the parents. The engagement of the community is seen as an important factor for a school to be managed well; involvement of the community is seen as a possible solution for several challenges like the lack of latrines and teachers’ housing conditions. Nevertheless, the installation of SMC has also encountered several hiccups in the start-up phase they are in at the moment. It is stated by district officials that training them should prevent them from doing strange things as the following quote illustrates: *“We have seen them [SMCs] doing things that are funny, we have seen them sell school land to raise funds. Probably to go to court, or to bail out an individual member of the SMC.”*⁷² Therefore, more sensitisation of the role of the SMC is needed to improve the functioning of this management body.

Furthermore, the head teachers are seen as key players when it comes to the functioning of the teachers and the schools: on the one hand they keep teachers accountable for their work and on the other hand, they should be able to guide the teachers to improve their teaching. In the sub-county, the head teachers of the schools have been allocated to their position, mostly in the last three years and have had some experience and training in managing a school. The circumstances in which they have to manage their school are often harsh, as is illustrated by one of the head teachers: *“When I came to the school, two years ago there were no kids here. Some teachers were there, but there were no children to teach. I called help from local leaders and started [together with CDO] to bring children back to school. They were just loitering around the landing site and we forced them to come to school. At the moment we have a high enrolment and*

⁷⁰ Interview 6-14

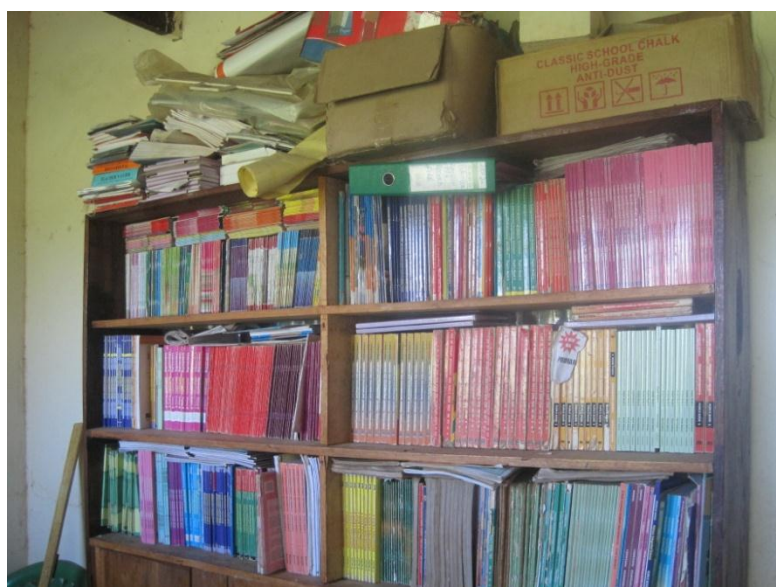
⁷¹ Interview 8

⁷² Interview 6 and 8

the situation is improving."⁷³ This indicates the crucial role a head teacher can play to change things positively.

Considering the availability of adequate resources, i.e. instructional materials in this instance, the earlier recognized challenges are verified: there are by far not enough books and other learning aids available in the schools. The widespread lack of resources makes it more difficult for the teachers to do their job, although it is perceived by the respondents as equally challenging to the limited quality of buildings and sanitation facilities. The books are supposed to be provided by the MoES through the UPE system of education, but that is not done enough. Even when there are some learning materials present in a school, the frequency of usage is stated to be low. Often they are kept in the head teachers' office to keep them safe [Figure 14].

Figure 14: Learning materials kept in the head teachers' office



Both lower and primary grades have a deficiency in learning materials, which is additionally challenging in lower primary due to the problems with teaching in the mother tongue. From the group discussions with the teachers it became clear that they are sometimes confronted with over ten different tribes, and subsequently dialects, in one classroom. The teachers indicate that they would rather see English as the medium of instruction, even in lower primary, to cut across this linguistic barrier.⁷⁴ By means of countering this problem, the Government is developing learning materials for P1 to P3 in Kiswahili, to be used from 2014 onwards. The CCT of the district expects this to bring progress.⁷⁵

⁷³ Interview 16

⁷⁴ Group discussions 3 and 5

⁷⁵ Interview 7

7.2 Teachers' capabilities

In line with the expectations that were derived from the theoretical framework and the analysis of the national constructs of implementation in Chapter 5, the capabilities of the teachers to manage a class are not enough adequate. As was already established in the elaboration of the teachers' well-being, they mostly have a very hard time doing their job; their freedom to act and to aspire were challenging. First of all, they are confronted with harsh living standards in the remote area of Namasale. Their living conditions are unsatisfactory and the remuneration is also insufficient. Nonetheless, a part of them have indicated to still enjoy their job, although another part has signalled to be very demotivated.⁷⁶ Another issue that makes the teachers' job more difficult is the pupil/teacher ratio, which can be as high as 120:1 in some instances in Namasale. The combination of this high pupil/teacher Ratio, a deficiency of learning materials and low quality and quantity of provided training – pre-service as well as in-service – make their capability to manage a class unsatisfactory. The teachers themselves indicate several challenges they are confronted with. Among these challenges are: late coming of pupils due to domestic chores; inadequate supply of textbooks and other learning materials; poor conditions in classrooms; no salary at end of month; hunger; lack of writing materials; overcrowding; and indiscipline (Kaheeru 2012). This shows that teachers' capabilities are hindered by multiple factors.

