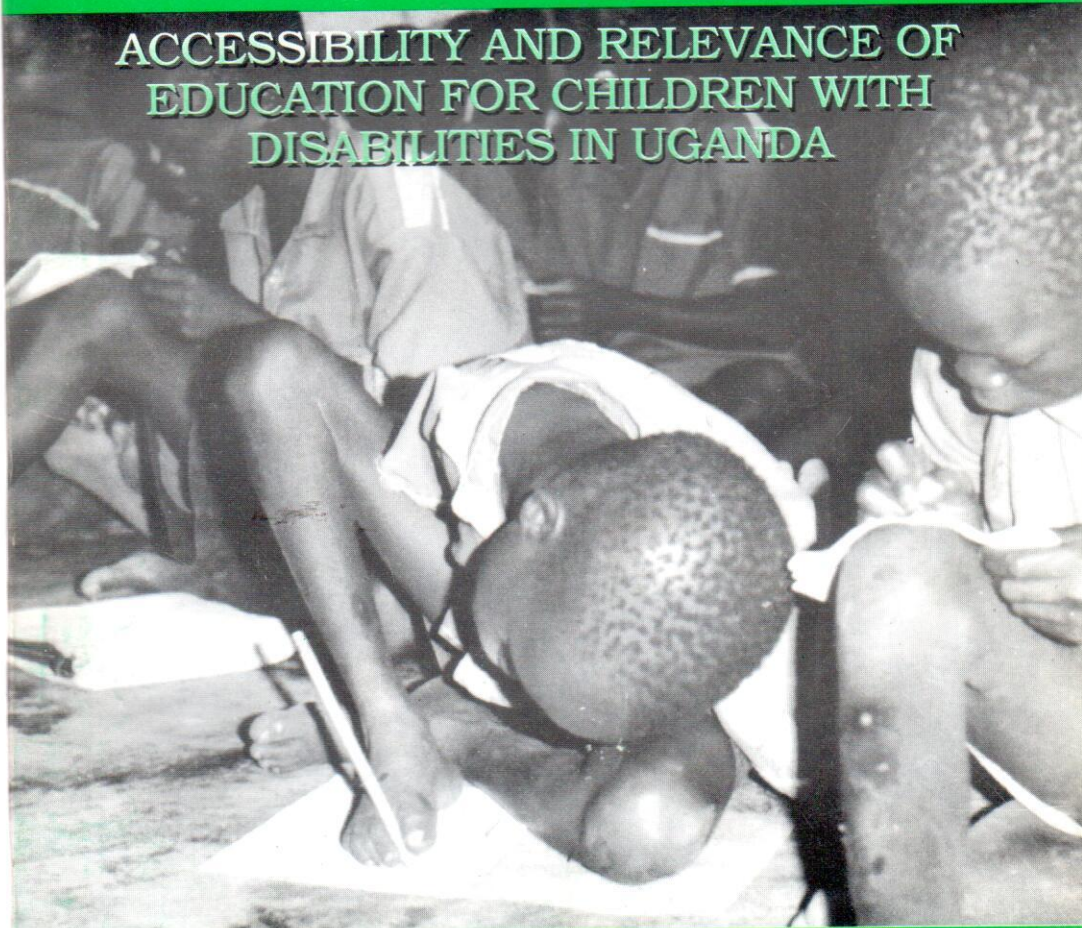




UGANDA SOCIETY FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

ACCESSIBILITY AND RELEVANCE OF
EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH
DISABILITIES IN UGANDA





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OCTOBER 2003

FOREWORD

Accessibility and Relevance of Education for Children With Disabilities (CWDs) in Uganda is a study report about the challenges that these children face in accessing formal education. It reveals gaps that exist in the Uganda's formal education system from the perspective of CWDs. As a result of physical, social and economic barriers, many CWDs drop out of school at the lower levels of primary. Of those remaining that complete primary, only a small number succeeds to post primary.

