GETTING BACK TO THE GARDEN: RETHINKING CHILD WELFARE IN UGANDA

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the attempts of the Ugandan government to enunciate and implement a policy of child welfare that is community based. The study analyses child care practices in traditional communities, and highlights the disruptions caused by external influences, including the imposition of a colonial system. It also considers important impacts, dictatorships, civil wars, economic problems, and the AIDS epidemic.

The implementation of a new approach to child welfare, one oriented to a conception that looks back to a time when Ugandan society was community based, is explored. The dilemmas within the attempt to implement such a policy are also discussed.

The analysis suggests that the spirit of communalism still exists in Uganda with regard to child care. Nevertheless, it also appreciates that communities are faced with many problems that might undermine it. Paramount among these are the AIDS epidemic and lack of resources. As well, western ideas and concepts such as gender equality and children’s rights might influence attempts to re-establish traditional forms of child welfare.
Thus, considering that many changes have occurred in communities, the traditional context has been altered, and some traditional communal practices might not be useful or relevant in the modern context. Nonetheless, there are positive practices that can be revisited and strengthened. It is the view of this study, therefore, that the garden we wish to reclaim will need different methods of cultivation from those used in the traditional garden. Consequently, the garden will be different from the traditional one.
This thesis is dedicated to three very nice people:
Ndiyunze-Bizimana
Jane Kabatooro
Mary Jo Lee
They were all called in their youth to rest eternally in a very beautiful garden.
Writing this dissertation has been a long and arduous journey. I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to the people whose valuable contributions helped to keep this work on the rails and bring the dissertation into shape. I am deeply indebted to the members of my committee for their constant support. Professor Ralph Garber, my thesis supervisor, has been very dependable throughout this whole exercise. I am very grateful to him for his precious contribution.

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Chapter One

Introduction

This study analyses a new approach to child welfare in Uganda, one oriented to a conception that looks back to a time when Ugandan society was community based. It presents an account of the child care practices in the traditional rural community. Within these communities, every adult member felt obliged to protect children. Not only was the whole community responsible for child welfare, but members were also responsible for each other’s welfare. Generally, it is judged there was a harmony in the community. This harmony was shaken when foreign influence set in, and interfered with the people’s living practices.

This study appreciates the various changes Uganda has gone through, that have had a negative impact on the garden, but concentrates on what the government is doing to respond to the changes, in order to re-institute community-based approaches that were tampered with. The study critically looks at the approaches used by government in its endeavour to achieve this goal.

The study analyses, among other issues, the reality of the situation in which children in Uganda live, and the policy responses to deal with the different situations. It is important to note that there will be no model building, but there is awareness of theories that might have application to
the child welfare situation in Uganda, and these are discussed. The different beliefs which underlie the various strategies about the best way for organizing society and therefore likely to promote social development, of which child welfare is part, are therefore analyzed.

A Word About the Metaphor

To facilitate an understanding of the attempt by the Ugandan government to root its child welfare on an earlier community based approach, I have used the concept of a garden. When a garden is not well tended—when incorrect practices are introduced and little or inappropriate fertilizer administered—the produce will be poor, and the soils get poorer over time. Likewise, when a community's traditional ways of living, rooted in culture and environment are interfered with, cohesion and strength is weakened over time. When the British colonized the country and introduced their practices, Ugandan communities faced two opposing worlds. Traditional ways became weak, while "modern" industrial practices did not answer the needs of rural, agricultural peoples. Besides, the unwillingness of Ugandans to give up completely their traditional ways did not strengthen the foreign implants either. Morris (1972) articulates this dilemma using the failure of British law in East Africa. He compares the imposition of British laws onto societies with different social, cultural, and economic differences to planting "a hardy plant in an alien soil."
It is important to remember, that even when a garden has been neglected for a long time, it can regain its productive capacity when cultivated, and appropriate practices and plants reintroduced. Nevertheless, the capacity rarely gets to the level where it was when the soils were virgin. Likewise, we must ask questions: How difficult will it be to reinstitute the Ugandan community garden? To what level of strength will it re-establish itself?

"Getting Back to the Garden" implies revisiting the notion of using traditional communal practices in an effort to address the problems of children which colonial policies failed to do satisfactorily. In the context of this study, going back means looking at the positive aspects in the traditional community, in order to build on them and to implement a strong contemporary policy.

The metaphorical garden, with its patterns of authority, is made up of women, men, children and the old. Children can be seen as young trees in the garden, that must be nurtured as they grow, otherwise the garden shrivels. It is proposed, that the tenders of the garden (adult community members) know best what kind of fertilisers and practices are needed for the plants to grow. Any tampering with such an important practice by an agent outside the garden, without consultation, is likely to injure the plants. Nevertheless, climatic changes may make it inevitable for normal practices to change.
Likewise, some of the traditional garden practices may not be appropriate to the contemporary context due to the evolution of the surrounding environment. These have altered the soil too much, and the practices which can no longer fit have to change accordingly. For example, the practice of discriminating against women cannot be upheld in contemporary society, because just as the community has changed (become more complex), so have the roles expected of every member in the community. It may be apparent that there are other practices that are worth preserving and/or reintroducing today and in the future. This study, therefore, argues that for a community based approach to produce the desired results, every constituent member must be involved without discrimination. While going back makes sense, the environment has changed as well as the understandings of its tenders.

**Background Information**

Uganda obtained her independence from Britain in 1962 after 68 years of protectorate status. British rule extended over the present territory of Uganda by 1914 and was achieved through force of arms and the signing of agreements with local rulers (Kiwanuka, 1968; Mamdani, 1976). At independence, Uganda, like most other African countries, emerged with the rudiments of a formal welfare system that reflected both the ideology and basic structures of the systems used by former
colonial masters (Asamoah and Nortey, 1987; MacPherson, 1987, 1982; Midgley, 1981). The welfare sector was given a low priority, since social spending was considered a waste of resources. The predominant belief by the colonizers was that colonies were to be self-sufficient, even though virtually all the wealth extracted from the colonies went to Britain. Social welfare was to be financed by local taxes and charities (Mair, 1944).

Prior to the colonial conquest, social problems were seen and acted upon as essentially a community matter. These were dealt with by internal systems of the family, the clan, and tribal structures, which together constituted the "community" and communities. It is important that we understand communities in Uganda. Community in most societies in Uganda originally referred to kin groupings which had a common descent. Usually headed by an elder or clan head, these were organised around particular lines of authority. With movements and territorial boundaries sometimes brought about by state administrations, the conception of community then changed to embrace people of a different descent, but sharing the same geographical boundary. So in this study, the term is used to refer to a group of people living or working in the same geographical location, usually a village or a town who identify themselves as having shared interests in some way and who interact together to pursue these interests. Politically, this refers to the Local Council 1.
Many of the internal systems that dealt with social problems collapsed due to colonial penetration, creating more problems with which these structures could not cope. Thus, colonial rule not only imposed systems of administration on areas which had previously governed themselves through distinctly different political and social forms, but also created, through the drawing of artificial boundaries, new geo-political entities.

From the beginning, competition between colonizers created borders where none had previously existed, planting the seeds of social restructuring which would later grow into enormous problems, and create social disorganisation. The results of this are, among others, problems of border disputes and conflict among cultural groups, which have all contributed to problems of the children.

Despite the massive problems created by such external influence, the colonial government's concern was with containment rather than contentment (MacPherson, 1982). Maintenance of law and order for the comfort of the colonial staff and their families was the paramount consideration; the work of government in the early days of British administration was almost confined to ensuring this (Midgley, 1981; Wicker, 1958; Mair, 1944). Consequently, measures were established to deal with the increasing juvenile delinquency in the urban areas where the colonial staff resided. Colonial power acted to ensure European lives and property were to be given
essentially the same kinds of protection as existed in Britain (MacPherson, 1982; Midgley, 1981).

The unbalanced emphasis was on the treatment of adolescent deviant behaviour and conspicuous child neglect in urban areas which together constituted a very small percentage of the population, while ignoring the more pressing problems of poverty and deprivation of the great majority who lived in the countryside. This has been a major criticism levelled against social welfare ministries in most Third World countries (MacPherson, 1987; Hardman and Midgley, 1982). Such measures emphasize further the low priority accorded to welfare matters. As noted by Asamoah and Beverly (1988), the colonialists tended to split different aspects of human and social problems rather than seek comprehensive social provision. They gave importance to political and economic issues rather than social needs (Hardman and Midgley, 1982). They were concerned with reducing the importance of traditional structures which provided a base for welfare (like the family and tribal structures already referred to), and tended to make decisions for short-term expediency for the colonizers rather than long-term benefit for domestic residents or citizens of the colonies. Clearly, colonialists who intruded into the 'Garden' did not appreciate or value its structure and usefulness, and altered or even destroyed some of its important components.
Considerable work has been done to illustrate the inappropriateness of colonial approaches to social welfare provision in African countries (Midgley, 1986, 1984, 1981; Hardman and Midgley, 1982; MacPherson, 1987, 1982; Mair, 1944). The recurrent theme in these writings is that most of the imposed services have been quite difficult to maintain due to social, cultural, political and economic differences between the metropolitan countries where the services originated and the societies onto which they were imposed. Regarding child welfare, the approaches have been seen as alien. That is, western, urban, industrially-based, expensive and therefore unable to provide a realistic answer for the cash-starved societies of the developing world (MacPherson, 1987; Midgley, 1981). This has meant that the majority of children who reside in rural areas have been left unprotected by state policies, because governments continue to follow the colonial model that hardly took rural areas into consideration. A study carried out in Uganda to determine the number, status and needs of children in need of services revealed that some groups of children were likely to be desperate depending upon their geographic location, the income of parents or caretakers, urban or rural residence, and access to health and education facilities implied by the above three factors (Dunn, et al, 1991). Similarly, Uganda's health and demographic survey (1990) demonstrated variations in child health, immunization and access to safe drinking water by
geographic region, with urban areas favoured and rural areas disadvantaged. These disparities are also reflected in inappropriate child welfare service provision. Problems of access, whether physical, social, economic or otherwise, are likely to affect rural areas more than the urban areas.

The Problem

Uganda has undergone various social, economic and political changes since the entry of colonialists in the late nineteenth century. The years following independence in 1962 were marked by persistent political strife resulting in constant armed conflict. Children have suffered most in the years of fighting and instability as communal care, parental care, schooling, health facilities and the legal protection of children's rights were all severely dislocated. When this is added to a high infant and child mortality rate (101 per 1000 and 180 per 1000 live births respectively) from disease and malnutrition, and the impact of the pandemic AIDS which has brought about a large orphan problem, it can be understood that children, who constitute half of Uganda's population, are an important group in urgent need of attention.

Many of the children's problems in Uganda, in addition to the political unrest, have been attributed to: (1) widespread poverty among the population which is reflected in the lack of resources at the household level which limits economic access
to services like health care, clean water and education; (2) inadequate provision of basic social services in many areas of the country which makes physical access to services difficult or impossible; (3) lack of effective demand for services due to low levels of awareness; (4) attitudes and practices that discourage households from seeking the services which could improve the quality of their own and their children's lives.

In addition to the above factors, it is the view of this study that the inappropriate and insufficient child welfare system imposed from outside also contributed to the problems of children. Child welfare service provision in Uganda has, until the new policy, been dominated by legislation, most of which was a verbatim replica of the law, ethics and practice in England from 1894-1962. The 1933 Children and Young Persons Act of England and Wales was copied verbatim to provide a statutory basis for intervention in child welfare issues (Child Law Review Report, 1992). Often this has proved inadequate due to the social, economic and cultural differences between Britain and the Ugandan society. In fact, as Mills (1992) observes, one of the outcomes of the collapse of civil order, and the breakdown of legal machinery in Uganda was that it clearly demonstrated the inadequacies of colonially inspired child legislation, a legislation which dominates child welfare provision.

State intervention in child welfare was exclusively on legal issues, yet social issues impact greatly on the well-
being of children, and it is difficult, yet essential, to legislate on these. In Uganda for example, survival and development are major areas of child vulnerability because they are strongly influenced by traditional values and beliefs. Such beliefs were tolerated by colonial governments provided they did not challenge colonial authority or offend European morals too greatly (Midgley (1981). The implication here is that important survival and development issues like child immunisation, education and early marriage, were of no concern to the colonialists. Communities that were far from colonial contact had no access to any government programs.

Child care and protection laws were summarily imposed by an alien colonial administration which took little account of the cultural context and actual child protection needs of the societies concerned. Colonial administrations were essentially designed for control, and were established directly by the authorities to deal specifically with social problems in the colonial capitals (Hardman and Midgley, 1982). The emerging welfare institution during the colonial period was thus urban-centred, and the child welfare services were primarily concerned with the provision of residential care mainly for the juvenile delinquents whose behaviour was considered a threat to the colonial staff. Yet Uganda was and is an agricultural society with 90% of the population living in the rural communities.
Since the primary concern was with protection of colonial staff residing in the urban areas, no attempt was made to build on the existing rural community mechanisms to handle child welfare issues. This major neglect led later to problems for children. As the Ugandan society after independence continually experienced grave social, economic and political conditions, the inadequacies of the old child welfare legislation became glaringly obvious, and the situation for children became a national concern. The problems of children in institutions, the increasing number of children on the streets, increasing cases of child abuse (both physical and sexual), and many reported cases of orphans' property being fraudulently claimed, drew public attention to, and stimulated political action on the needs of Uganda's children. It was realised that the approach inherited by the government after independence was insufficient to solve the escalating problems of children. The community, especially in rural areas, could no longer be ignored. New approaches that involve communities, that strengthen their coping capacities, and which build on what communities already have, had to be sought.

This study examines such attempts by the Ugandan government to enunciate and implement a policy of child welfare that is rooted in the context of the Ugandan society. The question is to what extent is it possible for the country to return to a communally oriented child welfare system given a history of colonial dominance, dictatorships, civil wars and
the serious AIDS epidemic. These influences have had a serious impact on community life.

The next chapter discusses the different approaches to development. The strategies about the best way for organizing society in order to promote social development, of which the well-being of children is part, are analyzed.
Chapter Two

Theoretical Considerations

Introduction

This chapter describes the theoretical ideas that will guide the analysis. It discusses the various approaches to social development, of which child welfare is seen as a part. It also discusses the different beliefs which underlie the various strategies about the best way for organizing society and therefore likely to promote human happiness and social well-being or social development. The chapter also discusses the different ways in which development is looked at; modernisation and communitarianism. The adequacy of these approaches for explaining the situation in Uganda is analysed.

Modernisation Theory

The proponents of modernisation theory hold that the centrality of development is the transition to modernity. The theory emphasizes a capitalist strategy of rapid economic growth. As well, it stresses the modernising of traditional institutions because these are considered an obstacle to the conditions necessary for economic growth.

In his discussion of modernization, Midgley (1984) indicates that it posits the view that underdevelopment, such
as is found in most of Africa, reflects an original condition of backwardness of developing nations, marked by the presence of traditional economic and social institutions. Consanguine relationships, people predisposed towards apathy, and non-futuristic cultures are prevalent. These reinforce each other to keep social systems at low standards. For the advocates of this approach, the impediments to modernisation must be removed in order to foster development. Progress necessitates the diffusion of modern technologies and ideas into the developing nations. Midgley concludes that the welfare view of the modernisation paradigm is that it comes as a result of economic growth. Social needs should be satisfied through individual effort in the market place. Public provision should be limited to providing for emergency needs of individuals who cannot be helped by their families, preferably by voluntary organisations rather than by the state (Wilensky and Lebeaux, 1965). It is ironic, that proponents of modernisation theory who view traditional institutions as an obstacle to economic growth and development, in turn expect such institutions to care for their members.

Modernization theorists take a dualistic approach, the traditional and the modern sectors. The former is seen largely as negative—ways of thought, practice, forms of property and social organisation which slow down or prevent the development of modern economy. They claim that economic measures would fail unless traditional social institutions and cultural
values were modified. It is argued by some that the extended family impeded economic development because the presence of a large number of dependants hindered labour mobility and limited the family's capacity to save and thus contribute to capital formation (Goode, 1963; Livingstone, 1969; Hagan, 1960). The extended family's cultural rigidity is also seen as an obstacle to individualism, initiative and ambition which characterises a dynamic capitalist economy. Success is directly linked with individualism, competition and achievement motivation.

Thus, modernisation theorists focus on economic growth, in which capital formation is the key factor. They see development passing through five stages of economic growth (Rostow, 1960; 1963). Accordingly, the present economic conditions in Africa correspond with past stages of developed countries, and it is advocated that it is only a matter of time before African countries, or any other Third World country, gets to the present stage of developed nations. Thus, what the Third World countries need is to imitate institutions, models, and structures that are characteristic of western countries (Hardman and Midgley, 1982; Midgley, 1981; Hoselitz, 1960). This argument tallies with Marx's prophecy that developing nations can see an image of their own future in the developed nations.

The central ideas of modernization theory reflect a completely different societal context from the pre-colonial
communal society, as discussed in a later chapter. In order to use the ideas to alter the communal societies therefore, western values and institutions had to be diffused to the Third World societies. As noted by Hardman and Midgley (1982), the ideas of modernisation theory were used to explain the causes of mass poverty and give prescriptions for its amelioration. The adoption of economic policies were recommended, which were designed to stimulate rapid economic growth. Diffusion of western values and institutions to the Third World was also applauded (Hardman and Midgley, 1982; Midgley, 1981).

It has been acknowledged that such quest for economic growth weakens traditional values and undermines the moral basis of society (Mishan, 1967; Hirsh, 1977; Lasch, 1991). While formal education and literacy programs were introduced to combat traditionalism, most governments introduced such institutions for the primary purpose of skill improvement, which was considered essential for economic development.

The modernization approach was advanced by the western powers after their victory in World War II. It reflected the values of capitalist democracy of high social mobility in a consumer-based Keynesian economy. The countries under colonization assimilated the values of the industrialized world, adopted its technology, and imported its financial and educational institutions without regard to the possible consequences. With borrowed funds, many developing countries
pursued modernization goals on a large scale (Midgley, 1981; Hardman and Midgley, 1982). In the case of Uganda, steel foundries, cement mills, hydro-electric schemes were built at great expense. The country is still indebted heavily to foreign governments and financial institutions which provided the capital for these investments. Many have now collapsed due to poor maintenance resulting from either insufficient technological skills, or corruption. Thus, despite the very narrow revenue base, a big percentage of government revenue goes to debt servicing, minimizing further the ability to provide the very needed services to run the local institutions. Although social and attitudinal changes were considered essential for modernization, they were not as easy to implement as the economic requirements. Many societies continue to stress the importance of their own cultural values, and the need to hold onto their traditions.

Modernization theory includes a residual approach to social welfare, which is an expectation by the government that the family and the private sector will carry out the social welfare responsibility. (Midgley, 1981; Hardman and Midgley, 1982; Midgley, 1982; Midgley, 1995). Government sees its responsibility as coming only after these other mechanisms have failed.

Although widely adopted, the residual model of social policy was found to be unworkable in Uganda for several reasons. The economic development plans that had been
emphasized did not bring about rapid growth and industrialization. The difficulty of mobilizing sufficient capital to create a manufacturing base frustrated the prediction that capital investment would transform the economies. The Ugandan economy has largely depended on exportation of primary products and importation of finished products. Thus, the lack of a self-sustaining and integrated economy has resulted in one that is constantly faced with balance of payment problems. The economic growth, anticipated by the residual model proponents to increase incomes, has not led to improved levels of living and welfare.

While there has been clear evidence that the policies which derive from the central ideas of modernization theory have failed to improve the conditions in Third World countries (Hardman and Midgley, 1982; MacPherson, 1982; Midgley, 1981), the current policies prescribed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank as conditions for loans to developing countries are based on the same principles. The result is that most Third World countries, including Uganda, continue to replicate inappropriate models because of dependency on resources and technology.

**Individualist Approach**

Underlying this approach is the idea that social development goals can be attained by requiring people to take
responsibility for their own welfare (Midgley, 1995). It maintains that individuals are responsible for their destiny, and that the welfare of the whole society is enhanced when people strive to promote their well-being. Under this ideology are two different positions: a extreme non-interventionist position where individuals should be left to themselves to succeed or fail in the market; the position that those measures which boost individual functioning, which create a more vibrant enterprise culture, which facilitate the productive use of the market by ordinary people should be adopted. The latter position, the belief in specific interventions by governments and other organisations to promote social development in the context of the market economy, currently characterises the individualist approach to social development.

Proponents of the interventionist individualist approach maintain that its success in promoting social development can be achieved by fostering an enterprise culture to promote social progress, small enterprises for needy people, and social welfare by enhancing individual functioning (Midgley, 1995).

A dynamic economy which permits individuals to meet their own needs and those of families and dependants is essential for the effectiveness of the individualistic approach. Welfare cannot be enhanced in a stagnant economy. Efforts must be made to ensure that the economy is thriving, and that people can
participate effectively in productive economic activities such as access to jobs, opportunities for self-employment and a good environment for investment.

The creation of such a positive culture of enterprise is viewed as the responsibility of governments and other agencies. Opportunities for enterprise have to be opened so that individuals can participate and function in the market. For this to be possible, governments are required to create a dynamic capitalist economy (Rostow, 1963; 1960). Proponents of the individualist approach also deem it necessary for governments to create conditions that favour the growth of small-scale enterprises. These would create opportunities for poor people to generate the resources they need to meet their own needs.

Supporting the Informal Sector

Contrary to the modernization approach which emphasises investment in large-scale industrial development that creates employment and enables people to earn income for their social needs, advocates of small-scale enterprises point out that such emphasis on industrial development is inappropriate to the needs of developing countries (Schumacher, 1974; McRobie, 1981). They argue that poor countries are hampered by a lack of investment capital sufficient to expand the industrial sector and thus create wage employment for all of the working
age population. Besides, rampant corruption and mismanagement, in most countries, is a sure way of hindering the growth of the modern sector. The latter reasons largely explain the situation in Uganda. The mismanagement of the industrial sector, built on borrowed funds, resulted in its collapse, thus affecting the growth of the economy, and weakening people's purchasing power.

Advocates of the individualist approach optimistically view the informal sector as providing a market economy in the developing world. Rather than struggling to mobilize capital for large-scale industrial development and job creation, it is considered better to promote the growth of small enterprises which provide excellent opportunities for the poor to engage in productive economic activities. Through its lending and technical assistance programs, the World Bank has promoted the development of the informal sector activities among the poor. Governments are urged to provide credit facilities for the growth of this sector. Commercial Banks are also urged to interact and provide services to small business.

This approach explains the current situation in Uganda where, through its poverty alleviation policy popularly known in Uganda as the 'Entandikwa', the government allocates funds to selected rural dwellers to invest in agricultural expansion. However, this policy is likely to benefit just a few local elites (whether political, social or economic) in the rural areas, because they are the ones with a voice. Rural
Credit Farmers Schemes were introduced by Commercial Banks in Uganda in early 1986, loan conditions eased, for poverty alleviation through the promotion of the informal sector. Based on the popular belief that men are the household heads and therefore the bread winners, access to such credit facilities was almost exclusively for men. Women were left out, save for those who had acquired some status mainly through educational achievement, and therefore belonged to the local elite. Considering the important economic role women play in society (Boserup, 1970), discriminating against them creates an obstacle to the improvement of social well-being, especially that of children. Besides, there is an increasing number of female-headed households due to wars, increasing mortality due to AIDS, as well as single parenthood.

**Enhancing Individual Functioning**

Enhancing individual functioning is another way proponents of the individualist approach posit as a means for people to improve their welfare. Competent functioning in the market is difficult for many individuals due to lack of confidence, low self-esteem and an overwhelming burden of problems. For these impediments to be removed, such individuals have to be assisted to function effectively. It is believed that social work is well placed to provide such assistance (Midgley, 1995). Consequently, social development
strategies that rely on social work interventions have been advocated. This suggested model of social work is, therefore, one which focuses upon coping mechanisms of the people.

Statist Approach

This approach is built on the idea that the state embodies the interests of society as a whole, and therefore has the responsibility of promoting the well-being of all citizens. Nonetheless, the inefficiencies of the government are acknowledged, although its authority to ensure that social development policies are implemented has not been challenged.

The strategies employed by government in promoting social development include a unified socio-economic development approach, resource redistribution, and the basic needs approach.

Unified Planning

According to Midgley (1995), the Unified approach evolved out of a dissatisfaction with the economic models which characterised early development planning. As already discussed, the models assumed that economic growth would create employment, increase income, and therefore eradicate poverty. Economic factors such as investment and trade, dominated development plans, and the central planning
ministries were exclusively dominated by economists (Hardman and Midgley, 1984; Midgley, 1995) who put emphasis on economic factors. Contrary to this approach, the Unified approach does not see economic growth as a sufficient basis for promoting social welfare, and gives equal emphasis to economic growth and social progress (Midgley (1995). It also requires that the commitment to improving the well-being of the population be shared by economic and social planners. Commitment to promoting economic growth and fostering social welfare on the part of the government is deemed important.

The success of this approach largely depends on technical expertise, and political will. It is clearly top-down, and this has been criticised as a means of involving the poor in participating in the distribution of the much needed resources.

Resource Redistribution

The fact that developing countries did not register improvements in levels of living of the poorest groups resulting from economic growth, pointed to a major weakness of using economic growth as an indication of social development (Hardman and Midgley, 1982; Midgley, 1996). This failure to alleviate problems of mass poverty despite improved economies was attributed to unfair distribution of the accrued benefits,
in favour of the elites and the rural upper class, while the rural masses were continually exploited.

Despite the criticisms, economic growth is still used as an indicator of a country's development. The World Bank applauded Uganda as one of the countries in Africa that recorded the highest growth in 1995 (The New Vision, April, 1996). Despite such recorded progress, the same source (The New Vision) noted that such economic progress did not mark improvement in the social sectors. The enrolment levels of school-age children remain below the desired level, and there is not yet enough basic minimum health coverage for everyone in the country.

Proponents of an egalitarian approach believe that the above situation can be remedied by implementing redistributive policies efficiently (Chenery, et al, 1974; Cornia, et al, 1987; Griffin & James, 1981; Lipton, 1977). A reduction in military spending has been recommended as one way in which the savings from these cuts can be channelled to the social services sector. However, considering the persistent wars in most African countries, and Uganda in particular, the military is one sector that will continue to attract a large share of the budgetary pie.

There were a series of problems that continuously worked against the statist approach to social development in Uganda prior to 1986. The numerous regime changes since independence greatly undermined the trust of large portions of the
population, creating a fraying character of state-society relations (Chazan, et al., 1992). Secondly, the extensive nature of the administrative and coercive apparatus (the military) increasingly became a drain on the scarce resources. This was further aggravated by widespread use of public funds and positions for personal enrichment of civil servants, politicians, and their immediate supporters. Therefore, a government plagued by such evils and unable or unwilling to address them, would not promote social development. Besides, the heavily centralized statism concentrated decision-making powers at the top, and, there was a lack of a sustainable relationship between the centre and the periphery.

Communitarianism

The communitarian approach is based on the view that development can best be promoted by people working together harmoniously within their local communities. For communities to succeed, cooperation among the members is considered vital, for through such cooperation they are able to exert greater control over local resources and local affairs. For the proponents of this approach, the promotion of people’s welfare is best done within the context of community life (Oakley, 1991; Gran, 1983; Korten and Klaus, 1984).
Community Participation

Community participation recognizes the need for political awareness of the poor people, and the need to organize them to take control of their own affairs. The advocates maintain that social development could best be fostered through the efforts of ordinary people. A strong leadership that consults regularly with community members is an important element for building and strengthening the community, and therefore its ability to have control over the issues that affect them. Despite the emphasis placed on the need to target the impoverished, Midgley (1995) notes that the proponents of this approach are a bit sceptical about the poor's willingness to participate due to many years of oppression and deprivation, which may have made them fearful, apathetic, and therefore indifferent. Chambers (1983) clearly illustrates the powerlessness of the poor, especially in rural areas through what he terms a "deprivation trap". The deprivation trap is a series of undesirable conditions rural people are faced with, which reinforce each other to keep them in their situation. The advocates of the community participation approach claim that such conditions are a result of government's creation of large and inefficient bureaucracies, squandering of scarce resources on wasteful projects, and use of government agencies to corruptly benefit politicians and senior civil servants while the needs of ordinary people are ignored.
As discussed in a later chapter, the problems highlighted above are similar to the situation in Uganda, though the intensity of the problems is currently lighter than it was before 1986. Nevertheless, there are still various factors that will affect communalism in Uganda. The persistent civil unrest in some parts of the country due to 'chronic' political wars and the impact of AIDS and its associated problems pose a challenge to mobilizing communities. Another major factor is tribalism. This affects communalism from the top, because it affects the allocation of resources. Highly placed persons who have access to the resources, tend to favour the areas and tribes they come from to the neglect of other communities.

The communitarian approach recognises the important role women play in society, and acknowledges that they have long been neglected in development. This raises concerns about the distribution of rights and activities and whether communalism can be effective when women are continually subjugated. Incorporating women in the development efforts is therefore one important way of facilitating community participation.

Thus the communitarian approach is most useful in explaining developments in Uganda. An example is the government's belief in inculcating new values such as emphasizing the inclusion of women that has hitherto not been taken as a major issue in most traditional communities. As is discussed later, the current political organisation in Uganda emphasizes the involvement of women in the Local Councils and
Committees, which are charged with the responsibility of the overall community organisation.

The communitarian approach is also most relevant to the study, since the new policy advocates its application by recognizing the importance of building on the strengths within the community, for example, the clan, the extended family, and the existing local leadership.

Modernization theory is useful in explaining the development of social services in Uganda. As the analysis in the preceding chapter indicates, the theory is useful in interpreting what happened during and after the colonial period.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the various views underlying the social development strategies about the best way of organising society, in order to promote people's well-being. The different views have centred on the power of the individual, the community, and the state in this process. The extent to which these various approaches reflect the situation in Uganda has been highlighted.

The various approaches will be used selectively to guide the analysis of this study. The communitarian approach will be used to explain pre-colonial communal practices for child welfare. As well, the approach will be applied to assess the
feasibility of utilizing communities in child welfare programmes as advocated by the new policy.

Modernization will be used to explain the impact of external influences on traditional communities. It will also be used to explain the impact of policies derived from its central tenets as well as the government’s dependence on non-governmental organizations especially in child welfare service provision.
Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines the approach used to carry out the study. It describes the rural area where the study was conducted, how the key informants for the study were selected, and the methods used to collect the data.

Description of the Study Area

Rakai district is located in South-Western Uganda. It has a population of 382,000 people on a land area of 3,889 sq. km (World Vision, 1992). Like the rest of the country, the main economic activity is agriculture. Fishing is another major activity, since the district borders Lake Victoria in the east.

The first AIDS cases and victims in Uganda were reported in Rakai as far back as 1982. The disease was undetected for a long time most likely due to the government’s failure to reach the rural areas. This became one indication of the inefficiencies of urban-based policies. While the government concentrated on improving the conditions in hospitals (curative approach), minimal though these efforts may have been, communities in rural Rakai were slowly being wiped out by a mysterious disease (AIDS).
Since the disease affects the most productive group, the loss of the able bodied young men and women has had a lot of adverse consequences on the district in general, and on communities in particular. The near decimation of the productive segment of the population has caused serious economic difficulties, and is responsible for the escalation of poverty.

One of the inevitable results of the AIDS scourge has been the increasing number of AIDS orphans. The district has the highest number of orphaned children in Uganda, with both parents dead (NCC Situation Analysis, 1994). It is estimated that over 65,000 children in Rakai are orphans (Rakai District Development Plan, 1994).

Rakai was selected as a good area of study, because of the appalling impact of AIDS on the communities in general and on children in particular, and the challenges this has posed to government and other agencies involved in child welfare in Uganda. Also, Rakai is one of the districts where community coping mechanisms have been utilized to face a calamity, and thus had a lot to offer to the study.

Like most rural areas in Uganda, the physical infrastructure (roads, health centers, schools) is poor, and this aggravates an already bad situation.
Participants/Key Informants

The participants or key informants for the study were selected from the capital city, Kampala, and from Rakai district. At the recommendation of the National Council for Children staff, Rakai was selected because it is one of the districts where the District Programme of Action for Children was first established. Some of the key informants were selected from communities in this rural district. Twenty five (25) key informants were selected.

For purposes of this study, key informants are members of the various stakeholding institutions involved in child welfare at the national, regional and sub-county levels. In other words, those who had enough experience to be able to give the needed answers.

At the national level, these are the National Council for Children officials; Probation and Social Welfare officers\(^1\) in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs; and officials in the non governmental organizations (NGOs) providing child welfare services in Uganda.

At the regional level, the key informants are members of the District Team and Planning Committee, and the staff of the non governmental organizations (NGOs) with child welfare programmes in the district. At the sub-county level, key informants are health workers, welfare workers, teachers, police officers, and community leaders who have direct contact with children.

\(^1\)Now referred to as Child Care and Protection officers after the department of Probation and Social Welfare was moved to the Ministry of Gender and Community Services and its name changed to department of Child Care and Protection.
informants are Child Volunteer Advocates, community leaders, and elders in the community.

Selection of Key Informants

National Level

i) At the national level, four key informants were selected from the National Council for Children Secretariat. These included the officers in charge of the major functions for which the National Council for Children was established.

ii) From the list of civil servants in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, two Probation and Welfare officers were selected. Those selected were recommended by the Commissioner of Labour and Social Affairs, and the reason was that they had been involved with establishing the National Council for Children, and were therefore the most knowledgeable in the area, hence likely to provide the most useful information. In addition to these, one retired Probation and Social Welfare Officer from the same department was included among key informants, and the basis for his inclusion was that he was involved with the child welfare system long enough to understand the process.
iii) From a list of non-governmental organizations active in child welfare in Uganda, four were selected, and a key informant was chosen from each. The key informant was the officer in charge of child welfare programmes at the agency.

**District and Sub-County Level**

i) At the district headquarters, four members of the District Planning Committee, who are involved with the District Plan of Action for Children, were selected as participants.

ii) At the recommendation of the District Probation and Welfare officer, two key informants were selected from two of the most active non-governmental organisations operating in the district.

iii) At the sub-county, the sub-county chief was included among the participants, and with his help, three Child Volunteer Advocates were selected. As well, four community members were selected, two of whom were elders within the community. The other two were the local council officers responsible for children's issues (Local Council 1 Vice-Chairmen).
Data Collection

This study relied on interviews and documents and reports as the primary sources of data. The interview method was employed because as acknowledged by Marshal and Rossman (1989), the interview process allows for a wide variety of information and immediate follow up questions.

The study opted for an interview guide, because as a tool, interviews provide the opportunity for the researcher to probe deeply, to uncover new clues to open up new dimensions of a problem and to secure vivid, accurate and inclusive accounts from informants that are based on personal experience (Burgess, 1982). (Interview Guide in Appendix V).

The interviews were one hour in length. The respondents were given the option of suggesting a place where the interview would take place that was appropriate for them. This created ease, and, combined with the semi-structured interview, assumed the appearance of a natural and interesting conversation that was guided and bent to the services of my research agenda.

Before the interview, the respondents were assured of confidentiality, and were then asked for permission to tape-record the interview. Only fifteen (15) respondents consented to this request. Note-taking was preferred by ten (10) respondents, all of whom were officers both at the national and district level. Interviews with seventeen (17) respondents
were conducted in English, while the remaining eight (8) were conducted in the local language (Luganda).

