

*Improving Educational Quality (IEQ) Project*

**ENHANCING DIALOGUE AMONG RESEARCHERS,  
POLICYMAKERS, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN UGANDA:  
COMPLEXITIES, POSSIBILITIES, AND PERSISTENT QUESTIONS**

*IEQ undertaken by:*

**American Institutes for Research**

**in collaboration with  
The Academy for Educational Development  
Education Development Center, Inc.  
Juárez and Associates, Inc.  
The University of Pittsburgh**

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## **Acknowledgements**

We are grateful to all those at the selected schools for their participation and contribution in this pioneer project. In addition, we thank USAID (contract number HNE-I-00-97-00029-00) for its funding and support. Finally, we appreciate the Acting Secretary and our colleagues at the Ugandan National Examinations Board (UNEB) for their support.

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# **Enhancing Dialogue Among Researchers, Policymakers, and Community Members in Uganda: Complexities, Possibilities, and Persistent Questions**

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## **Abstract**

The problem of nondialogue among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners is known in Uganda and elsewhere. Most education stakeholders agree that research findings should be utilized more effectively in improving schools. There is less agreement on how this should happen. Participatory Action Research (PAR) is one possible solution as it involves dialogue, investigation, and action, and includes local people in the research process. In this study, researchers use interpretive theory and data collection techniques to illuminate the complexities and possibilities of PAR and to understand how dialogue may contribute to better schools. Data analysis suggests three interrelated themes: power, dependence, and resource distribution that represent the enormous dilemmas of using participatory approaches and enhancing dialogue among education stakeholders. However, the findings suggest that some stakeholders were able to collaborate in new ways to improve education quality. Finally, the authors raise questions about the sociocultural implications of participatory approaches and enhanced dialogue within Ugandan society.

## **Introduction**

From Ugandan independence in 1962 until the early 1970s, Uganda's education system was considered one of the best in Africa. For about a decade after independence, access for non-elites improved and quality was maintained. However, from the early 1970s to the mid 1980s, education, like other sectors, suffered considerably from dictatorship and political instability. During the middle 1980s the political situation began to stabilize. It was then possible for the Ugandan government to initiate a comprehensive reform program to improve the quality of primary education. The objectives of this

reform include rehabilitating and strengthening the teaching profession, enhancing community participation in improving education quality and equity, allocating resources for materials, revamping the examination process, revitalizing educational publishing, and rehabilitating schools and teachers' colleges.

This study relates directly to one of the reform objectives: enhancing community participation in education quality and equity. Its purpose is twofold: to illuminate the complexities and possibilities of participation as a method to improve education quality and to understand how dialogue among researchers, policymakers, and community members (teachers, parents, and pupils) may contribute to better schools.

## **Dialogue Among Researchers, Policymakers, and Practitioners**

According to Freire,<sup>ii</sup> dialogue includes reflection and action. It is multidirectional between and among education stakeholders and its ultimate purpose is transformation. In the Freireian view, dialogue among education stakeholders would allow for multiple voices that have mutual influence upon each other. By viewing each other as potential creators and users of knowledge, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners may penetrate traditional barriers to communication. This presents a more participatory view in which everyone in the system has much to learn about reaching ambitious goals for student learning, and challenges the traditional linear notion of knowledge transfer from theorists/researchers to practitioners/policymakers.<sup>iii</sup>

The problems of nondialogue among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners are well documented.<sup>iv</sup> Cultural difference theory<sup>v</sup> offers an explanation to this problem, suggesting that researchers/theorists and policymakers/practitioners represent different cultures. The two cultural groups view their roles, responsibilities, and commitments to collaboration differently. In addition, differing

conceptions of how knowledge is created and used<sup>vi</sup> offer insights into the divide between researchers/theorists and policymakers/practitioners. The traditional linear models suggest that knowledge is created by researchers and disseminated to policymakers and practitioners. This view diminishes the necessity for dialogue: researchers create knowledge and policymakers/practitioners consume it. Moreover, the politics of knowledge is a formidable force.<sup>vii</sup> Those with the power and status “to know” frequently set the research agenda and interpret the results,<sup>viii</sup> and those with limited power generally remain silent. Finally, language frequently keeps researchers, policymakers, and practitioners from engaging in dialogue. In multilingual countries, the language of research and policy are held frequently in the dominant language. Those who do not speak the language of power are left out of important discussions.

Despite the problems, most education stakeholders agree that research findings should be utilized more effectively in improving schools.<sup>ix</sup> For instance, while some scholars are concerned that more dialogue would compromise their “objectivity,”<sup>x</sup> many argue that research will be more relevant and better understood if researchers, policymakers, and practitioners collaborate.

## **Improving Education Quality (IEQ) Project**

The Improving Education Quality (IEQ) Project,<sup>xi</sup> funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), responds to policy needs for research-based information for improving education quality in developing countries. Partnerships are fundamental to IEQ: all projects are collaborations among a number of host country institutions, educators, and researchers. U.S. team members supply supplemental technical knowledge and skill as they work together with their host country counterparts.

IEQ Uganda began in 1995 with a meeting of national education stakeholders to discuss the information needs for primary education reform. The meeting resulted in a research agenda: two large-scale baseline studies were commissioned and completed by the IEQ researchers between 1995 and 1997. Both studies employed quantitative and qualitative research methods to understand the overall conditions of Ugandan primary schools. Among the many findings IEQ researchers observed that the culture of the school and the teachers' role were central to overall pupil performance.<sup>xii</sup>

The publication of the first two IEQ studies resulted in a policy dialogue about the general education conditions and contributed to policy decisions regarding textbook guidelines and incentive grants for girls' education.<sup>xiii</sup> However, IEQ researchers from Uganda and the United States remained unsatisfied. The same faces as always were around the policy table: would the findings have impact on the quality of schooling at the local level? Given the dismal conditions and climate of many schools in Uganda,<sup>xiv</sup> and the implementation of Universal Primary Education (UPE),<sup>xv</sup> IEQ researchers sought a methodology that would combine investigation with action, be democratic in nature, and include local community members in the policy dialogue about education. Participatory action research (PAR)<sup>xvi</sup> is one such method within the family of participatory approaches.<sup>xvii</sup>

## **Participatory Action Research**

PAR is an iterative process that combines dialogue, investigation, and action. Participants assess their situation, analyze data that they themselves have collected, act on the findings, and begin the process again. It is based on several assumptions. PAR assumes dialogue with practitioners and other local people will produce rich insight. They have the ability and the position to assess their situation, analyze information, and create an action plan for improvement. A second assumption is that in-depth participatory work in a few communities/schools can provide insights that are relevant to other

communities/schools and policymakers. Finally, PAR assumes that human behavior is contextual and dynamic; that humans function in changing and adaptive ways.