With regards to their class management, the teachers have successfully completed the two-year teacher training at one of the PTCs and all of the teachers that are part of this research have several years of teaching experience. However, they have been trained in accordance to the old-fashioned curriculum of the PTCs and the in-service opportunities have been limited. The curriculum of the PTCs has been revised and is being implemented from January 2013 onwards.⁷⁷ The interviews and group discussions that have been conducted show mixed results of the success of the in-service training by the CCT, although it is generally understood that this training has not been available for all the teachers. Moreover, the teachers state to have not had training very often the last years; occasionally, there has been a meeting at the schools and also some meetings at the CCT-centre have been mentioned. Nevertheless, not all teachers have been in the position to attend these meetings, due to the distance or other responsibilities. The situation in Namasale is described by a local chief as: *"here in Namasale, the CCTs are not there. Not often in the schools. The teachers are just there with the head teachers. They are under close*

⁷⁶ Group discussions 1,3 and 5 and Kaheeru 2012

⁷⁷ Interview 26

supervision from the head teachers.” Generally, in the group discussions, the teachers reveal that they feel that they are in need of more training to improve their ability to manage a class.⁷⁸

The remuneration of the teachers has been previously pointed out, but from the group discussions and the observations in the schools it becomes clear that there is a genuine need for improvement. It is generally accepted that the teachers’ salary in Uganda is considered low, even in comparison to other countries in the region.⁷⁹ Another basic requirement to increase the freedom to execute their job is, for example, the teachers’ living conditions. The teachers’ housing is considered very poor in most schools. For example, they have to share a hut with other teachers, or the quality of the hut is abominable [see Figure 15]. Figure 15 also shows a recently constructed accommodation that has been built with assistance of a EDP for the head teacher. That is, if housing is provided at all around the school. In some instances, the teachers have to commute from other towns, in the case of Namasale for example Amolatar town, which increases the absenteeism among teachers. Thereto, they often do not have the transportation possibilities to commute to and from school and often do not go at all. Some schools have advocated increasing the community participation to counter these challenges. For example, through gathering parents to help building teachers’ houses or the establishment of a School Development Fund.⁸⁰ The aim of such a fund is to increase the motivation of the teacher through a small extra pay from the parents, something which is far more common in urban areas. Unfortunately, due to the poverty level in Namasale, the payments for the fund are often late or not even made at all, so the effect on the motivation of the teacher is considered little.

Figure 15: Teachers’ housing conditions



⁷⁸ Group discussions 1, 3 and 5 and interview 11

⁷⁹ Interviews 28 and 34

⁸⁰ Interviews 11 and 16

7.3 Students' capabilities

The capabilities of the students cover the last section of this analysis. The position of the students is categorized through the support from their parents and the students' capability of accessing appropriate pedagogies. The former indicator is concluded unanimous: the parents do not support the education of their children in Namasale Sub-County enough. The latter indicator is especially challenging for girls, as was already mentioned that in the area education for girls is, generally, considered less significant.

All of the interviewees agree that the support of the parents towards the education of their children is meagre. Statements about parents neglecting their children and forcing them to work - in the household, on the land or to go fishing - are common, although it has to be noted that the history of education in the district is also not a lengthy one. A lot of parents did not go to school themselves and, therefore, it is agreed upon that they do not see the value of education for their children. Another issue is the prevalent level of poverty: some of the parents simply cannot afford to send their children to school, despite the abolishment of school fees. By means of bringing change to the parent's attitude, it is often emphasised that the sensitization of parents should be increased to highlight the importance of education for an improved situation of their children in the future. It is also stated, by one of the head teachers, that the results of children's education, as compared to especially fishing, are paying off and more people and children emphasise education.⁸¹

Despite the slowly changing attitude of the community, the attendance and completion rates are still miserable. As shown in paragraph 6.3, enrolment is relatively high in the first years of primary school, but in later years this decreases to a questionable level. The main reasons for a high drop-out are: starting to work [mostly for boys] and early pregnancies and marriages [mostly for girls]. The official numbers of the DEO's office show an average drop-out rate of 59% [boys: 53%; girls: 68%] (Kaheeru 2012). These figures support the statements with regards to the gender bias in the area towards boys' development and education.

All in all, the students' capabilities are inadequately fulfilled: parental support is generally low and there is a gender bias in favour of boys. In combination with the insufficient provision of basic survival capabilities, the challenges with school management and unsatisfactory teacher capabilities it can be concluded that the pupils in Namasale do not have access to appropriate pedagogies.

