



Universal Primary Education Under Decentralization:

An Asset or Liability to Quality Education in Rural Uganda?

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This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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List of Acronyms

| | |
|---------|---|
| ANPPCAN | African network for the prevention and protection against child abuse and neglect |
| CAO | Chief administrative officer |
| DEO | District education officer |
| DIMPSC | Decentralization instructional materials procurement steering committee |
| DIS | District inspector of schools |
| EMIS | Education Management Information System |
| FGDs | Focus group discussions |
| FY | Financial year |
| IOS | Inspector of schools |
| LC | Local council |
| LGFC | Local Government Finance Commission |
| LPO | Local purchase order |
| MoES | Ministry of Education and Sports |
| MoFPED | Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development |
| MoLG | Ministry of Local Government |
| NEMACY | Uganda Network for the Marginalized Child and Youth |
| NRM | National Resistance Movement |
| PTA | Parents' teachers' association |
| SMCs | School management committees |
| UPE | Universal primary education |

Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my parents, Mr and Mrs Walusa for their tireless love and contribution towards my education.

Acknowledgment

My sincere and heartfelt thanks go to my parents and all who have supported me in many ways to come up with this paper and to conclude my studies at ISS.

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Abstract

Since the early 1960s, the structure of Uganda's current education system has been in force consisting of seven years of primary education, four years of lower secondary cycle, two years of upper secondary cycle and three to five years of university studies. In January 1997, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) introduced Universal Primary Education (UPE) with a main goal of providing the minimum necessary facilities and resources to enable Ugandan children of school-going age to join, remain in school and successfully complete the primary cycle of education. This led to an increase in the provision of free primary education for four children in every family, and later to all children of school going age. School enrolment increased from 2 million pupils in 1986, over 6.8 million pupils by 2000 (MoES 2001: 6-11), and 8.3 million in 2012 according to Ministry of Education and Sports factsheet (2000-2012), with the majority of children being enrolled in rural Uganda.

At the same time, the government decentralized UPE by devolving powers from central government to district councils and to lower local councils with the main aim of involving local communities in implementing UPE, democratization, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in accordance with quality education. Sector Budgetary constraints between what is planned and provided is a common occurrence in primary education in Uganda today, hence leading to a cutback in the way education services are provided coupled with Insufficient teaching and learning materials that affect quality and equitable education (MoES 2012: 69). The rampant power struggles under decentralization has made many primary schools lag behind with a lot of time spent between the drawing of budgets, their approval and provision of funds, let alone some budgets being reduced at district level based on political interests.

The quality of primary education provided therefore illuminates a divide between urban and rural schools. The standard of education is questionable especially in rural primary schools of Uganda under a decentralized UPE system, with a concern of whether it offers useful Education for disadvantaged groups especially in rural areas, let alone its impact towards provision of quality education (MoES 2001: 11). As such, my paper presents how a decentralized UPE system has impacted on quality education in rural Uganda today with the realities versus fallacies of a decentralised UPE system.

Relevance to Development Studies

Decentralization is currently used in many countries as a Poverty reduction strategy and pro-poor rural development measure. It continues to be an ongoing focus within development studies being implemented in many countries so as to improve the provision of public services. This paper therefore presents the controversies surrounding decentralization of social service delivery with a case study of how a decentralised UPE system has impacted on quality education in rural Uganda. It also presents how the central government works with the local government under the decentralization policy, and the role of different stakeholders especially those at the grass roots level and their struggles for power.

Key words: Decentralization, Quality Education, Community Participation and Power in Decision Making

Chapter 1: Bringing Education Services Nearer to the People

1.1: Government Initiatives to Decentralize Primary Education in Uganda

Uganda just like many African governments decentralized education with an aim of improving efficiency, effectiveness, promoting social equality and justice within the education system as per Gershberg and Winkler (2003: 324). Golola (2001: 5) and Asimwe et al (2000: 2) argue that the decentralization of Universal primary education (UPE) in Uganda was initiated with five major goals; to have the involvement and empowerment of local populations in decision making and problem resolving, democratization of the decision making process, enhanced mobilization of funds and resources at the local level, reduced costs on service delivery, and raising clear accountability and efficiency at the local level. The overall purpose of decentralizing UPE by the central government was to improve education provision in Uganda, hence 16 years after the implementation of UPE under decentralization presents an interesting assessment of quality education in rural Uganda under a decentralized education system.

In the context of devolution, Barkan and Chege (1989: 433) description embraces Uganda's trend of decentralization involving "[...] decentralization that provides for meaningful participation by the people in the decision making process [...]" where the central government transfers authority to the local authorities that they partly control. UPE in Uganda operates under devolution with the local government predominantly exercising political and financial autonomy while the central government influences decision making especially the upper wing of political involvement. The decentralization policy under UPE in Uganda is founded on the transfer of powers, functions and responsibilities to the local government with powers to make, approve and implement own plans and budgets, raising revenue and allocation of resources to their local priorities, making ordinances and bye laws, hiring, firing and managing personnel. As for the purpose of this paper, my discussion has been focused on devolution of decision making, citizen's involvement and participation in the planning process so as to achieve the objective of decentralisation towards taking services closer to people at all levels with an aim towards quality education.

1.2: Contextual historical background

The local government of Uganda offers many services to communities such as education, health, agricultural advisory services and rural infrastructure (rural roads, water, and electricity), most of which have been decentralized by the central government to the local governments so as to promote effective provision of social services. This kind of Decentralization has been implemented under 3 major components; *Administrative decentralization* in which powers over administration and delivery of services is mandated to the local government, *Fiscal decentralization* through which the local government is given the fiscal

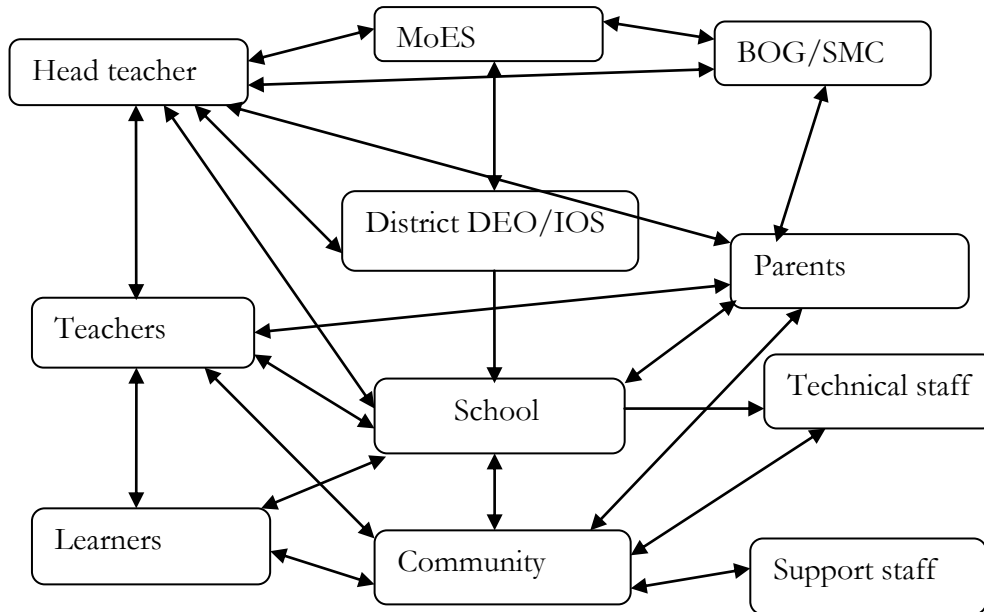
autonomy especially regarding policies towards increase of revenue, and *Political decentralization* meant to devolve opinionated rights to Local Governments (Falleti 2005: 329). Uganda's case of a decentralized UPE system presents the central government at the top tier of decision making powers and authority over how the system is to be managed with less concern of local choices and decisions. Decentralising UPE in Uganda was therefore a government initiative through the Ministry of Education and Sports along with interrelated ministries.

According to the 1997 Local government Act (Cap 243: Section 9[1]), political structures within Uganda have the “*highest political authority within their areas of jurisdiction of a local government with legislative and executive powers*” thus having responsibility towards matters surrounding service provision within their communities. This kind of system has put greater emphasis on new leaders, highlighting the great importance of proximity to policy makers and community engagement in policy formulation for provision of inclusive education services. Brett (1994: 69) argument in relation to Uganda's case presents this kind of decentralisation as devolution in terms of transfer of planning and budgeting powers from the centre to the lower level local governments comprising of different actors including Politicians who represent the political wing, bureaucrats and the school level actors.

According to Article 183[3] of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda, the *politicians* under the headship of the district chairperson represent the political wing. They monitor the general administration of the district; coordinate activities of councils at the lower local administrative units at the district coordinate and monitor government functions between the district and government, and are concerned with the approval of the final budget at the local government level. *Bureaucrats* are part of the local government working directly with the central government and headed by the chief administrative officer (CAO) to coordinate the administration of government services in the district. Primary education (UPE) in this case is managed by district councils, having the authority to formulate, approve and execute development plans and monitor their implementation based on district priorities. The district education officer (DEO) is the key person responsible for the implementation of UPE at the district level, directly works with the head teachers for any feedback to the ministry of Education and sports, and delegates head teachers within their different schools with authority to control school affairs. *School level actors* are at the last level of institutional structure involving different actors like head teachers, teachers, school management committees, Parents' teachers' associations, parents, pupils and the community at large. With the aim of creating ownership and involving local communities in monitoring and implementation of UPE under decentralization, stakeholders at this level are responsible for the schools administration, overseeing teacher performance, persuading parents to send children to school, provision of scholastic materials and meals for children at school, putting together teaching guides, work and lesson plans for easy implementation. In tackling issues related to local participation and the zeal of all citizens to demand for a desired kind of education system, the relationship between power sharing and decision making (who decides what to be done at a given level) has been presented in this paper.

In analyzing the involvement of school level actors as key players in any decentralized education system like UPE in Uganda, I will use the modus-operandi of USAID where the district is at the centre of the whole approach. Greater relationship in this case is seen between the district and the ministry of education and sports, with different actors within the system placed at different tiers, and some actors having more powers to influence decisions than others.

Figure 1: The whole school approach.



Source: Adapted from USAID school approach in Uganda

The district leadership in this approach plays a key role in bringing all school level actors together with inter relationships and communication between different actors. Actors at this level are answerable to the head teacher and the district education officer stands at the highest level of leadership at this tier.