PAR differs from traditional, extractive research. First, PAR results in action at the local level as well as information for policymakers and other stakeholders. With practice, this kind of research can become a normal aspect of continuing staff development or community mobilization. Second, PAR seeks to involve people, who under other approaches have been passive “subjects,” as active participants in the research process — problem identification, data collection, and analysis.<sup>xviii</sup> Third, participatory action researchers approach the work as interactive partners with community members.<sup>xix</sup> They serve both as researchers and facilitators: encouraging participation, prompting dialogue, building relationships, collecting data, etc. Finally, PAR findings are immediately given consideration at the local level because community members have been actively involved in the research process. In short, PAR is a potentially positive, proactive resource for change.

The power of PAR comes from dialogue among local stakeholders and researchers, but the power of this approach must be kept in perspective. PAR represents a radical change from traditional research, cultural norms, and the way that many educators and community members function. Radical change in belief and behavior does not happen overnight, and for some it does not happen at all. Despite the fact that researchers and community members engage in the PAR process together, the status of researchers and community members frequently remains static. In other words, traditional barriers to communication may remain. PAR may “romanticize the goodness and democratic tendencies”<sup>xx</sup> of local people and researchers and ignore the ways in which those with (or without) power may be reluctant to change. Moreover, the intensity of the effort cannot be underestimated: PAR is labor intensive and initial results such as attitude change among some participants are not universally visible.<sup>xxi</sup> Finally, PAR takes time: it represents a tremendous amount of learning and reflection for all. Nevertheless, participatory approaches

to improving education have resulted in positive change especially among communities where there are disadvantaged groups (poor, rural, female), and where demand for education exists but the government has failed to provide adequate resources.<sup>xxii</sup>

## **Method**

To illuminate the complexities and possibilities of participation as a method to improve education and to understand how dialogue among researchers, policymakers, and community members may contribute to better schools, we (the authors of this paper who were members of the IEQ core research team in Uganda)<sup>xxiii</sup> used interpretive theory<sup>xxiv</sup> and qualitative data collection and analysis methods.<sup>xxv</sup> Interpretive theory focuses on the specifics of meaning and action in day-to-day life and considers the context within which these actions occur as influential on human behavior. It considers the multiple realities that exist in any community.<sup>xxvi</sup> We conducted this interpretive, qualitative analysis of the process in which we and other members of the IEQ core research team took the role of participant observers as community members, teachers, and pupils sought to improve education through participatory action research.

In addition to participating in PAR activities, IEQ core research team members collected data on the PAR process to understand how dialogue among researchers, policymakers, and community members may contribute to better schooling. Primary data include IEQ core research team field notes, analytic memos, and IEQ participants' formal meeting records or minutes. Other data include meeting artifacts, such as flip charts, pupils' work, lesson plans, community maps, notes from home visits, photographs, and descriptive informal conversations between the IEQ core research team members and members of the school. IEQ core research team field notes captured the content of the PAR meetings, interactions among participants, body language, and laughter and silence. Analytic memos captured interpretive reflections regarding any aspect of the work. Raw field notes and analytic memos were written by hand and taken to

Kampala where they were entered into a word processor. All data produced directly by the participants (lesson plans, maps, flip charts, etc) were kept at the schools and reviewed in the field. They were the property of the participant groups that produced them.

Data were analyzed through interpretive data analysis methods<sup>xxvii</sup>. Analysis occurred in and out of the field. In the field it was ongoing and participatory: it included IEQ core research team members and participants conferring regularly about their emerging understandings during community meetings and individual interactions. Out of the field, IEQ core research team members (Carasco, Clair, and Kanyike) conducted a formal data analysis that consisted of displaying and verifying the data. First, the data were examined and codes were developed and revised. For example, “decision making” was an initial code that was eventually subsumed under “dependence.” Data were imported into Folio Views (data management software) and sorted for patterns and discrepant cases. Throughout the analysis, IEQ core research team members conferred regularly in order to explain and verify findings.

Throughout the 18-month study considerable attention was given to developing the capacity of IEQ core research team members and community members to collect, analyze, and interpret data in depth and with rigor. For instance, in November 1998, IEQ core research team members participated in a qualitative research workshop to prepare for formal data analysis.<sup>xxviii</sup> IEQ core research team members reviewed formal qualitative data analysis steps,<sup>xxix</sup> critiqued field notes, discussed differences between field notes and analytic memos, developed preliminary data codes, and began the coding process. Nevertheless, the limitations of this study are due to the teams’ experience with interpretive methodology. This was the first experience with interpretive research for some of the IEQ core research team. Some IEQ core research team members did not systematically take field notes or keep analytic memos during the site selection process;<sup>xxx</sup> therefore, we can only recollect the conversations among the

IEQ core research team and the education authorities in Kampala. Second, some of the field notes lack the perspectives of our school partners. There are more accounts of the PAR process and fewer reactions and direct participant quotes.

## **Findings**

As stated previously, the purpose of this study is to illuminate the complexities and possibilities of participation as a method to improve education and to understand how dialogue among researchers, policymakers, and community members may contribute to better schooling. In this section we describe three aspects of the PAR process (site selection, group formation and action, and Quality Learning Exhibitions) and discuss three broad interrelated themes (power, dependence, and distribution of resources) that represent some of the complexities and possibilities.

### ***Site Selection***

The site selection process in itself was participatory. We took into account the relevant Ugandan educational administrative structures, i.e., the national Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES), district education authorities (DEOs), and the Teacher Development and Management System (TDMS).<sup>xxxi</sup> A major site selection objective was for the education authorities to identify with the research so that they would support it. Pursuing this objective was risky since previous IEQ research had shed less-than-positive light on the education system. The task was to explain the purpose of PAR in a climate in which there was fear of research findings and evaluations.

We proposed to work at three school sites within one administrative cluster to minimize the effects of cultural, language, and socioeconomic factors. This proved challenging as Ministry of Education (MOE) people had difficulty understanding the reasons for studying only three sites. We reviewed the MOE's criteria for assessing coordinating center performance, while simultaneously

discussing the selection criteria with senior MOES and TDMS officials and DEOs. Site selection discussions were important as they provided opportunities to learn about sites and listen to education authorities' concerns. Moreover, these discussions provided opportunities to explain PAR and get early acceptance for the research.

We used purposeful sampling strategies to select the school communities. Five criteria guided selection: (1) a community's willingness to participate and interest in the research; (2) the school/community's readiness for positive change (e.g., evidence of community and parent involvement in a Parents Teacher Association; cooperation among the members of the school and its supporters, collaboration between the DEO and Coordinating Center Tutor, a functioning TDMS structure, and teacher and pupil commitment to the work); (3) the stability of teacher staff; (4) physical accessibility and availability of accommodations in the community; and (5) recommendations by the relevant education authorities (MOEs, TDMS and DEOs).