⁸¹ Interview 15

7.4 Conclusion

Overall, the SDI has provided insight in the capabilities behind the regular input and outcome indicators of the quality of education. It was already concluded that the quality of education in Amolatar District and Namasale Sub-County was of a worrying level; the SDI shows that the capabilities are far from being fulfilled. In line with the overall goal of the SDI, it can be concluded that the constraints on the capabilities of teachers and students are recognised and interpreted as being severely challenging and that the selected school improvement intervention [the introduction of the Thematic Curriculum] has not reconciled these problems. Additional barriers in rural areas are present and are obstructing teachers' and students' capabilities even more. Additional factors like poverty, commuting distances, living conditions, gender bias and poor teaching and learning facilities are increasingly present in rural areas. Moreover, the *basic survival capabilities* have not been met in Namasale Sub-County and on such a weak fundament the other capabilities do not find room to grow. Therefore, the desired functionings were not achieved and did not lead to the improved well-being and morale of teachers and students, consequently this did not result in improvements in overall school quality via its positive reactions, as is the goal of the SDI.

8. Conclusion and discussion

This final section of this thesis provides the concluding remarks. First, a summary of the results of the analysis is given. This summary is divided into elaboration upon the preconditions for successful implementation of the curriculum and quality of education, followed by the analysis of the education quality indicators and capabilities in rural areas and is completed with the additional barriers in rural areas and teachers' and students' capabilities. Thereafter, the implications on theoretical and policy level are addressed and finally the issues for further research will be handled.

8.1 Conclusion

This thesis has analysed the change in the quality of education as was intended by the introduction of the Thematic Curriculum from 2007 onwards. On the one hand, the general constructs of implementation have been analysed. On the other hand, the eventual change of the quality of education in a rural district in Uganda has been examined, based on the exploration of the SDI. This SDI has been recommended to analyse the quality of education beyond traditional indicators of the quality of education. Among these traditional education quality indicators were input factors - e.g. enrolment rate, completion rate, pupil/teacher ratio and teachers' qualifications - and educational outcomes such as literacy and numeracy test scores. It has been argued that these indicators do not take into account additional factors that could hinder educational performance; in this case the extra barriers that could hinder rural teaching and learning such as poverty levels, teachers' housing conditions or the distance between home and school. The applied CA offers insights into the values of education and the SDI is proposed to be used as analytical tool to measure the impact of a school improvement intervention. The selected school improvement intervention was the introduction of the Thematic Curriculum in 2007, which aimed at increasing literacy and numeracy levels in Uganda. Quality improvement has been a major interest of the GoU after introduction of UPE; the subsequent access shock put enormous pressure on the quality of education.

The main aim of this research is formulated as follows.

This research aims at determining the success of the introduction of the Thematic Curriculum in Uganda as a quality improvement intervention. The level of success will be established on the basis of utilising a Capability Approach School Development Index beyond the standard education quality indicators in rural government primary schools.

The conclusion is divided into three part, in consistence with the research questions of this study. First, the conclusion examines the preconditions for successful implementation of the curriculum. Second, the extent to which the education quality indicators represent the needs and the required capabilities of government primary school teachers and students in rural areas will be addressed. Third, the additional barriers that hinder teachers' and students' capabilities in rural areas are discussed. Finally, the theoretical and policy implications of the results of this study and issues for further research will be considered.

8.1.1 Curriculum implementation and quality of education

The preconditions for successful implementation of the curriculum are parted up in three constructs: support from outside agencies, capacity to support innovation and the profile of implementation (Altinyelken 2010). The analysis of these constructs shows a clear example of a situation wherein the implementation process of the curriculum is problematic. Although the *support from outside agencies* is present, their actions are far from sufficient to support proper implementation of the curriculum. All three indicators of outside support are insufficiently maintained: the teachers' professional development has proven to be ineffective to reach all teachers, both pre-service and in-service; provision of physical resources is almost completely inadequate, especially in rural areas; and monitoring practices are poorly executed, the inspection of schools lacks basic resources to fulfil their task and that leaves room for corruption practices and people not doing their job. Thereafter, the *capacity to support innovation* is also characterised by many shortcomings to support implementation of new ideas in schools. In short: physical resources are scarce, school infrastructure and learning materials are insufficient; school ethos and management are not fit for their task, SMCs are introduced without sensitization; and the circumstances of the teachers and students are not benefiting the quality of education, embodied by often dreadful living and working standards resulting in low motivation. Finally, the overall *Profile of Implementation* is generally perceived as good in theory, but bad in practice. Summing up, the focus on improvement of literacy, numeracy and life skills; the introduction of new pedagogical child-centred teaching methods; the establishment of local languages as medium of instruction in lower primary; and the change towards continuous assessment are widely supported and praised by the respondents in this research. However, it is also broadly emphasized that the introduction of these elements is confronted with many challenges in the daily practice in Uganda. These results are in line with expectations, because previous attempts have also proven to be started off with the worst of all possible scenarios (Ward, Penny and Read 2006).