The government's UPE policy promotes access to primary education for all children, and yet CWDs are not able to utilize this opportunity. When educational facilities are not equipped with the resources, Special Needs Education teachers, or the adapted structures needed to accommodate and include CWDs, they are restricted from the benefits of education.

To promote access to education of CWDs through inclusive education and make it relevant to them, peoples attitudes need to change, facilities have to be put in schools for them, appliances and aids need to be availed to them, more special needs education teachers need to be trained and deployed in schools and curriculum has to change. This calls for a concerted effort of all stakeholders if this is to succeed. These include government, parents/guardians, communities, Local leaders, Non-Governmental Organizations, donors, school authorities and district leadership.

This report provides insight and information to all those who have a stake, responsibility and zeal in promoting the education of children with disabilities. It reveals the challenges that have limited accessibility and relevance of education to CWDs.

Jackson Atria
Executive Director,

Uganda Society for Disabled Children

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to all children with disabilities in Uganda who face unmentionable challenges while accessing formal education

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge all the people who contributed to this study, and the participation of the children with disabilities, their parents, families, teachers and legislators.

The input of the USDC staff was invaluable, especially the staff who conducted the field work. Basil, Solome, and Bright are appreciated for designing and pre-testing the research tools and Martin for processing and analysing the raw data.

Please note that the above list is in no way exhaustive. We thank all who participated and contributed to this study.

Any errors that may have skipped the eyes of those producing this report are highly regretted.

Uganda Society for Disabled Children,

October 2003

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACAO	Assistant Chief Administrative Officer
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CBR	Community Based Rehabilitation
CWD	Child with a Disability
CWDs	Children with Disabilities
CWSEN	Children with Special Education Needs
CWSLN	Children with Special Learning Needs
DANIDA	Danish Development Agency
DEO	District Education Officer
DPO	Disabled Persons Organisations
EARS	Education Assessment Resource Services
ESIP	Education Strategic Investment Plan
FGD	Focussed Group Discussions
HI	Hearing Impairment
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LC	Local Council
LQDP	Local Government Development Programme
MI	Movement Impairment
MFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MR	Mental Retardation
NCC	National Council of Children
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NPAC	National Plan of Action for Children
PLE	Primary Leaving Examinations
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
SFG	Schools Facilities Grant
SI	Speech Impairment
SNE	Special Needs Education
SNECO	Special Needs Co-ordinator
UACE	Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education
UCE	Uganda Certificate of Education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISE	Uganda National Institute of Special Education
UPACLED	Uganda Parents of Children with Learning Difficulties
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USDC	Uganda Society for Disabled Children
VI	Visual Impairment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study aimed to investigate accessibility and relevance of education for children with disabilities (CWD's).

Inaccessibility in institutional contexts include educational structures such as staircases and latrines, large class sizes, curriculum inadequacies, and lack of instructional and scholastic materials, and Special Needs Education teachers. Social challenges are identified as negative attitudes towards disability, complacency of parents to cater for the educational needs of their CWDs, and the lack of interest among parents to send their children to school. Environmentally, long distances and terrain limited CWDs from accessing education. Poverty was identified as the key economic barrier.

This study provides a deeper analysis of the barriers affecting accessibility and relevance of primary education for children with disabilities in Uganda. It was conducted to increase understanding of all stakeholders, particularly policy makers and planners charged with the responsibility of providing education for all children.

A number of recommendations were made that could increase accessibility and relevance of education to CWDs. Physical structures like the terrain, construction of ramps, wider classroom doors, adapted toilets so as to make education accessible. There is also need for instructional materials for CWDs like Braille materials, type writers and text books. Compensatory aids such as hearing aids and other assistive devices should be provided to facilitate them in their studies. Program for training Special Needs Education teachers should be scaled up so that more of them are deployed in schools.

