

Poverty, Shame and Social Exclusion

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Needy and vulnerable but poverty is not my identity: Experiences of poverty in Uganda

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List of Acronyms/Abbreviations.

BAT	British American tobacco
CBF	Community Based Facilitation
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DFID	Department for International Development
ERP	Economic Recovery Plan
FOWODE	Forum for Women in Development
FY	Financial Year
GoU	Government of Uganda
LC	Local Council
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NUDIPU	National union for people with disabilities in Uganda
OTC	Over the counter Pharmaceuticals
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PFA	Prosperity for All
PMA	Plan for Modernization of Agriculture

PPET	Post Primary Education and Training
SACCO	savings and credit
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programs
SPC	Special police costable
TDS	Technical Development sites
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UDHS	Uganda Demography and Health Survey
UGx	Uganda shillings
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHS	Uganda National Household Survey
UNICEF	UNITED Nations children fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
UPPAP	Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment
UPPET	Universal Post Primary Education
USD	United States Dollar
USE	Universal Secondary Education

1.0 Introduction

This report presents the findings of extended interviews conducted in 30 purposively selected households experiencing hardship and low wellbeing. The interviews targeted 30 adults, mostly household heads, and 30 children aged 10-18 years belonging to the same respective households. The purpose of the interviews was to elicit the views of the respondents in regard to how they experience a life of poverty and the strategies they adopt to cope with the associated shame and/or stigma. Poverty or hardship was approached as a complex multifaceted phenomenon, that recognizes that human beings are diverse, impacted upon differently by several factors that include level of income, access to community support, productive resources, voice in the community; and above all access to opportunity. In this context other than focusing on poverty by income level per se, the research sought to further find out how much our respondents have achieved with that income, taking into account that such achievements vary markedly between different individuals.

The study further took cognizance that our respondents' economic options and ability to attain their desired aspirations are affected by their perceptions of what they ought to be and/or achieve in order to be accepted or respected in their society as individuals of worth. This phenomenon that is often referred to as social shame or otherwise known as poverty shame, was core to our analysis, as the research focused on unraveling its consequences for our respondents – one of them being social exclusion.

Throughout the research the social exclusion concept was approached in a negative sense, understood as a process of becoming detached from the community and its structures, threatening collective social values and the destruction of the social fabric. Social exclusion was also seen in terms of outcomes such as inadequate social participation, lack of social integration, lack of power or agency in the community, and uncertainty about the future.

The poverty experiences of our respondents were conceptualized under four broad themes: livelihood insecurity; low income resulting into poor living conditions and low well being; vulnerability to stresses and shocks; and inability to attain desired social aspirations including acceptance and respect as individuals of worth in society. For our child respondents, inadequate social protection and general insecurity in both home and school settings were added as themes specific to their age cohort.

The analysis focused on the adult respondents' experiences of poverty; what they achieved with their meager income; their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with life; and the extent to which they felt their economic options and/or ability to attain their desired social aspirations, were affected by what they felt they were expected to achieve in order to command respect in their community and avoid poverty shame.

The consequences of poverty shame and/or stigma especially social exclusion was a core analytical theme; with a specific focus specifically on its impact on our respondents' social participation, integration and voice in society. For our child respondents, the focus of the analysis was on how they experienced hardship and coped with poverty-related shame both in the home and school arena.

The profiles of individual men and women, and children presented provide a vivid picture of their everyday experiences of hardship, what it means socially to be materially and financially deprived and how they strived to cope with the related shaming.

2.1 Methodology and findings

For purpose of maintaining coherence in presentation and analysis, the methodology section, and findings in the form of the 60 profiles of the interviewees (30 adults and 30 children) respectively, are annexed in three separate appendices

3 Discussion and analysis

3.1 The context of poverty, what it means to be poor.

Our adult respondents described themselves as subsistence cultivators – a livelihood option synonymous with production of foodstuffs for basic family consumption. On top of subsistence cultivation, the respondents also engaged in casual labour (*kupakasa*) doing a range of odd jobs including digging for other families so as to earn income.

Only four households had additional businesses to generate income. No respondent was engaged in formal sector employment. All the child respondents, on top of attending school, also engaged in casual labour work to supplement their family-income. All the adult respondents described their livelihood options not in terms of meaningful economic gain, but just as a means of surviving or getting by. The way they described cultivation or digging indeed suggests that it is more of a way of life – a peasant subculture, than a rational economic choice seeking to generate meaningful economic yields.

In other words farming, as our respondents' main livelihood option, was not practiced as a business, and thus was not driven by need to increase profit margins. Nonetheless they talked of squeezing a 'surplus' from their subsistence production that is sold to earn the much needed income. This income was described by all respondents as paltry and meaningless in terms of meeting their economic needs. It had to be supplemented with income from other activities, especially engaging in casual labor work.

For all our respondents the estimated combined monetary income from sale of agricultural produce, providing casual labour, or engaging in petty trade was very low. Apart from Case A10 who had a large family labour force, bringing in a combined annual income of USD 766, equivalent to USD 2.1 per day; no other family had an annual income exceeding USD340 or USD 1.1 daily. Thirty one percent of the population in Uganda live on less than USD 1 a day (Uganda MDG Report 2010 Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development Report 2010)

The respondents' dissatisfaction was not only with their low income but with what they have achieved with it as well. Their income, *meager* as it is, is spent on meeting pressing family needs including purchase of dietary essentials; other essentials like kerosene and soap, clothing items and other personal effects; paying children's school fees; and seeking treatment in episodes of illness. No respondent talked about investment or reinvestment of their income, or acquisition of economic productive assets like land, cattle, ploughs among others.

The findings indicate that the respondents, as a result of inadequate cash income, are unable to afford or access basic consumer commodities and /or services; which subjects them to a life of extreme hardship and ill being. It emerged that the respondents live directly off the land – hand to mouth, unable to afford basic dietary essentials like sugar and cooking oil. Three of them even talked about often begging for salt or doing without.

All respondents, as a result of earning low incomes, lacked decent housing some residing in makeshift grass thatched structures without facilities for cooking and sanitation, including excreta disposal.



Plate 1: A typical dwelling of our respondents

Four households were landless, living as squatters or tenants. Twenty out of thirty respondents had their children enrolled in lowly ranked, universal primary education (UPE) or universal secondary education (USE) schools where free tuition is provided by the government. Access to safe water for ten households was problematic. In episodes of illness, the families relied on care options of questionable efficacy, like self treatment with traditional herbal concoctions as they could not afford facilities that provide quality care services at a fee. Five families lacked access to kerosene or other forms of fuel for lighting and had no option but to bear with darkness at night.

Overall our respondents' low levels of income did not only translate into material deprivation and low wellbeing per se, but a source of shame as well. None of the respondents expressed pride in peasant subsistence cultivation or providing casual labour as a means of livelihood. Engaging in casual labour, by both adults and children was described as shaming, and leading to loss of status for the families involved. The children especially described it as an option of last resort that is not in any way dignifying.

Overall the respondents' descriptions of their experiences of poverty revealed their innermost feelings vis-à-vis their hardship and low wellbeing; social and material aspirations; and how they behaved when they failed to attain them.

3.2 Shame as a consequence of being poor

In depth analysis of the individual profiles of both adults and children shows that the respondents' low incomes have effects that go beyond material deprivation and ill being; and are not restricted to individuals or families, but impact on the entire functioning of the communities. All the men and women interviewed attributed their experience of hardship to economic challenges especially low income. All respondents had diverse and explicit material and social aspirations that were yet to be fulfilled. The material aspirations described included, among others: acquisition of land; construction of a permanent house; owning livestock especially cattle; operating a viable business; being gainfully employed; and having ample cash and personal effects. Other

aspirations included purchase of a motor bike, a motor car, a solar panel, enrolling the children in a good (non UPE) school, ensuring food security for the family and buying good bedding materials. The respondents' key social aspiration was being accepted and respected as individuals of social worth in their respective communities.

It emerged that the social acceptance and/or respect that the respondents yearn for, is mainly linked to material acquisitions. Twenty six out of the thirty adults interviewed felt that they are not regarded as persons of worth in society just because they are materially deprived. The material deprivation and subsequent social devaluation were seen by all respondents as a source of shame. Many talked of feeling much emotional pain that often degenerates into shame, humiliation or stigma. This is especially so when they compare themselves with their presumably better off neighbours.

As a consequence of experiencing a life of hardship, our respondents had developed a strong sense of negative self evaluation vis-à-vis their 'richer' neighbours. They intimated that their neighbours regarded them with contempt; harbored negative attitudes towards them and associated them with a myriad of negative social values including dishonesty, laziness and lack of focus in life. Evidence of negative self evaluation and subsequent feelings of shame, worthlessness, low self esteem, humiliation, self pity, disillusionment and hopelessness among others, is reflected in the case profiles of all adult and child respondents. (See appendices 2 and 3). A case by case analysis of the 30 adult respondents presented below illustrates this.

Case A₁ Kwamya attributes his family life of hardship to his low income. At the age of 74 he feels he will never attain his economic aspirations that include constructing a permanent house, registering his land, and owning cattle. As a result of failing to achieve these, he is sure he is not accepted or respected in the community as a person of worth and has developed an "I do not care" attitude. He believes that his neighbours harbor negative attitudes towards his family and are always ready to put him down; including grabbing his land.

"I'm the poorest in the community (ndi munaku curu curu) my neighbours overlook me, some are openly hostile to me (abaliranwa tibanfaho abandi bandabya kubi)".

In order to fend off the contempt, real or imagined, Kwamya, is always on his guard, ready for anything. In a nutshell he is a victim of an inferiority complex that is a negative outcome of poverty shame.

Case A₂, Asaba, an impoverished widow does not talk about material acquisitions like land or houses. Her main concern is chronic cash shortfalls and the subsequent inability to afford basic consumer items at home. Instead of assisting her, her neighbours pity her, a factor that subjects her to much emotional pain. She points out that her emotional pain often degenerates into shame. She is convinced that like all poor people, she is regarded with contempt, seen as lazy and dishonest by mainstream society (**buli omu aturora nka abagara, kandi abagobya**). This only aggravates her emotional pain.

Case A₃ Pulakiseda, whose family is landless and living as squatters, yearns for a substantial income that would enable her to attain her cherished material aspirations – a corrugated iron sheet roofed house, livestock (cattle, goats and poultry) and operating a viable business. She feels if she owned such assets, her family would be accepted and respected in the community in contrast to her current situation where nobody accepts or respects impoverished squatters. Pulakiseda is convinced that however much she and her family toil, they will never in their life time attain what it takes materially to be accepted as individuals of worth in the community. Like Case A₁ she has, over time, developed an "I do not care" attitude. Though she yearns to be treated at least humanely by her neighbours, this is rarely so. The scornful, contemptuous way she is more often than not treated by her neighbours; coupled with the negative social values that she is aware the poor like her are associated with in the community; all evoke in her feelings of emotional pain and / or humiliation. She is always on her guard, ready to avoid or endure such pain or shame.

Case A₄, Yosiya, a 45 year old male is much dissatisfied with his social and material acquisitions. At his age he feels he ought to own a permanent house, livestock especially cattle, goats and chicken; and above all educate his children to tertiary level. He also yearns, albeit in vain to be socially accepted and respected in his community. Yosiya is much aware that he will never attain these aspirations **"my concern is basic survival..." (Ebyekitinisa knabihwaho nkasigaza kukisa kimu)**. Nonetheless it is his inability to afford school dues for his children, and lack of a permanent house that he finds most disturbing and shameful. He suspects that his neighbours pity and despise him; and he deliberately avoids interacting with them.

Case A₅, Mande, a 37 year old male, is not in any way near to attaining his social and economic aspirations. His dream is to construct a good house, buy a large piece of land own livestock especially cattle, and a motor car. He adds that in addition to material acquisitions, he also longs to be seen as someone of high integrity. However his hard work and age notwithstanding, he appears to have lost hope of ever attaining his aspirations. His neighbours, he says, treat him unfairly because of his poverty and this, coupled with a personal conviction that he will never improve his worth, evoke in him feelings of worthlessness and shame.

