HIP HOP AS A TOOL FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

- A Case Study of Breakdance Project Uganda (BPU)

Niina Lisma
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Diaconia University of Applied Sciences
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and Community Development Work
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ABSTRACT

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The aim of my thesis was to study and evaluate the impact of the work of Breakdance Project Uganda (BPU) and how the methods and approaches of BPU has enabled the empowerment of youth. I travelled to Uganda first time in 2010 and since then have been actively involved with the organization. The idea for this thesis evoked from acknowledging the need for researching the impacts of the organization as BPU is reaching its 10th year of operation in 2016.

Through individual interviews I aimed to find if, and in which ways, members have been empowered during their time of involvement with BPU. I selected eight long-term members for the interviews. The approach of the interviews was narrative, asking about the members experiences from childhood to present, emphasizing their experiences in BPU. I conducted individual an interview with the founding member Abramz Tekya and a focus group interview with five members to collect material about the history and the work methods of BPU. The second part of the focus groupinterview aimed to discuss and identify advantages and challenges of BPU as a grass-roots organization and ideas and needs for future development. I implemented the interviews in Uganda in January 2015.

The nature of my research is a qualitative case study. A qualitative research is open to interpretation and semi-structured interviews allow the participants to share what they find relevant to tell. I used the method of thematic analysis, after transcribing all interview material.

Overall result of this thesis is that it recognizes BPU's role in tackling youth development issues in Uganda. Key result was to be able to identify common factors supporting empowerment, as inclusion, self-discovery, confidence, responsibility, leadership, creativity, initiative and social capital. Members connect the positive transformation and process of empowerment to their involvement in BPU activities. The advantages identified of being grass-rooted are mainly about the human capacity and inclusive participation possibilities. On the other hand to meet the needs of rapid growth, there is a current need to reform the basic structure of the organization to meet the needs of both new and long-term members. Major challenges are about financial stability and human resources. Volunteer members hope the organization to register as an NGO, to provide salaries for the administration team and to establish its own youth center.

Keywords: youth, empowerment, unemployment, community arts, Breakdance Project Uganda, Uganda, Africa, grass-roots, hip hop culture, inclusion, identity, self-esteem, leadership, self-discovery, transformation, disadvantaged community, community, b-boy, b-girl, b-boying, breakdance

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

Over 70 percent of Uganda's population are youth, yet the country has very limited resources for young people to build on their futures. Numbers of youth in Uganda are eager to push their creativity and learn new skills, but the government is currently showing little effort to include youth as a part of its development programs. Community arts methods have been used especially in the UK, including youth in art-based development projects. Many of these programs aim to empower young people. Although Uganda is yet to discover the role of arts in national development, Breakdance Project Uganda (BPU), a grass-roots organization operating in Uganda, is already doing so by using different elements of hip hop culture to work with young people coming from various social, economic, religious and tribal origins (Breakdance Project Uganda –leaflet 2014). In 2016 BPU is celebrating its 10th year of operation.

This thesis research is studying the work of BPU. In my opinion this study is an important possibility for the volunteer members of the organization to evaluate the meaning of their work by discussing their individual transformation and the work methods, advantages and challenges of the organization. I focus on how BPU uses hip hop as a tool to empower youth in Uganda and how this empowerment is visible in the long-term members of the organization. Secondly I focus on the organizational level and what are the needs of BPU to develop and operate more effectively. The material for this work is collected through personal interviews and a focus group interview with long-term members of BPU.

This study provides official research information for BPU to use when in need to share information about the purposes and outcomes of their work to authorities, for example when applying funding for projects. This study introduces alternative tools and methods for youth and community work fields, bringing out fresh and youth-orientated ideas. I find this study meaningful as it brings out the voice of young creative Ugandans, whose work is able to educate and transform youth and whose stories and ideas can change the one-sided media image about Uganda as a country.

2 CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Empowerment

The meaning of the term empowerment is commonly known as giving power to people. Empowerment is a process that cannot be done for people but with them. Empowerment is a term that is still shaping its meaning, therefore the term has been defined in multiple ways by different people. Wellerstein and Bernstein (1994) define empowerment as a social action process that promotes participation of people, organizations, and communities in gaining control over their lives in their community and larger society. With this perspective, empowerment is not characterized as achieving power to dominate others, but rather power to act with others to effect change. (Fitzimons, Hope, Cooper, Russell 2011. 17-18) According to Bounds and Hepburn (1996) individuals cannot be empowered by others, but can be enabled to empower themselves. Empowerment process has to happen with the full engagement of the people it concerns, as no one can impose empowerment on someone. Therefore it is significant to realize that in some cases empowerment cannot be achieved. (Thompson 2007, 15)

Neil Thompson discusses the psychological, cultural and structural dimensions of empowerment. Psychological empowerment involves the development of confidence and self-esteem. Improvement of skills can directly boost someone's self-esteem. Cultural empowerment can help a person free himself from internalized oppression within one's culture, for example by challenging stereotypes. The structural location and place in the network of social divisions directly affects the power one has to control his or her life as well as the life chances that a person has. Conscientization is known as a form of empowerment that raises people's awareness of how problems experienced often have much to do with wider social or political issues relating to the structure of society. Empowerment can be achieved when a person is made aware that the situation he or she is in may not be a matter of personal failing but a matter of power as a structural problem in the society. According to Thompson empowerment process can be individual or

involve groups, organizations or communities. Empowerment within organization can happen by giving staff a greater autonomy over their work responsibilities, and by doing that, encouraging creativity among them. Giving the staff possibilities to be part of the decision-making in all levels and to develop and suggest their own ideas can be a driving wheel to add to their work motivation. (Thompson 2007, 16)

Thompson introduces some key concepts related to empowerment. First concept he raises is human agency -the ability of individuals and groups to make decisions for themselves and to be responsible for their own actions. Second concept Thompson presents is resilience –to be able to become stronger through adversity. This concept is related to an idea that power comes from within, referring to a use of inner resources as finding meaning, direction and connection in our lives. Third concept Thompson raises is voice –the ability of people, especially from disadvantaged groups, to make their wishes and feelings known and to have a say in what happens to them. (Thompson 2007, 17). The relation between the one helping and the one being helped should be a form of exchange, as it promotes partnership and user involvement in the empowerment process and shares the responsibility over progress. Thompson's fourth concept is crisis intervention - to make the best use of the opportunities for growth and learning that are presented in the crisis situations. Lastly Thompson points out the importance of endings. Through endings the empowerment progress can be affirmed and through celebration of the progress the person is able to acknowledge his or her own potential and inner resources for self-direction. Thompson emphasizes the dependency avoidance as a primary feature of empowerment work and the important role that endings play in preventing dependency. (Thompson 2007, 30-31)

2.2 Empowerment in youth work

The UN and ILO defines youth and young people as persons between 15 to 24 years. According to The African Union (2006), The African Youth Charter has a

wider definition for youth of age 15 to 35. UN acknowledges that the definition of youth can change with circumstances, especially with the changes in demographic, financial, economic and socio-cultural settings. Youth empowerment approaches aim for example to develop young peoples' cooperation and leadership skills, provide young people with information that can support them to take action and to tackle problems by themselves. Youth empowerment fosters participation and inclusive practices for youth to be part of decision-making on issues concerning their lives. (UN 2013)

Emile Durkheim (1893) believed that education is the key to establish social stability and social cohesion and that young people need to be socialized to the culture, traditions and ways of behaving in the society. Durkheim's model for youth work complements the socialization process of the family and the school, aiming to prepare young people for their roles in the society while instilling them with the shared moral values and beliefs. Youth workers act as educators and as role models for young people, but young people themselves have a limited participation in decision-making concerning their lives. (Fitzimons, Hope, Cooper and Russell 2011, 154) Marx's theory of capitalism recognizes that the young people are victims of injustices in society because of the interests of dominant economic and social groups that have an impact of marginalizing young people and reducing their life chances. Marxism believes that the equality of young people cannot be achieved until institutions are made to change their norms, rules and power bases. Empowerment of young people therefore depends on the political consciousness, knowledge and understanding of the youth workers. (Fitzimons, Hope, Cooper and Russell 2011, 170-171)

Jagdish Chouhan argues that anti-oppressive practice is a key principle in work with young people. Anti-oppressive practice is based on the understanding that society and people create divisions and socially embedded beliefs within structures, institutions, cultures and relationships make some groups believe they are superior to other groups of people in the society. (Chouhan 2009, 61) Fitzimons, Hope, Cooper and Russell argue that youth work has the positive intention transferring power to young people, engaging them as partners and actively involving

them in identifying, exploring and understanding issues of concern to them (Fitzimons, Hope, Cooper and Russell 2011, 170-171).

2.3 Principles of community development and community-based arts

In this study I define disadvantaged community as an environment where people do not have an access to basic needs such as nutrition, education and healthcare services and as a condition in which people cannot use their power to control over their own lives and the decisions that concern them. Whereas the environment can be defined as disadvantaged, in people it is more of a state of mind. By giving an adequate amount of tools and support, other than monetary, the mentality of individuals can be empowered to take action to control their own lives even if the disadvantaged conditions they live in have not changed. United Nations define community development as a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems (UNTERM 2015). Through active participation of community members, community development is a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community.

Swanepoel and de Beer have introduced the ethical principles of community development. The principle of human orientation means that people's physical and abstracts needs, such as happiness, self-reliance and human dignity, go hand in hand and are present at the same time. Therefore people must progress in realizing their inner potential while working to fulfil their physical needs. (Swanepoel and de Beer 2006, 26-27) Swanepoel and de Beer state that to mobilize people in full participation we must involve people in projects as part of the actions of decision-making, planning, implementation and evaluation. It is a democratic right of people to be part of a decision-making that concerns matters affecting their lives. (Swanepoel and de Beer 2006, 28) Swanepoel and de Beer raises a clear guiding principle on participation:

> Don't mobilize people to play a minor role in a project and to fill a subordinate position in relation to professionals, bureaucrats and donors. If the people are not the main role-players there is something wrong with their participation. (Swanepoel and de Beer 2006, 29)

Swanepoel and de Beer emphasize that empowerment is not only about sharing skills but to give people power over decision-making and the tools to be able to use that power correctly. The guiding principle of empowerment is based on an idea of giving people the power or the right to make decisions but also provide the necessary information to make good decision-making possible. (Swanepoel and de Beer 2006, 30) Swanepoel and de Beer emphasize that development agencies should never assume ownership at first with the idea to transfer it later on when, in their opinion, people are ready. The principle of ownership is about activating people to take up responsibilities of ownership and manage their future through their own projects. Swanepoel and de Beer argue that projects tend to show effort trying to bring relief to trapped people without the slightest effort to actually free them from the trap. The last ethical principle states that transforming efforts do not try to bring relief but attempt to release people from the trap so that, free and self-reliant, they can gradually improve the situation themselves. Transforming efforts are seen as long-term activities that bring radical change to peoples' lives over a period of time. (Swanepoel and de Beer 2006, 30-32)

To be able to carry out the ethical principles, community development process needs to follow and respect practical principles of learning, adaptiveness and simplicity. Swanepoel and de Beer emphasize that community development projects should be approached from the perspective of creating learning opportunities so that everyone would be learning from one another as students, varying the position of a teacher. People's right to make decisions has to be maintained throughout the project to avoid the interruption of the learning process. The principle of adaptiveness requires a change of mindset and willingness to learn in the process as well as organizational and procedural changes. The principle of simplicity carries the idea that the smaller and simpler the project the easier it is for people to make sense of it and be able to make informed decisions, gaining long-lasting results. (Swanepoel and de Beer 2006, 32-35)

Community-based arts method has been widely used in community development work in the UK. Community-based arts refers to projects that take place in informal settings outside of official institutions. Community arts projects can be initiated and provided basically by anyone. As per Social Exclusion Unit (2004) taking part in art projects is considered to promote social outcomes, by helping to tackle social exclusion and by building social capital. White (2006) argues that community art projects address some of the broader determinants of poorer mental health, such as deprivation and social isolation and can therefore promote factors that have positive effect on emotional health. (Hadland and Stickley 2010, 18)

A study from Rachel Hadland and Theodore Stickley explored excluded young people's experiences of taking part in a community art project in the UK. The study interviewed two male and two female youth age of 14 to 16 participating in a community-arts project provided by City Arts in Nottingham. Results showed that generally youth found their experience with community-based arts activities enjoyable giving them the opportunity to be involved in diverse activities after suspended from school. Whereas girls felt involved, boys did not feel particularly involved in the actual project and would prefer doing sports activities. One of the boys felt the project giving a secure environment for him to be in. Participants mentioned the inclusive nature of the project and how it had connected them to people in their local community. The study identifies the personal and social benefits of art, and the potential that community art projects have in promoting feelings of self-worth and a sense of belonging. Hadland and Stickley discusses of the ethics of short-term arts projects that can bring brief fulfillment but include a risk that the removal of these meaningful activities can reaffirm in young people the sense of hopelessness and abandonment that they may already feel as a result of being excluded from school. (Hadland and Stickley 2010, 19-21) More sustainable community-art projects can overcome this challenge, giving youth a community where they can continuously express themselves.

Community Development Foundation based in the UK reported about arts in community work in The Report of the National Inquiry into Arts and the Community. Community Development Foundation argues that art makes vital contributions to

communities in six main areas: 1) in developing the ability for creative thought and action in individuals, 2) in developing the ability for creative thought and action in communities, 3) in the education of feeling and sensibility, 4) in the exploration of values, 5) in understanding cultural change and difference and 6) in developing critical faculties. (Community Development Foundation 1992, 5-8)

Artists observe and make sense of the world around them. According to Community Development Foundation social concern, including political concern, has always been part of the arts, and connect with moral issues and the exploration of values. Arts is conscious and promotes creative thinking on the concerns at community level. Community Development foundation states that art approaches are therefore fundamental to the health of society, the harmony of communities and the well-being of individuals. Community Development Foundation further argue that arts can contribute to the inter-cultural and inter-racial understanding between people in multi-racial societies. Through arts people are able to investigate their own values and the values of others and as a result of these actions arts and artists contribute to the world around them. (Community Development Foundation 1992, 5-8) Community Development Foundation (1992) states:

> Through participation in the arts, individuals can extend their capacity for creativity, communication, innovation, initiative and application in solving problems and pursuing opportunities. Individuals can gain in self-confidence through the creative process and become thereby more participative citizens. The arts can empower individuals. (p.6)

2.4 Uganda and the State of Youth

As a donor dependent country struggling with challenges of diverse nature including unemployment, corruption, poor infrastructure and high inflationary rates the Government of Uganda fails to provide adequate and appropriate social services for the country's population. According to the State of Uganda Population Report 2013 the most vulnerable are traditionally marginalized groups especially the disabled, the youth and women (UNFPA & the Republic of Uganda 2013). Uganda has the world's youngest population with over 78 percent of its population

of 33 million below the age of 30. The group of approximately 8 million youth are currently given little voice in shaping the nation's future. The State of Uganda Population Report 2013 address youth by stating that the potential, talents and wisdom possessed by special interest groups is such that it is essential to ensure they are properly mobilized and integrated in the development process of the nation. (UNFPA & the Republic of Uganda 2013) The report emphasizes the importance of empowering young people by giving responsibilities and obligations to participate in making decisions that affect the individual Ugandans and the country. Even though the revised National Youth Policy (2011-16) addresses the need of employment creation through youth-led enterprise development and the role of the state and private sector to create internship and job opportunities, according to the statistics Uganda has remained as one of the Sub-Saharan countries with the highest youth unemployment rates. The State of Population Report (2013) acknowledges that youth planning in Uganda has been largely non-governmental and organization-based, reacting to the prevailing circumstances of the youth. The report states that there are currently no coordinated efforts to respond to the needs of young people in Uganda. Teenage pregnancy rate in Uganda has raised up to 24 percent, but the percentage is lower among girls who are able to attend school. (UNFPA & The Republic of Uganda 2013) This shows a need for programmes that support the education and empowerment among girls in Uganda.

12 percent of all the youth in Uganda are chronically poor. Recent survey 'Lost Opportunity? - Gaps in youth policy and programming in Uganda' raises the key challenges of youth; the lack of jobs to do, lack of skills, difficulty in obtaining a first job, under employment and job quality. As agriculture as a livelihood provides employment for most of the people living in rural areas, unemployment is predominantly an urban problem. The survey states that currently youth are most likely to find employment from largely disorganized informal sector facing challenges of corruption, nepotism and exploitation. Inability to find work has started to create a sense of uselessness and idleness among young people reinforcing poverty, social exclusion and marginalization. The survey remarks that marginalized young people are likely to seek out alternative sources of self-worth, self-

esteem and social status, to be recognized by their peers. This may lead to increased crime, mental health problems, violence, conflicts and drug abuse. (Action Aid 2012)

Youth Participation in Development -report (2010) by the Department for International Development (DFID) emphasizes that promoting youth participation can take many forms, from encouraging youth volunteering in community development projects, to empowering young people to offer their perspectives on world issues, to having youth serve as members of advisory boards, become peer mentors, and lead development programs, non-profit organizations and small businesses. The report further argues that youth lack role models who work in less traditional professions as well as information about opportunities for complementary education. Youth in Uganda are in need of alternative ways to learn applicable skills and create employment opportunities. (Action Aid 2012)

2.5 Hip hop culture: "Something outta nothing"

Hip hop culture started evolving in the Bronx, New York in the early 1970s. At the times of deprivation and mistreatment youth from Latino and Afro-American heritage felt the need to express themselves and let their voice be heard, giving birth to a worldwide movement and sub-culture known as hip hop. After the long period of gang fights and killings in New York, Kevin Donovan known as Africa Bambaata and his movement Zulu Nation started preaching about change and open-mindedness towards all the people living on earth, teaching the truth of knowledge, wisdom and understanding. The message shared by Africa Bambaata played a meaningful role laying the foundation of the values in hip hop culture.

Afro-American and Latino children in 1970's Bronx did not have much that they owned and hip hop became something that everyone could take the ownership of. According to a hip hop pioneer Icey Ice at that time there wasn't much for them to look forward to. A lot of the youth came from very dysfunctional homes and

were exposed to substance abuse, alcoholism, domestic violence and things of that nature. According to Icey Ice government disenfranchised the community they lived in and the youth were left with nothing to identify with. Hip hop essentially gave them back a sense of identity within a youth culture, but at the same time the ability to dictate it according to their own terms. (The Bronx Boys -interview 2009)

In Hip Hop Files, Cephyr, a hip hop artist from Bronx, argue that in a romantic context hip hop's street components were artistic, youthful expressions, but they emerged from a sobering environment of extreme deprivation and decay. The concept of pure invention –or creating something from nothing –was in full effect by the end of the 1970's. (Hip Hop Files 2004) In his book Hip Hop Won't Stop, Jeff Chang describes that the certain invisibility of these youth served as a unique reward for the revolutionary youth movements, pushing the limits of the youth aiming to prove others that they are more courageous than the living conditions would ever allow them to be. The invisibility was a key to the style that would make other people realize that what they had was something others would never be able to take away, nor be part of. (Chang 2005, 131-132)

Hip hop culture consists of four elements; graffiti writing, DJing, MCing and b-boying/b-girling. Hugo Martinez, a sociologist and the founder of United Graffiti Arts, describes graffiti painting as a way to gain status in the American society where ownership creates identity. For graffiti artists own name is a currency and the value increased by the amount of traces left in private and public areas. (Chang 2005, 132) B-boying, widely known as breaking or breakdance is a street dance style practiced by b-boys [break-boy] and b-girls [break-girl], dedicated practitioners of hip hop. The term b-boy originates from Bronx-boy, named according to its area of birth. Traditionally b-boying is practiced on the streets where youth formed cyphers [a form of a circle] to express themselves by responding to breaks, parts of funk music with an intense drum beat, combining top-rocking, footwork, freezes and power moves. In cypher everyone are entitled to respect one another. Battles, the competitive aspect of b-boying, is where you call another dancer to go against you and try to burn and compete the other with dance

moves, aiming to do better than the opponent. According to Grandmaster Caz, the tool of communication in hip hop is the music and MCing is the language of the culture. The voice and rhymes of an MC [Master of Ceremony] is how someone in France lets someone in Germany know how they are living and what their conditions are and what they are about (Hip Hop Files 2004, 6-8). B-boy Alien Ness states: when hip hop started it was all about the connection between the DJ and the dancer, as DJ plays the funky beats for the dancers to respond to with movement (Hip Hop Files 2004, 6-8). Bringing all the elements together by organizing block parties in Bronx, DJ Kool Herc combined the art forms together as hip hop culture.