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Chapter 1

BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM



CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction

Education, a building block of development, is one of the most important investments that a country can make. It positively affects socio-economic behaviour such as productivity in the workplace, living standards, and health behaviour.

Uganda's expenditure on education is 2.6% of the Gross National Product (GNP). The Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) centrally manages the formal education system, which is based on seven years of primary school and six years of secondary school. Vocational, technical, and academic courses are offered through post-primary and tertiary institutions. Primary education is supported locally by the District Local Government Administration (DLGA). Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) supplement the efforts of the government, through the provision of educational facilities, resources and teacher training.

According to Coleridge (1993), Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) are a minority all over the world, yet most governments have provided programmes and support for only 5% of them. PWDs have the potential to be independent, and contribute to their country's development process, yet they are often stigmatized within their families and communities.

The statistics on disability in Uganda are inadequate. The World Health Organisation estimates that there are 2.1 million PWDs in Uganda. (World Health Organisation estimate of a 10% disability rate). The National Council of Children (1994) approximates that 800,000 children in Uganda have one or more disabilities, while



the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MOFPED) estimates that there are a total of 1.2 million children with disabilities (CWDs) in Uganda, with about 1 million living in the rural areas. These statistical inaccuracies pose serious problems in effective and efficient planning for the education and welfare of CWDs.

According to the MOFPED, 98% of PWDs lack formal education, which results in limited access to opportunities (such as employment) for the enhancement of their lives. If they have attained such qualifications, they usually acquire positions that are often low grade and low paying.

1.2 Background to the Study

The family and society have often viewed children with disabilities as a burden, hence stigmatizing and isolating them. This makes them very vulnerable. Despite the introduction of Universal Primary Education¹, children with disabilities are frequently not enrolled in school, as they are not considered worthy of attaining formal education. Those who are enrolled are usually teased and bullied by their peers, and this discourages them from attending school more often. This is a significant factor in low school enrolment and retention of CWDs (National Council of Children, 1994).

Prior to 1997, of the few children with disabilities who attended school, many were only able to enrol in special schools or annexes which provided vocational training. In 1997, Uganda introduced Universal Primary Education (UPE) which allowed four children per family to receive free education.² Children with disabilities were to be the priority beneficiaries of this programme.³ As a result of this, the enrolment of children increased from 2.5 million in 1996, to 5.3 million in 1997 and to 6.5 million in 2000 (MOFPED,

¹Countrywide, the low enrolment and completion rates (in primary education) among certain marginalized groups e.g. children with disabilities and the girl child is a major concern.

²Within the UPE, government committed itself to assist 4 children per family by meeting the teacher's salaries and training, tuition fees, instructional materials, and construction of required facilities. Parents are expected to provide uniforms, meals, books, and locally available material and labour for construction.

³Although UPE has been operational since 1997, the government has no clearly defined mechanism to enforce the prioritisation of education for the girl child and children with disabilities.

001).⁴ However, there was no proportionate increase in the enrolment of CWDs.

The UPE continues to target CWDs, but the government has not set up the infrastructures in schools necessary for their integration. The physical structures including the walkways, toilets, corridors are not accessible, and special educational equipment such as Braille machines and hearing aids are not available. The sizes of integrated classes are too large, and teachers are not able to attend to the unique learning needs of CWDs.⁵ Moreover, few teachers have the knowledge and skills to educate these children. These concerns have contributed to the high drop out rate of CWDs.

Uganda's education system offers an inappropriate curriculum for CWDs. The curriculum at primary level has become increasingly irrelevant to the skills that these children need in their day-to-day lives outside school. The emphasis is on academic subjects, rather than balancing theory with the teaching of independent living skills. Most CWDs do not go beyond primary level. Therefore the education they receive in primary is critical as it is the foundation for their livelihood.

