

NDOLERIIRE KYOMUHENDO PATRICK (2006-M092-10006)

Challenges Batwa Face in Formal Education: A Case Study of Kigezi Sub-Region, Uganda.

This dissertation presents findings and recommendations on challenges the Batwa, a minority group in Kigezi sub-region of Uganda, face in formal education. With a focus on primary and secondary levels, the researcher set out to better understand the challenges the Batwa face. Formal education is looked at as both a human right and a development issue for the Batwa. The Batwa are believed to be indigenous to the forests in the Great Lakes Region but in Uganda they were evicted from the forests in favour of biodiversity conservation. Up to 40% live as squatters paying their land lords through labour. While some do manual work to earn a days' meal for the family, others live by begging. Only a handful can read or write. Many, especially the youth, have taken to drug abuse. The study was guided by the following research questions: What are the challenges faced by the Batwa in formal education? Does the formal education system suit the Batwa in the Kigezi sub-region? And can formal education facilitate well-being of the Batwa? Much as the formal education system in Uganda is criticised for irrelevancy to the context, without it the Batwa will remain excluded from development frameworks for generations which undermines their realisation of other human rights and poverty eradication initiatives. Based on field findings and analyses, recommendations to address the challenges, and make Batwa girls and boys participate in and benefit from formal education, will be made. The dissertation progressively introduces the situation of the Batwa in the region, gives a statement of the problem and objectives of the research. This is followed by research methodology and the conceptual framework. The concluding section contains analyses of data, conclusion and recommendations to address the challenges.

The data were obtained from 72 self-administered questionnaires, 12 focus group discussions and 9 one-to-one interviews. The challenges are associated with a household such as lack of food, shelter, educational materials; personalities such the Batwa negative attitudes towards formal education; the discriminatory environment; and the inappropriate education system, as well as lack of role-models and support by parents. The reflective participatory methodology employed by the study, involved both the Batwa as rights holders, and duty bearers. Both are critical players if Batwa boys and girls in the Kigezi sub-region are to overcome their challenges in formal education. This approach was useful and led respondents to question what could be done to address the situation. Indeed CARE International in Uganda, where the researcher worked at the time, was developing a project proposal aimed at addressing some of the challenges. The author recommends integrated approaches to addressing the challenges, because all are inter-linked, and reinforce one another. The government of Uganda invests heavily in formal education, yet Batwa in the Kigezi sub-region hardly benefit. The researcher recommends affirmative action for the Batwa and resettlement by government as a long term strategy to address the plight of the Batwa. Of critical importance is the need to address the discriminatory tendencies among the majority ethnic groups as this stretches from home, community, to school and local decision making processes; as well as orienting Batwa attitude to embrace formal education. Until Batwa families in the sub-region appreciate and are able to support their children in formal education, and the children have sustained interest in formal education, other efforts will not yield much. The families should be

able to meet their physiological needs of food, shelter, clothing, and specifically sanitary requirements for girls.

Key Words: **Formal Education, Kigezi Sub-Region.**