The current UPE system in Uganda has been dubbed by many people in the contemporary society as *“the revolution in education”*, considering the fact that the state is at the forefront in children’s right to basic education as per Article 34(2) of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda. However, this kind of model of a decentralized UPE system has negatively impacted on the quality and equity dimensions within Uganda, based on regional divides between the rich and poor, rural and urban. The most central of all is the condemnation of children of the poor in rural areas of Uganda to poor public/UPE schools with poor services as compared to better schools in urban areas with better services and infrastructures, thereby creating a rural-urban divide. As different stakeholders perceive of UPE differently, so are their powers and roles under decentralization with the continued struggle for power, the failure to fully devolve powers to local governments and local citizens, regional imbalances and unclear resource allocation which has indeed challenged the quality of primary education in rural Uganda under the current decentralized UPE system.

1.3: What is wrong with the decentralization system in Uganda?

Uganda's decentralization process started with the enactment of the 1987 resistance council/ committees (RCs), with powers over resource management in their areas of influence based on region. In the mid-1990s, constitutional reforms to decentralize power from Kampala to the districts were initiated, a response to the global order for well-organized, equitable and responsible service delivery. The government thereafter embarked on the implementation programme of decentralization in 1993, which was later enshrined in the 1995 Constitution of the republic of Uganda and legalized in the 1997 Local Government Act where local governments were authorized with responsibilities for lower level local councils, sub-counties and divisions. Local governments were therefore given powers through devolution with responsibilities of finance, legislation, political, planning and personnel matters (MFPED 2005: 78). As a country-wide political pledge of the 1996 presidential campaigns of the ruling national resistance movement (NRM) party, UPE and decentralization coincided at a time when reforms in Uganda's education system were being carried out starting as a major political issue ending up in decentralization of UPE. The local government in this case was given the mandate to control education services within their different district levels (Nishimura et al. 2009: 28).

The central government in the current UPE system has retained the central role in management of UPE for efficiency and equity especially setting standards, textbook production, teacher training and provision of funds as the local governments and school level actors are mandated by central government with authority over resource management at the school level for example paying teachers' salaries, teacher hiring and firing, but with less involvement of the local communities. Some powers have therefore remained at the centre within the central government, administrative responsibility has been handed over to line ministries through *de-concentration*, authority and responsibility have been transferred to local governments by *devolution* hence lower governments perform functions that used to be done by the higher authorities like teacher hiring and firing (Prinsen et al 2008: 153). Some of these line ministries and local government officials have presented rampant fraud and favouring people within their own circles through the '*old boy and old girl system*' which tends to affect the quality of services provided, education in this case.

1.3.1: Responding to the gap in the decentralized UPE system in Uganda

As a poor quality lessening approach and pro-poor rural development measure, decentralization continues to be an ongoing focus within development studies, and in many countries aiming at improved provision of public services. However, there still exist unclear examples of the realities versus the fallacies with failures to present practical examples in many of the successful stories reported. In order to understand how a decentralized UPE system has impacted on quality education in rural Uganda, various indicators have been used to measure quality education and answer my research objective of finding out how the current implementation of UPE under decentralization have impacted provision of quality education in rural Uganda through a case study of a rural

community in Jinja district, and to determine whether decentralization is an effective tool for delivering social services to local communities. Since most reports provided like the education and sports sector Annual performance report for the financial year 2013/2014 by (MoES 2014) measure quantity of education , the main indicators used to measure quality education in this case will focus on input variables and output variables. These will focus on the planning and budgeting process, criteria of resource allocation, the degree to which pupils and teachers in rural UPE schools can hold a conversation in English, and the ability of local communities to influence decisions and lobby for the kind of education they wish for.

1.3.2: Main research question

How have power dynamics under decentralization impacted on the quality of UPE delivered in rural areas of Uganda? The sub-questions used in investigating my research problem are; how have inter-governmental relations created by decentralization promoted local participation in decision making and resource allocation within UPE, how has the current implementation of UPE under decentralization promoted local participation and empowerment towards the provision of quality education in rural Uganda, how has power allocation under decentralization impacted on quality, performance and equality of primary education in UPE, to whom are schools governing bodies under UPE accountable and who has power to decide what is to be done under UPE in Uganda?

Chapter 2 : Research Methodology and Tools for Data Analysis

2.1: The Research Process

According to O’Leary (2014: 2), research is very important in establishing and revealing unknown facts to the wider world and reaching new conclusions with knowledge that tackles social issues. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in data collection. Qualitative data was mainly used to explore findings from respondents about the involvement of local communities in decision making, sharing of power and impact assessment of the decentralized UPE system to rural Uganda whereas quantitative data involved statistical analysis for collected information related to changes over time in resource allocation, resource allocation and other statistical variables. Purposive sampling was mainly applied by selecting respondents for the interviews and focus group discussions based on either their knowledge about the topic researched or as part of their involvement in the implementation of UPE in Uganda.

2.1.1: Main instruments used in data collection

Interviews were carried out with key informants at the national, district, sub-county, school and community level so as to get information related to participation, quality, equality and power to influence decisions. Key informant *interview guides* were used to interview officials at the central government and local government about their involvement in UPE. Parents’ interview guides were also applied to get information from the service users in the community (parents) about the kinds of responsibilities they have in the implementation of UPE, their ability to influence policy through the budgeting and planning process, along with how UPE is generally operating under decentralization at the lower local levels. School level Interview guides were also applied to the respondents at school level especially the teachers and head teachers.

Focus group discussions were carried out with both the school management committees (SMCs) and parents’ teachers’ associations (PTAs). These were aimed at finding out about their different opinions and roles under the decentralized UPE system, what powers they have to influence policy and decide on resource allocation as well as how schools are functioning under decentralization. As interviews and focus group discussions were carried out, observations were made especially about unspoken communications from the respondents.

Document review was also used to get data and information related to my research topic. Main documents reviewed included legal instruments of Uganda (Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, Local Government Act and UPE policy guidelines), district and ministerial documents, school reports and any other relevant and authentic government of Uganda publications and reports.

I as well had interviews with civil society organizations (CSOs) that directly work on issues related to education in Jinja district upon advice from the chief administrative officer (CAO) although this was not part of my research design. CSOs reached included African network for the prevention and protection against child abuse and neglect (ANPPCAN –Uganda chapter, Jinja

branch), Child Fund International, and Uganda network for the marginalized child and youth (NEMACY – Uganda).

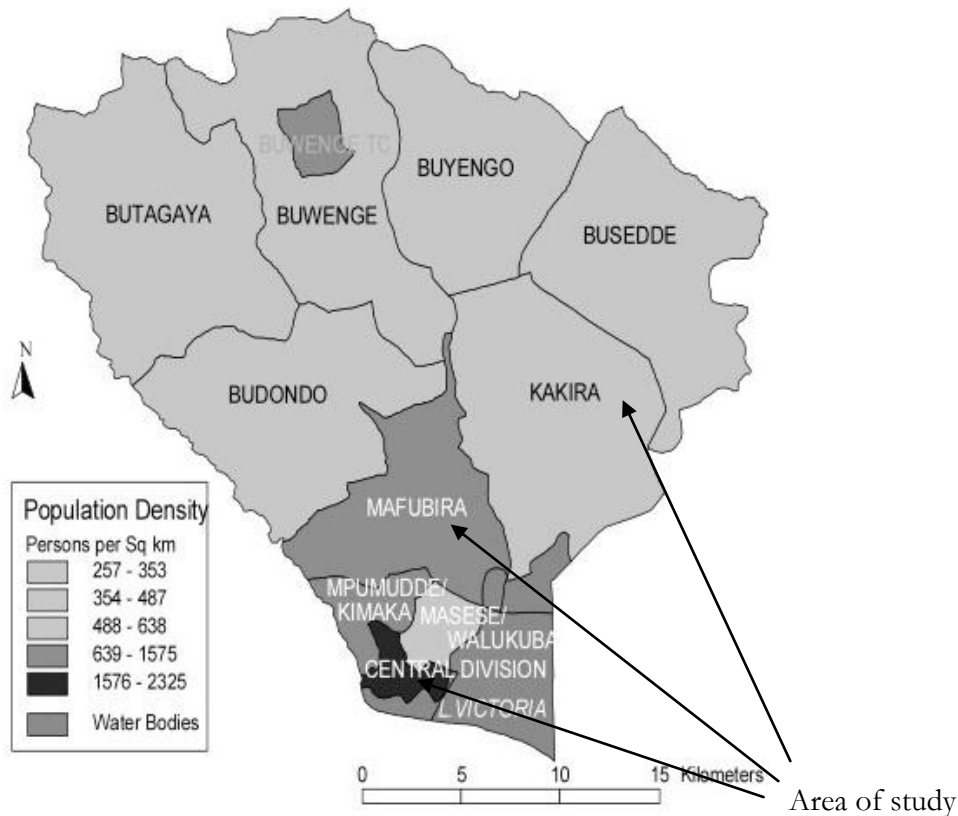
2.1.2: Selection of the case study

Using the case study approach, I chose two sub counties within Jinja district covering two villages in each sub county. Jinja district was selected due to its proximity and being one of the districts quite far away from the capital city Kampala. Since 1990, the creation of new districts has been an on-going process in Uganda, with eastern Uganda registering the highest number of new districts from the former 16 to 25 districts now. Jinja is one of the old districts in eastern Uganda with many sub-counties, town-councils and municipal settings as compared to other districts in Eastern Uganda.

Jinja district has most of its population in rural sub counties (Jinja rural), with a composition of 8 rural sub counties and 3 town councils, one municipality divided into 3 divisions. Jinja has 56 parishes and 399 villages. Of these, I covered 2 rural sub counties; Mafubira Sub County and Kakira town council, plus Jinja central division and 4 villages (Wairaka central, Mawoito, Wakitaka and Musima villages). With a total land area of 767.8 square Kilometres, 65.8 square Kilometres is under water, 53.3square Kilometres is under open water and the remaining 12.5 square Kilometres under permeable farming hence the dominant activity within Jinja district is subsistence farming with each house hold having an average holding of 1.3 hectares (JDLG 2013: 7).

The reason I took on Jinja district for my case study is due to the fact that it would enrich my research with a clear study of UPE under decentralization in the rural communities of Uganda since 430,500 persons of its 527,300 population live in the rural areas of Jinja district and the least population of 97,000 in the town setting. I preferred choosing an area in Eastern Uganda since I am more familiar with the language given the fact that some of my interviews and FGDs were carried out using the local Language easily understood by the respondents. Of the 32 districts in eastern Uganda, Jinja is the most populated district in the region which prompted me to take on this area for my case study.

Map 1: Map of Jinja district indicating areas of my case study.