Hip hop culture has evolved and expanded into a worldwide movement that has touched every continent and almost every country in the world. Hip hop has been interpreted in as many ways at it has practitioners, everyone adding something to it. As Aby, a hip hop pioneer and the president of The Bronx Boys, puts it:

> Before it was really straight up Blacks and Latinos, now we got Asians, we got Germans, we got guys from Poland, we got Puerto Ricans, blacks, whites, Jews and it looks like some kind of religion to me that has overcome anything I've seen. I have never seen an Arab and a Jewish guy hang out like they hang out here, and I have never seen blacks and whites hang out like they hang out here. Our culture we have learned to embrace it and it is an amazing culture and that's how I feel about the transition. (The Bronx Boys –interview 2009)

Over the years hip hop has spread worldwide as a phenomena that has caught the attention of the media, investors and academics. The authenticity of hip hop as a culture that has emerged from the unfavorable circumstances of disadvantaged youth makes it an interesting subject to study. It has moved from the streets to big concert halls, studios and classrooms and is studied academically in universities. As the culture grows pioneers remind new practitioners to respect the roots and foundation laid for it. The authenticity of the culture is not visible in the mainstream media portrays, but where the four elements blend with the values of peace, unity, love and having fun.

2.6 Hip hop as a tool to work with young people

Hip hop has been slowly discovered as a tool used in classrooms, therapy sessions, prisons, and youth and community development work. Social worker Tomas Alvarez has utilized hip hop therapy with youth in Oakland in his social work practice. Alvarez states that through Beats, Rhymes and Life –Rap Therapy program, participants learn to use rap as a springboard for discussion and as a conduit for positive peer interaction. Youth have learned to use the program to talk about their struggles, seek advice from peers, problem solve and re-author their narratives from a strength-based perspective. (Alvarez 2012, 117-118)

Therapeutic outreach through b-boying in Canada's Artic and First Nations communities is a project by Buddha, a b-boy and a social worker from Canada. Buddha approached Canada's high Artic with an idea of organizing a one week intense breakdance program. The idea emerged from the thought that despite the underbelly of real pain and anger often experienced by the youth in Canada's north, there is still a strong passion to try new things, connect with the larger world, and scream out to everyone that they are here and they count and that their voices are important (Leafloor 2012, 131). With a multiple of approaches, blending b-boying with mentorship and role modeling, group therapy, goal setting and leadership training, the project turned out to be a success. The project combined hip hop culture with the traditional Inuit culture, blending local drums, dance moves and games to elements of hip hop. B-boy Buddha describes the project as fluid, yet structured and highly intense, but also fun and engaging. Through the project youth have experienced the love and support from their own community coming to cheer for their final performances and through that experience gained confidence and more positive spirit. In a dance routine community members witnessed the local bullies working side by side with those who have been bullied. (Leafloor 2012, 133-134)

A hip hop organization Tiny Toones in Cambodia shows practical example of using hip hop as a tool for youth development. Born in Thai refugee camps and growing up in USA Tuy Sobil, known as KK, fell into gang memberships and was

deported from USA to his roots in Cambodia, a country he has never visited before. Children in the local community heard about his breakdance skills and started to come and ask him to teach them. Unprepared for it, in 2005 KK opened up his home to children working and living at the streets of Phnom Penh. As a former dancer KK realized the need of engaging children with breakdancing and began combining dance lessons with encouragement, support and guidance with a vision to give youth a safe environment to enjoy learning, explore creativity and develop a positive sense of identity and community. The mission of Tiny Toones Cambodia is to provide a safe, positive environment for at-risk youth to channel their energy and creativity into the arts and education, empowering them to build self-confidence in their daily lives, aim for better employment possibilities, and feel supported pursuing their dreams. (Tiny Toones Cambodia 2015)

Another example in Nusairat refugee camp in Gaza, Palestine is a group of young people who established the Camps Breakers in 2003 with a vision to use dancing to create new lifestyle full of peace and love for the youth and children in Gaza. The group found breaking as the best form of art for people in Gaza as it is an art form that helps to release pressure physically and mentally. Located in the middle of Gaza strip Nusairat refugee camp, the project is aiming to build their center into a big art academy creating dance events, exhibitions and projects for the children in Gaza.

> We have more than fifty dancers in the center. Most of them are refugee children. Our responsibility is teaching them dance, supporting them physically and physiologically. We also take care of their needs as well. (Camps Breakers 2015)

3 BREAKDANCE PROJECT UGANDA (BPU)

> In the street of the blind, the one eyed man is called the Guiding Light. (Genesis Rabbah)

3.1 History of Abraham Tekya and BPU

To create an understanding of Breakdance Project Uganda (BPU) one needs to know the history of Abraham 'Abramz' Tekya, the founder of the organization. The turning points Tekya experienced in his childhood and adolescence pay value to the birth of BPU. I will narrate the life path of Tekya using material from my interview with him in Kampala, January 2015. Abramz himself is the optimum story-teller of his own story. The following text is a summary of what Abramz shared about his life path:

I was born in a rich family but grew up poor. My dad was working as an auditor in different banks and my mom was a nurse in a hospital. Both of my parents passed away when I was 7 years old. I have two brothers and one sister. My mother used to take care of many children as she was a person who loved children and people. My dad used to teach free accounting classes for people at our home. I remember they loved us so much. Both of my parents died of AIDS in a same year and life changed after that. My siblings and I had to live with different people searching for a home, which was really hard over the years. Relatives and other people who used to receive help from our parents started looking at us as a burden. We were constantly being reminded that we are orphans now. At some point I started to think that maybe that's how an orphan is supposed to be treated. I wasn't able to see beyond that because that's how I used to be treated; beaten up of every little mistake that you made, getting punishment that weren't even relevant to the mistakes made, people always reminding you that you are never going to be successful, you are never amount to anything, right in your face.

I found my passion in music, dancing and drawing already as a child. After our parents died we stayed at our grandmother's place. She was listening Miriam Makeba, Paul Simon and Michael Jackson all the time on repeat. When we moved to our auntie's place I was introduced to the world of rap music through my cousin. For me, mainstream music played a big role as a window to rap music and through rap to hip hop culture. One time I heard hip hop music that to me sounded different and I was so eager to understand the difference in the lyrics that it pushed me to learn English. The underground rap was really relevant to what we were going through. It was music that was made with no shame, just truly expressing themselves. As a kid who was going through so much with my siblings, it was good to find something that I connected with. I went to a nursery school and studied up to senior 4. In school I remember myself as a student who loved dancing, drawing and rapping. My interest in arts was not supported at home, but my teacher was fascinated by my work and wanted me to start making illustrations with science class. Before I knew it other teachers realized what I am doing and they started talking about me in the staff room. I didn't know what role art was going to play in my life but it felt good just to be appreciated and known. I started teaching visual arts classes to people and received new positive identifiers that helped me to build my self-esteem. In primary school the head master wanted me to teach his older son who wanted to learn how to rap. It was empowering to me and every time I went back home and they started to talk down on me, it didn't hurt, because I knew that somewhere I was something.

I tried breakdancing first time at the early 90's when watching music videos. I was fascinated by the moves and tricks I saw, but kept hearing that it is not real. At that time it was tougher to learn because we hardly had an access to internet. I got inspiration from dancers like Crazy Legs and Shabba Doo from USA. I found the dance moves doable but it was difficult to learn when no one was there to teach the foundations of it. My cousin taught me a dance move called running man in 1991. He was surprised of my skills to learn fast and never taught me anything again. It gave me confidence to believe I can dance. I started to learn more and create my own moves, but struggled to keep on dancing because I was not allowed to do that at home. I quit in 1993 and concentrated on rapping.

I got back into b-boying in the early 2000 and that is when I started really putting my emphasis on the dance form. I went to clubs and parties with friends and always wanted to get down and dance. At that time my brother and I were living in a slum and dropped out of school because we could not pay school fees. We kept putting on our school uniforms and every day we went to stand outside the school gate, because it made us feel like we were still students. At that time many kids who did not go to school were seen as thugs, so it also helped us to avoid being called thieves or thugs by our neighbors. Every time when there was a dance competition coming up at the school me and my brothers were invited to participate. Even though the school used us and our dance skills to win competitions, it played a big role in my life, as it kept me going and pushed me to share dance. With my brother Sylvester we started to go around slum communities teaching people how to rap for free. That is where we started to see that hip hop can transform people and it turned out to be stronger than we thought. We went to communities and we didn't even have these ideas that everyone is a teacher and a student. We weren't that smart. But we saw the important role that rap music played in the slums and started to cooperate with a local club called Spark. We got a free venue with a sound system and a small amount of transport in exchange of entertainment that would bring customers. We took the responsibility to promote and host the events. I know the club made a lot of money with our contribution but it gave people a platform to get known and receive job opportunities, building hope within the people. At first my brother and I were just sharing skills, but eventually we started to see the power that it had on people who used to be part of violent groups or criminal groups to stop because they wanted to be rappers.

I founded an organization called Hip Hop Activists Uganda. The aim was to use hip hop as a tool to build communities, empower people, extend services and create employment opportunities for artist. Some of the aims were realistic but some were unrealistic. We taught rapping, DJing, breaking, graffiti, but some of these things were skills that we didn't really have. Challenge with Hip Hop Activists Uganda was to bring people together as a group to work towards the same goal. Some of the members were interested to go to communities, build social

work and create social change and other members were thinking about their personal growth and career booths as artists. It doesn't come that easy to think that art can transform people, even for the person who is holding the flag to keep pushing it. Even to us it took us a while to realize it, but when we did the challenge was getting other people to buy the idea. Having experienced the transformation of people through rapping I started to see how people needed more skills than I had. I realized that with dance we could reach to more people, because in dance there is no language barrier, dancing is like a language itself. I started going to places teaching people dance skills. Right now when I think about the skills I was sharing I laugh at myself, but it gave birth to a movement that didn't exist.

I started to find people who were passionate about dancing and we put together a crew. At that time I was hosting a Hip Hop Night at Sabrina's pub under the Ugandan Hip Hop Foundation. I brought breakdancing as part of the event and started to preach about the gospel of hip hop culture showing pictures of Rock Steady Crew and getting people to understand all the elements and values of respect and appreciation. People thought that breaking didn't exist anymore and I used to go look for videos and pictures to show them. I struggled to get people understand what I wanted to do. When I asked a free venue for breakdance classes, people refused because they did not understand my vision. In 2004 a commercial dance film You Got Served came out and made a difference in attitudes towards breakdancing in Uganda. The movie actually helped me, because it caught everyone's attention. After people had seen the movie they started providing platforms where I was able to teach people about the art form. I realized that many people were now breaking, even as a career, but they lacked some fundamental skills. That was a motivation for me to start teaching breakdance at Nsambya Sharing Youth Center. Breakdance became my tool to promote the use of the elements of hip hop to enhance social change among people and communities. I just wanted to see social change through this art.

I went through a journey of mistakes and life lessons before I found Breakdance Project Uganda. The success behind BPU is that the journey did not start from BPU. The path included indifferences, neglects and good and bad partnerships.

There were people who gave me a push forward and there were people who tried to pull me down. People sometimes think I am a genius, who just woke up in the morning and created BPU. But I have just been a student of life like everyone else. It was a series of things that worked and series of things that never worked that led to that structure. If I hadn't got those experiences in the past, BPU would not exist. After I had seen the impact of hip hop in people's lives, there was no one who could come and tell me to stop. Breaking had a very positive start in Uganda, even if the skills weren't that right, the seed that was planted was positive. Hip hop is giving people something to draw happiness from but also a tool to better themselves and the communities they live in. I want to see the happiness that people feel through hip hop correlating widely with the positive social change in the society. The thing is that anyone can be hip hop; a person who is from Acholi tribe in Northern-Uganda or Indian, Catholic, Muslim, young, old, it doesn't matter what religion or tribe. University graduate and street kid can be hip hop, and they add their own uniqueness to it. It is just you being yourself.

For me hip hop has been a tool for self-discovery, allowing me to be myself and contribute to the culture as it evolves. Culture is the way people live and to know where you are going, you need to know where you are coming from, and where you are right now. Hip hop culture is more connected to the youth than traditional dances, because in hip hop they are free to create and add new material to it. Hip hop is genius in a way that it itself allows evolution, growth and change, but the fundamentals stay the same. Everyone is given a template and the template is the same, but they all tweak it around to add their own little things to it. As long as you have that template you do whatever you want with it. For me it would be wrong if someone tells me that breaking is not my cultural dance, because it lets me express what I go through: the sadness, the happiness, everything. (Abraham Tekya interview 2015)

Breakdance Project Uganda is built on the value-base that Abramz adopted during his adolescence. Abramz made the decision to prioritize the use hip hop as a tool to create positive social change. Instead of finding his knowledge from university, Abramz has studied on the ground, learning through experience; meeting

people and hearing about their life. As Abraham puts it: I am not a politician so I'm not gonna use politics. I am not a soldier, so I'm not gonna hold a gun. I'm a b-boy (Bouncing Cats 2010).

3.2 Vision, mission and aims of the organization

The role of Breakdance Project Uganda in steering the national development has been acknowledged by UN in State of World Population Report, Culture and arts supplement in 2010. The report considered arts for advocacy, recovery and re-newal in Northern Uganda among children who had been victims of a war that lasted 20 years (1996 - 2006) in northern Uganda. At the time hundreds of thou-sands of children were abducted by Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) to be used as child labor, most of them worked as child soldiers or were forced to marry LRA soldiers. After the war in 2009 the UN-supported Gulu Youth Center in Northern Uganda began cooperation with Breakdance Project Uganda (BPU) and Hip Hop Therapy Project introducing breakdance and hip hop to supplement the center's existing work in health care and disease prevention for youth and young adults. BPU brought dancers from Kampala to teach local children and adolescents in Gulu. According to United Nations Fund for Population Activities the program was an enormous hit with youth and a draw for the center (UNFPA 2010).

> We have break dance for therapy every Saturday, and they dance away and forget themselves. --- Breakdance [Project] Uganda's vis-iting stars have brought choreographed messages of peace and pos-itive social change with their performances (Faith Lubanga, Outreach Officer at Straight Talk Foundation).

Breakdance Project Uganda (BPU) is a grass-roots, youth-centered organization founded in Uganda at 2006. The mission of the organization is to engage young people in elements of the hip hop culture to build leadership skills and promote social responsibility (Official Breakdance Project Uganda Facebook Page 2015).

BPU uses dance, visual art, rap, beatboxing and other elements of hip hop culture as tools to engage and unite young people coming from different social, economic, cultural and religious backgrounds and to provide them with skills that support them to become socially responsible leaders in their communities (Breakdance Project Uganda –leaflet 2014). BPU organizes weekly community sessions in four different branches, which are free of charge for everyone to join to learn and share skills. Other activities include community outreaches, peer mentorship, school sponsorship program, youth development workshops, events and performances (Breakdance Project Uganda –leaflet 2014). Currently BPU operates in four different branches in Kampala, Gulu, Kitgum and Masaka. The organization has set six main goals to guide their work. BPU works directly with young people and channels particular emphasis on youth who come from disadvantaged conditions, giving them hope and opportunities. The foundation of the organization is based on the idea that everyone is a student and everyone is a teacher. In practice this means that every member can learn and teach and has the capacity to be a positive role model to others.

Using hip hop as a tool BPU aims to

- Bridge the gap between people from different backgrounds

- Build young peoples' leadership skills and self-esteem

- Promote positive social responsibility and social action

- Increase access to formal and informal education

- Generate employment opportunities

- Connect local and international artists

(Breakdance Project Uganda -leaflet)

3.3 Work methods

To explain the work methods and the purpose behind the methods used I use material received through the first part of focus group discussion with members. All the work of BPU is based on the idea that everyone is a student and everyone is a teacher. The idea is based on an old African proverb 'each one, teach one', that became known in hip hop culture as a watchword of Universal Zulu Nation. The phrase originated in the US during slavery, when slaves were denied education and pushed to maintain a belief they were unworthy. Despite the possibility of punishment, some of the people were brave enough to risk themselves in an effort to teach others. When a slave learned or was taught to read, it became their duty to teach someone else. (Zulu Nation 2015) The proverb is still used in many community driven programs. B-boy pioneer Poe One has spread the knowledge. In an interview from Strife TV he talks about himself as a student who learns every day: I learn from beginners, from pros, from everybody and I just try to do the philosophy of each one teach one, that I learned from Zulu, just keep passing on what I have been learning (Strive TV 2010).

When people come to BPU sessions they are taught for free, but once learning they are also entitled to give back to the community by teaching others for free. By using this method BPU is able to keep the activities running with any line-up of members, always re-forming the structure and roles. Teaching others requires knowledge of the history, foundations and techniques of the art form, leadership skills and ability to engage the students to learn. BPU is giving chances for members to learn and practice such skills by teaching and leading in BPU activities, and through that develop the ability of members to use the skills in social and working life. Long-term members function as peer example to new members as it is likely that the way they behave and teach influences the actions of new members. To be a member of BPU means eventually to be both a student and a teacher, but being a teacher never ends the journey from one as a student. The value to use the model of 'each one, teach one' is to promote respect and humbleness.

One of the admin team members see 'each one, teach one' as an empowering statement that both challenges you and makes you think that you also have something to give. In his words this approach has personally empowered him because at the time of joining BPU he was a young person growing up in a community where there was no respect and no one listening to him. At the community sessions there are people with skills from beginners to advanced level and members are challenged to teach at their own level.

> If you just look at life in general, if you are good in beatboxing or something, someone might think that I don't think I can add anything to what this guy is doing. But you might have a skill that I don't have. That's because you found me doing what I do best it is hard for you to realize that maybe if I get off the dance floor I don't have enough confidence to speak in public

According to another administration team member, the statement improves members' mentality to share. Instead of learning and keeping the skills for themselves, people share. With this mindset members have started to move around different communities in Uganda, sharing skills to other people even outside of BPU. He says that through teaching one another members are able to develop their skills and the organization is able to grow. A volunteer member of BPU, who graduated from high school two years ago, sees this method as a contrast to his experiences in regular school in Uganda.

> At school we have teachers and students. There is that division between a student and a teacher. Many times if the teacher is not in the class that means you are not going to study. No one is going to go on the board and teach. [In BPU] there is always another person who can teach. Everyone is respected, no matter how old or young, which means that it brings confidence to all the people that they could really share what they have

Free weekly community session is the main work method of BPU. The session takes place in four different cities at Kampala and Masaka in Southern Uganda and Gulu and Kitgum in Northern Uganda. All community sessions are organized free of charge and open for all people of different ages and backgrounds.

In Kampala BPU has a community session every Monday and Wednesday from 5pm to 8.45pm. The session starts with a warm-up session, after which members select the teachers for the day and divide other people in groups based on their skill level and interest. In Kampala the sessions have dance, rap and beatboxing. All the beginners and newcomers go to beginner's class and start from basic foundation moves. Intermediate and advanced level dancers choose a class based on their interest. Classes on advanced level vary a lot based on the person teaching, but many members try out different creative methods to help dancers push their creativity and skills to freestyle. Depending on the teachers of the day there are also classes for other street dance styles. Often people who visit the organization bring in new skills and the community session offers a platform to share from. After the more formal part there is time for freestyle dancing that in hip hop culture takes place in cyphers.

Each community session is closed with a gratitude and communication session. A group of volunteer members, usually the younger girls from BPU, are leading the session. Two people at a time are invited to come in front and show appreciation by thanking other people and sharing the positive things they have done to others. People who are been thanked stand up as others cheer for them. Gratitude session is followed by communication session, during which members who have signed up to communicate are invited to come in front one at a time to share their issue. The session offers a platform for anyone to show appreciation and gives a freedom to share anything in mind. Young girls leading the session have also come up with songs and short theatre plays to educate and entertain. The value of the session is to give members opportunities to practice communication and public speaking skills and to receive positive recognition in front of others.

A while after joining BPU one of the volunteer members started a weekly visual arts session. The mission and approach of the session is the same as in weekly community sessions but it reaches out to youth who might be interested in drawing and graffiti writing instead of breaking. Today the session is run by previous students and has expanded to include photography skills.

