INTRODUCTION
In Nabogoye Village in southeastern rural Uganda, schoolgirl potential is ironically thwarted and unfulfilled by initiatives meant to empower and educate women. As a means to develop the community, local community leaders—with support and funding from an international Jewish NGO—award scholarships to ‘promising’ schoolgirls with strong ties to the Bayudaya community, a fundamentally Jewish cohort in the village. This study explores the underlying factors of subjective notions of ‘potential’ that, in turn, emphasize the risk inherent to potentiality.

METHODS
The literature used in this analysis was retrieved from database searches of ‘potentiality’ from university libraries. I found anthropological accounts of ‘potential’, let alone ‘thwarted potential’ to be scarce. However, those that were found, consistently included metaphysical philosophy in their bibliographies and references. In addition, a review of the sources utilized by Dr. Bocast (2014) in her account of potentiality in Uganda also directed my attention to philosophical theory. I thus centralized my search within the field of philosophy and applied fundamental existential theory to Dr. Bocast’s discussion of thwarted potential.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
• ‘Being,’ is informed by both time and space; it cannot be conceptualized without being in relation to something, a concept referred to as “being-in-the-world” (Heidegger, 1962).
• The concepts of potentiality and actuality are two classifications along the same spectrum of existence. This spectrum introduces the idea that there are multiple ways of ‘being,’ i.e., being potentially something and being actually something. Aristotle (1998) proposes that what is potential is informed by what is actual. In other words, what is has precedence over what can be.
• ‘Potential’ is informed by social normativity; the realization that particular potentials even exist is situated within a given social framework.
• Potentiality exists insofar as its counterpart of impotentiality—that is, the potential not to be.

ANALYSIS
According to contemporary development ideology, a community with educated and empowered women will yield a self-sustainable community, which complements the long-term goals of the Bayudaya community leaders, the AEC. However, the NGO named Kulanu, that funds the sponsorship program, sees the betterment of the community as an additive to the organizations’ purpose—to expand their vision of an arguably homogenous Jewish diaspora by crystalizing the Bayudaya community. These divergent perspectives obscure the very notion of ‘empowerment’ for schoolgirls and delimits what girls can and do strive for. By drawing on the concept of ‘potential’ in anthropological and philosophical literature, I invite new ways of analyzing the circumstances in which potential is realized and compromised as individuals and communities are prompted to meet the goals of others.

‘Potential’ exists along a continuum of time and space, specifically in terms of the past and the future. More specifically, social norms impact and define potential across temporal space. That said, exposure to contrasting notions of potential may further complicate the actualization of potential. This is because the joining of diverse spaces of past and future obscure the identities of those who imagine them; individuals are prompted to identify with an unfamiliar temporal space. In this case, the identities of Kulanu, the Bayudaya community, and the schoolgirls are construed via the identification of, and exposure to, one another’s existence. Introducing these actors to alternative normative values invites them to realize other potentials and thus unveils hidden human capacities. However, social boundaries are not always ideationally expanded to allow these potentials to be fully realized. To demonstrate this, I present one example.

The utility of education varies among the three agents in discussion, at both macro and micros levels. In other words, education is “equipment” (Heidegger, 1962) used to pursue diverse projections of ‘being.’ That said, community investment in schoolgirl potential is risky because the projections of the future are not in concert with the multiple understandings of what should or ought to be achieved. The impending threat of transgression results in forms of surveillance that also thwart schoolgirl potential. The designated “smartest” (Bocast, 2014) schoolgirls, in this case, have the most potential to actualize all three modes of ‘being’—those idealized by Kulanu, the AEC, and the girls themselves—and thus have a greater propensity to challenge them, hence the risk.

CONCLUSION
In this particular case, the actualization of potential as understood by Kulanu, the AEC, and the schoolgirls are not fully achieved because of the inherent tensions among their respective and prospective spaces. This ultimately complicates the identity and objectives of all three agents. By incorporating subjective ties to time and space—not to mention the power dynamics central to each—in an analysis of thwarted potential, we can expand the theory of potentiality to make sense of the circumstances in which potentials are compromised and identities are reconfigured.

FUTURE RESEARCH
Given that identity is so central to ‘being,’ the identities that are produced and reinforced from the actualization of potential are as uncertain as potentiality itself, thus enhancing the risk that is inherent to the nature of potential. Scholars should consider the role of identity and belonging in the actualization process of potential among human prospects in order to further evaluate the risk that undergirds the extraction of particular potentials.

REFERENCES

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Modes of Being, Time, and Space: an Exploration of Potentiality in an Ugandan Village

Young Abayudaya Girl Admires Hanukkah Lights in Uganda. Photo by Aaron Kinu Moses, 2011.