Accessibility in educational facilities varies by disability. For example, children with movement disorders require ramps, enlarged corridors, and doorways, staircase alternatives, and clean toilets. Children with hearing impairments require hearing aids and teachers familiar with sign language. Individuals with visual impairments require instructional materials like Braille machines (which are available on a limited basis) and safe, easy to navigate physical structures and surrounding compounds. Children with learning disabilities require specialised learning aids and resources to assist them in understanding. Teachers trained in Special Needs Education are needed to educate all CWDs, irrespective of their disability.

⁴To date, there is no evidence that the number of children with disabilities enrolled in schools has increased as a result of UPE.

⁵According to the Ministry of Education and Sports, "National Primary School Mapping Census" (1999), the teacher pupil ratio in lower classes (1-3) stands at 1:110 whereas that of upper and middle classes (4-7) is 1:55.



Traditionally, the boy child is valued more than the girl whether they are disabled or not. Thus the disabled girl child has a double disadvantage due to these negative attitudes, and issues with their accessibility differ from those of their male counterparts. For example, girls with disabilities may experience sexual harassment and rejection at school and at home. They may also be expected to perform certain gender roles despite their disabilities.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Although education is one of the basic human rights, children with disabilities persistently have problems in accessing it. Accessibility is defined in terms of distance, cost, and relevance of courses offered, the availability of instructional materials, adapted infrastructures, and the number and experience of Special Needs Education Teachers.

1.4 Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the study are as follows:

- (a) Primary education services are not accessible to CWDs.
- (b) An inclusive policy on primary education exists but it is not adequately implemented.
- (c) Children with disabilities have different challenges to education based on their gender.
- (d) Few CWDs go beyond primary education.
- (e) The courses offered to CWDs at the primary level are not relevant.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Accessibility to education has attracted many studies. This study will add to the knowledge gained from the previous studies and fill existing gaps.

This study will analyse the relevance of primary education for CWDs, and the conditions and infrastructures which hinder their access to education.

This study will also raise awareness and discussion among educational planners, public and private stakeholders concerned with promoting access to education and the equalisation of opportunities for CWDs.

1.6 Objectives of the Study

1.6.1 General Objectives

The general objective of this study is to determine the barriers to access and relevance of education of CWDs.

1.6.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are to:

- (a) Assess the relevance of primary education currently offered to CWDs.
- (b) Determine the gender specific challenges of CWDs in accessing education.
- (c) Explore the disability specific challenges of CWDs.
- (d) Investigate the constraints to the provision of educational service for CWDs.
- (e) Make recommendations to stakeholders for improving educational services for CWDs.

Chapter 2

METHODOLOGY



CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology used in selecting the sample, the area and population of study, data collection techniques, and analysis and report generation.

2.2 Study Design

Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used to authenticate the study, and to allow for the collection of detailed information from the respondents in their social context. Primary data was collected through both structured and unstructured interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. National and international documents were also consulted. The study was completed in 10 calendar weeks (50 workdays).

2.3 Study Area and Population

The study covered 12 of Uganda's districts: These include Adjumani, Apac, Arua, Hoima, Lira, Luwero, Masaka, Masindi, Moyo, Nakasongola, Nebbi, and Ssenbabule. A total of 20 respondents were targeted per district for a total of 240 respondents. The focus group discussions involved 120 children from 5 selected districts. Ten additional key informants were included from line ministries, NGO partners, and legislators. A total of 370 respondents and key informants participated in this study.



The key informants interviewed included: Members of Parliament representing PWDs, line ministry officials, district partners, managers of vocational institutions, local council leaders, administrators of childcare organisations, agencies and institutions, District Education Officials, LC V Officials, Chief Administrative Officers, Resident District Commissioners, Executive Directors of NGOs, Opinion leaders, Disabled Persons Organisations, parents, CWDs and teachers.

2.4 Sampling Techniques

The study covered all the districts USDC operates in. Sampling techniques employed were purposive and snowball sampling. Variables including age, gender, geographical location, and the types of disability were considered.