Two of the authors (Carasco and Kanyike) visited nearly all the 30 schools recommended by education authorities, and after further discussion with various stakeholders, in March 1998 three rural schools in a rural county in a southwestern district were selected because they best met the criteria.

The district is approximately 240 kilometers from Kampala in the southwestern part of Uganda. There are two major towns in the district. Much of the population resides in rural areas outside of the towns. This area has drawn an increasing number of new settlers from other parts of the country. Ranching and dairy farming are the main economic activities. Historically, people were pastoralists and nomads but recently they have settled and started some agricultural activity such as cultivation of beans and maize. The main language is Runyankore. Two of the three schools are located in a small trading center (population 2,000). The third school is 20 kilometers from town off a dirt road that connects small

trading centers. School A has 16 teachers and 900 pupils. School B has 10 teachers and 600 pupils. School C has 9 teachers and 500 pupils.

### ***Group Formation and Action***

In April 1998, a one-week community-based workshop was organized to introduce teachers and community members to PAR. The workshop sessions were conducted in English and the local language; translators were available and participants could use either language.<sup>xxxii</sup> Workshop objectives and activities included exploring quality learning, practicing Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) tools,<sup>xxxiii</sup> and developing an action plan for the work in the three schools. Participants in this introductory workshop included head teachers, teacher representatives, PTA representatives and School Management Committee (SMC) representatives from the three schools, and IEQ core research team members.

Immediately after the April 1998 workshop, IEQ core research team members met with the head teacher from each school to arrange a schedule for initial meetings of a teacher group, a community group, and a pupil group. From April 1998 to September 1999 these nine groups (three at each school) met to explore how they themselves could improve the quality of education in their community.

Initially, all groups engaged in several activities aimed at building relationships and confidence, exploring quality learning, and collaboratively setting an agenda for the work. The IEQ core research team spent significant time in the field visiting homes, participating in meetings, and talking informally with locals. At the outset, the IEQ core research team member in each school took the lead in organizing the meetings and chairing them. After two or three meetings each of the teacher and community groups elected a chair and a secretary to record the proceedings and decided when and for how long they would meet. The IEQ core research team continued to facilitate the pupils' meetings during times when they would not miss any formal classes.

Over time and as groups gained confidence, PAR activities focused on identifying problems associated with schools and potential solutions. Below are a few examples of PAR activities by group:<sup>xxxiv</sup>

- PAR activities with the teacher groups began with discussions on the conditions that support quality learning. All teacher groups discussed and revised their lesson plans based on the conditions that they had named. Two teacher groups developed and practiced a peer assistance system in order to improve their classroom practice. Through data collected from the peer assistance instrument, teachers discovered that although they had studied teaching methods, they had not understood them sufficiently to apply them in class. One teacher group developed a pupil evaluation instrument and learned that many of their pupils could not see the blackboard.
- Two of the three community groups identified pupil absenteeism as a barrier to their children's education. They collected data on pupil absenteeism by making community maps and visiting homes. They also studied their children's daily schedule to see how it influenced attendance. After data analysis and dialogue some parents reduced their children's workload of domestic chores so they could attend school more often. One of the community groups decided to visit their children's classrooms to get a better idea about the school conditions. They noticed the classroom had no benches, desks, lockable doors, or window shutters. They decided to contribute the money and labor for new benches and developed and initiated plans for building new classrooms.
- Through PAR activities, the three pupil groups discussed characteristics of good teachers and pupils. From these characteristics, pupils chose areas for action. In one group, pupils took action to solve pupil tardiness. They drew community maps

indicating the homes of all of the pupils in the PAR group. For each pupil, they indicated the distance between the home and school. Then they identified classmates who lived near each other, pupils who are frequently tardy, and those who are not. The outcome of their analysis was a system whereby pupils would help each other get to school on time.

### ***Quality Learning Exhibitions***

In October 1998 and September 1999, the schools and the IEQ core research team hosted the Annual Quality Learning Exhibitions. During exhibitions, pupils, teachers, and community members met with local, district, and national leaders to discuss their PAR experiences in studying and improving education in their communities.

During the afternoon, dialogue groups were facilitated so all participants could discuss education issues further. Questions were raised and solutions offered regarding pupil discipline, language of instruction, coeducation, and handicapped pupils' rights (to name a few). The discussions were held in English and Runyankore, and translators provided simultaneous translation during large group discussions.

The Quality Learning Exhibitions were significant. This was the first time that many of the community members, teachers, and pupils had the opportunity to discuss education issues with district and national education authorities. The confidence with which they presented their perspectives on education was noteworthy. Both Exhibitions ended with a sense that local communities have the power to engage in dialogue with researchers and policymakers and improve their situation.

### ***Power***

Power differences among individuals and groups are a fact of human society. The question then becomes how power is managed so that it does not inhibit dialogue among groups. We have evidence of

how power impacts participation throughout the education system: examples of policy makers and the funding agency's influence on the IEQ research design, implementation and dissemination, and evidence of power differentials among and between people—researchers to head teachers, head teacher to teacher, teacher to parent, adults to pupils to name a few. However, we focus mainly on the head teachers' power and the IEQ core research teams' role for a number of reasons. First, tremendous authority is vested in head teachers by the rules and regulations governing schools. In practice all stakeholder groups including outside researchers, both above and below the head teachers in the education hierarchy, regard head teachers as the school authority on a day-to-day basis. At the school level the teachers, community members, and pupils are accustomed to head teachers dominating decisions and dispensing favors. Community participation, a goal of education reform, conflicts with this “natural order” in the schools as it invites all to become involved.

Evidence of the head teachers' great power emerged during the site selection process at the school level. Constrained by time and a desire to respect the hierarchy, we initially discussed possible participation in the research with head teachers. On all occasions, the head teachers instantly agreed that “their” school was willing to participate. There was no expression by the head teachers of consulting anybody else before deciding to involve the school in the research. The head teachers mentioned that they would inform their teachers and the community, but those head teachers were confident that those stakeholder groups would not refuse to participate.

The second encounter with the head teachers' power occurred during the identification of teachers to represent their colleagues at the April 1998 workshop. We realized that if we left the process of identification to the head teachers, the possibility of a head teacher hand-picking “his people” as the teachers' representatives was very high. Therefore, we requested to be present when the elections for teacher representatives took place. In one school, the head teacher was present during the elections. He

assumed the role of chair and openly suggested to the teachers whom they should elect. There were only two female teachers present and they decided between themselves who would attend the workshop. With respect to the male teachers, there was voting by raising hands, and the head teacher's favored candidate got elected. The candidate who lost appeared bitter about the result.