> If you are in an environment where everyone is a student and everyone is a teacher, it also helps you to sit down and study from somebody who is not very experienced as you are. Imagine I am not the best teacher, but you have that room also, because I'm in a space where there's no judgement, where everyone is supportive even though they are more experienced than you might be

Breakdance Project Uganda has a registration book in each branch to register the contact information of each member who joins. Membership in BPU is free of charge. People who have registered are informed about issues related to the organization. A member of BPU is expected to take on roles as a student and a teacher. At the beginning BPU membership was rather loose, but after noticing differences in the activity level of members, two types of memberships were created. Beneficiary membership is for the people who want to come and learn but do not want to or have time to pass on the skills. These members do not contribute to the development of the organization. BPU has also beneficiary members in other organizations and institutions. When teaching workshops in partner organizations the time does not allow to cultivate the idea of each one being a student and a teacher, which puts them in the role of beneficiaries.

Volunteer members are people who take on roles and responsibilities and are involved in the work processes related to the organization. Volunteer membership is a status that can be acquired. Some people who join BPU understand the aims and values of the organization right from the start and involve themselves in different activities and for others it takes a while longer to realize the idea of the organization. Volunteer membership in BPU includes responsibilities such as attending meetings, participation in community outreaches, cleaning practice spaces, spreading information and involvement in events organizing. Volunteer members play roles that may not be visible but actually hold BPU together as an organization. When members start to take on roles in the organization, they become volunteer members. At the time when special chances like workshops, performances or job opportunities come, volunteer members are in priority to be considered because of their active involvement. For an unemployed volunteer member an opportunity like teaching a workshop on a regular base can be important way to earn money for living, while still continuing to volunteer for BPU. Volunteer

membership is a status that is acquired, but it is also a status that expires when a member stops taking on responsibilities. Reasons for stepping out has been various; from change of location to tight work schedules to a lack of motivation.

A part of the volunteer membership is to attend general meetings. All members are free to join the general meetings and contribute with ideas and opinions. The meetings have an agenda and a structure, but the main idea is to come together and make sure that the environment encourages everybody to participate.

> You bring your ideas in to the sessions and when we are done with the meeting you feel like you've contributed. Because we believe that everybody has ideas and through that we believe that each idea helps to contribute to the organization. --- We make sure that at least everybody gets involved

BPU has formed an administration team to handle the most important management issues such as finances, school fees program, communication with partners and publicity. Members emphasize that even though BPU has an administration team and a director, it is made by its members and therefore it is important that everybody contributes to the decision-making. Many BPU members are children and it is hard for older members to make decisions suitable for the younger generation without their participation. By involving members of all ages to take part in the meetings, their thoughts will be heard. Sometimes children bring ideas that none of the adults were able to think about. Volunteer membership in BPU is not related to the age or experience but in the attitude and willingness to contribute.

> We want to involve people and take them through a process of being part of the solution to their own problems. If we just design a solution, when you bring that on the ground it is not effective. In meetings we bring all these people together and ask what you think about this - and then one time you create a solution that suits everyone

Breakdance Project Uganda supports its members' access to formal education. BPU started as an organization providing dance skills, but as the organization started to attract a number of children and youth they realized the need for some of these members to go to school. In Uganda students pay school fees which all

families or children who grow up as orphans cannot afford. In order for the children to learn basic skills like reading, writing, English and mathematics, they need to attend school. BPU members realize that breakdancers need more than dance skills. The founder of the organization started the school sponsorship program by paying school fees from his own money while developing a method that can be more sustainable. The idea of making printed BPU t-shirts came up and from one t-shirt sold with 20 000 shillings (7e), 8000 shillings is spent on making it and all the profit is put together to send members back to school. In time school sponsorship program has grown and managed to send a number of children back to school. The program has inspired also private donors to support individual members with school fees for a number of years. For example, Kampala International School, where BPU members currently teach weekly workshops, decided to contribute. Some of the members sponsored are about to finish senior 6, which is an advanced level for students who plan to go to university. When choosing members for school sponsorship program the administration team looks at the commitment and the need. Members have to be a committed and motivated to go to school. Other thing evaluated is the need for support as BPU is not providing support for members whose family is able to cover the school fees for their children. Sometimes there are parents who try to take an advantage of the organization thinking that there is a big sponsor behind it giving money for the program. Therefore administration team members do a careful needs assessment.

Community outreach is one of the methods that BPU uses to promote their work and to reach people who cannot access to the weekly community sessions. Most of the people willing to participate are youth who struggle to receive enough money for transport back and forth or do not even have an option to attend as the distance is too long. Through community outreach members of the organization go and share with people in communities by performing and giving workshops. The skills taught are free, applicable and practical hoping to inspire the students to keep practicing after BPU members leave. For some children and youth who do not have an access to education and grow up in challenging living conditions, willingness to learn to do a head stand can be a reason to get up from bed every morning. Dancing brings joy and happiness.

> The workshops mentally start channeling their energy, like instead of wasting my time here, why don't I learn this creative way of expression. Often people just want to be the best in their community, only with that it challenges you to work even harder for anything. Community outreaches basically helps us to learn more about the people and them in a creative way to start channeling their energy to something positive

Outreaches are a way to promote the work of BPU and to reach out for more people to join the organization. Through a community outreach BPU members bring people in the community together to learn new skills.

> There are some places we don't even go back that much, it is just to do a long day of performances, free workshops, as well as telling people where they can go to access these things. --- It is basically to promote the work we do, so that people know where to find the services if they need them

Another purpose for community outreach is to make people exposed. The founder of BPU emphasizes the power of exposure as a lot of people dream according to what they are exposed to. During an outreach at Lutembe fisherman's village by Lake Victoria, BPU members got exposed to a challenged community with high HIV/Aids rates. As a traditional counsel in this village children are given a fishing net to start fishing and men are advised to marry as many women as possible and have as many children as they can. Members of the community told how all the young people dream about such future and refuse to access services of another kind. Some of the youth have learned to think there are no alternative skills that they could be able to access. The value of BPU going to that community was to empower the youth to think about other alternatives. Through breakdance workshops youth in that community got an access to a new skill that is free for them and open their mind for other possibilities. BPU uses this approach also when organizing an outreach in slum areas. As the founder puts it: not every job in a slum is negative, but it is hard for the youth living in slums to dream big if they don't know that there is a world beyond their quarter or if they feel like what they want to pursue is unreachable.

Community outreach is also a way to help BPU to connect with families of children who are members or willing to become members and to collaborate with different organizations. By visiting communities and organizations BPU members build trust with parents and organizations. BPU has built partnerships with organizations and schools, sending members to teach regular workshops at their own premises. One partnership was implemented with InterAid as BPU members taught breakdance and rap skills to refugee youth. The project closed with a performance in BPU's annual community event. BPU partners with many campaigns as hip hop engages people to take part in an event, but during the event they are learning and advised about health and other important issues concerning their communities. Members know that there are many organizations with a big budget and a lot of resources but they find it hard to have participants in their programs because people don't think it is cool. By attending the community events organized by partnering organizations BPU plays a supporting role to sugarcode, adding a cool layer on issues that may not be attractive as such, but important and needed in life.

> By partnering with different people that are selling or giving out free services that BPU doesn't offer we've used our skills and talents and coolness as a magnet to attract those people and bring them together, but then tell them that these people are doing this and this and you can learn about that

One of the most meaningful outreach projects that BPU has been involved in is a partnership with PoP –Product of Prison. Through this partnership BPU established a Prison Breakdance Program. The program took place in Luzira Upper Prison among prisoners condemned for a long time or for life. The partnership started in 2011 and weekly dance, rap and beatbox classes took place also in 2012 and 2014, reaching up to 200 participants.

> Through that they got to be happy, because this was something that brought happiness to them. When we went there they were always thankful. Luzira Upper Prison is a place from where people don't move out, they are always in, but through these skills they could at least practice by themselves, share and connect with other people

Through the program BPU aims to give the inmates creative ways to channel their energy from training to fight with other prisoners to work hard in order to do a windmill, handstand or a head spin [breakdance moves]. Members emphasize the rehabilitative value of the program, stating that a lot of times people are given tools that are intended to help them move on but they still don't because they are also in need of tools that can help them first get rid of the past they are stuck in. Members who have taught in the prison have realized the mark it leaves on the people as once you commit a crime and get sentenced, you get a label that identifies you even when you leave prison.

> Most of the time the system here when someone commits a crime, no one usually spends a lot of time asking why, a lot of times they ask what. I think most of the times if we would understand why, that would really help us to be careful when we put labels on people

Involving inmates to the program helps them to gain new positive identifiers. The program has helped its participants to transform through the rehabilitative approach and by giving motivation for self-development. When released from prison and going back home, these skills can help to transform the negative image that the community members have of them. Acceptance from the community can be what helps a formal inmate to avoid the cycle of crime. Every year the program closes with an event where BPU invites guests from the Uganda prison service, the staff and other inmates from the prison. This was the first time when all prisoners have been brought together. The event contains a showcase performance, dance battles and giving of certificates and BPU t-shirts. Going against each other in dance battles has introduced a creative way of non-violent conflict resolution. At the end of the event people have a chance to talk, network and interact with each other. BPU members involved in the program have acknowledged how being a member of this program helps the inmates build a sense of community both inside and outside of prison.

> When they see us walking through the doors, walking through the gates, go interact with them, they ask us how life outside is and we also ask them how life inside is. It is really refreshing for them and most of the people who are in Condemn have said they had given up life but when we see you guys come visit us it gives us more hope

> that someday I will walk out of here, someday I'll go out there and do
> things

As breakdancing requires a lot of energy, power, attitude and skills, one of the interviewees say that the high-powered nature of the art form is effective in prison where the prisoners being flamboyant with their breaking skills is a good thing. When the prisoners start provoking BPU members with their skills, they provoke them back with more skills, channeling their energy into practice.

> You can see how that helps resolve conflicts over time. You can see
> how people who are used to be like "yeah I'm the strongest and can
> punch them all", getting to a point where they are like "yeah, I can do
> a better footwork than you"

Prison Breakdance Program has been an eye-opening experience for BPU members teaching in prison. Through the program members of BPU have heard personal stories of inmates and advises on how to avoid such mistakes they've made. One of the prisoners transferred to Gulu prison started to teach fellow inmates there. The program has been a school of life also for BPU members. One of the members involved in the program tells they have learned important values and understood the importance of taking responsibility of their own actions. Some of the inmates in Luzira have come to BPU community sessions after being released from prison to give their testimonies.

> I remember this one guy who came through with his son. He was like
> 60-year-old and it was really meaningful. He came down and he was
> telling about his life story and what he did to get in prison. It was a
> good piece of advice that our members could also hear from a person
> who is older but who has been in that life, to basically get to learn
> from him and to hear how much he appreciates our work

Breakdance Project Uganda (BPU) collaborates with many organizations and institutions to perform and teach workshops in several events throughout the year. Anyhow, once a year members of the organization work together to organize an annual Hip Hop for Society –event and reversely invite partnering organizations to perform and exhibit their work in a BPU event. Hip Hop for Society has stabilized its place as an event showcasing the positive roles and impact of hip hop

culture, reaching to thousands of attendants every year. The event is a combination of live performances, workshops, dance battles, educational discussions, exhibitions and inspirational speeches. Every year the event is built by volunteer members of BPU, with the support of partnering organizations. Attending the event is free for both the spectators and for the artists performing. To organize this event BPU works in close collaboration with multiple local and international organizations, who can perform and showcase their activities and achievements on stage. There are also stands for exhibiting art, selling merchandise and providing further information about the featured organizations and community activities. The event has been running now for eight years, growing into a wide collaboration of many partners.

> Hip Hop for Society is the biggest annual event of BPU and to me it is the biggest hip hop event we have in the country, because of what it offers and the impact it has on the people and also in terms of numbers, how many people come attend it. We have all genders and all different age groups that come for this event

The value of the event is to showcase the positivity that hip hop possess and fight the general view people see in the media of hip hop being about negative things such as substance abuse and gang violence. One of the members says that because of BPU there are things that people have achieved through hip hop, that have been instrumental and developmental in the communities and in the personal lives of the members. Hip Hop for Society is an event where BPU members want to highlight that positive impact and make it visible and understandable to a wider audience. BPU members also invite their parents and other family members to see them perform on stage.

Hip Hop for Society -event aims for empowerment, co-operation and participation within and beyond the organization. The planning of the event is an intense and short process taking place during school holidays from end of December till end of January. In the first meeting volunteer members come up with a relevant theme such as education, social responsibility, empowerment and dreams. Some performances created are related to the theme with an aim to educate the people and other performances are to entertain the audience. Every year the process to

plan and implement the event includes educational tools that walk hand in hand with the values and aims of BPU. More emphasis is put on the process than in the outcome, as it provides opportunities for the members to grow personally and professionally. The process aims to develop members' skills on decision-making, group work, leadership, and time- and event-management. In general meetings BPU uses learning-centered approach, having educational discussions related to the theme and supporting everyone to share their ideas and opinions on the matters being discussed. According to Dunoon, learning-centered approach can be used to achieve more creative and deeper understandings of the issues members face and build new insights as the basis for action (Hughes and Wearing 2007, 80). In general meetings members discuss about the theme in depth, suggest artists, share responsibilities and talk about advertisement. Members select a responsible team that consists of eight members by voting. Core team decides on issues such as logistics, venue, sanitation, security and safety, budget, partnerships, sponsorships, event coordination and management. The event is funded by sponsorships from local and international organizations and through private donations.

The event offers a platform for BPU members to grow personally and professionally, involving members in the process and providing opportunities to organize a community event and to perform, sell merchandise, network and open doors for future cooperation. BPU invites artists to perform but new artists are invited for an audition to see the performances carry the values of BPU. Members emphasize the relevance of the event as part of hip hop culture in Uganda, bringing in more essence and knowledge.

> Here you don't only find hip hop but it is also other things you can do in life. Since two years now the event has been a seemed event and it has brought more knowledge again to different approaches. --- I like the vibe of the event because it brings everyone on stage and the surroundings, like there is a big community that come around, still the big community that cares about the same cause of positive roles of hip hop to the community

In addition to the ongoing programs BPU has lately expanded its work with activities such as language school. In co-operation with teachers from Kampala International School, BPU has been able to provide free weekly afterschool classes in English. Through varying programs BPU members have been approached with invitations to travel abroad to teach and perform. Different members have been given an opportunity to be part of Brave Kids festival in Poland and We Free festival in Italy throughout the years. Other programs have taken place in Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Switzerland and USA. BPU also receives international visitors throughout the year to work with the organization on a voluntary basis enabling cross-cultural exchange also in their own premises.

3.4 My relation to BPU

I travelled to Uganda at the end of 2010 to volunteer for six months. After one month I attended to a hip hop event where I met dancers who invited me to attend a training session at Nsambya Youth Center in Kampala. I participated the first session at the beginning of November 2010, which was the beginning of my journey with Breakdance Project Uganda (BPU). I had practiced different dance styles in Finland since childhood and now felt inspired of finding a community that I can relate to by sharing the same interest. The major reason why I found BPU as something I wanted to be involved in was their way of welcoming me in to the community. I noticed how in BPU my background did not cause attention unlike elsewhere at the streets of Kampala. By the time I participated the community session first time I had spent two months in Uganda trying to find a common ground and understanding with local Ugandans. It was hard to find people with the same mentality and to create genuine friendships. For the first time in Uganda I was able to identify myself as something else than a white girl. It played a big role in the way I portray and understand Uganda and Africa today. I kept coming to BPU's community sessions and later on was asked to participate in meetings and take part in BPU members performance about social responsibility at Hip Hop for Society 2011 -event. Even though I learned a lot during the 4 months I spent with BPU, I cannot say that I learned to understand the essence of the

organization. In January 2012 I travelled back to Uganda with my sister. During the two months in Kampala we spent hours with Abramz and other members eating food, discussing about hip hop culture and BPU and I gained a deeper understanding of the community. Once back home I attended an entrance exam for Diaconia University of Applied Sciences to study bachelor's degree in Social Services. In Helsinki I started to attend classes at Saiffa –Flow Mo Dance School, a place that until today has been a valuable place for me to learn about the foundations of hip hop culture: the history, the elements and the knowledge. In June 2013 my sister and I travelled back to Uganda and attended several community outreaches with other members of BPU. By learning, teaching and dancing in cyphers with children in slum communities I started to understand hip hop culture as a life education and the relation of it to my studies. In 2015 I did an international practice placement in Swaziland and got a chance to teach weekly hip hop classes to children in a primary school. From Swaziland I travelled to Uganda to collect the materials for this thesis work, interviewing and exchanging knowledge, ideas and opinions with members of BPU.

4 A CASE STUDY OF BREAKDANCE PROJECT UGANDA

> Young people should be at the forefront of global change and inno-
> vation. Empowered, they can be key agents for development and
> peace. If, however, they are left in the society's margins, all of us will
> be impoverished. Let us ensure that all young people have every op-
> portunity to participate fully in the lives of their societies. (Kofi Annan)

4.1 Nature and aims of the research

My thesis is a case study of Breakdance Project Uganda and the target group is
the organization and individual long-term members of the organization. The na-
ture of my thesis is qualitative. Qualitative research methods aim to research the
target group holistically understanding the complex nature of constructed reality.
Qualitative method acknowledges the influence of value base and sees the re-
searcher as a human being with values that may affect the research process and
the analysis of results. As a practitioner of hip hop culture and as a student of
social services my interest towards this topic comes from personal experiences
and the connection I have drawn between hip hop culture and youth work through
those exposures. Much of my knowledge is based on personal experience and
knowledge shared by hip hop artists and personally I believe that to truly under-
stand hip hop is to be part of it. Personally I think that the authenticity of hip hop
exists in cyphers and streets and in the mentality and values of people who have
dedicated their lives to the art form. Qualitative research cannot be fully objective
as the data is always interpreted and bounded with the set of values of the re-
searcher. Research lens is the mental filter present in all qualitative research,
affecting researchers' interpretations of the field-based data that will later be re-
posted in a qualitative study (Yin 2011, 25). My perspective on the topic re-
searched comes from inside and therefore I cannot be objective towards the cul-
ture, but more of a messenger letting the voice of young people engaged to hip
hop to be heard. I want to emphasize that this is my interpretation of hip hop and
the work of Breakdance Project Uganda, it is not neutral but blended.

I argue that Breakdance Project Uganda has been able to support the empowerment of youth engaged to the organization throughout its almost ten years of operation. This research is aiming to find how this empowerment is supported and how the impact on individuals correlate with the goals of the organization. As another research goal I look at the advantages and challenges of BPU as a grassroots organization and aim to define the future needs of the organization. Data is collected through individual interviews and a focus group interview. Qualitative study allows analytic generalization, as to generalize the findings to other situations that were not studied, based on logical argument, theory development or replication (Yin 2011). Instead of interviewing all the members of BPU I am able to argue based on the selected group of members interviewed.

The purpose of the individual interviews is to answer in which ways the engagement to hip hop and Breakdance Project Uganda has supported the empowerment of individuals' lives and to identify specific factors supporting the transformation. In the analysis I will look at how those factors correlate with the aims of BPU. The purpose of the focus group interview is to move the focus from individuals to organizational level and look at the organization with a critical eye. First part of the focus group interview was a discussion of the methods of BPU, collecting material which I used to explain the work methods of BPU in chapter 2. The second part of the interview concentrated on identifying advantages and challenges of BPU as a grass-roots organization and the organizational needs in order to develop the work in future.

4.2 Research methods

My research strategy is a case study. Schramm (1971) defined the essence of case study as trying to illuminate a decision or a set of decisions as why they were taken, how they were implemented and with what result. Case study is useful when aiming to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political and other related phenomena. (Yin 2014, 4) The use of case study arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena,

allowing investigators to focus on a case and retain a holistic and real-world perspective by studying for example individual life cycles or organizational and managerial processes (Yin 2014, 4). This research studies Breakdance Project Uganda as an organization that uses the social phenomenon, hip hop, to empower and educate and the members of the organization as the human products of the process.