Source: Adapted from JDLG 2013

2.1.3: Research sample Population

A total of 29 respondents were interviewed and these were purposively selected due to their experiences, expertise and knowledge on matters related to decentralization and UPE in general. The schools selected were Wairaka primary school and St. Stephen primary school in Kakira Town Council since they have the highest pupil enrolments within the district, Musima primary school and Wakitaka primary school that are located quite far away in the rural villages of Jinja district. A total of 3 respondents were interviewed at the central government, 10 at the local government, 9 respondents at school level along with 2 focus group discussions and 7 respondents at the community level inclusive of 3 officials from designated NGOs/CBOs. This has been expounded further in my Appendix.

2.1.4: Limitations and challenges

The current wave of the allowance syndrome in Uganda has made many people believe in allowances and being paid for their time. Many of my respondents at all levels expected to get an allowance for their responses and time which was a limitation towards getting information from key informants who had the information I needed but were less willing to be interviewed, or preferred questionnaires to interviews. I therefore had to lobby and re-assure my respondents about my intentions of the research which later yielded into their acceptance for the interviews.

Harmony on an appropriate time to carry on FGDs by the participants was a limitation in my data collection especially bringing the two parties together for a meeting. Members of the SMCs/PTAs were mainly farmers who expected to be given allowances, some not interested in having a joint meeting or preferred to be interviewed privately especially the case with one chair person of one SMC. I therefore applied my skills of community mobilization to bring members together and made it clear to the respondents that there were no allowances. However some refreshments were given in the FGDs to encourage participants.

Statistical data was so generalised and less useful in answering my research question related to performance indicators. This was part of the information I needed from the local government and central government showing variations in rural and urban performance index. I therefore resorted to what schools had to offer and responses from respondents at this level.

Some of the intended respondents were not interviewed due to the fact that they were either new in office and did not have the relevant information I needed to answer my research questions, were out of office by the time I carried out data collection, were on suspension especially for the respondents at central government or were holding 2 positions/offices at a time. I therefore tried to identify some other respondents to interview upon advice. UPE has country wide coverage, the sample size used was small as compared to the whole country representation of rural primary schools hence some indicative reports and government publications were reviewed and have been used in the analysis of my data so as to fill up gaps within collected data especially from the lower levels. This study therefore is not to generalize findings to Uganda as a whole, but generate insights, information and conclusions to be used to test the theory and add to future/contemporary debates, policies and studies about how a decentralized social service system impacts on rural service delivery using a case study of UPE in Uganda.

2.2: Power, Community Participation and Quality Education

The main concepts used in the analysis of my paper include power in relation to decision making, community participation and quality education. For the different concepts, indicators have been identified and used to measure the quality of UPE education in rural Uganda. **Power** as for this paper is used in the context of decision making and decentralization involving governance that Stoker (1998: 1) defines as collective action, while Peters (1993: 55) looks at it as a way in which “We must be concerned with the extent to which complex structures linking the public and private sectors . . . actually mask responsibility and attach to problems of citizens in understanding and influencing the actions of their governments.” This therefore explains the motives of inclusive primary education to all Ugandan children of school going age adopted by Uganda’s government through a decentralized UPE system.

Different scholars have defined **community participation** differently. It is regarded as a process of equitable sharing of project benefits towards the abolition of poor quality service provision by some development economists, while others view it as a mechanism used to improve project efficiency, realize

set up goals and objectives at the community level (Paul 1987: 2). Community participation in relation to decentralization emphasizes the need to involve communities in the *planning* (needs assessment to allow making choices), *implementation* of approaches to tackle poor quality, *management, maintenance, monitoring* backed by a feeling of ownership or responsibility, *evaluation* of what the intended strategy has achieved or failed to achieve, and providing a way forward for others to learn from. This provides an insight for involving communities in Uganda's primary education through a decentralised UPE system.

Quality education as a concept is defined by Farrell (1999: 155) to mean "education as a long-term process in which children are sorted out at many different points and in several different ways [operating] as a careful social selection mechanism." Using his view, Farrell believes that quality education in any system involves the probability that children from various social groupings will stay in school right from the time of enrolment up to Completion level (*equality of survival*), or the possibility that children from various societal groups in different spaces learn the same things at the same level and get the same quality /standards of education (*equality of output*). In the end, these two inputs are supposed to lead to *equality in output* with equal benefits from the education being attained; value in the education being attained with the ability to use what has been learnt later in life for the benefit of the whole society. In the framework of this paper therefore, quality education in rural Uganda has been linked to the decentralization policy where presumed powers meant to be devolved to the lower levels have impacted on Uganda's UPE system as will be discussed based on the indicators below.

2.2.1: Key indicators used to measure quality education.

According to World Bank (2000: 126), decentralization involves a means of putting resources where they are needed with the immediate beneficiaries in charge. The quality of UPE in Uganda therefore depends on an all-around interaction between the government, schools, communities, households and the students working together for a general purpose, which will be measured using various output indicators.

Different indicators based on the main concepts for discussion have been used to measure the viability of the different key concepts in measuring quality education as shown below based on the input and output factors. The enlisted indicators used to measure variables include how the flow of resources right from the relevant ministries to the school impacts on the quality of UPE based on its timely releases and allocation, power struggles and the ability of the local communities to influence decisions that impact on quality education, and the viability of English expression by children completing the primary cycle of UPE in rural Uganda (Literacy rate).

Table 1: Indicators used to measure quality education.

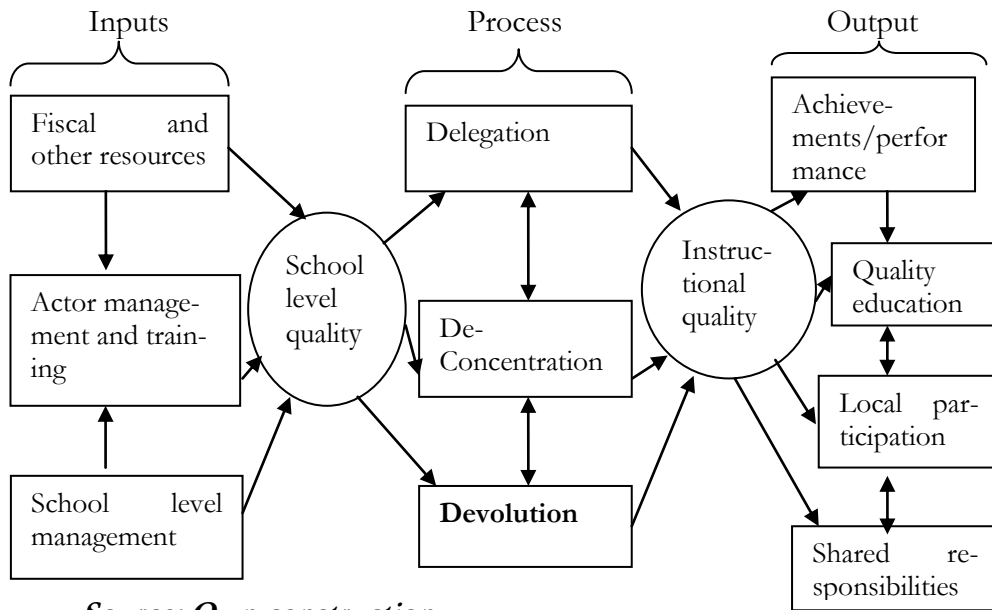
| Inputs | | Outputs | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Variable | Indicators | Variable | Indicators |
| Fiscal and other re-sources | -Qualified teachers -Black boards and chalk availability -Textbook avail-ability | Performance and enrolment | -Learning achievements in relation to com-munity needs -Distribution of resources at the different levels |
| School level management structures | -Power to make decisions | Local commu-nity participation | -Ability to be heard and influ-ence good poli-cies at the school level |
| Budget allo-cations | -Transforming allocated budgets into realized in-puts and budgets -School resource inputs | Good School level manage-ment/ adminis-trative system | -Timely releases of UPE funds to schools |
| Curriculum development and manage-ment | -Involvement of all stakeholders at all levels in its drawing | Power/ Shared responsibilities | Ability to be heard by other actors |

Source: Own construction

2.2.2: Data analysis

In measuring quality education, the *modeling approach* has been used where variables related to cause and effect relationships have been measured. These variables include performance and quality education, community participation and power in relation to the causal mechanisms that affect desired outcomes. Having defined the various objectives of implementing UPE under decentralization, the approach will be used in a way of cross checking the goals and objectives against measured outcomes/outputs (variables). Based on this model, Creemers and Kyriakides (2006: 352) emphasize that different factors at different levels are helpful in measuring success within the structure, related to each other and can be measured using similar dimensions. Each factor is a multi dimensional construct that considers other factors and outcomes of a system taking into account main determinants at the classroom, school and system levels. These activities usually range from a specific measurable variable to generalize and represent the whole system in relation to the purposes that a decentralized UPE system is supposed to achieve. This is explored methodically below.

Figure 2: Methodical construction to analyze my data.



Source: Own construction

This model explores the relationship between inputs, process and outputs. As a way of promoting local participation, achieve the goals of UPE and promote quality education, the government of Uganda through the process of decentralization decided to use inputs with the transfer of powers and decision making to the lower levels, school level management, fiscal and other resources. This was principally done through devolution. The outcomes of implementing UPE under decentralization in Uganda will be analyzed in this research paper as per the key instruments of local participation, decision making, actor interplay and resource allocation.

Chapter 3 : The State and Quality Education in UPE

3.1: The Politics of a Decentralized UPE System in Uganda.

In 1997, the Ministry of Education and Sports in partnership with interrelated Ministries decided to decentralize some roles to different level governments, with some roles being delegated to the local governments and some remaining centralized at the central government.

According to one respondent at the MoLG, the Government decided to decentralize UPE because the centre had failed to perform as expected hence the need to engage the local communities so as to create ownership of UPE.

This has been in the form of administrative decentralization where local authorities have been given certain powers by central government through hierarchical subordination, yet at the same time authority has been transferred to independent local governments for decision making on issues related to finance and management. Most of the UPE funds and resources are dispatched from the central government to the local government for their distribution to respective schools, thus each tier in the system has a role to play other than having the burden stalled to one level at the central government. The local government has therefore been mandated with the responsibility for the monitoring and implementation of UPE, receives teachers' salaries for dispatch, passes bye-laws and distributes the school facilities grant while the central government handles UPE funds, procures textbooks and instructional materials, among others. The central government therefore is the major key player in policy making as the local government only implements policies that come from the centre and are less involved in the policy process.