During the first few teacher meetings, teachers rarely talked. Even when discussing a simple matter such as fixing a date for the next meeting, teachers were reticent. During an early teacher meeting, one teacher asked in the presence of the head teacher whether he could contradict the head teacher (MO *fn* April 30).<sup>xxxv</sup> That only one teacher had the confidence to ask such a question underscores the risk involved. Contradicting a head teacher carries risks, since head teachers have the capacity to engineer the transfer of "troublesome" teachers and even interfere with the teachers' inclusion on the payroll.

Head teachers dominated the conversation at the initial teachers' meetings. We discussed this observation initially at IEQ core research team meetings and decided to exclude head teachers from teachers' meetings. At two of the schools, the decision was made after the first teachers' meetings when we realized head teachers created an environment that made it difficult for the teachers to express themselves freely. We approached the head teachers and advised them that it might be more productive if the teachers met on their own to discuss matters that concerned them. The head teacher of one school responded that he had no problem with this arrangement. He had heard from a fellow head teacher that the IEQ core research team had already conducted meetings with the community members and teachers of School C without the presence of the head teacher (MO, *fn* June 2). In the third school, we observed the situation before taking action with the head teacher. But at the third teachers' meeting, matters came to a head when deliberations completely stalled within half an hour of the meeting.

An IEQ core research team member spontaneously arranged for some group discussions and then advised the head teacher discreetly that his presence may be a major problem. The head teacher seemed to agree because he left the meeting a short while later. (JC, *fn* June 5).

On another occasion in the same school, the head teacher made a decision about an IEQ teacher meeting on behalf of all the teachers, without consulting them. An IEQ core research team member writes and reflects.

Thursday 11th was a working day and she (CCT) went for the meeting. The head teacher told her that the teachers had not agreed on the meeting, so they were not ready for the meeting. The CCT further explained that later some teachers came to her and said that they were actually ready for the meeting but when their boss (head teacher) spoke the way he did, they had nothing to do but keep quiet. The impression I got was that the head teacher did not want the meeting on that day to take place. So he used his position to speak on behalf of the rest of the teachers. Aware of the dictatorship in primary schools, it is not surprising to me that the teachers could not speak out their minds openly and make other suggestions. (MO *fn* June 15).

A few teachers appeared to support the dictatorial practices of head teachers. When these teachers were asked why some of their colleagues were not attending IEQ meetings, they responded: “Some teachers are not attending because you (members of the IEQ core research team) had said that participation in this research was voluntary. I think these teachers who do not attend should be reported to the head teacher.” (MO *fn* June 16).

Other teachers, however, indicated a less positive appraisal of the head teacher’s power. For example, during a teachers’ meeting, they were discussing their situation before IEQ. They mentioned some of the things they had learned from PAR and then made comparisons to previous staff meetings that had always been chaired by the head teacher:

Charles (a teacher) caused laughter when he reported that “I used to attend meetings with no notice by the head teacher or heads of departments.” An IEQ core research team member wanted to know more so she asked a question, “Did you feel free to participate in the meetings that you did not plan for?” Hamida (another teacher) testified, “We could participate but not fully.” Charles pointed out a weakness of such meetings, “[W]e do not know where the agenda comes from and the teacher is not encouraged to talk about the problem he/she is facing in teaching.” Peter interjected, “[E]ven up to now the situation of those meetings ha[s] not changed.” (DN *fn* Aug 29).

In addition to illuminating the head teachers’ power, the above data suggest the power that we held as members of the IEQ core research team. For example, by initiating PAR we exercised a certain

amount of power over the community. We were the ones with the knowledge of the PAR approach. Moreover, we grappled with how central power was to our actions and decisions. Sometimes our actions replicated the status quo. For example, in order to get the cooperation of the head teacher, a vital prerequisite to beginning PAR, we began dialogue about PAR with the head teachers. To some extent, this action may have reinforced the head teachers' authority.

On the other hand, we used our power strategically to intervene when the head teachers' actions might influence an election or inhibit participation in meetings. For example, after observing the influence of head teachers over teachers in meetings, we discussed these observations with the head teachers. By engaging in dialogue together we were able to persuade the head teachers to let the teachers meet on their own. This space was critical for teachers to gain their voice.

We also reflected frequently on power issues and disagreed with each other about working within the existing school structure. An IEQ core research team member reflects:

We want the community to be able to express itself. However, that is but one of the objectives. We also need to create an environment in which a category of stakeholders can express itself without fear in the presence of other categories of stakeholders. We need to bridge the gaps. LK fears that constantly citing power relations as a reason to keep groups apart may have the negative effect of fossilizing both our fears and the traditional power relations themselves. The proposal that inter-category (teachers, pupils and community) be channeled via the school research committees is good, but it is also limited. The committees will essentially be a bureaucratic structure, another "appropriate" channel for communication .... "Appropriate" channels of communication are many times tools for domination and control. (JC *am* June 14).

Enhanced community and teacher participation as an education reform goal conflicts with the authority that characterizes the head teachers' role. The evidence suggests that outside stakeholders—in this case IEQ researchers—can have impact on the head teachers' dominance by engaging in dialogue with them. It also suggests that without reflection, a key component of PAR, outsiders can replicate the existing authority structures.

## *Dependence*

Dependence is another theme that emerged from the data. Dependency manifested itself in two ways: dependence on others and dependence on outside knowledge. The evidence suggests that both individuals and groups were dependent. Like power, dependence has historical roots and can severely limit individuals' and groups' ability to engage in dialogue. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that through extended dialogue and with time, individuals and groups became more independent.

***Dependence on others***—In the first few weeks of convening meetings, the teachers and community members had difficulty taking organizational responsibility for the meetings. Making the necessary administrative arrangements for seating, chairing, recording, and facilitating the meetings was problematic. In addition, planning meetings was difficult. Initially, we (IEQ core research team members) carried out these tasks. However, we began to deliberately raise issues of organizational responsibility at the meetings. An IEQ core research team member's field notes illustrate what happened after teachers evaluated their meeting:

After the evaluation, a core team member reminded participants on the need to further discuss the following issues (i.e. replacing teachers' recorder/secretary, safeguarding of IEQ materials like flip-chart paper, attendance, and time management) with a view of looking for strategies to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. (DN *fn* June 22).

It took about 3 months for teachers to take over the organizational aspects of the meetings. It was not easy for the IEQ core research team to hand over some tasks. After two months of teachers' meetings in one school, a problem of chairing arose:

The chairperson did not turn up for the meeting. So I asked for someone to volunteer to chair the meeting. I encouraged them by referring to one of the principles of PLA (our work), "Be ready for the unexpected." It took us quite a while and no one volunteered to chair the meeting. I suspected that since most people who turned up for the meeting had not been with us for the last two to three months, they felt that they would not guide the meeting appropriately. To proceed, I decided to chair the sessions. (MO *fn* July 23).