It is important to note that assigning of the respondents by the head creates potential for bias, but there was no way around this. Within the Ugandan context, it is the only way to get access to the people. However, in terms of the content of the interview, I do not feel that this would have in any way distorted the information given.

Documents

This study relied on documents as another source of data. These documents include newspapers, speeches, minutes of meetings, conference papers, reports from relevant ministries, the Uganda National Program of Action for Children reports, and the National Council for Children documents. Important archival sources were found in the Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR), Makerere University Library, and the National Archives.

Data Analysis

The taped responses were transcribed verbatim. In the instances where interviews were conducted in the local language, they were translated into and quoted in English. To
ensure confidentiality, no names are used. Instead, each respondent is identified by a letter of the alphabet.

The interviews were analysed, and units relevant to the focus of the study identified. Responses were grouped under the following major topics; the situation of children; responsibility for children; the role played by the state and NGOs; the Uganda National Programme of Action for Children; the National Council for Children; the District Programmes of Action for Children and the community based approach to services for children.

The documents provided data on government policies and plans for implementing the new approach. The documents were analysed to establish government policy and programmes and their impact on the major topics of study.

Summary

This chapter has explained the data gathering process followed in the study. The participants for the study represent different areas of life: civil service, NGO community, volunteer workers, community elders, and local political leaders. They therefore had different experiences to offer to the study.

The strengths of the methods used in collecting the data have been highlighted. Arguably, semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis were the most appropriate for this
study. The context in which this study was carried out is analysed in the next chapter.
Chapter Four

The Context: Uganda

Introduction

Only through an understanding of the political, economic, and institutional background to present day Uganda would the problems of children and a search for ways of addressing them be fully understood. This chapter therefore examines the social, economic and political changes Uganda has gone through, and presents the present administrative structure in which the problems of children are being addressed.

It is important to note that detail is given to the turbulent post-colonial governments in Uganda in order to bring out the contrast between the present National Resistance Movement (NRM) government which assumed power in 1986, and the post-independence governments up to 1986. The purpose of such detail is to justify the ‘sympathetic’, yet critical views of the government’s effort to address issues affecting children which appear in the analysis chapter of the thesis.

Location

Uganda is a landlocked country lying astride the equator between latitudes 4° North and 1° South, and longitudes 30° East and 35° West. It covers an area of about 241,038 square
kilometres, of which 17% are swamps and water and 12% are forest reserves and National Parks. Uganda shares Lake Victoria, the world's second largest freshwater lake, with Tanzania and Kenya to the south and east; to the west it borders Zaire, to the north is the Sudan, and Rwanda to the southwest (Atlas of Uganda, 1967). The whole of Uganda is in the upper basin of the river Nile which begins its 3,800 mile-long course to the Mediterranean sea here. (For the location of map of Uganda, see appendix I).

Physical Features and Climate

Much of the country lies at 1,000-1,200 metres above sea level, but the relatively flat central and northern plains are interrupted by a number of prominent extinct volcanoes along the country's eastern border, and by the mountains and the lakes of the rift valley in the west. Most of the southern part was covered by equatorial forests which have been cleared due to an increasing demand for settlement as well as cultivation land. The vegetation in most of the northern parts is Savanna grassland.

The annual range of temperature is very small and over the greater part of the country, the mitigating effect of the altitude prevents either excessive heat or excessive cold (Mukherjee, 1985). In no part of Uganda does the temperature reach above 95°F. at any time of the year, while the daily
variation is between 70° F. and 85° F. Rainfall varies somewhat from place to place and from year to year, and there is, on the average, rain in every month with two wetter periods and two drier periods. Being blessed over a large proportion of its area with fertile soils and a reliable rainfall, Uganda is in many ways potentially the richest agricultural producer of the East African countries.

Population

The most recent population and housing census conducted in Uganda in 1991 showed that the country supports a human population of 16.7 million (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 1994). This gives a density of 85 people per square kilometre, and places Uganda in fourth place behind Rwanda, Burundi and Nigeria as one of the most densely populated countries on the African continent (World Resources Institute, 1990). In the context of this study, it is worth noting that in 1991 more than half (53.8%) of the population were children (defined as population under 18 years of age) (1991 Population and Housing census, 1995). Also, 90% of the population live in rural areas, making Uganda one of the least urbanised countries in Africa (after Burundi, Rwanda and Burkina Faso) (World Resources Institute, 1990). Most of the population is concentrated in the Lake Victoria crescent, the western and
south western regions of the country due to fertile soils and plenty of reliable rainfall.

Uganda’s Social Composition

Uganda, before the British rule, was not a single state comprised of one tribe or race. On the contrary, there were many tribes, and in most cases each was independent of the others, possessing its own social organization, language and territory. The concept of Uganda as a nation state, therefore, is a direct result of Uganda’s colonial experience after the British arbitrarily carved out boundaries of today’s Uganda, including within its borders a diversity of tribes who must evolve a common destiny in an indivisible sovereign state. As will be observed later, in drawing the national boundaries, the similarities of the natives was not regarded as important. Rather, the physical features already outlined played a much more important role in determining the demarcations, making Uganda an amalgam of different ethnic groups. The diversity of peoples was used by the colonising power to divide and rule (Mutibwa, 1992). This policy created societies which saw themselves as states within the state, and others were relegated to second-rate positions. The political, educational, economic and social policies that were pursued not only sharpened existing differences, but also introduced
new class formations. Such a situation did not favour the achievement of national unity (Mutibwa, 1992).

Presently, Uganda has more than forty distinct ethnic groupings. The four major ethnic divisions are; the Bantu, the Nilo-Hamites, the Hamites, and the Nilotics. The Bantu constitute 60% of the total population, and occupy the southern half of the country. The Nilotic groups constitute 25% of the population, and occupy the northern region of Uganda.

Despite the influence of urbanisation that facilitated mobility and led to intermingling of some of these groups through migration and intermarriages, Ugandans still value cultural identity both in their private and professional lives (Ofcansky, 1996), and ethnicity remains a key issue in the country's politics.

**Political History**

Uganda obtained her independence from Britain on October 9, 1962 after 68 years of protectorate status. British rule extended over the present territory of Uganda by 1914 and was achieved through force of arms and the signing of Agreements with local rulers (Kiwanuka, 1968). However, as noted by Mutibwa (1992), the British did not invade Uganda in the classic sense of the term. Speke and Grant were the first Britons to visit Uganda in 1862, and their visit had more of
a geographic than a political significance as they were looking for the source of the river Nile. Henry Morton Stanley’s visit had more political significance. It was after his Christianity message to the king of Buganda that an invitation was extended to the Queen of England (Queen Victoria) to send more missionaries to Buganda to teach his people the Christian religion and ‘Western Education’.

The name Uganda which the British gave to their newly acquired territory is significant. It was with the Baganda rulers and people that the British government first established formal relations. It was also the Baganda agents who led the way in setting up centralising administrative structures similar to their own in other parts of Uganda that then British administrators took over.

British missionaries who arrived in 1877 were followed two years later by French Catholics. The king’s court became a battlefield for the two missions, the Church Missionary Society and the White Fathers. The initial grounds for disagreement were religious, but the disagreement did not remain purely religious. The issue at stake was which group would triumph and thus control political sovereignty in Buganda. When the new converts took sides in support of their masters, political divisions in Buganda were emphasized. This degenerated into civil war in 1892 (Mutibwa, 1992). Thus Baganda were the prime Christian converts, and led the way in making denominational allegiance a political issue. The
triumph of one religious group meant that power and influence were disposed and enjoyed according to religious affiliation. This pattern was reproduced throughout the protectorate of Uganda. Catholics, who were in the majority, were relegated to second place status, and Muslims, who had been a considerable power since 1880s, fared even worse. The seeds of religious divisions continue to plague Uganda’s political life.

Not only did religion disrupt the political scene, it also grossly altered peoples’ traditional beliefs and values as is discussed in chapter four. As more and more Ugandans were converted to Christianity, more of their children were educated in mission schools which taught a Christian doctrine in addition to reading, writing and arithmetic. Muslim education emphasized the study of the Qur’an rather than secular education, with the result that very few Muslim children received "modern" education. Under Christian doctrine, schooling depended upon demonstrated conversion to Christianity, and this was through baptism, which entailed a renunciation of their traditional beliefs and customs. The baptism name had to be an English, or a biblical name. The African name was referred to as "the Pagan name", while the baptism name was "the Christian name". The missionaries, especially Protestants, discredited traditional ceremonies such as traditional dances and songs which they labelled as "heathen". Converts were reminded that Christian faith was not compatible with traditional beliefs such as traditional
healers. The effect of these cultural denials was that those people who had converted to christianity and had some education began to occupy positions of power and influence in the christian church as well as government as clergy or clerks. Such people realized that conversion to christianity was not only advisable but a passport to advancement.

In Uganda, religion continues to be used to bring about divisive ideologies among the population (Museveni, 1986, 1988, 1989). As already noted, the church of England was favoured. It was enshrined in the 1900 Agreement that the British made with the Baganda that the king had to be a protestant, and that he could not marry a catholic.

The Baganda, who occupy the districts of central Uganda, have from the beginning of the period of British rule until now held a pivotal position in Uganda's affairs and politics. Their own centralised and hierarchical system of government was easily recognizable to the British and, as agents and collaborators, the Baganda suited the needs of an overstretched, underfinanced and understaffed colonial power. Buganda agents were active in politics and religion in all areas of the territory. However, their role as agents of British imperialism was resisted in some parts, and by 1911, many had been withdrawn (Kiwanuka, 1968).

The Baganda in turn had much to gain from collaborating with the British. They extended their sphere of influence and benefitted educationally, administratively and economically
from having the British set up their seat of government and commerce in Kampala, in the heartland of the Buganda Kingdom.

Another issue that has been a major feature of pre and post independence politics in Uganda is the wish of the Baganda leaders to preserve the integrity of the old kingdom and its primacy. This attitude, coupled with Buganda’s central position in the country, has had a destabilising effect on establishing a unitary state.

Another legacy of British rule with important political consequences for modern Uganda was the demilitarisation of the Bantu speaking people (southerners), and the predominant recruiting into the army of the Nilotic Langi, Acholi and Kakwa who, as they came from non-centralised ethnic groups, posed no obvious threat to British power. The British instead, used them to fight the opposing forces in the south, like the powerful Bunyoro kingdom whose king Kabalega fiercely resisted the British rule. As observed by Mazrui (1988), the placing of a predominance of military power in the hands of a minority has tended to create a power imbalance in the country, and because of this, engineering a substantial enough power base has been a central political problem for political leaders.

Independence, therefore, found a nation already divided along ethnic and religious lines. Catholics and protestants were often at odds as were christians and moslems. Also, tribalism became a factor in Uganda’s politics. The result of all this has been a turbulent social, economic and political
development. Since independence in 1962, there have been seven changes of national leadership (Wiebe et al, 1987). Three of these regimes were removed within a period of less than one year, with some surviving for only six months. This resulted in a lack of leadership commitment, so that each government’s concern was to loot enough national resources to sustain them in exile after being overthrown. These years of crisis gave way to lawlessness. Many adult Ugandans lost their lives which led to an increasing number of orphans.

At independence, Sir Edward Mutesa, the then king of Buganda, became the first president (with no executive powers) after elections. Milton Obote, who was the chairman of the Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC) party which won the majority of seats, was made prime minister. Obote later successfully organised an internal coup which toppled Mutesa. He then became president with executive powers. Due to the central role the Baganda played in Uganda’s politics, Obote’s leadership depended on his Northern Army which included many of his fellow Langi and the neighbouring Acholi. His policies have been described increasingly as ‘encirclement’ and ‘containment’ of Buganda (Mudoola, 1986).

Obote’s regime was overthrown by Idi Amin on January 25, 1971. Under Amin, Uganda witnessed one of the worst ever dictators. Within a year, of his coup, Amin turned on his entire Cabinet and sent them on indefinite leave. He then turned his Kakwa and recently recruited Anya-Nya troops from
Southern Sudan on the Langi and Acholi soldiers. His attempts to gain popularity by courting religious leaders and trying to 'please' Ugandans by expelling the Asians quickly turned sour. He found himself increasingly isolated and vulnerable with an ever decreasing power base.

The political, social and economic situation deteriorated drastically. Every sector of the economy was affected. Basic necessities, like soap and salt, became luxuries. Since the leader was uneducated and had still made it to the top, the attitude to education changed. His terrorism forced many intellectuals into exile, causing severe "brain drain" in various sectors of the economy.

In his famous "Economic War and Africanisation of the Economy", many non Ugandans, mainly Asians, were forced to leave the country. Later, Amin became a threat to all expatriates, and they fled the country. The Asians had been key actors in the business sector; their expulsion left a large gap in the economy. Businesses were taken over by his supporters who grossly mismanaged them.

There was a great opposition to Amin's regime, particularly from the elite who regarded him as an illegitimate and illiterate ruler. His response in the face of widespread hostility and economic collapse was to use force and terror tactics to stay in control. It is estimated that under Amin's terrorism, about 300,000 people were killed (Weibe and Dodge, 1986). It was mainly adult males that were
victims, leaving behind widows and orphans. His reign of terror, aimed at consolidating his position, printed a bad image on the international scene. As a result, bilateral aid was withdrawn and multilateral aid was reduced.

In 1979, Amin was overthrown by a combined force of Ugandan exiles and Tanzanian government troops through what was popularly called "the Liberation War". However, while the country was liberated from a dictator, the moral decay his regime had caused was to take a long time to clean up. The country experienced the worst looting ever. Infrastructure, already in a sorry state, was destroyed further, shops were looted and personal property vandalised and destroyed. In addition, the regimes of 'the liberators' who succeeded Amin did not put things in order, but continued the vicious circle of chaos (Mutibwa, 1992).

A new government, under the leadership of Professor Yusuf Lule, was established in April 1979. This lasted just sixty eight days. It was taken over by Godfrey Binaisa, who has been accused of being overly concerned with maintaining himself in power and enriching himself and his cronies (Mutibwa, 1992; Omara-Otunnu, 1987).

Binaisa's regime was replaced by a military Council headed by Paulo Muwanga, who organised multi-party elections that brought Obote back to power in 1980. The results of the elections were disputed widely and several political leaders, including those who had liberated the country, retreated into
rebel activities to press for a change of national leadership. The rebel leader was Museveni, the current president. He made his base in what came to be popularly known as the 'Luwero triangle', which is located in the central region. Baganda's deep rooted hatred for Obote was a key factor in the success of the rebel movement.

Under Obote's second regime, Uganda experienced terrorism similar to that under Amin. In trying to clear the area of rebel activity, government soldiers assumed all civilians were involved, and killings were indiscriminate. The next five years is generally assumed to have been almost as devastating in loss of life as the Amin period, with an estimated 200,000-300,000 people killed primarily in the Luwero Triangle. The orphan census of under eighteens in Luwero in 1989 was 16,575 which was six percent of the under eighteen population (Dunn et al, 1991). Not only were children orphaned, but many families became displaced and lost family members. The number of uncared for children increased, and there was a corresponding increase in the number of children in institutions.

By 1985, the government army was divided, and the Commander turned his Acholi troops against Obote's Langi. In a coup led by disgruntled Acholi military officers, Obote fled, and the Army Commander, Tito Okello, was installed as the new president. The coup, however, created more problems for the leadership than it tried to solve. It split the
government forces; this became an advantage to Museveni. In fact, in the second half of 1985, Uganda was divided between the part under control of the government in Kampala and another under the National Resistance Army/Movement.

The Okello-Lutwa's regime lasted only six months. After six years of guerrilla warfare, the National Resistance Army under Museveni's leadership gained victory on January 26, 1986. Since then, there has been relative security in the country, although the ethnic differences continue to plague Uganda. The predominantly Nilotic army, which fled after the 1986 NRAs victory, continues to cause suffering to the civilians in the northern areas. This has greatly affected social service delivery in these areas, and some schools have closed because children are abducted from school and subjected to all forms of torture.

The insecurity is also caused by the fragmentation of so many armies prior to the 1986 war. This resulted in easy availability of arms for disaffected groups, leading to a proliferation of rebel movements and bandit gangs which the present army has found extremely hard to overcome.

Nevertheless, despite the banditry activities in some parts of the north, the present government has indicated it is an advocate of human rights and offers a political climate stable enough to consider the revision of policies that affect the welfare of children. Further, unlike the past when the army represented torture and/or death, the present army
punishes severely those who step outside its strict disciplinary code (Low, 1988). The political wing of the army, the NRM (National Resistance Movement), on coming to power, set out its aims in a ten point programme that supports participatory democracy and recognizes the importance of "an independent and integrated and self-sustaining national economy" built on self-reliance (NRM Manifesto, 1986).

Mudoola (1988) has described Ugandan politics between 1962 and 1986 as "a case study in institutional pathology, characterised by an ideologically fragmented elite unable or incapable of working out viable political formulas to neutralise local conflicts, and by social-political forces completely out of joint" (Mudoola, 1988, p.294). From what has already been outlined, there has been a lack of political values common to all players that could sustain the system without force. The present government's aim, since it took over power, has been to try to achieve a consensus through its policies and broad-based government.

The NRM government has pursued a policy of involving people in affairs that affect them. One significant step towards this was the involvement of people in the making of a new constitution, an exercise completed in 1995. The new constitution gives the people the mandate to decide in a referendum the form of political system wanted after the five year term of office for the current leader expires in the year 2000. For the last ten years, party politics, which are
considered a major factor that divided the country especially since allegiance to a party depended on one’s religion and tribe, have been suspended. The first direct presidential election held in May 1996 gave the incumbent overwhelming support (75%) which could well indicate that the present political structure is more acceptable to the majority of Ugandans than the multi-party politics.

The Present Political Structure

In its Ten Point Programme, the first point of the NRM government is "to create a local government system that would be democratic, participatory, efficient and development-oriented" (NRM Manifesto, 1986). It also promises that the new system would provide communities with an opportunity to take charge of their destiny through local institutions of self governance and resource mobilization. In pursuing this objective, the government established local councils and committees (then referred to as Resistance Councils and Committees until the constituent assembly changed the term to Local Councils and Committees), with powers to make autonomous decisions regarding local affairs. Local Councils and Committees are rural and urban political subdivisions below the national level which are constituted by law and have substantial control of local affairs. The Local Councils were given recognition in 1987 by the Resistance Council statute.
This statute legalized their existence and integrated them into a local government system. The development of the Local Council structure from the village, LC I, culminating in the National Council is an effort to blend the traditional style of government with modern democratic principles.

Description of Local Councils and Committees

The Village Local Council (LC I)

The village council consists of all persons residing in that particular locality or village. The number of people which should compose a council is not specified. Non Ugandans are also included in the village council, but are not eligible to be voted for. The members of the council elect nine members from among the residents that are eligible to be voted for as an executive committee.

The Parish Council (LC II)

The elected executive committee of nine members are delegates to the parish council. Therefore, all village executive committee members within a parish constitute a parish council (LC II). The parish council members elect from amongst themselves nine people who are the executive committee.
Sub-County Council (LC III)

This consists of all executive committee members of parish councils in the sub-county. The Sub-County Council members elect from amongst themselves a nine member executive committee.

County Council (LC IV)

The sub-county executive committees within a county constitute a county council. It is at this level that one woman representative is elected to the district council. In addition to one woman representative, each sub-county council (LC III) elects two representatives to the district council (LC V).

District Council (LC V)

One woman representative to this council is sent by LC IV, and two other people by LC III councils. If there are six counties in a district, each with four sub-counties, LC V will have a total of fifty four members, from whom nine people will be elected to the executive committee.

The following chart gives the structure of Local Councils and Committees in diagram form:
Chart 1. STRUCTURE OF LOCAL COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES

PARLIAMENT

DISTRICT COUNCIL LC (V)
(a) Every sub-county and Town Council elect two representatives from amongst themselves to the District Council.
(b) Every county and municipal council elect one woman representative from among themselves.

COUNTY COUNCIL (LC IV)
All sub-county executive committees in a county form a county council.

SUB-COUNTY COUNCIL LC (III)
All parishes' executive committees in a sub-county form a sub-county council.

PARISH COUNCIL LC (II)
All members of the village executive committee in a parish form a parish council.

VILLAGE LOCAL COUNCIL LC (I)
All Ugandans (who ordinarily reside) in a village that are above the age of 18 years are members of the council and are eligible to vote.
Composition of a Local Committee

As described above, a Local Committee of nine members is elected from the members of a Local Council. A Local Committee, as per section 10 of the Resistance Councils and Committee Statute (1987), consists of the following: Chairman; Vice-chairman (and Secretary for Children's Welfare as of 1994; General Secretary; Secretary for Youth; Secretary for Women; Secretary for Information; Secretary for Mass Mobilization and Education; Secretary for Defence and Secretary for Finance.

The Secretary for Women, representing women's concerns, must be a woman. Women in theory, therefore, have more chances than men in representation on the Committee, though their participation is hampered by other factors which will be discussed in a later chapter.

Powers and Functions of Local Councils and Committees

Statute 9 Section 6 of the Resistance Councils and Committees Statute establishes a Resistance Council as a policy-making organ within its area of jurisdiction and, in particular, the Council shall,

(a) identify local problems and find solutions thereto;
(b) formulate and review development plans;
(c) at the District level, pass annual estimates;
(d) make by-laws in accordance with section 26 of the RCs statute;
(e) perform such other functions as may be delegated to it by the minister (Resistance Councils and Committees Statute, 1987, p. 79).

The powers and functions of a Resistance Committee are stipulated in Part 1 Section 14 of the RCs Statute 1987. It states that:

a Resistance Committee shall be responsible for the implementation of the policies and decisions made by its Resistance Council, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing shall,

(a) assist the police and chiefs in the maintenance of law and order;
(b) maintain security in the area;
(c) encourage, support and participate in self-help projects and mobilise people, material and technical assistance in relation thereto;
(d) at village and parish levels, vet and recommend persons in the area who should be recruited into the armed forces, Police Force and Prisons Service;
(e) serve as the communication channel between the Government and the people in the area;
(f) oversee the implementation of Government policy in the area;
(g) where necessary, elect ad-hoc and other sub-committees to assist the Resistance Committee in its functions;
(h) at sub-county level, elect members of the Tax Assessment Committee; and
(i) generally monitor the administration in its area and report to the appropriate authority any incidents of mal-administration, corruption and misuse of government property (The RC Statute, 1987, Section 14, Part 1, p. 83).

Parallel to the LC system is an administrative structure headed by the District Executive Secretary who is responsible for the activities of civil servants, many of whom are representatives of central ministries.
The significance of outlining this political and administrative structure is that it provides the framework in which policy is implemented. The elaboration also is aimed at showing the policies of the current government regarding problem identification and delivery of services at the local and regional levels. With respect to problems affecting children, it is significant that provision is made for Secretary for Children’s Welfare at every level.

Summary

This chapter has outlined the context in which the issue of this study is being examined. The main arguments have been that: a) the partitioning of Africa during the colonisation process greatly altered social organisation; b) the introduction of foreign religions undermined the traditional institutions which were crucial for maintaining a healthy ‘Garden’; c) religion contributed to social division; d) external influence, especially the colonial policies of divide and rule, is a major factor in Uganda’s past and present efforts to deal with social and economic problems affecting children; and e) the philosophy and policies of the present government indicate that it has provided a structure that it can use to identify and deal with child welfare problems.

The latter argument is elaborated by a discussion of the present political structure which emphasizes involvement of people in all matters that affect them. It has established
Local Councils and Committees that will work alongside existing institutions. The emphasis on community involvement has the potential for re-engaging the community in dealing with child welfare problems. Thus the government has adopted a communitarian approach to development, an approach that recognizes the need to organize the people to take control of their lives.

The chapter has discussed the turbulent history Uganda has gone through, with a view that this will provide an understanding of the factors that contributed to the problems of children in Uganda, and the reasons for the difficulties in dealing with them. Presently, Uganda is attempting a communitarian approach to tackle children's problems, but the impact of a modernisation approach on communities, which led to many years of suffering and insufficient social services, is likely to make the implementation of this approach difficult. Also, the many years of suffering due to persistent political strife created a 'resigned attitude' within the people, and organising them is likely to be a slow and difficult process.

To understand the traditional communal practices that the government is attempting to reestablish, it is important that such practices be analysed in order to identify the positive aspects. This is dealt with in the next chapter which discusses the ways in which children were provided for in Ugandan communities before external influences set in.
Chapter Five

Child Welfare Provision in Pre-Colonial Communities in Uganda

Introduction

In this chapter, the traditional forms of child welfare provision are discussed. The discussion centres on the nature of relationships that existed in communities before colonial intervention, and the effect this had on children and families in general. It is important to note, that details about the early pre-colonial period are sketchy and based largely on archaeological findings and oral traditions (Ofcansky, 1996; MacPherson and Midgley, 1987). Of significance also is the acknowledgement that, naturally, there was much variation in the indigenous societies of Uganda, but they had certain common features distinct from those of the money economies which affected them (Widstrand, 1979).

Historical Background

Pre-colonial Uganda, like most of African societies, was mainly characterised by a low level of development of the productive forces (Mair, L. 1944; MacPherson & Midgley, J. 1987). The majority of people were engaged in subsistence agriculture, which provided them with the necessities of life. Great extremes of wealth were very uncommon. A barter economy was the rule (Mair, L. 1944). Barter enabled people to acquire
foodstuffs that they could not grow on their land. There were also credit systems, where people could acquire foodstuffs in times of shortages, and were expected to pay back when things got better. Children were direct beneficiaries from such collective endeavours. As Wandira (1971) notes, "Children were looked at as the young trees that were to grow into a forest hence the need for proper nourishment to aid their growth" (Mbiti, 1971, p. 203).

The availability of land, which was very fertile in most areas, coupled with a good climate rendered threats of famine unlikely. Since societal welfare overrode individualism, families that faced starvation probably resulting from a poor harvest, were saved by the rest of the society. Walter Goldschmidt (1976) emphasizes this observation; that no person was indifferent to the welfare of his clansman, however much he may be in personal conflict with them.

The main source of wealth in all societies was human labour; mutual assistance and cooperation was an essential ethic of indigenous communities. Most societies were organised on a communal basis, including ownership of property, while its production was basically collective. The spirit of cooperation was very natural to the people's way of life (MacPherson, S. & Midgley, J. 1987; Kayongo-Male & Onyango, P. 1984; Mair, L 1944; Widstrand, 1970). This collectivism is noted by Mair (1944):
The family, rather than the individual, was the economic unit. Activities needing more labour than a single family could supply, such as house building and sometimes also work in the fields such as sowing or harvesting, were carried out in cooperation by groups of kinsfolk or neighbours. The aged and sick were cared for by their relations (Mair, 1944, p. 42).

Thus, the pattern of social relations in pre-colonial societies put primary emphasis on group responsibility for welfare. Communalism and collective effort in the organisation of societies was the dominant theme. The overarching power of kinship ties in social relations provided an effective framework for the organisation and management of the household economy (MacPherson, & Midgley, 1987). Individual needs in the society were part of the wider society. The argument was that self-sufficiency as western culture demands was not enough. Anyone who did not depend on a group was regarded as having a solitary, poor and brutal life (Beatie, 1964).

Due to the unavailability of health facilities and lack of medicines, the health situation in pre-colonial societies was largely inadequate. Epidemics and childhood killer diseases like measles, tetanus, respiratory tract infections, diarrhoeal diseases, combined to hold infant and child mortality at high levels. Some of the diseases were a direct cause of certain cultural beliefs and practices. Among the Bafumbira for example, tetanus was usually acquired after burning the skin of a newly born infant to make two vertical
straight lines on each side of the face, which was considered a mark for beauty.

The high infant and child mortality rate explained why families believed in having many children as well as firmly believing in institutions like polygamy, to minimise the proportion of dead children against the survivors.

It is important to note, however, that herbs and other traditional medicines were used in pre-colonial societies, and such medicine had some efficacy in fighting diseases and ailments. The use of some of the medicines continued even after the introduction of modern medicine which reflects their effectiveness.

Pre-colonial Family Form

The predominant family form in pre-colonial Uganda was polygamous. Since the dominant model of traditional marriage was one of a process that established a socially sanctioned relationship and created an alliance between kin groups and lineages (Anastasia J. Gage-Brandon, 1993), children had a wide safety cushion in the event of any disruption in the family. Like most of Africa, polygamy in Uganda is the undoubted goal of men in rural society (Southall, 1961). This is a built-in value for societies based on patrilineal descent groups, and Uganda is an exclusively patrilineal society. Expansion of the descent group is a positive indication and in
patrilineal societies, polygamy improves chances of numerous progeny. A large progeny was the key determinant of a man's social prestige, political power and economic prosperity. His ability to expand his control over land and his production of food and livestock largely depended on the number of women farmers whose agricultural and domestic labour he could mobilise (Hay and Stichter, 1984).

The settlement arrangements were such that the man built a hut for each of the wives, and for the majority of polygamous families, all the women shared a compound. There were cases, however, where the man would have different homes in different places, sometimes with great distances between the homes. This, however, depended on his wealth, and was common among chiefs, who had wives in the different corners of their territory. The union of the relationships was usually cemented by the exchange of bride wealth (Radcliffe-Brown, 1950).

Pre-colonial Society and the Child

The nature of pre-colonial society provided a warm and affectionate atmosphere of human contacts in which children lived. Mutual responsibility was common to most societies. Traditional groups (nuclear or extended family, clan, blood pact brothers), always provided protection for their members
against contingencies of sickness, old age, widowhood, disablement and orphanhood.

Community members including children were protected through social control mechanisms based on norms and values of the society. Such control mechanisms were applied to effect social order. Deviants to such norms were heavily penalised through fines, ostracism and death penalty in severe cases. Where it was felt necessary, capital punishment was used by elders to alert the young generation about the gravity of particular cases (Nzita & Mbaga-Niwampa, 1993). For instance, among the Bakiga, girls who became pregnant before marriage were thrown over a cliff to die (Nzita & Mbaga-Niwampa, 1993). Among the Bafumbira, a similar form of severe punishment was administered. Girls who became pregnant were taken to the forest and abandoned. It was believed that this would serve as a deterrent to other young girls, since pre-marital sex was abhorred in these societies, and illegitimate children were unacceptable. The fear of such cruel punishments prompted the girl's mother to use every possible means to induce abortion if she found out about the pregnancy before other community members. Most of the methods used were also equally brutal, and would sometimes cause death of the mother and the child.

It was the responsibility of every adult member to ensure that children performed to the expectations of the society's norms and values. It was also their responsibility to protect all the children from any kind of vulnerability.
Another control mechanism was the institution of taboos in traditional societies. It was believed that whoever violated norms and values of the society, tragedy would befall him. One of the taboos that protected children, especially girl children was incest taboo which prohibits sexual relationship between members of the same blood relationship. The significance of this was that it minimised cases of defilement. If the offence of defilement was ever committed, a big fine had to be imposed and rituals performed before the culprits would be accepted back in their society.

Value of Children

The value pre-colonial communities attached to children contributed to their well being. The desire to have many children that was deeply rooted in Ugandan traditional culture contributed to children’s protection. Male children were seen as an assurance of the continuity of the clan, while female children were seen as a source of wealth, especially in communities where the institution of bridewealth was highly upheld (Mandelbaum-Edel, 1957).

In his study of the Banyankole, Roscoe (1929) acknowledges the desire of every woman to marry and have children, for an unmarried woman had no standing in society. A woman’s most important social role was to bear and rear children for her husband and his lineage.
Likewise, it was considered a curse for a man to die childless, and if this happened, the man was buried as a child. This was considered a disgrace. A lot of emphasis was placed on procreation as the chief end of marriage.

Mbiti (1969) sums up this point: "To die without getting married and without children is to be completely cut off from the human society, to become disconnected, to become an outcast and to lose all links with mankind" (Mbiti, 1969, p. 134).

Children were a source of prestige and earned respect for their parents. Among most societies, failure of a couple to have children was blamed on the woman (Mandelbaum-Edel, 1958; Goldschmidt, 1967). Mandelbaum-Edel (1958) observes that among the Bakiga, "A childless woman had a lower status in everyone's eyes for her failure to give her husband children" (Mandelbaum-Edel, 1958, p. 72).

Barrenness was attributed to various causes, including the breaking of some taboo, special medicines which were administered to "tie" her (that is, to prevent conception) by those who did not wish her to have children, or to some error in the performance of marriage ceremonies (Mandelbaum-Edel, 1958). Thus to prove her "womanhood", every woman was anxious to show signs of pregnancy as soon as possible after her marriage. As soon as she conceived, a medicine man was consulted, and drugs would be given to drink daily. This was done to prevent a miscarriage. Among the Baganda, a pregnant
mother was accorded special care. Lucy Mair (1934) notes among
the Baganda, that in most instances, the husband called one of
his elderly female relations to come and look after his wife
until the child was born. In all cases, it was the husband’s
clan who were specially interested in the pregnancy. They
looked after the mother, and made her do whatever they
considered to be best for the unborn infant (Mair, 1934). An
expectant mother must not step over the feet of a man, for it
was thought that doing so might kill the unborn infant. Any
visits by an expectant mother had to be escorted by a boy from
the man’s clan, whose duty it was to beat the grass on either
side of the path, if it was a narrow one, in order to take
away any evil effects which a man passing beforehand might
have left behind. There were other contacts which were
considered harmful to the unborn child, including contact
with, or seeing an unhealthy and weak child, wild animals such
as monkeys, and laughing at a lame person. To minimize the
effect of such incidence, it was deemed wise to keep wives
within an enclosure and to limit the right of access thereto,
so that all influences on the unborn child might be for good.

A number of taboos had to be observed by the pregnant
woman during the whole period. She was not allowed to eat
certain kinds of food; salt was also forbidden, and she was
given a substitute. Certain kinds of staple foods were also
forbidden, and she had to drink a little water before she ate
any food to prevent the food from scalding the child in the womb.

The above precautions taken during a woman’s pregnancy seem to suggest that the preoccupation was with the health of the unborn child rather than that of the mother, though the latter was the only means by which the child could be protected. One reason why children were highly valued was because they were regarded as a source of labour, which was much needed to ensure survival in the otherwise harsh environment. They were also desired as a means of ensuring perpetuity of lineages. Thus all societies were interested in procreation and child upbringing, and various taboos and customs were observed in the process. Children were an assurance that the future of the family was not at stake. This was more so for male children, because descent was traced through the father’s lineage. Parents would bring pressure to bear on their sons for the sake of continuing the lineage (Marris, 1961).

In all societies where the institution of bride wealth was a pre-condition for marriage, it indirectly served as child-price, because its payment gave the man legitimate rights over the wife’s fertility. As noted by Radcliffe-Brown (1950), an African man marries because he wants children. In other societies, its payment served primarily to determine the status of children of the marriage (Mandlebaum-Edel, 1958). Bride wealth was so linked to children that in some societies,
in the case of the death of a woman without children, cattle had to be returned, or another wife had to replace her in order to fulfil the function for which bride wealth was paid. Goldschmidt (1967) observed among the Sebei of eastern Uganda that if a woman died in her first child birth, the dowry was returned (or another girl was given to the man). A similar situation is noted by Mandelbaum-Edel (1958) among the Bakiga of south-western Uganda, "Should a wife die young and childless, having failed to perform her expected functions, her family had some obligation to make it up to the husband by giving him her sister in marriage" (Mandelbaum-Edel, 1958, p.77).