Case A₆, Aida, a married female aged 25 years attributes her low family wellbeing to chronic cash shortfalls caused among others by her husband's alcohol abuse, non transparent spending and family curses. She believes that material wealth is a favor from God, and that it is only divine providence that can extricate her family from impoverishment. Nonetheless her life of hardship makes her feel shame, despair, misery and worthlessness **"...we are indeed badly off, God gave them, they are okay. My family is shameful, I feel worthless" (haka haswaza idi aho nke kitagasa)**.

Case A₇ Ruth, a 40 year old married woman is yet to achieve her desired material and social aspirations that include construction of a permanent residential house, owning livestock especially cattle and goats and enrolling her children in a good private school.

She believes that material acquisitions *per se* can elevate her social worth making her acceptable or respectable in her community. On the contrary however, she is severely impoverished and the prejudiced treatment she is often subjected to by her better off neighbours, evokes in her feelings of hopelessness and shame.

Case A₈ Topista a 35 year old single mother believes that material acquisitions like land, a permanent house, a viable business and nice clothing items can elevate her social worth in her community. She found it difficult to talk about her experience of poverty and literally broke down, weeping. She could not bear being reminded about shameful past incidents of poverty and related indignity.

Case A₉ Byairungu, a 52 year old married man longs to build a permanent house, own land, livestock and personal effects including good clothes. These acquisitions *per se*, he believes, can elevate his social worth and respect in the community. Byairungu however has no hope of attaining his material and social aspirations, and as a result feels despised and worthless in the community.

Case A₁₀ Mujuni, who lives as a squatter desires to buy land, construct a permanent house, buy cattle and settle down. He feels that this would earn him social acceptance and respect in the community. In his current situation his neighbours despise him openly and isolate his family. This makes him feel inferior and ashamed. ***"because I am landless I'm seen as a transient in the community, No one accepts or respects transients"***

Case A₁₁ Maliya , a 52 year old mother dreams of constructing a permanent house, feeding and clothing her children decently, purchasing nice bedding materials, improving her farming activities and enrolling her children in good schools. As a result of extreme impoverishment she acknowledges that these are likely to remain unfulfilled dreams or aspirations in her life time. Though Maliya believes in divine providence, she feels bitter and ashamed when she is treated unfairly by her better off neighbours, whom she feels ought to accept and treat her with respect, her impoverishment notwithstanding.

Case A₁₂ Nyanjura, a 45 year old mother of 12 aspires to acquire more land, construct a permanent residential house, invest in agriculture, buy livestock like cattle and a motorbike or car. She is certain that these material acquisitions coupled with conducting herself with integrity, have capacity to earn her acceptance and respect in her community. Though she admires her richer neighbours, longing to be like them, they in turn openly ridicule and avoid her because of her deprivation. This makes her feel very ashamed. "***nobody renders advice on how I can get out of this situation, no one shares anything with me, instead they gossip about my situation at the trading centre; I feel ashamed***" (mpuura ninswara).

Case A₁₃ Kachope, a 53 year old male wishes to improve his family well being by buying cattle, a motorcycle, constructing a permanent house and starting a business. He is aware that these acquisitions would also enable -him to gain respect and acceptance in society. However, he realizes that he will never attain his aspirations in his life time and has even stopped trying. Kachope nonetheless feels that his impoverishment notwithstanding, his fellow community members ought to accept him and treat him with respect. The fact that they do not, and often openly show him contempt by derogatorily calling him 'kisaati'¹ makes him feel ashamed.

Case A₁₄ Kato, a 45 year old married man is not sure if he is accepted or respected in the community since he does not own a permanent house, a motor vehicle and livestock especially cattle. He says that as long as others do not openly despise him, that alone makes him feel respected. However one day when he asked for salt from his neighbour and the request was rudely declined, he felt extremely ashamed and worthless. "***Omuliranwa nkamusaba omunyo yagunyima , nkahurra nswaire munno nacwamu tindigarukka kusabiriza omunyo***"

Case A₁₅ Mary, a 39 year old mother of 8 aspires to improve her family wellbeing by building a good house, enrolling her children in good private schools, starting a viable

¹ Kisaati is a derogatory reference to casual labourers(bapakasi) in the community, who are often attired in dirty ill fitting garments (bisaati) where they derive this un- dignifying label

business and feeding her family well. She stresses that if attained; these aspirations not only have the capacity to improve her family well being, but also to accord her acceptance and social worth in the community. Mary feels very bitter and ashamed about her family impoverishment, at times wondering if she has not been rejected by God or probably cursed. She however observes that issues of family or individual status are not her direct concern but her husband's; since he is the de facto family head and breadwinner.

"...I am a woman and I do everything single-handedly. My husband doesn't help me and the family needs are many. Whether I am seen as a person of worth or not is not my concern. It is his problem as the family head" (niwe ninyenka).

Case A₁₆ Yezefina , a 41 year old mother of 7 concurs with Case A₁₅, that issues of social acceptance and/or respect are not her concern since she is a married woman. However, she longs to acquire property like cattle, build a permanent house, educate her children in good schools and cultivate using a tractor. Nonetheless Yezefina doubts if she will ever achieve her material aspirations. She says that she has instead accepted her poverty with dignity and her neighbours do not treat her with prejudice.

Case A₁₇ Katusime, a 30 year old married mother of 7, holds similar views as Cases A₁₅ and A₁₆ in regard to material acquisitions, marital status and social acceptance and/or respect. Unlike Case A₁₆ however she is extremely conscious of her deprivation and deliberately isolates herself from her better off neighbours.

Case A₁₈ Iga, who at age 84 was our oldest respondent, is aware that material wealth like good housing and livestock especially cattle and goats, always impart social acceptance and/or respect to one endowed with it. Referring to his situation where he lives a life of destitution, without a roof and property, he stated with certainty that he is beyond shame. His lifestyle where he consumes whatever he earns without a care for tomorrow reflects a situation of someone without any capability or agency, and in a state of existential hopelessness.

Case A₁₉ Joyce, a 65 year old widow longs for a bigger income to enable her to build a better house, and enroll her grand children in good schools. Issues of acceptance or family respect do not concern her. However, she longs to be like her richer neighbours whom she sadly observes are either indifferent or openly scornful of her impoverishment; "as if it was my choice". Joyce was impoverished after loss of her spouse, and is often filled with nostalgia, pain and shame when she reminisces about the past, pre-bereavement better times.

"When I remember how I used to be and compare with what I am, I am filled with sadness and shame. I always cry to ease the pain?" (obunyijukaoku nyali, mpurra oburumu n'okuswara; ningaruka omumaziga.)

Case A₂₀ Eriabu, a 35 year old married man with a family of 8 is of the view that social acceptance and/or respect start with having a family and being of high integrity. He felt that material acquisitions like a business, cattle or motor vehicle though essential are only subsequent. He is aware that his own deprivation, characterized by chronic cash shortfalls, a poor residential house and inadequate land, means he may never achieve his social aspirations despite having the prerequisites-of a family. He always feels ashamed when he is reminded of his poverty by some of his neighbours.

Case A₂₁ Nyamaizi unlike a number of her fellow married women folk, is much interested in acquiring material assets, expressly to gain social acceptance and respect. The assets in question include a good house, cash money, good clothes, cattle, a solar panel and food security among others. She is aware however that this remains a pipe dream. Some of her neighbours openly treat her family members with contempt because of their extreme deprivation. This makes her feel bitter and ashamed (**mpurra nsalirwe, ninswara**).

Case A₂₂ Katongoole a 73 year old man aspires for a bigger income to enable him to start a business dealing in second hand clothes, and increase his farming activities. He observes that for one to be accepted and/or respected in the community he must have a good daily income, own cattle and a good permanent house. He is quick to add

however that attaining social respect is not an issue of his immediate concern and as such wealth accumulation is irrelevant to him. He is only interested in working for daily survival. Katongole nonetheless is bitter and ashamed that his better off neighbours do not care about his family because of its impoverishment.

"My family is poor; I am far behind other families. I desire to be like them but it's not possible. They do not care about me." (tukanakuhara twasigara enyuma. Busaha atufaho).

Case A₂₃ Abi, a landless single mother says that issues of social acceptance and/or respect do not concern her. Nonetheless if she had ample income she would purchase land, build a permanent house, engage in meaningful business, enroll her children in good schools and improve her family welfare. Abi has experienced a unique, difficult past and feels that getting out of poverty has capacity to address her predicament. She is bitter and ashamed that she is likely to live in poverty throughout her entire life time.

Case A₂₄ Efuraziya, a 53 year old mother of 10 is not preoccupied with attaining material acquisitions and, social respect. Though she longs to purchase land, build a permanent house, operate a viable business, and enroll her children in good schools, routine survival is her primary concern. She is nonetheless bitter and ashamed about her extreme deprivation and hardship, to the extent of attributing it to family curses.

Case A₂₅ Alice, a 36 year old married mother of 7, desires to construct a good house, buy land and a bicycle. This, plus having well educated family members and owning a motor vehicle is what she feels imparts social acceptance and respect to a family. She goes on to clarify however, that her family gave up on the latter aspirations long ago. She is nonetheless ashamed of her family impoverishment, especially when referred to derogatorily as ***"kisaati"*** by her neighbours.

Case A₂₆ Fabiano, a 28 year old married man who lives as a squatter longs to buy land and build a permanent house. This, in addition to purchasing a motorcycle and operating a business, is what he feels would earn him social acceptance and respect. Unlike many other respondents he has not lost hope of attaining these aspirations.

However his current situation of extreme deprivation makes him feel inferior and ashamed.

Case A₂₇ Kaija, a 48 year old married man with a family of 12, dreams of constructing a permanent house, buying a motorcycle and acquiring nice bedding materials for his family members. He observes that the above material acquisitions plus owning cattle and dressing smartly would earn him social acceptance and respect. Like Case A₂₆, his current deprivation notwithstanding, he has not given up on attaining the latter aspirations. Kaija is however ashamed of his current situation, especially so when his 'richer' neighbours treat his impoverished family with undisguised contempt.

Case A₂₈ Grace, a 51 year old single mother yearns to start a food vending business and construct a better house. She is aware that she is not socially accepted and/or respected as she owns no adequate land and a motorcycle. However, she has not lost hope and is certain that someday she will attain her material and social aspirations. Grace nonetheless is ashamed of her current situation especially when treated unfairly by her better off neighbours; mistreatment that she attributes directly to her impoverished situation.

Case A₂₉ Topha, aged only 22, was orphaned early and compelled to drop out of school to head the household and care for his four siblings. He longs to acquire livestock especially cattle, goats and chicken and enroll his siblings in better schools. He is aware that he is yet to be socially accepted or respected as a person of worth in the community since he does not own a good house, livestock and a motorcycle. This alone makes him feel inferior and frustrated.

Case A₃₀ Ezaru, a 21 year old woman with six dependants, longs to build herself a house, buy livestock, good clothing items and bedding materials. These material acquisitions she feels can earn her social acceptance and/or respect in her community. She adds however that since she is resident at her brother's place, issues of social acceptance and respect do not directly concern her. Ezaru is however conscious and

uncomfortable with her extreme deprivation, and feels bitter and ashamed when provocatively reminded of it especially by her close relatives

3.2.1 Internalized self shaming- responses of the poor

It emerged from the interviews that all our respondents, as a result of perceived inner images of themselves vis-à-vis their life of hardship, experience self shaming, often expressed as negative feelings or behavior towards self or others. This is elicited in different ways including developing an 'I don't care' attitude; always being on one's guard ready to respond aggressively to any incidence of shaming, real or imagined; and stoic individual endurance of emotional pain.

Other responses include deliberate self isolation; blocking off the mind to sore feelings of poverty and related indignity including social rejection or disrespect. Four respondents justified their hardship and related shaming by attributing them to divine providence, and family curses-issues that are conveniently beyond their control.