Following the poor situation with regards to the implementation process, the intended change in the quality of education has also not been achieved. All in all, it can be concluded that the indicators of the quality of education show an alarming situation. Overall, the input indicators show that enrolment has increased rapidly since abolition of school fees, but consequently a lot of pressure is put on the quality of education. The access shock resulted in large drop-out and pupil/teacher ratios in combination with low survival ratios, i.e. a lot of kids go to school but they often do not reach the end of primary level. These challenges are up to date troublesome for Uganda's education quality. Furthermore, the outcomes of education in Uganda are also not satisfactory: the NAPE report shows that the levels of proficiency of pupils in P3 and P6 in literacy in English and numeracy are worrying. Additionally, the Uwezo report endorse these conclusions and claim that their reports show that the quality of education is even worse when the drop-outs are included.

8.1.2 Education quality indicators and capabilities in rural areas

With regards to the quality indicators, there are substantial differences recognised between urban and rural schools; the latter being worse off. In line with the limited national progress in the quality of education, the figures for Namasale Sub-County and Amolatar District show that both the inputs and outcomes of education are below national averages and, therefore, it is concluded that the quality of education is particularly low in this area. However, to understand the extremely poor situation in the government primary schools in Namasale, it is not sufficient to solely analyse the numbers and figures; the factors that withhold teachers and students to perform need to be taken into account. Therefore, the SDI is utilised to gain insight in the processes underlying the educational outcomes, i.e. their capabilities, agency freedom and well-being freedom.

Overall, the SDI shows that the capabilities of teachers and students in Namasale Sub-County are far from being fulfilled. To start with, the *basic survival capabilities* have not been met: clean water, sanitation and shelter are not sufficiently available for the teachers and students. Furthermore, the teachers have indicated to have limited well-being freedom; often they work long days without having necessary nutrition. This is even worse for a lot of students; they often go for entire school days without a meal. On such a weak fundament other capabilities can hardly be developed. Additionally, the poor living conditions for the teachers and the little respect there is for the teachers' work limit their motivation. With regards to the school management and resources capability, it is concluded that these are also challenging. For example, there are SMCs and PTAs put in place to manage the schools, but the people involved

do not know their role or are not motivated or concerned with improving the situation. Moreover, school infrastructure and learning materials are in such a poor condition that it hinders performance severely.

The teachers' capabilities – to manage a class, to access in-service training and being adequately remunerated – are far from being fulfilled. The teachers find it difficult to manage their classes with high pupil/teacher ratios and low book/pupil ratios. Furthermore, their ability to access in-service training is small; either the in-service training is not provided, or they are not able to join for numerous reasons. Moreover, the only remuneration the teachers have is their salary, which is not enough compared to their cost of living. For instance, teachers cannot sustain their families with the little money they earn; that is if they do not encounter administrative difficulties and receive salary at all. The bad examples of teachers being excluded from the pay roll or experience any other difficulties with receiving their salary are numerous.

Thereafter, the students' capabilities are also under severe pressure. First of all, the drop-out rates are extremely high and subsequently the completion and survival rates are low. These rates are consequences of several factors, e.g. little support by parents for their children's education or even more basic reasons like poverty that leads to the need for children to start working – e.g. fishing, digging or petty trading. Additionally, the support for girls' education in the research area is even less; this is often seen as a waste of resources. In the area the occurrence of early pregnancies and early marriages are numerous which cause girls, but also to some extent boys, to drop out. For example, marrying off girls is an active practice, because that provides a family with income from the dowry that has to be paid.

8.1.3 Additional barriers in rural areas and teachers' and students' capabilities

The peninsular location of the district has been a blessing and a curse for the sub-county: on the one hand, it has enjoyed relative peace in the war-struck northern part of Uganda and has provided economic activity from fishing; on the other hand, the location is characterised as very remote place and the level of poverty has possibly influenced the educational performance. In line with the overall goal of the SDI, it can be concluded that the constraints on the capabilities of teachers and students are recognised and interpreted as being severely challenging and that the selected school improvement intervention – the Thematic Curriculum – has not reconciled these problems. The SDI has provided understanding of contextual factors that hinder the teachers' and students' capabilities which in their turn affect the quality of education. Moreover, it is concluded that additional barriers in this rural area are observed and are obstructing

teachers' and students' capabilities. Additional factors like poverty, commuting distances, living conditions, gender bias and poor teaching and learning facilities are widely present in Namasale Sub-County. Moreover, it is concluded that the poverty in the area provided room for early marriages, early pregnancies and child labour to be present and withhold children from enrolling in school; thus hinder the quality of education. Another observed barrier for the rural area is the decentralised education system in Uganda and the subsequent challenges with the provision of learning materials, teachers' salary, the construction of classrooms and sanitation facilities, or the accessibility of in-service teacher training. Also, sufficient inspection and monitoring leave room for teachers and head teachers to relax and increase the corruption of inspection reports. Other factors that hinder teachers' and students' capabilities are found in the limited support of parents. For example, the parents are expected to step in and help construct better teachers' accommodations or clear roads for children to go to school safely.