Child bearing was, therefore, the most paramount function expected of every woman upon marriage. Among the Bafumbira, if there was no girl to replace the deceased bride, bride wealth had to be returned if the man’s family wished.

In most societies, the presence of children, particularly infants, made for special complications in divorce. Since the transfer of rights in children was permanent in most societies, women might well endure great hardship in order to retain the right to remain with their children. A woman was not allowed to take any of the children with her; they belonged to her husband’s family, and she had no right to them except as a member of that family. Mandelbaum-Edel, (1958) notes, "If a woman left to ‘marry somewhere’, whether during her husband’s life time or after his death, she must leave her
children behind. If children were left motherless, their father expected his other wives to feed them."

A similar situation is noted among the Baganda by Mair (1934):

If a man divorced his wife, she was not allowed to take her child with her; it belonged to the husband, it was his duty to look after it as best he could. A mother, who was nursing her child, would tear it away from her breast, and pass it to her husband saying, 'Take your child' (Mair, 1934).

Such child custody rules, which required the woman to leave her children in cases of separation, explains why divorce was very rare, despite serious conjugal difficulties. Bride wealth as child-price has been widely documented (Mair, 1977; 1934; Kuper, 1982; Mandelbaum-Edel, 1958; Goody, 1971). Even if there are changes in customary norms governing the formation of marriage, the attitudes emphasizing child bearing as a woman's primary role in society remain very strong.

Lucy Mair (1934) attributes such separation of a child from the mother as lack of real love, but this biased attitude is typical of the early writers on traditional practices in foreign cultures, especially in Africa. Separation of the child from the mother in case of separation was purely because children belonged to the father in a patrilineal society. They never lost all contact with their natural mothers as they grew up. That their mother had left to marry some one else was not kept secret from the children, who received the same kind of
treatment as the other children in the father's household. In any case, most children were sent to live with the father's relatives even when the marriage was stable. For those who understand the usefulness of clan identity, raising the child in the father's clan was in the child's best interests. Even in societies where a child who was still breast feeding was allowed to go with the mother upon divorce, she or he was brought back to the father's home as soon as the nursing stopped. Among the Bakiga, some children were brought up by their maternal grandmothers, especially when a second child was born before the former baby had grown up. For the sake of the children, a man would continue relations with his wife's family even after her death or divorce (Mandelbaum-Edel, 1958).

Children were highly valued, and occupied a very special position in the family, since after all the presence of the child justified the family's existence. The polygamous family, as already indicated, provided the child with a wide safety cushion. Since most work was done communally, it was the responsibility of every member in the compound to ensure that the child was well protected. Of course this extended family context, was not always idyllic; at times jealousies and rivalry between the co-wives could be hurtful to the child. This, however, depended on the male head within the family, and once again, the source of conflict was mainly which woman had more children, especially male children. It is ironic
that, while the female children had an 'economic value' of bride wealth, having only female children was considered an unfortunate situation. This was because continuity of the lineage was threatened.

The strict rules of child custody, which made it very difficult for women to divorce, was beneficial for children in most cases. The families remained intact, though in most cases the woman received less support from the husband. The children, however, were brought up among their own, and this was considered very valuable to them. Since the children belonged to the man's lineage, in the event of death of the parents, responsibility for the care of children rested with the man's relatives. The immediate family, and the wider clan had the traditional obligation to look after 'their own'. The traditional practice in most societies was widow inheritance by a younger brother of the deceased, or another junior member of the late husband's family (Ankrah, 1993; Mandelbaum-Edel, 1958; Fallers, 1929). Children therefore always had a father figure even after the father's death. In the event of the mother's death, the practice in most societies was for the child to be looked after by the late mother's relatives, who would bring the child back to the father's family when considered of a 'safe age'. This, however, depended on particular tribes, and is a practice that cannot be generalised.
Child Rearing Practices

Child rearing was a communal and collective duty with emphasis on discipline and etiquette. The latter was a very important element in education. The phrases of greeting and farewell were taught to children before they could speak, and they were drilled in the correct gestures—to kneel and put their hands in the stranger's (Mair, 1934). Kneeling was emphasized among the Baganda, and it spread to other areas because of Baganda's influence over the other tribes resulting from the British administration.

Children were trained to take their place as citizens by watching their elders at work and gradually sharing more and more in the various tasks (Mair, L. 1944). Girls spent more time with their mothers, while boys spent time watching their fathers at work (Wandira, 1971). Since the needs of the time were generally simple, they did not require sophisticated skills to satisfy them. Consequently, not much time was spent explaining to the children about the relevant skills. They learned by watching elders work, and eventually participating.

The welfare of the child was the concern and responsibility of the entire community rather than parents' alone. Blakemoore and Cooksey (1981) observed that in traditional African societies, it was the responsibility of every adult in the village to play mother or father roles in scolding, instructing, advising or rewarding children. They
further note that this was reflected in the general use of immediate family terms (mother, father, brother, sister) to other villagers whether related or not.

It was taboo or unheard of for any particular parent to claim monopoly rights over the maintenance or disciplining of a child. All children were cared for by the communal society through its extended family system. In some societies, illegitimacy was never a reason for neglecting a child. Once paternity was directly acknowledged or inferred, the child became a full member of his or her father's clan and could even inherit from the father. Even orphans or children whose paternity was questioned would belong to their maternal family where they suffered no discrimination and would be absorbed into the extended family system. In short, the situation was such that children born during pre-colonial era enjoyed some kind of social security where risks of neglect, child abuse, or being in need of care and protection were minimal.

In his work on religion and philosophy in Africa, Mbiti (1969) explains that in traditional society, children were trained for the welfare of the whole society. The spirit of communalism was inculcated into them from early childhood. The transition from childhood to maturity was accomplished in accordance with long established and accepted practices and rituals. Wandira (1971) asserts that such communal responsibility introduced children into the limelight of social and economic activity. Both Mbiti (1969) and Wandira
(1971) agree that the system of child care and development was concentrated on ensuring that the children learned the values cherished by the societies in which they lived.

Guardianship of children in some societies was not restricted to the biological parents (Mair, 1934; Mandelbaum-Edel, 1958; Fallers, 1929; Roscoe, 1924). In her anthropological study of the Baganda, Mair (1934) observed a common practice where a child would be sent away from its own parents to the household of some relative of the father. The motives for this practice are so varied that it is difficult to find a single underlying reason for the custom. Among the reasons were the need "to hold the clan together", if the child was brought up by the father's brother; assurance of a strict upbringing if the guardian was the father's sister. Such assurance of a strict upbringing was because of all relatives, the father's sister was held in great respect and awe, for it was believed she could make a curse effective during her lifetime. This indicates that the motives for the practice were not always the same. In the paternal aunt's home, where strict upbringing was expected, the motive was interest in the child's own future and a wish to secure the child a sound upbringing and therefore opportunities of advancement. The other motive lies in the recognition of mutual obligations between relatives and the desire to strengthen the bonds of kinship in a concrete manner, since
such a child could easily be selected as the heir of his father’s brother even when he had his own sons.

Thus it was a commonly held view that the father’s brother was the same as the father, and hence no doubt that he would be kind to the child. In her anthropological study, Mair (1934) revealed that ill-treatment in such cases was considered so unlikely that no one had many ideas as to what would be done; there was simply a general feeling that such a situation would be very disgraceful.

While adult members were all involved in the disciplining of children, authority within the household rested on the man. In some families, however, as a matter of course, most discipline and decisions about daily details of the child’s life were in the mother’s hands, but major control was still the father’s.

Writing about authority patterns among the Baganda, Richards, (1964) reveals the overwhelming authority the father had over his whole household. He notes,

In traditional Buganda, the father expected deference and often abject humility from his wife and children and from other members of his household. A wife was expected to be submissive and obedient to her husband. She knelt to greet him on his return from a walk or an expedition and was prepared to bring him water to wash his feet. She spoke to him in a low voice of respect and unhesitatingly obeyed his commands, at any rate in the presence of visitors. He had the best of food, which was prepared to his special liking and kept waiting at his wish. The wife sat with the children, either alone on a verandah at the back of the house or at one end of the long mat which
served as a dinner table to the family (Richards, 1964, p. 257).

It was the mother’s responsibility to ensure that girls learned the "proper behaviour", otherwise they would be a disgrace in society, and the mother would carry the blame. Thus, there is much evidence in the literature that suggests quite sharp differences between the rearing of boys and that of girls (Mandelbaum-Edel, 1958; Richards, 1964; Roscoe, 1929; Mair, 1934; Beatie, 1964). In all societies, modesty is one point about which women were self-conscious, and in which little girls were actually drilled. They were required to sit in a particular manner, being very careful to tuck their legs under when they sat. Among the Bakiga, girls were not supposed to whistle, or eat eggs, or goats' meat. Even in dancing, she was expected to dance like a girl (Mandelbaum-Edel, 1958). Every girl had before her the example of the good woman: quiet and modest, yet self-reliant; fulfilling her social role with dignity, though always in formal subordination to her husband. Woman's subordinate role was sharply institutionalised; any young girl knew that a woman may not own property or take part in marriage negotiations. She saw how her mother deferred to her father's wishes, and heard the neighbours tease a young bride who forgot to call her husband "master" and used his name instead. (Mandelbaum-Edel, 1958). Such do's and don'ts produced shyness in girls as they grew up. They were never able to assert themselves in the company of the opposite sex.
Boys were less given reason for shame than girls, and they got a very different picture of the role they were to play, and the ideal ways of playing it. Thus a boy easily learned his right to be boss and whom he may boss (Mandelbaum-Edel, 1958). Boys would even get this assurance by watching the manner in which girls were taught. Roscoe (1929) notes that among the Bakiga, a girl was brought up in the belief that her husband was to be her lord and master and that she had no choice, but to submit.

Not only were there sharp differences in the girls' and boys' behavioral training, but also in their responsibilities. In almost all societies, the major responsibility accorded to boys was herding cattle (Mair, 1934; Mandelbaum-Edel, 1958; Goldschmidt, 1976; Roscoe, 1929). This was a group activity, and boys had a free and happy life while herding lasted. They had ample time for all kinds of games, or even to take a nap while the cows browsed. Thus the herd-boy learned the man's approach to work, relaxed and leisurly, and broken by jokes or a song.

Unlike boys' work, the girl's work was neither relaxed nor joint work. Like the behavioral influence from the mother, a girl learned early that women worked hard and had a kind of puritan attitude toward work. Among the Bakiga, this was grounded in their economy, which assigned to women the essential productive tasks and left them largely masters of their working time.
In his study of the culture and behaviour of the Sebei, Goldschmidt (1976) observed that children were expected to handle serious chores, and were inducted into their responsibilities with stern measures from their earliest years. He also noted differences between the tasks assigned to girls and boys,

When a woman goes away from home, she may leave a girl of four or five. She gives her a small gourd to fetch water and tells her to sweep the house, bring firewood, collect vegetables and look after the younger children. A few years later when the girl is seven or eight, she will start to dig in the gardens. She will start to cook and make the fire by the time she is eight. She is taught to do exactly as her mother does, so that when the mother goes anywhere, she will return home to find the work done. Mothers are concerned that their daughters learn proper housekeeping so that their husbands will not beat them for neglecting their duties, and so it will not be said that they failed to learn proper behaviour from their mother (Goldschmidt, 1976).

Contrary to the heavy tasks that were required of a girl at such an early age, the principle chore of boys in the same society was herding cattle, and sometimes ploughing fields.

A variety of measures were used to enforce respect. While the mother was pre-occupied with what kind of manners the children would have, especially the girls, disciplining the children fell under the father's overwhelming authority. Nevertheless, in polygamous families, where the father was not always present, mothers carried out the disciplinary measures
themselves, including threatening the undisciplined child with the father’s wrath.

A variety of punishments were administered, caning being the most commonly used. Older children would sometimes be deprived of food, locked out of the house to sleep in the cold, or given hard work (Minturn, 1964; Mandelbaum-Edel, 1958; Richards, 1964). The punishments used, particularly exclusion from the house and food deprivation, were often ineffective in some societies because children would simply go next door and stay in the house of their grandmother, or mother’s co-wife. Women did not feel that they must back up each others’ discipline and would always feed a child who came to them (Minturn, 1964).

Some punishments were extreme, like burning of hands in the fire for stealing, or rubbing the child’s naked body with a stinging plant, or tying their hands to a rafter with their feet touching the floor. None the less, such punishments had to be accepted without rancour, especially if they were administered by the father (Richards, 1964). This attitude was supported by a common proverb in most societies; "To beat a child is not to hate it" (Richards, 1964, p. 261). It was thought important that children should accept punishment meekly and even gratefully. A child was expected to fetch a stick for his own beating, to lie down humbly before the father and to bear no grudge for the punishment (Richards,
1964). Unlike work responsibilities, both boys and girls were given the same punishments.

**Traditional care for the Deprived Children**

It has already been emphasized that all adult members of the society cared for the young. However, there were children who, either from the loss of their parents, or being born in unacceptable societal conditions, constituted a special category of children. The arrangement and quality of care for such children differed from one society to another. What was common in the care for these children in all societies was reliance on the extended family system. A description of the traditional care for deprived children in five societies exemplifies this.

These societies are selected due to the availability of literature on their traditional customs, because they were among the first to come in contact with foreigners, and therefore to be studied by the anthropologists and missionaries. They are also the biggest tribes in Uganda, and for historical and other reasons, each of them has had influence on neighbouring tribes in terms of language, customs and practices.

Among the Baganda, if the parents died leaving young children, the latter were not deprived of the services available for other children within the society. When the man
died, his brothers or other relatives protected and reared the children. In such cases, the father's brother would be treated like the father (Richards, 1964; Mair, 1934). The widow and her children stayed in the home to keep the property until her sons grew to adulthood. The eldest son was the true heir, and could therefore take over all the deceased father's property. A girl could never become an heir, and if the father did not leave any son behind, then an heir would have to be selected from his brother's children, or any member of the clan.

Children born out of wedlock were also provided for in either the extended family of their mothers or that of their fathers, the latter being only possible if the putative father accepted that he was responsible for the pregnancy. If the man who made the girl pregnant refused to marry her, the parents of the girl would look after the child. This willingness to care for children born out of wedlock did not mean that premarital pregnancies were easily accepted. Though not as harsh as the Bakiga, the Baganda also considered it disgraceful for an unmarried girl to become pregnant. When this happened, the girl could not have any contact with her parents until the child was born. She must cook her own food and eat it alone, living in a temporary hut built for the purpose (Mair, 1934).

Like the Baganda, the responsibility for caring for deprived children among the Basoga fell on the extended family members. Children born out of wedlock were provided for just
as any deprived children regardless of the circumstances leading to their birth. In case of premarital pregnancies, those responsible would be told to marry. Where marriage did not take place, the maternal grandparents or other maternal close relatives would shoulder the full responsibility of providing for the needs of such a child until adulthood. The child could join the family of the putative father only after the latter had paid a cow or a bull as a fine. The death of the mother was always a great blow to the children, especially the young ones. In such cases, the man's other wife or wives would be called upon to look after the orphans. Although children born out of wedlock were accepted into the mother's clan, in most instances they could not inherit.

Among the Acholi of northern Uganda, if a married man died, his paternal successor took over all the responsibility for his children. In case of the death of the mother, her children remained the responsibility of her husband who would ensure that the children were brought up by his other wife or wives if he was a polygamt, or by his other relatives. In most cases, the man whose wife died did not take long to marry another wife to provide for the children of the deceased wife.

Like the Baganda and the Basoga, the responsibility to look after the children who were born out of wedlock fell on the maternal grandparents, if the putative father of the child refused to marry the mother of the child. If, on the other hand, the putative father of the child married the mother of
the child, the latter would be accepted in the father's clan and would live with his father and mother among his paternal parents. If the putative father refused to marry the mother of the child, he was required to pay a fine which consisted of several heads of cattle before he could claim the child.

Failure of the putative father to either marry the mother of the child or to pay the fine meant that the child remained with the parents or other relatives of the mother throughout his\her life. In the case of a boy, on attaining adulthood, the guardians would give him land on which to settle and would also be responsible for paying bridewealth for his marriage. In the case of a girl, upon marriage, the bridewealth paid would be used by the grandparents or close relatives in the absence of the former.

The Bakiga of South Western Uganda were quite different in the way they cared for deprived children, especially those children born out of wedlock. The provision for the deprived children therefore was available for only those who were born through recognised customary marriages. If the children's father died, their mother was married through the extended widow inheritance system. If the deceased had brothers, one of them, would inherit the widow, and would assume the role of a father.

Unlike the other societies which were not very hard on children born out of wedlock, the Bakiga did not tolerate such children in the family. It was considered a very serious
disgrace to the family if their daughter became pregnant outside marriage. If it happened, the girl was regarded as unfit to live in their families and clan as a whole (Nzita and Mbaga-Niwampa, 1993).

Like the Bakiga, provision for deprived children among the Banyankole was only meant for children born in recognisable marriages. The practice of widow inheritance was also highly practised, and in the event of the father's death, children were well cushioned. Polygamy was widely practised, and the co-wives cared for the children of the deceased mother.

The above situation makes it clear that traditionally, governance of child care matters was a purely family affair. The norms of child care, provision in case of emergency, was a familial responsibility rather than the state's. In any case social problems were essentially local, and required local solutions. It is also evident that there were no uncared for children where the strength of African conception of kinship was unimpaired. Mair, L. (1944) acknowledges that in a village where the authority of chiefs or elders is respected and therefore effective, there is no problem of delinquency. Likewise, unemployment or destitution are unlikely where everyone draws his living from the land. She considers these as the problems of more complex types of social organisation which are so heterogeneous that their members are not bound by common bonds of conduct.
Such common bonds of conduct were very crucial in the maintenance of law and order, and are the very bonds that were loosened by external influence.

Summary

The traditional forms of child welfare provision have been explained in this chapter. It is apparent that the spirit of communalism played a very important role in promoting the welfare of children. Communalism was strengthened by geographical proximity. Usually, all members of the community were tied by common bonds, since movement of people was fairly limited. This made it comfortable for some societies to send their children to live with their relatives, since it was possible for children to maintain contact with their natural parents.

The polygamous nature of the societies acted as a safety cushion for the children in the event of their mother’s death. Raising other women’s children, if they were not available to do so, was well accepted. Equally important, at least for the children, was the practice of widow inheritance. In either case, orphaned children were assured of continued care from a surrogate father and mother.

Children were highly valued for many reasons, including cementing bonds of kinship, where they would be sent to live with relatives; ensuring continuity of the father’s lineage in
the case of boys, and in the case of girls, bringing in bridewealth which would later be used to get a wife for their brothers. Girls were also valued for their social responsibility of bearing children.

Discipline and etiquette were key components in the education of children. These were considered to be the most important elements for holding the community together. They were, in most cases enforced by what anthropologists have regarded as "severe punishment", though it was emphasized that it should not be looked at as cruelty to the children, but as correction.

In the rearing of children, affection was not expressed as we know it in the western world---kissing, hugging, and cuddling, and being reminded by their parents that they love them. This, however, did not mean that the children were not loved, for even now, many Ugandans do not feel there is need to remind one's children that they love them. It is considered obvious.

Children were also given responsibilities in the family; girls had different responsibilities from boys. The latter's responsibilities were more leisurely than the former's, but these were accepted without question. In any case, the economies were so simple that complex skills were not required.

All societies had provisions for deprived children, but measures to care for some categories of such children varied
in different societies. Orphans were all cared for by the members of the man's relatives or other wives, if he was polygamous, in case of the mother's death. Children born out of wedlock were not easily accepted in some societies, with little provisions for them in such societies.

It is important to note, that the discussion in this chapter offers a description that the current approach alludes to, that of a communal Garden tended by all and for all; a caring, cooperative community, that was assumed by the proponents of modernization theory to continually care for family members, with minimal assistance from the state. Nevertheless, communities are not static. The institutions within are bound to change along with the changes taking place around them, thus questioning the idyllic, romantic picture that is often used to describe traditional communal care for children.

The discussion in the next chapter centers on the changes that have occurred in the community and which have upset its institutions.
Chapter Six

External Influence on Ugandan Communities

Introduction

The discussion in this chapter centres on the effect of external influences on Ugandan societies. Emphasis is on the disruption of the social, economic and political set up of the indigenous Ugandan societies. The chapter discusses the disruption caused by European influence, emphasizing the impact on the family and the society at large. Tracing such disruption through history, an attempt is made to analyze the impact it has had on the wellbeing of children in Uganda.

The assimilation or failure of alien elements in the Ugandan societies is clearly highlighted. Contrary to the general view of anthropologists on African institutions, including the family before European activities began to impinge on it, African societies were not static, and were changing both in structure and function (Nukunya, 1975; Mamdani, 1976).

Of course, the pace of change prior to the introduction of European culture and in some areas like technology, was very slow. Nevertheless, all societies were generally in a state of dynamic equilibrium before the arrival of the white man. The advent of colonialism put a halt to the societies’ social balance and introduced a metamorphosis that turned "butterflies into wasps" (Museveni, 1996, p. 15). Thus it is
important to stress in this introduction that the major changes taking place in Ugandan societies in particular, and Africa in general, can be traced directly or indirectly to factors originating from: Islamic intrusion; colonial rule; christianity; formal school education and economic conditions such as, the introduction of cash crops and a cash economy. The latter has kept the Ugandan economy in perpetual indebtedness, particularly the actions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

The Political Disruption

Among the major problems of post-colonial Uganda, which resulted in the social, political, and economic disruption of the societies, was the way in which its boundaries were drawn. As noted by Mutibwa (1992), when the imperial powers met in Berlin in 1884-5 to divide up Africa among themselves, they looked not at peoples but at mountains, rivers and other physical features of the continent, which, in fact, united people rather than divided them. By the end of the exercise, people who belonged to the same ethnic group or even clan found themselves in separate colonies, soon to be further separated by the introduction of foreign languages and cultures.

Thus the partitioning of Africa socially disrupted many societies, and it brought within the fold of one country
peoples at different levels of social development and without close historical contacts, while splitting nationalities and tribes into, or among, several countries (Mamdani, 1976). The result of this was the different tribes and clans of people of Uganda remained foreign to each other, especially since the colonial powers made no effort to unite the people. Instead they emphasized differences in order to implement their policy of divide and rule. These differences erupted as soon as the protecting powers departed, and since then have been the major source of Uganda’s political conflicts.

As already discussed, most of Ugandan societies were traditionally organized in small kin groups, with the exception of Buganda which had a highly organized structure (Monarchy). In most other societies, there were senior men who played an arbitrative and advisory role in group affairs. There were no specifically political authorities (Beattie, 1964).

In Uganda, the British colonialists utilized the highly organized system in Buganda to carry out their system of indirect rule, and gave Baganda a special status. The British ruled Uganda through the indigenous political authorities and not directly through European or European-appointed administrators. The Baganda chiefs were then used to spread the new form of administration to the rest of Uganda. This imposition was resisted in most parts, and is another factor in Uganda’s instability.
While the formal alteration in social and political institutions may have been possible, but not easy, it was difficult to change peoples' ideas and values. Thus, despite the changes, some of the pre-colonial values remain even today. Most societies still cherish the strength of the clan system; and clan elders are still very instrumental in conducting the day to day affairs of the societies. This, however, only applies to rural areas whose contact with the external forces has always been minimal.

Fallers (1965) confirmed the difficulty faced by the traditional chiefs among the Basoga of eastern Uganda through whom local government was carried out. While they increasingly adapted themselves to Western norms, the adaptation was not complete. He observed that universal civil service norms of disinterested public service co-exist with particular values of kinship and personal dependence. This inevitably leads to conflict not only within the individual person, but also between individuals. The result is that chiefs frequently have to choose between applying one standard or the other, since they cannot apply both. Thus a chief may have to choose between favouring a kinsman or friend in a court case, an acceptable mode of behaviour in terms of traditional values, or applying the law impartially, as modern civil service norms require. Since he is constrained by both sets of norms, he is faced with an insoluble dilemma; either course will be wrong by one set of standards. In any case, taking either course of
action and ignoring the other may lead to dismissal from the clan if he upholds the civil service norms, and from the civil service if he favours the traditional norms.

This dilemma of trying to blend western and traditional values has affected every aspect of life in Ugandan societies. Bridging this gap has proved a major hurdle. No matter what changes societies go through, they never stop looking back, and various aspects are never left behind.

It is important to note, that because of the various tribal groupings, there was no state form in Uganda. Any association with other groups was in barter. The colonial state, the foreign implant, is the only one Ugandan ‘citizens’ have ever known. The difficulties in the country could be a result of this. The colonial administration ‘invented’ a Ugandan state form, and a legal system, in a multi-tribal, arbitrarily national society. This greatly weakened the cohesiveness of the traditional groupings, for, as already noted, they were now obliged to meet the demands of the new national state. The effect of this change was a decline in their sense of responsibility, since now a higher authority was responsible for all citizens. This created a sense of dependency, and dealt a major blow to the strength and operation of the traditional society. No attempt was made by the new national state to identify the positive aspects of the traditional system and build on them.
The Social Disruption

Colonial intervention also affected family life. As noted above, there was a breakdown in attachment to and dependence on traditional types of domestic grouping, and changes in the institution of marriage due to Western influence (Beattie, 1964). This greatly affected the familial set up, which was the most important institution in traditional societies.

While some connections to traditional ways persist, Western influence, especially the introduction of a cash economy, undermined the strength of parental, family, and lineage control of the individual. Consequently, group action was affected, giving way to individualism.

The introduction of compulsory taxation laws for all adult males over seventeen, which rendered every tax defaulter liable to imprisonment, left propertyless native men with no alternative but to be dragged into paid employment if they were to meet these new demands. Apart from selling their labour to the rich landlords, paid employment was more available in the urban centres that were springing up in Uganda. This was a major blow to the familial set up, and to the traditional ways of life.

Thus the colonial period saw the beginning of migrations from rural areas to towns by natives, mainly men, in search of employment. The migrations necessarily brought about the breaking of social, cultural and ethnic barriers hitherto
existing among migrants. It gradually led to privatisation and individualism and the communal way of life was undermined. Its existence became more of a myth. The cost of living in towns was high in terms of housing, clothing and food. The conditions in the urban areas were far from ideal for the predominantly illiterate natives who were mostly employed in manual labour. They could not afford to live in good sanitary conditions because of their low paying jobs. Consequently they found themselves overcrowded in unhygienic slums and shanty towns.

As movements to and from the urban areas went on, traditional group ties were increasingly disregarded. Unlike in the rural areas, it became difficult for the urban dweller to provide food and shelter for numerous relatives over long periods. This implied a conflict of two sets of obligations for the employee who moved to the urban area. There was, on the one hand, the obligation to sustain the needy relatives as required by tradition, and the obligation to meet the costs of rent, food and shelter for self and the family, on the other. Despite the difficulties of these obligations, however, it would be extreme to say that traditional ties have completely died out as portrayed in some literature (Beattie, 1966; Ofcansky, 1996). The presence of dependent relatives in families of the employed in urban areas is common, and refusal to help them can result in isolation, especially on return to rural areas. This is something still feared, because there are
few Ugandans who solely reside in the urban areas. The majority are seasonal emigrants to urban areas. It is also a widely held view, that some things cannot be bought with money, and require the cooperation of a group. This could be indicative of the importance still placed on group attachment.

It is important to note, that even in large urban centres where these changes have been greatest, there are still distinctions among families of the so-called new elite and those of the working classes. Regardless of these differences however, wage employment often separates the worker physically from his kin group if he has to live in town at some distance from his home.

Another major aspect of change was the introduction of new institutions that increasingly took over the functions and activities which used to be performed by the lineage and extended family. Schools, to undertake the teaching of the skills that are required in the modern world, and hospitals, to take responsibility for the sick that used to be a family obligation, were introduced. Such developments have made it increasingly possible for people to become independent of kinship ties and more ready to disregard them if they consider them a bother, or if relatives are not readily accessible.

No factor disrupted the traditional familial life more in Uganda than did religion. This has been noted by Ofcansky (1996) when he acknowledges the significant role religion has historically played in the national life of Uganda. While
Islam was the first foreign religion, its impact on
traditional norms and values was not as significant as that of
Christianity. The latter was introduced into Uganda by
European missionaries in the late 1800s. These represented
several religious organisations, including the Anglican Church
Missionary Society (CMS), the Roman Catholic society of
Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers), and Mill Hill Fathers.
Not surprisingly, British colonial policy reflected a
Christian bias (Ofcansky, 1996).

The introduction of the church for Christian teaching was
used in most cases to attack the norms and values cherished by
traditional society. The interpretation of peoples' culture
was in most cases biased, and often the effect was to disrupt
traditional institutions.

The system of sending children to live with relatives,
that was very common among the Baganda for example, was very
much criticized. It appeared incompatible with the
missionaries' ideal of home life which they were anxious to
instill into the natives. Thus Christian influence was
directed against the system, and this influence was effective
to the extent that some customs have lapsed altogether (Mair,
1934). This "concern" of the missionaries about children being
"sent away" by their parents to live with relatives is ironic,
since the period of separation from their parents was about
the same proportion as a child spent in public school
education in England. If there was any effect resulting from
such separation, it should have affected children in both places in a similar manner. Indirectly, this could be interpreted as an attack on the extended family, and an attempt to emphasize the nuclear family as the ideal. It is important to note, that at the same period of history (1880s-1920s), the British sent 100,000 or more of its children to Canada and Australia because they were alleged to be orphans or abandoned (Jones and Rutman, 1981).

Christian missionaries attacked the institution of marriage from the choice of partner to the form it should take. Mandelbaum-Edel (1958) notes that with the introduction of the church, the practice of arranged marriages was sharply criticized. Girls who embraced the Christian faith started to make their own marriage choices to the scandalized but impotent horror of their fathers (Mandelbaum-Edel, 1958). In her anthropological study of the Banyoro of western Uganda, Beattie (1964) sums up the views of a school teacher about the confusion caused by girls’ own choice of a marriage partner.

Nowadays, Europeans have put the idea into girls’ heads that they should find husbands for themselves; this has led many of them into unsuitable marriages or into informal liaisons, leading to promiscuity and disease. Some girls prefer not to get married at all; The result is that people play with one another in the fields and on the paths like animals (Beattie, 1964, p. 255).

Along with this is the observation made by Nukunya (1975), about the removal of sanctions against divorce,
infidelity, and premarital sex play. This is believed to have lead to increasing premarital conception, since punishments have been rendered ineffective.

This lack of adherence to traditional moral standards is one sign that traditional norms and values are no longer respected. The Christian idea of a "good family" was one based on love (the European interpretation of love), and this was only possible if the partners themselves chose to get married. Nevertheless, this was not possible where there were stringent rules about the mixing of both sexes. Among the Bakiga, an adolescent girl was severely punished, if she gave any signs of disobedience during adolescence. Such signs included staying out later than she should, talking to a strange boy, or resisting a marriage plan (Mandelbaum-Edel, 1958).

While there may have been a bad side to the marriage institution, its arrangement may have been ideal under the circumstances of the time. The harsh criticisms of the early anthropologists, like the initial Europeans who went to Africa and Uganda in particular, arose from an attempt to compare marriage with what prevailed in Europe at the time. In most cases, conclusions were drawn that reflected the views of an outsider, completely ignorant of what the people concerned cherished. Fortes (1950), for example, expressed an opinion that the African marriage is not based on love.

Such attacks on the institution of marriage and that of the family had a profound impact on Ugandan societies, and has
greatly disrupted the traditional child welfare arrangements. Despite the emphasis on the freedom of choice in marriage, which, as already pointed out led to many undesirable effects, the advocates of such changes also abhorred the consequences. The Christian ideal family, which idolised the nuclear/monogamous family, did not have room for children born out of wedlock. Even in societies that traditionally had arrangements to care for such children without discrimination, the bias was created. The concept of "illegitimate children" was introduced in such societies, so that the legal status of a child depended on whether the child was conceived and born in lawful marriage. Legitimate and illegitimate became legal terms of reference, and consequently, the welfare of the legitimate child was more secure than that of an illegitimate child. This brought about a unique situation, where women who bore children outside the 'legal relationship' were in some cases forced to abandon them, creating another category of children who needed care and protection.

Changing Families in Uganda

The family has been greatly affected by outside influence, both in structure and function. The traditional family had the potential for persistence in times of crises such as war and disease. One of the essential characteristics of the African family, agreed upon by all sociologists, is the
idea of permanence and commitment to mutual economic and social support (Levine, 1990), although some of the members may be temporarily dispersed for occupational, social or political reasons (Okediji, 1974; Kayongo-Male & Onyango, 1984; McGrath et al., 1991). Such reasons have affected, and continue to affect the nature of the family in Uganda. These are complemented by other factors like economic stress, urbanization, education, Christianity and neo-colonial cultural influences. These factors have gradually eroded the co-operative and caring obligations widely cherished between and among kin, and which were essential for a stable and a secure traditional life. Increasing mobility and migration to urban settings exposes more and more people to western styles of life, increasingly focusing more on conjugal relationships, and thus, changing the structure of families. The influence of the market, combined with the influence of Christianity, has slowly undermined the practice of polygamy, consequently tilting the balance toward monogamous marriages. This tendency towards monogamous marriages has not, however, fully succeeded, and other forms of relationships resembling polygamy have emerged, especially in urban areas.

Polygamy 'Transformed'

Polygamy is one of the traditional practices that has been influenced by the expectations bred by factors like
education, urbanisation and religious beliefs. Changing attitudes and definitions of marriage are among the many concomitants of urbanization and modernization. Nevertheless, the traditional male’s desire for polygamy in most African societies still persists. In situations where monogamy is morally valued or even legally enjoined, functional alternatives to polygamy are frequent, such as concubines or ‘outside wives’ as they are commonly referred to in Uganda. Kayongo-Male and Philista Onyango (1984) attribute this to the constant increases in bride wealth. According to them, the failure by most men to raise enough bride wealth to contract a second marriage forces them to have informal relationships where they even make ‘informal families’. Informal cohabiting has been analyzed by different sociologists (Anastasia J. Gage-Brandon, 1993; Parkin and Nyamwaya, 1987; Kayongo-Male and Philista Onyango, 1984). They have attributed the tendency towards increased cohabitation to various factors, including social pathology or deviance resulting from modernization, women’s increasing control over their lives, a weakening of the authority of parents or of the family head and reduced lineage control. While these factors could all be plausible explanations of the increasing informal cohabitation, the economic factor is given less attention than it deserves. The economic difficulty of raising bride wealth could be a factor in reducing the rate of polygamy.
Unlike in the traditional polygamous families where all the women married to the same man knew each other, the present informal cohabitations are secretive; and the children in some cases do not even know their step mothers. Children are therefore not as well cushioned in this haphazard system as they were in the traditional one.

Informal cohabitations are not due to economic reasons alone; in the urban areas they are also engaged in by the elite. It is, in a way, a recall of the polygamous custom which was shunned because of the Christian influence. In this case, since it is a forbidden union, it is a relationship without the pre-colonial commitment to care for the resulting progeny. In a Christian (nuclear/monogamous) context, the informal liaison is 'adultery', and the woman is either a prostitute (for poor women), or a mistress (for rich women). Paternity is sometimes denied, so resulting children are bereft.