The decentralization of primary education in Uganda started as a political move by the President of the Republic of Uganda in 1997. According to Geo (2004: 307), the goal for a decentralized education system as with Uganda's case usually entails "politicization to significantly impact educational quality and efficient resource allocation along with equity in provision of education." With concentration of influence at the centre, the management of UPE and resource allocation is still a role of central government, contrary to the application of decentralization involving the transfer of decision making powers over the whole system plus its management to local governments, communities and schools. Based on the discussion by Falleti (2005: 330), decentralization in many countries is always recognized through *de-concentration* (significant control from the centre), *delegation* (assignment of local leadership) and *devolution* (delegation over local decisions).

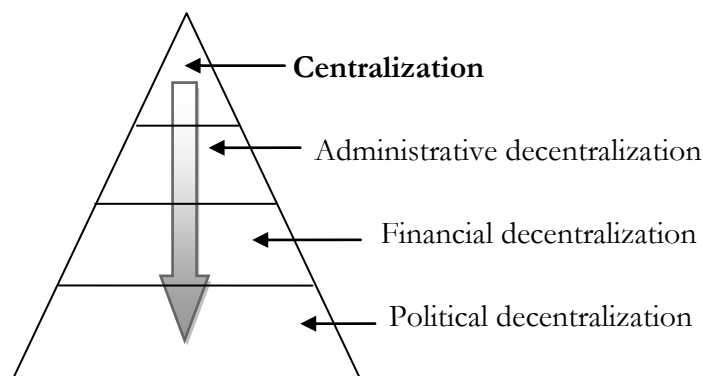
3.1.1: Defining decentralization, power and community participation in the context of UPE in Uganda.

I have incorporated the concept of decentralization as used by Bennett et al (1997: 2) in relation to democratic local governance which involves give-and-take interactions between the central and local governments, local governments

and the citizens through community participation. In this kind of relationship, the argument for power is to extend autonomous processes to the lowest levels of government so as to ensure good governance and democracy within a developing country. Uganda just like many sub-Saharan countries has implemented a decentralized UPE system as a public sector reform aimed at effective and improved service provision, with reports concerning greater achievements of decentralisation. However, Adamolekun (1999: 58) asserts that many generalized successful stories reported as a result of decentralized systems have “no real successful stories as far as improved development and performance at the local level is concerned,” which will be the main expression within this chapter of my analysis using the concepts of power and decision making in relation to quality education.

Broadly defined, decentralization emphasizes the transfer of authority, power, resource management, functions and the provision of services from the central government to local/lower level actors and institutions. According to Mansuri and Rao (2012: 2), decentralization refers to “efforts aimed at strengthening supply and demand sides of village and municipal governments, with strengthened citizen participation on the demand side like fostering mechanisms for deliberate decision making and the provision of social services by local governments through transferring and reforming administrative functions on the supply side.” Weiler (1990: 340) argues that decentralization and centralization of education are interrelated as the former gets incorporated into existing centralized structures on education management. These arguments are in line with the decentralization of primary education in Uganda right from the inception of UPE as a process aimed at having control over the different sub-national governments (Local Government in this case) legitimized. The non-uniform distribution of an equally balanced UPE system has seen different regions (urban schools in this case) benefitting more from the current decentralized UPE system due to local governments always giving them first priority than the rural schools even in resource allocation. As such, I do realize that this explanation fits into the argument of Cheema and Rondinelli (1983: 18) where decentralization focuses on “the transfer of planning, decision-making, or administrative authority from central government to its field organizations, local administrative units and local governments” with the mandate to carry on self-directed decision making based on self evaluations.

Figure 3: Dimensions of decentralization



Source: Adapted from Bennett et al (1997: 3)

To explore the kind of decentralization on which UPE in Uganda is/has been operating, I will use the pyramidal explanation of Bennett et al (1997: 3) that explores the different levels of decentralization functionality. UPE is currently being implemented under the first tier of administrative decentralization where functional responsibilities have been extended to the local government, but less accountable to the local citizens in Uganda.

According to Sayed (2002: 37), decentralization claims to allow decision making to take on at a locally based level. This however always excludes participation of all people within defined spaces and places with those in the middle and upper classes usually more influential in decision making. Two versions of participation are looked at under his arguments; one as a system where people access participation through election cycles for policy implementation and the other where people can freely make decisions governing their lives usually with more local participation as will be discussed with the case of UPE in Uganda and its impacts on quality education especially in rural Uganda.

Bowen (2008: 70) describes community participation as “the active involvement of local community residents, particularly persons identified as poor, under privileged and disadvantaged” so as to create an empowered community with the same sharing of power and benefits, checking on corruption and rent-seeking especially in development projects and social services. The implementation of UPE under decentralization in Uganda was aimed at promoting innovative standards, attitudes, knowledge and skills among the general public so they can put together their capacity as change agents and improve the quality and effectiveness of primary education in Uganda. This in line with the conceptual thinking of Rao (1989: 1401) explains that the interaction of different tiers is obvious due to the fact that “as one moves down the tiers of planning, more and more open systems would be encountered with increasing external linkages, which are difficult to plan for in isolation neglecting the linkage.” The closer interlinking relationships of the different tiers in planning for rural growth needs in Uganda are well covered at the upper and middle tiers of the system, with less at the lower levels yet adequate and practical linkages are important tools towards development and improved service delivery in the contemporary world.

Voices and suggestions of community members are realized through their power to express out their ideas within open spaces. Luttrell and Quiroz (2009: 6) define power using the components of *power over* as the ability to influence and coerce, and *power to* as the ability to organize and change existing hierarchies. The decentralised UPE system in Uganda has created *hidden power* where decision making is focused on powerful groups in society over the whole system, often not including/devaluing concerns and agendas of the less powerful groups within the system just as described by Luttrell, Cecilia, et al (2007: 1). My concern in Uganda’s case is about how local government uses its influence in financial resource allocation and planning under the decentralization policy and who has the main responsibility and power to allocate resources to beneficiaries. In this chapter therefore, 3 research questions have been answered: How has power allocation under decentralization impacted on quality, performance and equality of primary education in UPE, how has the current implementation of UPE under decentralization promoted local participation and empowerment towards the provision of quality education in rural Uganda, to

whom are schools governing bodies under UPE accountable and who has power to decide what is to be done under UPE in Uganda.

3.2: The struggle for powers and its impacts on decision making

According to Geo and Macleans (2004: 309), many parts of the world today have been decentralizing and privatizing publicly provided education with the central government giving the regional and local governments responsibility over the education system with a claim that it will enhance quality education. Uganda too has been in the process of decentralizing many of its social services, education inclusive to promote local participation and autonomy, creating ownership in the citizens and promote the provision of quality social services. Based on the discussions by Geo and Macleans, they use the example from USA of the federal *'No Child Left Behind'* legislation on one hand against the other state-level resort to tax credits and vouchers, where all approaches were aimed at quality education but with a clear outlay and aim attached. Uganda likewise has put up measures to achieve quality education at all regions through a decentralized system and unified curriculum. Based on my findings, Uganda's decentralization system has given politicians the greatest powers in the country to the extent that they do influence the way and arrangement in which funds and resources are to be allocated.

The Inspector of schools in Jinja reported that there is no political will for a developed and quality education system in Uganda since both UPE and decentralization were political initiatives, and they are only aimed at keeping the current ruling national resistance movement (NRM) in power.

As school level actors ask parents to support their children at school, some politicians offer contradicting statements that all is paid for by the NRM party and the president himself which illustrates a politicized UPE system that has affected quality education in rural Uganda as a result of struggle for powers against contradicting statements amongst key players.

3.2.1: Management and administration in UPE

Different actors in the implementation of UPE in Uganda have different roles to play, to the extent that local government is tasked with providing and implementing primary education services to the communities while the central government takes on management of the system. No clear lines have been drawn on what kinds of power particular actors in the system have since the middle and upper tiers of government have an overriding role and responsibility, the reason these power interactions under decentralization in UPE impact on the provision of education differently.

One head teacher reported a scenario where the lower local government expected him to approach a school challenge based on their demands while the higher local government expected him to follow their directives too.

Central-local power relations still present as a main component of UPE under decentralization in Uganda with intergovernmental relationships between the central and local government being high drivers in the kind of primary education offered in Uganda. Central government still demands more decision mak-

ing powers over resources that are centrally derived especially finances and management of primary education. On the other hand the local government too wants to assume management functions especially between higher local governments and lower local governments. This competition for power has affected provision of quality education within the country especially in the rural areas of Uganda.

A case in point of this was given by one town clerk about a rural school in Kakira town council that needed to be fenced off to reduce the theft of school property, land inclusive. The local government felt it was not their role but that of the central government, and so did the central government through the MoES. This created tension between the two tiers given the fact that the school has a very big pupil enrolment within the district.

This illustrates the undefined levels of responsibility not clearly spelt out in the UPE policy guidelines and the local government Act in relation to decentralization and Actor interplay. This has impacted on the smooth management and administration of schools especially in rural Uganda where more than 80% of SMCs and PTAs are comprised of members who are either illiterate or semi-illiterate and see education as a secondary need to children in rural Uganda.

3.2.2: The planning and budgeting process.

The district councils usually create education committees that develop work plans together with the education departments communicating directly to the most powerful financial committees at the districts that handle financial resources. This has created the underlying function of bringing about a system of patronage for political enlistment with politicians having a degree of control over administrators as discussed by (Francis and James 2003: 336).

This kind of arrangement only involves members at the district with less/no representation from lower level committee members hence priorities go mainly to the municipal, urban and city schools, more to the advantage of the politicians and less to the rural primary education system in Uganda. The district councils through the district service commission have been given the mandate to recruit, remunerate, discipline and fire their own staff, a setting that has promoted tribalism, favouritism and regional imbalances through selective recruitment and replacement. As for UPE, good and well qualified teachers have been placed in urban schools while new entrants have always been pushed to rural schools which explains the reason as to why schools in rural Uganda are lagging behind despite the fact that all primary schools in the country do follow the same curriculum compared to the prior system where government would post teachers randomly to schools. This has therefore failed to promote equal access to primary education thus more of a liability than an asset to quality education in rural Uganda. Vulnerable and less powerful groups in society are left to the whims of local government who have an upper hand in decision making.

At the district level, the key budget players are the councillors under a political umbrella with the role of passing the final budget and a mandate to either accept or decline a budget for a specified program. As decentralization offers councillors powers in decision making, some of them are less educated and have less concern about developmental projects, always with preferences for

projects of their own interests especially from which they can take some money for their own benefit at the expense of the citizens.

Of the respondents interviewed, 65% did agree that the district councilors supposed to pass the final budgets are not competent enough, and many of them value projects that profit them financially than those that benefit community.