This case study research collects data about personal experiences of the members. Through the interviews members talk about their past and present lives as well as their personal future hopes. As per Robert K. Yin in group settings an essential ingredient of the study will at some point include narrative information about one or more of the individuals who are part of or participate in the small group, culture or collective process. Every qualitative research is likely to collect data about individual people and to report something about their perceptions, aspirations, beliefs or behaviors. (Yin 2014, 9) According to Gill Musson the life history method focuses on the ways in which the individuals account for and theorize about their actions in the social world over time. Musson refers to McAdams (1989) who defines life histories as an internalized narrative integration of past, present and anticipated future which provides lives with a sense of unity and purpose. Life history method therefore provides a fundamental source of knowledge about how people experience and make sense of themselves and their environments, allowing the actors to speak for themselves. (Musson 2004, 34-35)

A case study can include multiple of research methods. My data collection methods are individual interviews with narrative approach and a focus group interview. Interviews were semi-structured. Qualitative interview is a form of interviewing whereby the researcher's goal is to reveal a participant's meanings and interpretations from the participant's point of view. Qualitative interview therefore takes on more unstructured conversational format and the interviewer has the responsibility not to ask leading questions. (Yin 2011, 312) Focus group discussion is a form of data collection whereby the researcher convenes a small group of people having similar attributes, experiences, or focus and leads the group in a non-

directive manner. The objective is to surface the perspectives of the people in the group with as minimal influence by the researcher as possible. (Yin 2011, 309)

4.3 Ethical considerations

In qualitative research it is essential to bring a strong sense of ethics to the research process. The integrity of the participants must be valued and it is essential to maintain the confidentiality between the researcher and the target group. According to Robert K. Yin when doing research one of the most important choices involves deciding what data, once collected, to incorporate into an analysis. The major objective for building trustworthiness and credibility is to report research procedures and data as transparently as possible, but some data will always fall out in the process as it is impossible to analyze all the data collected. (Yin 2011, 38-39) It is pivotal to preserve research integrity as to be trustworthy when representing positions and statements and to fairly examine all the data collected.

The advantage of my personal membership in the organization is the already existing bond with my target group. Members in the organization knows me and trust that I will use the interview data in ethically correct manner. I have credibility to give a critical eye on certain issues concerning the organization. On the other hand my membership in BPU can influence my objectivity in the process and gives a challenge to the presentation of results in which I will have to avoid bringing in my voice through the data.

For my bachelor's thesis Breakdance Project Uganda, Diaconia University of Applied Sciences and I signed a cooperation agreement as an approval of all cooperation partners' approval to participate in a research. In addition each interviewee and I signed a consent form, in which I explained the purposes and aims of this research, how it will be used and the rights of the participants to ask any questions and leave the process at any state without a need to explain why. Before the interview I also explained the participant his/her right to confidentiality and staying anonymous, which was also mentioned in the consent form. As per

British Sociological Association informed consent implies the responsibility of a researcher to explain in appropriate detail what the research is about, who is undertaking it and why, and how it will used (Batsleer 2010, 186). The consent form also included a question whether the participant does or does not want to have his/her name published in the final thesis work. As all my interviewees are willing to have their names published in the work. As their names do not give any special value to the presentation of data, I will add their identities to references.

5 RESULTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

> What lies before us and what lies behind us are all small matters compared to what lies within us. And when you bring what is within out into the world, miracles happen. (Henry David Thoreau)

As the impact of the work of BPU is best visible in the transformation of its members' mentality, behavior and life style I conducted semi-structured interviews for eight long-term members of Breakdance Project Uganda. All interviewees has to be over 18 years of age. The interviews took place at Kampala, Uganda in January 2015. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour 15 minutes. Each interview was recorded using digital voice recorder, with a permission from each participant. After data collection I transcribed all the interview data verbatim. I read the transcripts several times and started the analysis process. I found similarities in the data and started to distinguish and arrange statements that match with certain themes sorting them under those common themes, in this research factors supporting empowerment. Similar statements were grouped together under themes alike. I started the analysis with the findings of nine common themes and finally identified five broader themes; formation of self-image through inclusion and self-discovery, boost of confidence and self-esteem, development of responsibility and leadership skills, growth of creativity and initiative and building social capital.

The five core themes influencing the transformation and empowerment are presented in the following subchapters using direct quotations from the participants. According to Yin, when a researcher wants to portray the real-world events from the participants' perspectives, narrative could present their voices through the use of extensively quoted material (Yin 2011, 235). It is important to acknowledge that the people I have interviewed are long-term members of BPU, who either have been or still are actively part of the everyday activities of the organization. Despite the variations in their current activity level, BPU has played a big role in the lives of these particular eight members interviewed. Although their experiences are comparable to each other and to the experiences of other members in

BPU, the life path of each member is still unique and deeply personal. Instead of focusing the individual stories when presenting the data I draw attention on the factors emerging from the stories that have supported the transformation and empowerment of members. My purpose is to examine cross-cutting issues rather than the life histories of individual members. As per Yin when presenting information about different participants but not focusing on their life stories, the narrative still includes mixtures of quotations and dialogue with individual participants, but the same individuals are not necessary tracked from one issue to the next (Yin 2011, 240). In Liebow's (1993) narrative presentation the text refers to the experiences of different participants, depending on the relevance and suitability of their experiences to the topic. Yin explains:

> When organizing a narrative in a cross-personal manner, the voices of the participants in a study are not presented in any depth. Although their perceptions and opinions on specific topics still have been preserved, the overall goal is to draw attention to the topics and issues, not to the individual people. (Yin 2011, 240)

5.1 Sense of inclusion and self-discovery

Inclusion can be seen as a precondition for healthy living. The feelings of satisfaction and happiness are usually related to the sense of belonging. Pearpoint and Forest define inclusion as the foundation of the house. It is not a guarantee, but rather a precondition for the growth and development of full and healthy human beings (Pearpoint & Forest 2015). Inclusion embraces the acceptance of differences and the understanding that people can be different from one another but able to live together peacefully. Social inclusion refers to participation, being allowed and enabled to take part in the society. Social inclusion can be about decision-making, economic and social relationships, well-being and so on. The act of social inclusion is to fight social exclusion. Davis and Hill argue that when placing emphasis on parent's roles in reproducing social capital, children's roles as decision-makers and agents of their own life has not been acknowledged in the discussion of social inclusion. (Davis and Hill 2006, 5)

Almost all the members interviewed shared in their personal stories that they've had to learn how to take care of themselves at a young age. Becoming introduced to BPU has been a positive turning point in their lives:

> I come from a challenged family. So to meet people from other challenged versions of life, it really made a lot of sense because we had many things in common and many things different from one another. But we had something that brought us together, we learned to learn from each other -so I found another family

> I have got exposed to good people and a good structure or a way of life. A setting were you interact with people, get to know them and you get your own opinions to be heard. --- Best thing to hear was my thoughts being considered

> When you don't have a mother [there for you] and you have to survive without that love and borders. So when you get to find a kind of a community center, it becomes a home. --- I listened so much and took in the information. It was information that I had missed as a kid. I didn't have anybody to tell me what is right and what is wrong. --- BPU covered wounds I had got in my childhood

Breakdance Project Uganda aims to create premises for the people to come together and uses hip hop as a tool to attract young people. Members of the organization share the same interest towards hip hop and through that interest they have met a variety of people with different cultural, economic and religious backgrounds, forming a community of interest. Members of BPU have started to build friendships and spend much of their free time together.

Most of my interviewees have grown up without full parental guidance. Some of them have lost one or both of their parents, others have grown up with a single-parent. Members identify the organization as something that has been guiding their life. Some members told that after losing their parents at a young age, the organization has compensated the role of a lost guardian. My interviewees identify BPU as a place where they come when in need of advices and guidance, in many occasions refer to it as a family.

> BPU is definitely a family. It is where I got introduced to the new me and it is where life made a lot of more sense. --- Here is a sense of

> togetherness, people working together and a sense of working to-wards a common goal, helping each other to have a better life in the future

> BPU has been there for me as a family. Right now it's not about the project, it is more about the family. I have been sharing all my problems with them

> I don't think there is ever a time when I am out of line and they don't come up to me and tell, hey Key, this what you did isn't right, try to do something positive about it. You are advised accordingly

> BPU is a family that is always there, through hard times and through good times, and they see me. When you make a mistake, they tell you hey we know you can do better than that

All of my interviewees have come too BPU to learn hip hop skills as they found cool and have taken time to realize the deeper vision of the organization and their roles as members. Two members shared that they used to be stubborn boys. Other member states that he used to not care about anything or anyone and could steal and try harmful substances, the other member has a past selling alcohol at school. In time the peer support from other members and the sense of community started to transform their mentalities:

> I started to understand that so many people come from different backgrounds, like religious and tribal, and we all come there and share different skills. --- This is the way we have grown in BPU, with the mentality to teach one another. Through that we have been able to understand what hip hop is and also help the communities where we come from

> When I started to do breakdance, the people in BPU taught me how to share. And now if I have a move I always share with someone. And that doesn't end there, it is a lifetime lesson, it's a way I live. If I have for example small shoes I want to give them to someone else

The concept of collective identity was first introduced by Sigmund Freud stating that an individual is always part of a group. According to Freud belongingness, identification with members of the same group and differentiation from non-members are the three basic elements constituting collective identity (Petkova 2005). One of the members tells that he got introduced to dancing at home where he

used to follow his mother doing traditional dance. That inspired him to dance from a very young age. Learning to dance through BPU has made people respect him as a dancer and as a teacher and to see him as a factor for change. Being a member of BPU has given new identifiers also for other members. One of the members used to be insulted for being small, but in BPU others identified her as a dancer and as a b-girl and that empowered her to step up as the person who she wants to be and wants others to see her. Another member grew up as an orphan and learned to live with the mentality that the voice of orphan children would not matter:

> All the stuff I went through when I was still a little kid didn't give me anything positive to identify myself with. The only identifiers were negative ones like an orphan, a kid from the ghetto, poor kid, or dis-advantage kid. --- The first time I learned to do a 'freeze' that others couldn't do was really empowering. I realized that no matter how good I think someone might be, I can also have skills that they don't have

Another participant shared that he grew up in a challenged family with a teenage single mother switching between different communities in search of affordable flats and schools. He enjoyed drawing from a young age and tells that the skill is something he inherited in the family DNA. Introduced to b-boying through BPU and through that to the depth of hip hop culture tackled a part of him that he never knew about.

> I got introduced to a different type of mentality that is not available everywhere, a community where there is a lot of engagement and things to relate to. --- It gave me a new definition to myself. At first I would say I am a breakdancer and just me being a b-boy, it is like someone goes to study and becomes a doctor. It kind of gave a title to my life. I found something I could fight for and something I could call myself

Traditionally the self has been seen as some kind of inner essence or mental phenomenon existing inside of the body. Foucault challenges this idea of self by introducing the human body as a site of power operations. According to Foucault the 'self' is a production of the ways in which the body of a human being is clas-

sified, managed, disciplined and regulated by him/herself and by others. Foucault's concept technologies of self (1976), ways of becoming a self, contain all the ways in which we create or transform our bodies and souls and work upon our bodies to become a self and achieve a sense of fulfilment, in relation to the history and social location. (Pini 2004, 160) One participants shares her story of escaping bad living conditions to look for a better future in Kampala. She was lucky to find good people letting her to stay at their home but has to cover all her expenses by herself. At the moment she wants to go back to school, as she never had the chance to finish basic education. Through BPU and breaking she found a place and a way to express herself freely, while at home she is pushed to play a different reality.

> It's like every time I leave home to come for practice I feel free, I feel so happy and I am not stressed. Because it is like I have left the other world behind and I have come to another world. --- In dancing I am proud of myself and people are proud of me. I feel happy every time I come to be myself, I come to be a b-girl. --- BPU, they have given me the chance to be what I wanted to be since I was young

My interviewees identify hip hop as a tool for self-expression and self-discovery. In BPU activities they feel they have been allowed to express themselves freely.

> BPU told me about the culture of living. The culture of living as a young person coming from a university, disconnected, you don't even know who you are. You are just told to do this, in Uganda you do this job, get money and build a house. I don't want to build a house, I want to build a center for everybody, a home

> I would say that hip hop is the freedom and the way to get to know who you are through trying out the different elements

> To me I feel it [hip hop] is a good instrument or a good treatment for someone who is sick or someone who needs self-discovery, someone who is lost. They can use it to understand. We all understand it in our own way, we feel it differently. --- Personally I don't care how we see it, but where it is taking us

> Hip hop is a tool, it's an understanding, you don't just do it but you live it, you'll be it. You can't say that "when I'm at BPU I can break"

but when you are in the marketing community then you feel shame. For me then it is not hip hop. I'll have to be free with what I do

Me dancing, it is rehabilitation. When you listen to the break-beat being around the practice and being around hip hop, it is another spiritual world. --- You do not need to be in a silent community to get spiritual with it. You just need that loudness just to get spiritual, for people to express themselves and tackle those nerves. To do that move to win or to have fun with it within the cypher and having the music to move you. --- For me that has been like putting a puzzle together, uniting all the pieces of knowledge, as a process that has led to who I am today

5.2 New identifiers to build confidence and self-esteem

The oldest definition of self-esteem is developed by William James in 1890. Williamson defines self-esteem as a self-feeling that is entirely dependent on what we back ourselves to be and do. Self-esteem depends on individual's hopes, desires and aspirations, which in return requires competence. Morris Rosenberg introduced self-esteem as a positive or negative attitude based on a feeling of one's worth as a person. High self-esteem refers to self-respect and low self-esteem rises from feelings of unworthiness (Mruk 2006, 12-13).

Wells and Marwell (1976) developed four concepts defining self-esteem. First concept is self-esteem as an attitude that involves positive or negative cognitive, emotional and behavioral reactions. Second factor is the discrepancy between the ideal self and the perceived self: the wider the gap between the two percepts the more self-esteem suffers. Thirdly self-esteem is seen as feeling-based, reacting to the psychological responses of a person towards himself. Lastly self-esteem is seen as a component of personality associated with motivation and self-regulation. Self-esteem is intensely personal as it says something about who we are and how we live our lives. (Mruk 2006, 13) Self-understanding can be used as a tool to understand the meanings of our actions and to manage our goals, relationships and the direction of life. Breakdance Project Uganda aims to build young people's self-esteem. One of the members state that by giving a platform to share, appreciate and learn, the gratitude and communication session has

given a platform for the members to build their confidence and self-esteem. Another member addresses that the organization does not just offer skills to dance but provides chances for the members to practice public speaking and leadership.

> You get used to getting up in front of an audience and addressing them, it gets natural over time --- you find yourself just flowing because now it is part of who you are

> Through gratitude session I have learned how to speak in front of others, how to respect others

> I used to be shy, even I couldn't tell my story. But now I can stand in a crowd and I can talk to people

For youth who usually have less opportunities in their communities to speak for themselves or access education, participation in educational and developmental programs that offer free activities can play a meaningful role in the development of a young person. Children brought up in low-income households and impoverished environments may require extra support and resources for their inclusion to be meaningful; and these need to be offered in ways that are sensitive to the wishes of the children themselves (Davis and Hill 2006, 13). Participatory programs hold potential to support the growth of self-esteem that can eventually help a young person to move out of the mindset of being incompetent. As Mugizi Taye defines poverty in Shake the Dust -documentary: poverty is something that comes from inside the heart, poverty doesn't necessarily mean lack of funds or lack of money, to me it is more like low self-esteem, because you find with high self-esteem a person can do anything (Shake the Dust 2014).

Breaking as an art form can support the growth of self-esteem when the environment where it is practiced from is positive. As an art form breaking engages the practitioners to showcase skills in the dance cyphers and battles, and puts the dancer in a spotlight. The cypher has certain informal rules, a cypher code, that creates an environment where everyone should show respect on one another and encourage participation. Obviously this is not the case in all cyphers. Teachers who know the culture of the dance form hold the responsibility to teach their students about the culture and values of cyphering. In a supportive environment

the experience of stepping in to a cypher as a solo dancer is more empowering than intimidating. As there is certain vulnerability present in a cypher, once a person is able to overcome the tension it shifts into feelings of excitement and supports the growth of confidence. The confidence that one feels when dancing starts to transmit to other aspects of life as a skill to be genuine to oneself and to others. As Johannes Hattunen, b-boy Hatsolo describes the authenticity of the exposure: I believe the way to find the essence of your own true soulfulness is to strip down all the pre-meditated gestures, the pretense, the effort to express and just to exist in the moment. A 22-year-old member and a three-time champion of Ugandan Break-Fast Jam 7toSmoke –battle connects the dancing and his first experiences battling to the growth of self-confidence:

> I started coming for practice, but I was still shy a little bit. Then one time when I was there they called people to battle for a shirt and that's the time I really gained the confidence and I won the battle. Since from that time I have told myself I won't give up and I will make it, and I will train and I will win battles. --- It has really given me confidence. When I was in my family I couldn't even speak a word. But after all I started to speak out even with myself, people started to hear my voice.

Instead of gaining his confidence directly from practicing the art form, another member sees the connection in the way BPU has encouraged him to improve his skills and pursue new skills, and by giving him roles and responsibilities to practice leadership skills:

> I did football before and it was quite competitive and I am quite lazy. So people there didn't really help me or give me that confidence that "you are a better person, you can do this", even if you do not see it in yourself. They did not put me to a place where I would have been a leader at some point, so I was always under somebody. But BPU did. --- Today I can stand on my two feet and give a speech about something and people could listen

5.3 Developing leadership skills and responsibility

Don Popo, a Colombian hip hop pioneer argues that hip hop is attractive to youth in the hood because it's a culture that gives you hope in change and the conviction that you have a control over that change. (Shake The Dust 2014). BPU aims to provide tools and motivation for self-development where the society, family and school system has failed to do so.

> Hip hop is something that keeps you really focused, helps you to think positively

> The way I see things has also changed. I am growing, I'm not a child anymore. I am someone responsible of my life as well

> Since I started hip hop I started thinking that at least I can practice so that I can't focus on thinking something [negative] or not doing anything. I make myself all the time busy practicing

BPU aims to serve as a platform for self-development and promotes social responsibility and social action. One member talks about the battle she has fought to not let people put her down and stop her from dancing. After overcoming the pressure and knowing that she is on the right path, the resistance even motivated her to push harder as to show people what she is capable of. As a result she has won the b-girl battles in Break-Fast Jam 2013 and in Hip Hop for Society in 2014. She has also been part of the team teaching in Luzira Prison and worked in Peace Corps camps as a facilitator, mentor and counselor. Currently working as part of a Batalo East team –an initiative formed to link and strengthen the traditional and urban arts together (Batalo East 2015), she emphasizes the importance of balancing time and thinking about how to master the art form, to modify and upgrade it:

> If you don't work, you cannot just say I am a b-girl. --- If you want to be someone you will have to work for it. It is never easy and it has never been easy in any art form or any kind of job. So it is up to you to reach your inner self and see how far you are willing to pursuit

According to Eckersley people who set 'extrinsic goals' pursuing fame and fortune tend to experience lower overall wellbeing and to be less trusting and caring in their relationships. On the other hand, people who prioritize 'intrinsic goals' of close relationships, personal growth and self-understanding tend to have higher overall wellbeing and willingness to contribute to the community. (Eckersley 2006) The values and work methods of Breakdance Project Uganda aim to support the intrinsic aspirations of inclusion, self-development and self-discovery. Through the concept of each one being a teacher and a student the organization is cultivating the practice of sharing.

> Hip hop teaches you to love people, you'll learn that when you talk to people everybody is like a brother or sister to you after that. So you ended up sharing that thing. I always want to tell people share every time when you go to a different place, because you will leave your energy there when you share. That energy grows. --- I have a responsibility to take on to the next. There are people who inspired me and there are those people who inspired the people who inspired me

> I pass on the knowledge through teaching and through performance. I share by giving free dance classes to the youth around. When teaching I want to show different people their strength, because as a choreographer I can see strength in a crew or in an individual, and try to advise them, so through that I share my skills

One of the members finds the engagement in BPU feeding the sense of responsibility in its members.

> We might not be able to provide food or shelter, but at least I know that morally people have been catered for

She wishes that people could stop branding hip hop culture and take it more as something that people in the hip hop community believes in and respects. She emphasizes the responsibility of people engaged to the authenticity of hip hop to promote the positive aspects of it:

> Get people understand what we stand for and help them see what we see, and don't judge us for who we are because of the mentor was gone years before some of us were even born. If we can make

> it a better, healthy environment for the young generation that is com-
> ing up, I feel breakdancing or hip hop would be in another level

Transformational and transactional leadership emerged from new leadership lit-
erature. Transactional leader provides rewards such as status or resources in
return of compliance. Transformational leadership refers to a leader who moti-
vates and inspires followers by raising their aspirations and fusing them with
those of the leader. (Hughes and Wearing 2007) As a result of new leadership
approaches a leader is seen as a manager of meaning within the organization
rather than as a director of tasks, by continuously challenging their employees
with new ideas and approaches. According to Bryman (1999) the leader is influ-
encing and strengthening organizational culture by articulating shared values and
defining the mission or purpose of the organization (Hughes and Wearing 2007,
78-99). Leaders are considered as ambassadors sharing the information about
the organization to a wider population.