Families and family life are also being drastically changed by AIDS. The disease has had a profound impact on the family structure, and the result has been the emergence of different and unique family situations, which bear directly on the child. Because the disease hits hardest those who are in their most productive years, illness and death leave the surviving family members devastated economically. The impact is profound.
Since the most prevalent transmission of AIDS in Uganda is heterosexual sex, the presentation of AIDS in one spouse often indicates infection in the other, even if the progress of the disease does not follow the same timing. This has far reaching implications for child welfare. At a time when it is committed to family preservation, families are being infected by a virus that impairs their ability to function independently.

No other factor has raised the need for a reassessment of the community coping mechanisms as has the increasing number of orphans resulting from AIDS and the continuous political strife. In addition, there is an increasing number of children on the streets, resulting from poor economic conditions as well as ineffective community care. The increasing number of such children largely accounts for the government’s willingness to look back at the community and assess what traditions can be utilized for the benefit of children.

Family and community support has continuously been influenced by the forces already described, and has, as a result, declined in their strength to care for children. The economic hardships most families are faced with make it increasingly difficult to absorb a large number of children. Such economic dislocations and the AIDS crisis have drastically altered the traditional functioning of the family, and this has overwhelmed the residual approach introduced by the colonial masters.
The non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which stem from the residual policies, have been criticised for undermining the traditional coping mechanisms. Some of them have maintained the policy of institutionalising deprived children. This has been criticized, as the ready availability of the "orphanage alternative" would further undermine traditional coping mechanisms, to the disadvantage of children who lose the chance to grow up in a family environment (Alden, Salole, Williamson, 1991). For most of the orphanages, funding depends on the number of children in the institutions. As a result, many children have been encouraged to go to the homes, even when they have a relative alive who would have taken them. Research conducted on institutions in Uganda (Save The Children Fund-UK, 1989) indicated that about two-thirds of the children in institutions had either parents or relatives and could therefore be resettled. Only a small proportion did not have a home. Homes would be available if the state earmarked funds to the family for the child taken back to assist in this reabsorption. Again, this is a result of the residual policies that did not take into account family benefits in order to make families more economically strong and therefore self reliant. As observed by Luthra (1982), the family needs to be given incentives for it to maintain its central place in its capacity to promote and undertake care of children, and to remain the linchpin of social security.
Uganda inherited a very poor funding system for social services, particularly for child welfare. The expenditure on defence is more than what is spent on all the social services combined. For the first fiscal year of 1988, for example, 43% of total outlays were for defense and internal security, 30% for education and general services, and 14% debt services. This left a mere 13% for current expenditures on productive and social services (World Bank, Sept. 1988). The situation was no different in 1991. The expenditure on defence was higher than the expenditure on education, health, and other social services combined. This is an amazing situation in a country where millions of people are dying of AIDS, where government should be re-thinking its priorities, given the extent of social and economic disruption that the AIDS situation has and continues to cause.

While the expenditure on defence has continuously raised criticisms from within and outside Uganda, the country’s political history is responsible for this situation. The country has been plagued by political turmoil for more than twenty years, a significant percentage of the expenditure is geared towards repressing such civil unrest.

**Economic Disruption**

Among the ideas introduced by the colonialists in Uganda was a new land system which appropriated large tracts of land
to a few favoured chiefs or individuals, in effect upsetting traditional rights to land holding which guaranteed everybody access. Hand in hand with the new land system was the introduction of cash crops and the emergence of a cash economy. These measures dealt a blow to the communal ways of life. Men who built permanent houses and planted their land with a perennial cash crop like coffee, out of their own earnings, could not continue to be satisfied with traditional tenure. Land ceased to be a communal resource and became a means of private investment (Beattie, 1964).

Thus, the traditional forms of economic activity, which entailed co-operation by groups of neighbours or kin, as in agriculture, house building and such activities, have been replaced. The locally made implements for home use such as pots and hoes, traditionally obtained from craftsmen in exchange for stock or grain, are increasingly being replaced by machine-made kitchen and agricultural implements from industrialized countries, and purchased in the shops for cash. The decrease in shared activity promotes individualism, since individuals gain economic independence from their neighbours or kin. This individualism affects every aspect of social life, including caring for children. There is a corresponding weakening of ties between extended and nuclear units, both vertical (less grandmother care/availability for young children whose mothers are not available either due to divorce, death for example), and horizontal (less ties among
the sibling group once they reach adulthood, move away from home, and are not available to 'parent' children who have lost their own parents). This is a sharp contrast to what was observed in the preceding chapter about the ready availability of care for children whose parents were not available.

Clearly, the ideals of capitalism had no place in traditional economies. The new outlook to the production and distribution of goods involves attitudes to labour and to hard work that are very different from traditional ones in most simple societies. The early Europeans, imbued with the ideas of capitalism, referred to the natives as lazy and inefficient. Yet, considering that work in traditional communities was socially prescribed, and work under capitalism is motivated by individual success, the difference was in values, not capabilities. In traditional communities, labour was an inherent part of a primary subsistence cycle. It was not a tedious obligation to be undertaken only in order to earn money so that the demands of schools, governments and businesses can be met.

The changes in the institution of marriage already referred to were to a large extent aggravated by the introduction of a cash economy. The worst attack was mainly on bride wealth, which plays a very important role in the determination of a union status in Ugandan societies, although the arrangements vary from society to society. Analyzing marriage among the Baganda, Lucy Mair (1934) notes,
The transfer of bride wealth was, and still is, the essential act which legalises the marriage. Compared with the bride-price, the ceremony in the church is of secondary significance, even to the most religious. Normally the banns are not cried until the bride-price has been paid, the presence of the bride’s brother when the names are given to the clergyman, being required as evidence of the payment (Mair, 1934, pp 81–82).

Traditionally, bride wealth was in the form of goods, and these were not supposed to be exchanged or sold. They carried a social significance. Selling bride wealth cattle was equated with selling a daughter as expressed by the Bakiga themselves (Mandelbaum-Edel, 1957). Such cattle carried a symbolic significance.

In most societies, cash transfers have increasingly replaced the transfer of cattle and/or other goods, and this is increasingly seen as undermining the symbolic significance of the institution, which is now considered by the critics as an economic transaction. The monetization of bride wealth also weakens group ties, because like all activities in traditional society, its payment was a collective responsibility. As well, its utilization was shared among kin. This practice has been altered, because the assembling of a cash bride wealth, unlike the amassing of a herd of cattle, does not demand group collaboration. A man accumulates a cash bride wealth by emigrating to an urban centre to search for employment. Similarly, a father who has received cash as bride wealth for his daughter is unlikely to keep it for his son’s marriage, or
to share some of it with his kin, because of the many incentives increasingly available in a cash economy to spend the money elsewhere.

Such incentives have affected girl children, because they are increasingly seen as a source of wealth. As a result, the age of marriage for girls continues to fall. This a major factor that hinders girls' education, and forces the ones who have already enrolled in school to drop out.

The Role of the Colonial State

Despite the social, political and economic disruptions of the traditional communities brought about by the external forces, the assumption that the communities would continue to care for their members was upheld. Even so, no attempt was made to strengthen the already disturbed traditional communities to enable them to continue this responsibility. This is probably because, as noted by Luthra (1982), colonialism took place at a time when science and technology were the major concerns, where these became the culture of the industrial countries, and where the very base from which everybody grew (family) was forgotten.

Talcot Parsons (1951) argues that industrialisation has affected family and society through value demands. Value demands of industrial capitalism are the reverse of those of the family system. He designed what he called polar values to
explain this phenomena. He calls them "dilemmas" which come as a result of the contrast between industrial values and those of the family. The actor is therefore placed in a difficult situation---the dilemma of making a decision, to favour the family or the industrial demands. Favouring the family antagonises capital accumulation; on the other hand, disregarding family values erodes family relations and ties.

Parsons' contention has some relevance to the Ugandan situation. Under the process of industrialisation and urbanisation in most societies family links are still valued, especially in rural areas which are dominated by what Goran Hyden (1983) calls the "Economy of Affection". In this regard, family values are still upheld.

Families need to be strengthened by promoting their self-reliance and economic viability, in order to be able to overcome the various negative factors that affect them, questioning their sustainability as a safety cushion for the majority of Uganda's children. Notable among these undesirable factors are the low budget allocations by the government and the growing number of deaths due to AIDS and war. These have increased individual adults' responsibilities for caring, and strained individual ability and commitment to meet traditional social obligations, while at the same time creating an orphan crisis that needs to be dealt with by an organised and well funded welfare system. There may be no doubt that such a system should build on the community and boost its coping
mechanisms, but there has been no policy commitment by government to move in this direction.

Summary

This chapter has analyzed the changes that were brought about by the influence of European activities in Ugandan communities. It has suggested that there are factors working against communities to know that they have problems and taking responsibility for their solutions. The changes have been discussed in the contexts of political organization, domestic and family life, and economic relations. It will be noted, that the different dimensions interpenetrate one another. The discussion of the political disruption for example involves the consideration of social and economic relations. The chapter has touched briefly on colonial partition of Africa, with a view to understanding the impact this had on traditional groupings and their social relationships.

Similarly, economic change, in particular the advent of a money economy, and all that this implies, have radically altered traditional methods of production and exchange, as well as most other areas of social life. The new economy had an effect on traditional attitudes to land. It ceased to be regarded as an available resource for all; rights to it became vested in private individuals.
The interferences with the communal life which was very crucial to the protection of children, affected the capacity to continue this responsibility. However, the rate at which this took place varied in rural and urban areas. The traditional ways of life continue to have a place in the lives of rural dwellers.

However, the imported policies had and continue to have an impact on all areas, since every citizen is obliged to respect the laws of the state and not those of the community, especially where the two conflict. Such foreign implants have posed a dilemma to the Ugandan, who has to face two opposing worlds and try to reconcile the traditional values with those coming in the wake of social change.

Clearly, the family has been dislocated in the wake of such changes. Despite the problems, it is still expected to carry the responsibility of the welfare of its members, of which child care is an important part. There are obvious indicators that the family is under strain. This questions the applicability of modernization theory, which entrusts the family with welfare responsibility while at the same time the theory's central tenets are responsible for the extra strain on the family. The proceeding chapter, which discusses the current situation of children in Uganda, clearly provides a case for government to increase its commitment to assist families in the care of children.
Chapter Seven

The Current Situation of Children

Introduction

The social, political, and economic disruptions discussed in the previous chapter affected the wellbeing of children in Uganda. It was gradually undermined by the attack on the family in which they were cushioned. This chapter presents an analysis of the current situation, outlining the numerous problems faced by different categories of children.

Children under 18 years as legally defined constitute well over half the population of Uganda. Most of these children grow up in villages, which are aggregates of many individual homesteads, each on its own land. Analyzing the situation of children in Uganda, UNICEF (1989) gave an overview of rural children.

A typical Ugandan child starts life in a large family in a rural area. Like most of her relatives, she is delivered at home by an older neighbour. As a small baby, the child is likely to be healthy and grow well, as long as she has her mother to care for her and breast feed her. After six months, however, the protection she obtains from breast milk will wane, and the child will begin to suffer from repeated bouts of infectious diseases, especially diarrhoea, because her mother does not have the time to carry enough water from two kilometres (or more) away to keep the house, kitchen and utensils clean as she would like. Each episode of diarrhoea or other illness leaves the child a little thinner and weaker, because she
cannot regain the weight lost when she was ill. She is undernourished not because her village lacks food, but because her mother does not have the time or firewood to cook frequent small meals or to coax her to eat when she does not feel well. (Source, UNICEF: Children and Women in Uganda: Situation Analysis, 1989, p. I).

Despite their significant representation within the population, children and their mothers are the most vulnerable groups in society. Children are vulnerable because they have higher physiological needs for growth and development. While mothers may try to cope with society’s burden, usually at the expense of their own health, children are totally dependent on society for their physical, mental and social needs. Young children are particularly vulnerable, because they are unable and incapable of identifying and demanding services for their own wellbeing. Consequently, many children continue to suffer immensely as casualties of war and violence, as refugees and displaced children (Mills, 1992; Dodge & Raundalen, 1987), as victims of neglect, cruelty and exploitation (Child Law Review Committee, 1992). Children continue to suffer from the grave effects of problems caused by external indebtedness which diverts domestic funds to pay international debts.

When studying the situation concerning children in Uganda, it is usefully considered in terms of their survival, protection and development as set out in the World Declaration
and Plan of Action at the "World Summit for Children" for world leaders in New York in September 1990.

**Children's Survival**

Child survival is the major area of child vulnerability in Uganda. Children under five years are the most vulnerable group in Uganda in terms of mortality and morbidity (Situation analysis, 1994; UNICEF, 1991).

On the survival of children in Uganda, respondent F noted, "Survival issues are the most critical when it comes to children's issues, because children have to survive first, and then be protected and be given their developmental needs. Yet the infant and child mortality and morbidity rates remain high."

In 1991, Uganda's infant mortality rate (IMR) was 122 infant deaths per 1000 live births, and the under five mortality rate was 203 deaths per 1000 live births. This under-five mortality rate figure implies that a newborn Ugandan baby has only an 80 percent probability of reaching age five (Situation Analysis, 1994; Uganda Ministry of Health sector paper, 1993). Some of the risk factors are: births that are too frequent; mothers who are too young or too old; and low education for the mothers (Uganda Demographic and Health Survey, 1989\90).
The Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (UDHS) indicated a positive correlation between shorter birth intervals and early death among infants: children born less than two years after an older sibling had more than twice the risk of dying in infancy compared to those born four or more years after a prior birth. This shows that the survival of a large number of infants in Uganda is at stake, considering that the total fertility rate (number of births per woman's lifetime) in Uganda remains high (7.1), and family planning use is as low as five percent (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 1991 census; Uganda Demographic and Health Survey, 1989-90). The fertility rate has remained unchanged for the past 20 years.

The very high value placed on children in Uganda is a key determinant of fertility. Respondent J, an officer in one of the child welfare agencies, explained the impact of such pressures to bear children;

Children are valued in all Ugandan Societies. Women who cannot bear children live a miserable life. And it is always the woman to blame if a couple fails to get children. It is a shame for any woman not to bear children. In fact it is one reason why the couples who have fostered children want to keep it top secret. They fear the stigma in case anybody found out that the child is not theirs. So women have to get as many children as they can have, because it even proves that the bride wealth was worth paying (Respondent J, administrative officer, Uganda foster care and adoption agency).
In such an environment, women are esteemed for their reproductive capacities, and infertility is usually regarded as a much more important problem than excess fertility, especially by men (Okurut, et. al, 1993). Infertility is feared so much that a woman was quoted by a respondent M from the medical field to have said, "Even if I get a miscarriage, at least people will know that I am a normal woman, not a tree."

Infant mortality contributes to driving up the fertility rate, and this jeopardises the health of mothers. High infant and child mortality encourages some couples to have more children than they ultimately want in order to achieve the desired number of surviving children. This was expressed in the rural area; "People prefer having many children, because once they have lost one child, they are not sure that the others will survive. So they want to have as many as they can...I think its sort of security for them." (Interview with respondent S, a Child Volunteer Advocate). This view was complemented by the response from respondent U, also a Child Volunteer Advocate, "Now that AIDS is prevalent, people want to have many children." These views were not shared by an elderly female respondent, Y, at the community level who observed, "Some parents wished they had fewer children because then they would have fewer graves and less weeping." This response indicates the impact AIDS has had on the communities, including their traditional values.
The age of the mother is another risk factor associated with infant mortality (Uganda Demographic and Health Survey, 1989\90). Children born to adolescent mothers (less than 20 years old) or to women over 40 years of age are also likely to die in infancy. Yet the majority of Ugandan women bear their first child before the age of twenty. This is primarily due to early marriages. The Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (1989\90) indicated the early age at which women marry. Fifty percent of all women aged 20-49 were married by the age of 18 years. The same study indicated that 60% of the women had their first birth before the age of twenty.

Mortality differentials according to the mother’s level of education were also noted. Infant and childhood mortality tends to be less for children whose mothers have completed primary education and above, than those children whose mothers have either no education or have not completed primary education.

These factors reinforce each other, minimising the chances of many of Uganda’s children living to see their fifth birthday, or even completing their first year of life.

As will be elaborated below, the education of girls is given less priority than that of boys in rural Uganda. For the few girls who enter primary school, only five percent reach secondary school (Ministry of Education, 1993). A study by a women’s local NGO, Action For Development (ACFODE) found out that teenage pregnancies and poverty were most responsible for
the high drop out rate among Ugandan school girls. In rural Uganda, early marriages were a major reason for school girl drop outs. Of the parents interviewed, 52% said that their daughters were married between 13 and 18 years of age. Such a large uneducated group of adolescent mothers is unlikely to control fertility, or to appreciate the importance of being able to identify common ailments in children so as to minimize infant deaths.

Most infant deaths are caused by preventable diseases. The leading illnesses among children under five are malaria, diarrhoea, acute respiratory tract infections, nutritional disorders, and immunisable diseases (Kadama, 1993; Kamugisha, 1992; Wamai and Barton, 1992). While prevention of most of these is possible, it is not without difficulty. Malaria, for example, which is the leading cause of morbidity in the general population, accounts for up to 30% of all deaths among the 2-4 year old age group (Kadama, 1993, Situation Analysis, 1994). The disease is endemic in Uganda. The increasing impact of malaria could be partly explained by low levels of awareness, poor service availability and lack of resources at the household level. Other factors include the increasing resistance of malaria parasites to the and cheaper drugs, poor vector control, poor case management and virtual absence of specific malaria control activities in the country [Situation Analysis, 1994; Uganda National Programme of Action for Children document, Section One, (3)]. Therefore, the means of
preventing infants from contracting it would be difficult for the majority, especially in rural areas.

Diarrhoea, one of the symptoms of malaria, is easily preventable when there is safe water and good sanitation. But in areas where accessibility to these essential services is lacking, prevention becomes difficult. This could explain why diarrhoea is disproportionately common in rural villages which face severe shortages of safe water (Barton and Bagyenda, 1993).

Various factors have, over the years, indirectly contributed to perpetuation of these life threatening conditions, and consequently to death among children. For any significant improvement to be possible, these factors must be addressed. Significant among these are over-burdened and isolated mothers, poverty, malnutrition, inaccessibility of adequate health care, and AIDS (UNICEF, 1989).

Mothers may have the desire to adequately care for themselves and their children, but may lack the time, knowledge and skills to do so (Children and Women in Uganda, 1989; Situation Analysis, 1994). The high fertility rates and little formal education of women have already been noted. Ugandan women also work for very long hours each day. These factors limit channels for obtaining clear and appropriate information, contributing greatly to child vulnerability since mothers are usually the sole care takers of young children.
Nevertheless, the struggle to survive under harsh economic conditions, especially in urban areas, makes it difficult for parents to provide adequately for children's health needs. In a research project conducted on the role of local government councils and committees in children's welfare (Dufite-Bizimana, 1991), it was indicated that the most worrying problem for most children was neglect. In one urban area, it was reported that mothers often leave their children outside locked rooms (houses) and go to run their small businesses in town while children go without food. In the face of such pressing problems, immunisation becomes a secondary issue and despite the reported wide coverage of immunization countrywide, lack of immunisation was cited as one of the problems the children encountered. The predominant view was that male negligence partly accounts for this. For example, three women responded as follows, "Most men do not think about the importance of child immunization. They do not consider it their responsibility at all" (Secretary for Women, RC I, April 1991). Another respondent, a market vendor, went on to say, "Even when the wife is very busy or unable to take a child to an immunization centre, the man does not bother." Another observation was made, "Some men do not even know how an immunization card looks like. Such men may not even take a sick child to hospital when the mother is not there."

The belief in most Ugandan traditional societies that child care is solely a responsibility of the mother poses
danger to the welfare of children, especially where the mother is burdened by many responsibilities. One administrator expressed concern that fathers did not take the immunisation of their children as their responsibility. It is another "women’s responsibility". He wondered,

In case the expectant mother is unable, how many fathers can, even those who understand, take their pregnant wives to be immunized against tetanus for the benefit of the baby to be born? I doubt if there are many.

Malnutrition predisposes children to communicable diseases which they are too weak to resist. Thus infant and childhood illnesses and malnutrition have a cause and effect relationship. A study carried out in one district in Uganda (Situation Analysis, 1994) indicated that malnourished children had a significantly higher risk of death from malaria, measles, diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections. Conversely, childhood infections, especially diarrhoea, acute respiratory infections and measles, predispose children to malnutrition due to malabsorption as well as loss of appetite and therefore decreased food intake (Situation Analysis, 1994; UNICEF, 1989).

Malnutrition is linked to lack of knowledge, which affects feeding behaviours and beliefs. Issues like maternal knowledge of food selection, preparation and value, food taboos, all affect the nutritional status of the child.
Traditional food taboos mostly involve foods that cannot be eaten by women and children (especially girl children). Often the taboos include protein-rich foods such as chicken, eggs and goat meat. There are few restrictions on food for men. Food restrictions are usually on commonly available foods, which further imbalances the intra-household distribution of food (UNICEF, 1989; Serunjogi, Uusitalo, Bagenda, 1992).

The problem of inaccessibility of adequate health care is a major constraint to care. Many rural families live so far from the health units that they are unable to reach them when the need arises. This problem is aggravated by the lack of transport. For most Ugandans, therefore, the search for health care is costly, not only in monetary terms, but also time. There are lengthy trips to reach health facilities, which are generally followed by extended waiting before being seen briefly by a health provider. Considering that women do most of the household work, such time costs are likely to be dropped at the expense of the child’s health.

As already mentioned, the majority of Ugandans, especially in rural areas have no access to safe water and sanitation facilities. In these difficult circumstances, children are more vulnerable to related diseases, and they bear the burden of collecting the water from long distances. From a review of 29 recent studies of diarrhoea in Uganda, higher rates of diarrhoea were associated with unprotected water sources, lack of latrines, and greater numbers of under-
five year old children in the home (Wamai and Barton, 1992). Access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation by the nation’s population is a pre-requisite for the improvement of health and a general reduction in the incidence of water borne and related diseases.

AIDS threatens child survival in Uganda both directly and indirectly. Given the prevalence of the disease in Uganda, many children born to infected mothers inherit the virus. While the risk of infection of children born to infected mothers is estimated at 30% in the developed countries, the chances of infection are likely to be higher in Uganda due to factors like poor medical facilities. In the context of this study, it is worth noting that in 1993, Rakai had the highest number of orphans with both parents dead. The death of adult relatives from the disease has a direct bearing on the breakdown of the extended family support network, rendering children vulnerable to different hazards.

Children’s Protection

Besides their survival needs, children have protection needs. They need to be guarded against abuse, discrimination, neglect and exploitation. Estimates from the Department of Probation and Social Welfare indicate that four million children, half of the total child population in Uganda, live in difficult circumstances and are in need of protection.
While all children are vulnerable because of their age, certain categories are more disadvantaged, and more likely to be denied their rights. The largest categories of these are children with disabilities, orphans, young offenders, institutional children, abused children, street children, the employed young, the out-of-school children, and the girl child. As in the case of child survival, there are predisposing factors to this vulnerability. These include poverty, armed conflict, and unplanned parenthood.

**Children with Disabilities**

These are children who are afflicted by physical, mental or sensory infirmity, and in need of particular attention, support and care (Child Action 2000, Govt. of Uganda, 1993). The number of disabled children is estimated to be as high as 800,000 with one or more forms of disability (Uganda Society for Disabled Children (USDC), 1994). These children have limited access to social services, especially rehabilitation and education. Most schools do not have special facilities for the disabled, and parents may be unwilling to invest in a disabled child if resources are scarce (Muyinda and Barton, 1992). A World Bank Country study (1993) noted the vulnerability of handicapped children in Uganda.

What makes the handicapped particularly vulnerable is not their disability, but the attitude of
people. According to traditional beliefs in several parts of Uganda, disability has a supernatural origin. Disability symbolises a curse which has struck a particular person but is most likely weighing on the whole family. As a result, those afflicted by disabilities tend to be shunned by society, while their families try to keep them hidden to avoid the shame and possibly the ostracism of the community. Often physical disability is assumed to go hand in hand with mental deficiency, so little effort is made to educate handicapped children or even to treat them as persons (World Bank Country study, 1993).

Thus, disabled children are rarely integrated properly within community life. Their situation is made worse by the lack of a clear national policy to guide the processes of addressing the various problems and causes of child disability. Currently there is lack of clarity as to which ministry is responsible for disabled children.

Orphans

A common result of the internal conflicts, the social-economic decline and the prevalence of AIDS in Uganda is an increasing number of orphans. The orphans issue was often cited as the greatest challenge to the current efforts to address problems affecting children. Responding to the question of the major problems faced by children, participants gave the following responses: "Rakai has been severely affected by the AIDS problem, and the most burning issue on children would be orphans and their needs." (Respondent P, in Rakai district). "The problem of orphans poses a great
challenge, because their numbers continue to increase, making it difficult to devise viable solutions to the problem." (Respondent Q, Rakai district).

The respondents were asked to give their opinions about the best way to handle children's problems. Of those who responded to the question, the majority said that children's problems are best handled in the community. Respondent T, a female child volunteer advocate expressed her opinion: "It is important that all issues concerning every child are dealt with in the same community. The community is where children grow, and where they are known."

Some respondents also expressed the view that while the escalating problem of orphans deserves urgent attention, there was a possibility of diverting attention from other needy children, whose parents are alive. This view was given by respondents at the national level. Respondent G, a retired probation and social welfare officer made the following observation:

The NGOs have responded to the problems of children, but their emphasis is usually orphans. To me, this is not right because there are some children who have parents, but who need help because their parents are poor. In fact, some of these children may be in a worse state than orphans who have caring relatives.

A similar observation was made at the National Council for children secretariat by respondent B:
We have sometimes been criticized that we do not give attention to child protection, which essentially addresses children in crisis situations. But the council was set up to promote the wellbeing of all children. We need to educate the masses that all children need love and protection, not only the so called vulnerable children.

The significance of these observations is that they reflect a discontent with the residual services introduced during colonialism. Such services concentrated on the needs of a small minority of children who were considered vulnerable. Orphans were among such category of children.

The term orphan in Uganda refers to a child who has lost one or both parents. According to the 1991 census, there are about 1.2 million orphans in Uganda (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, 1991 census), representing about 12.8% of the population (0-18 years) (UNICEF, UCOBAC, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 1993). This large number is a challenge to the traditional patterns of orphan care. Extended families are having difficulty coping with financial and nutritional demands of caring for orphans (Seeley, 1993; Barnett and Blaikie, 1992; UCOBAC, 1993).

The most recent study (1993) on the situational analysis of orphans within family and community contexts covered 517 typical families, involving 3,594 family members. The study covered selected counties in all the regions of Uganda. It indicates that within households visited, there were 1,811 orphans, forming 50.4% of the total population studied. The
average family size was seven people, and bigger families of 10 to 14 or even more represented 20%. The average number of orphans per family was four, and families with five to nine orphans or even more represented 28%. Most of the households were headed by widows. Such families lived in poor housing conditions and their incomes were very low, as most of the family productive work concentrated on food production for survival. Most possessed only the barest essentials, and those that were headed by grandparents were in more severe circumstances. A small percentage of orphans (7.5%) had access to education, and school drop out rate among those who were lucky to go to school stood at 26.4%. This was more than double that of the non-orphaned children (at 12.5%) (UCOBAC, UNICEF, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 1993).

What raises great concern is that AIDS is now the leading cause of orphanhood, and it drastically changes families and family life. Since the disease hits hardest those who are in their most productive years, illness and death leave the surviving family members devastated economically. The impact of the disease on family welfare and food supply is profound. Children are sometimes taken out of school, not only to reduce pressure on the family budget, but also to supplement the household labour (Ankrah, 1993).

The weakening of the family support network has led to the emergence of a unique form of family re-organisation of child headed families, called by some, "Children-Alone
families" (Obbo, 1991). An increasing number of orphaned siblings are left on a plot of land and in their deceased parents' house. They cook, grow food and struggle to acquire income for basic subsistence needs, as well as school fees, if they have time to attend and if school is accessible.

In Rakai, the first district to be hard hit by the pandemic, the following concerns were expressed,

We have the extended family which is being weakened because of the continuous line of death. A child loses a mother and father, the next time the aunt is sick, and then the uncle who would take on the children also dies. So children have had to live on their own, with the oldest child taking charge of the other siblings. In such cases the oldest child has to leave school to stay at home to try and care for the young ones. I had a case where the children were sponsored in school by NGOs, and the eldest couldn't go to school although the chance was there. He had to stay at home to work on the land, to go to the lake to collect fish for sell, so that he could raise money for soap, salt, paraffin and sugar. Because of such situations, children are stressed at an early age, taking up responsibilities of adults. The stress is even more when caring for their sick parents. The children who are in the care of very old relatives also face another burden. In most cases, it is the children who end up caring for the old relatives. The very old grand mother or grand father is just there for company (Interview with respondent P, probation office).

The issue of children-alone families raises important questions about the traditional forms of caring, especially the extended family as an institution. While it is true that these children-alone families emerged because of the failure of absorption into the extended family system, it is also true
that this failure is not due to unwillingness to take on the children. The extended family is, in most of these cases, simply not there. The fact that the study of the situation of orphans already referred to (UCOBAC, UNICEF, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, 1993) reveals large numbers of orphans within families is testimony that the extended family is still a safety cushion. It, however, has got holes caused by factors like AIDS, wars, and migrations of family members to different areas.

For children to opt to live alone after their parents have died, and in the absence of any relative, may be an indication of how the family unit is cherished in Ugandan societies. It also reflects the lack of alternatives for children who have no extended family, no surrogate adults, no public assistance, no knowledge of other possibilities. A respondent in the Probation office observed: "Many of these children have refused to go in the institutions because they want to keep together. They also do not want to lose their parents' land, which in most cases is the only resource available to them." (Interview with respondent O, Rakai district).

Responding to the question about community's role regarding children's well-being, respondent O said,

There are community groups, especially comprised of women who have come up together to do communal work for the children; say if parents have died, and they have left land, these women come and plant
food for some children. Then others have day care centres, where they gather these children on weekends and clean them up. For example they trim their hair, nails, and make sure the children are clean.

In areas where such organised groups do not exist, it was reported that there is usually supervision from an adult member within the community, chosen by the community itself. This responsibility falls on the child volunteer advocate.

The other major cause of orphanhood is the "endless" wars that have affected different parts of Uganda since 1979. Since the war to overthrow Amin's repressive regime by the Tanzanian forces in 1979, Uganda has not had total peace in the whole country. Even at present, when the country is regarded as being generally stable, there has been constant instability in most of the northern parts of the country. Children continue to be innocent victims of adult conflicts.

Street Children

Other results from the social, economic and political factors have been the increase of street children. Friends of Children Association (FOCA) defines street children as "Children working and living on the streets" (Friends of Children Association, 1992). Munene (1993) gives a more detailed definition, adding that those children are under 18 years, and the street is their major source of socialisation
and growth. He categorises them in two: full timers who work and stay on the streets; part-timers who spend the whole day working on the streets and go back to sleep at their homes.

Available estimates put the number of street children at 4000 nationally, of whom 1000 are in Kampala (FOCA, 1992; Munene, 1993). Some of the causes that have forced children to flee their homes and seek refuge on the streets in urban centres are violent conflicts and wars, family disintegration, child abuse, death of parents which has worsened due to the AIDS pandemic, lack of education opportunities, rural poverty, urbanisation, and 'bad' peers (Munene, 1993; Byamukama, 1993; UNICEF, 1994; Govt of Uganda, Child Action 2000, 1993).

Street children lack all forms of protection and care, and those who sleep on the streets lack shelter as well. They have no access to education and health services. They lack nutritious food, good clothing and parental and community love. Research carried out in ten towns in Uganda indicates that the problem of the quality of life of these children is of greater concern than that of their numbers (Munene, 1993). Those who have established permanent homes on the streets distrust everyone outside their own society. They have proved a challenge to the NGOs that have attempted to help them. Organised in groups, they are able to send messages to avoid any "external" interference. One NGO, Save the Children Fund (SCF), has been making an effort to gather them together since it would be easier to help them. But on detecting the SCF
staff, they would run into hiding shouting, "Aba Sevu bazze! Yiyo Landrover yabwe"—meaning, "Save The Children Fund has come! There is their landrover." (Kasirye, 1992)

The Problem of Shelter

This is one of the biggest problems faced by the street children. Those who stay full time on the streets and other hidden places like tunnels, old bus coaches, crumbling buildings, do not have appropriate shelter. The most common form of bedding is polythene bags and sacks, because this is the only bedding they can afford. These are usually available near garbage (Munene, 1993). They are therefore exposed to mosquito bites, rain, and toxic fumes from the garbage near where they stay.

Health

The health status of street children is quite disheartening. As already indicated, they are exposed to a harsh environment which makes them susceptible to diseases and other health hazards. Munene (1993) reports that they are vulnerable to diseases more particularly sexually transmitted diseases, malaria, injuries and skin rashes. Their situation is worsened when they fall sick as they rarely receive medical attention. Their health conditions are also worsened by their
diet. In most cases they cannot select what they eat since it is picked from garbage. Some of it is even toxic, poisoned with the intention of killing rats (Munene, 1993).

**Unfriendly Social Environment**

Street children are not liked by other people. They are scapegoated whenever something goes wrong. They are usually referred to as "pick pockets" and as generally undesirable elements of the streets. Consequently, they are harassed even by some security personnel like police. Street girls are sexually abused by street boys and some men who find them in their hiding places. This makes them susceptible to unwanted pregnancies, without anyone to take responsibility.

**Labour**

Street children survive by providing manual labour. In so doing they are exploited and exposed to hazards. For instance they are underpaid, overworked, and in high risk situations. In border areas, they are employed to carry out illegal trade across the borders passing through complicated routes to reach their destinations. In some cases they are also used as agents for theft and spying. When they get caught, rarely are the adults who use the children pursued.
Child Abuse

Child abuse is a problem that is rarely discussed. Nevertheless, increasing media attention has made it apparent that a significant number of children in Uganda are physically, sexually, or emotionally abused. Step-mothers have been identified as notorious child abusers, resulting in children leaving home for the street (Byamukama, 1993). The reason usually given for these abuses is that they feel they should not carry the responsibility of looking after children the husband has "collected" from other women. Usually the anger is turned on the child.

Abuse has also been reported in institutional settings, such as remand homes and orphanages (UNICEF, 1994; Mukasa-Kikonyogo, 1992). There is an ever present danger of inflicting excessive pain under the guise of discipline by parents, teachers, guardians, correction and law enforcement officers (Child Link Vol. No. 1, 1995; Child Action 2000, 1993). However, child abuse is sometimes attributed to lack of awareness about child care and the rights of children by both communities and parents, as well as to economic hardships.

Although child abuse is on the increase, only a small number of abused children are reported and culprits brought to justice (Child Link Vol. 1, 1995; Kasawuzi, 1992; Child Law Review Committee, 1992). This is because of divergent feelings about the nature of this problem. It is maintained in most
societies that children need to be punished in order to prepare them for responsible adult life. In most societies, the commonest form of punishment is caning, and advocating for its abolition is associated by many as "importing western ideas" (Kakama, 1993). Some crude forms of punishment, however, were termed as child abuse (Dufite-Bizimana, 1992). There is also a lot of stigma attached to this problem, especially sexual child abuse. A female respondent H, from one of the non governmental organizations commented on the danger of this stigma:

When you complain about defilement, men are not bothered. In fact they become hostile to you. When one concerned woman became vocal about the daily reports of defilement in the newspapers, she was labelled an ‘impossible woman’. When children get defiled, even their parents prefer that they don’t say it, especially when it is committed by a close relative. Our societies do not want to accept that sexual child abuse exists.