With such struggles for power against interests, the making of inclusive and completely favourable decisions still remains a challenge under the decentralized UPE system in Uganda with urban UPE schools always at an advantage of getting their plans and budgets approved against the far away and hard to reach rural schools of Uganda. This indeed offers a frustrating education system to the extent that actors in the system only work to survive and not to provide quality education, always working for personal gains and not to serve beneficiaries. Interests of weaker factions in the general public have been damaged since the intended goal of having communities participate in UPE under decentralization has been played down by the political dimensions. Gilbert (1987: 56–80) in general argues that the benefits of the latest participation and its achievements in practice have often been enormously embellished with unclear rural outcomes since politicians in Uganda have used UPE under decentralization for political gains and maintaining the current government in power. The deputy chair person of Jinja district council in his statement during my interview clearly stated that;

“We as politicians know that the Government initiated UPE for a right cause to benefit the local citizen, but decentralizing it was for political reasons for communities to think UPE is owned by the people yet the government still has total control over UPE. The current government is using this method as a political machine.”

This kind of system is linked to the Madisonian presumption explained by Bardhan and Mookherjee (2000: 112) which holds that the “lower the level of government, the greater the extent of capture by vested interests and the less protected minorities and the poor tend to be considered” since politicians as an interest group have kept on oppressing the rural areas through the decentralization policy in various ways, which is a shortfall of mixing up development and politics together with a stiff comprehension of the later involving the interplay of politics and development.

Still in the same line, policies in Uganda today are formulated by the parliament with the highest stake to decide on how a policy is to be implemented in collaboration with the central government as actors at the higher level who finance, delegate powers and enforce policy. Noted from my interviews at the MoLG and MoES, they usually work with the higher local governments and other ministries at the higher level in issues related to policy. Less of local community participation was reported, and if any it is usually the affluent and well off members in the community who represent the whole population ignoring the argument of Samoff (1990: 518). He argues that decentralization presents an approach for extending fundamental influence by depoliticizing the limited rural population, controlling the procedures of local government institutions, and socializing shared unprejudiced management. This kind of system has presented the current implementation of UPE under decentralization as a liability to rural schools and communities in Uganda based on the poor structures and failure of the local populace to engage in decision making.

3.3: Local community participation in decision making and planning towards quality education

The decisions of community representatives under UPE in Uganda (SMCs and PTAs) are not heard or do not get to the top management at the district and national levels for policy consideration. Their ability to influence decisions and to sell pre-conceived proposals of the community as far as development is concerned is minimal. Lower tiers of the system are left behind. As explained responses of participants in one of the focus group discussions indicated that they are working under ‘*eyes on hands off*’ system where they are less involved in the policy making process but only implement policies as they are commanded. This kind of system is in line with the arguments of Friedman (1993: 29) who uses the term ‘positioning for patronage’ to define this form of assumed power prevalent in Uganda’s case involving less participation of the parents and the local communities especially in decision making with a small and self-perpetuating clique acting on its own interests to decide for the bigger community, coupled with poetical interference.

Theorists like Botes and Van (2000: 43) argue that many countries that implement community participation simply persuade the beneficiaries to agree with their proposals on what they think is best for them which is not a genuine attempt to allow communities choose valid development options freely. Uganda’s case is quite interesting as the local communities make their budgets through the school representatives, sent to the district levels and later on to the central government to be incorporated into the national plans. While talking to the SMC and PTA members, they agreed that they have powers to decide for the other parents since they represent the local masses from lower levels. They however reported that their powers and decisions end at a certain level, always at the sub county level.

The chairperson of the SMC at Musima primary school put it clear that “the central government has given them a voice in the locality and can influence change by encouraging more children to attend school and proper rules for good governance at the school level. However, this is at school level and usually involves a few of the parents in decision making since the higher local government usually gives us directives on what is to be done or implemented.

This indicates that the higher local government has the upper hand at district level in the current UPE under decentralization, less of the local communities thereby creating less ownership of the system by the local community who always deem it as ‘*the Museveni education system*’ which has negatively impacted on quality education in Uganda especially rural Uganda.

Communities too report that their level and ability to demand for improved services from government is minimal since they are not involved in the planning process at school level, but are only informed of what is to be done at the school level. One parent from Wairaka Primary school reported that;

“We are only called by the school authorities and the sub county chief (representative of the lower local government at the village level) to be informed about an agreed upon resolution by the school management committee. So we absolutely feel our roles and powers to decide at the local level are infringed on since a certain group of the school decides for the bigger group concerning the school administration and management.”

The government tries to make communities feel part of government initiatives. Confrontation however start at the school level, then local government level especially as politicians struggle about what priority to consider, at many times following the priorities of the central government against those of the community members. Plans of quality and realism rarely materialize at this point thus making consideration of community suggestions in planning a fallacy with decisions and plans following a top-bottom system in Uganda's case.

The rural - urban and private – public school divide in quality primary education has not been bridged in Uganda as one of the goals of decentralising UPE for equal and quality education. The current UPE in Uganda consists of two parallel formal systems with a public pitiable system mainly attended by the rural and urban poor or the majority, and a private/ well managed system for the more affluent households especially in the urban areas of Uganda. Since different actors have different interests and rationalities that Stiefel and Wolfe (1994: 17) define as big challenges within decentralization in developing countries, uniform distribution of social services is rarely realized in developing countries despite the presence of SMCs that represent the government and provide an avenue for exercising local democracy.

Following this differentiation, I had a comparative case study of a school in the rural setting and one in the urban area. As there were less complaints in the urban school about issues of management, failure to pay teachers' salaries and planning, the head teacher of one rural school reported that they had last received UPE funds in February 2014 despite the fact that funds are supposed to be released on a quarterly basis. The UPE policy streamlines that children should keep at school, the rural school had no black board chalk for use during lessons which prompted the head teacher to send children back home for 200 Ugandan Shillings each to purchase chalk. Parents geared by political influence refused to pay the fee, while teachers had no lunch at school and many had not received their salaries for the previous 3 months. This has all been brought about by decentralization that has created 2 kinds of education systems; one in the rural setting where no fee is supposed to be charged and the other in the urban area where a subsidized amount of fee is charged with less political interference thus the differences in the kinds of quality education provided.

The central government through the public officers is mandated to work closely with local communities at the lowest level especially those in the remote areas of Uganda since they are more vulnerable and most in need of improved social services. Under the goal of achieving community participation and creating ownership, the interaction of local political leaders and other different level actors work towards increasing the effectiveness of service delivery. Although the provision of services to communities ought to be an agreement between the service implementers and the policy makers, findings from my research indicate that UPE in Uganda has seen service implementers especially at the lower levels being involved only in the service implementation but not planning since they only follow set up policy guidelines. As reported by over 87% of the respondents, central government through MoES initiated a policy of '*mass promotion*' where all children in UPE schools have to be promoted to the next class in every new academic year. Lower level actors were not brought on board to have this discussed, but were only informed to have it implemented within the various schools. As urban UPE schools have taken on the initiative not to promote every child, the rural areas have anxiously taken on this initia-

tive with influence of the politicians hence the current UPE under decentralization is only taking children through a system of education but not promoting quality education in rural Uganda since politicians through their powers wrongly advise rural communities to take on wrong initiatives.

Based on the current trends of decentralization in many developing countries, there are challenges in uniform service delivery and provision, with lack of empirically viable realistic outcomes as far as decision making and responsibility allocation are concerned. According to Bardhan and Mookherjee (2006: 101), delegation of powers in many systems is restricted to service delivery with less financing authority with the central government deciding on how much is to be given to which sector/region based on the approved budgets from high level actors at the central government. Decision making at the lower levels is also less felt as discussed by Paul, F and R. James (2003: 326), since funds for activities of UPE in Uganda come from either the local revenue or the central government, with most of the finances dominating district education budgets coming mainly from the central transfers with conditions attached (conditional grants) thus undermines the genuine local decision making and implementation process which affects the quality of education provided to the communities.

The DEO of Jinja district during the interview clearly stated that “at many times I have to inform the CAO and key politicians on what I have to do in a certain school, or communicate to the higher authorities on what the lower level key players especially parents in this case want to be implemented at their schools. Rarely do I get response. The suggestions and decisions of the lower levels are usually left in balance and not considered due to the fact that the main player in this system is the central government that provides funds to run UPE schools.”

This explains the fact that although UPE in Uganda is working through the devolution of powers, the lower levels have less power in making decisions. Thoughts of local community members especially in rural Uganda are deemed uninformed and ‘*local*’ by the politicians and other bureaucrats. This has therefore failed to address the current UPE needs of Ugandans in the rural communities, hence making decentralization a liability to rural primary education.

In Conclusion decentralization is a good policy worthy to be implemented as a development initiative to the benefit of the poor communities. However, the decentralized UPE system in Uganda has been so much politicized with most powers still retained at the centre, local participation less realized along with conflicting struggles for power. As service providers at the lower levels have been de-motivated and not consulted when ministries want to make policy changes and reforms, work is compromised and it is seen only as a survival mechanism. The question of a general lack of consensus on priorities by councillors who are handicapped by inadequate information and not experienced in bargaining and compromise especially in the budgeting process, the excluded groups in our communities especially those in the rural areas at many times feeling less satisfied with the kind of education being provided by the government through decentralization have made UPE a liability to quality education in rural Uganda.

Chapter 4: Discrepancies between what is planned and what is provided

4.1: Resource planning and allocation

Government of Uganda adopted a medium term budget framework in 1997 where priorities are consistently formulated towards Uganda's poverty eradication alleviation program (PEAP). The current planning process in Uganda depends on the 2010-2015 National Development plan (NDP) with sectoral allocations in ministries being provided global budgeting ceilings. In the budgeting, the medium term budget framework sets the sector and district spending ceilings where priority areas (education inclusive) are taken into consideration. Priorities in primary education are developed by the education sectoral working groups comprising of the finance ministry, the ministry of education and sports, technical advisors and some civil society representatives. The budget as per the NDP is result-oriented, determines the costs of respective interventions that need to be undertaken to achieve specific outputs. Focus is always on regional equality to promote access, participation and performance along with equity among different socio-economic groups. This in line with the planning process involves certain groups of the population with the mandate towards resource allocation left to central government through the ministries.

