

NATIONAL COUNCIL

P.O.Box 26080



FOR DIASABILITY

Kampala, UGANDA

**THE STATE OF SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OF SPECIAL
NEEDS EDUCATION TEACHERS AND TEACHERS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE
DISTRICTS OF KISORO, LYANTONDE, KAMULI AND ARUA**

CONDUCTED BY: NAMUKASA LILLIAN AND KAMYA JULIUS

MARCH 2011

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANNPCAN	African Network for Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect
CWDs	Children with Disabilities
CBR	Community Based Rehabilitation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DCD	District Council for Disability
DEO	District Education Officer
DPO	Disabled People's Organisation
EARS	Educational Assessment and Resource Services
EPRC	Education Policy Review Commission
FGD	Focus group discussion
GWPE	Government White Paper on Education
IDI	In-depth interviews
KII	Key informant interview
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
NCD	National Council for Disability
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education
NDP	National Development Plan
NUDIPU	National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
ODW	Operation Days Work
PET-Uganda	Peace Education Trust Uganda
PWDs	Person(s) with disabilities
PRDP	Peace Recovery and Development Plan
SNE	Special Needs Education
SNECOs	Special Needs Education Co-coordinators
SFG	School Facilities Grant
UNAB	Uganda National Association of the Blind
UNAD	Uganda National Association of the Deaf
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
USDC	Uganda Society for Disabled Children
UNEB	Uganda National Examinations Board
UNISE	Uganda National Institute for Special Needs Education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisations
VEDCO	Voluntary Efforts for Development Concerns

SUMMARY OF REPORT

National Council for disability conducted a study on the state of Special Needs Education and employment of teachers with disabilities in Uganda. This was done following complaints that Council receive from stakeholders on inadequate educational materials for children with special needs, lack of schools designated for special needs education and termination of services of those teachers with disability. Recently Ministry of Education in conjunction with Public service offered teaching positions to teachers with disabilities, this study was carried out to establish if the appointments have been effected and teachers are on duty. The study was conducted in four districts with in four regions of Uganda to get representative views.

While conducting the study we learnt that the state of special needs education is wanting with little funding, no higher education for deaf students, deaf/blind students have not been catered for in education sector at all because teachers trained in tactile are lacking, there is total lack of scholastic materials, negative attitudes towards children and teachers with disabilities, children with disabilities are neglected by their parents and the entire community because of their disabilities. Children with mental challenges have been left tied at home in the back yard and those with autism and learning difficulties have not been catered for due to lack of special schools and neglect by the entire society.

The report is informing Council and all other stakeholders that pupils with disabilities to attain better special needs education, there is need for improved budgetary allocation, teachers trained in special needs education should be recruited and posted to their work places, re-instate teachers with disabilities to their teaching service, positive attitudes emphasized, subvention grant should be regularly released to schools, increased budget for special needs education, accessibility should be mandatory to all schools and scholastic materials should be provided to the teachers and children with disabilities, also political will and policy implementation be a must to promote equalization of opportunities

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The report on the state of Special Needs Education is a very important document to our monitoring and policy influence work, which is a key function of the council. The report aims at informing all stakeholders working towards quality education of a disabled child.

National Council for Disability extends its sincere gratitude to the Government of Uganda that supports our operations, the sample districts where the study was conducted and to all the respondents who dedicated their time to inform the research team. Special thanks also go to the four Councils for Disability and local governments for their reception, information and guidance throughout the study.

We gratefully thank Ms. Kiwumulo Lydia from MGLSD department of Disability and Elderly for her unwavering support in data collection as a research assistant.

FOREWORD

The importance of quality education –special needs education in particular, to learners with disabilities cannot be over-emphasized.

As a disability monitoring body, National Council for Disability has reached out to Government and the Persons with Disabilities for information regarding the state of Special Needs Education. The findings in this study point out the fact that while Ministry of Education and sports is working relentlessly to make improvements in this area, several challenges still pertain. These challenges range from inadequate budget allocations and releases to poor teacher-pupil ratio, inadequate teaching/ learning aids, abject poverty among families with children with disabilities and so on.

The above mentioned challenges are however not insurmountable. Concerted effort between Government, Civil Society and private sector is critical for increased budget allocations; actual release of funds; more training, recruitment and appropriate posting for SNE teachers; provision of specialized teaching/learning aids; affirmative action for teachers with disabilities in employment.

It is intended that these findings and recommendations inform and guide education policy makers and implementers in the country.

National Council for Disability appreciates the support from Government through MGLSD which has supported our interventions. We call upon Government to increase and continue with support to this noble cause.

Julius Kamya



Executive Secretary

National Council for Disability

1.0 Introduction

The National council for Disability is mandated to monitor and evaluate government and non-governmental organizations to ensure that policies and programs designed are offering quality services and promoting full participation of persons with disabilities. To do this work well, research studies are conducted or commissioned to get deeper insights of the situation at hand.

National Council for disability conducted a study on the state of Special Needs Education and employment of teachers with disabilities in Uganda. This was done following complaints that Council receive from stakeholders on inadequate educational materials for children with special needs, lack of schools designated for special needs education and termination of services of those teachers with disability. Recently, Ministry of Education and sports together with Public service commission offered teaching positions to teachers with disabilities, this study was carried out to establish if the appointments have been effected and teachers are on duty. The study was conducted in four districts with in four regions of Uganda to get representative views.

The NCD is ensuring equalization of opportunities to attain education and employment that is crucial to achieving social inclusion for all citizens and enabling individuals with disabilities to live and work in the community in order to achieve independence. These opportunities are central to Uganda's strategic policy objectives such as prosperity for all, achieving full employment, ensuring equal rights for all citizens, and fighting against discrimination.

- 1) The right to education is granted to all persons in Uganda by virtue of Article 30 of the Constitution which provides that all persons have a right to education. For children, Article 34 (2) of the Uganda Constitution further clarifies that every child is entitled to basic education which shall be the responsibility of the State and the parents of the child.
- 2) These provisions are further legislated in the context of persons with disabilities in different statutes: The 1996 Children Act requires parents and State to afford children with disabilities equal opportunities in education, subject to progressive realisation.¹

¹ Children Act 1997, Section 10

Special Needs Education in Uganda started in 1952. The Colonial Government began providing separate 'special education' services for a few children with visual, hearing, learning and motor impairments, and since the many children and youth with disabilities were not benefiting from the existing educational provision. Persons with disabilities were generally marginalized by beliefs and attitudes in society, developments in this 'special education' moved slowly. Inclusive education has subsequently been seen as the way to ensure that all learners access and participate in education. However, due to lack of trained teachers and special scholastic materials, children with disabilities have not benefited from this educational arrangement.

National decentralized programme on Special Needs Education was established in 1991-2003 called Educational Assessment and Resource Services (EARS), this was developed as a result of cooperation between the Governments of Uganda and Denmark, through the Danish International Development Agency (Danida)², The Government of Denmark channeled the technical and financial support that facilitated the establishment of special needs education (SNE) services in Uganda. The funding received from Danida facilitated developments including;

Renovation and construction works to establish staff accommodation and offices at the districts; These were referred to as “Educational Assessment & Resource Centers”. The offices were fully equipped with furniture (for both adults and children), assessment materials and audiological equipment e.g. screening audiometers.

Procurement of equipment; In addition to audiometers used for screening of hearing loss, other equipment was for classroom work e.g. Perkins Braille’s. These were distributed to schools and units supporting learners who are blind.