All in all, it is concluded that the preconditions for successful implementation of the Thematic Curriculum are not sufficiently present in Uganda. Furthermore, the analysis of the inputs and outcomes show that the quality of education in Uganda is low. Additionally, the SDI shows that the indicators fundamental to the low quality of education are inadequately taken into account and are insufficiently provided for. Finally, several additional barriers that hinder the educational performance in the rural area of Namasale are understood.

8.2 Theoretical and policy implications

The study has emphasised a nexus in thinking about school improvement that has been subject to a broad debate. This nexus rethinks the paradigm of school improvement, and challenges top-down views of development in education. The theoretical implications of this study are to be found in the exploration of the SDI and the indicators for the quality of education. The SDI adds to the debate on the measurements of quality of education from a CA point of view. Therefore, the SDI shifts the emphasis from focussing on inputs and outcomes of education, as was – and is – the accepted standard to designate the quality of education and to compare countries, regions and schools. For example, the Education Development Index is used as comparison by the EFA movement, but this is also merely focused on educational inputs and outcomes. This research shows that it is important to analyse the teachers' and students' capabilities, because these reveal influential factors and that hinder teaching and learning.

This study explored the use and relevance of each of the proposed indicators within the conditions and context. Thereto, it can be concluded that the indicators have proven to be

relevant for studying capabilities and the quality of education in a rural context. Additionally, the SDI has proven to be especially useful to analyse additional barriers in rural primary schools. Thus, the CA and the SDI can function as framework for educational stakeholders to analyse the impact of their school improvement interventions in a broader way. Nevertheless, it needs to be recognised that the expectations of the endeavour to utilise the SDI as framework are subscribed to in this research: following the conclusion of Tao (2010) this proposed framework for school improvement has been an experiment that proved to be challenging, difficult and in need of further exploration.

With regards to the analytical framework of curriculum implementation, this research shows that the SDI adds a suitable instrument. This study endorses the indicators that have been proposed in the top-down analytical framework and emphasises the theoretical assumption of taking into account the link between ‘the big idea’ and classroom practice. Therefore, the SDI proceeds further as tool for the actual classroom practice and in that respect responds to the call for more research on the process of implementation. By means of comparison of both approaches, the analytical framework of implementation already consists of capacity factors - such as physical resources, teacher factors and student factors - and these issues are shown to be extended by the capabilities analysed with the SDI. In sum, it is concluded that using the SDI to analyse the curriculum implementation process provides bottom-up insights in the existing realities, classroom cultures and implementation requirements that are believed to be most important for curriculum changes to work best.

Furthermore, this research illustrates the difficulties that are to be found in a rural area following the devolution of government, and subsequently educational management. The gap between district and the MoES is big and the district is lacking the capacity to take care of their own problems. For example, the construction of sanitation facilities is very problematic, because the funds have to come from the MoES but applications can only be submitted for the budget of next year and these are released meagrely. This research shows that this decentralisation is not working effectively and districts are left to themselves. In conclusion, it can be especially appealing for the GoU to focus on increasing the quality of education – and the overall situation – in the rural areas, because the majority of its population lives in rural areas. Moreover, to be able to achieve the targets of the MDGs and the EFA targets, the most cost-effective interventions can be done in rural areas.

The results of this research call for a comprehensive and cooperative approach with all educational stakeholders to improve the dire educational situation in Namasale Sub-County.

The focus of a new improvement intervention should be beyond solely educational inputs and outcomes, but should definitely take these into account. The suggestion is made to focus attention on the well-being issues of the teachers, as they are seen as the most important actors to increase the learning of the students, especially in the rural areas where other educational stakeholders – e.g. inspection, CCT or NGOs – are absent. Additionally, the SDI emphasises that a general socio-economic improvement of the lives in the area can result in better educational outcomes. Although it might not be easy to increase the general level of well-being in the area of Namasale, it should be an additional ambition to do so. The recent initiatives to connect the district to the power system and the installation of the ferry across Lake Kyoga show that the general situation in the district must come from far, but things are looking up.

8.3 Issues for further research

One of the limitations of this research was the limited time there was available for the field work in the field work area. Consequently, the proposed quantification of the SDI could not be explored to the fullest and, consequently, the results remain a qualitative interpretation of the researcher. Although the research is based on a broad basis of data sets from two separate research projects, the secondary data from the participatory assessment report did not include a ranking of capabilities. In future research this could be improved by taking up the SDI as a solitary approach to the quality of education in an area, and not – as was more or less the case in this research – as an additional instrument to analyse the progress of other improvement intervention.