Two female respondents chose either to displace their inner felt shame to their husband and male relative respectively, asserting that the issues of social acceptance or respect are not traditionally a woman's concern. One respondent said she has internalized her 'poor' identity with dignity in respect to her life of hardship and has no internalized feelings of poverty shaming. Whether this is real or pretence could not be ascertained.

Another respondent contends that having a family per se, whether or not they experience a life of hardship, is sufficient to gain social acceptance and respect in the community. One respondent who was full of self pity and appeared disillusioned and despondent had convinced herself that being poor and deprived was her destiny in life.

3.2.2 Direct shaming by others-incidences, locus and response.

Twenty two out of the thirty adult respondents recalled experiencing incidents of direct shaming by others, the loci of shaming and how they felt and responded. Six respondents were unable to recall any direct shaming incident and two found it unbearably painful to talk about the shaming incidents, lost self composure and wept openly.

Case A₁ Kwamya, narrated an incident where his most treasured asset, a piece of land was on the verge of being grabbed by his richer neighbour. When he sought arbitration from a local (LC. I) court; the culprit was not even summoned. The complainant felt overlooked because he was poor. To date the incident evokes in him feelings of shame and worthlessness, though he still owns the land.

Case A₂, Asaba felt much pain and lost composure when asked to recall and talk about specific shaming incidents. Case A₃ Pulakiseda talked about two incidents; one where she was insulted without provocation by a neighbour and scornfully reminded about her single marital status and extreme poverty; and another where her grass thatched house was torched with impunity by her landlord. In the latter incident the landlord even had the audacity to challenge "*poor her*", to do anything if she could. She narrated the two incidents thus

"...one day a neighbour insulted me without provocation. She directly referred to my single marital status and extreme poverty. I felt bad at heart, I decided to keep quiet." (akanjuma kubi, yampera obunaku, nobutaba no musaija. Nkahurra kubi ha mutima, kyonka nyacwamu kuculera)

Another incident was when her house was deliberately torched. The suspect, her landlord when confronted scornfully retorted, ***"...poor you, what can you do? I let the issue rest at that but felt humiliated and worthless." Nkahurra kubi nswaire kyonka ensonga nyagireka aho)***.

To date the two incidents, though unrelated, evoke in her feelings of shame and worthlessness.

Case A₄ Yosiya, narrated an incident more or less similar to case A₁. Case A₅ Mande, mentioned an incident where some important people paid him a visit at home. Since his house is bare of any item of furniture, not even a chair, he had no option but to receive

the visitors outside, in the courtyard. The visitors, oblivious of his reluctance to expose his poverty, mistook this as a rude inhospitable-gesture a form of anti social behavior. Yosiya Case A₅ said that he experienced an extreme form of shame (*okuhemuka*) following this incident. He describes the incident thus;-

"...some important people dropped by at home. I kept them outside and we talked from there. How could I open my house to them? Where would they sit? I do not own a single item of furniture-not even a chair. My visitors however mistook me for a rude inhospitable character. I felt so humiliated!" (nkahemuka.)

Case A₆ Aida, narrated two incidents. In the first her uncle deliberately declined to inform her about his impending wedding because he knew she had nothing material or financial to contribute. She felt humiliated and treated like an outcast. The second incident was when she tried to contribute in a village meeting and was insulted, put down and finally silenced by a richer neighbour/participant. She was provocatively reminded that no worthwhile idea can be expressed by a person like her, who resides in a grass thatched house! She felt very bitter and humiliated.

Case A₇ Ruth, who is very poor, and lacking decent clothes, was mocked by her richer neighbour who owns several clothing items. She (Case ₇) felt ridiculed when her neighbour mocked her while at the trading center by asking her when she will ever dress up smartly? She felt ashamed and had no option but to bow her head and keep quiet. She narrated the experience thus;

"...my neighbour has many good clothes and I have very few. One day she mocked me openly, that when will I ever dress up smartly? I felt humiliated. How could I respond, apart from keeping silent?" (nkaswara. Ntamugarukemu, nyacwamu kuculera.)

Case A₈ Topisita behaved like Case A₂ when asked to recall a shaming experience. She lost composure and the interview was prematurely terminated.

Case A₉ Byairungu brought up the subject of contaminated water in the communal spring/well for discussion in an LC meeting. Important as the issue was, he was put down because he is poor. He felt ashamed and stormed out of the meeting in anger.

Case A₁₀ Mujuni, attended a fundraising function and felt ashamed because he had nothing to offer. He ended up making a “big” pledge well knowing that fulfilling it would be an uphill struggle. Nonetheless, he felt happy to escape humiliation at least on that occasion.

Case A₁₁ Maliya, recalled an incident where her straw thatched house was set ablaze. Though the source of fire could not be established, she felt ridiculed and ashamed when some of her neighbours mocked her; that why does she prefer to live in a straw thatched house as if she does not know about the existence of corrugated roofing iron sheets?.

Case A₁₂ Nyanjura complained about her neighbours who instead of sympathizing or sharing with her vis-à-vis her life of hardship, gossip about her impoverishment. This evokes in her feelings of shame (**mpuura ninswara**).

Case A₁₃ Kachope recalled an incident at a local drinking joint when he ran out of money and none of his fellow revelers was willing to share their alcohol with him. He felt humiliated and vowed never to go out to drink again without sufficient money. He also narrated an incident in 2007 when a tree branch fell on him and fractured his leg. He was rushed to hospital where he spent three days without attention, until in frustration he discharged himself. Meanwhile he witnessed presumably “better off” patients being treated. He asserts that he was neglected because of his poverty, and felt ashamed and worthless.

Case A₁₄ Kato one time had a pressing need. He had no salt at home and approached his neighbour for help. He knew the neighbour could help but was shocked when his request was scornfully declined. He felt extreme shame (**okuhemuka**); ended the

hitherto good relationship with his neighbour and vowed never to beg for salt again even if it means eating unseasoned food.

Case A₁₅ Mary, recalled a bizarre shaming incident when her pig was stolen. When the thief was apprehended, he hurled a string of insults at her, reminding her of her filthy stinking poverty. She felt insulted, intimidated and ashamed. Although she recovered the pig, she did not report the incident to the authorities due to fear that because of her poverty, she may not access justice. She summed up the incident thus;

"I felt insulted and intimidated. I recovered the pig but I didn't report the thief to the authorities. I feared I might be treated badly there. When you are poor you never take anything for granted." (omusuma akanjuma kubi, nahwa amaani ebyokumunyegera nyabihwaho. Omunaku tasinga musango.)

Case A₁₆ Yezefina and A₁₇ Katusime could not recall any specific incident of indignity inflicted on them because of their poverty.

Case A₁₈ Iga, who insisted he is beyond shame, talked about being neglected in old age by his children because he is poor. This he stressed is a shame; especially for his irresponsible children.

Case A₁₉ Joyce generally complained about her richer neighbours who are indifferent about her situation or are bad hearted and openly scorn her; as if she deliberately chose to be poor. She finds this shameful.

"Most of my neighbours are indifferent about my situation. Others are bad hearted and openly scorn me as if I chose to be poor" (bampere obunaku nkatirundi nkabweyendeza)".

Case A₂₀ Eraibu recalled a land dispute involving himself and a richer neighbour. Although the dispute was resolved in his favor, the neighbour abused him, referring to him as a hopeless and poor immature man who owns nothing and will never amount to anything. He felt annoyed and humiliated.

Case A₂₁ Nyamaizi narrated an incident where a neighbour eloped with her underage daughter who was enrolled in secondary school. Despite being aware of the gravity of

this incident in legal terms, she felt intimidated and did not file any formal complaint. The latter she knew requires money that she did not have. The family felt humiliated but had no option but to keep quiet.

Case A₂₂ Katongole recalls an incident when he fell ill and was incapacitated. He required hospitalization but none of his neighbours could take him to the hospital, until an area MP came to his rescue. He attributed the deliberate negligence by his neighbours to his impoverishment, a situation he found shameful.

Case A₂₃ Abi recalls an incident where her aunt well aware that she is poor, landless and more or less destitute, scorned her for raising her children in rented premises. She felt humiliated.

Case A₂₄ Efurazia recalls being treated unfairly by her relatives who attempted to forcefully evict her from family land, well aware that she had nowhere to go. She felt ashamed.

Case A₂₅ Alice did not recall any particular incident, though she feels ashamed whenever she begs someone to read or write something for her. She is illiterate and innumerate, a factor she blames on poverty.

Case A₂₆, Fabiano a squatter was forcefully evicted from the land by his ruthless landlord for rent default, despite his pleas for temporary reprieve. The whole incident he affirms was shameful and he blames it on his impoverishment.

Case A₂₇ Kaija recalls an incident in 2007 where a neighbour accused him of sorcery. He asserts that this is the most direct poverty related experience of indignity and shame he has ever experienced in the community.

Case A₂₈ Grace recalls being shamed at a family meeting about her niece's impending wedding. They were discussing the budget, and when she raised an issue, she was rebuked and rudely reminded that as a needy person; issues of budgeting should not concern her. She feels the humiliation to date.

Case A₂₉ Topha used to love school, but was compelled to drop out early to become a household head and take care of his siblings, when both of their parents tragically died at the same time. He described his inability to continue schooling like other orphans, as a direct poverty related experience of indignity. To date he still feels sore, shamed and worthless.

Case A₃₀ Ezaru said that when she was working as a housemaid for a rich family in the community, she was ill treated, despised and always reminded of her extreme poverty. She could not bear the shame and had to abandon the job.

In all the cases where direct poverty related incidences of shame and indignity were inflicted and sorely felt, the locus of shaming was either the neighbourhood, LC court, public meeting place, family gathering, trading centre, hospital and not least the home.

The diverse loci where poverty shaming occurs in the case of our adult respondents, including even the home, means that it is difficult for any poor man or woman to escape shaming by others, and the often associated sore feelings.

3.3 Coping with poverty shame

There was unanimity among respondents that poverty and poverty shaming respectively, are largely phenomena of indignity. The situation is even worse when shaming is done deliberately, with the intent of evoking emotional pain. Thus individuals who find themselves in poverty shaming situations respond or try to cope in different ways. The latter is the focus of our analysis at this juncture. Taking cognizance of the likely effects of idiosyncrasy in respect to how our respondents strive to cope with provocative shaming, a case by case analysis is attempted.

3.3.1 Coping Strategies.

Case A₁ Kwamya, is aware that he is among the most impoverished in the community. He virtually has no voice in the community and even doubts if he can access justice in the local arbitration system. Further he is aware that poor people like him are viewed

negatively in the community, in his particular case as lazy and ignorant. When confronted with provocative shaming, as in the NAADS meeting, he simply withdraws and keeps quiet. He also proudly states that he does not beg and sacrifices all to dress his family decently. These strategies he says, have served him well from time immemorial.

Case A₂ Asaba, says that living in poverty is painful and concealing it to avoid shame is her only option. She is also aware that the poor are seen as dishonest and lazy, devoid of focus in life. She conceals her poverty and the related shame by desisting from begging for anything from her neighbours, however tough the circumstances. She is convinced that by behaving thus, she at least retains her dignity in the community.

Case A₃ Pulakiseda, is aware that poor people in her community are associated with laziness and bad luck. When she was directly insulted in reference to her poverty, she chose to keep silent. In order to conceal her poverty and the associated shame, she desists from begging, even when lacking basics like salt, sugar, soap and paraffin. She also tries to dress well and look presentable whenever she steps out in public.

Case A₄ Yosiya, knows that poor people in his community are associated with negative social values especially laziness and dishonesty. He is openly ashamed of his poverty and often tries to conceal it by withdrawing from society. More specifically he avoids the company of his richer neighbours. He also avoids seeking help as much as possible, and only identifies with those he sees as worse off. This he says is the only way he can salvage his self worth that is at stake as a result of his poverty.

Case A₅ Mande, is not comfortable with his poverty and tries to hide it to avoid the associated shame. He washes his clothes so as to look clean and smart. He also buys clothing items for family members to ensure that they look smart. He makes sure that once in a while he buys meat (beef) and above all he makes effort to behave well and posture as a dignified confident man in the community.