It becomes obvious, then, that only a small fraction of abused children get reported (Child Law Review Committee, 1992). Sometimes children and/or their mothers are reluctant to explain "obscene" affairs in front of the adults since it is culturally forbidden.

Early marriages are a specific form of child abuse which is also not taken seriously, not even by the media. Most abuse is encouraged by the rigid cultures which demand that people can marry off their twelve-year old daughters. In any case,
allowing marriages at an early age is equal to defilement, and letting it continue makes the national law on defilement almost meaningless because its enforcement becomes difficult.

**Child Labour**

Child labour is another form of abuse that is hardly regarded as such, because of the attitudes of society. The participation of children in domestic activities is culturally perceived as part of the learning and preparation for adult life. This normal work can become excessive or exploitative and be a form of child abuse. In the majority of homes in urban centres, many young girls and boys (referred to as house-girls\boys) are engaged as domestic servants; some are as young as eight years. The relationship between young labourers and their employers is usually unhealthy, since the children are too young to take on important responsibilities such as looking after a baby, cooking, washing and doing other jobs, usually for large families. As all of these children are too young to take such responsibilities, and are uneducated, psychologically depressed and in many cases morally harmed, their own effects on the babies they look after is itself an added problem for the children of Uganda (Child Action 2000, 1993).

Although the proportion is suspected to be large, the actual number of employed children in Uganda is not known.
(Uganda National Program of Action for Children, 1992). It is one area where the affected children are most vulnerable, as there is little support and care that is offered by the ministry concerned and the government generally. However, given the unique conditions in Uganda, tackling the problem of child labour may be quite difficult, because usually children work to help supplement the family income. In the case of children-alone families, they are actually working because they are heads of households and sole bread winners. In such instances, legislat ing against child labour leaves legislators with a dilemma.

Child Offenders

There are also children who require protection who come in conflict with the law. Such children are not better protected either. Research done in Uganda on the subject revealed many difficulties in the juvenile justice system.

Since Ugandan law does not prescribe procedures to be followed when trying juveniles, they are subjected to the same strict ones as adults. Even the one properly constituted juvenile court operates under the adult code.

Child legislation in Uganda does not normally function to ensure expeditious processing of cases, yet this is one of the important considerations of providing justice and welfare. Various factors contribute to such delays: conflicting
statutes dealing with juvenile law; bureaucratic procedures; insufficient resources; corruption, which leads to a weak justice system; the lack of perception of the legal rights of children.

Children charged with capital offenses face the worst blow of a 'delayed justice'. Capital offenses have to be heard by the High Court irrespective of the age of the offender. Only a few judges reside outside the capital city, and circuit judges visit infrequently. Thus, children are subjected to four hundred and eighty days custodial remand before they can be granted bail. Even after completion of such a period, the bail conditions make it inaccessible to most children as the cash sureties demanded are beyond their reach. Research has revealed a strikingly high use of custodial remand (Dufite-Bizimana, 1991). A high proportion of those whose remand conditions were known were remanded in adult prisons, the most used option. Yet half of these children, who were remanded in custody were eventually found not guilty (Dufite-Bizimana, 1991).

After the juvenile has had an adjudicatory hearing at which he has been proved guilty, a decision is made concerning proper disposition. Most of the disposition alternatives are either inadequate, or a hindrance to children’s proper growth and development. Those given custodial sentences face the most difficult situation. They are sent either to the Reformatory school, or to the Approved School, under the guise of
rehabilitation. However, these institutions have been considered 'child prisons'. A study carried out by Kasirye (1991) on the reformatory school in Uganda revealed that the children were required: to wear prison uniforms; had standard hair cuts; moved chained while going to work on the school farms; were subject to rigid rules and regimented programmes.

Thus, for the juvenile in Uganda whose court appearance results in a custodial sentence, institutionalisation means isolation in an understaffed security institution with hardly any education or vocational training, and no counselling or any other guidance upon release (Kasirye, 1991).

The absence of detention centres for children while on remand means they must be detained with adult criminals, thus interfering with their normal development, and exposing them to a situation that may turn them into more hardened criminals.

The Girl Child

Gender is another factor of child vulnerability in Uganda. Girls particularly are exposed to a higher degree of vulnerability to abuse, lack of protection and care. A girl child is more likely than a male child to be denied education, to be required to drop out of school, to be defiled, to suffer the negative effects of circumcision in those societies where it is practised, and to marry early.
A study by a local women's organisation, Action for Development (ACFODE), suggested that forced marriage was the major reason the majority of girls run away from home. Early marriage is directly linked to cultural values: "A pregnant, unmarried daughter becomes a source of acute embarrassment to the family. Moreover, girls, when they marry become 'assets' in poverty-stricken families, when sold for large dowries." (ACFODE, 1991, p. 28).

The majority of girls who run away from home to escape a forced marriage live in extreme poverty with no reliable income, under conditions of persistent anxiety, which leaves them vulnerable to dangerous situations, including selling sex for money.

**Government Organisation on Behalf of Children**

Child protection at the national level was the responsibility of the ministry of Labour and Social Affairs when the Department of Probation and Social Welfare was in the same ministry. In 1995, the Department was moved to the Ministry of Gender and Community Development, to which the responsibility for child protection then shifted. Other ministries that have child related responsibility are Justice, Local Government, and Internal Affairs. At the district level, the District Probation and Welfare Officers are responsible for the protection of children within the family, the
community, and the legal system. The Department's activities are constrained by under funding, which affects the extent and quality of care and protection available to children. There is also the problem of inequitable sharing of the little funds allocated, between child care institutions and community-based activities. In conformity with the residual approach to social welfare followed by colonial administrators, and adopted by the government after independence, the institutions consume the lion's share of the limited resources available. In 1992, 80% of the budget for the Department of Probation and Social Welfare was spent on institutions. Yet less than 0.1% of the estimated vulnerable children are cared for in institutions (Child Law Review Committee, 1992), and gross abuse and neglect of children continue to occur in rural areas where the majority of children live, and where culture is used as rationalisation to justify abuse of women and children.

Children's Development

In the area of developmental needs of children, education and employment are of major importance. Education is considered a strong weapon of progressive change, a key to improvement of peoples's abilities, values and attitudes.

Ugandan formal education is based on seven years of primary school and six years of secondary school. Vocational, technical and academic courses are offered through post-
primary and secondary institutions. The education system is centrally managed by the Ministry of Education and Sports, although primary education is supported jointly by local district administrations. Formal and non-formal education are provided jointly by Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ministry of Local Government. Non-governmental organisations also contribute substantially in providing education, especially to children from poor families, and orphans.

Many children in Uganda do not have access to education. Access is affected by high educational costs, household poverty, low literacy among parents, and poor distribution of schools, which means some children live far away from any schools. Public insecurity also disrupts the educational system. The 'chronic' civil wars occurring in different parts of Uganda at different times disrupt families since in most cases they are displaced from their homes and families. Such insecurity prevents the residents of the affected areas from carrying out the normal economic activities, aggravating the problem of poverty. In such circumstances, teachers are frightened away, and they opt for places that are more stable.

Low literacy of parents is associated with low perceived value for education (Situation Analysis, 1994). Parents who have low education levels are less likely to invest in their children's schooling. A quantitative analysis of school attendance showed that a child's chances of attending increased with greater parental education, especially that of
the mother (Kakande and Nalwadda, 1993). In the study, it was found that when the educational level of the male household head increases from 'none' to 'completed primary', chances of his child attending school go up by 13 percent. It is even more marked for women, if the mother’s education is raised from 'none' to 'full primary', the chances of her child attending school are increased by 40%.

This finding gives an important warning about school enrolment in Uganda. It points clearly to the need for the government to be vigilant and to remove obstacles to school enrolment. To guard against the possibility of a 'vicious circle' emerging, the educational system needs to be seriously addressed.

Household poverty, and the high costs of education are barriers to education. In the 1970s the government almost abdicated its responsibility for education to parents. School administration fell into the hands of the Parents' Teachers' Associations (PTAs). Over time these associations have continued to hike the school charges, and this increasingly proved a burden to many parents especially the very poor in rural areas.

These concerns about high school charges were expressed during the interviews in the rural district. One respondent stated, for example,

"Education has become very expensive. The PTA charges are beyond what most parents can afford. At
least if it were only fees. Some times even when children are sponsored in school by NGOs, only the fees is paid, and the parents are unable to raise the PTA money (Interview with respondent W, vice-chairman LC I, and in charge of children’s welfare).

One of the salient features of the 1996/97 budget was the abolition of the PTA charges (Parents/Teachers Association). It also revealed the government’s plan to pay school fees for four children in every family. However despite these commitments on part of the government, effective implementation remains questionable. Clearly, abolition of the PTA fees will only succeed if the government allocates more funds for school maintenance, for example, the building Fund and pays a living wage to the teachers who survive on extra funds from the PTA fees. Despite the additional burden PTA fees impose on the parents, it could be seen as an example of communalism, and the willingness of parents to take charge of the educational institutions within their areas.

Large families are another reason many Ugandan children do not get a chance to attend school. The situation analysis carried out in 1994 got such responses: "The children are too many. Like me, I have almost ten children and I will not manage taking all of them to school." (From Situation Analysis, 1994, Kalangala interview).

While the school enrolment level is still below the desired level, the drop out rate has increased since the mid-seventies. In 1986-1988, 76% of school age boys and 63% of
school age girls were enrolled in primary school. The enrolment in secondary school of school age boys was 16% and nine percent of school age girls (UNICEF, 1991). This shows that the drop-out rate during primary school is considerable. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning estimated there were 630,000 children in primary one in state schools in 1989 but only 171,400 in primary seven (Background to the budget, 1990-91).

Data from the statistical department of the Ministry of Education and Sports suggests that students are dropping out of school at every level of the education system. Of the children who began primary school in 1986, 70% dropped out by 1992; only 30% of this group reached primary seven. Girls dropped out more than boys; during the same primary cycle, 75% of girls did not complete their primary education compared to 64% of boys. Surprisingly, smaller proportions of pupils are completing primary school today than 20 years ago. Of the children who enrolled in primary one in 1975, 90% reached primary seven; considerably higher than the 30% who finished from the 1986 cohort (Ministry of Education and Sports, Statistical Abstracts, 1994).

There are various factors responsible for this wide disparity in the drop-out rate. The most obvious is the five year period (1981-1986) of protracted guerilla warfare against the Obote II regime which covered various areas of central Uganda (particularly in the area surrounding the capital,
Kampala). During these five years, social services in the affected areas came to a complete standstill. Many families were displaced or killed. Schools were destroyed and used as shelters for the army. Many orphaned children, of those who had been butchered, in desperation joined the freedom-fighters in order to drive out men who represented death (Mutibwa, 1992). The very young ones (infants) found by the freedom fighters, either had been abandoned by their parents or had been lucky not to be killed, were taken on and looked after by the freedom fighters. This explains the presence of a large number of children in Uganda’s armed forces, popularly known as the "kadogos" (A Swahili word meaning young ones). Since the affected areas accounted for the highest percentage of enrolment, the collapse of the school system during this period had a big impact on the enrolment levels.

Completion of primary cycle is not the whole picture. The erosion of students from the school system continues in secondary school; in 1986, 16% of students entering secondary school had dropped out after four years; the figure rose to 47% in 1991 (Ministry of Education and Sports, Statistical Abstracts, 1994).

The near collapse of the Ugandan economy due to mismanagement from the early 1970s to the mid-1980s led to increased poverty, which made it difficult to keep up with the ever increasing educational costs. After the guerrilla war was over in the "Luwero triangle", insecurity shifted to the
eastern and northern parts of the country, initiated by the ousted forces which have vowed to take control of the government again, and hence are still fighting. This has greatly affected school attendance in these areas.

**Equity in Education**

The children who do not go to school and those who drop out are disproportionately female and rural. At all levels of the school system, the proportion of females is less than that of males; girls comprise 45% of primary pupils, 30% of lower secondary level students, and only 20% of upper secondary level students (Kwesiga, 1993).

Girls' education is compromised in different ways. Some of these are identified as: more domestic tasks for girls than their male counterparts, leaving no time for homework; adolescent pregnancy sometimes resulting from defilement by classmates and teachers; cultural expectations in many rural communities tend to propel girls out of school and into early marriage. A child volunteer advocate, while responding to the question regarding problems of children identified lack of schooling for girls. She expressed these concerns: 1) Parents feel that educating girls is wasteful because it is like educating for another family"; 2) "When girls begin showing signs of maturity, they are constantly reminded that they are ready for marriage. Some girls drop out of school because of
such frustrations." (Interview with respondent T, a Child Volunteer Advocate).

Adolescent pregnancy is another major factor that affects girls' school attendance, since those who get pregnant are required to drop out and are not allowed to re-enrol at the same school after delivery, because "they will be a bad example to the rest of the girls". Even when the boy or teacher responsible is known to the school authorities, hardly any measures are taken against him. The problem was cited by the Child Volunteer Advocates as one of the commonest that come to them. One child volunteer advocate noted,

I always get cases where girls are impregnated by boys, and the boys deny responsibility. In the most recent case, the boy’s parents took the girl and hid her away while the boy continued with his schooling. After she delivered, she was brought back to her parents' home. But they made sure that their son was away. They changed him to another school (Interview with respondent V, a child volunteer advocate).

In such incidences, the girl’s family, especially the father, is ashamed of the social stigma, and cuts off all ties with her (ACFODE, 1991). Presently there are great divergencies in the quality of education that is provided in rural and urban areas. In rural areas, there are hardly any teachers, and the few there are unqualified.

The Parents/Teachers Association (PTA) fees are higher in urban areas than in the countryside, reflecting a greater
capacity to generate funds to support the schools. Rural poverty does not allow parents to raise enough money for Parents' Teachers Association in order to be able to maintain quality teachers, one reason educational standards are lower than in urban locations.

A study of educational access confirmed that children's likelihood of attending school is increased by urban residence (Kakande and Nalwadda, 1993). Children in rural areas walk long distances because there are fewer schools. In a rainy season, they are vulnerable. Walking through mud, bare-footed is very unpleasant, and a good reason to evade school, especially by the very young. Also there are no scholastic materials. The result of such poor conditions is poor performance, that does not actually reflect the intellectual capacity of the child. The implication is that the representation of children from rural areas in higher institutions of learning is very minor, yet this is where the majority of children live.

On financing education, the government has tended to favour the post-primary educational institutions while basic education has been mainly supported by local authorities, communities and parents. For example, the government meets full boarding and lodging costs plus 65% of tuition expenses of students in post-primary institutions while at primary schools it meets only 50% of the tuition fee. As already noted, the tuition fee is not the major burden to the parents;
PTA funds are. At the university level (government university), the government meets all costs of all students who qualify. For every Makerere University student (the oldest university), the government forfeits the chance to educate 108 pupils in primary school per year (Vulnerable Child, Vol. 4 No. 2, June 1994). This financing system has tended to leave parents to bear the greater burden for basic education. This has created inequalities in educational opportunities in society. The system limits access of the poorest groups of the population to basic educational opportunities, especially as the cost of education even at primary levels has increased over the years.

The high drop-out rate leads to problems of the unemployed young, as many children immediately look for other ways to ensure their future is a bit bright. Since they do not possess the required skills, they end up in inferior jobs, some of which are exploitative. The high drop-out rate also leads to an increasing number of street children in urban areas, and of idle and disorderly children (boys) in rural areas.

Employment of children is another crucial aspect when analyzing the developmental needs. Considerable abuse is occurring as a result of engaging children in employment. Although the employment decree of 1975 states that no person under twelve years is allowed to be employed except on light work as prescribed by the Minister, the concept of 'light
labour' is not defined. Monitoring and enforcement are virtually nonexistent.

In reality, many young children work to pay their school fees or to supplement the family income. For the few who are in children-alone families, they work to maintain their siblings. This, however, does not 'excuse' the problem of child labour. It, instead, calls for an organized and well financed welfare system on the part of government, and a clear policy on orphan care.

Summary

This chapter has presented an account of the situation of children in Uganda. The situation has been analysed in terms of their survival, protection and development. In terms of children's survival in Uganda, the analysis has suggested that the infant and child mortality rates are high, and short birth intervals due to the desire to have many children is one key factor responsible for the high incidence of such mortality rates.

Education, especially of the mother, is noted as an important factor in decreasing mortality levels. Yet the education of girls is given lower priority than that of boys. This leads to a vicious circle of early marriages, lack of education, short birth intervals, and consequently, high mortality.
Poverty is also responsible for the lack of access to health services. This is aggravated by a lack of information, and negative attitudes towards modern child care practices which result from cultural beliefs and taboos.

AIDS, an endemic disease prevalent in Uganda, is a threat to child survival. Children face both the risk of infection and the loss of affection. The former happens when the child is infected in the mother's womb, during delivery, or by nursing while the latter happens when the child loses the mother or father or both at a very early age, thus minimising his/her chances of survival.

The chapter has also presented the various categories of children that require protection---those who are 'traditionally' referred to as the vulnerable. These include the disabled, orphans, street children and the physically and sexually abused. This thesis adds another category, the girl child.

This study argues that the escalating problems of children in Uganda are a result of the failure of the residual social policies advocated by the proponents of modernisation theory. Such policies were concerned with the juvenile delinquents in urban areas, with no attention paid to the children in rural areas. Such disparities have continued, for, as noted in the chapter, there are rural/urban disparities in accessing social services. This raises another observation, that even some children whose parents are alive are needy
and/or vulnerable. An approach that aims at improving communities to promote the well-being of all children is necessary. This fits in with a community approach which recognises the important role women play in society. It also calls for an approach that pays attention to resource redistribution in order to avoid the current rural/urban, female/male disparities.

The communitarian approach will have to be realistically different than in the past. Treatment of women and children will have to change drastically. Taboos on food will have to be eliminated. Schooling will have to be supported at the national level. Public health will have to be accessible and affordable. Child related problems will have to be addressed, comprehensively, rather than piece-meal.

The new community will resemble the old only in respect of geographic location. Almost all other aspects will have to be modified.

The scale, scope and severity of problems associated with children can only be responded to by a massive infusion of funds, resources, training and public education.

The next chapter details the government response to meeting children's survival, protection and development needs.
Chapter Eight

Policy Response

Introduction

The responses by government, national and international NGOs, and other foreign donors to the needs of children brought about by the situations already discussed are analyzed in this section.

At independence, in October 1962, Uganda inherited a child welfare system primarily concerned with the provision of residential care, responses to child offenders and the management of legal provisions for adoption and foster care. While the need for these is acknowledged at the present time, there is no doubt that they were irrelevant to the needs of most rural children at the time. The strength within the community was sufficient to handle children's problems. Also, legal adoption and legal fostering were completely alien to Ugandan society. Writing about the native customs and beliefs of the Baganda, Roscoe (1911) acknowledges that,

Owing to the clan system, no occasion arose for the adoption of orphans; children belonged to the clan, and when their father or mother died, they were still under the care of some relative who took the place of the father (Roscoe, 1911, p. 81).

The two concepts of fostering and adoption are still not well absorbed in most communities in Uganda. This was
acknowledged by respondent J working with one of the NGOs that were included in the study. The respondent noted:

People in Uganda do not understand these terms the way they are understood in the western world. For Ugandans, informal fostering has always been common especially among relatives. And when they take on a child who is not related to them, then they take the child as their own, and it is kept top secret. So under these circumstances, it becomes difficult to implement formal fostering and adoption through court because then it will become public, and usually the parents do not want other people to know that the child is not their own. Besides, the court is associated with criminals, and few people are willing to go to court just to look after a child. And once parents decide to take on a child, then they consider this a permanent arrangement (adoption).

It is therefore inappropriate to focus on child welfare services introduced from Britain as the central themes of child welfare policies. In any case, it is evident that most of these measures were put in place for the benefit of the colonial masters. In accordance with what existed in England, for example, juvenile courts, remand homes and reformatories were established to ensure that the colonial staff had the same kinds of protection as existed in Britain (MacPherson, 1982; Midgley, 1981). Similarly, the Adoption Act of 1943 makes it clear that it was intended to give only the British exclusive rights to adopt children in Uganda (Respondent J, 1995).

As the Ugandan society continually changes due to a various factors, notably the deteriorating economic
conditions, and the growing number of deaths due to AIDS, the residual approach to social welfare provision becomes inefficient. AIDS increases individual responsibilities for caring, strains individual ability and commitment to meet traditional social obligations, yet at the same time creates an orphan crisis that can only be responded to by an organised and well funded welfare system. Such a system should build on the community, and boost its coping mechanisms.

As noted by Ankrah (1986), the residual approach introduced during colonialism has the effect of nibbling away at major problems without making an impact on the lives of all Uganda’s children. For example, there is a pre-occupation with the young offender, although no solution is offered to the problems of hundreds of school drop-outs or to those who never have a chance to go to school. The pre-occupation with adoption seems trivial when nothing is done for millions of infants and under fives who continue to die of diseases that could be easily prevented.

The post-colonial governments up to 1985 did not appear to see the inadequacy of the policies and the child welfare situation was hardly given any attention. This is not surprising, considering there was gross abuse of human rights at the time, and children’s issues were the least to be considered.

The attitude of the government towards children’s issues changed in the mid-1980s. The country had experienced a long
period of wars that left the economy shattered. Children’s issues could no longer be given a low priority, because the after effects of the many years of social, political and economic turmoil were visible in an increasing number of children on the streets, a situation that had not been seen previously. Also, for the first time, institutional homes sprang up to house the increasing number of orphans and displaced children. Since restoration of human rights was one of the government’s top agenda items, the government readily joined the international community in the attempt to promote the rights of children.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Uganda is a signatory to the 1990 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The convention defines a child as a person under eighteen years of age unless, by law, majority is attained earlier (Article 1). It espouses the notion of a child as an individual in his/her own right and not an appendage or property of the parents; having rights that apply without exception/discrimination (Article 2). As already noted, the girl child in Uganda and is more disadvantaged than a boy. In a study on village perceptions of children’s rights (Kakama, 1993), it was found in the discussion groups that on various fronts the girl child experiences discrimination. Girls are a second consideration
for education, especially in instances where there is insufficient money; girl children do not have the right of inheritance, and they are generally subjected to harder work than their brothers. These discriminatory practices against the girl child are largely culturally determined. As such, it is only through public education and sensitization that, hopefully, peoples’s attitudes will gradually change.

Since culture is an integral and valuable aspect of every society, the state is faced with a dilemma of protecting children who are victims of some negative cultural practices. The dilemma is whether to validate local customs and accept the negative aspects, or allow central state regulation to suppress them. However, if the latter happens, and the state coercively overrides these traditional aspects of local culture, it would weaken the child caring integrity of the community which, after all, hardly receives any child care resources from the state. The inherent question is "Who has power over the children?" Since the couple takes a collective responsibility to bring children into the world, this responsibility is the basis of the family's social power (Agnes Pitrou, 1990). However, this responsibility for the children is sometimes a cause for conflict between the state and the family (Agness Pitrou, 1990). Nevertheless, the family constitutes a good unit for influencing successive generations, and it is considered the ideal setting for normal child development.
Despite the recognition of the child as an individual in his/her own right, therefore, the United Nations Convention also recognises the primary role of the family and parents for the care and protection of the child (UN Convention, Article 5). The child has the right to live with the parent(s) who have a joint primary responsibility for the upbringing (Article 9). Consequently, the Convention calls on state parties to respect the rights and duties of the parents to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner that is consistent with the evolving capacities of the child [Article 14 (2)]. The Convention requires state parties to provide special protection for those children separated from, or, without families and to ensure appropriate alternative family care and placement [Article 20 (1-3)]. It also calls for the development of children through access to health services (Article 24), to education (Article 28-29), play, leisure, cultural activities (Article 31) and the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion [Article 14 (1)].

The Convention seeks to protect the child from practices that are prejudicial or harmful to his/her welfare, for example, child labour (Article 32), drug abuse (Article 33), sexual exploitation (Article 34), sale and abduction (Article 35). In reality, it is difficult to draw a line between what child labour is and the expectations from a child by the parents and/or guardians, and the community. The unique
situation of children-alone families makes such international concerns regarding child labour become counter-productive. Prohibitions of child labour in such unique circumstances might prevent teenage household heads from working to provide for their families.

The Organisation of African Unity, which has a very limited influence on domestic policies, recognised the importance of carefully looking into the differences in society. The civil servant who was given the responsibility of updating the report on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child noted,

Government has made progress on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child, but this progress has mainly been on the articles that do not conflict sharply with society’s cultural values and traditions---those that do not put children in a vulnerable position. (Interview with respondent F, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs).

As related to juvenile justice, a child accused of an offence or crime should have his/her human rights respected, have legal counsel or other assistance, be tried by an impartial court and benefit from all aspects of due process of the law. Detention or imprisonment of children should be used as a last resort and for a short time (Article 40). The Convention deplores institutionalisation of children, and instead advocates for care, guidance, supervision order,
counselling, probation, foster care, etc., as viable alternatives [Article 40 (4)].

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

While the African states agreed to adhere to the principles of the rights and welfare of the child contained in the United Nations Convention, it was realised that there was a need for an African Charter for Children. There were some unique concerns that were not adequately addressed by the UN convention and which were bound to affect the implementation. Certain local conditions in Africa such as severe economic depression, shortage of basic social amenities, widespread armed conflict with resultant displacement of populations constituted special factors which had to be taken into account, with regard to the implementation of any body of law affecting the rights of children. Thus it was apparent that the United Nations Convention should be complemented by a local charter which, while retaining its spirit, made special provisions guided by the situation on the ground in Africa. Africa's various cultural backgrounds, its traditions and aspirations, its economic hardships, its changing political conditions, and similar circumstances among nations, gave rise to critical variables which were bound to affect the implementation of any norm of a social character.
The African Charter addresses issues of child mothers requiring the states of the OAU to take all appropriate measures to ensure that children who become pregnant before completing their education are given an opportunity to continue with their education on the basis of their individual ability [Article 11(6)]. The Charter discourages customs, traditions, cultural or religious practices that are inconsistent with the rights of the child spelt out in the United Nations Convention. These include those which interfere with the normal growth and development of the child like female genital mutilation and the methods used for boys, which have raised health concerns since they have been identified as a potential risk for the spread of the AIDS virus.

Other articles in the United Nations Convention whose implementation in the African context was questioned are Articles 13, 14 and 15. While providing for freedom of expression, of association, thought, conscience and religion, such expressions are subjected to the guidance of parents or legal guardians depending on the age of the child. Nevertheless, the new constitution of Uganda (1995) respects the rights of every person to the above freedoms [Constitution of Uganda, 1995, Article 29 (1)(a–e)]. The leading newspapers in the country give weekly page space to articles on children. Like all other services, however, this is only beneficial to children in urban schools, since media coverage in rural areas is minimal.
Although Article 10 of the African Charter gives children protection of privacy, it is once again subjected to reasonable supervision by parents and/or guardians. Article 11, which deals with the education of the child, also takes into account among others, the preservation and strengthening of positive African moral traditions and cultural values, and the child's understanding of primary health care.

The African Charter, while upholding the rights of the child, recognises the need for the child to have particular responsibilities towards his/her society. Article 31 of the Charter states that every child, subject to his age and ability and such limitations as contained in the Charter, shall have responsibilities towards his family and society, the state and other legally recognized communities and the international community. The child has a duty:

(a) to work for the cohesion of the family, to respect his parents and elders at all times and to assist them in case of need;
(b) to serve his national community by placing his physical and intellectual abilities at its service;
(c) to preserve and strengthen social and national solidarity;
(d) to preserve and strengthen African cultural values in his relations with other members of the society, in the spirit of tolerance, dialogue and consultation and to contribute to the moral wellbeing of society;
(e) to preserve and strengthen the independence and the integrity of his country;
(f) to contribute to the best of his abilities, at all times and at all levels, to the promotion and achievement of African Unity (The African Charter, Article 31).
While Uganda is a signatory to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, there has been no written policy so far that addresses or incorporates the duties and responsibilities of the child. Instead, the new constitution imposes a duty on every citizen of Uganda "to protect children and vulnerable persons against any form of abuse, harassment or ill treatment" [Constitution of Uganda, 1995, Article 17 (c)]. The Children's Bill (1995) also imposes a duty on a parent, guardian or any person having custody of a child to maintain that child and, in particular, that duty gives a child the right to education, immunization, adequate diet, clothing, shelter, and medical attention [Article 8 (a-f)].

Since to ratify a convention is only an ethical act with no binding legal authority, the publicity of this international commitment and other matters concerning the rights of the child remained a rather low key affair. The major reason for such a rather quiescent attitude could have been due to the formal responsibility for responding to international documents such as the United Nations Convention and the African Charter rests with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to whom the substance of these documents is not, professionally or politically, very relevant. The Ministry only communicates with the Cabinet to obtain approval for signing and ratifying such conventions. In the case of these two instruments, there was little effective liaison with the line ministries. Hardly any effort was made to publicize the
rights either before or after the instruments had been ratified.

However, the situation gradually changed. In 1988 UNICEF convened a conference on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was attended by social workers, lawyers, non-governmental organisations operating in the field of child welfare, and UNICEF. Since then, a lot of progress has been made towards implementation in accordance with article four of the United Nations Convention which states that "the state shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the Rights recognized in the Convention" (UN Convention, Article 4). The government of Uganda by its statements and actions has shown its concern about the problems faced by Uganda’s children. Accordingly it has taken some measures to improve the situation of children and protect their rights. In his address to the national seminar on the United Convention on the Rights of the Child in Kampala (November, 1988), President Museveni said that "as important as the need for human rights is, even more important is the need to recognise and protect the special rights of children who are the most vulnerable members of our society" (UNICEF National Seminar on the Rights of the Child, 1988). Attempts have been made to make known the provisions of the Convention to adults and children alike, in accordance with article 42 of the UN Convention.
The presence of free media in Uganda has made the fulfilment of the article even more feasible. The media is very active in creating awareness of the abuse of the rights of children. Almost daily a case of child abuse is reported (Kakama, 1993). Survival and development needs of children are common features in most of Ugandan newspapers. This is a positive indication of the awareness being created concerning the rights of the child, which is crucial if significant improvements in the welfare of children are to be achieved. Positive signs of this awareness have also been noted at the community level. A research project, "Children and Their Rights: Village Perceptions" was concluded in seven districts in 1993. The research received a positive reception from all groups who participated. There was, however, a lack of broad understanding of the rights, and translating the term in local languages was very difficult (Kakama, 1993). An earlier research study also had revealed overwhelming willingness by communities to take up functions related to child welfare. Desire for statutory empowerment in order to handle offending and child care matters was expressed (Dufite-Bizimana, 1991).

Although there is a lot yet to be done, the measures taken express a genuine concern for the well being of children in Uganda. Notable among these major and broad areas of action that have been undertaken so far are the formulation of the Uganda National Programme of Action for Children, the
inclusion of children's rights in the country’s constitution, and the establishment of the Child Law Review Committee.

The Uganda National Programme of Action for Children

At the World Summit for Children held in 1990, a great promise to the children was made by world leaders, a promise to end child deaths and child malnutrition on today's scale by the year 2000 and to provide basic protection for the moral, physical and mental development of all the world’s children (World Summit for Children, September 30, 1990). In response to the commitments made at the world summit meeting, the government directed the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development to draw up a National Plan of Action for Children (UNPAC). The Uganda National Programme of Action for Children establishes survival, protection and development goals related to children and women for the 1990s which will serve as a basic reference for establishing priorities during national development planning, programme identification and resource allocation (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 1992). This plan identifies areas which need action and outlines goals and strategies needed to respond effectively. The broad based support for the Plan of Action from the government, non-governmental organisations, and the media and its technical committees which include health and nutrition, basic education, water and sanitation, child protection, and the
macro-economic policy framework for improved human development, all helped to focus the spotlight on children.

The National Programme of Action has been decentralised to the districts and sub-counties, where plans of action have already been established. This works very well with the current government decentralisation policy. The emphasis in the district and sub-county plans is that programmes to enhance the rights of children should be given priority at the district and sub-county levels and eventually, in the household. It is basically at the household level where change must take place if the provisions of the Convention are to be successfully implemented, and if the situation of children is to improve.

National Council for Children

To coordinate the implementation of the National Programme of Action for Children (UNPAC), the National Council for Children was established. The National Plan of Action activities are carried out within existing government structures and the voluntary sector, mainly through non-governmental organisations. The role of the National Council for children is coordination and liaison, advocacy, resource mobilisation, support for the development of district and sub-county plans of action for children, and monitoring of the implementation of the National Plan of Action’s goals and
activities. The National Council for Children organises consensus conferences every year, attended by high ranking government officials and representatives of non-governmental organisations and external support agencies. Sectoral reports concerning the survival, protection and development of children are presented. This activity helps to develop a framework within which all interventions to improve the situation of children can make their contribution.

Children's Rights in the Constitution

In the new constitution of the Republic of Uganda which came into force on 8th October, 1995, the rights of children are embodied. Article 34 of the constitution states the rights of children thus:

(1) Subject to laws enacted in their best interests, children shall have the right to know and be cared for by their parents or those entitled by law to bring them up.
(2) A child is entitled to basic education which shall be the responsibility of the State and the parents of the child.
(3) No child shall be deprived by any person of medical treatment, education or any other social or economic benefit by reason of religious or other beliefs.
(4) Children are entitled to be protected from social or economic exploitation and shall not be employed in or required to perform work that is likely to hazardous or to interfere with their education or to be harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.
(6) A child offender who is kept in lawful custody or detention shall be kept separately from adult offenders.

(7) The law shall accord special protection to orphans and other vulnerable children [The Constitution of Uganda, 1995, Article 34 (1-7)].

All the rights are in tune with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Given the devastating effects of the AIDS pandemic and the turbulent social, economic and political situations in Uganda, the constitution specifically includes special protection to orphans and other vulnerable children. Given the inter-relatedness of women’s and children’s issues, the constitution provides for affirmative action in favour of marginalised groups in article 32; "The State shall take affirmative action in favour of groups marginalised on the basis of gender, age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom, for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against them" [Constitution of Uganda, 1995, Article 32 (1)].

The Constitution also embodies the following rights of women: to be accorded full and equal dignity of the person with men; to State provision of facilities and opportunities necessary to enhance their welfare to enable them to realise their full potential and advancement; to protection taking into account their unique status and natural maternal functions in society; to equal treatment with men including equal opportunities in political, economic and social activities. The constitution prohibits laws, cultures, customs
or traditions which are against the dignity, welfare or interest of women or which undermine their status [Article 33 (1-6)].

The inclusion of children’s and women’s rights in the constitution is a positive development, and an indication of positive change in society’s attitudes towards issues that affect these key members. In the series of debates held by the Child Law Review Committee, the proposal to codify children’s rights was one of the hotly debated issues. It was regarded as an imported idea, and, therefore, open to criticism from African traditionalists and supporters of an Afro-centric determination of social issues (Child Law Review Committee, 1991). It was argued that children’s rights are closely linked to social legislation, which was provoked by industrialisation, and the consequent collapse of family values, including child care. The Ugandan situation, it was maintained, is different, because the family, both in its nuclear and extended form, is still functional. Children are still highly valued, and are a responsibility of family members. They are provided for, it was argued, to the best means the family can afford. The tone of the argument raised an important dichotomy of needs versus rights.