Furthermore, as has been discussed in Chapter 2, the selection of capabilities is not a straightforward and generally accepted initiative. This is subject to an extensive amount of debate and it needs to be recognised that the list of capabilities that has been chosen in this research is not complete. Due to the time constraints of this study, the list of capabilities proposed by Tao (2010) has been converted into comparable indicators, but a study into the theoretical and methodological implications of the selection of capabilities could be up for further research. Another issue that could be a topic to further research is a genuine and practical comparison of the utilisation of the SDI in two or more districts and favourably a comparison between rural and urban districts. This kind of undertaking can provide insight in the barriers that hinder capabilities and the differences that are to be found between the barriers in urban and rural areas.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Overview of respondents

Appendix 2: Topic list expert interviews

Appendix 3: Topic list group discussions

Appendix 1: Overview of respondents

Table 15: Ministry of Education and Sports and affiliated organisations

Nr.	Institute	Function	Date
1	National Curriculum Development Centre	<i>Head of Pre-primary and Primary Department</i>	5/11/2012
3	Directorate of Education Standards	<i>Education officer</i>	7/11/2012
4	Kyambogo University	<i>Dean Faculty of Education</i>	9/11/2012
26	Ministry of Education and Sports	<i>Principal Education Officer Primary Teacher Education</i>	13/12/2012
28	Ministry of Education and Sports	<i>Assistant Commissioner Primary Education</i>	18/12/2012
29	College of Education and External Studies, Makerere University	<i>Associated professor and Dean of School of Distance and Lifelong Learning</i>	14/01/2013
32	Primary Teachers College Kibuli	<i>Principal</i>	17/01/2013
33	Primary Teachers College Kibuli	<i>Registrar and Tutor</i>	17/01/2013

Table 16: Education Development Partners

Nr.	Institute	Function	Date
2	Royal Netherlands Embassy in Kampala	<i>Education Specialist</i>	5/11/2012
5	Link Community Development	Founder and Director	9/11/2012
19	Aga Khan Foundation	<i>Executive officer</i>	28/11/2012
20	Uwezo Uganda	<i>Program and Administrative Associate</i>	29/11/2012
21	ICCO-Alliance	<i>Program Officer Education</i>	29/11/2012
22	UNICEF Uganda	<i>Education Officer</i>	30/11/2012
23	Curasse Cambridge Education, NCDC	<i>Education Adviser</i>	30/11/2012
25	Mango Tree Uganda	<i>Content & strategy Director Northern Uganda literacy Project</i>	11/12/2012
27	Independent Consultant/Researcher	<i>Education Research & Evaluation</i>	17/12/2012
30	UNICEF Uganda	<i>Senior Educational Specialist</i>	15/01/2013
31	Save the Children Uganda	<i>Technical Advisor Education</i>	16/01/2012
34	Belgian Technical Cooperation	<i>Educational Advisor</i>	18/01/2013
35	UNICEF Uganda	<i>Northern Uganda Education Coordinator</i>	23/01/2013

Table 17: Civil Society Organisations

Nr.	Institute	Function	Date
24	FENU - Forum for Education NGOs in Uganda	<i>Executive Director</i>	5/12/2012

Table 18: District and sub-county government officials

Nr.	Institute	Function	Date
6	Amolatar District	<i>Education Officer (DEO)</i>	14/11/2012
7	Amolatar District	<i>Center Coordinating Tutor (CCT)</i>	14/11/2012
8	Amolatar District	<i>Deputy Chief Administrative Office (CAO)</i>	14/11/2012
9	Amolatar District	<i>Community Development Office (CDO)</i>	14/11/2012
10	Amolatar District	<i>Resident District Commissioner (RDC)</i>	15/11/2012
11	Namasale Sub-County	<i>Chief Parish level 2</i>	15/11/2012
12	Namasale Sub-County	<i>Community Development Office</i>	16/11/2012
13	Namasale Sub-County	<i>Sub-county chief</i>	16/11/2012
14	Namasale Sub-County	<i>Chairman LC3</i>	16/11/2012

Table 19: Head teachers Namasale Sub-County

Nr.	Institute	Function	Date
15	Namasale Primary School	<i>Head teacher</i>	16/11/2012
16	Wibanua Primary School	<i>Head teacher</i>	16/11/2012
17	Bangladesh Primary School	<i>Head teacher</i>	19/11/2012
18	Nabweyo Primary School	<i>Head teacher</i>	19/11/2012

Table 20: Group discussions

Data	Institute/Location	Group	Date
1. Group discussion	Namasale Primary School	<i>Four teachers</i>	15/11/2012
2. Group discussion	Namasale Primary School	<i>Three Grade 6 pupils</i>	15/11/2012
3. Group discussion	Wibanua Primary School	<i>Five teachers</i>	16/11/2012
4. Group discussion	Namasale Landing Site	<i>15 boys 8-12 years</i>	17/11/2012
5. Group discussion	Bangladesh Primary School	<i>Four teachers</i>	19/11/2012

Table 21: Observation reports

Data	Content	Date
1. Observation	General Impressions Namasale Town	15/11/2012

2. Observation	Wibanua Primary School	16/11/2012
3. Observation	Namasale Primary School	16/11/2012
4. Observation	Town walk Namasale	16/11/2012
5. Observation	Visit landing sites: Namasale and Wibanua	17/11/2012 10:00-13:00 (Saturday)
6. Observation	Visit Landing site: Namasale	18/11/2012 Sunday
7. Observation	Bangladesh Primary School	19/11/2012
8. Observation	Nabweyo Primary School	19/11/2012