Transport; All the original 45 districts received a yellow pick –up vehicle clearly labeled EARS/Special Needs Education Program. This was meant to ease mobility for outreach work by the Assessment and Resource teachers (by then called assistant inspectors EARS/Special Needs education) at the districts.

Training, Workshops/Seminars were conducted including professional upgrading of staff at the headquarters through degree courses abroad.

² Danish assistance to Uganda 1987-2005, Synthesis report, 2006

Institutional Linkages were carried out (locally, regionally and internationally).

EARS/SNE programme had a sister training programme called UNISE which offered special needs education courses from Certificate to degree levels. Later UNISE was combined with Kyambogo University as a Faculty of Special needs and Rehabilitation in 2003. In that period, the government particularly Ministry of Education developed more structural insights pertaining developing and popularizing SNE at central levels that included establishing a desk at Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) and a desk at the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC). Both places have been staffed with two qualified officers in Special Needs Education.

In Uganda, all teachers are central to the implementation of inclusive education strategy and steps have been taken to ensure that Uganda's teachers are better able to teach children with special needs - all those who experience barriers to learning and development - in an inclusive setting. There are still key areas of teacher training in Uganda that need further attention.³ He further urged that, since 1990, 716 in-service teachers have been trained through the full-time Bachelors and Diploma courses, and between 2000 and 2003, 1,451 were enrolled on the distance courses. The number trained, however, is just a small proportion of the estimated total of 130,000 teachers employed in primary schools. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Sports, Kyambogo University conducted in-service training for teachers at regional level. Many of these have been deployed as Special Needs Education Co-coordinators (SNECOs).

³Okwaput.S, http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/eenet_newsletter/news10/page8.php).

2.0 Statement of the problem

Despite many positive social, political and economic developments in Uganda, the state of special needs education is wanting with little funding, no higher education for deaf students, deaf/blind students have not been catered for in education sector at all because teachers trained in tactile are lacking, there is total lack of scholastic materials and they are neglected by their parents and the entire community because of their multiple disabilities. Children with mental challenges have been left tied at home in the back yard and those with autism and learning difficulties have not been catered for due to lack of special schools and neglect by the entire society.

The government have put up laws and ordinances to construct ramps in schools but the ramps are not on standard and are not helpful to children who need to use them, blind children lack scholastic materials, Braille instructors and they are not provided with standard latrines, schools have not catered for children with disabilities latrines, the hygiene situations often are alarming, leading to increased school drop out for children with disabilities at all levels.

There is remarkable dwindling of Special Needs Education teachers due to low remuneration, teachers with disabilities continue to be discriminated and face employment terminations, those recruited end up not allocated to schools or the schools they are allocated are not accessible to them and they are often subjected to severe human rights violations. Special needs teachers at times are placed in areas where they do not have special units; teachers with disabilities in general are situated or placed in remote, rural areas which are difficult to access by public transport and unfriendly for their stay.

Consequently, teachers with disabilities are physically and emotionally cut off from the outside world leading to stigma and change of profession or requesting for early retirement which was reported in Kisoro and Kamuli Districts. More so, lack of teachers with disabilities in service has discouraged PWDs from learning leading to wide spread illiteracy in the disability circles, in

Uganda 55% of PWDs lack functional literacy knowledge and skills, and only 33% ever reached primary seven.⁴

In Uganda today, there is a high rate of unemployment due to the struggling economies in the region, low educational attainment, unfavorable labor market dynamics, low productivity, lack of appropriate vocational and clinical services, labor force discrimination, failure of protective legislation, work disincentives caused by state and federal policies, poverty-level income, inadequate linkages in health care access to disability beneficiary status, and ineffective work incentive programs. This situation exacerbates the appallingly low access to employment for teachers with disabilities and high school dropouts. This requires a study done to understand what could be the cause and impact of unemployment of teachers with disabilities.

3.0 Objectives

1. To establish the current state of special needs education in the four districts of Uganda
2. To find out factors affecting education of children with disabilities and employment of teachers with disabilities
3. To assess the employment situation (entry, retention and exit rates) of teachers with disabilities and non-disabled SNE teachers in the education service.
4. To examine current policy initiatives in relation to employment of persons with disabilities
5. To suggest practical measures for addressing the barriers to Employment of teachers with disabilities and non-disabled SNE teachers.

4.0 Purpose of the study

The study was conducted to understand the status of special needs education in schools and employment of teachers with disabilities. The information gathered will be used to influence policies and to close the gaps that negatively affect special needs education and employment of teachers with disabilities. The study established the barriers to recruitment of special needs

⁴ Uganda National Household Survey 2005/2006

education teachers with disabilities and came up with recommendations that policy makers/implementers can use to enhance employment of teachers with disabilities and make SNE a more effective and efficient education approach.

5.0 Methodology

The study was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Desk review of laws, policies, programs and other relevant literature from line ministries/institutions was conducted.

6.0 Scope of the study

The study was conducted to establish the challenges faced by CWDs employment of teachers with disabilities in Uganda, challenges they face in attaining jobs and challenges faced at work, come up with recommendations to ensure children with disabilities attain better education and teachers with disabilities also receive the same privileges of work with other teachers at school. The information generated will give the education sector a better understanding of how to improve on Special Needs Education and employment of teachers with disabilities so as to make their life comfortable to offer services. The information will also be useful to policy makers to come up with new policies and procedures of employing teachers with disabilities and educating CWDs to attain better grades and reduce on their rampant school drop out.

6.0 Methodology

6.1 Research design

The study was conducted in four districts, one in each of the four regions of Uganda. The districts include Kisoro in the west, Kamuli in the east, Lyantonde in central and Arua in the north. The study was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The sample population was selected purposively following information obtained from resource persons at the districts and Kyambogo University that eased the identification of SNE teachers and teachers with disabilities from higher institutions of learning, Ministry of education, Education service commission.

6.2 Population and sampling

This study was conducted among 200 respondents in the four districts of Uganda. Each district had 50 respondents; 50% of the respondents were persons with disabilities and 50% were non-disabled SNE teachers and key informants - including other teachers and administrators in schools and local governments. Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents according to the above stipulated categories. Documents were reviewed and key informant interviews were carried out within Kampala that covered the national level.

6.3 Data collection Methods

Study participants were purposively selected for in-depth interviews (IDI); that is, SNE teachers, teachers with disabilities - both employed and unemployed. Key informant interviews (KII) were conducted from Ministry of Education, education service commission, National Council for Higher Education, Public/District Service Commissions, Kyambogo University and District Administrators.

The criterion that was used for selecting respondents was as following:

Respondents included: Non-disabled SNE teachers; teachers with disabilities (disaggregating their disability categories, age - above 18; sex (both males and females). Key informant interviews were conducted with Ministry of Education, Department of Special Needs, Public Service Commission, and Education Service Commission. District service commission, Kyambogo University department of special needs, local politicians for persons with disabilities and Disabled Peoples Organizations in the areas selected. The in-depth interviews and the focus group discussions were carried out among persons with disabilities.

6.4 Data analysis

Information obtained was analyzed using statistical packages that include SPSS, EPINFO and coding was used to analyze qualitative data obtained from FGDs.

7.0 Discussion of findings

7.1 The current state of special needs education (SNE) in the four districts of Uganda

According to the findings in this study, Special needs education is still lagging behind in the education system of Uganda. Children with disabilities attending school both at primary and secondary level are still very few and often susceptible of dropping out of school due to lack of basic needs for their education ranging from scholastic materials, food, clothing and accommodation, lack transport to schools and there is a challenge of accessibility to buildings among others.

In the four districts that were visited, Arua district showed indicators that were used to justify its development in terms of special needs education with 8 units on primary level for special needs education and one secondary school unit for blind children.