The occurrence of deficits in financial and human resources at the local levels (local government in this case) present a gap between what is planned at the lower levels and what is provided both from central and local governments. Naidoo (2002: 18), in a comparative analysis of decentralized education systems in several sub-Saharan African countries argues that accountability to the grassroots is never done by the service providers thus the *"location of power has not really shifted from the centre to the periphery but instead a reinforcement of central control of the periphery"* with the central government using decentralization as a tool to manage lower levels. The MoES questions the practicality of whether they have or not to manage UPE and issues therein at district level within the decentralized system, where bureaucrats do what pleases them and at many times defy ministerial directives. This kind of system in Uganda today has created conflicting local government interests and priorities where more resources are being allocated to schools within the municipal/near the district offices due to political interests divergent from the ministerial objectives. As such, this implores the undefined and unequal resource allocation within UPE schools with more being allocated to urban schools as compared to rural schools like classroom and stance construction that is now a responsibility of local governments out of their revenues. The current UPE system in Uganda therefore presents 2 different systems, one urban setting receiving and having sufficient funds with well developed structures and the other in the rural areas with poor infrastructures and less resources to run and manage schools.

In this chapter therefore, findings respond to the research question of how inter-governmental relations created by decentralization have promoted local participation in decision making towards resource allocation within UPE.

4.2: Resource allocation, regional imbalances and quality education in rural Uganda

According to Section 15(5) of the 2008 Education Act, no fees are supposed to be charged for children in UPE with a provision of urban council schools where a specified amount of fee is supposed to be levied as a charge for maintenance and utility expenses per child. Rural schools in this arrangement are not supposed to charge any fee except for uniforms and now school feeding which is not mandatory. With this regional difference in fees charges, urban schools are always at an advantage with funds to run their own schools as compared to rural schools that have to solely depend on financial releases either from central or local government with a need to always endure the pressure of delayed and not enough financial releases. This affects management and administration of schools in rural Uganda, an impact to quality education. This is coupled by bureaucracy and funds taking a lengthy process right from their release at the ministry of finance, planning and economic development to schools other than being transferred to schools by the ministry with no other players in the process.

Having been given the mandate and powers at the lower levels, local governments are required to be answerable and accountable to service users and beneficiaries as far as what services they are providing, when and how. Accountability as reported by the officials at central government is supposed to be made through public exposure of the financial releases per quarter and holding Barazas presented to community members about service provision based on budget allocations, releases and expenditures. This is in terms of what funds have been allocated to UPE from different sources, and how it has been spent to different schools. However, the MoLG reports that very few districts do hold such community accountability meetings.

In Mafubira sub county, the teachers, community members and local government officials reported that “they have never been summoned by the higher local governments to be presented with accountability on what funds are planned for UPE, how much is received, expenditures and deficits therein” which makes the current UPE system unclear to many Ugandans as far as resource allocation is concerned for effective quality education.

Funds under the decentralization policy in UPE are either released on a monthly basis (teachers’ salaries) or a quarterly basis (school facilities grant, UPE grants and any operational grants) for school management and administration. These funds usually come from the ministry of education and ministry of finance, planning and economic development either directly to the school accounts for budget payments known in advance or to the districts either on a monthly or quarterly basis. It is at the district level where a lot of lower level involvement and power is exercised on how, where and what these funds are to be used for. Taking a case study of instructional materials (IM) to explain my argument, funds are received to the CAO’s district collections Accounts, then immediately transferred to a dedicated DEO/IM textbook local purchase order (LPO) Account held at a local commercial bank. The district inspector of schools/ district education officer (DIS/DEO) on behalf of the Decentralization instructional materials procurement steering committee (DIMPSC) then prepares the schedule for LPOs for each school in the district according to en-

rolment and the per capita funding allocation provided to the district. However, first priority is given to the areas near the district and within the municipal as compared to rural areas. This is a lengthy process as funds are handled by many people before getting to the final beneficiary, let alone the beneficiary not receiving all that they are supposed to receive except peanuts. The central government has therefore re-centralized the system where instructional materials are directly sent to the respective UPE schools by the top tier of the system at MoES with responsibility of carrying out purchases and supply which presents decentralized UPE system as a liability to rural Ugandan schools based on the lengthy process involved.

UPE as a policy in Uganda is reported to have increased access to education and enrolment within the country. Quality education is usually realized in good private schools or urban UPE schools with poor performance in rural Uganda. Bureaucrats and politicians have created a favoured system towards the urban education system less of the poorly structured rural education system. Samoff (1990: 514) in his arguments expresses this as a challenge of “decentralization efforts that appear not to have improved local service delivery especially in rural areas.” He emphasizes the fact that decentralization tends to widen the gap between the poor that he looks at as the marginalized and the rich especially those in urban areas. He uses the explanations of centralized authority and local initiatives in regards to what the central government has to offer and what local communities want to have, an imbalance between the provisions of central government and the demands of the local people. Local governments usually prefer to put funds into urban schools that can easily be used as ‘specimen’ in cases of monitoring from central government officials.

4.3: The transfer of Finances to UPE schools through Local Government

According to Coombs and Jenkins (1991: 2) public service delivery is defined in relation to “public sector budgeting being *incremental* in its approach.” These are designed to bring about development and change within the community. Three main key players at the top tier of the system are currently involved in the Education sector budgeting and planning process in UPE; The Ministry of Finance Planning, and Economic Development (MoFPED) that stands at the highest level responsible for guiding and coordinating various government ministries and departments to manage the overall government budget, with greater input at the final level of budget supervision and approval. Officers within various departments at the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) are greatly concerned with the design and management of the education sector plans and budgets, plus the monitoring of various activities within the ministry. The ministry of education and sports works with the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) in this case the decentralization secretariat to monitor the performance and implementation of UPE in their areas of jurisdiction within the country. Finances are usually released through the MoES from MoFPED to local governments that later distributes it for various functions in schools. Urban schools in this case are given first priority against the rural schools, let alone in procurement where supplies are first distributed to urban schools before reaching rural schools.

While interviewing the district planner, his responses indicate that first priority is always given to urban schools. Out of the 87 UPE schools in Jinja district, 82% of these are in rural areas and are struggling with no/limited permanent structures, instructional materials and stances. Money from MoFPED allocated to districts for different social services through the Local Government management service delivery (LGMSD) usually first handles urban needs with rural needs given a second choice, an effect to quality education in rural Uganda as resources are offered to rural schools as a 'by the way.'

According to Rao (1989: 1400), "Owing to the processes generating stratification and inequality, a substantial part of rural resources becomes the private property of rural elites or comes under personalized effective control." This is a re-occurring scenario in the current UPE in Uganda today, to the extent that communities have labelled those with in power as the "*corrupt and thieves*" since they always want to take on projects of their own interests, or many delivering incomplete and poor services. The commissioner for education planning and policy analysis at the ministry of education and sports in his statement clearly states that "*Capitation funds released to school managers does not correspond with the numbers released by the MoES.*"

This therefore raises a concern of where funds disappear from or get diverted by some district officers receiving the UPE funds meant to be transferred to schools. A total of 83% of UPE schools especially those in rural Uganda report that at many times they receive money once or twice in a year, some operating from the first to the third quarter without funds yet they are supposed to receive funds every quarter. Some schools receive far less funds that cannot cover school demands, an indicator of differences in funds approved and released, with even some funds not well accounted for at the top levels of management at the different ministries. This kind of corruption and misuse of funds prevalent in our government will keep affecting the quality of education services delivered unless it is checked within the current decentralization policy in Uganda hence posing a liability to rural UPE schools in Uganda towards quality education.

Table 2: Differences in financial approvals and releases by MoFPED in the last 10 years

| Year | Approved (Ugandan Shillings in billions) | Released (Ugandan Shillings in billions) | Shortfall (Ugandan shillings in billions) |
|-----------|---|--|---|
| 2002/2003 | 41.53 | 40.34 | 5.69 |
| 2003/2004 | 41.53 | 39.51 | 8.34 |
| 2004/2005 | 33.5 | 31.8 | 15.2 |
| 2005/2006 | 33.49 | 32.5 | 13.77 |
| 2006/2007 | 32.8 | 30.8 | 15.9 |
| 2007/2008 | 33.5 | 30.3 | 17.1 |
| 2008/2009 | 41.01 | 38.96 | 9.14 |
| 2009/2010 | 41.01 | 38.96 | 11.34 |
| 2010/2011 | 41.01 | 41.01 | 9.19 |
| 2011/2012 | 44.78 | 43.4 | 5.86 |

Source: Adapted from The New Vision Wednesday July 16, 2014

Using a case study of 10 year (2002-2012), statistics indicate that there are financial shortfalls between funds released and approved. As the MoFPED does the approval and it sends the money to the districts, they usually report different financial figures which indicates that either funds are misused, misappropriated or swindled which is a challenge of operating UPE under decentralization where funds pass through different players and actors before reaching the final service user.

Devolved powers under the decentralized UPE system have come along with the opportunity of abusing them through the interplay of corruption and education delivery. This kind of power abuse and struggle has made many district leaders feel *“it is alright to dip their hands in public purse for their own private use”*, let alone the less involvement and participation of the local communities/citizens in programmes and policies that are meant to impact on communities. Leaders both at the higher local government and central government usually connive and work together to implement programmes that will give them an opportunity to have a lion’s share.

Following my case study, 3 schools reported the presence of ghost teachers created by the district officers and put on the government payrolls. School level actors are not informed as to why some teachers are paid salaries as others are not paid or get 30% of their salaries. Intimidation and confrontation amongst the leaders was reported at the local government especially in budget meetings as a result of conflicting interests between the people who make the budgets (technical team) and those responsible for passing these budgets (councilors both at the lower local government and district level) due to differing interests and unclear budgets with financial statements not declared to the education sectoral committee.

This has therefore affected the kind of education offered in rural Uganda.

The UPE system in rural Uganda is a challenge to the success of UPE in Uganda today especially the provision of quality education to the extent that there are differences in the literacy rates between rural and urban Uganda. The Uganda Bureau of statistics, UBOS (2014: 19) in its report defines a margin in the literacy rates for specified years between the rural and urban populations. Among their claims is the fact that rural areas at many times are hard to reach and benefit less from the local government area budgets, let alone delays in getting resources to run UPE schools. Although there were no statistics to illustrate rural and urban performance patterns in Jinja district, the IOS reported that there has not been stable performance of pupils in UPE schools in primary education especially Jinja rural.

“The numbers in performance seem to be fluctuating and as for rural schools, they always have the worst performance in every year” which to me is a clear divide brought about by decentralization with more concerns being put to urban schools than rural schools in Uganda.