Another argument raised was that traditional societies did not accord individual rights because, as already elaborated, every societal member worked to ensure the cohesion and well-being of the community. Importing foreign
ideas like individual rights therefore was seen as a further threat to communal living. The argument was taken further to attribute current marital conflicts and divorce rates to the issue of women's rights.

The Child Law Review Committee

Another significant step taken by Government was the review of the laws affecting children. The Child Law Review Committee in Uganda was inaugurated in June 1990 and it reported to the government in March 1992. The Committee examined the existing laws concerning child welfare, and in the context of international legal developments in children's rights, proposed appropriate legislative changes for the greater protection of children. From the outset, the committee recognised that laws concerning children, when based on the rights and best interests of the child, provide an important national framework and point of reference for the better protection of children. Thus, in drawing up its proposals, the committee took into account the problems relating to child survival and development. A major issue addressed by the committee, however, was the review of the inadequate colonial legislative inheritance and its socio-economic inappropriateness. The proposals gave prominence to a child's best interests and the involvement of local authorities and communities in child care, justice and protection matters.
The government recognises that reform of the laws is a crucial part of the overall approach in improving the situation of the child. The law provides the power, the structure and the framework to guard the well being of children. While the proposals of the committee have been accepted by the government, the bill has not been debated in parliament for enactment. This is mainly due to a slow bureaucratic process characteristic of most governments. Despite this delay, children's rights to survival, protection and development issues have been pushed into public attention primarily because of the debates and discussions which took place both within the committee and between it and other bodies such as the police, the legal and medical professions, academicians, government departments, non-governmental organisations, and other interested parties. As part of the publicity of the rights of children during the formulation of its proposals, the Child Law Review Committee, with UNICEF's assistance, provided a leaflet entitled "The Rights and Responsibilities of Children in Uganda" which was widely circulated. The leaflet was translated in eight major languages and 42,000 copies were printed and circulated. It was used for sensitisation of the masses on the rights of the child, especially by the department of probation and social welfare in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and the NGOs involved in child welfare. An essay competition whose theme was "The Rights of the Child" was held for school
children in 1991, and over three hundred children from different districts in Uganda responded.

While the above measures are a good public relations strategy for raising awareness of the rights of children in urban areas, it is much less useful in rural areas where the majority of children do not attend school. They, therefore, did not participate in the essay competition. Where the illiteracy rate is high people cannot read the pamphlets on children's rights. Where people are poor they cannot afford radios to listen to radio programmes that are focused on children's issues.

Nevertheless, one fundamental consideration of the Child Law Review Committee was the involvement of communities in all matters that affect them. Research was accordingly conducted to find out the views of communities about the best ways to handle children's issues. It was an overwhelming view that children's issues should be tackled in the community, because this is where they are born and are known (Dufite-Bizimana, 1991). Some possible obstacles to this communal responsibility were noted, however, including the tendency of some parents to think they 'own' their children. Respondent O, a probation and welfare officer, made the following observation:

People are generally willing to revive the traditional communal care for children. In some areas, all adults still care for any child within the community, especially if the child is in danger, any member protects him or her. But in areas where this cohesion is not strong, they wish
it could be made so. I think with serious commitment, what is left can be built on and strengthened. Of course there has to be assistance.

To enhance community responsibility for children, the committee proposed that there be a representative of children's affairs on the local government council. This proposal was accepted by the government immediately. Consequently, the responsibility of children's affairs was placed under the office of the vice chairman [The Local Governments (Resistance Councils) Statute No. 15 Section 17 (1)].

Social Welfare Policy

The protection of children involves various service ministries: Justice, Local Government, Internal Affairs, Education and Sports, and that of Natural Resources. Until recently, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs had the principal public sector responsibility for child welfare. Recognising that children's issues are closely related to women's issues, the ministry of Labour and Social affairs was relieved of the responsibility for children, and it was placed under the Ministry of Gender and Community Development. Consequently, the department concerned, that of probation and social welfare, was transferred to the Ministry of Gender and Community development.
The ministry responsible for child welfare is charged with setting policy, standards of care in children's institutions, and monitoring the performance of non-governmental organisations that are providing child welfare services. A new, comprehensive social welfare policy is in the process of being drafted. The policy is to address, among others, the behaviours, attitudes and interventions that are required to reduce the incidence of child vulnerability. These broad areas will form the basis of the welfare policy: good child care practices and the rights of the child; strengthening the family unit and community care for children; parental responsibility for children and appropriate parental behaviour; and, resource allocation for the survival, protection and development of children. In its policy guidelines formulated in 1990, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs draws attention to the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Emphasis is put on the need to engage with local government and NGOs in assisting communities to be aware of the issues involved in child survival, protection and development, and to encourage their participation in them (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 1990).

In order to have a firmer control over the institutions governed by non-governmental organisations, the ministry responsible for child welfare established rules concerning Babies and Children's Homes, which were gazetted as a statutory instrument in 1991. Consequently, standards that
every children's institution should meet were set, and many homes that did not meet the standards were closed. Prior to this intervention by the ministry, there were no rules for setting up a children's home. Currently, any individual or organisation that wishes to establish a home has to get the approval of the ministry concerned.

Policy on Gender Relationships in Development

The government has recognised the important role women play in development, particularly in ensuring the well being of children. A Ministry of Gender and Community Development has been created as one of the strategies to raise the status of women. Women have a special representation on the local councils; there is a women's representative for each district in parliament. Economic advancement of women is the priority of the Ministry of Gender and Community Development. "Our policy aims at strengthening the position of women by raising the value and productivity of their labour giving them access to and control of productive resources" (Museveni, 1993). Formulation of a National Gender Policy to further strengthen this stand and streamline areas of integration and cooperation is in the advanced stages (Government Report on the Implementation of the UN Convention, 1995).

The situation of women is in many aspects linked to that of children, and raising their standards of living will have
a positive impact on the survival, protection and development of the children. It was noted earlier, for example, that one of the indirect causes of death among children in Uganda is attributed to isolated and overburdened mothers (UNICEF, 1989). Thus it is believed that given equal opportunities in education, income generation, decision making at both household and national levels, women can greatly enhance the rights of children and improve their own status.

Health and Health Services

Child survival has been noted as the major area of child vulnerability in Uganda. Presently, 36 out of 39 districts of Uganda have a government hospital. There are altogether 95 hospitals, 196 health centres, 121 dispensaries/maternity units, 21 maternity units, and 258 dispensaries (Ministry of Health, Uganda). The major policy documents in health, the 'Three Year Plan'(1993), and the 'White Paper'(1993), recognise the unequal distribution of health facilities, and note that they are mainly concentrated in the urban areas. In rural areas, they are almost exclusively along the main roads, far from the intended beneficiaries. Most of the health units, especially those in the rural areas, lack basic equipment and are understaffed. Non-governmental organisations provide 40% - 60% of the country's curative care, and most of them work with the government on all major public health programmes.
The National Health Policy that the government has adopted is based on the principles of primary health care with emphasis on community based interventions. This is in areas of health promotion, disease control, sanitation and simple curative health care. The Government has also restructured the health management system in order to decentralise decision making within the health sector to the district level, and has also streamlined management of the health care delivery system to achieve a greater degree of coordination and accountability at all levels. In partnership with health providers, therefore, communities will be part of decision making, implementation, and supervision of health programmes. The increased involvement of communities and community health workers will be supported through a primary health care support network which brings together both health care technicians and the population. The White Paper on health policy notes that the Local Councils system has created a favourable environment in which to empower communities to participate in their own development. This is conducive to intensified implementation of primary health care (Ministry of Health, 1993).

Some significant steps have been taken to increase resources to this sector. Government expenditure on health, as a percentage of total national expenditure increased from 2.6% in 1984 to 7.1% in 1991-1992. Despite this increase, however,
the health sector is still awfully inadequate, and like all other social services, the rural areas are most affected.

With great assistance from UNICEF, there have been significant achievements in the government's efforts to control diarrhoeal diseases which are responsible for about 12% of the deaths of children under five years. The Control of Diarrhoeal Diseases Programme is encouraging the use of oral rehydration salts (ORS). The communities are being taught how to make and use home made oral rehydration salts. But again, the success of this depends on the availability of clean water, firewood to boil the water, saucepans, money for sugar, salt, etc, which women in rural areas find hard to get.

Although there has been an increase of safe water supply coverage, more than 70% of families still lack a safe water source within 1.5 km (UNICEF, 1994). A positive measure in this sector has been adopted by the Directorate of Water Development. To ensure proper maintenance of the available water source serving a community, users are encouraged to participate. The people at the village level select a volunteer to care for the water source (in the case of a spring) and promote safe water use and sanitary behaviour. Where there is a hand-pump, a mechanic is appointed to ensure proper maintenance. The involvement of the community has raised the functionality rate for hand pumps from 36% in 1981 to 85% in 1993. Strategies by the government to improve water and environmental sanitation are contained in the National

Vaccination against the six major childhood diseases, namely, tuberculosis, whooping cough, diphtheria, tetanus, poliomyelitis and measles, is a key intervention to improve child survival rates. Uganda launched the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (UNEPI) in 1986. A major indication of the success of this programme is the steady decline in the incidence of measles which hitherto has been responsible for more child deaths than any other disease. The success of the program constitutes one of the major determinants of the overall decline in infant and child mortality.

The Ministry of Health, in the financial year 1992/1993, trained 1,908 traditional birth attendants, 1379 community health workers, and 1,000 midwives (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 1993). A national drug policy has been passed by parliament. All these measures will help to improve maternal services and better child care.

Considering the difficulties women face, and the problems associated with artificial feeding, efforts are being made to promote breast feeding as a key strategy to child survival and development. Given the time consuming chores they perform, breast milk is the only assured food available to babies, especially at a very young age. The Ministry of Health has set up programs to promote breast feeding policies and practices.
Uganda’s policy on HIV/AIDS is acknowledged as one of the most progressive in Africa. The policy recognises and takes account of the multi-sectoral nature of the problem and the need for diverse means of tackling it. All government ministries are expected to develop their own specific AIDS control programmes. Government instituted a Commission (Uganda AIDS Commission) in 1992, whose role is to coordinate all AIDS related activities in the country. Alongside the Uganda AIDS Commission is the AIDS Control Programme (ACP) in the Ministry of Health, whose focus is education and sensitisation of communities regarding AIDS prevention and control with special emphasis on behavioral change. The Ministry of Education introduced AIDS education in the school curricula right from Primary Three. Children are taught how the virus is spread, and how it can be prevented from spreading. NGOs have contributed a lot in the area of AIDS prevention and helping those affected. They have also contributed much in the area of research, thus providing facts on which appropriate intervention policies can be based.
Nutrition

It has been acknowledged that the problems of stunting, malnutrition and all related problems among children are not a result of lack of food, but rather a combination of other factors mainly emanating from ignorance. Consequently, with regard to nutrition, work on the country’s Food and Nutrition Policy is in the advanced stage.

Education Policy Review

To address the educational needs of Uganda’s children, the education policy was reviewed. The key objective was to revitalise the education sector by implementing strategies to increase access and equity, enhance quality, efficiency and relevance, to build institutional capacity, and to reform finance allocations and financial management. The programme also laid strategies to address the needs of marginalised and disadvantaged groups in addition to those who are excluded from schooling because their families cannot afford the fees including as already mentioned, female children, orphans, the disabled and the migrant population (Ministry of Education and Sports, 1992).

The 1992 government White Paper on Education, "Education for National Integration and Development", argues that education must be democratized and made more equitable if it
is to further the well being of the populace, as well as serve economic development and growth. The government's overall policy on education, therefore, is that Uganda must seek to establish the highest quality of education possible as the basis for fundamental change and national development. A universal and compulsory primary education by the year 2003 is proposed, which will "lead to eventual alleviation of poverty, disease, disharmony, degradation and ignorance" (Ministry of Education White Paper, 1992). The policy strongly emphasizes the government's commitment to affirmative action.

Response From Non Governmental Organizations

That the government has formulated policies aimed at improving the welfare of children is a positive indication that it recognises the vulnerability of children. In reality, however, its capacity for effective response is limited by budgetary constraints, inadequate facilities, and the impact of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank Structural Adjustment Policies that dictate to governments the need to cut down on social service spending (Mazrui, 1991). Because of limited funding for this social sector, NGOs are major players. In the area of child care and protection, in particular, most services since independence have been provided by NGOs and other agencies. In Uganda, a review of services available in 1972, ten years after independence,
found that virtually all provision for children was made through non-governmental organisations, apart from those that dealt with children convicted of offenses. Control of both management of facilities and general policy remained with the non-government organisations. Many of these had connections with religious organisations, while others were local but in receipt of donations from overseas. The Ugandan government saw the majority of social welfare activities remaining in the hands of the voluntary agencies for many years (Farrant, et al., 1972). Virtually all the services provided by these agencies were located in the capital, Kampala. The report concluded that the efforts of voluntary organisations were largely unco-ordinated, and even competitive, and although representing an enormous degree of effort and commitment on the part of those who staffed them, largely irrelevant to the needs of the majority of children. Midgley (1982) notes that this example illustrates a common pattern—small scale provision by voluntary agencies adopting conventional Western approaches.

In the context of this study, the NGOs that have been most active are Save the Children Fund (UK), World Vision International, The Uganda Community Based Association for Child Welfare (UCOBAC), and the Uganda Foster Care and Adoption Agency (UFCAA). The role each of these NGOs has played in the UNPAC process will be briefly highlighted.
Save the Children Fund (UK)

Save the Children Fund has been very instrumental in the field of child welfare in Uganda. The organisation assists the Department of Probation and Social Welfare in its role of protecting children. It played a significant role in the review of laws concerning children in Uganda, and in formulating the Children and Babies' Home rules. It also contributes to the funds needed to run the National Council for Children, and has assisted in the payment of salaries of the NCC staff. Save the Children Fund is one of the few NGOs that concentrate all their activities on children.

The Uganda Community Based Association for Child Welfare (UCOBAC)

The Uganda Community Based Association for Child Welfare is an Association of non-governmental organisations, donors and individuals who are working in the area of child welfare in Uganda. It was established to further the abilities of field based NGOs to identify, target and meet the needs of the most vulnerable children especially those orphaned by war and AIDS using community based approaches (UCOBAC annual Report, 1994). The Association has the major objectives of: "Fostering the sharing of information, facilitating relations between Non governmental Organizations and government, strengthening the
capacity of local NGOs to care for children both by developing their skills and accessing them to funds" (UCOBAC Annual Report, 1994).

UCOBAC was an attempt at trying to organize the field of child welfare in Uganda, which suffered lack of coordination, competition and duplication of services (Participant K, 1995). Their activities included building the capacity of the local community initiatives to help children, promoting information sharing, and networking and advocacy (UCOBAC, 1994). The organisation also fostered dialogue between NGOs and government, and acted as a bridge between the two.

In capacity building, UCOBAC came up with the idea of a "Grant Bank" system whereby money is solicited from donors and beneficiaries identified at the grassroots throughout the country. These are the people who are actually helping children. They are given some form of training in the areas of project and financial management, after which UCOBAC provides access to the funds. UCOBAC then supervises and monitors the implementation of the projects (Interview with respondent K).

Noble as their intentions are, their activities are hampered by lack of funds, and their dependency on donor funds. This was confirmed by respondent K.

Our activities are hampered by lack of funds, but we firmly believe the most important resource in child protection is the community. We have had quite a number of donors. UNDP, UNICEF, World Learning, Save the Children Fund (UK), CONCERN
International, AMREF, have assisted us in various ways.

Activities like those performed by UCOBAC and other community based organisations promote the implementation of the UNPAC because the important ideas are firmly established by the time the UNPAC process is introduced at the grassroots level.

**World Vision International**

World Vision International has and continues to play a significant role in the field of child welfare in Uganda, especially in protecting the most vulnerable children, who are mostly orphans. Their programmes emphasize community based approaches. They acknowledge that the long term solution lies in the strengthening of the traditional structures that have always taken care of orphans, and appreciate the need to promote and enhance the capacity of these structures. In pursuit of this, the organisation assists 2000-2500 foster families in Rakai (one of the districts where it operates), with credit in order to increase their productive capacity (World Vision, 1992).
The Uganda Foster Care and Adoption Association

A significant result of the constant wars and the AIDS pandemic was a large number of orphans in Uganda. This, accompanied by economic hardships, has posed challenges to the traditional forms of caring for orphans. One of the consequences of this was a sudden growth of children’s homes. By 1990, a total of seventy six Children’s Homes, caring for over 3000 children, had been established in Uganda (Office of the inspector of Children’s and Babies’ Homes, Department of Probation and Social Welfare, 1995). The majority of these were run by indigenous and foreign non government organizations (Department of Probation and Social Welfare, 1995).

The Uganda Foster Care and Adoption Association was formed to sensitize communities about formal fostering, a term that is not well received in most Ugandan societies. However, fostering within kin groups is still being practised and remains the major cushion for the orphans despite the ‘holes’ within it.

Government has also strengthened its role of monitoring the activities of the various NGOs. Through the Department of Probation and Social Welfare, the activities of all NGOs working in the area of child welfare are monitored. In undertaking this task, Save the Children Fund, a British NGO, plays a major role. Save the Children Fund remains the major
player in the field of child welfare, because it works hand in hand with the Department of Probation and Social Welfare. Most of the active programmes within the ministry responsible for child welfare are funded by Save the Children Fund. This has occasionally caused conflict between the Department of Probation and Social Welfare and other NGOs. Respondent P from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs stated,

There was a complaint by World Vision as to whether Save the Children Fund should work hand in hand with the government through the Probation Office. So they felt that if they worked hand in hand with the Department of Probation, then they would be implementing Save the Children Fund's policies. However, through meetings with the Rakai Joint Advisory Welfare Council, World Vision finally agreed to discuss the issue.

Such lack of co-ordination and competition among non-governmental organisations affects the effectiveness of their services, because inter-agency collaboration is one of the crucial issues in social service delivery. Otherwise uncoordinated efforts are likely to lead to duplication of services.

Despite the important role NGOs play in the social service sector, especially child welfare, some of them operate under suspicion, based on experience of some "bad" NGOs which are fronts for private gain rather than communal benefit. They are private businesses seeking the NGO label to get tax exemptions (World Bank, 1993). Some evade working with the
community, and instead want to set up projects that are more 'visible'. Examples of these are NGOs that resist assisting children in their own communities, and instead want to set up institutions for them.

In some circles, however, NGOs are respected for those qualities that represent NGOs at their best (World Bank, 1993). The best medical facilities in rural areas for example are run by religious non-governmental organizations.

Summary

This chapter has presented the policy responses to the numerous problems children face. The important issues discussed in regard to these policy responses by government are the following: the government’s representation at the World Summit for Children and the subsequent signing of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; the ratification of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; the establishment of the Uganda National Programme of Action for Children, and subsequently the National Council for Children; the government’s revision of all policies that affect children, namely, health (nutrition and HIV/AIDS), social welfare, gender policies, education, and reviewing laws concerning children; and, the inclusion of children’s rights within the new Constitution of the Republic of Uganda. These measures suggest that, compared to previous
governments, the present government has made an effort in establishing policies aimed at improving the wellbeing of children.

The major observation with regard to the Conventions to which Uganda is signatory is that they adopt a statist approach to social development. They emphasize working with national governments to promote the well-being of children. However, the problems of using such an approach in Uganda are also highlighted.

The African Charter, while "tilting" the United Nations Provisions to suit the unique African conditions, weakens any universal protection of children, because of their self-protective character. Also, the responsibilities of children spelled out in the African Charter weaken protection of the child against abusive or neglecting parents. For example, imposing a duty on the child to work for the cohesion of the family, to respect his parents and elders at all times and to assist them in case of need.

Despite the commitment by the government, there is no indication of resource availability or commitment to implement most of the policies. Thus, while the Conventions emphasize the statist approach, in practice, the element of resource distribution, which is very crucial for the statist approach to work effectively, is missing.

The chapter has therefore presented the response by the non-government organizations, both local and international,
because it is apparent that they are very instrumental in implementing most of the programmes. It was noted earlier, that the role of non-government organisations in social welfare is one of the consequences of modernization theory.

The implication of the major role played by non-government organizations in the implementation of government policies in Uganda is that external forces continue to be a factor in the implementation of programmes. In the analogy used in this study, therefore, the tools used in the "Garden" are imported from outside, thus making it difficult to stop their influence on the tending of the "Garden". It is important that the government makes an effort to provide its own tools so that the impact of such well-intentioned programmes, may be beneficial for children.

All the policy responses analyzed in this chapter emphasize a community based approach. This is a positive sign for the implementation of the new child welfare policy which points in the same direction. The next chapter analyses the implementation of the new policy, concentrating on the Uganda National Programme of Action for Children which emphasizes commitment of all government ministries and non-government organizations whose policies bear directly on children. From the data collected, the chapter discusses the likely difficulties in the implementation efforts.
Chapter Nine

Implementation of the New Approach and the Dilemmas

Introduction

In this chapter, the new comprehensive community oriented approach to child welfare in Uganda is analyzed. The analysis centres on the performance of the Uganda National Programme of Action for Children (UNPAC), which was developed to guide the re-orientation of social services in order for the country to meet the needs of children.

The presentation begins with a description of the background to the formation of the Uganda National Programme of Action for Children. The goals of UNPAC, which are meant to serve as a basic reference for establishing priorities, coordinating activities and measuring progress of national, district and local community level activities in the field of social services, are highlighted.

The implementation of the Uganda National Programme of Action for Children (UNPAC) is then discussed, critically analyzing the structures that were set up to facilitate the implementation of its goals. This centres on the establishment of the National Council for Children (NCC), and the latter's role in the implementation of UNPAC's goals. The reason the National Council for Children was established, and what the Council does in practice is analyzed.
The structure within which the programme operates in the pursuit of reaching a community based orientation is described. Hence, the decentralisation process of the Uganda National Programme of Action for Children is discussed within the wider context of government’s policy aimed at promoting good local governance through democratization and decentralisation.

This is followed by an examination of the role of NGOs, as well as UNICEF, an international governmental organisation which is the world’s foremost advocate for children, and which was very instrumental in the establishment of the programme, and that of the National Council for Children (NCC) in particular. The discussion then looks at the limited resources allocated by the government, even though it owns the programme. In a way, therefore, this chapter is an interim assessment of what has been done in the attempt to meet the needs of children, and the extent to which these attempts are reaching the community.

The Formation of the Uganda National Programme of Action for Children

Background

Rights of Children already discussed in the previous chapter were antecedents to the World Summit for Children. The concern for rights and protection of children expressed in these documents supported the growing critique of forms of welfare provision which had emphasized residual, institutional responses, which did not improve the situation of children.

The promise made by world leaders to the children at the World Summit for Children held in New York in September 1990, has been highlighted in the preceding chapter. Being the largest gathering of world leaders in history (United Nations, 1993), it is possible to conclude that this high level attendance reflects a positive indication of placing high priority on being seen to be interested in children's issues on the political agenda. While in many cases the actions that follow such ethical obligations tend to reflect more rhetoric than reality, the response of the Ugandan government has been promising.

At the summit, it was acknowledged that most of the problems children face were not impossible to solve:

Enhancement of children's health and nutrition is a first duty, and also a task for which solutions are now within reach. The lives of tens of thousands of boys and girls can be saved every day, because the causes of their death are readily preventable. Child and infant mortality is unacceptably high in many parts of the world, but can be lowered dramatically with means that are already known and easily accessible [World Declaration, 1990, (10)].
Respecting the rights and opportunities of children was emphasized as one of the ways of diminishing their problems. It was also noted that national and international collaboration, which required an integrated approach in various fields, was essential if children were to be protected. Areas of concern were mainly the economy, health, environment, and social and economic justice. Here the argument was that most of the problems affecting children emanate from a complex of situations which must be addressed simultaneously. For instance, the problems of health, lack of education and poor nutrition cannot be addressed without addressing the problem of poverty and the economy in general.

Another argument was the strengthening of the family since it is the core of child protection,

The family has the primary responsibility for the nurturing and protection of children from infancy to adolescence... For the full and harmonious development of their personality, children should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding...(Plan of Action, Section 18)

Sensitization of children to make them realise their identity by involving them in matters of cultural development through socialisation was also acknowledged [World Declaration, 1990, (15)].

The role of women in development in general, and in the welfare of children in particular, was emphasized:
Women in their various roles play a critical part in the well-being of children. The enhancement of the status of women and their equal access to education, training, credit and other extension services constitute a valuable contribution to a nation’s social and economic development. Efforts for the enhancement of women’s status and their role in development must begin with the girl child. Equal opportunity should be provided for the girl child to benefit from the health, nutrition, education and other basic services to enable her to grow to her full potential (Plan of Action, 15).

Members present at the summit therefore called for an immediate political intervention on the rights of children, their survival, protection and development. In pursuit of these, global goals were formulated in the fields of health and nutrition, water and environmental sanitation, basic education, and protection of children in difficult circumstances.

The health goals are to reduce infant (under 1 year) and under-five mortality rates by one-third or to 50 and 70 per 1000 live births respectively, whichever is less, reduction of maternal mortality rate by half, and reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition among under-5 children by half [Goals for children and development in the 1990s, Plan of Action, 1990, (1) (a-c)].

Education goals are to increase universal access to basic education and completion of primary education to at least 80% of all primary school-age children; and reduction of adult illiteracy rate by half, with emphasis on female literacy.
For water and sanitation, universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation is the goal; while for child protection, the global goal is improved protection of children in especially difficult circumstances (UNICEF, 1990).

In order to achieve these global goals, the members committed themselves and their governments to specific actions at the national and international levels.

At the national level, five recommendations emerged.

(a) all governments were urged to prepare National Programmes of Action before 1991 to implement the commitments undertaken in the World Summit Declaration. These programmes would assist the provincial and local governments and non-governmental organisations to prepare their own programmes so as to implement the goals and objectives included in the declaration;

(b) each country was encouraged to re-examine its national plans, programmes and policies--to see the possibility of giving priority for the well-being of children;

(c) each country was urged to re-examine, in the context of its particular national situation, its current national budget, and in the case of donor-countries, their development assistance budgets, to ensure that programmes aimed at the achievement of goals for the
survival, protection and development of children will have a priority when resources are allocated. Effort must be made to ensure that such programmes are not affected by structural and economic austerity;

(d) families, communities, local governments, NGOs, social-cultural, religious and other institutions, including mass media were encouraged to support the plan of Action;

(e) each country was to establish an appropriate mechanism for collection, analysis and publication of data related to social indicators of the well-being of children in the field of health, nutrition, education. These indicators should be periodically reviewed, and statistics should be desegregated by gender to ensure that any inequitable impact of programmes on girls and women can be monitored and corrected [Plan of Action, 1990, (34) (i-v)].

At the international level, specific actions were proposed to create an international environment for the implementation of the Plan of Action, such as the inclusion of consideration of the Declaration and the Plan of Action on the agenda of their meetings and the institution of appropriate mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the Plan of Action [Plan of Action, 1990, (35)].

It is important to note that the World Summit Declaration and Plan of Action did not take place in a vacuum. As already
indicated, there were growing concerns with children’s rights and their protection raised by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the OAU Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. There was also concern with women’s rights and women in development (WID) which in turn raised questions about women’s roles in production and reproduction, about the role of girl children, and, hence, about the importance of the family. There was also a growing critique in some development circles of largely economic solutions to development problems. In some senses, therefore, the summit represented a coming together of the various development discourses.

One important observation from the World Summit is that it embraces the approaches to social development discussed in Chapter Two. It stresses the importance of communalism by emphasizing the active role expected of communities for effective execution of the Plan of Action [Plan of Action, 1990, (34) (iv), (24)]. It also espouses statism by encouraging work with national governments [Plan of Action, 1990, (34)(i-vii)]. The individualist approach is reflected in the Summit’s support for the need to increase individual household incomes as a way of fulfilling the Plan of Action goals, and therefore a means through which the well-being of children can be achieved.

Another important observation from the Summit is that some targets were set without any real acknowledgement that national or regional or class or gender poverty and inequality
might make them impossible to achieve. In the field of health and nutrition, for example, targets such as virtual elimination of iodine deficiency disorders, global eradication of poliomyelitis by the year 2000, and elimination of neonatal tetanus by 1995, raise questions about the role of: poverty, resources, access, and cultural beliefs.

To some extent, it was realised that the situation differs in each country, and some flexibility was given to countries to adapt the goals to fit their own situations. Hence countries were allowed flexibility to add those that are uniquely relevant, and omit those that may not be necessary or unfeasible at this time, or politically sensitive, or culturally conflictual [Plan of Action, 1990, (2 & 6)]. These adjustments would then constitute individual country plans of action for children.

The president of Uganda signed the World Declaration and committed the country to developing a National Plan of Action to achieve the goals. In November 1990, a national conference on children in Uganda was held. An interim committee was established to examine how Uganda could fulfil its commitment to the World Declaration and Plan of Action for Children. The committee recommended that the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development would coordinate the development of this plan of action and the main focus would be health and nutrition, basic education, water and sanitation, child protection, and macro-economic policy for improved human
welfare. Consequently, five technical groups which would develop goals in the above sectors were selected. The committee was composed of people from the relevant ministries, foreign and indigenous NGOs, academic institutions, and from external support agencies (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 1992).

In accordance with the observations made at the World Summit for Children that each country’s situation is different and therefore individual countries should develop their own Plans of Action [Plan of Action, 1990, (2)], the interim committee developed a Programme of Action in line with Uganda’s unique social, political and economic situations. Thus, the committee observed that in development of the goals, it was important to consider whether the goal is achievable within existing programmes without significant additional resources, achievable by policy reform and the establishment of new strategies with limited resource requirements, or achievable by policy reform and large scale financial assistance.

It was recognised that these goals could not be achieved through public service alone, and the importance of sectoral strategies to address cooperation and coordination with NGOs, religious institutions, communities, and the private sector was stressed. This cooperation would facilitate the achievement of goals in the most efficient and sustainable manner (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 1990).
The UNPAC Goals

The major goal of the Uganda National Programme of Action for Children is "to establish survival, protection and development goals related to children and women for the 1990s that build on existing Government policies and sectoral plans" (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 1992).

The Uganda National Programme of Action for Children (UNPAC) describes a situation analysis explaining the problems in the sector, their causes, goals, strategies to achieve the goals, and resources required. It reflects the Ugandan situation, and provides a framework for the country to meet the needs of children. The global goals concerning children's survival, protection and development were reviewed, and their appropriateness to the specific levels of achievement in Uganda assessed. Thus, realising that universal provision of social services is almost an impossible dream in an economically under-developed country like Uganda, the UNPAC goals are a modified version of the global goals. It is important to stress that they also aim at improving children's survival, protection and development.

The strategy of the Uganda National Programme of Action for Children is the provision of basic, minimum social services to as many Ugandans as possible, in the fields of primary health care, clean water and sanitation, primary education and adult literacy and community care of children in

In the health sector, the major goal is to improve the health and nutrition of mothers and children by reducing severe and moderate malnutrition among children under-five from 4.9% and 18.9% to 2.5% and 9.2% respectively, and to reduce infant and under-five mortality rate from 120 to 60 per 1,000 and 180 to 70 per 1,000 live births respectively, and to reduce maternal mortality rate from 500 to 250 per 100,000 live births. Among the activities necessary to achieve the goals are achievement of exclusive breast feeding of children up to four months of age by 90% of rural mothers and 80% of urban mothers, encourage breast feeding up to two years, and increase birth intervals to a minimum of two years. These activities are expected to reduce malnutrition.

For the reduction of infant and child mortality, maintenance of high levels of immunization coverage is emphasized, as is reduction of malaria caused mortality as well as malaria morbidity in pregnant mothers and reduction of mother to child transmission of HIV by reducing conception in HIV positive women.

It is important to note, that while these goals focus on the specific health and nutrition problems facing mothers and children in Uganda, they cannot be solved on a goal-by-goal basis, nor simply by strengthening the health service infrastructure. The strategies for the promotion of the
healthy development of children and women must address problems in a holistic manner. Mobilisation of communities to take responsibility for the health of women and children is essential. This requires serious sensitization of the whole community, especially male members. The common practice of putting the sole responsibility for the health care of children and of the whole family onto the mother has adversely affected the well-being of children, because women are usually too busy to ensure that the health requirements of children are adequately provided.

The development of the Uganda National Programme of Action for Children was based on existing government policies, and since the latter currently emphasize community based interventions, the involvement of all members of the community in the implementation of the UNPAC may be expected. The government policy in the health sector, for example, is to promote Primary Health Care (PHC) with emphasis on community based interventions in health promotions, disease control, sanitation and simple curative and rehabilitative health care (Ministry of Health, 1993). It became apparent during the interviews that community based interventions can only work if the responsibility is given to the community members. Responding to the question of whether government has involved communities in finding solutions to children's problems, the following observations were noted: "We are involved in a way, because children issues are part of the LCs responsibility"
Respondent V, LC I vice chairman responsible for children's issues). Respondent Y, a community elder, noted, "The situation is now different from what it was in the past when we were always reminded that children belong to the government, and yet the government did not do much to help them." Community involvement was appreciated as key to the success of programmes. "When government just introduces programmes, and does not involve us (the community), there is a general feeling that 'they' will do everything, because we do not feel it is our responsibility" (Interview with respondent X, LC I vice chairman).

Such attitudes run counter to the centralization which undermined local capacity building. As noted by Museveni (1993), the centralized system created a dependency syndrome. "People expected the centre to provide it all, although it never did" (Museveni, 1993). For the spirit of local ownership of the development process to be revived, there is need to unleash local initiative. This is based on the belief that human beings can govern themselves in peace and dignity in pursuit of their collective well being, and that they can be entrusted with their own destiny through a system of popular democratic local institutions such as the Local Councils.

The parallel work of the Child Law Review Committee gave a clear presentation of policies about how to protect and enhance rights through the involvement of parents and communities. The importance of strengthening the community to
build on what exists (communalism approach) was stressed by the two committees of the UNPAC and the Child Law Review. The latter discovered that involving communities gives them a sense of trust by the government, and thus a feeling of respect. This was corroborated by one female respondent in this study. Respondent T, a child volunteer advocate observed, "Programs in the community are likely to succeed when men are involved. They like to lead. So if they are appointed to organize the whole community, whoever is elected sees this as prestige. So they work willingly."

Most community based programs are fitted into the Local Council system, whose leadership is dominated by the male members of the community. While this has disadvantages, it also has some benefits for the women. If through such an organised system the functionality of water sources can be revived, local health centres maintained, adult literacy promoted, then women benefit, and so do the children. At least they no longer have to travel long distances to collect water, or to get the children immunized.

The importance of community involvement in the area of water rural water supply was acknowledged by UNICEF. It was noted that during the many years of neglect in Uganda, the utility of water sources completely went down. The rehabilitation of boreholes and the development of the community based maintenance system increased their functioning to 85% (UNICEF, 1994).
In the water and sanitation sector, the UNPAC goal is to increase access to safe drinking water and environmental sanitation from 23% and 30% to 75% respectively, ultimately reducing water-related and faecal-based diseases (UNPAC, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 1992). Among the activities necessary to achieve the goals are the adoption of criteria for choosing a particular type of intervention, where preference will be given to systems with the lowest cost per capita and with the most appropriate forms of community maintenance when choosing a particular water supply and sanitation technology (UNICEF, 1994). Community awareness should also be created about the benefits of clean water usage and improved sanitary measures.