It is interesting to note that when the teachers came to evaluate this incident later, one teacher said "It is like asking a visitor to participate in serving food." In Ugandan society, visitors or outsiders are

served by hosts. The teachers were expressing that this is their community and they are the hosts: they should have taken responsibility and chaired the meeting. The teachers were not proud of the part they played in that incident. (MO *fn* July 28).

Community members also exhibited dependence on others, especially local authorities. They looked initially or solely to the Local Committees (local administrative authorities) and religious organizations to solve problems, especially to mobilize people to attend meetings. When things did not go well in mobilization exercises organized by community members, the responsibility was placed squarely on the local authorities:

One participant hailing from a village cell complained that the people turned up on the specified day but there was no facilitator who showed up. Mrs. Mugenyi (facilitator) was absent and Mugabe admitted that because of a busy schedule he was unable to attend. Both facilitators from another cell (village) were absent too. Only one IEQ community member was present. The LC I chair did not show up either. Kategaya (an IEQ community member) blamed the failure to hold the meeting on LC I chairman. “They did not mobilise the community” he said with concern. (DN *fn* July 25).

***Dependence on outside knowledge***—We (IEQ core research team members) began the work by stressing to community members, teachers, and pupils that we are all researchers (*abacoondozi*). The idea that every person has knowledge to contribute was a foreign concept to the community members, teachers, and pupils. The most telling evidence of this is the way that the community named and described the IEQ core research team. They called us teachers (*abasomesa*). The significance of this label, “teachers,” in the local context is that teachers are perceived as the sources of knowledge. Community members see themselves as learners dependent on teachers for knowledge. The learner’s actions must be sanctioned and guided by the teacher, in this case an IEQ core research team member. There is no room for the learner to create knowledge. Much as the IEQ core research team tried to discourage it, the community’s attitude was rooted in fact. Two of the IEQ core research team members were senior academic staff at some of Uganda’s premier educational institutions of higher learning.

One example of the participants' hesitancy to adopt the role of "teacher" or knowledge creator occurred at a community meeting. An IEQ core research team member asked if they had any recommendations for improvement of IEQ work. One person responded, "The ball is in your court, tell us what to do and we will follow because we are interested in improving education for our children." (DN *fn* May 25). A community member at another school was perplexed about the role that the IEQ core research team had given him. He asked at the very first meeting: "How come you, the professors, are asking us, the unlearned, to do the research ourselves?" (MO *fn* June 6).

Dependence on others to build knowledge among the community changed in subtle ways over time. On the one hand, there is evidence that community members began to trust their knowledge; on the other, they still looked to us to validate their responses. During a village mobilization meeting, one senior community member appeared to vent her frustration about the IEQ project in this manner:

[W]e had expectations for material benefit and when this did not happen, people were discouraged. We are the people with answers to solve the problems of poor education. However, some people are finding difficulties with this research when they ask, "[W]hat do we learn when all the answers we give are presumed to be correct?" (DN *fn* June 8).

Like the community groups, the teachers also demonstrated a similar dependence on outside knowledge. For example, the teachers had spent a considerable amount of time discussing which conditions are necessary for quality learning from their own experiences and understanding. Then they went on to discuss how they could create these conditions with the use of various teaching methods that they had listed themselves. But the teachers seemed unsure about the knowledge that they had created, especially when an IEQ core research team member pointed out that what had been recorded was what worked for them on the ground and had not been taken from a textbook. Then one teacher asked, "But are these conditions that we have listed correct?" (DN, *fn* July 1). And they did not seem to highlight knowledge they had generated, for example, by connecting these conditions to the design of the self-evaluation.

An IEQ core research team member asked, what are the sources of information/data for self-evaluation and how does one go about carrying out self-evaluation? Charles outlined the following sources: lesson plan based on different steps i.e., setting of objective, introduction phase, content, sharing of experiences, evaluation of pupils and finally you evaluate yourself as a teacher. Another core research team member reminded the teacher of the conditions they had generated for quality learning. Charles quickly admitted the omission, “[O]hh, I had forgotten, those conditions should be considered first.” (DN *fn* July 31).

### *Distribution of Resources*

Distribution of resources is the final theme that emerged from the analysis of the data. We anticipated some of the community expectations that we knew we could not satisfy. For example, we were constrained by the IEQ project itself. IEQ was not funded to directly add material benefits to the schools, such as iron sheets for roofing, or teaching materials, although a result of PAR may be the acquisition of material resources through networking and community mobilization. Moreover, participatory work is voluntary: there would be no payment for participating in IEQ. In conditions of scarcity like those in the three rural schools, this pressure for material help and the impact it had on everyone’s ability to engage in dialogue cannot be underestimated. The issue of payment for participation or materials for schools persisted throughout our work. Teachers and community members raised the issue directly and indirectly many times.

All the head teachers we interviewed responded affirmatively when asked whether they wanted their school to be involved in the IEQ project. In Uganda, the word “project” is often associated with substantial sums of money. Even though we informed the head teachers at the start that there would be no funds for individuals involved or for the school, head teachers nevertheless appeared to be eager to participate in the IEQ work, hoping that in the future some material rewards would come.

At one school, the material problem persisted in different guises. The teachers at this school did not turn up on time for any of the IEQ meetings. After about six weeks, we asked them why they continually

came late. One teacher responded, “We have no watches, so we cannot tell whether it is time or not. Let the donor give us watches.” (MO *fn* June 16).

Two months later during a teacher meeting, the teachers at this same school were discussing their participation in the upcoming Quality Learning Exhibitions, and three male teachers stated that they did not want to participate unless they were “facilitated.” The “facilitation” referred to here was not just tea and lunch, but cash given to the teachers. The IEQ core research team member explained that no payments to participants were possible (MO *fn* Aug 20). Eventually the teachers at this school decided to participate even though they were not “facilitated.”<sup>xxxvi</sup>

It was not only the teachers who expressed concerns for material benefit. The community members did the same. In the initial community meetings, we distributed one ballpoint pen and one 24-page notebook to each member who attended the meeting. It was made clear then that the offer was “entandikwa” (seed support) and a one-time contribution to enable the research to get off the ground. Within a few weeks at one school, a community member asked, “Last time you gave the participants exercise books and pens, will you do this again?” (DN *fn* May 23).