Dunoon's learning-centered approach (2002) draw the attention from an individ-
ual leader to the capacity building within the organization in order to remain the
sustainability of the organization when the current leader may not be present an-
ymore. The approach involves helping people to become self-aware, to clarify
their goals and develop their own responses to organizational issues. The ap-
proach aims to build organizational capacity by helping members to achieve more
creative and deeper understandings of the issues they face and build new in-
sights as the basis for action. (Hughes and Wearing 2007, 78-99) Manz and Sims
developed a model of SuperLeadership in 1989, emphasizing the capacity of oth-
ers within the organization or a group to take on leadership roles and responsi-
bilities. The approach is designed to build the self-leadership capacity of the
members to build knowledge and develop solutions to problems they encounter
in everyday organizational practice. Manz and Sims further argue that in many
modern situations the most appropriate leader is one who can lead others to lead
themselves. (Hughes and Wearing 2007, 78-99)

An author Dr. John C. Maxwell has formed a theory of five levels of leadership.
According to Maxwell the five levels of leadership are positional level, permission

level, production level, people development level and pinnacle level (Maxwell 2013). First, positional level, is where a person obtains the leadership position and starts to shape and define him/herself as a leader. At this level the leader will receive the least of the people's energy, effort and mind. At the second, permission level, the leader starts to connect and get along with the people understanding that relationships are the foundation of leadership; to influence someone you have to be able and willing to listen to, observe and learn from the people lead. (Maxwell 2013) The leader develops an attitude of serving others. By everyone being a student and a teacher BPU aims to grow the youth's willingness to serve other people and communities.

> I have been representing in youth camps and I have been sharing my skills. I have been in BPU meetings and I have been in my family meetings, and I am the chairperson leading these 45 or 80-year-old people. --- BPU has supported me to grow up as a leader. I am a youth leader now

On the production level leader develops momentum. As per Maxwell momentum can help to solve 80% of the problem-solving in the organization. In this stage the leader starts to be effective and productive. The fourth level of leadership is people development. In this level the leader works with passion and strive, excited of what s/he does and understands that the most valuable asset in the organization is the people of that organization. Realizing this the leader commits to develop and grow the people in the organization increasing their capacity. (Maxwell 2013) Members who show responsibility in BPU are given roles that acquire strength, innovativeness and capability to work independently. The values of BPU emphasize the responsibility of long-term members to work as peer supporters for people who are still in the beginning of the process of learning.

> I take the money to schools and monitor whether the members have been attending school and if school fees have been paid on time. I also host hip hop events like Hip Hop for Society –event. I am also a teacher and a student at BPU. I am always there to teach people rapping and breaking

Maxwell presents three keys for developing people; recruitment, positioning and equipment. Recruitment, as to know what kind of skills you are looking for in people. Positioning, as an ability to discover what the people are good at. Equipment, as to discover the strengths of a person and to support the person to do the work well. To form a sustainable cycle of leadership the process of training starts from followers observing the leader, to leader observing the follower and finally the follower taking on a leadership position by having a new person to observe his/her work. As per John Maxwell you never equip someone well before they can multiply themselves, therefore it is important to train somebody to train another person. BPU's work is built on the vision of 'each one, teach one' and the idea resembles Maxwell's theory. Long-term members have taken the knowledge with them and started to pass on what learned in BPU in the communities they come from or currently live in.

> The things that I learned from BPU didn't only serve me within BPU activities, but when I go to communities they [BPU] told me a certain way to approach people and talk to people, how to make them see beyond tomorrow and now, to build the next generation and to be the leader they are
>
> I have got skills to organize events through organizing BPU events and community outreaches. --- Through organizing Break-Fast Jam I could see how I could expand these skills I have learned from BPU. And that is again what BPU is all about. You learn something here and you use it somewhere else contributing to the community. --- I got to learn a lot of stuff, like basic areas to think about when organizing an event and the essential parts of an event and how to run a low-budget community event

According to Maxwell the highest level of leadership, the pinnacle level, is when the people respect the leader and follow him/her because of the qualities possessed as a person and as a leader. The leader is given a great amount of respect as a result of what s/he has done and achieved in life. Maxwell describes the process as a lifelong journey, stating that a leader is always in different levels with different people. (Maxwell 2013)

5.4 Encouragement for creativity and initiative

As a result of ethnographic studies conducted by Christopher Edmin in traditional urban science classes (2009) students who obey by following and copying notes are considered well-behaving whereas students who desire to engage and tend to use a lot of gestures and speak loudly, are seen as a cause of distraction. In his article 'Supporting communication and argumentation in urban science education: Hip-hop, the battle and the cypher', Emdin argues that when the relationship between students and the teacher mirrors that of power wielders and the powerless, and when teacher position students' experience-based understandings as outside of school science, students cannot be expected to have an interest in the discipline (Emdin 2011, 1-11). Hip hop has evolved from an art form practiced at the streets to a culture that has been discovered as an educational tool used in both formal and informal education with young children to adults. The use of hip hop in basic education has emerged from teachers realizing the interests of their students and the potential of use of hip hop to draw their attention. Emdin argues that teachers of hip hop youth perceive students to be actively involved, constructively participating, and behaving appropriately when they enact behaviors that under normal circumstances in students' out-of-school worlds would indicate a lack of interest. Emdin further argues that the kind exchange that is crucial in science education as fostering argumentation, active debate, complex thinking and deep questioning is present in hip hop culture, particularly in rap battles. (Emdin 2011, 1-11)

One of the main goals set by BPU is to promote formal and informal education and to increase their members' access to both. School Sponsorship Program tackles the issues concerning access to formal education by sending BPU members back to school. BPU provides informal education opportunities through the activities of BPU and the activities offered by partnering organizations. Some members interviewed refer to BPU as a life school and to themselves as students of life.

> My most important educational background is getting introduced to BPU. I am a student of life, I came to learn more about life from the experiences I've had in life. I have learned about life through BPU --- hip hop is a tool through which can easily engage the youth, in a community like Uganda where the biggest percentage is the youth, this can do a huge change to the youths life, and that way I mean there is a lot of information you can share through using breakdancing, rap music or beatboxing

Emdin has studied the educational perspectives of the dance and rap cyphers in hip hop culture. Emdin states that one of the major lessons from the cypher is its physical structure. He further argues that the cypher dictates that participants are organized in a way that facilitates eye contact, and has participants being positioned just about equidistant from each other. As per Emdin cyphers teach to educators that in order to facilitate exchange among participants the classroom should be organized in a circle that includes the teacher or facilitator. Cypher culture further provides knowledge about how to interact with students and how to enhance the communication among them. (Edmin 2011, 1-11) Some of my interviewees find BPU and exposure to teaching, cyphers and battles reducing the fear of challenges and finding it easier to invent new stuff and approach new tasks at work.

> With work you'll end up doing something very big and you'll catch up really fast, you don't hesitate to be an inventor, because the cypher itself has given you room to develop, explore, to create new stuff

> As a teacher you will always need to refill yourself --- I think with BPU it is kind of a life course where you meet knew challenges every Monday and Wednesday. Like someone shows up to there with a different mood and you will have to deal with that. And someone else shows up with a happy mood and you will have to deal them all with different moods. That has helped me to exercise. Also it is a place where I can freestyle, because in life our work is so structured. --- I think that is what makes me even more respected in my work outside BPU, because I have a room where I can exercise and help me in a process to create new things

Generally my interviewees see the engagement to BPU and hip hop as an advantage, supporting innovativeness in personal initiatives and in the working life.

> Through hip hop I have managed to innovate so many stuff like for example the rap cypher at the BPU weekly sessions, which people are now attending so much and they are loving it. --- I would love all the youth in Uganda to start to innovate some of their stuff through what they like to do. We have innovated our own projects, like Break-Fast Jam and BentLines team

> My mode of teaching when I explain it to different schools they really love it. That I am going to use hip hop and creative arts to teach these kids to get leadership skills, learn essential basic life skills

> With work I feel more confident, upgoing, funny, and easy to work with because of the environment at the youth center where we re-hearse from with BPU. There you are dealing with several people, so it is easy for you to fit in in any environment, because you don't take people for granted. You respect people in their caliber, how they come to you is how you will take them. --- If you want to be treated respectively, you'll have to show it and earn it

BPU fights to break the negative image related to hip hop culture and to raise awareness of the possibilities to used hip hop more widely as a tool to work with youth in Uganda. My interviewees wish to share the original values of hip hop to more people, spread the consciousness of the art form and provide applicable skills for youth through informal education.

> My basic understanding of hip hop is that it is an art form, a culture that gives you an opportunity to reform things. You can always add something to it. What should be shared to all youth about hip hop are the values. Not just to learn the moves, but how to use what you have learnt and how it can influence and how you can ship it

> Everything in this world starts with consciousness. Any action can be just an action, but if it has consciousness, it's connected to the next action that is then also conscious

> Most people think that if you do hip hop you are a thug, you are a lost cause, you have nothing in life, but that is not it. We all went to school but the education system and life are two different things. Some is applicable in the line of what you are doing, some is not

Young Leaders Think Tank for Policy Alternatives argues that the Youth Policy in Uganda looks at education, training and capacity building, it does not look into prospects of amending or reviewing of the current curriculum in order to reduce

on the widespread problem of a mismatch between the skills and knowledge schools are providing, and the existing needs of the labour market (Young Leaders Think Tank for Policy Alternatives 2011). The existing structure of the education system in Uganda has been in force since the early 1960s (Uganda High Commission 2009). The education system offers the basic subjects to educate those children who are able to pay school fees to attend school. As the education system has not been updated in many years it lacks creative teaching methods and student involvement. The education system has been criticized by different stakeholders of being too theoretical and lacking aspects of practical skills. The school curriculum does not support the growth of creative and critical thinking among students.

The impracticability and unrealistic aims of the education system has created lack of trust among the education system and citizen. Youth in Uganda have started to approach other ways to learn more applicable skills and build careers. In the lives of my interviewees engagement to hip hop does not appear as a phase with a beginning and an ending. Instead they are currently looking for ways to be able to sustain themselves by using the elements of hip hop and external skills they've learned through BPU.

> I have to work hard and grow as an artist. Currently I am working on my album. I want to keep learning new stuff. As long as I keep on being focused and work hard, because if I stop being focused I can ruin it

> I have started to make t-shirts and I want to start making jewelries. One day I want to start up a boutique, where I can put all my stuff which I do myself

> It is really important that I go for running, do different workouts to train like an athlete, so that I can be able to train my body to last long in this art form

> The arts give you a longer life, they give you voice, they are therapeutic. --- So I try to go in communities and take time to research. To see how different people around the world are incorporating hip hop into their daily lives and how does it help them

In 2011 a group of BPU members initiated Break-Fast Jam, an annual breakdance event in Uganda and East-Africa, aiming to transform into a complete global gathering, housing breakers from all corners of the world (Break-Fast Jam 2015). The event started as an idea to organize continuous breakdance battles in Kampala. After developing the idea for months they came up with an idea to organize a jam at the Sharing Youth Center. Before the main event members decided to go to different communities and organize battles of which the winner of each community would come to the main event and represent. Even though all the organizers of Break-Fast Jam are BPU members, the workgroup wanted to organize the event independently starting up a BentLines team to produce the annual event. BentLines aims to cultivate and elevate hip hop, art, education and culture in East Africa. By being independent they enable equal involvement of non-members of BPU who come from other hip hop –related communities.

> We started up a breakdance event called Break-Fast Jam, that is a huge accomplishment in life. That made me one of the key persons in an activity

> To us it was important that people get to see how rich this art form is knowing there are people coming for battles from very different areas, also was important for them to be known

5.5 Social capital

> The act of travelling and the performance of finding new social connections gives us the chance to not fall into redundance and stiff moralism. To be a nomad (physically or spiritually) gives one the chance to find an empty but needed position easier. This empty space is the nucleus of liberty and of being autonomous; to be creative (b-boy Storm, Battle Squad, Germany)

Social capital is produced by social networks and possess collective value arising from the networks that rely on each other through mutual aid. Social capital can be about information, to exchange ideas or learn for example about jobs or it can build networks that connect individuals who are diverse. Collective action can

foster social capital and social networks support the idea of seeing a group in-
stead of an individual. Defined by Morrow (1999) social capital consists of the
contacts and group memberships that, through the accumulation of exchanges,
obligations and shared identities, provide people with actual or potential support
and access to valued resources. McKenzie and Harpham (2006) refers to social
bonding, as the social interactions of young people who engage with other young
people and to social bridging, when young people engage with members of the
wider community. (Hadland and Stickley 2010, 18-19)

Instead of giving people material aid BPU members work with people by teaching
them applicable skills needed in life and raising awareness of their potential and
resources that already exists within them and their communities. In the globaliz-
ing world where young people travel and youth cultures spread fast, one of my
interviewees sees the potential in aid that is not about material resources but
exchange of knowledge and culture. BPU members are widely connected
through social networks that connect them to other members around the world,
to artists and to people in other work fields. As referred to the sense of family
created through social bonding already earlier, in this chapter I will now focus on
the networks members have created through social bridging. Most of my inter-
viewees have gotten opportunities to travel through BPU or other projects and by
visiting other places outside their own community and outside Uganda and Africa
and by meeting other people from abroad or from other communities they have
learned to understand the need of exchange.

> Youth in Uganda should get more involved in hip hop because this is
> one of the ways you get connected to your life and to different people.
> You get to know who you are through trying it, through expressing
> yourself through drawing, through getting down on the floor and try-
> ing out different things. So yeah, there is a lot of knowledge that can
> change you and the people around you when passing it on through
> teaching

As per Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013 in developing economies
where labour market institutions, including social protection, are weak large num-

bers of young people continue to face a future of irregular employment and informality (International Labour Organization 2013). According to the report prolonged job crisis has forced numbers of youth to accept jobs they are either overqualified or underqualified to do and remaining stuck in temporary employment with below-average wages. As one of its policy recommendations to tackle global poverty ILO urges the provision of career options to young people by supporting entrepreneurship and self-employment. According to ILO, entrepreneurship can provide career options for young people by unleashing their economic potential, offering greater independence, higher income potential and increased job satisfaction. (International Labour Organization 2013)

In an article 'Technologies of Self' Maria Pini refers to physical exercise as a phenomenon that increases its meaning in places where job prospects and long-term planning become increasingly dismal (Pini 2004, 165). Uganda's fast population growth and rural to urban migration has led to its young population to face financial hardship. In an uncertain political and economic situation youth are living one day at a time rather than making long-term plans for their future. Breakdance Project Uganda is aiming to generate employment opportunities to its members and to connect local and international artists.

Breakdance Project Uganda aims to connect local artists through programs and events and provide travel opportunities within the country for artists to meet and exchange. The organization cooperates with other service providers to make it possible for the members to network and connect also outside the organizational activities. In Uganda members have been performing in arts events, attended arts–related Peace Corps camps and formed crews to work together as artists. There has been also number of visitors from abroad coming to share and work with the members of the organization. One of the most remarkable exchanges being when Rock Steady Crew members Crazy Legs, Ynot and Servin from USA visited Uganda in 2008. Bouncing Cats –documentary follows the journey of Abramz Tekya and the exchange of BPU and Rock Steady Crew members. Several established international artists have cooperated with BPU members in Uganda since then. The annual Hip Hop for Society –event is one of the main

platforms to connect both local and international artists through collaboration in creating performances and by bringing people from local and international organizations to participate and perform.

Since 2009 Breakdance Project Uganda has been receiving opportunities to send members abroad through different programs. Travel opportunities have been funded by the initiatives inviting members of BPU to participate their programs. One of the programs various groups of members have been attending throughout the years is Brave Kids Festival in Poland. The festival invites young members of BPU to perform and exchange with other children and youth in Poland. During the festival children live with different Polish host families. One adult from BPU travels with the children.

> All my life I thought I could not get into a plane. It was through BPU that I got a chance and I was chosen to represent Breakdance Project Uganda and other youth. So we went for a festival called Brave Kids in Warsaw, Poland and we engaged with a lot of children. I was so happy. --- I got to know their culture and I got to interact with them

Members of BPU have also been part of We Free –festival organized in the community of St.Patriargano at Remini, Italy. St.Patriargano is a rehabilitation center for people who have been drug addicts or alcoholics. One of the methods used to rehabilitate people in the community is breakdance.

> We went there and we shared stories, because sometimes people think that if maybe your mom passes away or if you have no one to care about you, that the life ends. Which is not the right thing

Documentary film Shake the Dust, directed by Adam Sjöberg and produced by rapper Nasir Nas Jones, tells stories of b-boys and b-girls in Yemen, Colombia, Cambodia and Uganda. Two BPU members who were the main characters in the documentary got an opportunity to travel to USA twice for the film premiers throughout the country and to meet and connect with artists. Having a chance to be in an airplane has been an unexpected but a long wished opportunity for many of the members interviewed.

I was introduced to photography and I document the hip hop culture --- I have been able to travel because of that. Imagine a boy who comes from a struggling family, with a teenage mom reaching to that level that he can travel. --- It is a big accomplishment, because when my mom hears about this, it gives her a great confidence that she made the right choice that at the age of 16 she decided to have me and look today who I am. I am somebody in my family because of what I bring to the table

I have got a lot of chances to travel abroad. You can imagine a kid who has lost both of his parents and living in a slum almost his whole life, not knowing anyone who has ever got into a plane. Having the chance to represent BPU is different --- you go as a person who has something to contribute

Receiving an opportunity to travel to France and winning preliminaries to represent himself and Uganda in the world finals of Juste Debout, one of the most respected street dance competitions in the world, was a dream came true to one of my interviewees.

I remember when I was walking to that stage I thought that I am just going to do my thing. Whatever I am doing it is going to be like a celebration. --- It changed who I am and it changed the way I walk, the way I take dance and art. That pushed me so far, it showed me the bigger picture, and that picture is still in my head. Now I can say that it all is possible through dance

In 2013 Johannes Kung and Jocelyn Daloz travelled to Kampala from Switzerland and ended up producing music with BPU members Mugizi Taye, Ssekitoleko Joram, Kibuuka Oscar, Lutakome Felix and Mukalazi Moses. The team recorded an album of 7 tracks in a self-made bedroom studio. As a result of the cooperation the team formed YAEP! –Young Artists Exchange Project. The idea expanded and the first project Borda to Borda took place in Switzerland and Germany in May and June 2014 when the group from Uganda travelled to Europe. Borda to Borda -project consisted of workshops, concerts and photo exhibitions in Switzerland and Germany. In Borda to Borda report Johannes Kung describes the success of the project impressive stating that all the artist between 21 and 24 years of age proofed that they are able to work professionally and with dedication

to reach their goals (Young Artists Exchange Project! 2014). YAEP promotes cultural and creative exchange between young artist from different parts of the world with the motivation to implement artistic projects, compare notes with other artists, share knowledge with other artists and learn from other artists (Young Artists Exchange Project! –concept 2014). Since the first project YAEP has gained good reputation as an organization that focus on intercultural exchange and the use of hip hop culture to across boarders and stereotypes to bring people together and empower and inspire them through art. The project has been one of the most meaningful cross-country cooperation that BPU members have been involved in.