Issues like family planning and safe sex need intensive education, especially considering the high mortality rate due to AIDS. It is generally believed that having many children is useful because there is always a surplus in case of death. This belief, and family planning which encourages fewer children, are ideas which clash. Only families that have visible evidence of child survival may be persuaded to limit the number of children. Such families are likely to be few, considering the prevalence of AIDS in Uganda. However, it was noted in the previous chapter that there were dissenting views about having many children as security against death. Nonetheless, there is no evidence of any correlation between the impact of AIDS and the use of family planning services.
In the education sector, the goals are to increase access to primary level education from 69% to 95% and completion rate from 32% to 50%, as well as reduction of illiteracy (especially of women) from 45% to 24%. The strategies to achieve these goals centre on improving physical access to schools by reducing the distance to a maximum of four kilometres, achieving the required number of well qualified and motivated teachers and ensuring that after training they can be posted to all parts of the country without high dropout rates from the profession. The latter is only possible if the terms and conditions of teachers are improved. This would be through prompt payment of government salaries, the provision of free education for teacher’s children, and government support to regions that are too poor to provide either the necessary payments to teachers and/or services such as health care and water supply. Geographical access also has to be improved through rehabilitation of rural roads; otherwise rural schools will remain isolated, thus adversely affecting attendance at school. The supply of the needed scholastic materials must be augmented as rural schools are grossly undersupplied.

For children in difficult circumstances, the goals are to provide legal protection to all children, freedom from discrimination of disabled children, care for children without parental attention, and promotion of preventative measures to protect children through institutional arrangements. The
strategies to achieve the goals include: education of parents, the community and society on the rights of the child; advocating for better laws to protect child labourers and those in domestic employment; strengthening family units and emphasizing their responsibility as the first line of support, and the best channel through which children can receive help; encouraging community care and responsibility for children; encouraging the NGOs operational in the field of child welfare to provide appropriate support services to families within their community; and encouraging the District Development Committee to be vigilant in considering the interests of children in all their work.

**Implementation**

Despite the commitment made to improve the situation of women and children, the major fear was that the implementation of the National Plan could still be difficult. Factors, including lack of resources, adamant cultural beliefs, the impact of the AIDS pandemic, and lack of political will are important. The latter, however, did not come up much both in reviewing the documents and during the interviews, probably because of the visible signs of political commitment to the women and children’s cause. Such political will was, for example noted by UNICEF when analyzing the great achievement made in the immunization coverage, which was attributed to
political commitment. "The remarkable achievement that was made in immunization coverage in 1990-1991 proved what can be achieved where there is political commitment, sound management and effective social mobilization." (UNICEF, 1993)

During the period 1990-91, Uganda achieved 75-80% coverage in all six child immunization antigens despite the neglected infrastructure, insecurity in parts of the country, and poor conditions of service for health staff (UNICEF, 1993).

The political commitment of the Ugandan government to the implementation of the Uganda National Programme of Action for Children is rooted in the government's Ten Point Programme, and the political structure which provides a suitable context within which the UNPAC fits. This political structure, the Local Council System, has already been discussed in an earlier section. In its Ten Point Programme, the National Resistance Movement government emphasizes the provision of essential social services to everybody as one of its policies (NRM, Ten Point Programme, 1985).

The Uganda National Programme of Action for Children recognises that the resources available for social services are limited, but aims to improve on the amount of resources channelled into the activities that are the most important for the survival, protection and development of children and women (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 1992).
The NRM Ten Point Programme also recognises that the mobilisation of people to become aware of their personal power and responsibility to develop and provide services for themselves is one of the key avenues for successful improvements in social services. This awareness encourages them to participate in activities that affect them. This, however, is an endeavour that is likely to take time, due to factors that may have led them to develop a dependent attitude or made them indifferent (Midgley, 1995; Chambers, 1983). Nevertheless, the views expressed by the respondents at the community level did not reflect this indifferent attitude regarding child care. They appreciated it as their responsibility, though lack of resources was often cited as a problem.

Respondent O at the district appreciated that, "It is easier to help children when you involve communities than when you don’t." The important role the community plays in safeguarding children’s welfare was reiterated by respondent S, a Child Volunteer Advocate.

In an area like ours where many children have lost parents, communities help a great deal. Members of the community are the ones who know the demarcations of each member’s land, and we always contact them when the orphans property is being grabbed (Interview with respondent S, a Child Volunteer Advocate).
The responsibility to care for children was noted to be well received within the community, but some difficulties were also appreciated. An interview with respondent Y, a village elder, such obstacles were noted:

We know children are our responsibility, although we lack the resources to carry it out. When we cannot afford to educate them, they stay at home, but we care for them. We have to care for orphans also, but this is not without constraints.

Such problems were acknowledged by respondent Q, a NGO staff at the district, "The community can manage some problems, but there are others where for example money is required, and they do not have it."

In spite of economic constraints, the respondents appreciated the important role played by the extended family. "Extended families have been responsible for absorbing the highest proportion of orphans" (Respondent L, District probation and welfare officer). Respondent W, a village elder noted, "It is a cultural obligation for relatives to adopt children as their own."

In all interviews, there was admiration of the traditional practices of caring for children. One participant at the district level noted, "When you ask people what we should do to protect children, they all say we should go back to our traditional ways of looking after children" (Respondent O, a probation and welfare officer at the district).
At the community level, the same concerns were raised, especially with regard communal responsibility for children. One participant suggested, "We should abandon the idea of thinking that we own our children" (Respondent W, a village elder).

Regarding the above concern, one Child Volunteer Advocate observed, "Some people pinpoint parents who think they own their children, and they apologize. This suggests that some old traditions can be revived" (Respondent U, a child volunteer advocate).

Thus, while government assistance is essential in the provision of social services, real change can only result from the knowledge and sensitization of the masses. The fulfilment of the UNPAC goals therefore, requires a strategy rooted in the reality of the family and community life in Uganda. Of great importance is the need to understand what, why and by whom decisions are made concerning the needs of children, as well as how resources are mobilized and managed to meet these needs. These questions must be answered at every level at which critical decisions are made, that is at the community level, sub-county level, district and national level. It is important that strategies to improve the situation of women and children aim at strengthening existing capacities and processes rather than replacing them. Adopting a communalism approach is likely to lead to this. Encouraging community
participation in new programs is likely to boost the existing practices such as the clan and extended family linkages.

Nevertheless, recognizing that such practices are faced with a lot of social and economic hardships, some level of state intervention is needed, especially for economic support. A unified approach that requires that the "government makes a commitment to promoting economic growth and fostering social welfare" (Midgley, 1995) is essential. This is likely to promote policies that are redistributive, thus minimizing the economic difficulties that are a threat to the old practices of caring for children. Later analysis will critically look at how the implementation structures established to monitor the UNPAC goals are emphasizing existing capacities.

Establishment of the National Council for Children

To promote the implementation of the National Programme of Action for Children, and to monitor changes in the indicators of the survival, protection and development of children, a National Council for Children (NCC) was established by the government. The council is a semi-autonomous body, reporting to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs when it was established in 1993, but now reports to the Ministry of Gender and Community Development, because it is currently the Ministry responsible for child welfare. The National Council for Children has a secretariat
which is headed by a Secretary General and a Deputy, both responsible to the Council and the Minister of Gender and Community Development, the ministry that houses the Council. Appointed by the minister, the Council is the policy making body, and is composed of heads of relevant government departments, NGOs working in the field of child welfare in Uganda, and interested members of the public working in relevant fields. The Council has a chairperson appointed by the minister of Gender and Community Development. (See the NCC Organizational Structure in Appendix II).

Problems with the NCC Structure

While the establishment of the National Council for Children was widely approved of by the majority of the respondents, there were a few that indicated some discontent with its structure. Some concerns were expressed that the organization is likely to face problems resulting from its structure. Among the factors identified were the focus of power in the minister, too large a secretariat, and its location within the government structure.

Among the responsibilities of the minister are appointments, representing the organisation in parliament, and having the responsibility for the decisions of the Council. Most participants at the national level expressed concerns that for a development organization of this nature, which has
linkages with many partners such as NGOs, foreign agencies and other ministries, placing all the above responsibilities on the minister is ill advised. The operations of such an organization need quick decision making, flexibility and experimental learning. The minister is likely to be too busy to make this possible.

While there is an easy solution to the above problem, that is, delegating to staff, that such concerns were expressed by some participants (at the national level) who are closely involved with the National Council for Children could indicate that there is unwillingness to delegate to members of staff who are lower in the hierarchy.

Considering that the National Council for Children secretariat is not an implementing agency, and does not therefore administer programs, the size of the staff raises concern, due to the proportion of the budget that is spent on it. The budget estimates for the year 1994/95 indicate the proportion that goes to staff salaries, staff benefits, and furnishing the offices.
Table 1. National Council for Children Budget Estimates for 1994\95

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure Category</th>
<th>Total Expenditure ('000 UShs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secretary General's Office (includes salaries and wages,</td>
<td>637,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>housing allowance, night allowance, transport, office</td>
<td>(45.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>furniture, household furniture, etc)</td>
<td>(45.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication and Advocacy (includes salaries, night allowance,</td>
<td>327,078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>safari day allowance, information network, etc)</td>
<td>(23.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy, Planning, Research and Data Management (includes</td>
<td>165,578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salaries, night allowance, safari day allowance, etc)</td>
<td>(11.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Building (includes salaries, night allowance, safari</td>
<td>264,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>day allowance, follow up visits, etc)</td>
<td>(19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenditure</td>
<td>1,394,812</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NCC documents, Budget Estimates

The NCC, a coordinating body, should concentrate the limited funds on ensuring that the goals of UNPAC are fulfilled; this can only be realized if the funding is
concentrated in the social services sector, and in sensitization of the people.

Yet, despite the large allocation of funds that goes into the salaries and other fringe benefits for the staff, there is no indication that they are involved in any major activity at the grassroots. The furthest down they go is to the District level, and even then, the Child Advocacy officers, who are paid by an NGO, Redd Barna, play the most active part. This was acknowledged by respondents at the National Council for Children secretariat; "Redd Barna has helped us a lot in the area of communication and advocacy. The Child Advocacy officers who carry out this role are paid by Redd Barna" (Respondent B, in charge of communication and advocacy, NCC secretariat).

The large amounts of funds spent on the Council, as well as staff recruitment problems, could also be the reason for the delay of passing of the NCC Bill by parliament. It was noted at the national level that the role of the NCC did not justify such a staff size.

The NCC’s major role is that of overseeing the implementation of the National Programme of Action for Children. They do not implement any programme...except for the communication and advocacy. There is no need to have so many staff at the headquarters when we are pursuing a community-based approach (Respondent E, from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs).
Concerns were also raised by respondents that the establishment of the NCC was like setting up a quasi-state organisation. This was seen as a contradiction on the part of the government which is in the process of privatizing government organisations. Besides, the government's contribution to the running of the NCC is pitifully small. This is shown in the following table that shows the income source for 1994.

Table 2. **Funding of the National Council for Children**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Source</th>
<th>Amount ('000 UShs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government of Uganda</td>
<td>95,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(10.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>635,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(72.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redd Barna</td>
<td>123,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save The Children Fund (UK)</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>878,100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NCC documents, Budget estimates

Despite the small percentage of financial support by the government, the National Council for Children gives support to
the districts and line ministries to cover the equipment used in the development of the District Plans of Action for Children (DPACs) like stationary and typewriters. Yet the District Plans of Action are part of the District Development Committees, and should get financial allocations from the District budget. This raises a question of how legitimately the NCC can be called a government body, and further questions the sustainability of the program without donor support.

One positive indication, however, is that once the initial stages have been accomplished and the new approach introduced at the community level, the impact could remain. A good example is the parallel work done earlier by the Child Law Review Committee. It recommended community solutions to children’s problems, including some criminal offenses. Institutionalisation was recommended as a last resort. Even before parliament had passed the Children’s Bill, the recommendations were in effect at the grassroots (Kakama, 1993).

The participants at the community level criticized child institutionalisation, and believed that children’s problems are best handled in the community where they are known. Officials at the district confirmed this outcome. "Children issues are now dealt with in the community. Even some offenses are handled in the community. Some cases which go to the magistrate’s court are referred back to the Local Council Courts" (Respondent O, a civil servant at the district).
As a result, even when the activities at the national level stall after some time, the impact remains at the grassroots after the initial phase. Consequently, children's issues remain on the agenda of Local Councils and Committees, and thus their rights are protected, even though bureaucratic procedures and political entanglements remain an obstacle at the higher levels.

Another major problem, regarded the proper place where the NCC should be housed. Respondent E from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs reported,

Many people complain that NCC is not housed in the right place because it is housed under the Ministry of Gender and Community Development, which is a line ministry. Most people maintain that it is quite difficult for a line ministry to coordinate other line ministries. It is argued that it would be better if NCC was placed under either the President's office, or the Prime Minister's office.

Nevertheless, other views confirmed that the major reason for the discontent was not about a line ministry coordinating, but about which Ministry. It was noted that both the ministries of Labour and Social Affairs where the NCC was first housed, and the Ministry of Gender and Community Development under which the Council is currently housed, are not powerful enough to influence very powerful ministries like the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, nor are they ever likely to be, due to the importance attached to economic issues.
Ironically, the secretariat was originally placed under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (then the ministry responsible for child welfare) argued for the secretariat to be placed under its ministry. This could have been a strategy to increase government funding to this hitherto underfunded ministry, especially the Department of Probation and Social Welfare. One might argue, however, that the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning has more money, more power, and therefore is more likely to get things done.

Despite such complaints, the National Council for Children is viewed as "The most dynamic, comprehensive 'voice' for children in Uganda" (UNICEF, 1994). It is not surprising that UNICEF views the Council this way, considering the amount of contribution it provides.

Functions of the National Council for Children

Although the original UNPAC document establishes the National Council for Children as an implementing structure, the respondents from the Council stressed that it is not an implementing agency. Respondent A emphasized;

There seems to be a misconception that the National Council for Children is an implementing agency. It is not. Our duty is to monitor progress that is being made towards the achievement of the UNPAC goals. This is done alongside our other roles of
advocacy, capacity building, and resource mobilization.

This was reiterated at the fourth annual conference on the situation of children in Uganda by the National Council for Children Secretary General. He emphasized that the NCC was a coordinating body and not an implementing agency.

It was emphasized that all the programmes that influence the welfare of children and women are implemented in different ministries, such as Health, Education and Sports, Natural Resources, Gender and Community Development, Labour and Social Affairs, and Ministry of Economic Planning. The National Council for Children monitors the progress of the various programmes.

The major functions of the NCC are coordination, communication and advocacy, resource mobilization, and capacity building. Coordinating the implementation of the Uganda National Programme of Action for Children is a major role of the NCC. Such coordination involves the various government ministries and the NGOs (Local and International) working in the area of child welfare. Respondent C, at the NCC secretariat explained that, "Working with the focal point people in the various ministries and agencies, the National Council for Children compiles an update on the progress made within each of these, and therefore which goals are being met".
Inspite of this emphasis on coordination by the NCC staff, the respondents from the NGOs had different views when asked about their interaction with the National Council for Children. A participant in one NGO, respondent J noted,

The NCC is a coordinating body which should try to monitor all that is happening in all areas that are involved in child welfare. The NCC's work, though, is still very limited. As far as we are concerned, we have not participated in any activity organised by the NCC since it was established. And we are a major agency operating in a major area of child protection.

Respondent J went on to note, "If NCC was ready to work with NGOs, it would be the easiest way to reach the communities, since NGOs already have grassroots programmes. They are already close to the communities."

A similar observation was made by respondent I, working with a different NGO;

After establishing the National Council for Children, we expected programmes to be forthcoming, that should mobilize the NGO sector to try and see what they are doing and how best they can improve their activities. We have not seen this so far.

In its role of communication and advocacy, the NCC ensures that the needs and problems of children are addressed at all levels. That is, national, district and down to the grassroots level. They also take advantage of important seminars and/or conferences to advance the children's cause.
Through this advocacy role, the National Council for Children Secretariat has organised activities that have allowed children to voice their concerns. These include the organisation of and technical input for the celebrations of the Day of the African Child every year on June 16, stimulating involvement of children in important issues like the constitution-making exercise, and having child advocates at the community level.

Communication and advocacy not only help children's causes in terms of resource mobilisation, but also promote their protection from abuse and neglect, increase their survival chances because important issues like immunisation and the use of hospitals are brought to the attention of adults caring for them, and clearly explain the importance of education. Nevertheless, these can be achieved only if the advocates go into the communities where the majority of the children live. The NCC has tried to do this through the decentralisation process of UNPAC, and later analysis will elaborate on how reaching out to the community has worked.

The Council is also charged with the responsibility of mobilizing sufficient resources in terms of staff, and finances. When resource gaps are identified, NCC is expected to use its influence to solicit resources from government and/or external donors. In this regard, the NCC has made use of donor meetings. The Council's ability to generate resources
largely depends on the success of the communication and advocacy role.

For sustainability of the program, capacity building is essential. Local capacities have to be strengthened to be able to handle the issues on their own, for example, skills training and facilitation of income-generating activities. Availability of resources is crucial in the fulfilment of this important role. The NCC has facilitated the training of Child Advocacy Officers, who are responsible for facilitating and supporting the social services sector in the district, to develop and implement District and Sub-County Plans of Action for Children and advocate for their achievement. In this regard, the NCC relies solely on a non-governmental organisation, Redd Barna, for the training of the Child Advocacy Officers.

Decentralisation of the Uganda National Program of Action for Children

The new approach to child welfare was developed with emphasis on utilising the community. Despite this emphasis, the structure was formed at the national level, far outside the community. It was later recognised that for effective implementation of the Uganda National Programme of Action for Children goals, the process had to be moved down in order to get nearer to the community. Consequently, the NCC
decentralized the National Programme of Action for Children to the districts and further down to the sub-counties.

This exercise is well supported by the current government policy on "democratic decentralisation", one of the most important development priorities in Uganda. Thus, decentralisation provides an excellent framework for community-based actions for children. The political and administrative structure within which the decentralisation of UNPAC is implemented was elaborated on earlier.

Under the government's decentralisation process, most functions, powers and responsibilities for numerous services have been transferred from central government to the districts (Uganda Gazette no. 55 Vol LXXXVI). District Committees are also under obligation to delegate powers to lower levels of government such as counties and sub-counties. However, the centre has retained the core functions of national security, defence, citizenship, immigration, foreign affairs, public holidays and national projects. All human, financial, and other resources which were provided by the centre for activities in the districts are now under the control of the District Local Council (DLC). Since the membership is elected by the communities, financial allocation is likely to favour the community projects. The District Local Council is now responsible for planning and execution of services which includes the implementation of the District Plans of Action for Children (DPACs) and the Sub-county Plans
of Action for Children (SPACs). In Rakai district, where the DPACs are developed, "the District Local Council has recognized DPAC as a social sector component of the overall development plan" (Respondent N, civil servant Rakai District).

An important feature of the state decentralisation, which is likely to support the implementation of grassroots programs in favour of children, is financial decentralization. Each district will have revenue from locally raised funds and central government transfers. However, these funds need to be augmented by contributions from donors and the community. Fifty percent of the locally raised funds will be retained at the sub-county level (Decentralization Secretariat, 1994). This is an operational level which is more accessible by the people and which could facilitate the support of programs initiated at the community level.

The decentralization of the state in Uganda aims at shifting power to the districts, improving accountability and effectiveness, enhancing local ownership of development, and improving the capacity of local authorities to plan and manage the delivery of services. In view of the above, the major responsibilities described in the UNPAC have been transferred to the districts.

This is clearly a communalism approach, which emphasizes local ownership of development, and the importance of a community life context in mobilising people (Oakley, 1991).
The Local Councils and Committees that have been functional in Uganda since 1986 have raised the political awareness of the poor. According to the proponents of the approach, such political awareness is essential for organizing them to take control of their own affairs.

Whereas the Uganda National Programme of Action for Children is largely concerned with improved access to social services, the improved well being of women and children depends primarily on social actions from individuals, families and communities. In order to achieve concerted and coherent programmes of action, the social services part needs to be complemented by community based mobilization and action guided and supported by local programmes, which in this context are the District Programmes of Action for Children (DPACs) and Sub-county Programmes of Action for Children (SPACs). It is important that the people be encouraged and supported to take responsibility for their own development processes including meeting the needs of children. This does not exonerate the central government from taking responsibility for social services. Until now the central government has always been blamed for the inability to adequately finance services in the districts. Besides, as noted in the previous chapters, Ugandan communities are faced with unique social, political and economic problems. The AIDS disease, poverty, and other effects of social change continue to impact on communities'
ability to take responsibility for solutions to their problems.

Despite the benefits of decentralisation, the policy is not without critics. It is sometimes seen as inegalitarian and unconcerned with the privileges and exploitation built into local power structures, "It ignores the possibility that the holders of economic power at the local level will dominate local institutions and perpetuate hierarchy and oppression." (Smith, 1980; Dunleavy, 1980).

Decentralisation is likely to provide more power to local elites, and may be used by elites in power at the centre to create a local power base. However, in Uganda's situation where there are two parallel administrative structures, one political and another civil service, such concerns may be minimal.

The major fear expressed during the study concerned revenue. Participants at the district level, while responsive to the idea of decentralizing the Uganda National Programme of Action for Children, were anxious about how their district, with very little tax revenue, would fund the projects in the district. Some of the views expressed were, "Decentralisation is similar to denial of equal development to poor districts" (Respondent R, Sub-county level). Another participant wondered, "What's the use of decentralising power without resources?" (Respondent N, District level). Recognising that there are many projects in the District that require
funding, including DPAC, it is unlikely that the latter, which has not traditionally been part of the District planning process, will be given priority. The NCC's communication and advocacy approach used in introducing and supporting the decentralisation of the UNPAC process at the levels of district, sub-county and community is, therefore, very critical. Yet, as noted by one respondent at the national level,

The NCC does not adhere to the planning process in the district. There have been complaints in the districts that NCC presents the plans to the wrong people, and at inappropriate times. This makes the District Plans of Action for Children seem like they are separate from the ongoing plans in the district (Respondent E, from Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs).

As will be noted later, similar concerns were raised by the respondents at the District level.

The key actors in the UNPAC decentralisation process are the line sector ministries, heads of departments at the District, extension staff, the Local Council members, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), NCC secretariat, and the media. The sector representatives at the District level are important in maintaining the link between their ministries and the implementers. They also assist their counterparts, the heads of departments at the district level, to generate information concerning the situation of women and children in their sector. Since major actions affecting overall well being
of children take place at the local level, the effectiveness of the UNPAC decentralization ought to target the extension staff for planning.

The Local Council members are the main actors in the development process at the local level. Their role in child welfare is strengthened by the Local Government Statute which gives the vice chairpersons at all levels the responsibility for the well being of children. Despite this important role, the district situation analyses carried out by the National Council for Children suggests that the domination of the Local Council System by men, women's lack of information about their rights and the law, mishandling of cases by the Local Council Courts especially defilement cases, were behind the lack of child protection.

Ideally, the responsibility for the welfare of children on the Local Council would have fallen under the Secretary for women's affairs, because of women's traditional role of caring for children. However, for children's affairs to be properly represented, and if this important role is to be effectively carried out, the person responsible should have an active role in the Local Councils and Committees. In research carried out by the Social Work researcher to the Child Law Review Committee before the establishment of UNPAC, it was noted that women's participation in LCs activities was very low, and absent in some areas. Consequently, the Secretary for women was not given this responsibility. Besides, women, like
children, occupy almost the same disadvantaged position in society. Traditionally, they were both supposed to be seen and not heard, especially in the presence of men. Such discriminatory tendencies were more pronounced for girl children than for the boy children.

However, the NRM government has pursued a policy which recognises the need to integrate women, especially rural women, into the total development process. The creation of the office of Secretary for Women's Affairs on the Local Committee, and the establishment of the Ministry of Gender and Community Development, show the commitment of the government and its interest in women's participation in national development. Therefore, unlike former administrative units, LCs do not discriminate on the basis of sex. Women are as eligible as men to be elected in any office on a Local Committee. They have equal rights to compete with men for the eight offices of the committee, apart from those exclusively for women.

Despite this commitment by the NRM government, women's participation remains very low. Research conducted by the Child Law Review Committee came up with interesting findings regarding women's participation in Local Councils and Committees (Child Law Review Committee, 1991). In the areas visited, especially the base level LCs it was observed that women did not participate in the affairs of their village Local Councils. In one rural area, only two of the women
interviewed had ever been to a Local Council meeting, some women innocently confessed that they always thought the LC system was exclusively for men. The few who had attended had gone to give evidence in the LC court. Few women in some rural areas therefore attend the Local Council meetings, although the meetings are forums through which they can air their views, problems, and complaints. Even the very few women who attended the meetings did not contribute much; generally they just listened. Therefore, they did not make any impact on the decisions made by the council, apart from raising up their hands when there was voting (Dufite-Bizimana, 1991).

The Committee report also indicated that from the interviews held with the women in the areas visited, many factors emerged that could be responsible for women's lack of involvement in Local Councils and Committees. The gravity of the situation has already been highlighted as in some areas, women did not know they had a right to participate. Even in the areas where they knew there was a post for women's affairs, there was only one woman executive member on the committee as if this was a rule.

The factors that appear as important in influencing the participation of women in public affairs include traditional women's roles, education levels, marital status, lack of mobilisation and leadership. The traditional roles of women and their self conceptualisation instills a sense of fear in them and places heavy responsibility on them such that it is
very difficult for them to become involved in public affairs. In addition, many women are socialized to think politics is not their concern.

Education levels as previously noted affect women's level of involvement in Local Council activities. Although the Local Councils and Committees statute does not specify that one has to be educated to be on the committee, lack of education is still a hinderance mainly because of the inferiority feelings of the illiterate. Illiterate women usually shy away, yet these are the majority in rural areas. One woman is quoted as having lamented, "I was nominated, but I refused because I do not know how to read and write" (Child Law Review Committee Report, 1992).

Refusal by husbands was also revealed as a factor that influences women's involvement in Local Council activities. The family structure in Uganda is harmonised and based on patriarchal relationships between husband and wife. The women are expected to be docile and obey their husband's commands. In one district, one woman is quoted as saying, "No woman who freely expresses herself will be a friend to most men; she is usually referred to as an impossible woman, half male. If a woman has challenging ideas, she will be intentionally misinterpreted" (Child Law Review Committee, 1992).

Because of the male-female relationships within the family which are usually unbalanced, the men feel their dominant roles are threatened if their wives engage in
discussions in public forums. These verbatim quotes reveal how hard husbands are on their wives:

- "Men refuse us and say, 'I will tell you what was discussed';"
- "When you prepare to go for a meeting, they say, 'Who will look after children? Are you on the executive?';"
- "Men think women will meet other men there";
- "If you go, who will cook?";
- "What are you going to do there? What will you contribute?";
- "How can you leave your goats unattended to and go to show yourself in a meeting?"; and,
- "I cannot go to the meeting to earn a beating for nothing." (Dufite-Bizimana, 1991)

Interventions that emphasize gender-sensitivity in their design and implementation are, therefore, crucial. Gender issues affect all aspects of society. Yet, as observed by Ankrah (1992), to critically examine the consequences of the unequal male/female relationships in most African societies is often to meet with a reaction that some areas are sacrosanct, that they are an inviolable "no go" domain which, when assailed, refuge is taken in the idea that the behaviours are "The African tradition", "The African Culture".

This raises the issue of whether there are some traditional practices that are not useful to present issues. In order to ensure that children are protected in society, it
is important that all the constituent members, men, women, the young and the old, be equally regarded as useful members. The subjugation of women is clearly a practice that disadvantages children. Issues such as lack of land tenure for women, for example, deprives children of security in case of the father’s death. Associated with this is the traditional belief that girls cannot inherit their father’s property. The views of some of the respondents when asked about the likely obstacles to the community based approach confirmed such discriminatory practices. "It is a taboo for girls to inherit. If the man does not have a son, then one of his brother’s sons will succeed him" (Respondent R, Sub-county level). Another respondent noted, "When there is not enough money for school fees, girls are pulled out because at least for them they can marry" (Respondent T, a child volunteer advocate).

There have been occurrences in Uganda society that have posed challenges to these cultural traditions. AIDS, for example, challenges the sexual behaviours of men, which were traditionally not questioned. But the bitter effects of the pandemic increasingly show that a society can wipe itself out because of cultural entrapments that require the female to be submissive. The constant civil wars, in which mostly men are involved, and the economic hardships which make it necessary for women to engage in economic activities have reversed the traditional view that the male is the sole bread winner. Such
tendencies could be utilised to advocate for change of behaviours at the household level.

Problems and Challenges of UNPAC Decentralisation

The process of decentralising the UNPAC has not been smooth. It has faced challenges, including the question of ownership and commitment, funding, planning skills at the lower levels, and clashes between the Local Councils and technical staff at the Districts.

One of the major issues that came up during the interviews was whether the UNPAC decentralisation was an NCC activity or a District activity. In the establishment of District Programmes of Action for Children, it is emphasized that these should not be seen as separate projects, but rather as part of the cycle of District planning. Interviews suggested that this does not seem to be well received in most districts. Respondent E, from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs noted, "DPACs are supposed to be part and parcel of the district plan, but in some districts they have not been." He went on to note, "Some districts are still following the old system, and they prepare budgets which are not linked to the objectives and activities of UNPAC." This was corroborated by respondent F from the same ministry: "Because DPAC is supposed to be part of the District Planning
Council, it should be facilitated as their own. Sometimes it is facilitated as a separate project."

These problems are attributed to the approach used by the National Council for Children, which is charged with the responsibility of facilitating the plan with the aim of convincing the District Planning Committees to ensure a fair resource allocation to the social sectors. Lack of coordination between the NCC and the District Planning Committees was noted as a major problem. This arises from the NCC’s inability to adhere to the time table of the Districts’ planning process. The Districts have their plans at specific times of the year, during which budgets for the various activities are discussed. The National Council for Children does not adhere to this time table, and goes in at an inappropriate time in the District planning process. Respondent N, a civil servant at the district, expressed the following concern; "We cannot always delay our schedule. The NCC officials do not tell us the specific time when they will present their proposals". Consequently, the objectives of the UNPAC are sometimes not properly integrated in the district planning cycle. However, if the will is there, the decision to make the budgeting timetables compatible is easily achieved.

The lack of coordination could be a result of the original decision making process. While the whole approach emphasizes lower level involvement to ensure the survival, protection and development of children, the approach adopted
a top-down instead of a bottom-up approach in formulating decisions. The Districts were excluded from the original drafting of the UNPAC document, which clearly stressed the importance of community involvement. For Districts to be able to participate more actively, they ought to have been involved at the beginning. Then they would have worked out how they would fit the UNPAC document into their District planning process, facilitate it as their own document, and make it part of their daily activity. The present trend is imposing decisions on them. To reverse this situation, the NCC has to appreciate this oversight, and has to be vigilant in their communication and advocacy.

Inadequate planning skill was also noted as one of the problems, especially at the sub-county level. Until recently, the civil service appointments were only at the District level. All the other appointments at the lower levels of the District were under the local government. At a level as low as the sub-county therefore, it becomes difficult to find people who possess the required planning skills. This is expected to improve under state decentralisation, and there are indications of this. In some districts for example, Probation and Welfare officers have been deployed at the sub-county level. The success of this will, however, depend on the availability of skilled manpower in the country.
Role of Non-Governmental Organizations

Social service provisions in Uganda strongly rely on NGOs, and despite the efforts made by the government to increase the proportion of the national budget that goes to the social services sector, the amount of resources available remain limited to meet the magnitude of need. This raises concern about the achievability of the UNPAC goals. Nevertheless, the process of setting the goals plays a vital role in mobilizing political support as well as the resources needed. Thus the NCC relies heavily on NGOs in its attempt to coordinate and ensure the achievement of UNPAC goals.

The important role played by NGOs has already been discussed in the previous chapter. This section discusses the contributions made by Redd Barna and UNICEF to the implementation of the UNPAC.

Redd Barna

Redd Barna is very instrumental in the decentralisation of the UNPAC. The organisation has trained, and pays the salary for, Child Advocacy officers (CAOs) to facilitate and support the social services sector in the district to develop and implement District and Sub-county Plans of Action for Children and advocate for their achievement. Since their main duties are concentrated at the sub-county level, this solves
the problem of lack of adequate skills at the sub-county level for planning purposes. The Child Advocacy Officers are charged with the responsibility of sensitizing the District and sub-county authorities and the public in general about UNPAC, DPAC and SPAC processes and the role of the National Council for Children. The terms of reference of the CAOs indicate that their responsibilities cover all the duties of the NCC. This questions further the allocation of funds within the NCC secretariat. Most of the limited funds available are spent on administrative matters rather than on actual programmes. This is to the disadvantage of the children’s cause, and may not differ from the past colonial approaches.

UNICEF

UNICEF has played a significant role in the pursuit of goals set by UNPAC. It has been outstanding in the promotion of children’s survival. The success of the immunisation services in Uganda is a result of UNICEF’s response to the increasing infant and child mortality rate due to the six immunisable diseases which were responsible for the high incidence of child deaths in 1981. UNICEF assisted The Ministry of Health’s Uganda National Expanded Programme on Immunisation (UNEPI) to rehabilitate and fully equip over 800 health centres and units throughout the country with cold storage and vaccines.
Recognising the strong connection between safe water and sanitation in rural Uganda, UNICEF regards improvement of the drinking water supply and improved sanitation as a major strategy in the reduction of the infant mortality rate (UNICEF, 1990). UNICEF has therefore been a major donor, in terms of funds, material and technical assistance, to Rural Water Supply and Sanitation programme of the Government of Uganda since the early 1980s. UNICEF is involved in spring protection, borehole drilling, pump replacement, and gravity fed piped systems. The maintenance of the water sources had always been a problem, until UNICEF recognized the problem and used the opportunity of the newly established Resistance Councils in early 1986 to develop a system of community based water maintenance system.