Inclusive education is emphasized in the district; the District Education Officer Arua District reported that inclusive education is mandatory in all schools within the district. He further noted that *“inclusive education required all teachers to have skills in handling special needs pupils/students”*. Among the 8 school units, none of them is fully equipped to handle children with special needs. However, he reported that Eluba is well facilitated, Ediofe is fair, and Arua Demonstration and Mvara senior secondary school are all fairly facilitated. The teachers in the schools are qualified; Braille materials and other tools are available. The schools receive subvention grant of 500,000= from Ministry Of Education, however when we reached Mvara S.S School the deputy head teacher reported no support from ministry of education.

Table 1: Special Needs Education Centers/ Units in Arua

Name of school	Types of disability
Aria p/s	Physical/ deaf
Arua P/S	Deaf and all other categories
Ediofe girls	Blind and physical
Arua Demonstration	Blind-boys
Eruba P/s	Deaf
Olua p/s	Blind, deaf and physical
Pawor P/S	Blind
Endru p/s	Physical, blind, deaf
Mvara secondary	Blind for both boys and girls

Source: District Education officer's Office

Kisoro has one unit for primary which is government aided and 1 secondary unit that is privately owned by the church of Uganda for deaf children at Rwaramba secondary school. Before there was a unit for deaf pupils in primary school at Seseme Girls primary school which later closed due to wrangles in the church after the change of Bishop Kivengere, children abandoned education but later joined with those of visual impairment at Kisoro demonstration school. However, the secondary deaf unit at Rwaramba Secondary School is faced with challenges, threatened with closure as their funding partner has run short of funds to support the deaf students.

Table 2: Children with disabilities attending school in Kisoro District

Disability	Female	Male
Mental retardation	41	85
Visual impairment	60	110
Physical	73	89
Hearing impairment	88	83
Total	262	367

Source: Data collection from the field

Photo 1: Deaf Students of Rwaramba Secondary school sharing a light moment with NCD officials



Source: Data collection by Researchers

Kisoro district has 125 primary schools and 12 secondary governments aided. The district has no secondary school to cater for children with visual impairment that join secondary therefore; students with visual impairment are referred to Hornsby girl's secondary school in Kabale

District. The students have been facing various challenges because guardians/ parents of those children are poor and cannot afford the transportation and fees to take children to Kabale.

Rwaramba secondary school in Nyakinama Sub-county caters for children with hearing impairment who join secondary education, it is a community school started by the church of Uganda, the students with hearing impairment are supported by a non-governmental organization called Peace Education Trust Uganda (PET-Uganda), The NGO is yet to give up on the children due to lack of funding, it's been facing challenges with school management and administration since the donor money does not come on time, the school has failed to cater for their education as the students fees is not paid on time. Also, the sign language interpreters delay to get their salaries thus low morale in giving the service.

The district has constructed two dormitories for the disabled children in Kisoro demonstration school that has made their accommodation better. This is a very positive move for the lives of the children and it has reduced on school dropouts since children will stay at school and reduce on their transport challenges. However, a respondent in Kamuli district reported that

“ parents have neglected their disabled children as soon as they drop them in boarding schools, in Maria’s place there are children whose parents never visit them neither do they pick them for holiday, we have used school resources to drop children to their homes for holiday”

Photo 2: Dormitories build by Government funds at Kisoro Demonstration School



Source: Data collection by the Researchers

Kamuli District has 278 Universal Primary Education benefiting schools, 10 cop-centers, 50 secondary schools and 12 of those are government aided. The district has 3 primary units for special needs education and 1 secondary school unit for CWDs at Namasagali College for blind students. During the time of data collection, the secondary school had no instructor to teach/assist students in Braille. The study found out that those students with visual impairment end up not learning or they are never examined in mathematics due to lack of scholastic materials to assist them learn mathematics yet it's a key subject in learning. The primary school units are Maria's Care primary day and boarding school, St. Kizito Primary school which is day and boarding both are private schools and Kiwolera primary school which is government school with a boarding section as well. The biggest unit in Kamuli is at Maria's Care Primary school and by end of 2010, they had 19 children with disabilities who are deaf, among those 11 are boys and 8 girls.

Lyantonde District has no unit for special needs education, Children with disabilities learn in inclusive schools which have led to high drop outs for those with severe disabilities like mental retardation, profound deafness and total blindness. In Lyantonde district, the number of children

with disabilities in school is very low, according to the report from Lyantonde Education Department, there 271 children with disabilities attending school, 141 are male and 130 are female. The district also lack clear information of the total population of CWDs in the area. The children are in inclusive schools within the district except two pupils who are known to be attainig special school; one is in Mbarara at St.Hellens primary school and another one in Bwanda Primary school in Masaka District. There was no statistics about the number of trained teachers in special needs education; pupils with disabilities indicated to be studying in Lyantonde above are integrated in schools like Kariro primary school, St. Martin’s primary school and Kyabuuza Moslem primary school.

Kyabuuza Moslem primary school is government aided but the school had never received subvention grant, the pupils in the school has three categories of disabilities as indicated in the table below;

Table 3: Table indicating number of pupils with disabilities in Kyabuuza P/S

s/n	Category of disability	Number of students per class
1	visual	1
2	Hearing impaired	1
3	Physical	2
	Total	4

Source: Data collection from the field

In St. Martins primary school, there are children with disabilities, however the children are not getting better education since the school has no teacher trained in special needs education, the children and their parents prefer that very school because it has a boarding section that reduce on their transport challenges. The school has the following number of pupils in different classes as indicated below;

Table 4: Table indicating Disability categories of children with Disabilities at St Martin’s P/S

s/n	Category of disability	Number of students per class
1	Mental	5
2	visual	4
3	Hearing impaired	2
4	Physical	1
	Total	12

Source: Head teacher St.Martins p/school

St. Martins Primary school is Catholic Church founded and it supports children with disabilities with the support from the parents’ contributions of fees, the school has never received support from government and when the school head teacher was asked to comment of the special needs education status in the school she reported

“ we have tried to support the children with disabilities but no special care is accorded to them, the children we have in school most especially those with visual impairment struggle to learn on their own like putting the reading materials closer to their eyes, deaf children sit in front however their performance is very poor and those with mental challenges have been poor performers who end up repeating classes often thus dropping out of school”

The Education officer Lyantode district was interviewed to learn what is happening in the area, the research team was informed that:

“ There is no way through for SNE in our district since this district was cut from Rakai district, nothing we came with, all materials remained in Rakai, its only one teach trained in SNE that was transferred to this district and she is the one in charge of all supervisory activities and overwhelmed with work”

In the districts where the study was conducted we found out that there was no personnel destined to play the role of managing special needs education for instance in Arua district, the chair person District Council for Disability reported that there is no inspector of schools keeping record of issues to do with special needs education, there was no clear documented data in relation to special needs education.

The DCD chairperson requested DEO to transfer teachers trained in special needs education to schools that required the service, this was done, however, in the due course of the study we found out that, teachers are not effectively posted, you find a teacher trained in teaching blind children is posted in a school with only deaf children-For example in Arua Primary school, the teacher posted there is trained in teaching blind children yet is now handling deaf children. The District Education Officer promised to correct the mishaps and reported to be an advocate for Special needs education; he also emphasized that education policies related to special needs education should be put in place and should not only be at national level but trickle down the districts, there has been a challenge related to inadequate resources to implement the policy at local government level.