> YAEP means a lot to me. Through YEAP I got my first opportunity to travel. I did not believe that I could ever travel. And it was a very good experience to me, because I have heard so many stories from friends of mine who have got the opportunity to travel through BPU and coming back to tell how the plane is cool and all that stuff. Through YEAP I got that opportunity. We want YEAP to grow and reach artists all over the world to come together to exchange all the form of arts that we know

> There are more jobs there within art, I see more jobs within art that are just waiting to be created. The reason why we are poor is that we haven't thought about it. So we need to build people who help people to think. --- Next 20 years nothing can help to outgrow art, art outgrows everything. Weather is bad in politics, societal breakdown, art will live through that

Young Leaders Think Tank for Policy Alternatives has taken action to discuss about the challenges of youth employment in Uganda stating that the overall existing policies continue focusing on creating job seekers and not job creators. In terms of education, training and capacity building, the National Youth Policy sets its priority in supporting vocational training that could enable the youth to acquire a range of skills and essential tools that open up employment possibilities. Although vocational training has the capacity to solve youth unemployment issues, as per Young Leaders Think Tank, in reality the government is doing very little to support the young people who take up vocational jobs. This has resulted to an increasing lack of interest towards vocational institutes. (Young Leaders Think Tank for Policy Alternatives 2011)

A survey about youth and entrepreneurship conducted in Europe concludes that the main constraint on new entrepreneurship is a lack of start-up and liquid capital, indicating that plans to foster more entrepreneurship should begin by considering economists evidence on the importance of capital constraints (Blanchflower and Oswald 2009). In Uganda Young Leaders Think Tank has acknowledged the possibilities of young entrepreneurship and recommends a formulation of a policy that could enable youth to access business loans at low interest rates from different financial institutions within the country. Many youth have good business ideas but stay unemployed as a cause of insufficient funds to start up income generating business projects. (Young Leaders Think Tank 2011)

A few BPU members are able to earn income through breakdancing by teaching in different international and local schools and organizations. They still wish that there could be more possibilities also for b-boys and b-girls who do not teach to earn income. The aspiration of sustaining a career as a b-boy or a b-girl is a goal to some of the members interviewed.

> To me as a b-boy breaking is the strongest element of my life that I have, and if it is the main thing that is going to earn me a living, I am not going to change that in five years

> It is hard for me to really study. I have been out in school many times, not so much focused. I would love to be in some of the main battles in the world, I would love to be in some of the movies. Also I really want to work, get a job that gives me full-paid salary

In 2015 Uganda has been selected as the most entrepreneurial country in the world with an entrepreneurship rate of 28 percent. According to Trilby Ranja, it is not uncommon for times of difficulty to propel creativity and innovation (Virgin Magazine 2015). The ten most entrepreneurial countries in the survey are all developing nations. Trilby states that in western countries entrepreneurs may be advocates for lavish lifestyles and excess, but for most people, starting a business is simply a tool for survival (Virgin Magazine 2015). Having a real need to generate income to support himself and his family at large was a reason for one of my interviewees to start building career as an entrepreneur.

> I take care of my mom and I pay my brothers school fees every term. Now he is on a secondary school lever and it is quite a lot of money. So photography had to become business and I had to be real to myself that I do that as a passion, but also as a business at the same time. --- I still have to study within the process, not only as a photographer, but I need to know certain skills to the extreme, to replace the lack of degree.

Employment elsewhere has also created time-management issues for the members to fit with BPU activities. One of the interviewees told that by explaining the situation in the job interview and telling about the occasional responsibilities in BPU to her supervisor, she allows her to arrange the work schedule at times to match with responsibilities in BPU.

> My work schedule is really tight, so I have to find ways to balance things. I have to balance work, I have to balance breakdancing, and all other things. --- All I know is that time is created, no matter what. If you love something, there is nothing like, oh I didn't get time to do it

6 RESULTS OF THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

> Children close their ears to advice but open their eyes to example. (Unknown)

The focus group interview aimed to identify the advantages and challenges of BPU as a grass-roots organization and to consider the future development needs. According to Krueger and Casey focus group within organizations have been exceedingly valuable, but they must be done carefully, particularly concerning about how employees are placed in focus groups in order to avoid power differentials. (Krueger and Casey 2009, 189) I held only one focus group and considering the democratic and non-hierarchical nature of the organization I invited the founder of the organization and selected two administration team and two volunteer members. The criteria base was to choose members who are above 18 years and have been part of the organization for 5 or more years, have a relevant knowledge-base and understanding of the organization and have been taking different roles and responsibilities within BPU. To avoid the need of translation all the participants had to be able to communicate in English language. I acknowledge that selecting members who possess different hierarchical roles within the organization may influence what each member is willing to share. Although none of the members in BPU are employees as all of them, including the founder works on a voluntary-basis. Also as the focus of the interview was in the organizational level, the questions did not require personal testimonies.

Focus group discussion took place at the premises of In Movement, a partner organization of BPU. As a researcher my role was to create an atmosphere where each participant would feel comfortable and free to engage in the discussion. My role was to give the topics to discuss about by asking questions, but to let the discussion flow without taking too much control over the situation. As a research technique collecting data through group interaction focus group is aiming to create a relaxed, supportive and non-judgemental environment allowing participants to bring out their point of views and attitudes (Nylund 2014). I brought some snacks and drinks for the participants, trying to avoid the situation of being too

formal. The session was planned to take place evening time from 6pm to 9pm. Due to delays of participants time did not allow us to have long breaks. The session lasted approximately 3 hours, including my introduction of explaining the reasons and values of the discussion.

Maintaining the role of a researcher was challenging during the focus group discussion, but being me a member of the organization influenced the focus group interview both positively and negatively. Participants were willing to discuss about the methods in depth but on the other hand I felt they were confused of my role as a researcher in the beginning. Krueger and Casey advice researchers to consider themselves as the voice or interpreter of the participants, with the task to clearly communicate how participants felt about the topic. There may be different voices and multiple views that need to be presented, and your task is to accurately represent the range of views. (Krueger and Casey 2009, 126)

When implementing the focus group there were some questions needed to be clarified and explained more. I had 2,5 hours of material to transcribe from the focus group discussion. Discussion on work methods of BPU was used in chapter 2, and the discussion on advantages, challenges and future needs will be presented and analyzed in the following section. During the interview a topic of the needs of youth in Uganda also led wings for a discussion on BPU's role in tackling youth development issues in Uganda. Therefore I found it important to add a chapter on the topic giving concrete examples on how BPU aims to response to the needs of Ugandan youth.

6.1 BPU's Role Tackling Youth Development Issues in Uganda

Breakdance Project Uganda promotes leadership and responsibility to prepare the young generation to think for themselves, to lead themselves and to lead others. The vision is to educate the youth to take on leadership roles starting from a young age and to identify themselves as leaders of today. In a practical level BPU mentors people, believes in them and shows it by giving leadership roles to mem-

bers from a young age. One of the participants state that decision-makers in politics and owners of companies are usually very old and argues that some of them are too close-minded to listen to young people because they do not think they can be in charge of things. BPU promotes formal and informal education, by offering platforms for entrepreneurship, providing free skills and outsourcing skills from other institutions by connecting members to other services in order to access new skills. As one of the participants puts it: it is hard to find the heart of development without education. In order to reach sustainable development that exist also after the people are on their own it is essential to cultivate the culture of learning and self-development.

> You can buy all the clothes in the world and throw them to people all the time, but you are not really developing them because you are not teaching them anything. You are just making them more dependent. So it has to be both, where you give something to people as well as providing some skills that they can use to provide for themselves and even for their people

One of the participants finds ignorance as the major problem of underdevelopment. When people do not know what they have they are not aware of their own strengths. BPU takes an effort to combat underdevelopment by building people's self-esteem, teaching people about themselves and the world around them; about the history, the presence, as well as also giving them a change to learn in school. There are many communities in Uganda that do not allow free expression denying the freedom to speak, especially from the young generation. When children grow up in such environment they still don't know how to speak in public because they have never practiced it. Gaining the confidence to speak in public and to speak for themselves individual members in BPU learn to take action and roles to support and develop themselves, their own community and the people around them

Personally as a member of BPU, the major reason why I found BPU as something I wanted to be involved in was their way of welcoming me in to the community. Based on my skills I was placed on the same level with any other beginner who joins the session and as a human being on the same level with everyone else.

For the first time in Uganda I was able to identify myself as something else than a white girl. It played a big role in the way I portray and understand Uganda and Africa today. Inequality within people was identified as one of the key development challenges in Uganda. BPU bridges the gap between people from different social, religious, cultural and educational backgrounds by creating a platform where people can meet at the same level and exchange. Instead of focusing on the background and previous skills of a person, in BPU sessions the fact that each one is a teacher and each one is a student enables a 9-year-old student teaching a 50-year-old lawyer and reverse. Through the community session people have come to understand that everyone has something to contribute to one another.

> There are so many places with an amazing infrastructure but if you are talking to people individually, you'll realize that there is no development. And if that infrastructure is gone, everything is gone. Infrastructure cannot sustain infrastructure. Infrastructure itself cannot sustain mental development or mental well-being and wealth. But if people are developed mentally, they can sustain infrastructure and everything, because that's where development starts

Another major development challenge identified is employment. A majority of Ugandan youth are currently unemployed, among them youth who have finished their education and youth who have dropped out from school. Participant tells that BPU is doing its part by giving out free skills and some members have gotten jobs through those skills and been able to make a living, by doing what they love.

> Some are professional dancers, professional rappers, some of them teach [hip hop skills] in international schools, they are living through that, because of the skills they got through the organization. Also some of the members have gotten ideas and started to be innovative. Because we also love to develop our country, because of the same challenges that we see happening in the country. It is still a challenge but at least as our organization BPU we try our level best

Although the majority of the members are males, especially during the past two years BPU has been able to reach for more females to join the organization. Young girls have taken leadership roles by leading the gratitude and communication sessions and by teaching classes and participating actively in community

outreaches. In a male-dominated environment females sometimes have to push to stand out and receive recognition, but on the other hand it motivates them to work harder. With the increasing amount of female members the organization is putting effort in supporting the education and empowerment of girls by including more girls in the school sponsorship program and by supporting the empowerment of girls through informal art education. One of the short projects directed for female members with the intend of girls empowerment was a choreographed dance piece "Proud to be a b-girl" that united 20 female members of BPU and was performed in front of hundreds of people in Hip Hop for Society 2015 –event. The performance had BPU members from Uganda, Finland and Canada.

6.2 Advantages of BPU as a grass-roots organization

One of the participants state that BPU tackles real problems of the youth by using a creative and active element that easily brings youth to participate and by being open and welcoming to all people. By serving as a platform for a diversity of people the organization serves as an open platform for people of different backgrounds to meet in a neutral environment and develop new ways to understand life in general. The long-term members of the organization take on peer support roles to work as role models for the younger generation. Through hearing and reflecting other peoples' stories members have started to find solutions to their own problems, as for him the organization is a force to go in depth with physical health and into understanding the reasons behind own actions.

> It is creating a new community of diverse thinkers and also it is bringing another level of creativity and also a way of doing things, or looking at things, tackling real issues or problems, and also another way of understanding how things work around

Another advantage of BPU as a grass-roots organization is the workforce. As BPU is built by its members and connections, some of their programs can be effective although operating with a low budget. BPU receives support from other organizations and from the people and communities they work with, because the organization is rooted in the places they operate from. One of the members states

that people in the communities are not always aware of the problems they deal with and may feel exploited when someone comes with questions and advices. Therefore it is essential to build trust by understanding the ways the community operates before taking any action. Vice versa it is important that the people understand what BPU stands for and the way it operates.

BPU being rooted means that the members are able to see how the problems evolve positively or negatively, knowing exactly what kind of issues the community is dealing with. As a member says: we don't bring a knife to a gun fight. As a grass-roots organization BPU receives first-hand information which enables them to help people in the way they need to be helped, avoiding certain actions that could harm peoples' dignity. One of the participants tells that he has witnessed the work of big organizations who run their activities in Uganda from another continent and the people in charge of the organizations may never have visited the communities they aim to help. When employees working in the field report the issues to them, the information might be watered down before any solutions are made or the solutions are not applicable by the time they reach the communities. The advantage is therefore that BPU is connected to the people, understand and are aware of their issues, being able to take action in the moment it is needed. The support is relevant but of course limited to actions that do not acquire great financial resources.

Members recognizes another advantage in having genuine ambassadors of their work, as people who spread the word about BPU have experienced the work in action and got involved in it. There are children whose parents have visited the community sessions and other activities of the organization and reversely members have visited the homesteads of other members to create a connection with their families. Also the partner organizations and international visitors are invited to be part of the community sessions to see the work in action.

> We get genuine ambassadors who might not be able to reach to thousands of people like celebrities but at least whoever they talk to gets the real information. People feel like they own the organization,

> but the organization doesn't own them and it's not owned by the people in charge. If you think about it, everyone is in charge in some way

Members agree that being grass-rooted helps BPU to identify the right people to receive the right services and opportunities. The organization gives special opportunities for members who deserve them and who they know are going to utilize them so well that they are going to come back to share what they've learned to others. Another advantage identified is the level of independence that it allows BPU to use. As one member puts it: being grass-rooted is an opportunity for BPU to tailor-make its own solutions, for example what it comes to budget. Another participant concludes by stating that being a grass-roots organization saves BPU from unnecessary bureaucracy.

6.3 Challenges of BPU as a grass-roots organization

The results of the focus group discussion shows that main challenges of the organization are financial. The rapid growth has created more financial costs than the resources of the organization are able to cover. Breakdance Project Uganda operates as a grass-roots organization and the structure has served the needs of the organization during the nine years of operation. BPU is not registered as a non-governmental organization and therefore is not qualified to receive allowances despite some individual donations and sponsorships. At the moment the organization needs income to run its daily activities, such as paying the rent of the space where community sessions run from and the office room used and to send more members back to school.

> No matter how much we run the organization with a low budget and with volunteer members, there are still things that require money. You can't just go to a place and tell them we have an event free of charge, give us a free venue. We have our own income generating activities, we are still strengthening them, but also sometimes we kind of need to juggle to be able to run the daily activities

Another issue raised in the discussion is that none of the members are paid salaries of the work they do. BPU members formed an administration team that at

the moment consists of the founder and two other adult members. Administration team works several hours daily to run the activities of the organization, but none of these members are paid salaries.

> They are always doing BPU work but they don't get paid, because financially we can't afford. Through that challenge people are starting to lose focus. Because sometimes they need to go to some other places where they can get money from

The members of the organization hope to expand its existing programs in the near future but cannot do that before creating new ways to generate income. BPU has four branches that be located far distances from each other. BPU does not have enough funds to cover the transport, food and accommodation of members -necessities needed to establish a regular cooperation between these four branches. There are also local and international visitors who would be willing to offer their free services and skills that could benefit the members in different ways, but as their resources are limited there is a challenge every time to find a space to organize those activities from. The financial difficulties create a chain of other challenges. My interviewees feel that to operate with full power BPU needs its own center to run its activities from. Again to have a center the organization needs money to buy or rent land and dedicated people committed to build and run the center.

Other challenges that BPU currently faces are about the human resources, motivation, time-management and representation. BPU has hundreds of members, but currently only a handful of people work in the administration team. Some members who previously were part of the administration have left the country or lack motivation to work for free as they have financial responsibilities to fulfill. Many people have also started to use the advantages of the organization to build their own careers. Reasons for doing so differ as some members do it for basic financial needs and others for strictly selfish reasons.

> It is really kind of disturbing in many ways, whereby the organization empowers people, they get opportunities and they get skills, but it gets to a point where some people have to be begged to come and

> play some roles. Which means that some people have to get over-
> loaded by work to do

The challenge to motivate people is alarming since the rapid growth has in-creased the amount of members who only learn skills but do not to give back to the community. The real challenge is that some of those people spread false im-age of the organization and of hip hop culture which can ruin the reputation from those members who have taken time to understand the depth of BPU and the art form. Younger generation who grow up within the organization see the members as their role models. One of the participants state that if there are people who only possess great skills as b-boys and b-girls but do not contribute to other needs, that is the example the younger generation receives.

Another challenge that came up is the need to have the right people to represent the organization. There has been a number of projects that invite BPU members to come and represent the organization, both locally and internationally. In some cases BPU cannot decide themselves who goes and represents as the organiza-tions have their opinions about it. The people who receives those chances are not always the people who BPU would choose to represent themselves and cre-ates suspicion among other members on which basis the members are chosen. Also within the organization the decisions are not always based on fairness and mutual understanding as the members to represent are chosen through voting and some member favor their friends. This has created some dissatisfaction among members.

6.4 Ideas for Future Development

In the future members see that the organization will grow stronger because of the open-mindedness and flexibility of the organization. BPU's strength is seen in having people involved from many backgrounds and people who understand the vision are contributing to the development of the organization by sharing ideas. One of the participants visualize BPU changing the meaning of the noun Ugan-dan from being born in Uganda into having the feeling and the heart for what goes

on in Uganda and in the lives of people living in the country. He believes that the idea is going to spread through the members and the vision is going to be shared and interpreted in a lot of different ways to suit people in different countries and communities. BPU uses hip hop as a tool because that is what they found relevant to their communities, but if they had a different tool they would be using it to achieve the same things.

BPU members share the same visions that at the end of the day people could live off their sweat as b-boys and b-girls in Uganda, instead of branching into more commercial dance styles to earn money. The vision of income generating opportunities was one of the motivators to initiate Break-Fast Jam -event. Break-Fast Jam team hopes to attract more sponsorship to support the breaking scene in Uganda and East-Africa. As event organizers they are keen to see how the hip hop culture is growing.

Hip hop has made it possible for BPU members to be who they are. Members believe in the energy that exists in them as a community of hip hop artists. One of the participants tell that the power within hip hop community do not have to change the society right now but it brings something positive to the lives of the members and through them to others. As a 23-year-old BPU member puts it:

> I hope the authorities could see how much hip hop pays in the lives of the youth and I would also love to see them getting on board to embrace this culture which really means a lot to the youth. There is a lot of potential in it to develop small communities, groups, nations and even the planet as well, because of the beauty behind it; peace, unity and love. How about peace, unity and love –funded? For more knowledge to the community, for more sustainability for the nation, for more advocacy, for more change. It is through music that people can tackle real issues, to develop each other and the nation and everything

7 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION ON THE RESULTS

> If you want to change the fruits, you will have to change the roots. If you want to change the visible, you must first change the invisible. (T. Harv Eker)

Krueger and Casey emphasize that throughout the analysis process, the researcher should remember the purpose of the study as the depth or intensity of analysis is determined by the purpose of the study. Having a clear purpose makes the work of a researcher more efficient and effective. They further note that at times the purpose of the study is narrow and elaborate analysis is not needed or appropriate. (Krueger and Casey 2009, 113-114)

As a reminder, the purpose of this research has been to study Breakdance Project Uganda from individual and organizational level. The purpose to study individual members is to identify in which ways their engagement to BPU has transformed their lives and supported their empowerment. Through these findings I am also able to analyze how the main goals of BPU have been met. The purpose to study BPU in organizational level is to present the work methods of BPU and to identify the role of BPU in youth development and the advantages, challenges and future needs of the organization.

As per Krueger and Casey when writing the analysis, in case there are themes that repeatedly came out, a researcher can structure the written report around these themes rather than around the questions, or combine some questions. (Krueger and Casey 2009, 122) I am using thematic analysis looking at the different themes emerged from my research data. Norman Denzin argues that interpretation of qualitative data is an artful political process without a single interpretive truth but narrative or storied accounts. The process of analysis, evaluation and interpretation is always an ongoing, emergent, unpredictable and unfinished. Based on Ray Rist's idea Denzin argues that qualitative researchers can isolate target populations, show the immediate effects of certain programs on such groups, and isolate the constraints that operate against policy changes in such

settings. (Denzin and Lincoln 1998, 275-281). Adrian Holliday discusses about preserving coherence and original richness of the collected data. Referring to Adler and Adler (1994) when written accounts contain a high degree of internal coherence, plausibility, and correspondence to what readers recognize from their own experiences and from other realistic and factual texts, they accord the work and the research on which it is based a sense of authenticity. (Holliday 2007, 107-112)

Empowerment evaluation is an evaluation approach that aims to increase the likelihood that programs will achieve results by increasing the capacity of program stakeholders to plan, implement, and evaluate their own programs (Fetterman and Wandersman 2005). Chelimsky (1997) has described three purposes of evaluation. Evaluation for development collects information to strengthen programs or institutions, evaluation for accountability measures the results and efficiency of the programs, as evaluation for knowledge aims to increase understanding about factors by underlying public problems. (Fetterman and Wandersman 2005) This research evaluates the accountability that measures the results and efficiency of the work methods of BPU and the development needs identified in focus group discussion. Although the principles of empowerment evaluation has not guided my work process, the nature of my research and data analysis incorporates much of those values. The principles of empowerment evaluation defined by Fetterman and Wandersman are improvement, community ownership, inclusion, democratic participation, social justice, community knowledge, evidence-based strategies, capacity building, organizational learning and accountability (Fetterman and Wandersman 2005, 2).