Appendix 2: Topic list expert interviews

Topiclist interview Curriculum Implementation – Capability Approach

René Vermeulen Utrecht University

- Introduction
- Date and place
- Name and function interviewee

Topics covered in interview:

1. Curriculum Implementation
2. Educational Quality
3. Capability Approach and education
4. Other barriers in rural education

1. Curriculum Implementation

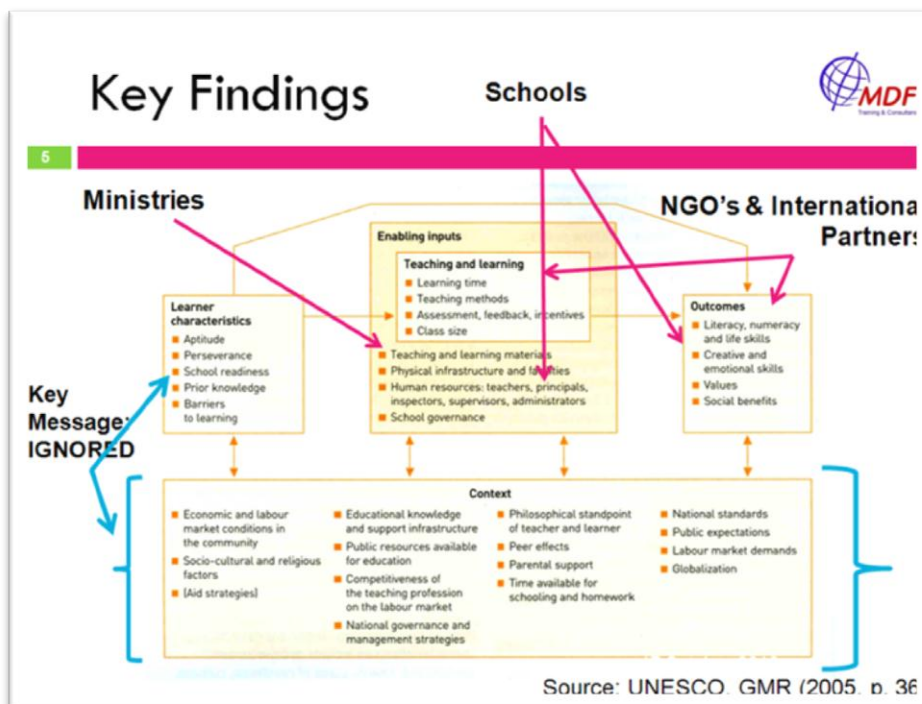
Q1) 1. Which preconditions [outside support, innovative capacity and practices] for successful implementation of the curriculum are not met in Uganda and to what extent does that hinder improvement of the quality of education?

- New Thematic Curriculum – why is there a new curriculum and how is working out?
 - Why this new thematic curriculum?
 - Progress of implementation
 - Urban vs. rural?
 - Failure or success?
- Curriculum Implementation – Are the constructs of implementation being met with the current curriculum? What is the level of implementation? Which preconditions are recognized?
 - Are the constructs of implementation being met in Uganda? How is the progress with these constructs?
 - Profile of implementation:
 - Coverage of learning areas
 - Instruction in English and use of local languages
 - Classroom Interactions
 - Assessment practices
 - Capacity factors:
 - Physical resources
 - School ethos and management
 - Teacher factors
 - Student factors
 - Support from outside agencies:
 - Teacher professional development
 - Provision of physical resources
 - Monitoring

- Bottom-up vs. top-down implementation:
 - What is your opinion on the way in which curriculum change should take place?
 - Does the NTC follow the suggested (bottom-up) implementation?
 - How is implementation proceeding in rural areas?

2. Quality of education

- Change in Quality of Education
 - How is quality measured/indicated in Uganda?
 - Is the quality of education under pressure with the increased enrollment of students?
 - What initiatives are undertaken to increase the quality of education?
- *Do the quality indicators take the learner characteristics and the context into account?*
- UNESCO Global Monitoring Report 2005 outcomes of education:
 - literacy, numeracy, Life Skills.
 - Creative and emotional skills
 - Values
 - Social benefits



Source Spoelder
2009

Q2) To what extent do the education quality indicators represent the needs and the required capabilities of government primary school teachers and students in rural areas?

- The role of the teachers in providing the required capabilities of pupils in rural areas?
- Or the ability of teachers to implement the learning outcomes of the curriculum?

- Instrumental value of education: understood as schooling – helps secure work at a certain level and political and social participation in certain forms.

What is the status of the following capabilities? (Compare/similar to constructs of curriculum implementation)

- Inputs
 - Teacher qualification
 - Cultural capital
 - ...
- Outcomes
 - Test scores
 - Certification
 - *UNESCO GMR 2005*:
 - literacy, numeracy, Life Skills.
 - Creative and emotional skills
 - Values
 - Social benefits

Q3) Which other barriers exist in rural areas that obstruct teachers' and students' capabilities?