In another example, we were visiting homes in order to mobilize the community. One IEQ core research team member asked a community leader if there were any problems with the IEQ work so far. He responded, “[P]eople’s needs are insatiable .... They have not been used to such meetings but they like the books and pens which you gave them.” (DN *fn* May 24). Two weeks later in discussing how to get more people to participate, the head teacher of that community suggested “that as a way of encouraging people to come for the research, something, say a cup of tea, could be organized in the middle or at the end of the meeting.” (DN *fn* June 7).

Finally, participants persistently expressed the demand for improvement of the schools’ physical infrastructure, the building of water tanks and valley dams. We reiterated the limits of our mandate: that

IEQ was funded to do research on improving education and this did not include the improvement of physical infrastructure or any income-generating activity. Some community members appeared dissatisfied with this response. After three months of IEQ meetings, the community expectations, at least those held by some members, still seemed to be at variance with those of the IEQ core research team. During a discussion based on their community map drawing, Mr. Mugabe (elder) told fellow participants not to add any more resources to the map. He argued that if the map looked complete, IEQ would not contribute resources. (DN *fn* July 23).

The above examples illuminate the kinds of requests for material resources. Given the conditions of the three school communities, these requests are understandable. For the most part, we held firm because we were working within project parameters and undergoing periodic scrutiny by project funders and Ugandan education authorities. Moreover, the examples illustrate the inequities in the research process. Some IEQ core research team members were being paid for their work; community members were not. This inequity influences dialogue between groups.

## **Persistent Questions and Discussion**

As stated above, the purpose of this study is to illuminate the complexities and possibilities of participation as a method to improve education quality, and to understand how dialogue among researchers, policymakers, and community members (teachers, parents, and pupils) may contribute to better schools. The themes that emerged in this research represent the enormous dilemmas in moving towards more participatory ways of ultimately improving education within the context of Ugandan society. They suggest the tremendous effort, time, and learning required of all committed to participatory approaches. We are not naïve about the cultural, political and historical context of Uganda, and the global social order in which countries compete for resources. Participation is rarely practiced in Ugandan

education institutions, school governance,<sup>xxxvii</sup> and classroom practice; thus we have been exploring ways of being and doing that challenge the political and social order.

In addition to these dilemmas, the findings also give evidence of participants beginning to speak out, trust their knowledge, and act independently regarding improving education in their community. One has only to look at the videotapes<sup>xxxviii</sup> of some community members, teachers, and pupils presenting their perspectives at the Quality Learning Exhibitions. Our findings are similar to those of other participatory efforts in schools and communities in other countries<sup>xxxix</sup>. Power relations, dependence on others and outside knowledge, and distribution of resources are issues in other stories of PAR.

PAR as a method to improve education is situated in broader issues that are critical to understanding how increased dialogue may be possible. Each issue raises persistent questions that emerged directly from our fieldwork, asking how power, dependence, and distribution of resources influence dialogue among researchers, policymakers, and community members. Our responses to these questions are partial, ambiguous, and dynamic as they represent an interpretation of events at a given point in time<sup>xl</sup>. More dialogue is needed within the education community, and we invite readers to consider these questions and become part of the conversation.

***How can power be understood in a way that promotes dialogue among researchers, policymakers, and community members?***

Power challenges dialogue throughout the education system: head teachers to teachers, researchers to community members, adults to pupils, to name a few. Dialogue promotes participation in decision making and action among all stakeholders, especially those at the grassroots. Can power and dialogue be reconciled?

A closer look at the head teacher to teacher relationship and the ways that we exercised power in order to facilitate dialogue adds insight. In Uganda, the role of the head teacher in participatory

approaches is problematic. On the one hand, head teachers are used to managing the day-to-day activities of a school. Generally unchecked by higher ups in the education hierarchy, these head teachers have an enormous amount of power over teachers, community members, and pupils. Initially, we decided that it was important for teacher, community, and pupil groups to work independently to learn autonomy in practice. Through our intervention, all groups have been meeting without the head teacher.

There is evidence that the teachers, community members, and pupils have learned that they are able to make positive contributions to improving education without the presence of the head teacher. But, participation means inclusion. We know that when the head teachers were present in the teacher and parent groups there was the potential for “engineered consent,” the illusion of participation.<sup>xii</sup> To date the solution has been for head teachers to meet among themselves. However, the ultimate goal is for all stakeholders groups to be able to meet together to name and solve problems that impact education in their community.

Without ongoing reflection and dialogue it is likely that those in power will continue to replicate the status quo. For example, when we began PAR we intended to work as diligently with the pupils as with the community members and teachers. Despite our intentions, we experienced some difficulties due to adults’ conceptions of how to work with the pupils. There was a natural replication of the power structure. Just as the head teacher held power over the teachers, the adults held power over the pupils. For example, at an IEQ core research team meeting we discussed pupil participation. Responses among some of the IEQ core research team members regarding how to work with the pupils ranged from dictating activities for the pupils to leaving them out all together. Dictating pupil activities is in direct conflict with PAR, and leaving them out not only violates one of the principles of participatory work, but also loses valuable pupil insights into improving education. The IEQ core research team spent considerable time discussing this issue. Discussions resulted in convening the pupils using the same PAR process as that of

the teachers and community members. The outcome was positive: pupils participated in the policy dialogue on improving education and they solved some of the problems that they themselves had named.

Finally, the concepts of power and dialogue are housed in the larger social, political, and global world order. Although the IEQ core research team was committed to dialogue and the principles of participatory practice, we were frequently constrained by those who held power over us. For example, Ugandan policymakers wanted us to work in more communities and produce faster results. The funding agency wanted more “concrete” evidence: how participatory approaches contribute to higher test scores. Our meetings with Ugandan policymakers and funding agents were spent trying to “convince” them of the study’s value as opposed to engaging in dialogue about the actual circumstances of the local communities. For the IEQ core research team, these meetings were frequently lost opportunities for dialogue.

Power is a formidable force in potentially inhibiting dialogue and participation. However, the evidence suggests that researchers and community members can reconcile power differentials by naming and discussing the issue, and by strategically intervening. Although national policymakers and funding agents participated in the Exhibitions for Quality Learning, we have less evidence that we can engage in truly multidirectional dialogue that puts improving education at the center of the discussion with national policymakers and funding agents.

***How can the teachers, pupils, and community members become more independent? What is the role of outsiders in promoting independence?***

In the beginning we initiated most of the participatory activities—starting with organizing meetings, conducting of meetings, and defining key questions to improve education. We understood the contradictory nature of our work. We were the ones who initiated PAR in the three schools; thus a

dependent relationship between the school communities and the IEQ core research team was inherent in the process.