7.1 Empowering members: How are the goals of BPU met?

BPU aims to bridge the gap between people of different backgrounds. In a survey by Harvard University Institute for Economic Research, Uganda has been revealed as one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world with more than

40 indigenous ethnic groups speaking different languages and habitants and migrants from around the world (Daily Mail 2013). The reign of terror during the rule of Idi Amin that divided the country in pieces and the diversity that the country still possesses has created a challenge to build a national identity that would unite all the people in Uganda. BPU members interviewed come from different tribal, religious and economic backgrounds and hip hop is something they have found as a common interest. Known as a cultural movement above the race and religious beliefs, hip hop culture welcomes differences and has potential to unite people who might otherwise live separate lives. BPU being is free of religious, political and tribal movements offering an equivalent platform for everyone to express and learn from. In his article 'Hip Hop: A Culture Above Race' a hip hop pioneer and DJ Skeme Richards writes that hip hop has become the common definition of peace that has settled rival gang disputes and brought tribes at war together while connecting Bronx to Finland, Africa to Switzerland, Azerbaijan to South Korea and beyond (Red Bull BC One -blog 2015). Based on my findings in BPU members feel included and free to express themselves as the environment does not allow bullying or hatred.

Personal identity develops from attachment or ownership towards something that a person feels that defines him/her as a human being. The concept of social identity was first introduced by Henri Tajfel (1972), defining social identity as that part of individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership (Petkova 2005, 12). Tajfel's idea gives freedom for identity to transform over time, not necessarily being tied to the place of birth or to a culture and condition in which one grows up in –but to what an individual feels most attached to. Based on my findings, BPU members interviewed, connect their involvement in BPU with their social identities. Common factors present in individual stories of members are the sense of inclusion and freedom of expression as indicators to the formation of positive identifiers and self-discovery. My results show that BPU has offered a platform for its members to do what they feel connected with and what feels relevant to their interests. In Uganda most of the de-

cisions concerning youth are made by adults, instead of discussed about to-gether. On the other hand the freedom of all citizen is highly controlled by author-ities. Young people rarely have possibilities for full self-expression. By giving op-portunities for children and youth to participate in decision-making, the gap be-tween children and adults narrows and in some cases, becomes invisible. Men-toring in the organization is a two-way process done by both the adults and the youth. Although young adults within the organization have the responsibility to be the first hand role models as children will follow their actions no matter how nar-rowed the power-structure is. The value of listening advises from both older and younger members emerges from the mutual respect and realization that also chil-dren should participate in decisions that influence their lives.

BPU aims to build young peoples' leadership skills and self-esteem. BPU does informal youth work and uses bottom-up approaches rather than top-down. Even though the atmosphere and approaches of BPU support the positive transfor-mation one can attend the weekly sessions of BPU many years without realizing what the organization is about. Usually people who misuse the skills have learned the hip hop skills but did not internalize the knowledge beyond the elements of b-boying, rapping, graffiti writing and DJ'ing. People who are more aware of their own living environment and the world outside it, are more likely to find solutions to their own issues. Based on my findings BPU exposes its members to new systems and new ways of thinking, enabling their mentality to transform. Most members interviewed mentioned that BPU has helped them to gain confidence. Before they have been suffering from a low self-esteem but through BPU and hip hop their self-image has changed and grown from confident b-boys and b-girls into artists and social actors who take responsibilities to care for themselves and others. Members working in administration team have been provided with mana-gerial skills to coordinate and lead people and to draft basic proposals and budget guidelines. Based on my findings administration team members have learned es-sential skills that help them now and can help them in the future working life. Taking on leadership roles from a young age is visible in the present actions of my interviewees. Starting as leaders in BPU community sessions they have now

taken their skills outside to other communities and projects, working locally, nationally and internationally.

BPU aims to promote positive social responsibility and social action. Based on my findings BPU manages to provide tools for personal capacity building. As it shows in my findings, when used right and positively, the skills and knowledge people gain through the art form has influenced their behavior also beyond the dance or rap cypher. In BPU hip hop has served as a tool to engage youth to participate and through the developmental methods and approaches the organization has managed to teach essential life skills. None of my interviewees started break-dancing or rapping to promote positive change, but to be part of a movement that to them looked like something cool and attractive. As Abramz states in Shake the Dust –documentary: when people get attracted to something, when something is cool, that means there is a lot of power behind something that is cool (Shake The Dust 2014).

BPU teaches leadership and communication skills for all members despite their age. My findings show that gaining weekly experience of public speaking at communication and gratitude sessions members feel more confident to speak in public places and communicate with people in other settings, such as in the working place. Members have come up with their own initiatives, representing as role models of the work of BPU. Group of BPU members initiated Break-Fast Jam -event which has grown rapidly since 2011 hosting international visitors from around the world.

BPU aims to increase access to formal and informal education. The creativity that youth gain from expressing themselves in the dance and rap cyphers, creating their own dance moves and rhymes, is not to be overshadowed. My interviewees are examples of youth who have not been able to complete basic education or attend university, but their participation in BPU has provided them with an informal educational model offering applicable skills and awareness, and supporting the growth of creative thinking. Today the school sponsorship program is able to send more members to school than at the time when my interviewees joined the

organization. According to Uganda Vision 2040 over the last fifteen years, the total primary school enrolment has grown to about 8.7 million pupils, representing over 90 per cent of the primary school age going population. (Uganda Vision 2040, 2007). Although the percentage of primary school enrollment shows positive growth the amount of students who continue to secondary schools is approximately 40 percent (Uganda High Commission 2009). Uganda Vision 2040 promises to offer opportunities for students to excel in whichever skills area they are placed, from sports and the arts, to technical and vocational to research and academic pursuit. The vision states that talent identification will be an on-going exercise throughout the education system so that the system is robust enough to capture and nurture excellence and innovation at point. (Uganda Vision 2040, 2007) Ugandan president Yoweri Musseveni has signed the Vision 2040, but in 2014 he criticized art education and the Faculty of Arts during his speech at Ndejje University in Luweero stating that graduates from such departments can hardly solve anything to steer national development (Daily Monitor 2014). Instead of blaming the subjects for being false more focus could be put on the teaching methods and perspectives on how to improve the art education to be useful for development of Uganda and Ugandan citizen.

As the education system still lacks certain areas that would enable the children to participate more actively and practice creative skills in school, BPU is one of the organizations playing a role to support the informal education of children and youth. It is highly important that children would access to both formal and informal education. Based on my results in many areas BPU responses to those needs of youth that school system lacks to provide, such as communication, leadership skills, creativity and decision-making. BPU members currently cooperate with primary and secondary schools providing creative education by facilitating dance and rap classes and creative games. BPU has potential to work with universities in Uganda. Through lectures and internship possibilities from BPU university students could learn how to apply their knowledge in practice and learn new approaches. BPU has established some cooperation through annual projects with the dance students in the Department of Performing Arts at Makerere University, but BPU's role could be deeper. BPU could offer new perspectives especially for

students in education, development and social work departments. If this kind of co-operation could pay off, it could send a powerful message to the government showing that arts education, once applicable and of high-quality, can play a role in steering national development.

BPU aims to generate employment opportunities. In his book Moral Imagination Lederach discusses about the importance of finding the own calling, the deeper voice, and to follow it. Lederach states that in the truest sense of the word, vocation is that which stirs inside, calling out to be heard, calling out to be followed (Lederach 2005, 24). In this light vocation is a calling instead of a goal to pursue. Knowing who you are gives you a sense of place in this world. BPU supports its members self-discovery, which relates to Lederach idea of finding one's calling, deeper voice and a sense of place in this world. Hip hop culture is a passion for all my interviewees and it makes them strive for change in themselves and in their surroundings. Members who are in working life told in interviews that their work feels easier and they are eager to face challenges because they have got used to facing those challenges within hip hop culture. Other members see their engagement to BPU as a direct reason why they are now in the working life. Some of my interviewees have been employed to teach hip hop and other creative skills in schools and organizations. This percentage of members who are paid for teaching outside BPU is still very small compared to the amount of the capacity that the organization possesses.

Generating employment opportunities is a challenge for BPU. Most of the members who search employment outside the organization struggles with time-management as their work responsibilities often overlap with the time they would spend in BPU activities. Traditionally in Uganda children support their families when growing up by bringing money to the household. Managing time between paid work and BPU work is a challenge to most of my interviewees who are now at the age when they are in pressure to take responsibility of their own lives, bring income to their families and participate actively in BPU activities.

BPU aims to connect local and international artists. Members of BPU are continually in contact with other local and international artists. Through Hip Hop for Society –event especially local artists meet under the same roof and have a chance network with each other. Where BPU cannot provide weekly networking with other artists, Kampala is culturally active city where numbers of other events offer possibilities for artists to communicate, share and cooperate. Many international artist have travelled to Kampala to share with BPU members, bringing constantly new approaches and ideas to the table. Similarly BPU members, like most of my interviewees, have travelled to Europe and America to participate in youth development programs, perform in events and to teach workshops.

7.2 BPU and future prospects

BPU members have formed a community based on mutual interest and in time the relationships between people have grown deeper. For most of the members their best friends are within the organization and they spend their free time together. As a common lifestyle in hip hop culture members have formed crews that support each other on a dance floor, but even more importantly, in life at all times. In the organization members work as colleagues and on free time they refer to each other as brothers and sisters, as extended family members. Some members also live together as flatmates. Establishing close personal ties within the organization can be both an advantage and a challenge. When someone fails to show respect or lacks interest or time to participate in the daily running of the organization, it hurts others more personally when the relationship has developed into a friendship. On the other hand BPU is an organization that has helped many people to step out of exclusion because of the welcoming nature of the organization. The sense of communality and bringing together people who share the same passion and mentality has established life-long relationships between members locally and internationally. As Abramz puts it: hip hop is something that all of us can be a part of, something that can be a part of all of us, it doesn't belong to any of our traditional cultures. The way hip hop happened in Bronx, is not the way it needs to happen in here, because we're living in two different realities (Shake the

Dust 2014). Based on my results members prioritize BPU as a family and the organization has provided them with a platform to find each other in a first place. Members see each other as peers who understand one another and share similar experiences.

The engagement in hip hop and the positive way that the organization uses the art form has built a community with a strong will to work towards a common goal. A good amount of youth have grown and found their calling through Breakdance Project Uganda. As the organization keeps growing it is essential for everyone to respect one another and understand the differences in the daily lives of members. It is in high importance that everyone would be honest about their personal lives and aspirations. During the focus group discussion members had strong opinions on the involvement of members in the daily running of the organization, which now seems to have fallen on the responsibility of a small group of people over-working. On the other hand it would be important that the organization could plan ahead, instead of deciding on meetings on a day's notice, when some people have already planned something else for the time. As there has been numbers of communication issues within members that at worst can ruin the communality the organization is built on, I do identify a need for more openness and straightfor-wardness in the communication between members. These issues are essential in order to maintain respect between the members, as colleagues, friends, broth-ers and sisters.

In focus group discussion members identified that there is more ignorance among some of the youth now, than there was when the individual members I interviewed were growing up. When more and more people have started to admire the break-ing skills over the skills to be a teacher and a student within the community, the members who dedicate their time working for the organization lack the positive recognition they deserve. This also correlates with the lack of motivation and lost focus among active members. Maintaining the responsibility as role models and peer supporters who act according to the values of BPU, is crucial now when the organization is growing rapidly and a few mentors cannot handle the work load.

BPU is in need to reform its basic structure to be able to build the organization to match with the rapid growth and needs of both the old and new members. BPU is still operating in the grass-roots level. To meet the purposes of the organization it is important to stay in close cooperation with the communities it works with, but the resources from the communities and partners can only cover some of the current needs. This raises a question if the organization has grown bigger than it can sustain itself on a grass-roots level? When Abramz started BPU he had no idea of the scope the organization is going to reach up to. In the beginning the organization did not have paper work to take care of and meetings were held informally while standing in a circle after practice sessions. As the amount of members kept growing rapidly and new methods and cooperation partners brought in more requirements, members discovered the need for an office to run their administrational work from. Currently BPU rents an office space from In Movement, an organization that also uses arts as a tool for youth work. At the moment BPU has very dedicated children and adolescents willing to volunteer and take on responsibilities, but the organization is lacking young adults willing to work in the administration team and the common reasons are financial. There is no guarantee that the same issue will not face those active and responsible adolescent once they reach the age when they'll have to start to earn income.

BPU is in need to be registered as a non-governmental organization. If done so, there is a possibility to generate more income. Even though the organization is not willing to become dependent on outside aid, there are still possibilities to receive sponsorships and funding to cover the costs to pay salaries for people working in administration team and to establish own youth center. In time more sustainable ways for own income-generating activities could be established. From my findings I am able to identify a direct connection between the lack of motivation of members and the need to generate income. BPU has been built on a volunteer work and this structure has been able to carry the organization for almost ten years. Next year in 2016 the organization will celebrate its 10th year anniversary. There is a lot of evidence to prove the importance of the work as the results of it are members who can speak for themselves and take initiatives to create new projects and support more people to become self-sufficient members of the

society. Registering BPU as an NGO will bring more paper work and more bureaucracy for the administration team to handle, but if the organization can receive funding to pay salaries for an amount of members, I believe it would directly correlate with their level of motivation and effectiveness. For many members the pressure and need to generate income to sustain their everyday life creates a problem with managing time to both make money and be active in BPU. BPU members are willing to work for the organization because they share the values and respect the organization for the influence it has had on them. On the other hand there are members who are building their futures and to be independent they need income. As one of the goals of BPU is to generate employment opportunities, instead of sending qualified people elsewhere they could hire some of them to work within the organization and the organization itself would benefit from the capacity of its members. With salaries and work contracts BPU could establish a more stable administration team able to work for a full day. They both need it and deserve it.

From building a base for stable administration BPU could start developing the idea of its own youth center in Kampala. The center could facilitate all the activities of the organization apart from outreaches and work in schools and other organizations. The idea of a BPU youth center is a common dream shared by all of its members. By having its own center BPU could become more organized with time management issues, activities and other responsibilities. Running the community sessions from their own center would give the members freedom to decide the dates and times for the activities and to make sure the time is enough to run the whole program. The center could offer free practice space for members every day and facilitate other youth development programs of BPU in cooperation with other partner organizations. When visitors come there would always be a space to organize activities with a short schedule. BPU could also hire the space for other institutions and artists and through that, earn income to sustain the place. The center to be beneficial for all the people who are currently members of BPU Kampala, it is important to be located nearby the communities BPU has now operated in. The challenge is to find enough space in Kampala, which is populous and densely built. If the compound would be big enough there are chances to

expand the services in the future. As a further idea the center could also facilitate a small shop for the members to sell their merchandise throughout the year and a short accommodation for members from other branches. BPU is known locally and internationally and I believe there are good possibilities to fund its own BPU center. As a summary the main needs of the organization are now to maintain the respect among members, to be registered as an NGO, to be able to pay salary for the administration team and to establish own space for the organization to run its activities from.

Despite the current challenges, members of BPU see the future of the organization and hip hop culture in Uganda in a bright light. As the organization has operated almost 10 years on a voluntary basis, members believe they are able to face a lot of challenges without giving up. The members are the most valuable ingredient of BPU as the essence of the organization exists in its people.

7.3 Discussion on Empowerment

Referred to in chapter 2 as a basis for anti-oppressive practice, society and people create divisions and socially embedded beliefs within structures, institutions, cultures and relationships, leading some groups to believe they are superior to other groups of people in the society (Chouhan 2009, 61). People living in poverty in Africa often receive monetary aid through different organizations. Monetary aid lacks sustainability and objectifies people to become the targets of aid instead of being the actors of their own life. As a result people become aid-dependent and disempowered to act. When the aid system cannot provide anymore they lack skills to support themselves. According to Dambisa Mayo, an author of Dead Aid, the trouble with the aid-dependency model is that Africa is fundamentally kept in its perpetual childlike state (Mayo 2009). This system prevents individual Africans from growth and from taking an initiative to develop their own country. As my research findings show, youth who grow up in disadvantaged areas can suffer of a fractured self-image caused by the media portraits and thoughts of incapability as a result of a lack of resources and accessible services. Many children have

inadequate amount of parental care and guidance. Likewise some of my inter-viewees, orphaned children can grow up thinking that their lives do not matter as much as others. Young people who come from such conditions rarely see the potential and inner power that exists within themselves. Low self-esteem and the lack of positive identifiers disempowers young people and prevents them from taking action to better their life conditions and the conditions of communities they live in. Many people turn to aid that may fulfill their first hand needs, but create a long-lasting cycle of dependency.

As Thompson argues the dependency avoidance is the primary feature of em-powerment work and the relation between the one helping and the one being helped should be a form of exchange (Thompson 2007). By focusing on feeding people's minds and offering services that are accessible to all, BPU is giving a platform for youth to start a learning process that can provide tools that enable them to support themselves. Guiding people to find power within themselves and the community they live in by teaching skills, discussing and consulting people, BPU teaches to use their inner capacity instead of leaning on outside aid. En-couragement supports the growth of self-esteem and more confident person is more willing and able to participate, make decisions and self-determine his/her life path. Empowerment of people is a way for sustainable development. As per Fetterman self-determination is the ability to govern oneself or chart one's own course in life (2001), and it involves skills such as the ability to identify needs, establish goals, create a plan of action, identify resources, make rational choices, take appropriate steps or action and evaluate short- and long-term results. Self-development is part of the theoretical foundation of empowerment evaluation and a desired outcome. (Fetterman & Wandersman 2005, 12) Thompson's idea, pre-sented in chapter 2, state that empowerment process has to happen with the full engagement of the people it concerns and in some cases empowerment cannot be achieved (Thompson 2007, 15). BPU has been able to attract youth to partic-ipate their activities and with the right amount of support and peer mentorship most of the youth stay, understand the vision and give back to the community. Anyhow, as no one cannot be forced, the decision on what to do with the skills learned stands with the member. As I mentioned earlier members interviewed for

this research are long-term members of BPU and for some other members the process might be entirely different.

Based on the interviews and focus group discussion, the participants are able to self-determine their life paths. By establishing their own projects, working as entrepreneurs, behaving responsibly and being active members of the society, they are able to use their full potential to achieve goals they have set for themselves. Considering that most of the members interviewed have grown up in disadvantaged conditions, to achieve such spirit of hope, confidence and determination takes effort and needs a supportive community. In chapter 2 I introduced Thompson's empowerment concepts. One of Thompson's empowerment factors is the concept of human agency -to be able to make decisions for oneself and be responsible for one's own actions. Second factor, resilience, refers to the idea that power comes from inner resources. (Thompson 2007, 17) Growing with an incapable mindset, some of my interviewees have come a long way to recognize their inner capacity. When they finally have, the actions of members show determination to utilize that capacity. Another skill BPU members have obtained and the main empowerment factor of Thompson inspiring this thesis work, is the ability to use voice. Being involved in decision-making processes, taking roles as leaders and talking in front of other members in weekly sessions has improved members ability to use their voice positively. Members I interviewed are images of self-determined and innovative Africans. As per Abramz Tekya the media shows portraits of the starving kids, the wars, the unemployment, and people begging all the time. What the media shows is part of the reality, but they also need to know that the real Africa is not only what they see in the mainstream media. (Shake the Dust 2014) In Ted Talk an author Chimamanda Ngozi raises up an issue of the danger of a single story arguing that the single story creates stereotypes and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue but that they are incomplete, making one story become the only story. She continues that the consequence of a single story is that it robs people of their dignity and make the recognition of our equal humanity difficult, as emphasizing how we are different rather than how we are similar. (Ted Talk 2009)

Growing up within an environment of rapid cultural change has got Ugandan youth restless and dissatisfied with the traditional norms where wisdom and leadership are emphasized for the elders, while young people are not given the opportunity to lead (Action Aid 2012). As urbanization is growing rapidly youth are constantly under the influence of western beliefs that fight the values and norms of their cultural heritage. In urbanized Uganda, sports and arts are potential fields of employment yet to be acknowledged by the authorities. Sports and arts has engaged many youth as a part of a social network. According to Action Aid - reportthe potential of developing sports and arts into a profession, employment opportunity as well as income generating source is high, but to achieve this there is need for a deliberate investment in building sports and arts as a profession (Action Aid 2012). Youth are in need of resources and facilities to execute and further develop their talent from. Acknowledgement and investments are needed from agencies and policy makers to realize this potential and urge youth programs that support youth, especially those with challenged background. Meeting these needs supports the empowerment of youth and therefore opens potential possibilities to use youth interventions to support the social and economic development in Uganda. The potential in youth of this generation is high, but often hidden and waiting to be uncaged.