Case A₆ Aida, sees her level of deprivation as disgraceful and tries to conceal it by distancing herself from her richer neighbours, generally living in isolation or identifying only with those she considers equally poor or worse off.

Case A₇ Ruth when directly shamed by her neighbour, responded by keeping quiet. She is aware that the poor in her community are associated with all sorts of vices including laziness and deceit. She hates poverty and often tries to conceal it to avoid the associated shame. For instance she restrains from borrowing however desperate her situation. She also tries to make appearances by dressing well, talking to fellow needy people, showing them unsolicited love and concern. Further she dresses her children well, to ensure they are smart and stand out in the community.

Case A₈ Topista lost composure and did not complete the interview.

Case A₉ Byairungu acknowledges that it is hard to be poor. He knows that he has no voice in the community, and that like all poor people he is perceived with contempt. Nonetheless he says he has internalized his impoverished identity by being what he is, contented with the little he has.

Case A₁₀ Mujuni who is seen as a transient in the community, and is not comfortable with his impoverishment, tried to compete with the rich at a fundraising function by making a big pledge. In so doing he felt he salvaged his self worth which was at stake as he actually had no money to contribute. Though fulfilling the 'big' pledge was a real challenge, at least he temporarily escaped public shaming. (***okuswara omubantu***).

Case A₁₁ Maliya, attributes her family poverty to divine providence so as to avoid shame. She avoids borrowing, especially from individuals. Failing to pay back she notes exposes the borrower to ridicule. Sometimes when she is subjected to poverty shaming, her coping strategy is not to show shame, or simply shame denial. She convinces herself in her sub-conscious that the shaming situation is not real or is only temporary.

"...I convince myself and others that I am doing something about my situation and my impoverishment is only temporary (mboleka nti obunaku bwe kiro kimu kyonka)."

Case A₁₂ Nyanjura, in response to negative attitudes of her neighbours towards her family, withdraws and isolates herself at home. But in response to the incident where she was scorned by her richer neighbour for dressing shabbily, she makes effort to dress smartly and be like her. To enhance her smartness she trims her hair, and applies make up before going to the trading center. Though deep inside she is much aware of her real needy situation, her efforts to stand out in society make her feel good and confident.

"I wash my clothes, trim my hair and apply some cosmetics or make up. Then I dress up and go to the trading center. I feel good though deep inside I am aware of my real situation." (hakiri nanyowe nyehurraho kurungi. Gonze nkimanyire nti ndi munaku.)

Case A₁₃ Kachope, who is aware that poor people like him are treated with contempt in the community, seen as only fit to do odd jobs (*kupakasa*), copes with his poverty by keeping mute when out of his house and not visiting a drinking joint unless he has cash.

Case A₁₄ Kato, after a humiliating abortive salt begging incident, resolved never to beg for salt again. He would rather pretend to have salt at home. Another strategy he adopts to salvage his self worth when facing poverty shaming is deliberate refusal to internalize his impoverished identity. He sacrifices everything to dress himself and his children smartly in an attempt to portray a positive, albeit false image of his financial worth.

Case A₁₅ Mary, is aware that poor people like her are seen as lazy and reckless individuals who lack sexual morals and reproduce prolifically. This and an incident where a thief who had stolen her pig had the audacity to abuse her, shaming her about her poverty, make her loathe poverty. In this context she tries to conceal her poverty

and avoid the related shame by pretending to be contented with her situation, enduring the hardship and avoiding begging for anything especially from her gossipy neighbours. Above all Mary attributes her family poverty to issues like family curses. However this may be seen as a strategy to avoid or endure poverty shame by conveniently blaming it on supernatural factors that are beyond her control.

Case A₁₆ Yezefina is aware that in her community the poor are associated with negative social values especially laziness and dishonesty. However, contrary to most of our respondents she does not try to conceal her poverty to avoid shame. This she says is because nobody treats her shamefully; that she accepted her situation and so did everybody. She is one of the few respondents who appear to have internalized a poor identity in the community.

Case A₁₇ Katusime, does not interact with her neighbours since it makes her feel uncomfortable. Instead she keeps to her home most of the time, and never discloses family secrets. On the few times she ventures out of home, she dresses smartly, plaits her hair and applies make up. If escorted by her children, she makes sure they are also smartly dressed. This she believes buffers her against poverty shaming, falsely elevating her self-worth in the community.

Case A₁₈ Iga, tries to conceal his poverty in a strange way. He convinces himself that he is rich spending whatever little money he has made, recklessly without a care for tomorrow. For him every day is a fresh start. In reality Iga who is aged 84 and more or less destitute, is beyond shame and actually has nothing to conceal. His situation as prior noted may be summed up as existential hopelessness.

Case A₁₉ Joyce, does not like being identified with poverty, because the poor are associated with vices like deceit in her community. As a household head (widow) she singles out failure to provide food for the family as the epitome of poverty, and refers to the related shaming as classical shame (*okuhemuka*). The latter is what she by all means tries to avoid, by striving against all odds to provide food for her family.

Case A₂₀ Eriabu, is aware that poor people in the community are seen as thieves, beggars, underprivileged and above all responsible for their plight. All these are negative attributes that annoy and shame him. To avoid such emotions he tries to conceal his poverty whenever he can. Any money he gets is thus spent on buying good things for the family and he makes sure he is seen spending. He also ensures that his children are smartly dressed, and gives money to his wife to plait her hair. Eriabu's coping strategy portrays a man who is by any means, not ready to internalize a poor identity.

Case A₂₁ Nyamaizi, withdraws and keeps quiet when her richer neighbours despise and ill treat her impoverished family. When confronted with a serious shaming incident, she also opted to keep quiet other than seek redress. She is aware that in her community, the poor are associated with all sorts of bad things including stupidity, illiteracy and witchcraft; a factor that prompts her to keep her distance from the rich. Overall she resents poverty and tries to conceal it to avoid shame. Her strategy is to dress smartly especially during the festive season, conduct herself with dignity and keep family secrets. It is apparent that Nyamaizi is not ready to internalize her impoverished identity.

Case A₂₂ Katongole, is not comfortable with his family poverty and tries to conceal it to avoid shame. He mostly keeps to himself at home. On the few times he goes out, he makes effort to dress well. He also works hard to afford household basics so as to avoid borrowing or begging, that he asserts is shameful.

Case A₂₃ Abi, says that being poor in her community is painful as poverty is associated with all forms of evil including curses and witchcraft. Her strategy is to conceal her poverty by dressing smartly, catering for her children's needs and above all avoiding borrowing or begging. She consoles herself that though poor, she is smart and self reliant.

Case A₂₄ Efurazia, points out that in her community, poverty is seen as a curse, and that poor people are associated with all sorts of social vices including drunkenness,

promiscuity, dishonesty and infidelity. She also observes that nobody wants to closely interact with a poor person. She thus tries to conceal her poverty to avoid the associated shame. Her strategy is to be tight lipped about her problems, confining them to her heart that she likened to a suitcase that stores all her junk including shame and emotional pain. Her other strategy is to dress well in her best attire whenever in public and walk tall, with a 'confident' expression on her face; all her poverty and shame locked up somewhere in her mental **"suit case"**. She poses a question that **"what does it pay to advertise ones misery"**?

Case A₂₅ Alice, is aware that being poor in her community is tantamount to being a thief, lazy and shabby in dressing (*kisaati*). She is thus not comfortable with her family poverty and often tries to conceal it to avoid shame. Her strategy is to confine herself to her home, or to dress smartly on the few occasions she goes out. She observes that those who are shabby look poor and lack self confidence.

Case A₂₆ Fabiano, strongly resents being associated with poverty, as the poor are seen as lazy, illiterate, thieves and generally objects of scorn. He thus attempts to hide his impoverishment to avoid shame. His strategy is to withdraw from mainstream society. He also works hard to maintain his family well, and pretends overall to lead a dignifying life.

Case A₂₇ Kaija, is aware of all the social vices the poor are associated with, including sorcery. One time he was directly accused of the latter. Overall he deeply resents his family impoverishment and tries to conceal it to avoid shame. His strategy is to pretend to be contented with his life, behave well and participate actively in community activities.

Case A₂₈ Grace, like all our respondents, resents poverty and all the negative social values the poor are associated with. She thus attempts to conceal her family impoverishment to avoid direct shaming. Her strategy is to dress smartly despite her sparse wardrobe, and try to stand out in public. She also pretends to exude an aura of contentment and self confidence, relegating her real impoverished identity to the sub-

conscious. Her other strategy is to discourage visitors to her home, and when this is unavoidable receive them outside in the courtyard. She and her family members are also as a rule tightlipped about family secrets, especially those that would expose their poverty and subject them to ridicule.

Case A₂₉ Topha, who is yet to recover from the shameful experience of prematurely dropping out of school to assume family headship as a result of bereavement, asserts that living in poverty is not dignifying. He tries to hide his shame by working hard and avoiding begging. He also tries to dress his siblings decently, be honest and self reliant.

Case A₃₀ Ezaru, despite her acute deprivation resents being seen as lazy and dishonest, and treated as trash (*kisaati*). She thus attempts to hide her poverty and avoid shame by confining herself to her home. On the few times she steps out she ensures that she is well dressed and strives to behave in a dignified manner.

3.3.2 Poor but generous

Most of our respondents, their extreme impoverishment notwithstanding, proudly affirmed that at one time or another, they indulged in a selfless act of rendering help or service to a neighbour or friend. These acts are highlighted in these selected excerpts;

"...I have a friend whom I felt needed a shirt badly so I went home got a shirt and a pair of trousers and gave them to him. I felt so happy inside; I felt I was doing God's work of helping one another." (Case A1 Kwamya)

"...I offered my neighbour free labour. I weeded her bushy garden for the whole day, without expecting anything in return. I felt good and very happy." (Case A3 Pulakiseda)

"...one time my neighbour needed to plant some bananas. He had no suckers. I approached him and gave him the suckers he wanted. I felt so happy!" (Case A5 Mande)

"...yes one time when I visited Kigaya my village of birth, there was an elderly woman dressed in rags. I gave her a dress. I felt a lot of happiness and love." (nkasemererwa nyahura nyina engonzi ha mutima.) (Case A7 Ruth)

"At harvest time I give groundnuts, beans and peas to other people just as a gesture of goodwill. This makes me feel good." (Case A9 Byairungu)

"My neighbour lost a child and was hard up at the time. I voluntarily stepped in and took charge of everything, including meeting the burial costs. I felt very clean in my heart afterwards." (Case A10 Mujuni)

"...last year in November, I gave a gomesi (traditional women's attire) to somebody. I felt very happy in my heart afterwards. I was prompted by God's spirit." (Case A11 Maliya)

"Last year (2010), a neighbour wanted assistance to string his tobacco. I helped him without expecting anything in return. I felt very happy." (A13 Kachope)

"...one time I gave a shirt to a neighbour. I also gave out maize and groundnuts. This made me happy. I felt clean in the heart." (A14 Kato)

"...one time someone needed to travel to Kampala urgently but was stranded as she had no transport fare. I had the money and just gave it to her. I felt so nice especially as a born again." (Case A 16 Yezefina)

"...I met an elderly woman in severe pain. She had a toothache. I took her to Hoima hospital and her bothersome tooth was extracted. I felt so happy." (Case A20 Eriabu)

"At harvest time I give out foodstuffs (sweet potatoes and beans) to my neighbours; just out of good will and love. I feel good hearted and happy to give freely." (Case A 23 Abi)

One time a neighbour was badly off, looking dirty and unbathed for a long time. I gave her a piece of soap and some food. I felt very happy, fulfilled in my heart, because I helped voluntarily and selflessly." (Case A 24 Efurazia)

"One time I freely gave my neighbour a dress. She was almost going naked! I felt so happy in my heart. At least her problem had been solved." (Case A28 Grace)

"In 2010, my neighbour was in trouble. She had nothing to eat. When I realized her dilemma I gave her some food stuffs. I felt happy, fulfilled inside." (Case A 30 Ezaru)

Diverse as these selfless acts of generosity are, ranging from donating food stuffs, clothing items and livestock, to offering free labor or assisting to transport the sick to hospital, a common theme that emerged is that the respondents derived extreme emotional satisfaction from them; satisfaction that was experienced as feelings of rendering unconditional love, good heartedness, open mindedness, warmth, hospitality, spiritual fulfillment and good neighbourliness.