Table 3: Literacy rates of Uganda’s population based on residence

| Residence | Year | | |
|-----------|--------|---------|---------|
| | 2005/6 | 2009/10 | 2012/13 |
| Urban | 86 | 88 | 85 |
| Rural | 66 | 69 | 66 |

Source: Adapted from UBOS (2014:19)

In line with this argument, there are no clearly spelt out statistics about the performance index based on rural and urban divides. Data is always generalized, to present a picture that there is better performance registered in Uganda’s primary education. However, one DEO reported that;

“There are sub-counties in Jinja district that have never reported more than 5 first grades in primary leaving examinations yet the highest enrolment in UPE is in rural Uganda. Even at the MoES, respondents interviewed agreed that there is a general decline in performance in rural primary schools of Uganda despite the high enrolment due to delayed release of UPE funds and other resources from the local governments to these rural areas despite the early release of funds from MoES.”

This therefore presents the decentralized UPE system as a liability to communities and schools in rural Uganda with poor quality education and less accountability from the local government.

4.4: Impacts of implementing a decentralization UPE system towards quality education in rural Uganda

Five levels of UPE management and administration at local government level were created with the decentralization of UPE in 1997. These were considered for management at village, parish, sub-county, county and district level. In analyzing the outcomes of the decentralized UPE system in Uganda, I will use data on perceptions from the community members in regards to planning, management, the course of action of UPE implementation and their impact on quality education within the selected rural communities. This section still pre-

sents an analysis of how a decentralized UPE system has impacted on quality education in rural Uganda, and whether decentralization is an effective tool for delivering social services to the local communities in Uganda.

The current UPE policy has contributed to access and partly equity of education as a pro-poor policy, with all primary school children following the same school curriculum. Due to the fact that Uganda's education system is a transplantation of the British education system initiated under colonialism as a British colony, efforts to revive the education system after the 1970s has unfortunately focused on reconstruction and not a new construction aimed at making it more relevant to the current needs. Some contents taught to children may not be relevant to the current positioning of Uganda's development especially primary school social studies. 93% of my respondents follow the belief that the key to national development is rapid quantitative expansion of current educational opportunities other than focusing on quality. Focus within the system has been put towards children being taken through a system, only to be kept at school and producing '*half baked primary graduates*' who cannot articulately express themselves in English. Since the majority of Uganda's population is poor and dependent on agriculture too, there is a big need for development and implementation of an agricultural human resource strategy which includes adequate basic education for the rural poor not only focusing on keeping children at school as a political machine. Overall, I would say that UPE under decentralization has promoted quality education in urban Uganda where resources are provided and easily accessible through local revenues than rural Uganda.

"Education in Uganda today is politicized and we have more of quantity than quality, more children go to school but cannot even speak English at primary seven especially those in third world schools in rural Uganda. The system is going down to shackles unless some policies and mandates related to decentralizing UPE are checked by the government."

This statement was from 5 of my respondents at school, community and lower local government levels which is an indicator that many children especially in rural Uganda are only passing through a system, but not getting quality education to favourably compete with children attending good private schools and urban UPE schools. I therefore look at this as a liability to quality education in rural Uganda under the decentralized UPE system.

The primary school curriculum used in Uganda has a strong urban bias meeting the assumed educational needs of the urban and middle class while minimal attention is given to educational needs of the greater part of students who live and work in rural areas. The current formal education system in Uganda therefore is not very relevant to the rural population of Uganda today as communities have not been allowed to decide what best suits them. Vokstrup (2001: 134) argues that following of western ideas, attitudes and challenges does not impart knowledge and skills that empower the majority of individuals to function as economic change and development agents at national and local levels and it still faces a challenge of being relevant to the rural population. While talking to the respondents at the ministry of Education and Ministry of local government, my conclusions indicated that the mode through which the current decentralized UPE system is being implemented does not reflect any vision towards a society of more fair play since it does in its arrangement replicate continuous increasing inequality in society where access to

education continues to favour the more affluent groups in the country. Net enrolment rate continues to be distorted against the poor from primary education to higher levels, with the situation getting even worse with advancement in levels. The implementation of UPE under Decentralization therefore has made no meaningful contributions to alleviating these equity constraints, a bottleneck towards the successful operation of the current UPE in Uganda under decentralization.

Uganda has been indicating an unstable increase and decrease in enrolment in the last ten years as a result of policies that constrain the performance of UPE schools, especially policies coming from the centre that are only communicated to local government for implementation. Among such policy constraints is where the local government decides on priority areas for budget inclusion, but finances still come from MoFPED since they still hold fiscal powers as far as what percentages of their budgets are to be supported by Government. This is in line with the argument by Carrin and Tshoane (2000: 32) that the decentralization of education services involves failure to surrender powers in decision making with most authority still retained at the central government without actual total surrender. The quality of primary education especially in rural Uganda is declining and questionable to decentralization and resource allocation. MoES (2014: 17) clearly reports that primary seven completion rates have declined from 71% in 2013 to 67.4% in 2014 which indicates that many children are dropping out of school with 93% of school drop-outs in rural Uganda. Many gaps related to limited and delayed financial releases along other educational resources, divergent interests among different stakeholders have been brought about by having UPE started under decentralization.

Nevertheless, there are examples that present some advantages of decentralizing UPE in Uganda as an asset to communities and schools in rural Uganda, let alone decentralisation when properly implemented illustrates a good tool towards provision of social services in developing countries. From the interviews, my respondents believe that the current decentralization of UPE in Uganda has had different results and outcomes based on perceptions of different actors, both service providers and service users at different levels.

Table 4: Perceptions of UPE implementation under decentralization from community and school members

| Perception | Number agreed | Percentage of whole sample population | Group identity |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| It has deepened democratization | 5 | 12% | Higher local government and central government |
| Promoted engagement, local participation and empowerment | 15 | 36% | MoLG and MoES |
| Has promoted ownership of UPE by local masses | 18 | 45% | Some SMCs, community members and PTAs |
| Enhanced quality education in Uganda | 3 | 7% | Higher Local Government |
| Total | 41 (for both interviews and FGD) | 100% | |

Source: Own construction

The greatest percentage of the sample size (45%) do agree that the current implementation of UPE under decentralization has created some degree of local ownership of primary education in Uganda with the local communities feeling responsible for the presence of schools therein, many of these UPE schools being locally referred to as '*community schools*.' However, the smallest number of respondents did not agree with the idea that a decentralized UPE system has promoted quality education especially in rural Uganda. Some community members well mentioned that these children go to school just to keep in there since it is a government policy that all children of school going age should be at school, but practically learn nothing.

Responsibilities for example planning have been divided amongst stakeholders amidst the presence of conflicting interests. Stakeholders at the school level always draw up and submit monthly reports to the district for use in the planning process and incorporation into UPE programs addressing key issues and priority areas at local government level. Responses from respondents at the local government and central government indicate that 75% of the respondents agree that decentralization of education has fostered better planning at the local levels since the centre had failed and the local governments directly interact with the local people about their needs as far as UPE is concerned.

As discussed by Gershburg and Winkler (2003: 15), "the decision to decentralize might not always be a rational linear process, but often is a highly disarticulated and political policy-decision" which well explains the decision to

start UPE and decentralization at the same time in Uganda. Of the respondents interviewed, 65% agreed that there are interactions between the central government and local government. School management committees and PTAs have been strengthened to manage schools as local government and MoES maintain regular communication with MoFPED to ensure the releases of UPE funds. During the two focus group discussions carried out with SMCs and PTAs, the two parties were very confident of their powers at school level and knew what was needed of them at that level.

One chairperson of a SMC reported that they have a lot of powers within the school, “We can influence a non functional head teacher to be transferred and we can rightly resolve our own differences at the school level other than having issues resolved by the DEO or ministry”.

I would therefore say that the management of schools has been to some extent clearly out spotted within the operation of UPE under decentralization.

Basing my arguments on Muriisa (2008: 88) where he asserts that decentralization leads to responsive and speedier service delivery to local people by reducing lengthy procedures at the lower levels, decentralization of UPE in Uganda has led to more children embracing and attaining school even in rural Uganda no matter how it is delivered. Decentralizing the education system is and can be a good development initiative especially where the government takes the keen interest in setting and enforcing the education standards with a shift from a research driven reform system to a policy driven reform system as clearly discussed by (Geo and Macleans 2003: 314). His argument fits in the case of Uganda especially with the evidence from respondents at the education department in Jinja local government. They argue that UPE was a good initiative, its implementation under the decentralization policy was even more better as the community have tried to own the programme and have given recommendations to central government on education reviews which has seen the current review of Uganda’s primary education curriculum to fit the requirements within the community thus decentralization has created a more problem based approach and clear information sharing system in some hard to reach areas. They however agree that the problem based approach was mainly implemented at the time when UPE had just started, not in the current UPE.

In drawing my conclusions, I will use the argument from Adamolekun (1999: 58) which asserts that decentralization being implemented in many developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa as a measure for efficient service delivery, poverty alleviation and public sector reform has widened the gap between reality and rhetoric without real successful stories of better performance and service provision at local levels. The considerable variations in outcome and inputs across regions in Uganda indicates a major gap of a decentralized UPE system posing more as a liability than an asset to rural UPE in Uganda in terms of quality education due to politicization of the whole decentralization policy. The rural schools in Uganda report more challenges with no clear communications from the central and local governments than the urban UPE schools, delayed and less financial releases, 3-5 months unpaid teachers’ salaries with children in rural UPE schools not paying any school fees as compared to their counterparts in urban UPE schools who pay fees. The whole UPE system in rural Uganda is a challenge to the success of UPE especially the promotion of quality education in Uganda today.

Chapter 5: Interpreting the Results

Having decided to implement UPE under the decentralization policy, the government of Uganda intended to increase quality primary education by bringing different key players together for shared responsibilities. However, the system has promoted quantity with high enrolment especially in rural Uganda acting as a good progressive initiative that has helped Uganda achieve basic education with generalized successes of primary education today. Uganda however is facing a political challenge of new mushrooming districts that come along with administrative and managerial requirements, making decentralized authority at many times misused especially in regards to financial management. Major gaps between rhetoric and reality will always arise as administrative and management functions get decentralized without clear lines drawn regarding the limits of people's powers and authority, adequate financial resources required to execute decentralization effectively and differed political interests at all levels of the tier. It is however important that Government should not become victims of hidden agendas of unfairness pretending to devolve responsibilities away from central government while still maintaining administrative control. Uganda's example illustrates the creation of fashioned transitional levels of dominance and power at the centre without shifting it to the periphery which affects the quality of education that would equally be provided in Uganda.