- Urban-rural differences
 - How is the situation in Namasale compared to Kampala/Urban areas?
 - Which preconditions for good quality education are lacking esp. in rural areas?
 - Qualified teachers
 - Learning materials
 - Buildings
 - **See capabilities list and constructs of implementation**
 - Countrywide implementation of TC?

- *Which problems are recognized with regards to teachers behavior?*
e.g. (Tao 2009)
 1. Absenteeism (or being extremely late for class)
 2. Withholding content or teaching very little during class
 3. Rote Teaching methods
 4. Corporal punishment
 5. Gender bias in treatment of students

- *Which problems are recognized with regards to students behavior?*
e.g. (Tao 2009)
 1. Irregular attendance
 2. Lack of engagement during class
 3. Poor Performance on tests

4. Low completion rates (dropping out)

- Which other barriers exist that hinder teaching and school attendance?

Appendix 3: Topic list group discussions

Topiclist group discussions Curriculum Implementation – Capability Approach

René Vermeulen Utrecht University

- Introduction
- Date and place
- Name and function interviewee

Topics covered in interview:

1. Educational Quality
2. Capability Approach and education
3. Other barriers in rural education

1. Educational quality

- Can you explain the current situation with regards to the quality of education in Namasale?
- What are the main challenges for achieving good quality education?

2. Capability Approach

- Which needs and capabilities are present in rural schools?
- Which needs and capabilities are lacking in rural schools?

What is the function of the following components of CA in your opinion?

To what extent are these important for development of students?

- Positional value of education: *depends on how successful a person has been relative to others.*

What is the role of these characteristics in the position of the person?

- Gender
- Race
- Class
- Inequality
- Rural area?
- Intrinsic value of education: *refers to the benefits a person gets from education which are not merely instrumental.*
 - Agency freedom
 - Well-being freedom
- *Are the selected capabilities in this list being met, and are these the right capabilities to indicate agency and well-being freedom?*

Capabilities related to teacher development

Aspects of capabilities	Aspects of teacher development
Well-being achievement	Acquiring employment as a teacher with consistent job security (this would promote consistent income, a sense of belonging and respect)
Well-being freedom	<p>The conditions needed to keep and enjoy the job:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Basic survival capabilities (such as clean water, sanitation and shelter) 2. Emotional/mental well-being: to not be in fear of violence, discrimination, or harassment from the head teacher or other teachers 3. Bodily integrity: being able to concentrate in class and not be hungry, tired or ill 4. Being able to manage a class (not to feel overwhelmed or overworked) 5. Being able to feel respect and recognition (self-confidence and self-esteem) 6. Being able to enjoy social networks and feel a sense of belonging 7. Being able to teach in a well-managed school with sufficient resources (time for class, salaries paid on time, materials and building) 8. Being able to access in-service training to upgrade qualifications (without gender bias, or extra cost to one's self) 9. Being adequately remunerated (be it through salary, housing, or incentives)
Agency achievement	Exercising individual agency within the school and being able to live the type of life they value
Agency freedom	<p>The conditions needed to exercise agency in the school:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Being able to have a voice and participate in decision making with confidence 2. The freedom to act without repercussion or shame 3. The ability to aspire and strive to do well (to be encouraged and expected) 4. Being able to feel respect and recognition (self-confidence and self-esteem)

Framework: Unterhalter (2003b) In Tao 2009

Capabilities related to primary school students

Aspects of capabilities	Aspects of education
Well-being achievement	Completing 7 years of primary schooling to acquire 'serving competencies' such as literacy and numeracy (this will enable future opportunities such as continuation to secondary school, employment and self-esteem)
Well-being freedom	<p>The conditions needed to enhance learning and complete seven years:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Basic survival capabilities (such as clean water, sanitation and

	<p>shelter)</p> <p>2. Parental support: to limit time being kept from school because of chores</p> <p>3. Emotional/mental well-being: to not be in fear of violence, discrimination, or harassment from the teacher or other learners</p> <p>4. Bodily integrity: being able to concentrate in class and not be hungry, tired, ill or physically abused</p> <p>5. Being able to enjoy social networks and feel a sense of belonging</p> <p>6. Being able to feel respect and recognition (self-confidence and self-esteem)</p> <p>7. Being able to study in a well-managed programme with sufficient resources (skill of teacher, time for class, money for teacher, materials and building)</p> <p>8. Being able to access the content of the lesson through appropriate pedagogies and materials that take account of gendered styles of learning</p>
Agency achievement	Having individual agency in class will enable the ability to identify the type of life they value in the future.
Agency freedom	<p>The conditions needed to exercise agency in the school:</p> <p>1. Being able to have a voice and participate in decision making with confidence</p> <p>2. The freedom to act without repercussion or shame</p> <p>3. The ability to aspire and strive to do well (to be encouraged and expected)</p> <p>4. Being able to feel respect and recognition (self-confidence and self-esteem)</p>

Framework: Unterhalter (2003b) In Tao 2009

3. Which other barriers exist in rural areas that obstruct teachers' and students' capabilities?