There is a total of 22,578 Pupils in primary school in Arua of those, 2780 have major disabilities. The children with disabilities are in different categories that are mental, physical, hearing and visual impairments. The largest category is physical disability. The DEO's office conducted a survey and found out that Madi County has the biggest population of children with disabilities; Telego County has the biggest population of children with mental retardation.

7.2 Financial Budgets received by the 4 districts

The government is supporting special needs education inform of subvention grant, according to Ministry of Education-department of special needs education 109 schools are beneficiaries of the subvention grant that ranges from 280,000=- to 1.5 million. The grant depends on the number of students that have a disability in the school. (Appendix, page 42). The ministry official reported that there are schools that are not receiving the grant because the schools never registered their account numbers with the accountants general and they are not on the system of Ministry of Finance. In the previous years, SNE budget was 123 million but in 2011/12 it was increased to

633 million; though the budget increased, the challenge that is affecting government programs is realization of the planned and allocated budgets.

Arua District education department gets SFG that is basically for construction of classrooms and repairs, in the financial year 2010/11 the district received 190 million which was distributed equally to schools that have a need.

In Arua, the department received PRDP of 434 million for class room, toilet construction and purchase of furniture. They also received 17 million from local funds collections; the funds were used in various categories. On the 17 million received, 4.5 million was allocated to special needs education; other 3 departments shared the remaining amount and shared it equally. While constructing classrooms, accessibility for PWDs was highly considered for instance ramps, special toilet stances and washrooms for CWDs are a must in every school, two stances of toilets were built for Special needs children to cater for boys and girls separately.

Kamuli district in the financial year of 2010/11, 4 million was allocated for special needs education with no transport facilitation to the District education officer and his staff to supervise SNE activities. This led to inadequate data on SNE since the officers has no morale to do their job. We also learnt that the office vehicle that provided to the department by DANIDA is no longer operational, offices for EARS are now used for other office departments yet they were specifically built to cater for special needs issues.

Lyantonde district has no clear budget for Special needs education, a respondent who is an employee to the district reported that the district receives 6 billion from central government for its operations and that money is conditional, the district collects around 30 million in local revenues. The only support children with disabilities are getting from the district is physical accessibility using SFG funds to construct ramps on school buildings and toilets.

Kisoro district financial year of 2010/11 had a budget vote of 297,000= for special rehabilitation, this money goes to community development department and its used to assess and identify children with disabilities who are referred to schools that offer special needs education. The Education officer reported that schools that have units of children with disabilities which are

government aided get 200,000= subvention grant from Ministry of education and sports to support them in feeding, purchase of learning and teaching materials. Local government has no budget vote for education of children with disabilities except the SFG grant that comes from central government to use in construction of classrooms and ramps are considered, pit latrines and teachers houses.

7.3 Factors affecting Children with disabilities and employment of teachers trained in special needs education

7.3.1 Factors affecting special needs teachers

Teachers trained in special needs education abandoned the skill due to low remuneration yet SNE requires extra attention. The Deputy Chief Administrative officer Kisoro District when asked about employment of the disabled teachers, she had this to say,

“To put special needs education on standard, there is need for affirmative action to be appreciated. As of now, not many apply other than those that get disabled on job and those that are retained as long as they conform to the procedures. Kisoro being hard to reach, when the special needs teachers go, they don’t normally return but keep upgrading, raise demand and get employment elsewhere because they would not prefer Kisoro given its far distance and remote nature”.

Teachers for special needs education also used the opportunity to upgrade their qualifications which helped them to get promoted to Head teacher positions; thus leaving the classroom activities. SNE is neglected at district level; this became more evident with the closure of EARS project that was supported by DANIDA. The special needs education program that was running in 48 districts was left to government to handle; the project lacked resources and closed completely. In Kamuli district the offices of EARS are now used for Education departmental offices for the district and the Car is no longer operational, in Arua district, the offices were used by the RDC till when ODW project under UNAB came in and the disability movement in Arua lobbied and got the offices for the project operations in the area.

Teachers with disabilities continue to be discriminated against and face unfair employment terminations. This was particularly emphasized in Kamuli district. Also, those recruited end up not being posted to schools or the schools they are allocated are not accessible to them. However there is a teacher with disability from Kamuli district that reported exceptionally, he has enjoyed his teaching service with less challenges, he said;

“I have a diploma in SNE; I have been serving for 21 years and 10 years on government payroll teaching in Kamuli district. Though I have not been chased, school administration at times have skepticism right from education service commission, I am always asked, how I will be teaching, while I was still teaching at St. Kizito P/S parents took away their children to other schools saying that I will fail their children, there is a time I was put off payroll due to my disability but I followed it up and I was put back. I urge all teachers with disabilities to work hard and be accorded their rights”

Special needs education teachers are at times placed in schools with no special units or in a schools with special needs that not of their specialty for example in Arua district a teacher trained to deal with pupils of visual impairment is posted in Arua demonstration school where there is a unit for children of hearing impairment.

7.3.2 Factors affecting children with disabilities in schools

In the due course of the research, it was established that there is a divided group of PWDs that cannot have the authority to influence decisions what can improve the livelihood of the entire population of people with disabilities most especially to advocate for better education of children with disabilities. Disabled People’s Organization have concentrated on advocating for the concerns of their disability category which has caused imbalances in achieving the universal goal for instance the deaf community advocate for their issues so is the other categories.

There is a remarkable low budget allocation to special needs education from the Central government to the Districts, often the allocated budget does not trickle down to the district yet they are the service providers. While conducting the study, in all the four districts there was a complaint of not receiving funds from Ministry of Education. For example, Mvara secondary

school has a unit for blind children; however they have never received any funds from the government to support the unit.

Special needs education lacks funds yet all its services are costly. The disability budget is very low and conditional. The district local revenue majorly goes to council activities on top of which the subvention grant no longer remitted. In Kisoro, it last came in Feb. 2010 which makes it so hard for the children to be catered for in schools. This has been made worse by poor financial accountability for the funds and the bureaucracy that leaves nothing to spend because the wrong people plan for the funds. For instance in Lyantonde district in the financial year 2010/11, the inspector of schools was supported with 32000= to carry out monitoring activities, but the financial year budget for SNE monitoring was six million which was never realized.

There is little government support in form of subvention grant that tend to be irregular in all districts. The inclusive schools have been heavily affected since there is no special support given to them by central government to cater for the children with disabilities in those schools and all districts visited were reporting lack of local revenues. Also, UPE program is not worthy to support a child with disability since per term each child in UPE school is funded between 700= to 1200= per term a fee that cannot even be used to buy one ream of Braille papers for a blind child.

Insufficient subvention grant, there is a grant supposed to go to schools directly from ministry of education to cater for scholastic materials and running day to day activities of special needs education, however the schools that were visited indicated that the fund is not consistent and is meager for example Kisoro demonstration primary school received 280,000= from the ministry and this comes once in a while in a year it came twice. This has deterred the activities and it has an impact on service delivery.

Respondents reported in adequate supply and lack of scholastic materials to use by children with visual impairment in the four districts that were visited. Overall, the disabled children in school were happy about accessing education though with a major challenge of lack of materials among others. Scholastic materials like Braille papers are not provide by government since they are not

on policy, a ream costs not less than 30,000/= which parents cannot afford to buy for their children yet the government is not providing the Braille papers. Teachers in Kisoro demonstration, Namasagali and Mvara secondary school reported that they have resorted to cutting manila papers which are used as Braille papers, however they fade in short time and they cannot be read at times get stuck in the Braille machine leading to increased expenses in repairs.