The following table shows the contribution made by UNICEF in collaboration with the Government of Uganda through their country programme in the attempt to fulfil the survival, protection and development goals.
Table 3. Contribution of UNICEF Towards the Achievement of UNPAC Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNPAC Goals</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Contribution of UNICEF country program to goal achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintain high level of immunization coverage (at least 80% of infants under 1 year) against six immunisable diseases and against tetanus for women of child bearing age.</td>
<td>70% for all diseases, except 98% (BCG)</td>
<td>* Through the sectoral program for health, provision of a package of essential health services, in the context of improved health district systems; * Emphasis on overall improvement in service provision and resource management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elimination of neonatal tetanus cases</td>
<td>83% immunization coverage for tetanus</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction by 95% of mortality due to measles.</td>
<td>68% immunization coverage for measles</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elimination of poliomyelitis cases</td>
<td>74% immunization coverage for poliomyelitis</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate Vitamin A deficiency</td>
<td>1991 survey in one district-5% exrothalma in children under 6 years</td>
<td>Improved nutritional status identified as over-all indication of success of country program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce iron deficiency to one-third of current rate.</td>
<td>Significant prevalence in 5 districts surveyed</td>
<td>See above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNPAC Goals</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Contribution of UNICEF country program to goal achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Reduce by 50% deaths due to diarrhoea and by 25% the incidence of diarrhoea in under 5s | 45% ORT use rate              | *Through the sectoral programs for health, provision of a package of essential health services in the context of improved district health systems  
*Emphasis on overall improvement in service provision and resource management  
*Emphasis of health programme on building community capacity for health promotion and disease prevention  
*Strong focus on communication |
| *Achieve exclusive breastfeeding up to 4 months of age by 90% of rural mothers and 80% of urban mothers.  
*Promote continued breastfeeding with rational complementary feeding from 4 months up to 1 year of age to 100% from the present 82%, and encourage breastfeeding up to 2 years. | 70% breastfeeding rate (exclusive breastfeeding rate) | *Emphasis of health programme on community capacity building for health promotion and disease prevention.  
*Strong focus on communication. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNPAC Goals</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Contribution of UNICEF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eradication of guinea worm disease.</td>
<td>In 1993, 45,000 cases reported</td>
<td>*Links strengthened between health and WES programmes to ensure balanced set of interventions *Provision of safe water supplies *Strong focus on communication *Promote advocacy among senior officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition among children under 5 by 50%</td>
<td>1992 under 5 stunting: Severe: 5% Moderate: 18%</td>
<td>Nutritional status identified as overall indication of success of country programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Achieve 95% access to basic education and 59% completion rate of the basic education cycle for children under 15. *Successful completion rate of the primary education cycle by boys and girls should be equal.</td>
<td>*1993 enrolment: 60% *1993 retention: 32% *1993 retention (girls): 40% *1993 retention (boys): 60%</td>
<td>*Education strategy focuses on increasing community demand for and access to education *Overall emphasis of country programme on ensuring that Ugandan women and girl children enjoy equal rights as do males to development opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To ensure that 75% of the population has access to safe drinking water and environmental sanitation, ultimately reducing water and faecal borne diseases.</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>*Emphasis on community involvement in construction management, and maintenance of water sources and sanitation facilities. *Demand-driven approach of WES programme to promote positive behaviour change at household and community level.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Government of Uganda–UNICEF Country Programme
The Dilemmas of The New Approach

It is evident that NGOs are major players in the social services sector, because of limited government funding. This marked donor dependency threatens the sustainability of the programme at the community level where the impact is needed most. This is aggravated by the use of national committees to reach communities. The participants from NGOs noted the complexity of using a national framework to reach the grassroots. One participant from an NGO, respondent F, emphasized, "For such an extensive approach to be effective, there must be political will to commit enough resources for the programme to work." A related observation was made by respondent I, from another non governmental organization, "NCC would be a good structure for protecting Uganda's children, but without resources, they cannot do much."

Responding to the question on whether the establishment of the NCC had an effect on funding, the general view was that the establishment of the Council had drawn financial support from external sources. Respondent A, from the National Council for Children secretariat, appreciated that "the NCC is largely funded by UNICEF and other external donor agencies."

While government was reported to have increased the budget allocation to the ministry responsible for child welfare, this was only appreciated at the headquarters. The view in the rural area was that government had done nothing so
far for the children, except paying Probation Officers’ salaries to enable them to sensitize communities about children’s issues (Respondent O, a civil servant at the district).

The probation officers’ emphasis on the importance of sensitising communities could suggest that they are beginning to change from the residual approach, and are moving towards a rural, community oriented approach. This was confirmed by statements such as the following from respondent L, one of the probation officers:

The present approach differs from the past approach, because in the past officers would sit in the offices and wait for cases to come to them. We are now going out to make an assessment of the situation, and on the basis of this, we begin to sensitize the communities about the welfare of children.

Respondent G, a retired probation and welfare officer shared a similar view. He noted, “Problems have become many and complex. The approach we used can no longer work. A lot of changes have occurred in the communities, and probation officers’ work has to change accordingly.”

Such a change in approach is a positive step towards the implementation of the new policy. Nevertheless, probation officers represent the bureaucratic, colonial policies, and have traditionally been seen to represent the criminal justice system. Their presence in the community may create a sense of
unease among the population. Therefore, they may not be the best channel through which a community based policy can be implemented.

The above concern was indirectly handled when the District Probation Office, with the assistance of Save the Children Fund, identified Child Volunteer Advocates to assist in sensitising the community about the rights of children. This was in recognition that most of the probation officers are based at the district level, and are unable to cover all the areas in the district effectively.

Child Volunteer Advocates are considered a very useful connection between the probation office and the community. Since they are elected by the community members themselves, they are an effective mechanism through which ideas can flow to the community. Community members have the liberty to withdraw the recommended person if they lose confidence in him/her. In Rakai, where there are many problems resulting from the high mortality due to AIDS, these Child Volunteer Advocates have been instrumental in mobilising communities to aid children, especially the children-alone families (Respondent P, Rakai probation office). To better protect such children, the Child Volunteer Advocates work with the Local Councils, and particularly with the vice chairman who is charged with the responsibility for children's affairs. Always there is an adult member of the community who keeps checking on the children who are living alone, and the major activities
like cultivating crops are performed by the adult members of
the community.

The responses at the community level suggest that such
readiness to help children within their families was a way of
fighting against the growth of children’s institutions
(orphanages) in Rakai. Most participants expressed negative
views about them, as suggested by the following statements
from respondents at the community level:

Some time back we had orphanages, but this was
wrong because the child in an institution loses
touch with communal life. When they are in an
orphanage, they don’t know who their relatives are,
and they lose touch with their siblings. Yet it is
very important for the children to know their
relatives (Respondent V, LC I vice chairman).

The LC I vice chairman reiterated, "some children refuse
to stay in orphanages. They insist on staying in their homes
and keeping together. That is why we have children living
alone." Such statements indicate that the family unit is still
highly regarded, and still socially intact in the minds of the
rural people, although under intense pressure from economic
forces and the high mortality rate. This calls for active
efforts on the part of the government to rekindle the spirit
of communalism before it wanes further.

While the role of non-governmental organisations was
appreciated, the programmes of some of them were not always in
unison with the people’s values. A case was reported where a
A non governmental organization (NGO) was forced by the community to close an orphanage. Respondent S, a Child Volunteer Advocate respondent noted,

When the AIDS orphan crisis had just began, the community was caught off guard. Many NGOs came in to help, and some built orphanages. But recently, there was one which was built, and the owners started recruiting children from other districts--from as far away as Mukono! The community was not happy about this, and they recommended that the orphanage be closed.

The response by the community could be interpreted as their determination to have ownership of issues taking place in their community. It could also be an example of regional or inter-tribal suspicion. Community members may be opposed to the idea of children from other areas being looked after in institutions set up in their own communities.

However, the above action by the community was considered by the probation office as an indication of the success of their sensitization efforts. Respondent O from Rakai probation office observed,

Many institutions were built as a way of attracting funding from external sources. Many of the institutions were in a poor shape. Through sensitization, we tried to get administrators together and talked to them about the shortcomings of institutionalisation of children. Communities were also involved, so that they could maintain the spirit to care for orphans.
While such sensitization efforts may have played a role in the community's reaction towards institutionalisation, some of the responses highlighted an inherent dissatisfaction with some NGO's approach to providing assistance. A key informant from the probation office, participant P, noted the complaints echoed by some parents and/or guardians regarding NGO's assistance.

Some parents complain that NGOs have spoilt children; that children are paying more allegiance to the NGOs than to the guardians. Even at home there are NGOs that come and provide things like food, soap, etc. So when parents tell the children anything, they stubbornly say, 'Are you the one looking after me?'... So the idea of respecting parents is somehow weakening because they are not getting much from them.

Such views are similar to the individualism discussed earlier, which resulted from the collapse of traditional communal ways of living. The views indicate a conflict embedded in the orientations of a communitarian and an individualistic approach. The non-governmental organizations aim at promoting the welfare of the individual child. On the other hand, communities still hang on to their traditional value of communalism, and would rather be assisted in this manner. In other words, assisting the family unit rather than the individual would better fulfil the cherished traditional values. Such conflicting views are an obstacle to the implementation of the new policy.
It is the duty of the government to control the activities of the NGOs. Nonetheless, considering that the government lacks the resources to implement its policies, it is not armed well enough to oppose NGOs activities. This poses a dilemma to the implementation of the policy, because it raises questions as to who has the upper hand.

While a lot of changes have occurred in society, some traditional attitudes continue to be upheld. There is unwillingness to reverse certain customs and cultures, and these are mainly those which affect the vulnerable members of society--women and children, especially girl children. This raises the issue of whether the new policy, which is a rights led policy, can fit in with the traditional attitudes to children. The current emphasis on children’s rights has often met with resistance from cultural conformists. However, it is acknowledged by some that change is inevitable, though it is not always positive change. One elder at the community level observed that,

The situation is very different from what it was. Many things have changed. When I was growing up, I could not sit where my father was; but now a child comes and puts the leg on the fathers. We copied other people’s cultures. Now you may be eating, and the child comes and puts the plate on the same table, which you would not do then. Children always greeted adults. Girls knelt while greeting. All these are a sign of respect in the Ganda culture (Respondent Y, a village elder).
In a society that still upholds such cultural traditions, caution needs to be exercised while advocating for children's rights. The issue of rights was mentioned as one of the likely obstacles to the implementation of the new approach. A sub-county chief participant noted, "How can we re-visit our traditions when you people are talking about children’s rights? Is there a tradition where you cannot punish a child? (meant beating)" (Respondent R, sub-county level). It was also noted that education prohibits practising some traditional ways. "Children spend a lot of time away from the elders who would be their teachers, traditionally" (Respondent Y, a village elder).

In spite of the obstacles, of those who responded to the question of whether the communities should be re-visited, the majority were in support. However, they held different views about it. The district executive officer observed, "We would go back if we were committed. But how do we tell communities what to do when we are not giving them anything, and when they do not have the resources?" (Respondent N, civil servant at the district). It was emphasized that such a policy would be more easily implemented in rural areas than in urban areas. "It is possible in rural communities. Children in rural areas behave better than those in urban areas. In fact, most of our national leaders attended school in rural areas" (Respondent V, LC I vice chairman). This raises the issue of whether the
same policy can benefit children in rural and urban areas equally.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the new approach to child welfare in Uganda. The major features in the chapter are: the formation of the National Programme of Action for Children; the setting up of the National Council for Children, and its workings in the attempt to reach communities; the decentralization structure within which the policy is implemented; and issues about resources, including the contribution of both local and international NGOs, as well as UNICEF, an intergovernmental organisation.

The formation of the Uganda National Programme of Action for Children marked an important development in child welfare in Uganda. It created awareness of the problems of children in Uganda. For the first time, the government made a commitment to the children's cause, although this commitment was not accompanied by an increase in resource funding for child welfare activities. It also provided a framework for assessment of the three important areas of children's well-being: survival, protection and development.

The chapter has also discussed the establishment of the National Council for Children, a structure that was set up to oversee the implementation of UNPAC's goals. In terms of the
theoretical framework, the establishment of the National Council for Children and its emphasis on decentralising its operations, is a community approach aiming at involving communities in an issue that concerns them. This fits in with the current political structure, thus improving the potential for the policy’s implementation.

The main arguments in the chapter have been that: a) involvement of the community is very important for the effective implementation of the policy; b) the structure and role of the National Council for Children does not justify the amount of resources spent at the secretariat; c) the lack of coordination between the NCC secretariat and the districts raises questions about ownership and therefore responsibility; d) the deployment of probation officers at the lower level may alter the perception of the policy at the community level; e) resource availability is central to the implementation of the policy, and government needs to allocate more resources; f) over-dependency on NGOs and other external agencies threatens sustainability and may undermine the spirit of communalism; and g) western concepts such as children’s rights may influence attempts to re-establish traditional forms of child welfare.

It is clear from the discussion that the people at the grassroots were not involved in the policy formulation. This study takes the view that this is problematic. It is considered important that the people be mobilized and
sensitized about the new policy, especially since they are the major players in its implementation. The National Council for Children has emphasized communication and advocacy as the most effective way of reaching the community. It is important to emphasize the need to involve all members, including women whose participation has been noted to be very minimal, and non existent in some societies.

The amount of funds spent at the National Council for Children secretariat has been noted to be high, even though most of the functions that the Council secretariat was established to perform are performed by the Child Advocacy Officers who are paid by a non-governmental organization, Redd Barna. The over expenditure of the limited funds at the secretariat is similar to the past approach where centralisation led to the concentration of funds at the headquarters while nothing was done at the lower levels, especially at the community level.

Despite the considerably high funding that goes to the National Council for Children secretariat, the discussion has noted insufficiency in their operations. Their time schedules have been noted not to coincide with the District schedules, thus affecting the establishment of the programme at the district level, and therefore slowing down the decentralisation process of the programme.

The discussion has raised concern about the deployment of probation officers at levels nearer to the community. These
concerns arise from an authority that probation officers traditionally represent. Since they have traditionally represented the criminal system, they may be viewed in the community as agents of the government giving orders rather than involving them. One way around this has been the use of child volunteer advocates who belong and are known in the community.

The decentralisation structure within which the new approach is to be implemented has also been analyzed, and the challenges it faces noted. It is expected that each District will locally raise funds, and these will be supported by central government transfers. This raises the issue of poverty, especially at the community level. Considering that the majority of Ugandans are poor, and that a significant proportion of the poor are in rural areas, the revenue base is likely to be small. It is also likely to differ from district to district. This raises the question of how central government allocations will be made in order to compensate for the Districts that are grossly lacking. Allocating the same transfer is likely to disadvantage the poor districts. Such concerns have been echoed in the discussion.

The chapter has raised questions of whether the government can do the job of implementing the policy without committing more resources. Resource availability is the major factor in the implementation process regardless of the approach adopted. At every stage, resources are key. Yet
government contribution to the implementation of the policy has been noted to be a small percentage.

It is important to note, that with a move to community work, there will be a need to have more officers in the field and adequately provided for in terms of offices, transport and fuel, housing and stationary. However, realising that currently the department with the responsibility of caring for children is understaffed raises doubt as to the effective implementation of the community based approach.

The discussion has noted that non-governmental organisations contribute most of the resources. However, this over-dependency on non governmental organizations (NGOs), though appreciated, has been feared to threaten sustainability, and to undermine the efforts aimed at rekindling the spirit of communalism. The chapter has also raised concerns about the perception of western concepts such as gender equality and children's rights among Ugandan communities and how these might affect implementation of the new policy.
Chapter Ten

Conclusions and Recommendations

This final chapter gives the conclusions of the study, and recommends principles that would facilitate the implementation of the community based approach. It has to be emphasized, that these recommendations are general because the process is in a very early stage. The applicability of social development theory to child welfare, which was referred to earlier is discussed. The chapter also suggests some research questions that require further examination, and describes, in form of principles, what the new Garden would look like.

Uganda, richly endowed with resources over a large part of its area, blessed with a temperate climate, is very rich in food production, and despite other problems, hunger is never an issue of concern. Its uniqueness in geographical beauty and the abundant resources earned Uganda the title of "The Pearl of Africa" from Churchill of England during the colonial period. Along with this praise, however, seeds were planted by the British during colonialism, that later earned Uganda the title of "The Tarnished Pearl of Africa" (Ofcansky, 1996).

In the context of this study, Churchill’s "Pearl" can be compared to the traditional "Garden", while "Tarnished Pearl" can be compared to the deeply injured garden during and after the colonization process.
Communalism

The spirit of communalism that prevailed in pre-colonial Uganda was on the whole beneficial to children. Communalism was so ingrained that even personal conflicts were not an excuse for anyone to neglect the welfare of a member. Since mobility was limited, families large and usually polygamous, children had a wide and strong safety net.

The societies did not emphasize individual rights, indeed this concept was unknown. At the same time, there were many restrictions imposed on women and children, thus giving them a lower status than adult males.

Child care was ultimately a communal responsibility, not solely the parents'. This implies that every adult member in the community could punish, scold, feed, and protect without fearing any negative reaction from the parents. Discipline was highly valued, and children learned cultural values, morals, modes of behaviour and skills from elders in the home and the community, through direct observation and imitation. Their learning of the history of their tribe took place through an oral tradition. There was therefore no dearth of education as every capable adult served as a teacher.

The pre-colonial community was a garden tended by its members. It was by all and for all. The dominant theme was collective organisation. The garden was therefore kept healthy and well cultivated, and the members knew best which farming
mechanisms to use. The implication here is that they did not count on anybody outside to tend the garden for them. This social organisation was altered during and after colonisation. The disruptions were social, economic and political. The garden was interfered with, to the disadvantage of children, the most vulnerable in society.

**Intervention**

The colonialists did not appreciate the natives' ways of living. Metropolitan ideas were imposed, that worked counter to the nurturing of the indigenous garden. The natives' struggle to fulfil both the traditional and modern sets of norms increasingly put a strain on garden practices. Traditional forms of authority were altered, and new ones imposed. The complete system of social security provided by the obligations of kinship was threatened with disintegration.

Modernization theory, which can be seen as the guide to the development of social services, was imported from Britain, and was based largely on the notion of economic growth. While proponents of this theory hold that the centrality of development is the transition to modernity, it is this transition that impacted negatively on child welfare. Whereas modernization theory views traditional social institutions such as the extended family system as impediments to development, this study suggests that that system was and is
a strength to child welfare, and should be supported to help cope with the strains partly rising from modernization. This study argues that the strength of the family and community is crucial for the implementation of the present approach.

Modernisation theory as represented by the activity of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, also argues for minimal state intervention, especially on social service expenditures. This study suggests that state provision of social services is necessary especially due to inadequate voluntary and private social services.

Due to the emphasis placed on economic development, large amounts of borrowed funds were invested in large economic ventures. These were expected to increase employment, and therefore raise standards of living. This study argues that such economic measures plunged the country into debt, and this has adversely affected social services provision.

A residual approach to social welfare accompanied modernization. Implementation of these residual policies contributed to the problems of children in Uganda. For a long time, the policies directed at children have tended to concentrate on residual categories of children that are defined as "vulnerable". This category includes the disabled, orphans, abused and abandoned children, institutionalized children, and young offenders. While such categories of children deserve attention, it leads to ignoring the millions of children who live in poverty, and who have no access to
education, health care, safe drinking water, and other essential social services. Pre-occupation with the "vulnerable" ones is reminiscent of colonial times when the British wanted to protect their own against delinquents.

The effect of modernization on the economy in general, and on communities in particular, has been a decline in the welfare of children. The situation of children in Uganda has steadily deteriorated, a situation made more serious by the residual social welfare model derived from modernization theory. It is insufficient to solve the problems. However, one of the consequences of the application of modernization theory has been the establishment of non-governmental organisations, which then provided other efforts to assist children.

**Policy Response**

Government's effort to revise policies concerning children is an indication that the problems of residual policies have been acknowledged. The present approach (the issue of this study) which emphasizes a community-based approach suggests that there is a recognition on the part of the government that the community in Uganda is an important resource that can no longer be neglected. The Uganda National Programme of Action for Children, and the consequent establishment of the National Council for Children, and
decentralization are all attempts to structurally respond to the above changes.

The current government approach alludes to social development theory discussed in an earlier chapter. The Uganda National Programme of Action for Children emphasizes the involvement of all sectors of the economy working together to improve welfare. This commitment by the Ugandan government offers an environment for the adoption of a social development perspective, which, as Midgley (1994) observes, requires the active involvement of government. He observes:

While the importance of other strategies should not be minimized, social development calls for central authority, directive planning, and the ability to mobilize resources on a significant scale. And this requires the involvement of an activist, technically competent, and responsive government (Midgley, 1994, p.9).

The mobilization of all social institutions for the promotion of human welfare is required by the social development perspective. Social development theory is inclusive. It embraces the statist, communitarian and individualist notions. The theory is therefore applicable to child welfare in Uganda, which embraces children’s survival, protection and development needs. For these to be met, there must be a concerted effort of all concerned institutions at all levels.
Dilemmas of the Policy

While the policy provides a promising framework within which the present problems of children can be addressed, there are obvious issues with which the authorities have to grapple. Significant among these are: a) the extent to which a centralised, bureaucratic structure, a modern, western idea, can be usefully applied to the Ugandan rural community; b) the impact of the AIDS epidemic on the Ugandan society; c) poverty, that is, whether the resources exist to accomplish the goal; d) aspects of the modern context that are appropriate to the re-introduction of traditional practices, and those that make it problematic; and, e) what needs to be done to more closely capture the positive aspects of the traditional garden.

The process followed in establishing the Uganda National Council for Children, and consequently the National Council for Children, reflects a community development approach which originated in colonial times and resulted in the creation of large national community development programmes in many developing countries (Brokensha and Hodge, 1969). As Midgley (1987) notes,

These centralised and bureaucratically administered schemes were subjected to increasing criticism over the years as it was realised that their administration consumed a good proportion of scarce resources, failed to deliver tangible benefits to the mass of the population and did little to...
involve ordinary people in decision making (Midgley, 1987).

The idea of establishing the National Council for Children was conceived at the international, and carried out at the national level. The community was not involved in the process. Despite this, communities were expected to be actively involved in implementation. This is a dilemma in the process of establishing the policy, which may affect the outcome. This has been suggested in the study, where the District Plans of Action for Children are sometimes not regarded as part of the District Plan. In order to effectively involve the community in the new policy, their problems and ideas should have been heard. Otherwise, there is a danger of adopting a rather technocratic approach which sees things in terms of getting the service delivery structure 'right' and ignores the social, economic, and political context within which it operates. This may derail the whole enterprise.

The issue of rights, for example, is foreign to most traditional communities, yet the new policy emphasizes the observance of children's and women's rights. These, it is acknowledged, have to be observed within the limits of the positive Ugandan traditional cultures. This is clearly a policy dilemma in a country that is in transition. While acknowledging that the world is changing, the policy also indicates the will to maintain traditions. How this is to be
managed is an important issue that needs to be recognized and addressed.

Women's involvement in community affairs is crucial. Some Ugandan communities, however, still sideline women. This implies that there are rocks in the garden which impede cultivation. Until they are removed or sharply reduced, there will be limited if any gain in local productivity. It is important to note that this is a traditional practice which existed previously, and thus suggests another dilemma for a "Back to Garden" policy.

Considering the changes that have occurred, the context—the nature of the garden—has changed, and one other issue that authorities have to grapple with is what aspects of the modern context are appropriate to the re-introduction of the traditional garden practices, and what aspects make it problematic.

The current political organisation, the Local Councils and Committees system, has been noted to be a good vehicle for the development of representative democracy and for promoting local development planning. Since these committees start at the grassroot level, they offer a promising context with which communalism can be strengthened. This is further supported by state decentralisation. This tallies well with the communitarian approach which recognizes the importance of political awareness of the ordinary people and the importance of involving them in affairs that affect them.
However, other aspects of the modern context may make the re-introduction of traditional garden practices problematic. Such aspects are a result of the various changes that have taken place within the communities, and in the surrounding environment. The dictates of the economy, for example, now require the woman to work outside the home. The constant wars in which mostly men are involved lead to a situation where most households are headed by women, dumbfounding the notion that women are just dependants. Easy movement has led to migrations, separating the extended family members, and therefore diluting the strength of kinship and clan systems.

This leads to the question of what needs to be done to capture the positive aspects. A ground-up approach, in which community members are involved could make a positive impact. But is a ground-up approach possible particularly given the centralized beginning? The answer to this is yes and no. For example, the study has indicated the positive influence of the use of Child Volunteer Advocates at the grassroots level. This, complemented by the Local Councils and Committees system could make the ground-up approach possible. However, as noted, the issue of resources is crucial. Though it has been acknowledged that community is the most important resource, realistically, members still need assistance to be able to cope with the increasing problems of children.

A ground-up approach could also be difficult because of the presence of an already established bureaucracy which has a
life of its own. Probation officers for example have been in the system since colonial days, and even though they may change their approach, still they will represent the criminal justice system, and will be associated with it. In essence, a ground-up approach would ideally eliminate them. This, however raises another question: can this policy benefit children in urban areas equally? Small as the numbers are, the so-called "vulnerable children" are mostly in urban areas, and this problem will require the services of probation officers. This may call for a differential urban/rural policy.

Recommendations

Lack of resources both at the national and community levels is another issue with which the authorities have to grapple. As acknowledged by Kanji (1990), no matter how adequate policies towards children are, they can only be effective within a strategy which changes the context of poverty and deprivation in which children live. As already noted, Uganda is richly endowed with natural resources, which can be utilized to improve the conditions of rural communities. To be able to benefit economically from these resources, governments need to provide both financial and physical resources. This emphasizes the need for government commitment, an essential aspect of the social development approach.
Physical Infrastructure

In an agricultural country, communities need a good road network to be able to market their produce and mitigate economic hardships. Though rural feeder roads constitute an essential element of Uganda's strategy for accelerated agricultural growth, they remain very poor in most areas. Roads are needed to bring in agricultural inputs and implements, facilitate the work of extension staff, to bring access to manufactured goods, create access to basic social services such as education and health and, most important of all, to provide access to markets for farm goods (World Bank, 1993).

Improving the road network system will reduce the physical isolation created by inaccessibility, especially during the rainy season. Chambers (1983) calls this seasonal inaccessibility "the dry weather bias." Agricultural and other extension staff go to rural areas only during the dry season, and suspend their services during the wet season when their services are needed most. The wet season is the planting period, calling for agricultural advice. It is also the period when most tropical diseases such as malaria are common, calling for health services.

Improving the road network system would also help in capturing the positive aspects of the traditional garden practices. Availability of resources could boost the spirit of
communalism that still exists, and help remove the weeds that have affected the beauty of the garden due to the inability to care for it.

**Assistance to Families**

Communities have undergone various changes, caused by the effect of wars, the impact of the AIDS pandemic, and the emergence of children-alone families. Extended families have continued to bear major responsibility. Government needs to address the changes in the community by assisting foster families with resources to help them cope with the demands placed upon them by the care of additional children. It is also important that non governmental organizations (NGOs) focus their approach from helping individuals to assisting families to set up projects that will ensure long term income or means of survival.

It is crucial to adopt a ground-up approach. Child Volunteer Advocates, who are recruited from local communities, are currently engaged to oversee the well-being of children. This is a positive step towards working around the bureaucratic colonial policies which are represented by the Probation Officers.
Similar to the above, the social work approach inherited from the colonial period is residual, urban, and clinically oriented. In view of the present policy, there is need to change to a more community, rural areas orientation. Social work graduates need to be supplied with the skills, sensitivity and encouragement to go "off the beaten track" and into the rural areas. The nature of the communities and magnitude of problems in rural areas require more collectivist, development oriented approaches. The study has indicated that probation officers are seeking to transcend their conventional remedial roles by moving to communities. This change in approach would be beneficial if funds were available. However, despite the realization of the importance of a more community based approach, resources are needed to initiate social programs which social development views as an essential ingredient of an overall growth strategy assigned to promote human well-being (Midgley, 1994).

Gender Issues

Considering the important role women play in society, and bearing in mind that they are still sidelined, interventions that emphasize gender-sensitivity in their design and implementation are crucial. There is a growing movement to
recognize women's particular needs and abilities in contributing to rural development. Projects need to be undertaken which will increase this understanding in the Ugandan context.

Some Questions For Further Research

This study could not answer all the questions, particularly as the community based policy is still in the early stages. Further research is required in the following areas:

a) There is need to examine the perceptions of children's and women's rights at the community level;

b) It is important that the coping mechanisms in the family be examined within the changing circumstances;

c) The issue of whether the same child welfare policy can apply to both rural and urban areas;

d) Since non governmental organizations (NGOs) have been active in social development, it is important that their function be examined more clearly.

Final Comments

In view of what has been discussed, and the recommendations that have been suggested, we have to ask ourselves about the degrees to which the government can
implement the policy. The study has highlighted many issues that suggest there are great difficulties. Significant among these is a lack of resources. Government allocation of resources to the department responsible for child welfare continues to be insignificant. Its contribution to the functions of the National Council for Children is also minimal. With such limited resources, therefore, it is clear that even with a political will, government cannot do the job.

It has been emphasized in the study, that NGOs provide most of the resources. But can they manage to do the job? For the NGOs to handle such a responsibility effectively, coordination among themselves and with government structures is important. However, coordination at both levels is lacking. Besides, non governmental organizations (NGOs) are foreign, and their operations sometimes do not match community values. They may negatively affect the outcome of the policy.

We then ask ourselves whether we can get back to the garden. The discussion has indicated that we can go back to the garden and tend it communally. But the tending practices will be different, and so will be the garden.

Since some of the traditional garden practices are considered inappropriate for the modern context, the garden we strive to get back to will be of a different kind. It is impossible to get back to the idyllic, romantic traditional garden of history. The various changes that Uganda has gone through could not have been imagined. We could not have
foreseen the persistent political strife accompanied by massive distractions of lives and property; we could not have foreseen the prevalence of a mysterious disease, AIDS; and we could not have imagined a situation arising where a child who was traditionally cherished, could carry the responsibility of heading a family (Children-Alone family).

The statements from the respondents supporting traditional ways of caring for children put particular emphasis on the communal responsibility for children. That is, the traditional way of children belonging to the community and not to individuals. This indicates that there is willingness and the possibility to go back. It is therefore essential, that in the efforts to sensitize the people, concentration be put on reviving the communal garden, but appreciate that the tending practices in the garden will have to change so as to match the present context. This way, the garden will be different, and probably better because the negative aspects will be phased out. This flexibility may ensure that the garden is never abandoned again, that only the tending practices will change.

Principles for Contemporary Garden Practices

The study has indicated the caring nature of the traditional community. It has also noted the external influences that interferred with such organized caring
relationships, as well as the effect of inevitable social change. Recognizing that such changes have altered the garden, the study appreciates that the new Garden will be different, and describes, in form of principles, what the new garden would look like.

Inclusion

It has been noted in the study that the traditional garden did not give due regard to women and children, and that their performance in communal issues is still minimal. This study suggests that women play a vital role in the present community. It is therefore important that measures be adopted that will facilitate the rights of children and women.

Monogamy

While the practice of polygamy had some positive effects on child care, the harsh economic realities of the present Ugandan society do not give it room. Also, the practice does not fit in with the present international emphasis on women's rights. Polygamy is therefore one of the traditional garden practices that is not applicable in contemporary Uganda, and the principle of monogamy will have to be reinforced.
Governance

Movements\migrations are increasingly made easy by viable communication. There are likely to be communities that are composed of people of different clans and origins. In such communities, governance through hereditary rulers and\or clan elders might not be viable. It is therefore important that democratic principles of governance be applied in the new garden.

Funding

The study has emphasized the importance of funding especially on the part of government. The belief that government will only come in after the family has failed will have to change. Child welfare programs have to be set up, and funded. It is important that funding follow a per capita system, whereby communities with a large number of children receive more funds.

Public Health

Public health provisions of clean water and sanitation is very crucial, and are important in reducing infant and child mortality rate that is very high in Uganda. Educating communities about the importance of public health might have
a positive influence on negative traditional beliefs and practices.

Accessibility

Of great importance for the new garden is accessibility. Communities must have adequate road access to avoid isolation. This will boost the communities' social, economic and political integration.

Underpinning all this is the notion of social development. However, the above general principles are seen in the light of developing a new, strong social structure in the country, and with or without social development theory, these principles are important.


Uganda is located in East Africa, stretching across the equator between 1° south and 4° north latitude, and 29° and 35° east longitude. Uganda is three hours ahead of GMT. The national territory of Uganda covers 241,038 sq. km: of which five-sixths is land and one-sixth consists of lakes, rivers, and wetland marshes. Average altitude is 1,312 m.
VIRTUAL STAFF

NB. As and when new duties requiring specific persons are identified, corresponding positions will be created.
COVERING LETTER FOR THE STAKEHOLDING INSTITUTION

I am a doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto, Canada. I am carrying out research about the new approach to child protection in Uganda, which emphasizes community involvement in child welfare issues. Specific emphasis will be paid to the National Council for Children, the structure that was set up to implement the new approach. Your agency was selected because of your major involvement in child welfare in Uganda.

This research will, hopefully, provide greater insight into the workings of the new structure that was established to better protect children. It is hoped that the research results will provide information useful for both practice and policy related to child welfare.

I am writing to request permission to access relevant files at your institution and to interview some selected members. I will, later in the week, pay a personal visit to your institution, and I will gladly answer any questions regarding this request.

Looking forward to your cooperation,

Sincerely,

Penninah Dufite-Bizima, Msc(Econ).
CONSENT FORM


Investigator: Penninah Dufite-Bizimana

I acknowledge that research procedures in this study have been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been informed of the purposes of this study. I know that I may ask now, or in the future any questions I have about the study or the research procedures. I have been assured that the information I provide will be kept confidential and that no information will be released or printed that would disclose my personal identity without my permission. I have also agreed for the interview to be tape-recorded, and understand that the tapes will be destroyed after the study.

I understand that my participation in this study is completely voluntary and that my decision to participate or not, will not influence my job and/or any services that I/we may receive. I also know that I am free to withdraw from this study at any time.

I hereby consent to participate.

Date:________________________________________
Signature:____________________________________

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Appendix V

Interview Guide

The interview guide identifies areas that are pertinent to the study, and the information that will be solicited during the interviews. Since the participants were chosen based on their knowledge of the issue being studied, all areas were explored with each respondent. Nevertheless, considering that the respondents were chosen from different contexts, questions varied. Naturally, some of the respondents raised issues that this interview guide did not address. Some of this information was relevant to the study, and created the chance to probe.

The Situation of Children

What are the major problems faced by children in Uganda? In your view, what are the causes of these problems?
How are they handled?
What in your opinion is the best way to handle children’s problems?

Responsibility for Children

Who, in your opinion, should carry the responsibility of caring for children, and why?
What is community’s role regarding children’s well being? To what extent do you think communities can carry the
responsibility of caring for children without parents? Extended families have always been a safety net. However, some people argue that this may, or may not have changed due to various factors. What are your comments about this safety net?

The Roles of the State and Non-Governmental Organizations

How has government responded to the problems of children? Have communities been involved?
What has been the response from the NGOs? Do NGOs involve communities, and if so to what extent?
What do you think about community’s involvement, and how do you think this would promote the children’s cause?
What is the level of collaboration between and among agencies involved in Child Welfare?
What do you see as the implications of NGOs major involvement in child welfare?

The Uganda National Programme of Action for Children

The Uganda National Programme of Action for Children has stipulated goals that are aimed at promoting the survival, protection and development of children. How familiar are you with the goals of UNPAC, and how are the programmes in your organisation aimed at achieving the goals of UNPAC?
The goals of UNPAC are well formulated, and if achieved, would make a world of difference for Uganda’s children. In your view, how realistically can these goals be achieved? What is your opinion about decentralizing it and therefore making it community based?

The National Council for Children

What do you know about the National Council for Children? To what extent are the functions of the NCC likely to facilitate the achievement of UNPAC’s goals? What is the nature of interaction between the NCC, government, and NGOs involved in Child Welfare in Uganda? One of the important areas the National Council for Children is concerned with is child protection. In this, the issue of children’s rights is emphasized. How is this concept perceived, particularly in rural areas? The UNPAC emphasizes a community based approach, does NCC emphasize this approach in their activities, and if so, how and to what extent? What effect on funding has the establishment of NCC had on children’s services? Where does the funding come from? What would you consider as the achievements made so far by the National Council for Children? What would you consider the outstanding problems?
District Plans of Action for Children (DPACs)

How do you think decentralising UNPAC will help you handle the problems of children?

Does the child welfare sector receive a fair allocation of funds at the district? Elaborate.

How effective has the NCC been in introducing DPACs within the District Team and Planning Committee?

How Participants think about the Community Based Approach

How does the current approach differ from the past approach?

What positive indications confirm that it differs?

What is likely to promote the success of the present approach?

What are the likely obstacles/hindrances?

Should we get back to 'the garden'?