Gradually, we shifted responsibility to teachers, pupils, and community members: They organized and facilitated the meetings. However, we experienced an interesting cultural dilemma. We were regarded as “visitors,” and culture dictates that one does not ask visitors to leave one’s home. Even making suggestions by word or action may be considered rude. Therefore, teachers, pupils and community members continued to indicate to us not only that they are dependent on us, but that they also want to continue the dependence! We explained that the ultimate responsibility for improving education in their schools is on them. There will be a time that we will not be needed, and there was pressure for us to expand PAR to other schools. We continued discussing this issue with them.

The outsiders’ role is one of balance. On the one hand, we had the power, skills, and resources to initiate the participatory process. On the other hand, it was up to us to model inclusiveness and power sharing.

***How can researchers, policymakers, and community members learn to construct knowledge and work collectively in ways that are consistent with the culture?***

The IEQ core research team sought to encourage all participants to construct knowledge and contribute ideas, although this notion contradicted how most Ugandans have been socialized. In Ugandan society it is the teacher or expert who holds the knowledge. As the result of such encouragement and the experiences in the PAR process, teachers, community members, and pupils slowly began to realize that they could construct their own knowledge and that their experiences are as valid as those of others “more learned than themselves,” as they put it.

Moreover, we were all learning how to participate and work collectively. We believed that opportunities to learn together are necessary for our work. There was an initial tendency for some

community and IEQ core research team members to put their individual benefits above the collective benefit, especially in sharing of information. While common sense would dictate that the stronger one's team members, the stronger the team, IEQ core research team members were initially hesitant about openly discussing each other's perceived weaknesses in relation to the project's objectives. However, we learned to provide information and opportunities to all community and IEQ core research team members, rather than a selected few. Moreover, we were dealing with the power and knowledge differences within the IEQ core research team itself. Participatory approaches meant refraining from issuing commands to others even when one had the power to do so.

***Is PAR sustainable if the material needs of the participants are not being met at the workplace or if school and community resources are less than adequate?***

The current economic situation in Uganda is harsh and has been so for a long time. By the mid-1980s schools had gone through almost two decades of very difficult times due to political and social instability. Schools then were dependent largely on parental contributions and a primary teacher's salary was less than \$10 a month, way below a living wage. However, for more than a decade now, there has been increased political and social stability in most parts of the country. The state has gradually reorganized the education system and there is increasing demand for accountability. Despite improvement, the salaries, now about \$75 per month, are still considered by teachers to be below a living wage. Therefore, school staff supplement their incomes by engaging in activities unrelated to their official jobs such as small-scale farming, petty trade, etc.

The IEQ project has brought the extra workload that PAR demands in a school. We think teachers and the community are crucial to improving education quality, and we have been persuading them that it is in their professional and community interest to engage in PAR. Some teachers appear to be convinced, but in order for the work to be sustainable, it may require more than a few. PAR has long-term benefits

for a community, but results such as changing attitudes are not initially visible.<sup>xiii</sup> We wonder whether PAR results will be sufficient to sustain the participatory activities with other material priorities. Can PAR compete with other activities necessary to make a living wage?

There is evidence that some teachers and community members would rather that the IEQ project merely give material resources. Some community members and teachers have directly said that a new school roof, more textbooks, or a new road will greatly improve education. We understand this request, given the lack of material resources, and we have responded in numerous ways to requests for material resources. We were aware of the imbalance of material benefits that this project has brought to some Ugandans. For example, some IEQ core research team members were paid, yet the community members were not. In addition, we were aware of our power limits. Despite dialogue with national stakeholders and funding agents about the research process, there was an unspoken agreement that financial decisions would be made elsewhere. This nondialogue among researchers, policymakers, and community members about distribution of material resources must be reversed.

## **Conclusion**

Given Uganda's history, participation and dialogue as approaches to improving education challenge systems that researchers, policymakers, and communities are accustomed to. PAR raises interesting dilemmas and questions that defy existing political, social, and cultural structures. These dilemmas and questions warrant discussion within the education community if we continue to claim that PAR is a viable alternative to ultimately improving education at the local level.

We have attempted to illuminate some of the complexities and possibilities of participation as a method to improve education and to understand how dialogue among researchers, policymakers, and community members may contribute to better schools. The problems associated with dialogue among

researchers, policymakers, and community members are perpetual: they existed before our work and will continue to exist. This study adds power, dependence, and distribution of material resources as major themes that add to the challenges of increasing dialogue.

Amidst the challenges, change has been initiated and the dialogue continues. We understand the difficulties ahead: sustaining PAR with less support as the project has not been refunded<sup>xliii</sup> and continuing the dialogue among researchers, policymakers, and community members on how to improve education. Nevertheless, we believe that this study has relevance beyond education. Dialogue and participation, while extremely challenging in certain contexts,<sup>xliv</sup> have the potential to transform communities. While the backdrop of this study is improving education, it allows researchers, policymakers, and community members to practice processes of inclusion, participation, and democracy. These processes are fundamental to individual and community well-being. It is possible that the praxis of the community with this research will encourage them to examine their role in improving other aspects of their lives.

## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> Dr. Joseph Carasco was on Kenya Airways Flight 431 that crashed on January 30, 2000. He did not survive, but his work lives on. It is with great humility that we revised this article for publication. Mrs. Modesta Agita Omono, another IEQ core research team member, was on that flight as well. We honor the lives and work of our colleagues and friends. We dedicate this article to them.

<sup>ii</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Seaburt Press, 1970), pp. 76–77.

<sup>iii</sup> Brenda Turnbull, *Technical Assistance and the Creation of Education Knowledge* (Washington, D.C.: Policy Studies Associates, 1996).

<sup>iv</sup> Mark B. Ginsburg and Jorge Gorostiaga, “Relationships Between Theorists/Researchers and Policymakers/Practitioners: Rethinking the Two Cultures Thesis and the Possibility of Dialogue,” *Comparative Education Review* 45 (May 2001):xx–xx.

<sup>v</sup> Henry Levin, “Why Isn’t Education Research More Useful?” in *Knowledge for Policy: Improving Education Through Research*, eds. Don Anderson and Bruce Biddle (London: Falmer, 1991), pp. 72 and 77.

<sup>vi</sup> Bruce Biddle and Don Anderson, “Social Research and Educational Change” in *Knowledge for Policy: Improving Education Through Research*, eds. Don Anderson and Bruce Biddle (London: Falmer, 1991), p. 6.

<sup>vii</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1980).

<sup>viii</sup> D. Pan, “Ivory Tower and Red Tape” *Telos* 86 (MONTH???1990): 109–17.

<sup>ix</sup> Fernando Reimers and Noel McGinn, *Informed Dialogue: Using Research to Shape Educational Policy Around the World* (Westport CT: Praeger, 1997), p. 5.

<sup>x</sup> J. Bradley Cousins and Kenneth Leithwood, “Current Empirical Research on Evaluation Utilization,” *Review of Evaluation Research* 56 (3) (1986): 00-00. MONTH???