One of the respondents said *“Schools have resorted to use of manila papers which they cut to the size of Braille papers and use to Braille notes; however these have posed a major challenge of spoiling the Braille machines and the brailed work fade way in a short time since the paper is not meant for that work”*.

While conducting the study we realized that in the entire country there is no early childhood teacher trained in special needs education, this is a big gap since the basis of education to have well trained children, the foundation level is very important which those children with disabilities have always missed. This has posed a major threat in their learning behaviors and that is why they rarely excel in their academics leading to poor grades at primary leaving examinations and other levels of examination.

Poverty, parents are poor they cannot afford school fees and assistive devices due to poverty; this has affected parents and end up not taking their children to school. For those who have gone to school the rate of school dropout is high, other children have only stopped at primary seven, the parents cannot afford the costs of taking children to secondary schools that have units for children with disabilities since they are in far distances and the requirements are costly.

Accessibility is another challenge, this comes with the way buildings are constructed, the distances from their homes and the improper toilet designs. Sanitation and hygiene is poor in schools, this affects girls with disabilities more since they require more hygienic places.

Girls with disabilities are at a high risk of dropping out of school when they get into adolescence, when they start menstruating, parents fail to offer guidance on what to do, they also never give

them sex education, the girls become unhygienic, they are stigmatized by their counterparts who have no disability, they have no sanitary towels to use thus end up deserting schooling.

Disabled children have been attached to organizations and are never appreciated and owned by their parents- they are generally discriminated from other children in the homes. Parents and community ignorance towards the usefulness of CWDs has increased the negative attitude towards them.

Stigmatization by the community and fellow children who brand them names like “Kalema, Kigala, Muzibe” among others, this was reported in all the four districts that were visited. Children with disabilities get traumatized in the process and end up dropping out of school. There is also a challenge of stigma inflicted on children with disabilities by the school environment and the community they are living in. Largely, CWDs of school going age resent schooling because their peers who are not disabled call them names, they do not want to associate with them, and this has increased the number of children with disabilities who drop out of school.

Also parents and guardians of children with disability stigmatize their children and end up denying them their rights, because of stigma parents hide the children with disabilities in the back yard, they never plan for their education and whenever they try to give them education they just drop them in school and never bother to visit them or even pick them for holidays thus ending up a burden to the school, such incidents were reported in Ediofe girls-Arua district and Maria’s care primary school in Kamuli District.

Sexual abuse is a challenge though it is at low levels; there was one case in Arua reported by ODW secretariat. In this case a girl with disability got impregnated by a sighted boy in their homestead where she lived. Also there is another girl in Ediofe girls who was convinced to give in for sex so that she can gain her sight and ended up getting pregnant too.

Unemployment of PWDs, when PWDs apply for jobs they are never considered due to negative attitudes of employers. There is less than 15 PWDs employed in Arua, the biggest number of those employed are physically disabled, visually impaired are normally employed in education service as teachers. We learnt that teachers with disabilities are failing to get jobs because of the gap between Ministry of Education and Education service commission, the two institutions needs to coordinate properly and there should be clear process to update each other of the progress in SNE,

Transport is a challenges since the road network is poor, there is an “I do not care attitude” by other road users towards CWDs. The children are often are knocked within the roads mostly at crossroads. Accidents on the roads while going to school has led to increased school drop outs due to fears to loose the lives of loved ones by the parents and the victims have decided to stay at home to avoid more accidents, there is no training given to motorists and cyclists on white cane usage and its rules in order to respect those who use it

Physical accessibility is a challenge generally, there are no ramps even at the district administrative blocks, in schools the toilets are shared and they are not user friendly to CWDs

Distance of schools to homesteads is long; this has demoralized those children that commute thus end up dropping out of school. Feeder roads in rural areas are not friendly for wheel chair users because they are full of potholes.

Inadequate coordination between ministry of education and sports and local governments has posed a challenge to special needs education; this was sighted in all the four districts. The schools that have units for children with disabilities reported to have never received subvention grants, others received once yet the MOES department of special needs education reported that some of the schools with special needs units have never submitted their accounts to the accounts general so the money end up being re-banked with ministry of finance.

There is inadequate staffing in the four districts that were visited for example in Arua district, 5 years back the department had 3 inspectors and one was specific for SNE, as of now there is no one to handle SNE. The District Education Officer urged that at least 3 inspectors are required to

cater for SNE in the following ways; one for mental, visual and other one for the blind. One head for special needs education cannot know all categories and in Uganda no training is given to multi-task. If at all that inspector gets any problem, the unit will be non operational. Inadequate staffing at district level has been reported to those concerned with recruitment but it ends up in lip service without providing a service and it worsened due to restructuring affecting SNE heavily.

Sign Language Interpreters are still glaringly lacking in schools with an example of Rwaramba secondary school where there are seven boys in school with only two sign language interpreter yet the students are in different classes four in S.4 and three in S.3 respectively.

Lack of political will to support special needs education, in all the districts it was reported that in the times if local council budgetary meetings issues to do with disability are least looked at they are never prioritized and the councilors with disabilities also have no powers to influence other members to pick interest in their issues, they are few in numbers and often supporting their arguments is a challenge since their levels of education are also low resulting in minimum capacity to express themselves in English.

The government of Uganda has put up efforts towards inclusive education however often this has been criticized and accused of putting children with disabilities among able-bodied children without adequate modifications to the teaching and learning environment, with inadequate specialised teachers.⁵ The recruitment of teachers for special needs education is poor since the public service commission and teachers' service commission recruit teachers basing on subjects and SNE is not a subject.

There is a challenge of record keeping at all levels, in all the districts visited none of them had a information management system to keep track of the education department nor to tell the population of children in school and show how many have a disability, its not easy in such situations to tell whether the teacher enrolled to teach SNE is working or has been off duty, not even easy to allocate those teachers recruited in the district whether they have a disability or not.

⁵ Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (2009); Disability is not inability Report

There is also inadequate information and lack of research in relation to SNE, children with disabilities cannot be easily identified in numbers, this has posed a major challenge in planning and budgeting for their needs, irregular class attendances, lack of attention by the teachers thus increased school drop outs.

7.4 NGOs and DPOS that support education of children with disabilities

1. ANNPCAN plays a role in prevention against child abuse and neglect through research, advocacy, service delivery and networking with other agencies working with children and communities for sustained impact.

2. Operation Days Work (ODW) Project officer interviewed and other staff in a FGD.

It's a project under UNAB, aiming at promote inclusive and quality education for young visually impaired learners in Northern Uganda. The project is operating in 6 districts; Arua, Gulu, Lira, Apach among others. ODW offers quality education to young learners between 6 to 22 yrs. It offers learning materials to blind learners like Perkins Braille's which is costly to students at a cost of 2.5 millions. ODW aids CWDs to learn practical science by providing Skelton for visually impaired learners, dental formulas and also goal balls for sports.

3. Arua district for the deaf also offers Sign Language Interpretation trainings to improve communication and learning of deaf children.

4. Arua association of for the physical disabled carries out advocacy to increase the number of children with disabilities in school.

5. Doctors with Africa also pay fees for disabled children, provide scholastic materials and medical care, walking aids, white canes, hearing aids in Arua District.

6. Uganda Society for Disabled Children (USDC) pay fees for some children with disabilities in schools and provide scholastic materials, it was reported in Arua and Kisoro districts.

7. QUAMA in conjunction with Doctors of Africa also carries out surgeries, they give amputees artificial limbs, they promised to give Ediofe girls school water tanks to harvest water at the school.

8. Peace Education Trust Uganda (PET-Uganda) it supports Rwaramba secondary school unit for deaf children. It pays salaries for the two sign language interpreters, hire students a house for accommodation and sustains their feeding.