A number of interesting questions may be posed here, vis-a vis our respondents behavior. For instance why should an individual experiencing a precarious life of extreme material and social deprivation behave this way? Is it rational, suggesting altruism or an urge to fill an inner emotional void created by years of experiencing a life of material deprivation and social obscurity? Or is it a negative effect of poverty shame or feelings, judgment and/or behavior leading to the desire to displace shame to those considered equally poor or worse off?

In light of the feelings of emotional bliss that these acts evoked in our impoverished respondents, and the zeal with which they described the acts, suggesting a form of emotional empowerment, I would argue the affirmative to the last two questions. In support of my arguments is the fact that altruism, despite being a quintessence of virtue, is not universal and as such it would not be rational for most of our respondents to behave in a manner that suggests otherwise.

3.3.3 Needy and vulnerable, but poverty is not my identity

Although all our respondents appeared inextricably entangled in a web of poverty, none of them was willing or took pride in adopting a poverty label.

Case A₁ Kwamya, remarked thus; ***'being publicly labeled as poor or needy is not good, especially for a man'.***

Case A₂ and A₃ also resent the poor identity despite having children benefiting from UPE and USE government anti-poverty programs that require a poverty label as a pre requisite for eligibility to register and access the benefits.

Case A₄ Yosiya, remarked thus; ***'...poverty is not a birth identity nor is it one's choice (obunaku tibuzarwa, kandi busaho abwekomera).'***

Case A₅ Mande had this to say, ***'...I feel annoyed and worthless being openly linked with poverty.'*** (obunaku tibugambwa).

Case A₁₃ Kachope remarked thus; ***'...it is very bad and humiliating for a man to be identified as poor, as needy.'*** (kumanywra nka atakwesobora oli musaija kihemura.)

Case A₁₇ Katusime when talking about antipoverty programs like UPE and USE asserted that she does not feel comfortable being labeled poor, needy or vulnerable.

Case A₂₇ Kaija, when talking about government antipoverty programs remarked thus; ***'It is painful to be identified as poor. We are all human beings. Nobody was created poor.'*** (itwena tuli bantu. Busaho aya hangirwe ali munaku.)

Case A₂₉ Topha when talking about his brothers enrollment in UPE schools, had this to say... ***'My brothers are getting free education, that's good. However I feel ashamed when they are openly categorized as poor and needy as if it was their choice.'***

On participating in anti poverty programs he remarked thus; ***"If I join a project for the poor, I may buy everything I want -family essentials, livestock and develop generally. But I will feel ashamed all the same"*** (nabwo nkusigara ,ninswara).

These excerpts provide evidence that because of the painful or shaming way that poverty is experienced, the poverty label or identity is seen as dehumanizing and the epitome of indignity. It is a label that nobody his/her level of impoverishment notwithstanding, is willing to accept and internalise.

The findings show that the resentment of the poverty label is not limited to the individual, but it is collectively extended to antipoverty programs and/organizations that are identified with a poverty label, especially if the latter is among the criteria for eligibility of the poor to participate. Many of our respondents said that they would shun such programs or only participate as a last resort, just to access the benefits like free education, farming inputs and training among others.

The majority of our respondents intimated that by accepting a poor label or identity, they would not only be internalizing poverty shame that is associated with failure and rejection by others, but also self rejection that tantamounts to violating the very core of their inner identity as dignified human beings.

4 Children's Experiences of Hardship and Shaming; Emotional Impact and Coping Strategies

4.1 Children's experiences of hardship.

As per our sampling strategy, all the 30 child respondents came from purposively selected low income families experiencing economic and social hardships. However, their poverty background notwithstanding most of the children (28 out of 30) had distinct career and social aspirations. Ten desired to become nurses, seven medical doctors, and the rest respectively dreamt of working as accountants, teachers, engineers, lawyers, clergy men, drivers and musicians. Only 2 had no specific career aspirations. Most of the children believed that attaining their aspired careers would enable them to escape their current life of hardship and lead better lives in future.

It's worth noting that no child preferred a livelihood option similar to that of his/her parent. Our child respondents were much aware that their parents' livelihood options (mainly peasant cultivators or casual laborers) lack potential for meaningful social or

economic liberalization. Many of them became aware of this at an early age, the earliest being 7 years (Case C27). Their parents' low income that translates into acute poverty and hardship both at home and school was attributed to the livelihood options that they (parents) chose or were compelled into as a result of illiteracy and subsequent lack of opportunity.

The children were aware that their parents' livelihood options are not only undignifying but also lack capacity to extricate them (children) out of poverty, and attain their career aspirations and a life of dignity. In this context all of our child respondents expressed feelings of bitterness, frustration, inferiority, hopelessness, exasperation, worthlessness and shame.

When describing their life experiences at home, they complained bitterly about poor living conditions especially lack of decent accommodation, bad feeding, and lack of personal effects especially clothing items and bedding materials, lack of or poor hygiene and sanitation, alcoholism and domestic violence amongst parents. Lack of facilities for reading and absence of privacy were also cited among the hardship experiences at home.

Though a number of children took pride in their homes, pointing out that where one is born is not his/her choice, others stated categorically that they were ashamed and regretted being born in their home. Given that all the interviews were conducted in the home environment, often with parents around (though out of ear shot); one can only imagine the magnitude of emotional turmoil within these young minds when they openly despise their birth circumstances, and the implications for their adult lives.

For this category of children, their home is obviously their first arena of shaming; shaming that is not only attributed to prevalent material deprivation, but also to how the children emotionally feel about their poor, struggling parents.

4.1.2 The home as an arena of shaming.

Excerpts from the profiles of our child respondents provide evidence that the home is the locus where children initially experience shaming- shaming that is mainly a product of their inner conscience and perceptions. For instance Case C₁ Josephat had this to say vis-à-vis material welfare of his home.

"My home doesn't compare well with others in the community. This affects me negatively, others are rich, and have good houses and enough food. I feel ashamed." Josephat further takes no pride in being born in his family. He had this to say, ***"...children of other families are in good schools. Our house is poor. The kitchen is grass thatched. The latrine is grass thatched, yes I regret being born here, but it motivates me to work hard."*** Josephat has a number of things he would like to do to change life at home, but unfortunately is unable to. ***"...if I was able I would increase family income, eat good food like rice. I like rice. I would also buy a car and construct a good house with a nice compound. I feel frustrated and ashamed because I'm unable to change anything."*** (mpurra ekiniga n'okuswara).

Case C₂ Monica, points out that in terms of material welfare her home is really badly off, not comparing favorably with others in the community. This affects her badly. ***"Yes I am affected. It's so bad. We toil so much, yet we are so poor. It's a shame."*** Monica openly regrets being born in her family. ***"Yes I regret, I eat so poorly, dress so poorly; our beddings are so bad, sleeping is a problem."***

Monica singles out inability to afford most basics in life, and rarely eating meat (beef) as the aspects of home life she resents most and finds most shameful. She points out that if she was able, she would change life at home by providing better food and clothes for her family members. Her inability to do anything to change life at home evokes in her feelings of inadequacy and shame, ***"...it feels so bad, like when you are unable to buy yourself a good dress and when you go for a wedding party everybody is smartly dressed and you are shabby, you feel inferior and ashamed."*** (mpurra ninswara njwaire kubi omubugenyi.)

Case C₃ Priva, says her family is very poor; that with their almost collapsing residential structure no other family can compare with hers by way of wellbeing. **"Our house is a real shame" (enju yaitu etuhemura).** However Priva expresses no regret for being born in her home. **(Omuka niho omuka). "It is only the poor house I resent, other hardships are tolerable."**

Case C₄ Rose, says that in terms of material welfare her 'home' is very poor and does not compare favourably with others in the community. She sums up her home situation thus... **'I am ashamed of my home, I feel so inferior'**. Rose sometimes regrets being born in her family especially when **"I am dismissed from school and my friends remain studying."**

The aspect of home life that Rose resents and finds most shameful is having no proper residential house. **"My parents separated and my fathers' hut got burnt. I live in a grass thatched makeshift structure with my mother. It is also in a poor condition. When friends come to visit I feel very ashamed."** (nkwatwa ensoni). If Rose was able she would build a house and clear the bush around their homestead to create a semblance of a home environment. **"Right now I do not have a home. I feel like I live in a bush."** Her inability to do anything to change life at home has left her full of despair. **(mpuura ntaina amani).**

Case C₅, Anthony, says that in terms of material welfare, his home does not compare well with others in the community, **"...my family is poor compared to others. Sometimes I get annoyed and feel inferior (nkwatwa ekiniga, nimpuura ndi wa hansj)."** Nonetheless Anthony has no regrets about being born in his family, because as he puts it. **"Where one is borne is God's providence; God is the giver of everything."** On top of the poor living conditions (bad house and scarcity of most consumer basics), Anthony says that alcohol abuse and domestic violence are aspects of home life he resents most. **"My father drinks too much, and fights with mother. The neighbours laugh at us, and I feel ashamed."**

Anthony says that if he was able, he would change all this, and also construct a new house, kitchen and bathing enclosure at home. His inability to change life at home makes Anthony feel frustrated, ***"I have no money and I am still young. I cannot do anything. I feel angry and frustrated."***

Case C₆ Anne, acknowledges that even by local community standards her home material welfare does not compare favorably with other households. ***"...I'm badly affected. Unlike other children I'm shabbily dressed, have no shoes and my hair is unkempt. I was born and raised in this home, and I have no regrets. However I always feel ashamed and inferior"***.

The particular aspects of life of hardship at home that Anne finds shameful include poor housing, lack of a kitchen, lack of basic furniture especially a table and chairs and chronic cash shortfalls. If she was able, that is had money, these are issues she would change first. Her inability to do anything to change life at home evokes in her feelings of frustration and hopelessness.

Case C₇ Joy, says that in terms of material welfare her home is not even worth comparing with others in the community. ***"We are very poor, our house is shameful. I do not feel happy"*** (*tuli banaku enju yaitu ekuswaza, tekusemesa*). Joy expresses regret being born in her family, ***"Yes I regret. Feeding is poor I sleep on a tarpaulin (tundubale). What is there to be proud about? The situation is not good."*** The dilapidated makeshift structure that goes for a residential house and the dirty surroundings are the particular aspects of home life that Joy finds particularly disturbing. ***"Look at our grass thatched house, it is dilapidated and ugly! Look at the courtyard; everything is dirty and scattered about. Everything here is a shame especially when visitors come home"*** (*enju, ezigati-hali okakurora ha kuswaza. Obutuba nabagenyi tukwatwa ensoni.*) If Joy was able she would hire labourers and build a good house. ***"But now I am young, not yet well educated and unable to get money. It's a pity I cannot do anything"***

Case C₈ Joseph is not proud of his family material wellbeing and describes it as appalling, not comparable with that of other families in the community, **"...our wellbeing is of very low standard, the way we live is extremely bad. It is shameful."**(*embera yaitu mbi muno, ekuswaza*). Joseph however has no misgivings about being born in his home, despite the poverty **"...the hardship is painful, it makes me feel bad and inferior but this is my home."**The aspects of home life that Joseph resents and finds most shameful include the shanty dwelling structure, chronic lack of money and lack of decent clothes. If he was able, he would construct a permanent house, accumulate cash and buy good clothes. His inability to do anything to change life at home evokes in him bad feelings including hopelessness and worthlessness (*mpurra kubi ndi muntu atyo, ntainayo kunihira kwona*).

Case C₉ Godi, says that in terms of material welfare his home doesn't compare favorably with others. This makes him feel inferior. (*mpurra ndi wa hansa*). However Godi doesn't regret being born in his family. **"I have no regrets being born here, it was God's providence."**The particular aspects of home life Godi resents and finds particularly stressful include the poor residential structure, and domestic violence. Godi says that if he was able, he would construct a better house, buy a fertile piece of land and motorcycle. He feels frustrated about his inability to do something to change his family impoverished situation.