Although art-based approaches for development are fresh and original, they are no longer out of the common. In changing circumstances, flexibility, ability to adjust and the courage to stay open-minded has become essential tools for capacity building in communities. Art has proven efficient means in empowering and educating youth to take agency over their own lives and act as community leaders, as the artistic processes foster their capacity to deal with the unexpected changes, inevitable in the path to sustainable development. Where today hip hop culture has grown its market value attracting media the negative components have influenced the positive image of hip hop as a youthful expression, boosting images of substance abuse and oppression of women. Even though media is often creating one-sided image of the culture, there are numbers of dedicated people who have stayed true to the culture promoting the basic values of peace, unity, love and having fun. There are rappers speaking about the cultural, political

and socio-economic challenges facing communities, b-boys and b-girls exchanging energy and passion for the culture in cyphers, graffiti artists sharing knowledge through creative art and DJ's going deep into the music and moving the crowd with it. The positive influence of hip hop culture in many communities is actually what is constantly keeping youth out of criminal activities, building creativity and self-determination among young people engaged with the art form. Whether it is Kontula in Helsinki, Namuwongo slum in Kampala or Bronx in New York, the ways in which hip hop is interpreted differ, but what youth learn through it is what combines the practitioners as one worldwide family. Hip hop, as it is, cannot empower all these youths, but the way it has been used and the skills that have been shared through the art form in Uganda and elsewhere, the community it forms and the self-disciplined learning process that the skills require, is what holds value.

8 PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

> The ultimate expression of generosity is not in giving of what you have, but in giving of who you are. (Johnnetta B. Cole)

This thesis work has combined my studies of social services and community development work with my passion for hip hop culture. In the process I have been challenged to look at my field of study and my topic of hip hop from many different angles. This work has been influenced by hip hop culture and by theories and methods of empowerment, youth work and community development practices. Writing this thesis has been a challenging process, where the field work was rather easy; the writing process has pushed me to work on my skills of academic writing and analysis. This work is done for the hip hop practitioners and for the youth work field. Presenting this thesis work at Hip Hop Studies: North and South –conference in Helsinki 20th November, it reached the eyes of a third audience of hip hop scholars, who research the phenomenon of hip hop culture from critical perspective. As a future graduate of social services and community development work I am aiming to use hip hop as a tool to work with children and young people. Therefore this study has been relevant for my professional growth of looking at more creative approaches to social work practice. Working closely with people outside the office settings is my strength in this field. Personally and professionally I find it challenging and therefore interesting to use creative tools and take initiatives in the working life. My personal and professional growth is closely tied to Breakdance Project Uganda, as I see myself as one of the people the organization has empowered. BPU members showed me how hip hop can be used as a tool to engage, teach and develop young people. That was one of the main reasons why I decided to apply to study in Diak. During the 3,5 years of studies I have been able to combine these two interests, especially in my placements, as each supervisor wanted me to use my skills in dancing at the workplace. I have grown professionally and personally, bridging the gaps between these two worlds in my life. In my future work after graduation I aim to give of who I am to the people I work with, as I believe that by being genuine in the work I do is how I can support the positive transformation of people.

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Mugizi Taye, Kibuuka Oscar and Kaweesi Mark 16.1.2015
Ddamba Faizal 22.1.2015
Drichiru Keysha 23.1.2015
Nambalirwa Joan 29.1.2015
Tekya Abraham 31.1.2015

APPENDIX 1: CASE STORIES OF EIGHT BPU MEMBERS INTERVIEWED

Case 1: It is through hip hop that I have grown to be more open-minded and confident

My name is Joram or Jora MC. I am a rapper and a b-boy. I am an admin team member in Breakdance Project Uganda.

I grew up with my mother and sister after my parents divorced when I was around 6 years. My mother struggled to pay the rents and find affordable schools so we kept switching living areas within Kampala. I was a stubborn child and when my mom sent me to a boarding school in a village things got worse. I was selling alcohol at school and escaped school premises to go clubbing. I was suspended from secondary school but they allowed me to attend final exams from outside. When I joined BPU in 2007, through-out the whole year I kept on being the same person. I had not gotten to understand the vision and the mission of the organization. I used to come and practice and just go back and do whatever I want to do, chill with friends and do a lot of bad stuff. My friend Felix introduced me to Abramz and so many other old members and through them I started to get the vision of why BPU is there. I started changing slowly by slowly. I am one of the administration team members of BPU and I coordinate the School Sponsorship Program. I share what I have learned, it can be rap or it can be breaking or how to organize hip hop events. We also go to teach and share in different places like in the prison and in different communities all over Uganda. BPU has made me who I am and I am thankful for the BPU people for always supporting and believing in me that I can do it. I do rap music a lot and currently I am working on my album. I am a member of Break-Fast Jam and BentLines team and a founding member of YAEP! –Young Artist Exchange Project. Through hip hop I have managed to innovate many new things, like the rap cypher at BPU community sessions. Through hip hop I have reached a lot of places that has ena-bled me to learn and I hope that also other youth in Uganda could have a platform to innovate something through what they like to do. I see my future bright, as long as I stay focused and keep working hard. I am also lucky that I am connected with so many peo-ple.

Case 2: Hip hop has put me in front, has made me to engage with a lot of people I didn't know

I am Fahadhi, b-boy Sky. I am a member of Breakdance Project Uganda. And I am a student. I was born in 1993 and I am 22 years old.

I grew up in a family of 15 children. My mom was a musician and my dad was a coach. We didn't grow up with my dad, we used to stay where my mom used to live. But my mom past away three years ago from now. I used to be just home, this guy who don't care about anything. I used to be stubborn, I used to hang out with bad groups, I used to smoke, I used to steal and not care about anything. I joined BPU late 2008. I had never seen hip hop before in my entire life and that was a time when I really had a smile on my face, I was like oh I wish. Then Abramz called me out: no matter where you come from just come and we learn and we teach you for free. Then I started joining in, coming for practice, but I was still shy a little bit. Then one time when I was there they called people to battle for a shirt and that's the time I really gained the confidence and I won the battle. Now I am a three-time champion of Break-Fast Jam 7toSmoke –battle in Uganda. When I started to do breakdance, all the people in BPU taught me how to share. Right now I am done with secondary school and Breakdance Project Uganda was paying my school fees. In my whole family I'm the only person who dances and they are proud of me. I am a three-time champion of Break-Fast Jam 7toSmoke –battles in Uganda. I've got many opportunities to travel abroad through BPU. I've been Holland, Poland and Italy participating in cultural exchange and youth development programs. I am one of the main characters in Shake the Dust, a documentary about breakdancing in Uganda, Cambodia, Yemen and Colombia and Eric and in 2014 I travelled to USA for the screenings. I have been representing in youth camps and I have been sharing my skills through teaching. Hip hop is a kind of a person who you really trust. This is a person who you tell a problem, this is a person whom with you really feel free to share, learn, love, joy, everything positively. Right now I have been focusing on dance. I want to represent myself and I want to represent my country and BPU internationally. I want to go and teach breakdance, and share the message of hip hop with all those communities which are not seen in the media. Also I really want to work, get a job that gives me full-paid salary.

Case 3: I would say that hip hop is the freedom and the way to get to know who you are

My names are Faizal Dhamba aka Mostrixx. I am a member of Breakdance Project Uganda and a member of Tabu Flo Dance Company. I dance by my profession, fusing urban styles with an afro groove and African traditional dances.

I come from a family of seven siblings from the same dad and mom. We are only two brothers, so I grew up with girls. I had a good childhood. It has been hard times and good times, but always have to move forward. I was all over the place, doing what I am not supposed to do and being punished all the time, because I wanted to keep playing all the time. I would say I was not a bad child, but I was stubborn and active. I was a child who really liked to express myself with movement and I loved dance and music. In school I participated in music, dance and drama -program. My mom is my inspiration, she does traditional dance. I didn't go far in school. I started from baby class and completed my senior 4 majoring arts. Most of the things I have learned are through meeting different people with different experiences and by participating in different workshops. I joined BPU in 2010 after seeing their performance. I was really blown away. That was my first time to b-boying with my own eyes. The first time when I went to BPU my focus was just on learning the moves, but the things I have learned and the people I have met since then, have changed my life introducing me to the art of hip hop and breakdance. The way people see me has changed as they know that I am a dancer and through that they give me respect. They see me as a teacher and as a lesson. I have got a lot of opportunities to travel to places that I had never thought of when I was going to sharing to learn those moves, meeting people, sharing and teaching. When I was in the Juste Debout contest in 2014, it felt like I was dreaming. When my name was announced as one of the people who had made it to the world finals in France, I couldn't believe it. I remember when I was walking to that stage I thought that whatever I am doing it is going to be like a celebration. It changed the way I take dance and art, showing me the bigger picture. Now I can say that it all is possible through dance. I want to share my experience and my movements with people. That is what makes me happier and that is what is always in my mind, to share my feelings to people through dance. Dance makes me feel relief and naturally happy. My biggest dream is to dance and I believe that by working hard I can put all my dreams in action and go far.

Case 4: I see hip hop as a self-discovery, as a tool that can help you understand

Kifuko Maureen Drichiru is my full name, but I am also called by Key or Keysha. I am 24 years old and I am from Lugbara tribe. I am a member of BPU. I am a graphics designer and florist, and I used to be a fashion model.

I was born in a family of nine siblings, four girls and five boys. My parents separated when I was 3 years and communication with my father was challenging. My dad passed

away when I was 10 and my mom passed when I was 12. We were used to simple life and it was tough for us as we basically raised ourselves, but we were there for each other. We had to cut all communication on our father's side. That is why we only know one side of the family. It was complicated and they didn't see us as their kids, they looked at us like foreigners. I attended primary and secondary school and did a diploma in graphics design. I got introduced to breaking through my brother who knows Abramz, it was around the time Hip Hop for Society in 2007 was happening. That is when I picked the interest as this was something unique and I wanted to be unique from rest of the dancers. After finishing with secondary school 2009, my brother let me join BPU during the school holidays. At this time I was a shy person. I would dance in the corner, keep into myself so much, because I was getting used, adjusting to be around with people. I am currently working as a florist and events designer in Sheraton hotel. I feel I have changed and I have grown up. When a task is given to me at work, it is easy for me to do it or approach it, because I am used to inventorying, to try new stuff in BPU. If I take long enough without dancing I feel like I am missing out something that can actually help me to balance my life. That is why I make sure that I try to create time to be able to dance. As a b-girl, I am among the few people who are doing this. There are so many things that actually motivates me, and I know that most of them are positive. I have won the b-girl battles in Break-Fast Jam 2013 and in Hip Hop for Society in 2014. I have also been part of the team teaching in Luzira Prison. If it wasn't for BPU I don't think I would be this person I am right now. Before I was constantly reminded that I am small, that I should be a model. I was called names like walking stick and skeleton, but never was I called names in BPU. When my mom passed away I was a kind of a person who suffered in silence, and I didn't care how people saw me, I was so arrogant. BPU being there to nurture me, to try to show me that you may walk away but you are home, when you come to a place with so much of positive energy being shared.

Case 5: Hip hop is a culture that gives you an opportunity to reform things, you can always add something to it

I am Mark, a social artist, basically using hip hop and other creative arts to empower, unite, inspire and educate the community people.

I am the fourth born in a family of five children. My mom and dad separated when I was 4 years and our mom left with us. Dad had so many women, so I don't even know how many siblings I have in total. From my mom and dad we are 5, and those are the ones I

really consider as my family. So we lived with our mom and it was a really tough time. She didn't have a job, so we lived in different slums. I remember certain things we were used to and we could not have those anymore. My elder brother used to work so we can pay the rent. My dad passed away when I was 6 years, but I had not seen him in 2-3 years. We got a scholarship to study in a nursery school where kids from quite well of– families go. But when my mom realized that she couldn't afford keep the five of us in town, she sent us to our grandfathers' place in a village, while looking for work. Mom was really stressed and when she decided to bring us back in town, it stressed her even more. In the process of my mom working and being stressed, she was in a lot of pain and they discovered she had a cancer. She was given three weeks to live and passed away in March 2005. Since then just my brother and I remained together and we had to figure things out. It was tough with school fees and we kept changing between schools. I was really good in grammar and got a scholarship to do primary 7 because of that. Our relative gave us a free room to stay until we finish primary 7. After that my brother got a place to stay and I kept switching between different available accommodations for many years, at one place I has to sneak in at night time and leave early in the morning. To pay my living costs I started making shoes and learned all the different tricks on how to make them. I started b-boying around 2008 after seeing some moves in Youtube –videos and some guys were doing it at school. They never told where they learned it from as they wanted to be seen as the best. Later I met Oscar who told me about BPU and invited me to come for their session. I joined BPU because of the moves, not because of the idea, but after starting to understand that ideology slowly by slowly, it really helped me to stay on track. I was about to finish secondary school and my brother gave me money to complete senior 4. I got money for registration to final exams from BPU. I remember going to the BPU meetings for the first few times having a mentality that I am a young kid, an orphan from the ghetto, and I was surprised when they were asking everybody to share their ideas. Through BPU I've got chances to travel abroad to Denmark, Poland and Italy. I teach in schools and in BPU I can always refill my approaches. I am also an administration team member in BPU and a chairman of Break-Fast Jam -event and BentLines team. I have learned the skills to organize, manage and coordinate events from BPU. It is a community where I am a leader but at the same time it is a place where I am humbled to be led. In future when I have kids I want to raise them to be really understanding and exposed; asking questions and stuff. B-boying is the strongest element in my life and I want it to be a way to earn me a living. I hope Break-Fast Jam and BentLines to grow

and start generating income and I am practicing coaching and facilitation skills to facilitate body conditioning workshops and use creative approaches like creative games to educate young people.

Case 6: Being around hip hop is another spiritual world -you just need that loudness for people to express themselves

My name is Oscar, I am a Ugandan, 23-years of age and a human being, that is a photographer and a human being again.

I was given birth by a teenage mom. My dad is nearly not alive in my life, not that my dad died, but I grew up with a single mother who is my friend, my lover, my sister, my mom and my dad at the same time. I have four siblings, one of them who I share the same dad with. So I come from a challenged family. I grew up switching communities, because of having a challenge with finances. My mom had to look for affordable schools for me and my siblings, so that we can carry on with life. I have been introduced to different religions and I have practiced all the mainstream religions in Uganda. I did my childhood education with my mom and then I went to primary school and I did half of high school. That is how much I spent time sitting behind the desk looking at the teacher. My most important educational background is getting introduced to BPU. I joined BPU in late 2006. I saw a performance with the craziest stuff I have ever seen and I was thinking that is something I have to do. I heard these guys practice at sharing youth center. I got introduced to b-boying and through that to the depth of hip hop culture, what it means to be a practitioner of the art form. Being introduced to different religions throughout my childhood and now being introduced to another religion, hip hop, gave a lot of meaning to my life. When I got to know about graffiti as one of its elements, there was a moment when graffiti was my girlfriend. We could spend the whole night together, nearly four days a week. I was asked to lead an activity within the organization and became a leader of the visual arts session where we do graffiti and photography. We started Break-Fast Jam and that is a huge accomplishment in life. I was introduced to photography through BPU and now it pretty much brings food on the table to support me as a person and my family at large. People know me as a photographer who is documenting hip hop culture in Uganda. Being able to capture those real moments when people are passionate about something, that is my passion too. For me it has been like putting a puzzle together, uniting all the pieces of knowledge, as a process that has led to who I am today. I want to be known for my work and I hope to do justice to hip hop. I have seen that there is a

need for people to be able to be financially stable through hip hop, breakers to be financed. I see myself being part of an administration through what I do as a photographer or as one of the founders of Breakfast-Jam, to bring that income to them. I am currently working on a book and in future I want to create a production company as a project where youth are able to create visual arts; films, graphics and photography. I want to see Break-Fast Jam on another level. Most of all, I want to see my mom comfortable and I am working towards that.

Case 7: I don't do what people want me to do but I do what my heart tells me to do –hip hop is my life

My names are Joan, Jojo. I am 18. I live in Kampala.

I was living in a village before I came to town. I've grown up with my dad and different stepmothers, not with my real mom. Since I was 3 months I was sick all that time until I turned 2 years. She was maybe so tired of me being sick and moving around in different hospitals, that she couldn't show me the love I expected. I was cured in another country and when returning to Uganda she took me to my dad. Since I was 3 years old I have not been with my mom. No one used to take care of me during the day. My dad woke up very early in the morning to go for work and even come back late when everyone is asleep. He woke me up so I can take a shower and dressed me in clean clothes and gave me something to eat, because often I had spent the whole day without eating. I've grown up in a difficult way but I thank God that he gave me a chance to live. Whenever I get something that stresses me I think about that time when I was young and get that energy so that I can do anything. I used to go to school, but sometime they had to send me back home because my dad used to delay paying school fees. I used to get different work, like fetching water, so that people can give me money to buy my own clothes. At the time of primary 7 I decided to ran away from home and came to Kampala. I started working in Kampala moving around selling clothes. I started breaking in 2008. That's when I came to BPU. I used to dance in church, because since I was younger I wanted to be a good dancer. My friend told me there is a project and they teach free of charge. When I came to BPU I was somehow still shy. I came for practice and Mark used to teach me something. I was a quick learner. At the time I came to BPU the person I used to stay with started chasing me away. So there was a guy called Gavin and he took me his home to stay with him and two ladies. He used to give me transport to come for BPU practice and my life started changing. I want to make myself to be a hardworking girl, not to get

a guy and all the time ask him for the money. I just want to work for myself, so that people they can respect me the way I am respecting myself. Sometimes I go to different areas and I teach and talk to them and share my story. I want to go back to school, but I have to work so that I can go back to school. I want to be a business lady selling my own clothes and jewelries. In dancing, I am proud of myself and people are proud of me. I feel very happy every time I come to be myself, I come to be a b-girl. Every time when I come to perform, to teach, I feel happy. BPU has given me the chance to be what I wanted to be since I was young.

Case 8: Through hip hop I got to find a family that I never had as a kid

My name is Tayebwa. I am a Ugandan. I am an MC, a breaker, a social worker, and I use art to study, to entertain people and to speak. I use breaking and MCing for therapeutic matters.

I was born at Mulago in Kampala 1989, but my background is in Bushenyi. My mother is a nurse by profession. She was the oldest girl in a family of about six boys. My father was a doctor, he studied insects and he was one of the people in Uganda in the 70's and 80's who were lecturing at the universities. He was going to UN to speak at conferences. My father died before I was born, so I never got to meet him. As I grew up I could understand that I didn't have a father, but the neighborhood where I grew up, there were other youth like me. My mother had to find alternative ways of making money, so she never had time to raise us as kids. After school we would be playing and staying at the neighbors watching TV. My mother left to the UK when I was still a young kid, to get a better life to be able to support us, and my sisters also went with her. I grew up without parental care for more than 10 years. As I grew up hip hop started speaking to me. There was a lot of music and culture in my life as a kid. That time we were very poor staying in a single room, so we had to sell matooke (green bananas) to survive. When I entered primary school I already knew many songs in my head. I was listening to albums from Eminem, Mobb Deep and Dr. Dre. During the break time I was drumming the desk with my fingers and I would rap, so I got to be famous in primary school. After primary school we moved, I was only left to be with my brother, he was the only person I was close to then. So by the time when I was in senior 2, I was a young gangster. I would steal and break into peoples' suitcases and open padlocks using wires, because I had to survive at that time. I wasn't getting any money from anywhere. I was smart in class, but I was never settled at school because I needed to look for money to pay school fees. But despite all this, I

was always a happy kid and music gave me so much hope. In 2006 I was in senior 4 and I got to know about BPU when reading a featuring article and seeing their perfor-mances. I knew that is what I'll have to do and Joram told me where to find them. Growing up without that love and borders from guardians, the community I found in BPU became my home. I stop hustling in late 2008. I am one of the founding members of YAEP and we travelled to Europe in 2014 to perform and teach workshops. The trip inspired me to go back and battle my childhood and use hip hop as a tool to speak through and share knowledge. I am still a BPU member but now I work in other communities to teach more and help more people to know what I've learned. Hip hop has been so good to me. I have faced challenges from the culture that I want to share with the world, because I believe that the next generation will lead the world for better.