9. Compassion a faith based NGO was reported in Kisoro district to be in support of CWDs education, they provide school fees, scholastic materials and uniforms

10. Sight savers has supported schools that have units for children with disabilities, in Kamuli district they have trained teachers in identification of children with visual impairments, provided scholastic materials like Perkins Braille's, Braille papers and two computers to Kiwolera P/S.

11. Plan international is operating in Kamuli, the NGO supports construction of class rooms and they consider accessibility of children with disabilities.

12. VEDCO (Voluntary Efforts for Development Concerns) works in Kamuli and provides income generating activities to parents of children with disabilities and other needy families which help them to earn money that have been utilized to educate their children with disabilities.

13. The Kisoro trust fund has been supporting Children with Disabilities in Kisoro district; it was supporting deaf children who were studying at Deaf Unit at Seseme Primary School. The children were later transferred to Kisoro Demonstration due to the conflict that cropped up at the church the founding institution. The trust fund used to provide 33 million annually to care for children but now they offer 16.5 million due to credit crunch and by the time of research they officially communicated to end the support in December 2011.

14. Mr. Opio Oloya a Ugandan journalist based in Canada, through an organization called ABC also has been supporting Kisoro demonstration school children with low vision, he provides up keep and other scholastic materials, his support ranges between 7 to 9 million annually. He also

pays school fees of 500,000= to those low vision children that joined secondary education at Hornby high school-Kabale.

7.5 The employment situation (entry, retention and exit rates) of teachers with disabilities and non-disabled SNE teachers in the education service.

Employment of Special needs teachers and teachers with disabilities is at low scale in the 4 districts that were visited. Retention of teachers with disabilities and those trained in Special needs education is not at its best, often SNE teachers are transferred, and teachers lack basics training materials to conduct their teaching work and others leave the schools they are deployed in either due to accessibility challenges or negative attitudes by the administration.

Though Teachers service commission called upon teachers with disabilities to apply for jobs, the method of verification and appointment remained the same and teachers with disabilities lost the opportunities at the interview level, others were not posted to schools after recruitment while others were posted in hard to reach areas where they could not manage due to accessibility challenges. In Kamuli District, there 55 teachers trained in special needs education, 5 certificate level, 50 diploma level, however, it was reported that only 10 teachers were in teaching service. Teachers with disabilities are least employed in government service for example the chairperson District Council for Disability is one of those that got job postings, however, there are some cases of two teachers who have been in service and lost the jobs due to unclear circumstances, both teachers are visually impaired.

Also the district Education department found it difficult to give clear statistics on the number of teachers with disabilities and teachers trained in special needs education that are employed in their districts. The figures received were in approximations, Lyantonde was the least in employment of teachers with disabilities and those trained in special needs education, the Inspector/SNE coordinator reported that 10 teachers were trained in Special Needs Education 1 is a graduate, 5 diploma and 4 are certificates. She reported that in the entire district there are two teachers with disabilities who are employed by government and both are female.

Kamuli district has 20 trained teachers with special needs 4 of them are degree holders, 7 diploma holders 1 certificate and 8 are still on training. The employed teachers with disabilities are minimal and there was a report from the department of Education indicating the recent recruitments of teachers in the district where 38 teachers applied but only two teachers with disabilities applied.

Teachers with disabilities often opt for retirement because when they get injured while at work, they have to be approved by the medical board that sits in Kampala and because they can't work choose to retire hence the need to sensitize those injured to get skills to enable them continues in service as disability isn't the end of their careers and that "Disability is not inability", and their rights as well.

In Arua district, teachers have been trained that is 482 teachers were trained in basics of SNE out of 25,604 teachers in the district. The teachers interviewed reported that the training often are too short to help them learn much to use in class, they never receive refresher courses at the end of the day they loose the skills mostly in sign language interpretation.

7.6 Policy initiatives in relation Special needs education in Uganda

7.6.1 International legislations

1. UN convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) it is an essential change at the international levels, which was adopted in January 2007. Since 2001, the United Nations have been negotiating a new human rights convention. The Government of Uganda ratified the convention in 2008. The Convention is also a powerful instrument in the struggle for access to equal rights and will enhance the dignity of persons with disabilities. In addition it will prove to be a valuable instrument for mainstreaming disability from a rights perspective. According to the Convention, governments all over the world have to make the inclusion of disabled persons in society an integrated part of their development cooperation policy. This is so because disabled persons worldwide have the same rights as other people. This obligation asks for enforceable

disability measures worldwide and NGOs, including other lobby-organizations, are to empower disabled people to make use of their rights.⁶

In the convention, States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties have committed to ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning directed to:

The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;

The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential; Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society like any other person.

In realizing this right, States Parties pledge to ensure that a) Persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education, on the basis of disability; b) Persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live; c) Reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements is provided; d) Persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education; e) Effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.

States Parties also pledge to enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community. To this end, States Parties shall take appropriate measures, including:

⁶ UNCRPD,2007

Facilitating the learning of Braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication and orientation and mobility skills, and facilitating peer support and mentoring;

Facilitating the learning of sign language and promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community;

Ensuring that the education of persons, and in particular children, who are blind, deaf or deaf blind, is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual, and in environments which maximize academic and social development.

To realize this right, States Parties pledge to take appropriate measures to employ teachers, including teachers with disabilities, who are qualified in sign language or Braille, and to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education. Such training shall incorporate disability awareness and the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, educational techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities.

2. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); Article 26 states that ‘Everyone has the right to an education’.

3. The Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966); Article 2 enshrines the right to education ‘without discrimination of any kind as to race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status’

4. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); emphasizes on the rights of children to free relevant and quality education regardless of status.

5. The Dakar World Education Forum Framework for Action (2000), promoting Education for All. In 2000 the World Education Forum in Dakar, 164 country governments, together with representatives of regional groups, international organizations, donor agencies, non-government organizations and civil society, put emphasis on the Jomtien 1990 declaration, where the World

leaders declared on Education for All, Article 1: 1 states that ‘every person, child, youth and adult shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs’. Uganda is a signatory to this agreement. This influenced the educational provision for children with special needs in Uganda and meant that even children with special needs were to benefit or be catered for under the educational provision in the country.

The UNESCO Salamanca framework of action on Special needs Education 1994; this emphasizes promotion of education and inclusion of all children with Disabilities.

7.6.2 National Legislations

1. The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995)

Human rights are a central element of the Constitution of Republic of Uganda (1995) which emphasizes protection of human life, and dignity. Objective XVI, under the national objectives and directive principles of state policy, states that society and the State shall recognize the right of persons with disabilities to respect and human dignity. Under objective V the State pledges to guarantee and respect institutions which are charged by the State with the responsibility for protecting and promoting human rights by providing them with adequate resources to function effectively.

An objective xviii (ii) emphasizes the commitment by the state to afford every citizen equal opportunity to attain the highest educational standard possible. Individuals, religious bodies and other non-governmental organizations are accorded the freedom to found and operate educational institutions if they comply with the general educational policy of the country and maintain national standards.