Case C₁₀ Tom, says that many families in the community are better off in terms of material welfare than his. This however does not bother him and he has no regrets whatsoever being born in his family. **"Many families are richer than us, but I do not care I am proud of being born in my home. My parents are caring and that's what matters."**

Nonetheless, Tom says that there are some aspects of home life that he resents and finds shameful. **"Our home is in bad shape. I dress poorly and we do not have a reliable means of transport. Sometimes I feel exasperated and ashamed."**(*Haroho obu mpurra kubi, ninswara*). If Tom was financially able, his

priority would be to meet the above needs. The fact that he is unable to do anything to change life at home evokes in him feelings of frustration.

Case C₁₁ Bernard, says his family welfare does not compare favorably with others in the community, **"unlike us, other families are okay. They have good houses, motorcycles and enough income"** (*Abandi tibali nkaitwe, bali kurungi, baina macala² ne sente zikubamara.*) Bernard openly regrets being born in his family, **"I am not proud to belong to this family. My needs are mostly not met. I am mistreated, our house is poor and we don't even have a pit latrine! It is shameful."** (*Timanyire habwaki nyazairwe hanu. Ebyetago bingi, enju mbi, busaho kinazi kandi bandabya kubi. Mpuura kubi ninswara*).

Case C₁₂ Abi Maria, says that in their community, other families are richer than hers a factor that often evokes in her feeling of unease and inferiority, **"We are poor. Other families are rich. They eat better food and their children are in good schools I feel lower than them."** This child who is aged 11, declined to talk further about her home.

Case C₁₃ Inno, says that in terms of material welfare his home doesn't compare favorably with others in the community. This often makes him feel worthless, **"...my family is among the poorest in our village. Our house is very bad. We even have no bicycle. I regret why I was born here. Things would be better if my parents had not died."** Inno openly feels ashamed of his home. He reiterates that the bad residential house and lack of a bicycle are the aspects of home life that he resents most and finds most shameful. Inno sadly points out that currently he is unable to do anything to change life at home. If he was able he would do a lot to improve welfare at home; **"I cannot do anything to change life at home, I have no money. If I had money, I would construct a new house, buy more land and**

² Macala-also known as boda boda. Motor bikes commonly used for short distance transport in both urban and rural areas in Uganda.

plant coffee; and also buy a bicycle." Innocent's inability to do anything to improve life at home makes him feel bitter and frustrated (***mpurra obusungu***).

Case C₁₄ Marion, says that in terms of material welfare, her family does not compare well with others in the community, ***"...my home is very poor, others have good houses and their children are in good schools. There is nothing to be proud of about my home. I feel ashamed"*** (***mpura ninswara***).

Marion however does not regret being born in her home, ***"we are poor but this is where I was born, this is my home."***(***omuka niho omuka***). Marion says that the poor grass thatched house, and unending land disputes with their neighbours, are the particular aspects of home life she resents and finds most shameful. If she was able she would construct a permanent house, and register (lease) the family land. She feels frustrated that she is unable to do anything to change life at home.

Case C₁₅ Rebecca, says her home is poorer than most in the community in terms of material welfare. This affects her badly, ***"...we are poor. When my personal needs cannot be met I feel confused and inferior"*** (***obwongo buhunga ninpurra ndi wa hans***).

Rebecca lives with her grandmother and doesn't remember much about her natal family, so she could not comment on what she feels about being born there. However she appreciates belonging to her grandmother's family. Rebecca is not happy about her home life. The poor grass thatched, dilapidated residential house and lack of proper beddings are the aspects of home life she resents most and finds shameful. ***"I am a big girl, I want to have my own bed. Imagine what it feels like to share a mat with small children; it's embarrassing. I feel inferior"*** (***ndi mwisiki mukuru baitu tingira kitabu, ndara hamukeka n'obwana buto. Nkwatwa ensoni***) . If Rebecca was able, she would construct a permanent house; buy personal effects for her siblings and a bicycle for fetching water. Her inability to do anything to change life at home evokes in her feelings of frustration and hopelessness.

Case C₁₆ Godfrey, says that in terms of material welfare his family is very badly off, not even comparable with other families in the community. This makes him feel inferior, and bitter (*mpurra ndi wa hansi nyina omutima gubi*). Godfrey declined to comment on whether or not he is proud to be born in his family. There are a number of things Godfrey does not like about his home. He says lack of a latrine, a bathing shelter and kitchen are the aspects he finds most shameful. He bitterly observes, **"...everything here is ashaming. Imagine having no proper house or latrine! Is this a home? I'm ashamed."**

If Godfrey was able he would buy land, build a good house and establish a nice homestead. He regrets he cannot do anything to change anything due to lack of money. This evokes in him feelings of frustration and humiliation.

Case C₁₇ Imma, says that in terms of material welfare, her home does not compare favorably with others in the community. **"...other homes are fine...there is a big gap between them and mine. The children in those homes attend good schools. Sometimes I feel frustrated and inferior."**(*amaka agandi galikurungi, titukuberenga. Abana babu basomera amumsamero marungi. Obundi mpurra kubi; ndi wa hansi*). Imma openly regrets being born in her home **"...yes, I regret. Poverty is too much to bear. Family members are always quarreling and abusive. When it rains the roof leaks and water seeps everywhere in the house."**The particular aspects of home life that Imma resents most include negative rivalry with an elder sister, being forced to dig when ill and a lack of a kitchen that makes her mother suffer when cooking at the verandah during the rainy weather.

Imma says if she was able she would change many things at home including completing the construction of the residential house, and instilling a strong sense of discipline in the family members. Her inability to change anything, which she attributes to lack of money, evokes in her a feeling of frustration and hopelessness. (*mpurra mbihirwe ntainayo kunihira kwona.*)

Case C₁₈ Shallot, her life of hardship at home notwithstanding has no regrets being born there. **"I do not regret, where one is born is God's plan"**. However, she reiterates that digging and charcoal burning as a means of earning livelihood is shameful and is one particular aspect of home life she resents most. Shallot would like to change many things at home, but is unable due to her tender age (12 years) and the fact that she is still enrolled in school. For instance she would do anything to get rid of charcoal burning as a means of earning income and her inability to do anything to effect any change makes her feel frustrated. **(mpurra kubi, ntaina kyokukora)**.

Case C₁₉ Yosamu, says that in terms of material possessions, his family does not compare favourably with others in the community. **"Our house is so bad! I feel unhappy and inferior."** Sometimes Yosamu regrets ever being born in his family, but is quick to point out that it is his home and he cannot change that **(omuka niho omuka)**.

The poor grass thatched house, and dirty environment are the particular aspects of home life that he particularly resents and finds most shameful. Yosamu says that much as he would like to change life at home, by constructing a permanent house for instance, he is not able to due to financial constraints. **"...I feel bad, but I have nothing to do"** **(mpurra kubi, baitu tinyina kyokukora)**.

Case C₂₀ Gerald, says that in terms of material welfare his family is worse off than many others in his community, **"...I know my family is very poor I feel bad and ashamed (tuli banaku. Mpurra kubi, ninswara)."** Gerald however does not regret being born in his family, **"As long as my parents love and care for me, I have no regrets."**

The particular aspects of home life Gerald resents and finds most shameful include alcohol induced domestic violence (all parents are drunkards) and poor hygiene. He says that if he was able (older) he would do something to change his life at home, **"...I**

would construct a good house but I am still young.” Gerald finds his inability to change home life frustrating. (*mpurra kubi*).

Case C₂₁ Alinda, says that his family is poor; that many families in the community are richer. However he has no regrets being born in his family. He says that his parents are honest and hardworking and will someday be rich. The particular aspect of home life that he resents and finds most shameful is his father’s excessive alcohol consumption that always ends up in violence at home. Alinda observes that there are many things he would like to change at his home, like construction of a better house. His inability to do anything to improve life at home however does not bother him. ***“I am still young and have no authority.”*** The bad conditions nonetheless often evoke in him feelings of frustration and shame. (*haroho obu mpurra kubi ninswara.*)

Case C₂₂ Johan, says in terms of material welfare his home does not compare well with others known to him in the community. This often evokes in him feelings of inferiority and shame. This is especially so when his mother fails to get money to seek treatment. Johan angrily says that he regrets being born in his family as his father does not show him any love and care. (*Isenyowe tanfaho, nobuntakuzairwe hanu!*)

The particular aspects of home life that Johan resents and finds most shameful include being required to do all the manual work, lack of land, a permanent house, kitchen and latrine. ***“Now we have no latrine. Excavating the pit is difficult work yet my father expects me to do it single-handedly.”*** Johan says if he had money these issues would be on top of his priority list to solve. He feels hopeless because he is unable to do anything to rectify the situation. ***“I am still young; I have no money what can I do?”*** (*nkyali muto tinyina sente. Hati ndakoraki*)

Case C₂₃, Irene says that her home is among the poorest in the community in terms of everything, including material welfare. This evokes in her ***“a feeling of acute inferiority”*** (*mpura ndi wa hansu muno*). Irene declines to comment on whether or not she is proud of being born in her home. The poor grass thatched house that drips when it rains is one aspect of home life she resents most and finds shameful. If Irene was able she would build a better house, and pay her school fees on time. She regrets

her inability to do these things currently. ***"I have no income. I am young. I feel frustrated."*** (*tinyina sente nykali muto. Mpurra abusungu*).

Case C₂₄ John, says that in terms of material possessions, there is no way his home can be compared with others in the community. ***"Our house is very poor. Mother compels herself to work, yet she is ill. The income is so low and we lack everything, not even a decent latrine. It pains and I regret why I was not born else where!"*** (*mpurra kubi muno. Timanyire habwaki ntazairwe handi.*)

John resents and is ashamed of everything at home. If he was able, his priorities would be to ensure that his mother ceases to engage in casual labour (kupakasa); enroll in a good private school; buy himself personal effects, and to improve feeding at home. His inability to change anything at this time evokes in him mixed feelings of shame, inferiority and helplessness. ***"I do not feel good. I do not know why I am not like others. It really hurts, not only to suffer, but to live with and endure the shame and knowledge that you can not do much to change anything. (kubonabona manyire tinyina ekinkusobora kuhindura ho kinduma muno)."***

Case C₂₅ Fred, says that in terms of material wellbeing his home does not compare well with others in the community. ***"My home is poor, of a low standard. It is embarrassing but it has motivated me to work hard and be like others in future. If only my parents were together we would be fine."*** Fred regrets being born in his family, not because of the impoverishment experienced there, but because of his parent's separation. ***"A female headed home does not give me a sense of belonging."*** (*hali isenyowe atali mpurra ntakuhirayo*). Fred reiterates that a broken family, poor house and low income are the aspects of home life he finds particularly disturbing. If he was able, he would reconcile his parents, build a good house and set up a viable family business. ***"But I am still young and lack money. It's painful, a real shame."*** (*mpurra nindumwa kandi ninswara.*)

Case C₂₆ Saulo, says that in terms of material welfare, his family does not compare favourably with others in the community. ***"My home is shameful, I feel bad."***

(omuka nihaswaza,nyehura kubi) Saulo however does not regret being born in his home, **"...it is my home anyway. I cannot deny it."** The shanty grass thatched dwelling structure, lack of proper beddings and clothing items are aspects of home life that Saulo resents most and finds stressful. Saulo says that he would do anything to address this situation (with priority on constructing a permanent house, and buying proper bedding materials and decent clothes); but unfortunately is not able to change anything due to lack of income. This inability to change anything often evokes in him feelings of frustration and hopelessness. **"I feel bad but there is nothing I can do."** (mpurra obusungu, baitu ekyokukora kyaha.)