The current decentralised UPE system in Uganda has expressed a lot of political hegemony and the desire for politicians especially those within the ruling national resistance movement to have powers over policies and resources with the mandate to decide on how, where and to whom resources geared towards the provision of universal primary education are allocated. Community participation is less felt, community members and other stakeholders at the lower levels are only involved in policy implementation with powers still being retained by the central government and a few members at the higher local governments. The politicisation of UPE in Uganda under decentralisation has therefore replicated it as a political machine for political gains of the NRM, with its impacts on quality education in rural Uganda posing more of a liability than an asset.

The devolving of financial resources to local governments is a good way of testing one of the reasons/objectives within decentralization of empowering the local people in decision making, let alone responsibility being devolved to local governments. Local governments have been empowered as focal points of managing development and social service delivery hence they need to be encouraged to work collaboratively with other stakeholders for effective and efficient service delivery. For the effectiveness of UPE under decentralization to all Ugandan service users, the local government should be in position to use its own local revenues instead of relying on funds from the central government. This will create clear lines of ownership and accountability, with less chances of financial misappropriation thus will lead to effective and improved education service delivery.

Owing to struggles for powers, many of the actors and stakeholders involved in the active implementation of UPE at many times are at loggerheads for various personal reasons and interests. This has affected the quality of edu-

cation that should be provided equally to all Ugandans. The different reasons for Interest groups coupled by objectives of engaging in a defined development initiative always cause conflict to the extent that as an idea is perceived negatively by one group, it may have a positive meaning for another. This is a persistent challenge in many developing countries that are initiating participatory development bringing different actors on board to work collectively for a common goal, given the fact that there are a variety of social groups within each community whose interests and perceptions of the actual and desired roles differ from each other.

The decentralized UPE system in Uganda still faces challenges that are well known to service providers at all levels with different entry points. In its annual evaluation report MoES (2014: 24-25) indicates that some of the major factors that have led to failures in the provision of quality education in UPE include diminutive levels in executing of inspection recommendations, increase in the number of districts that are not easy to monitor, limited community participation in UPE especially with a misconception that government is solely responsible for UPE implementation since UPE is a government program, many school management committees are non-functional and they do not monitor the course of action of UPE implementation due to inadequate training and the low levels of education of SMC members, and the pathetic monitoring mechanism at lower Local Governments. These are all related to power struggles and the failure of stakeholders to come to an agreement as regards decision making and the mode of UPE policy implementation thus proving more of a liability not only to rural schools but Uganda as a whole.

Uganda currently has no quality measurement indicators that are well defined especially in trying to come up with impact assessment of different policies. MoES annual evaluation reports of FY 2013/2014 indicate this kind of challenge by the MoES that stands as a serious gap in UPE implementation to the Government of Uganda. Developing countries that intend to measure the implications of defined policies especially decentralization and its impacts need to come up with clear and measurable indicators that can inform policy analysts and implementers on gaps, strengths and weaknesses from which other countries can learn.

Chile provides a good example of how a decentralized system promotes quality education. According to Geo and Macleans (2004: 315), the government of Chile decided to completely devolve fiscal and administrative decentralization to lower level actors. In Chile, as in other Latin America countries, monetary decentralization has resulted in an inclusive drop in the level of spending on education and led to positive impacts on the education system as a whole, but more on the rural municipalities of Chile. This system has created a democratic, efficient and accountable system responsive to community and local needs, with ability to empower teachers, parents and other actors in the system while improving effective quality education. This is a good example and can be borrowed as a good initiative for other countries taking on decentralization of education services on how to make it more efficient and effective for rural communities especially in developing countries.

Chile's example is in line with the decentralized Education systems being implemented within the Asian tigers. Geo (2004: 314) presents that decentralization has to be well managed along with priority to related factors that may deter its success especially human development expenditures and clear devolu-

tion of powers as dealt with by the Asian tigers. A balance needs to be created by the central government in setting and enforcing education standards and financial management especially in times of economic crisis for inclusive and efficient provision of services. His argument still presents decentralization as a policy that paints an artificial and misleading picture of completeness since it always creates shifts in the approach to social problems from research driven reforms to policy driven reforms and from strong central governments to evaluative states. Developing countries implementing decentralization should therefore streamline stakeholder boundaries, clear strategies and tools for impact assessment and remaining within the boundaries of the type of state.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Table indicating sample size

| Description | Sample size | Method used | Data collected. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Central government Ministry of Education and Sports. Ministry of Local Government. Ministry of Public Service. | 1 1 1 | Interviews Interviews Interviews | The overall roles of central government in the current implementation of UPE under decentralization and forms of inter-governmental relationships therein. |
| Local government Chief Administrative Officer. District Education Officer. Principle education officer. District Planner. Inspector of Schools. In charge special needs (UPE). Sec. educ on the political wing. Comm'ty Dev't Officer (Kakira town council). Sub county chief (Mafubira sub-county). Secretary for education (Kakira town council) | 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 | Interview Interview Interview Interview Interview Interview Interview Interview Interview Interview Interview | Power allocation and the relationships between the higher and lower local governments and how this has impacted on the kinds of primary education services provided in rural Uganda. |
| School level Head teachers. Teachers. SMC and PTAs. Community level Parents CBOs/NGOs | 4 5 2 FGD 4 3 | Interviews Interviews Focus group Interviews Interviews | Impacts on quality, performance and equality of primary education in rural Uganda in relation to measurement of power to make decisions that are passed by the higher authorities. Information related to local empowerment and community participation was put into consideration too. |
| Total sample size | 29 respondents for the interviews and 2 FGD each comprising of 7 and 6 participants respectively. | | |

Appendix 2: Introduction letter to ministry of local government and ministry of education and sports

Kawala Agnes, 0775434354
Jinja – Uganda
10/07/2014

To:
The Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Public Service.

Dear sir/madam,

RE: REQUEST TO CARRY OUT MY RESEARCH WITHIN YOUR MINISTRY.

I am Ugandan student pursuing a Masters degree in development studies, majoring in social policy for development with a specialization in local development strategies at the international institute of social studies in The Hague, Netherlands.

I am currently carrying out my research on a topical issue tackling policy and local development; **UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION UNDER DECENTRALIZATION, AN ASSET OR LIABILITY TO RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES OF UGANDA?**

The main **research question** is: How has power distribution under decentralization impacted the quality of social service delivery in rural areas of Uganda particularly universal primary education (UPE)? The **main objective of the research** is to find out how power distribution under decentralization has impacted delivery of quality education in rural areas of Uganda, and to determine whether decentralization is an effective tool for delivering social services to the local communities.

I would like to conduct 2 interviews with 2 respondents within your ministry on issues related to the following questions, though not limited to these:

1. Decentralization has to do with influence in the context of who rules, and who has power over what part of the system. How is this power to decide in UPE being realized in this ministry and what part of the policy is carried out by this ministry?
2. Who are the main actors in the policy implementation of UPE under decentralization at this level, and how has this allocation of power under decentralization impacted on social service delivery especially in UPE in rural areas of Uganda?
3. What kinds of power interactions exist between this ministry and other inter-related stakeholders in implementing primary education under decentralization? (donor-central-local power relations)
4. How does the central government under this ministry use its influence in financial distribution under the decentralization policy in Uganda

and who has the main responsibility and power to allocate resources within UPE?

5. How have inter-governmental relations created by decentralization promoted local participation in decision making and resource allocation within UPE? What is the feedback mechanism?
6. To what extent are local communities able to influence delivery of quality education by the government of Uganda in UPE?
7. How has power allocation under decentralization impacted on quality, performance and equality of primary education in UPE?

Hope to receive a positive response in this regard.

Yours faithfully,

Kawala Agnes

Appendix 3: Interview guide (for respondents at central and local government)

1. How is UPE currently being implemented under the decentralization policy in Uganda?
2. What is the relationship between the central government and local government in implementing UPE?
3. What are the responsibilities of the central government and local government in the implementation of UPE?
 - a. Central government
 - b. Local government
 - c. Community/school level actors
4. What is the hierarchy in allocation of power within UPE under the decentralization policy?
5. What kinds of powers have been concentrated, delegated and devolved to local government and what powers have remained at the central government? And why?
6. How have these inter-governmental relations impacted on the provision of quality education and equal access to education in the rural areas of Jinja district?
7. Does the local government involve local participation in decision making and resource allocation within UPE?

How?
8. What is the feedback mechanism between the central government, local government and community/school level?
9. Do the School community and local government finance the school activities?

How?
10. Has local participation in decision making under UPE affected on education service delivery in rural areas of Uganda?

How?
11. What changes have been realized in primary education since the start of UPE under the decentralization policy?
 - a. Quality education
 - b. Equality in education
 - c. Local participation

12. To what extent are Central Government policies constraining/fostering delivery of social services by local government?

13. Any other comments/remarks

Appendix 4: Interview guide (for respondents at school and community level)

1. To what extent are local communities able to influence delivery of services by local government in UPE?
2. How have you been involved in the decision making of the general administration, management and financial controls of the school?
3. Do you have powers to decide on policies at school, district and national levels?
4. What role do you play in the final allocation of the annual school budget and finances to the school?
5. What kinds of support have been received by the school in the last 6 months?
6. What has been the role of the community/parents in the implementation of UPE under the decentralization policy?
7. What changes have been brought within the education system by the government decision to implement UPE under decentralization?
8. What is the feedback mechanism between school expectations and what is being provided by the local government?
9. How has the implementation of UPE under decentralization impacted on education service delivery in relation to;
 - a. Participation
 - b. Quality education
 - c. Equal access to education
10. How are UPE schools in Uganda currently functioning under decentralization?
11. Any other comments/remarks

Appendix 5: FGD guide

1. What does the operation of UPE under decentralization mean to the school governing body?
2. How have PTAs/SMCs participated in decision making on issues related to:
 - a. Finances
 - b. Administration
 - c. Management
3. What kinds of school level decisions have been decentralized and how is decentralization being implemented at the school level?
4. Who are the different actors at school level as far as implementation of UPE is concerned?
5. What is their role in the implementation of UPE and how do they influence decision making at?
 - a. School level
 - b. District level
 - c. National level
6. Who is the main key player in deciding what, when and how UPE should be implemented in schools?
7. Does the school administration have a role to play in the allocation of school grants?
Specify.
8. To whom are schools governing bodies under UPE accountable and who has power to decide what is to be done under UPE in Uganda?
9. Has local participation in decision making under UPE affected on education service delivery in rural areas of Uganda?
How?
10. How is the school functioning under decentralization along with the involvement of the different stakeholders in decision making?
11. How has the operation of UPE under decentralization impacted on the quality of education delivered in the community in relation to:
 - a. Planning
 - b. Performance
 - c. Enrolment
 - d. Infrastructure
 - e. Management/administration
12. Any other comments/remarks