Article 30 provides for right to education for all and states that ‘All persons have a right to education’. Article 32 further provides for affirmative action in favor of marginalized groups, including those with disabilities and clause (1) states ‘... the State shall take affirmative action in favor of groups marginalized on the basis of gender, age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom, for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against

them. Finally article 35 provides for the rights of persons with disabilities and states in clause (1) that ‘PWDs have a right to respect and human dignity, and the State and society shall take appropriate measures to ensure that they realize their full mental and physical potential

2. National Education Policy 1992;

The overall policy of the Education and Sports Sector derives from the recommendations of the Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC 1989), that was subsequently refined into the Government White Paper on Education (GWPE 1992). The policy is under pinned by the current vision and mission of the sector. The vision of the Ministry of Education and Sports is “Quality Education and Sports for All “and the mission is to “guide, coordinate, regulate and promote quality education and sports to all persons in Uganda for National integration, individual and national development”. The GWPE states that PWD have the right to join a school and level commensurate with their qualification, interests and abilities; choose any subject they are able to do including sciences and be availed equal opportunities for education, training and employment. Hence, the MOES, as the main provider of educational services, recognizes that the special needs of PWDs for learning must be met to enable them to participate equally in attaining full education at all levels.

3. The Persons with Disabilities Act (2006)

The persons with disability Act would be a good document providing a comprehensive legal protection for persons with disabilities, however there has been issues with it since the government has not done much to implement it. The Act is in accordance with Article 23 and 35 of the Constitution; to make provisions for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against persons with disabilities towards equalization of opportunities. Part 2, Article 5 of the Act provides for a right to quality education by PWDs through inclusive education at all levels. It further provides for formulation and design of educational policies and programmes that promote the special needs and requirements of PWDs and give PWDs access to relevant education at all levels, paying particular attention to the requirements of girls and children in rural areas. The article also provides for the provision of learning and instructional, materials and assistive

devices suitable for learners with special needs. There is provision for structural and other adaptations of all educational institutions to the needs of PWDs, commitment of not less than 10% of all educational expenditure to the needs of PWDs at all levels and provision of assistive services during examinations.

The Universal Primary Education policy (UPE) provides that parents should give priority to CWDs and the girl-child, while enrolling their children in school. However, this affirmative action sounds good on paper, but has failed to make the required impact on education of children with disabilities. The children drop out of schools due to lack of teaching aids, special needs teachers, accessible buildings and a favorable attitude from teachers and fellow pupils⁷.

7.6.3 Policies and ordinances formulated and used at local government level to implement Special needs Education

Table 5: Table indicating districts policies and ordinances formulated to implement SNE

S/N	Districts	Policy/Ordinance
1	Kisoro	Each new block constructed at school must have ramps
		Each toilet that is newly constructed at school must have a stance for CWD's
		Children with disabilities should be given first priority in UPE schools
		All schools should allow children with disabilities to attain education (mainstreaming)
2	Lyantonde	Children with disabilities should be mainstreamed in inclusive schools
		Each new block constructed at school must have ramps
3	Arua	Recruit teachers trained in special needs education
		Each new block constructed at school must have ramps
4	Kamuli	Teachers with disabilities and teachers trained in special needs education are encouraged to apply for jobs in district service commission.
		All schools should allow children with disabilities to attain education (mainstreaming)
		Children with disabilities should be given first priority in UPE schools

Data collection from the field

⁷ The New Vision, 28 January 2010

7.7 To suggests practical measures for addressing the challenges affecting special needs education

There is need to advocate for direct funds from Ministry of Education to cater for Special needs education in terms of data collection, data management system to be in place in order to easy the flow of information and to help ascertain the needs of special needs education per district so that all children with disability needs are catered for accordingly since their needs vary according to disability category and family background.

There is need to devise means of providing locally made teaching guides for deaf and blind pupils in schools. In the course of the study we learnt that poverty is a challenge to the side of parents and guardians and teachers also lack teaching guides because they are expensive to buy yet government have not provided enough, using local materials can help reduce of the need. The following pictures indicate the locally made materials that are used in school that offer special needs Education.

Plate3: Locally made teaching materials for Deaf and Blind children



Source: Data Collection from the field

Parents of children with disabilities need to appreciate special needs teachers and shows willingness to take their children to schools with teachers trained in special needs education.

There is need for government to provide axially teaching aids to teachers with special needs especially those with visual impairments. The teaching aids that are provided currently are not favorable to them since they are not in accessible formats. Also capacity development fund at district level should cover SNE teachers and train them in computer usage.

Sign language be part of the curriculum because it then that scholastic materials for special needs will be availed by the Ministry of Education

Special needs teachers need to be appointed to head the budget departments in their respective schools in order to give propriety to special needs and enable equality.

Parents need to be sensitized on the need to educate their disabled children and not shun them because they are like any other children entitled to education. If CWDs are provided with good education they can be responsible citizens in future once they complete their education.

Also, there is need to sensitize PWDs to join association, some disabled people don't wish to be part of the union and are inactive. DPOs are urged to continue sensitizing and motivating the public to take part in disability work for betterment of persons of with Disabilities.

There is need to strengthen Government policy on special needs education for instance Government to provide scholastic materials like Braille, sign language dictionaries in order to enhance the learning of special needs pupils.

Government should inject money in starting up at least one school for special needs education per two districts in order to reduce on the distance traveled to attain education in far districts. Transport posed a big challenge which had led to high school drop outs and caused increased lack of information and awareness on the schools that offer the services.

Government and civil society organizations should collaborate to uplift the plight of children with disabilities through special needs education, the collaboration will help to reduce duplication of services and improve planning and budgeting for the needs of special needs education.

The special needs education inspector of schools should be recruited and facilitated in all districts of Uganda. There should be specifically trained inspectors for SNE most especially with skills to handle visual, hearing and learning disabilities.

The government of Uganda and other development partners in education sector should put up programmes, policies and implement them in relation to Early Childhood Development (ECD) in order to take priority in SNE. All key players should be key participants in learning and development of SNE, make sure information regarding SNE is incorporated in the ECD Learning framework.

8.0 Ethical Considerations of the Study

Ethical considerations that were focused on included:

To protect the respondents' human rights: Research participants were informed of the purpose of the study. They were also allowed to make voluntary choice of whether or not to participate. Participants also have a right to withdraw from the interview at any time without penalty. They were assured of anonymity and confidentiality in respect of the information given.

Balancing benefits and risks: The benefit of the study was all about knowledge, there was no direct benefits.

Obtaining informed consent: Informed consent was obtained and the study participants had a right to change their mind to stop the interview at any time. They had a right to ask questions where they do not understand without penalty.

9.0 Risks

Inadequacy of financial resources: Due to this, the time allocated for this study did not suffice. The same is true for the population samples, whose number was not adequately representative.

Reaching teachers with disabilities in their schools or homes was difficult. Some had gone for further studies or were not on duty.

Conclusion

Education being a right to all Ugandans, let government and all stake holders work together to empower and support a child with disability to attain better education through providing the required needs to attain education by promoting special needs education. National Council for Disabilities, Disabled Peoples Organizations and all stakeholders responsible should focus on conducting research and documenting the findings in relation to special needs education.