Case C₂₇ 13 year old Jamilla has this to say; **"Our income is little, and we lack many things. My home cannot be compared with others in the village. Our grass thatched house is a shame. It affects me badly."** (enju yaitu ekwasa ensoni. Mpurra kubi)

Jamilla nonetheless has no misgivings about being born in her family. **"Yes we are badly off, but I am proud of my home."** Jamilla singles out lack of a latrine, the bushy compound, and not least the poor grass thatched house, as the aspects of home life she resents and finds most shameful. If she was able, her priority would be to build a permanent house. Her inability to do anything to change anything at home despite her tender age makes her feel exasperated. **"I know I cannot do much. I am young and do not have money. I feel worried and it is frustrating."** (nyeralikirra ninyehura kubi.)

Case C₂₈ Tendo, says that compared to other homes, his is still lagging far behind in terms of material wellbeing. This often evokes in him feelings of inferiority and frustration. (mpurra kubi, ndi wa hansii). Tendo openly regrets being born in his family, **"Yes I do regret. Everything here is bad, look at the house! My parents are too poor to support me. I feel ashamed of home."** (omuka nihaswaza) The small grass thatched mud and wattle house is one aspect of home life that Tendo finds most stressful. Tendo feels frustrated because he is unable to do

anything to improve life at home. If he was able he would construct a good house, buy clothes, shoes and good food.

Case C₂₉ Farida says that in her village there are families that are both better off and worse off than hers respectively, in terms of material possessions. Those that are better off she observes, often evoke in her feelings of inferiority. Farida however does not regret being born in her home. ***"So long as my parents are alive, I will never regret being born here."*** Farida is not happy with a number of things at home though. She resents the poor house, lack of personal effects, filthy environment and persistently low crop yields. These aspects of home life often evoke in her feelings of frustration. ***"If I was able I would build a better house, increase farming and buy good clothes."***

Case C₃₀ Ronald, says emphatically that though many homes in the community are materially impoverished, his is the worst off, ***"My home cannot be compared with others. We lack everything, we are the poorest (nitwe ku kusinga obunaku)."*** Ronald says that this makes him feel inferior (*mpurra ndi wa hans*). Ronald openly regrets being born in his family, because of its extreme deprivation. He singles out the poor grass thatched house, inadequate nutrition, and lack of access to safe water as the aspects of home life he finds most stressful. If Ronald was able, he would do a lot to improve life at home, ***"I would construct a real house, buy a mattress, bed sheets, blankets and a bed, and build a kitchen."*** He regrets that he cannot do anything to achieve the above as he has no income and is still in school. He feels frustrated and often ashamed. (*obundi mpuura kubi ninswara*).

4.1.3 The school as an arena of shaming.

All child respondents, as per our purposive sampling strategy, were enrolled in school; 20 in UPE schools, 7 in USE and 3 in private secondary schools. Though the majority of the children (27) were enrolled in UPE and USE schools where social and material differences between the pupils/students are expected to be minimal, it emerged that this is far from being the case. In fact it is within the school environment that our

respondents' poverty and the associated shame were more sorely felt. This is because in contrast to the home setting where the children are to some extent sheltered from external sources of shaming, in the school arena where the children interact with their peers, friends, teachers and significant others it is difficult to avoid direct or indirect showing.

It emerged that apart from proneness to direct shaming by others, the school environment presents a conducive arena for self, internalized shaming especially so when the children notice the stark differences (material and social) between themselves and their apparently better off peers. All the children talked about having close friends or peers who come from "richer" families and experience comparatively better life at school.

The following 12 excerpts drawn from the 30 child respondents' profiles serve to highlight the children's plight.

"... My friends have money for lunch, I do not; my friends have enough pens, I don't. I feel bad and inferior to them. I feel they laugh at me. Some ignore me; they look at me as needy. (Case C1).

"Unlike my friends, I do not pay school dues on time and get dismissed. I miss lessons and they continue learning. I am always worried about my performance. I am a day student, my friends are in boarding. I walk a long distance to school and often arrive late. This embarrasses me. I am always worried and demoralized and teachers tend to ignore me. My friends look contented and teachers pay them more attention. Overall I find life hard and stressful. (Case C4)

"My friends, unlike me have pocket money, shoes and two pairs of uniform. They wear belts and carry their books in school bags. I feel poor and inferior." (Case C20).

"My parents had no money for my exams. I transferred late from my former school. Unlike my friends, I missed termly tests. I did not get a report card to take home, unlike my friend Marion. I felt sad, ashamed and envious. I cried all the way home." (Case C27)

"My friends report to school early, because they have no chores to do at home. They have pocket money for lunch, ride bicycles to school and have calculators. I lack all these. I feel ashamed (mpurra ninswara)" (Case C30)

"Unlike me, my friends dress well. They dress smartly in good uniform, shoes and belts. They carry school bags. They have mathematical sets and enough pens. They come to school with pocket money for lunch. I stay hungry at school. Sometimes I feel annoyed and humiliated (haroho obu mpura obusungu n'okuswara.)" (Case C28)

"All my friends have caring parents who strive to meet their needs both at home and school. For me, I look after myself. I suffer; feel pain in my heart and long for parental care. Thank God I am able to bear everything. I do not however envy my friends". (Case C22)

"I always get dismissed for school fees payment default, my friends pay on time and remain learning. I routinely go without lunch; my friends have lunch and are satisfied. I walk or ride 6kms to school; my friends rent rooms near the school. It is frustrating and I feel inferior." (mpurra obusungu kandi ndi wa hans.) (Case C2)

"Two of my friends , are poor like me and three are much better off. Unlike me my rich friends pay their school dues on time, always have money for lunch, have enough books and pens and put on good leather shoes. This makes me feel inferior (mpurra ndi wa hans)." (Case C14, Marion)

"At school my friend Christine lacks nothing, unlike me. She reports on time, while I delay at home waiting to get school fees. She has enough pocket money and 'grub'. My first days at school when I report are stressful-with a backing of notes to copy. It is sad to have so many unmet needs. Sometimes

I despair and feel sorrowful. (obundi mpurra ngwerirwe)" (Case C15, Rebecca)

"All my friends have enough pens and I don't. My friends dress in good uniforms, I don't. My friends have good trimmed hair, mine is unkempt. I am always borrowing something from my friends. I feel angry and inferior."(mpurra ekiniga kandi ndi wa hansii.) (Case C17, Imma)

The remaining excerpts from the 18 profiles of our child respondents are more or less similar, awash with tales of children vulnerable to indirect self shaming at school as they routinely interact with close friends or peers considered materially and socially better off.

4.2 The needy, vulnerable or poor label; a dreaded shaming identity.

Though the majority of our child respondents (27 out of 30) were enrolled in UPE or USE government schools, accessing free education; virtually all of them felt ashamed of being labeled poor, vulnerable and needy though the latter is a key criteria for eligibility to register for the free education programmes. In other words the benefits of the UPE and USE programs notwithstanding, being a beneficiary of the programs per se, was largely seen as shaming. Evidence of this is shown by the following excerpts drawn from the profiles of the 30 child respondents.

Imma (Case C₃₀), had this to say, ***"I am enrolled in a UPE school, accessing free education, but I do not feel at ease being categorized as poor, needy or vulnerable. It makes me feel worthless; it is annoying."***

Case C₁₄, Marion who is enrolled in a USE school, remarked thus, ***"...yes I know I am poor, but it is not my choice. It is not my identity. I would also like to be counted among the rich, like children in private schools. (busaho ayecweramu kuba munaku, nanyowe nkwenda kuba kurungi nka abana abandi abali omumasomero amarungi)."***

Case C₂₉ Farida who is enrolled in a UPE school had this to say; ***"The school has low academic standards. Teachers are always absent. My friends in private***

schools laugh at me, that my school is 'bona basome'³ for poor needy pupils. I feel worthless. (mpurra nke' ekitagasa.)"

Case C₁₅ Rebecca who is enrolled in a private school, i.e. not a beneficiary of either UPE or USE programs said that she appreciates the government anti-poverty initiatives like UPE and USE but doesn't like the associated 'poor' identity of the targeted beneficiaries. ***"UPE and USE are very good, if you can bear being labeled needy."*** Despite facing school fees problems, she doesn't long to be in a USE Seed school.

Case C₅, Anthony, who is enrolled in a UPE school remarked thus, ***"I don't feel happy being labeled poor and vulnerable. I feel ashamed."***

Though the majority of pupils/students benefitting from UPE and USE programs felt this way, there were a few who thought otherwise. For instance Case C₂₂, Johan does not care being labeled poor, needy or vulnerable, so long as he accesses the benefits of the UPE program. He is sure that without UPE, he would never have got enrolled in school. ***(Bona basome ekanyamba muno. Tinyakusambire musomero).***

All the UPE and USE pupils/students however, their resentment of the UPE and USE programmes notwithstanding, were quick to acknowledge that they had limited alternative options for enrolling in school; and that if similar initiatives are introduced they would readily register so as to access the benefits.

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5.0 Hardship and shame: experiences of the adults

A broad theme that has emerged from our research is that adults as a result of their life of hardship experience two types of shaming; self shaming that is psychological in nature arising out of realization or inner feelings that they are not what they ought to be as social beings in their communities or in terms of material /economic aspirations that they associate with gaining acceptance and social respect as individuals of worth .

³ Bona basome literally 'free education for all' is often used in a negative shaming sense to refer to both UPE and USE free government anti poverty education programs and the beneficiary children.

The second type of shaming is one that is directly inflicted or attributable to others whom the poor routinely interact with in the community. This type of shaming that we can refer to as other shaming is often done deliberately with express intention of evoking sore feelings including shame, humiliation, worthlessness and degradation among others, to the poor.

Both types of shaming are also attributable to some extent to the negative social values that are generally associated with the poor in society. The argument here is that the negative social values in question especially dishonesty, laziness, lack of focus in life and unreliability among others contribute to self shaming or are used as reference material by others to shame the poor. Evidence is abundant in our research where the poor are directly and deliberately shamed for no provocation, other than just their poor label and the associated negative social values.

Whatever the nature or source of shaming, the end result is that all our respondents resent poverty, the resentment often going beyond both the practical and emotional hardships they have to endure-or strive to avoid. The study has shown that the poverty label or identity per se, is extremely shaming, and that the poor, despite resiliently enduring material and social deprivation, find it difficult to internalize it. Their passionate argument and/or belief is that nobody is born or destined to be poor; that their poverty is due to circumstances beyond their control including birth circumstances, limited capabilities and lack of opportunity.

In order to escape or endure the poverty label and the associated shame (both self and other shaming), our respondents have adopted diverse coping strategies. What is interesting is that whether the shaming is internally perceived or directly inflicted by others, the coping strategies are more or less similar. They include among others, self withdrawal from society; trying to hide behind a façade of self respectability; identifying with those considered to be equally poor or worse off; false self contentment; shame denial and shame displacement by directing it towards others within the same social realm.

Other coping strategies however are more characteristic of self shaming and mainly reflect changes in attitudes and/or behavior among the poor as unique different individuals. These strategies that include among others, developing an 'I don't care attitude'; always being on one's guard to respond to real or perceived shaming; stoic endurance of poverty related emotional pain; shutting off one's mind to feelings of poverty related indignity giving up on social acceptance; pretending to be beyond shame; and feigning to accept the poverty label with dignity, may not necessarily affect others directly.

What is important however is that most of the coping strategies, whether adopted to avoid or endure self or other shaming, impact negatively on the functioning of society. The study provides compelling evidence to argue that poverty shame is not only a real and formidable negative force, but has worse negative consequences than material and social deprivation per se. Informed by the findings it is rational to argue that poverty shaming is not only well posited in the vicious cycle of poverty where the poor operate or are trapped, but is also a powerful catalyst to all the negative outcomes that threaten society collective values, structures and the entire functioning of society.

For instance most of the coping strategies the poor adopt to avoid or endure poverty shaming directly or indirectly lead to social exclusion. The latter is more often than not, expressed in terms of negative outcomes like inadequate or total lack of social participation, lack of integration, uncertainty about the future, lack of voice in the community, limited capabilities, deprivation of any form of individual agency, and existential hopelessness.