<sup>xi</sup> The Improving Education Quality Project (IEQ) is USAID-funded and undertaken by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in collaboration with the Academy for Educational Development (AED); Education Development Center (EDC), Inc.; Juarez and Associates, Inc.; and the University of Pittsburgh’s Institute for International Studies in Education (IISE).

<sup>xii</sup> Joseph Carasco, John C. Munene, Deborah H. Kasente, and Mathew Odada, *Factors influencing effectiveness in primary schools: A baseline study* (Kampala, Uganda: Ugandan National Examinations Board and Improving Education Quality Project, 1996); John, C., Munene, Mathew Odada, Deborah Kasente, Joseph Carasco, W. Epeju, W. Obwoya Kinyera Sam, O.K., Modesta Omona, and George A. Kinyera, *Teachers’ work experience and pupils’ schooling experience as determinants of achievement in primary schools* (Kampala, Uganda: Ugandan National Examinations Board and Improving Education Quality Project, 1997).

<sup>xiii</sup> Joseph Carasco, Lawrence Kanyike and Nancy Clair, “From baseline to insight: A look at the process of change through Uganda’s improving educational quality project,” paper presented at the 10th World Conference of Comparative Education, Capetown, South Africa, 1998.

<sup>xiv</sup> See Carasco et al., 1996; Munene et al., 1997.

<sup>xv</sup> UPE is Universal Primary Education. This reform has caused considerable controversy in Uganda as many schools do not have the infrastructure to provide education for all students.

<sup>xvi</sup> Peter Reason, “Three approaches to participative inquiry” in *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, eds. Norman K Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage, 1998).

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<sup>xvii</sup> Robert Chambers, "Origins and practice of participatory rural appraisal" *World Development* 22 (7) 1994; and Eileen Kane, *Seeing for Yourself: Research Handbook for Girls Education in Africa* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1995).

<sup>xviii</sup> Ernest T. Stringer, *Action Research: A Handbook for Practitioners* (Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage, 1996).

<sup>xix</sup> Despite that researchers approach the work as partners with community members there is still differential status and division of labor between researchers and community members.

<sup>xx</sup> Reason, 1998, p. 84.

<sup>xxi</sup> Nancy Clair, "Teacher study groups: Persistent questions in a promising approach," *TESOL Quarterly* 32 (3) (1998): 465-492.

<sup>xxii</sup> Andrea Rugh and Heather Bossert, *Involving communities. Participation in the delivery of education programs* (Washington, D.C.: United States Agency for International Development, 1998).

<sup>xxiii</sup> The IEQ core team consisted of Joseph Carasco, Principal Researcher, Makerere University; Lawrence Kanyike, Research Leader, Ugandan National Examinations Board (UNEB); Modesta Omona, Lecturer, Institutes of Teacher Education, Kyambogo (ITEK), Vincent Birungi, Tutor, Bushenyi Core PTC; Denis Nuwagaba, Action for Development (NGO); Imelda Kemeza, CCT Kazo Coordinating Center; Nekemiah Mwesigna, County Inspector of Schools, Kazo County; Patience Namanya, recent graduate, Makere University; Nancy Clair, Senior Research Advisor, Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC). At the beginning of 1999 N. Mwesigwa was transferred and replaced by Michael Tindikira. All team members are Ugandan except Clair who is North American.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Frederick Erickson, "Qualitative methods in research on teaching," in *Handbook of Research on Teaching*, ed. Merlin C. Wittrock, 3d ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 119–161.

<sup>xxv</sup> Mathews Miles and Michael Huberman. *Qualitative Data Analysis* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2d ed., 1994)

<sup>xxvi</sup> Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, "Entering the Field of Qualitative Research," in eds. Norman K Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln, *The Landscape of Qualitative Inquiry*. (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1998), p. 27.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Miles and Huberman, 1994; Amanda Coffey and Paul Atkinson, *Making Sense of Qualitative Data* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1996).

<sup>xxviii</sup> A PAR workshop had already been held with IEQ researchers and community members.

<sup>xxix</sup> Miles and Huberman, 1994.

<sup>xxx</sup> Carasco and Clair had numerous ongoing discussions about data representation in oral cultures. Carasco questioned the necessity of written field notes in oral cultures.

<sup>xxxi</sup> At the time of this research TDMS was the organization responsible for implementing most of the primary education reforms. TDMS is comprised of a small core technical staff at headquarters and a network of core primary teachers' colleges (Core PTCs) responsible for zones in the country. There are 18 core PTCs. The schools within the jurisdiction of each Core PTC are grouped in clusters called coordinating centers, each supervised by a coordinating center tutor (CCT).

<sup>xxxii</sup> During meetings, community, teachers and pupils used the language in which they were most comfortable. Teacher meetings were conducted in both languages; community meetings were in Runyankore; pupil meetings were in both languages. Translators were used in meetings when all stakeholders were present.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Kane, 1995.

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<sup>xxxiv</sup> For further details on teachers, pupils and community members' perspectives on improving education see IEQ Core Research Team, *Perspectives of Quality Learning: From Research to Action* (Kampala: Ugandan National Examinations Board and Improving Education Quality Project, 1999).

<sup>xxxv</sup> Initials refer to IEQ core research team members; *fn* refers to field notes and *am* analytic memo.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> In Ugandan English, facilitation is slang for payment to induce somebody to accomplish a task. It originally acknowledged inadequate salary scales.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Ugandan school governance is representative. PTA and SMC members represent the community regarding education. The potential for participation is there if a representative structure in place. The challenge is to widen opportunities for those who are not represented, and apply principles of participation.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Nancy Clair, Lawrence Kanyike, and David Smith, producers, "Joining Hands in Education" (Washington, D.C.: Improving Education Quality Project, in oroduction.).

<sup>xxxix</sup> Clair, 1998; Rugh and Bossert, 1998; Sheldon Shaeffer, ed., *Collaborating for educational change: The role of teachers, parents and the community in school improvement* (Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning, 1992).

<sup>xl</sup> Clair, 1998.

<sup>xli</sup> Graebner cited in Michael W. Apple and James A. Beane, eds., *Democratic Schools* (Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1995).

<sup>xlii</sup> Clair, 1998.

<sup>xliii</sup> IEQ core team members have continued the work without funding from USAID. They are disseminating project publications (the Principles and Case Study) throughout the country. Imelda Kemeza (letter to Clair, May 2000) writes that a head teacher's house is currently under construction in one local community.

<sup>xliv</sup> Joe Kincheloe, "Meet me behind the curtain: The struggle for critical postmodern action research" in *Critical Theory and Educational Research*, ed. Peter McLaren (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1995).