Reference:

1. The New Vision, 28 January 2010
2. National Education Policy 1992
3. The Universal Primary Education policy
4. The Persons with Disabilities Act (2006)
5. The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995)
6. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
7. The Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC 1989),
8. The UN Convention on the rights of PWDs (2006)

Appendices

SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOL/UNITS

	NAME OF SCHOOL	DISTRICT	DISABILITY TYPE
1	Kalasa Mixed Day & Boarding P/S	Luwero	Visual Impairment
2	Arua P/S	Arua	Hearing Impairment
3	Uganda School for the Deaf	Kampala	Hearing Impairment
4	St. Ursula P/S	Jinja	Mental Retardation
5	Bishop Stuart	Mbarara	Mental Retardation
6	Tukore Invalids P/S	Mbarara	Hearing Impairment, Mental Retardation & Physical
7	Ojwina P/S	Lira	Mental Retardation & Physical
8	St. Mark VII Unit for the Deaf Bwanda	Masaka	Hearing Impairment, Deaf Blind
9	Wanyange P/S	Bugiri	Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment
10	Waluwerere P/S	Masaka	Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment
11	Good Samaritan, Kitangesa	Masaka	Hearing Impairment
12	Magale Grils' Boarding	Mbale	Visual Impairment
13	St. Bernadetta's Parents P/S	Hoima	Hearing Impairment , Visual Impairment
14	York P/S	Bugiri	Mental Retardation
15	Kirinya P/S	Kyejonjo	Hearing Impairment
16	Mvara S/S	Arua	Visual Impairment
17	St. Hellen's P/S	Mbarara	Visual Impairment
18	Laroo P/S	Gulu	Hearing Impairment
19	Mulago School for the Deaf	Kampala	Hearing Impairment
20	St. Mary goretta Ngetta Grils P/S	Lira	Visual Impairment
21	Aber P/S	Lira	Hearing Impairment
22	African Families Support Services	Masaka	Hearing Impairment
23	Hassan Tourabi Education Centre Bweyogerere P/S	Kampala	Hearing Impairment
24	Kireka Home	Kampala	Hearing Impairment
25	Misanvu Demonstration SNE Unit	Masaka	Visual Impairment
26	Masindi Centre for the Handicapped	Masindi	Hearing Impairment, Mental Retardation
27	Bokwe P/S	Masindi	Hearing Impairment , Visual Impairment
28	Kamurasi Demonstration School	Masindi	Visual Impairment
29	St. Kizito Annex for the Blind	Kamuli	Visual Impairment
30	St. Francis S.S P/S for the Blind Madera	Soroti	Visual Impairment

32	Eruba P/S	Arua	Hearing Impairment
33	Hornby High School Junior	Kabale	Visual Impairment
34	Angal Girls P/S	Neebi	Visual Impairment
35	Paidha Demonstration School	Neebi	Hearing Impairment
36	Pajobi P/S	Neebi	Visual Impairment
37	St. KIzito P/S Kakumiro	Kabale	Hearing Impairment
38	Bishop Rwakaikara SNE Unit	Kabale	Hearing Impairment
39	Katikamu Sebamala P/S	Luwero	Hearing Impairment
40	Luwero Boys P/S	Luwero	Hearing Impairment
41	Nsawo CoU Primary School	Luwero	Hearing Impairment
42	Budadiri Girls P/S	Mbale	Hearing Impairment
43	Agola P/S	Tororo	Visual Impairment
44	Merikit Unit P/S	Tororo	Visual Impairment, Physical
45	Chemwania P/S	Kapchorwa	Mental Retardation
46	Seeta CoU P/S	Mukono	Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment
47	Mukono Bishop Wes P/S	Mukono	Hearing Impairment, Mental Retardation
48	Kisoro Demonstration P/S	Kisoro	Visual Impairment
49	Rwera Mixed P/S	Ngungamo	Hearing Impairment, Mental Retardation
50	Butambala School for the Deaf	Mpigi	Hearing Impairment
51	Nkoozi Demonstration School	Mpigi	Visual Impairment
52	Kakubansiri C/P P/S	Mpigi	Hearing Impairment
53	Moyo P/S Annex for the Blind	Moyo	Visual Impairment
54	Bumbo P/S	Mbale	Hearing Impairment
55	Ikwera Negri P/S	Apac	Hearing Impairment
56	Buckley High School	Iganga	Hearing Impairment, Deaf Blind
57	St. Gemma Kabuwoko Girls P/S	Rakai	Hearing Impairment, Deaf Blind
58	Bushenyi Centre for Disabled Children	Bushenyi	Hearing Impairment, Mental Retardation, Visual Impairment
59	Mpondwe P/S	Kasese	Hearing Impairment
60	Rukoki Model P/S	Kasese	Mental Retardation, Hearing Impairment
61	Lomukura P/S	Kotido	Hearing Impairment
62	St. Joseph P/S Gangama	Mbale	Mental Retardation
63	Nauyo P/S	Mbale	Mental Retardation
64	Kiwolera Army P/S	Kamuli	Visual Impairment
65	St. Thereza Bujuni P/S	Kibaale	Visual Impairment
66	Kinyamaseke P/S	Kasese	Hearing Impairment
67	Cannon Apollo Demonstration P/S	Kabarole	Visual Impairment
68	St. Peter and St. Paul P/S	Kabarole	Hearing Impairment, Mental Retardation

69	Rustya P/S	Isingiro	Hearing Impairment
70	Kasambya Unit for the Blind	Mubende	Visual Impairment
71	Liria P/S	Arua	Visual Impairment
72	Geya P/S	Yumbe	Hearing Impairment
73	Mbarara Mixed P/S	Mbarara	Mental Retardation
74	Fr. Hilders P/S	Soroti	Hearing Impairment
75	Nakatunya P/S	Soroti	Hearing Impairment, Mental Retardation
76	Ngora High School	Kumi	Hearing Impairment
77	Lukomera CoU	Luwero	Hearing Impairment
78	Luteete Mixed P/S	Luwero	Hearing Impairment
79	Busumbu P/S	Manafa	Hearing Impairment
80	Gulu P/s for the Blind Annex	Gulu	Visual Impairment
81	Gulu Prisons P/S	Gulu	Mental Retardation
82	Ishekye Unit for the Handicapped	Bushenyi	Hearing Impairment
83	Centre for the Blind	Iganga	Visual Impairment
84	Kyambogo P/S	Kampala	Mental Retardation
85	Wakiso S.S.S for the Deaf	Wakiso	Hearing Impairment
86	Entebbe Children Welfare Unit	Wakiso	Hearing Impairment, Mental Retardation
87	Kiteezi Centre for the Disabled P/S	Kampala	Hearing Impairment, Mental Retardation
88	Nancy School for the Deaf	Lira	Hearing Impairment
89	Ediofe Grils P/S	Arua	Visual Impairment
90	Pawor P/S	Arua	Mental Retardation
91	Arua Demonstration P/S	Arua	Visual Impairment
92	Hornby High Schoo, Secondary	Kabale	Visual Impairment
93	Agururu P/S	Tororo	Hearing Impairment, Mental Retardation
94	Amanang P/S	Kapchorwa	Hearing Impairment
95	Sir Apollo Kagwa SS Nazigo	Mukono	Visual Impairment
96	Salaama Children's Care Centre	Mukono	Visual Impairment
97	Kibibi CoU P/S	Mpigi	Hearing Impairment
98	Nyakibale Lower P/S	Rukungiri	Hearing Impairment
99	Ikwera P/S	Apac	Visual Impairment
100	Kateera Bikira P/S	Kiboga	Hearing Impairment, Mental Retardation
101	Rugazi Central P/S	Bushenyi	Mental Retardation
102	St. Ludovicos Kitana P/S	Hoima	Hearing Impairment
103	Kampala School for Physically Handicapped	Kampala	Hearing Impairment, Mental Retardation
104	Pakwach S.S	Nebbi	Visual Impairment
105	Ngora School for the Deaf	Mbale	Hearing Impairment
106	Spire road P/S	Jinja	Visual Impairment
107	Walukuba West P/S	Jinja	Hearing Impairment
108	Iganga Girls S. S	Iganga	Visual Impairment
109	St. Anthony's School for the Deaf, Nkozi	Mpigi	Hearing Impairment

N.B: More schools have applied to get the grant but await verification of the status.