The hardship experiences of our respondents that include low cash income resulting into poor living conditions and low well being; vulnerability to all forms of stress and shocks, and above all inability to attain desired social aspirations including acceptance and respect as individuals of worth in society may all be seen in a wider context of social exclusion, either as leading to it or its product.

Apart from social exclusion as a coping strategy to poverty shaming and its negative consequences, some of the coping strategies are positive or at least harmless;

intimating a form of positive or subtle shame. The coping strategies adopted by some respondents like motivation to work hard, behaving appropriately, participating actively in community life, dressing self and family decently, avoiding begging or borrowing, ensuring basic food security for the family, and enhanced resilience to lead a dignifying life may all be seen in this positive light.

Though the poor are constantly subjected to being associated with all sorts of vices and negative social values especially laziness, deceit, alcoholism and lack of focus in life among others, none of these emerged among the coping strategies adopted by our respondents to avoid poverty shame. On the contrary all our hapless impoverished respondents strived to cope with their hardship by behaving otherwise as if to deliberately dispel the negative social image in which they feel they are cast by their better off neighbourneighbours.

5.1 Perceived self shame : Children's experiences

The study findings show that unlike their parents who experience both internalized/perceived self shaming, and shaming by others as a consequence of their life of hardship, the children mostly experience the former type of shaming. In fact no child reported experiencing shaming directly inflicted either by their peers, teachers or relatives with deliberate intention of evoking sore feelings of emotional pain, shame, stigma or humiliation among others.

It emerged that the children became aware of their parents' poverty and associated shame at an early age, reflected in their (parents) challenged/meaningless livelihood options as peasant cultivators or casual labourers; low income; poor wellbeing and inability to support them (children) meet their basic needs at home and potentially attain their desired career aspirations.

The children talked boldly about the above as a key source of shaming and the realization of their inability to do anything to change their parents/family status quo was

described as painful and frustrating. Many children openly regretted their birth circumstances, wishing they were born elsewhere in presumably better off homes and circumstances.

Nonetheless, it is in the school environment where the children become more prone to internalized self shaming. The source of the latter is twofold-being enrolled in a UPE or USE school (which has a formal poor/needy label); and when the children compare themselves with their richer peers/friends and notice the stark material and social differences.

As prior noted being enrolled in a free UPE or USE school under the government anti-poverty 'education for all initiative' (*bona basome*) is seen as directly shaming by the children because of its undisguised poverty label. Enrollment of our child respondents in such schools was not an option of desired choice but rather a last resort compelled by family financial shortfalls.. A number of children expressed desire to enroll in a private school, where they felt they would not be subjected to feelings of poverty related shaming or ridicule.

However even in the UPE and USE (*bona basome*) schools, where children from poor households are supposed to predominate in terms of enrolment and free fees, our respondents still did not fully blend in. Stark differences vis-à-vis social and material wellbeing existed between themselves and their friends-a factor that constantly and painfully reminded them that they are not what they ought to be- not only at home, but in the school environment as well.

Unlike their parents who adopt distinct coping strategies as a way of mitigating the adverse impacts of poverty related shaming and indignity, this is not necessarily the case with the children. In the context of their age, the nature and locus of shaming, they apparently have no way of avoiding the shaming, and have to endure and live with its sore consequences that include feelings of indignity, hopelessness and stigma among others. This definitely does not augur well for the psycho-social wellbeing of

these young people especially when coupled with the material hardship experienced at home.

In a nutshell, compared to their parents the impact of shaming on children is likely to be more adverse. The only advantage is their tender age, meaning that they have a whole future ahead of them that may avail them with opportunity to be different from their parents and extricate themselves out of poverty.

6. Concluding Remarks

Given the complexity of summarizing a report of this nature, the following concluding remarks are made so as to help put it in perspective.

The study has shown that shame that is associated with poverty is real and experienced by the poor, irrespective of sex or age. Both adult men and women and children in our study experience poverty shaming in conditions that are not their choice and over which they have no control.

The types of shaming experienced by the poor-self inflicted/internalized and other shaming are distinct and occur in diverse loci. For the children who mainly experience the former type of shaming, the school arena is where it is mainly and inescapably experienced. For the adults the arenas of shaming are diverse, including even the homes, a factor that renders avoiding poverty shame difficult.

Since avoiding poverty shame is difficult for both adults and children, the only option is to endure it as best as they can. Whereas the adults adopt various strategies to cope with poverty shame, the children by virtue of their tender age and other factors over which they have no control, have no option but to live with and endure it characteristic emotional pain and other sore consequences a factor that does not augur well for their psychological wellbeing.

For the adults, diverse as their coping strategies are, the end result is that they mainly impact negatively on the functioning of households and communities. The latter is because most of the coping strategies directly or indirectly lead to deliberate invisibility or social exclusion, that is mainly expressed in terms of negative outcomes including inadequate or lack of so participation, lack of voice in the community, diminished agency and existential hopelessness.

Though poverty and shame are well posited in the vicious cycle of poverty where the poor operate and are trapped , the poor label or identity is dreaded, to the extent that the poor do not only resent being identified with it, but even the anti poverty programmes that carry an undisguised poverty label such as UPE and USE. This definitely has implications for the design of antipoverty interventions that have hitherto mainly been informed by the material deprivation approach; without understanding the multifaceted and dynamic nature of the poverty shame nexus, including the nature and how poverty shame is experienced, the arenas of shaming; and the coping strategies the poor adopt to avoid or endure its adverse emotional and other impacts.

The suggestion here is that anti poverty programmes like UPE that create or reinforce shame, their noble intentions notwithstanding, are likely to be shunned by the targeted beneficiaries and in the long run prove counterproductive.

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Appendix I Methodology

Research Design

The research adopted a cross-sectional design utilizing mainly qualitative methods namely semi-structured in-depth interviews and a review of secondary documentary data. At the core of the research is an enquiry into the argument that shame is a universal attribute which is common to people suffering from poverty in all societies; that shame has internal and external exponents-that people are ashamed that they are poor and feel shame as a consequence of being poor, and that both contribute to reducing individual agency and increasing social exclusion.

Obtaining this type of data involves eliciting people's views, listening to their stories and engaging them in substantive debate. Qualitative methods are most appropriate for this type of research as they are flexible, allow for iterative information analysis, and reflect the respondents' rather than the researchers' perspectives and priorities. We therefore opted for individual in-depth interviews with adults and children respectively for this phase (WP2) of the research.

Sampling and Selection of Study Participants

The sampling strategy of the Uganda study was based on the need to understand the social construction of shame, and explore how individuals directly experience poverty, shame and/or social exclusion and recognize the connections between them. We therefore sought to elicit the views of men, women and children (aged 10-18 years) about their life of impoverishment and hardship, including how they experience and strive to cope with poverty shame. The household/family was used as the basic study unit.

Selection of study participants was thus non random, indeed purposive specifically seeking to identify poor people-individuals hailing from families that are unable to afford a range of consumer goods and/or services seen as basic even in their rural settings.

Thus the principal criterion for sampling was the level of material deprivation of individuals at family level.

The desired categories of families were identified with the help of local community leaders (Local Council 1 officials). The local council system is well established in Uganda, and the LCI is the lowest unit of administration equivalent to a village. The LC leaders, who are popularly elected, know and understand their constituents well, and are generally well-liked and trusted. They also have registers of their constituents that were drawn on as sampling frames whenever need arose.

It is thus these local leaders who played a key role in identifying potential participants informing them about the research, to gauge interest. The families who fit the sampling criteria and were available and willing to participate in the study were approached, briefed about the research objectives and invited to participate.

As the research involved interviewing both adults and children aged 10-18 years belonging to the same respective families, parental consent was sought for the participation of these young people.

Study Setting-Hoima District

The research was conducted in Hoima district in western Uganda. Selection of Hoima was not based on any rigid social, economic or demographic criteria, except that it is predominantly rural with high levels of poverty as is much of Uganda. Further the principal researcher hails from the district and is conversant with the prevailing norms, values, local language and other cultural attributes of the ethnic Banyoro, which provided an advantage for conducting a study of this nature. Hoima district is successor to the ancient Bunyoro-Kitara kingdom, at the turn of the century.

Sampling

Hoima district with a population of 405,000 (Uganda Population and Housing Census, 2020) is composed of two counties, Bugahya and Buhaguzi. The research was

conducted in Bugahya County. From the county one sub-county (Buhanika) was selected. From Buhanika sub-county, two parishes-Kitoonya and Butema were selected. In each parish (LCII), sampling went down to village (LCI) level. A total of 10 villages were selected and 3 families selected from each village to participate in the study.

The research objectives were explained to the local leaders and they were requested to identify the families that fall within the poor cohort in their respective villages. Using their close knowledge of their constituents and backed by village registers, the local leaders were tasked to identify/list the poor families according to the poverty/vulnerability indicators prior agreed on.

Visiting the Households

Following the sampling/selection exercise with the LC leaders, the next task was to visit the households. The purpose of making contact with the households was two fold (i) to, through direct observation ascertain if they fall within their designated category, and make changes where necessary, (ii) identify the most eligible interviewee in the household (presumably the household head), explain to him/her the objectives of the research and request/persuade him/her to participate in the research.

Only those households with at least one child aged 10-18 years, and enrolled in school were considered eligible for participation in our research. Fortunately the research period coincided with school holidays, and identifying such families posed no challenge.

The time schedule for the interviews was set at this time with care being taken to ensure minimal interruption of the respondents daily work routine.

Preparation for Conducting the Interviews

Before conducting the interviews clearance was obtained from the district civic/political leadership. Pretesting of the research tools was undertaken to ascertain whether they were adequate to gather the required data. The pretest also helped determine the time

required to complete each instrument (adult and child questionnaire), identify individual needs of the research and gain insight into the research environment. After the pre test, adjustments and relevant changes were made before commencement of final data collection.

Conducting of the Interviews

The research aimed at conducting 60 interviews involving 30 adults and 30 children aged 10-18 years coming from the 30 respective households that were identified and agreed to be interviewed. Only three families were selected in each of the 10 LCI villages, a factor that left many eligible households rather disappointed.

The interviews both for the adult and the child respondents were carried out at the respondent's convenience. Before commencing with the interview, the respondent was assured of confidentiality, his/her important role in the research and the manner in which the respondents' responses would be recorded. The respondent's consent to voice record the interview was requested. Voice recording of all interviews was therefore used to capture the interview dialogue, verbatim. None of the respondents was uncomfortable with voice recording of the interviews. Nonetheless, the voice recording notwithstanding effort was also made to ensure that the details of the interview were also recorded on the questionnaire and note books.

Data collection Management and Quality Assurance

In the process of data collection, there was continuous recording of observations and information from the interviews. Field editing was undertaken daily for accuracy and consistency, and referral to the individual respondents' done where necessary to address any discrepancies in the responses.

Besides the regular recording of the observations and interviews, the research team held regular meetings to review the data collected, reflect on the data collection process and note the overall perceptions and interpretation of the information. This enabled the research team to identify gaps and lay strategies for addressing them.

Ethical Procedures and Considerations

As prior noted, informed consent was obtained from the interviewees before conducting the interviews. In the case of children consent was obtained from their parents/guardians. Though copies of consent forms were available, our respondents preferred verbal consent. The latter was recorded. All the gathered data was securely locked in a cabinet only accessible by the research team. Effort was made to ensure careful protection of our respondents' confidentiality by recording and reporting only using their pseudonyms or interview codes; and not sharing information provided by the respondents during the course of the interviews with anybody else other than research team members.

Data Management and Analysis

Objectivity was maintained through frequent sharing of interpretation of the collected data with the international study team via regular web conferences. The importance of maintaining confidentiality was again emphasized during these progress assessment webex meetings. No real names were recorded or reported during data collection and report writing respectively.

The voice recorded interviews were transcribed, and the transcripts word processed and stored in the study computer, accessible only to the Principal Investigator. The transcribed information was then analyzed using content analysis based on a framework derived from the research objectives.

Challenges

Apart from finding it difficult to convince our respondents not to expect immediate benefits at the research's end; and a few respondents who found it too stressful to talk about their experiences of poverty and poverty shame, no major challenges were encountered.