2.5 Research Instruments

The following research instruments were used to gather data for this study:

2.5.1 Pre-field Consultations

Pre-field consultations were held with various stakeholders, including NGOs, relevant departments in the central and local governments, and individuals concerned with the education of children with disabilities. These consultations focussed on the perceptions, priorities, and experience of service users, policy makers and implementers and the factors that affect access to, relevance, and the quality of education for children with disabilities.

2.5.2 Literature Review

The literature sources consulted for this study included documents from the Ministry of Education and Sports, National policy documents, reports from partners i.e. the Education Assessment Resource Services (EARS) and the Uganda National Institute for Special Education (UNISE), and studies conducted by earlier researchers.

2.5.3 Observations

Schools in the different districts were visited to gather data on non-verbal behaviour. An observation guide was developed to explore elements of accessibility including: the availability of instructional materials, conducive environment, the inclusion and integration of children with disabilities, class sizes, and the physical infrastructures of the facilities (toilets, corridors, ramps, staircases), and the class sizes.

2.5.4 Focus Group Discussions

Focus groups were held with CWDs in the five districts of: Masaka, Masindi, Luwero, Nakasongola and Ssembabule, to gather qualitative data. These groups discussed the factors that make education inaccessible, their coping mechanisms and how to address inaccessibility. A total of 120 CWDs were selected to participate.

Fifteen focus groups were conducted, consisting of eight children each, and divided according to gender, disability and class (e.g. P1-P4, P5-P7, and post-primary pupils). The groups were then further sub-divided to consist of children enrolled in school, those that have dropped out of school and those that have never attended school. The purpose for these sub-divisions was to maintain homogeneity for each group and elicit discussions on the different challenges each segment experiences in accessing education (Please refer to Appendix IV).

2.5.5 Unstructured Interviews

Unstructured interview techniques were used to gather pertinent data from key informants. The interviews were based on a guide that had a checklist of questions for teachers, parents/families, local Council leaders, managers of vocational institutions and members of Disabled Person's Organisations (DPOs).

Chapter

3

LITERATURE REVIEW



CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

Uganda has put emphasis on the promotion of education as a means of ensuring sustainable human resources, and equalisation of opportunities. The formal education system is beneficial for both individuals and society. Education provides individuals with the information and skills necessary to live full and satisfying lives. Like many developing countries, educational services in Uganda are inadequate and inaccessible to many categories of children especially the vulnerable ones.

The literature reviewed for this study is based on the relevance and accessibility of education for children with disabilities. Section 3.2 examines the historical context of education in Uganda and gives a situational analysis of the formal education structure. Section 3.3 reviews the strengths and weaknesses of the education system, section 3.4 analyses the relevance and accessibility, while section 3.5 investigates the educational challenges of children with disabilities. Lastly, section 3.6 discusses the policy and institutional framework of education for children with disabilities.

3.2 Uganda's Formal Education System

Uganda's formal education system is centrally managed by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), and begins with seven years at the primary level, and six years in secondary. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) assist the Local Government Administration in supporting primary education (NCC, 1994:73; UNICEF, 1989). To graduate to the next level, the following exams must be written successfully: Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE), Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) and Uganda Advanced



Certificate of Education (UACE) respectively. At each level below primary, the pupil can choose to pursue academic, technical or vocational careers.

The government introduced the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997. This program was meant to provide free primary education to four children per family. However, it was later expanded to cater for all children in primary. Teachers' salaries and training, tuition fees, provision of instructional materials, and the construction of classroom facilities are paid by the government while parents are expected to provide uniforms, meals, books and locally available materials and labour for construction.

With the introduction of UPE, enrolment of children increased from 2.5 million in 1996 to 5.3 million in 1997 and 6.5 million in 2000 (Ministry of Finance, Planning & Economic Development, 2001).

According to the 2000 Census of the Ministry of Local Government

"There are a total of 10,902 primary schools in the country, of which 82% are government-aided, while 18% are privately owned. There are 107,376 teachers, of whom 2/3 are qualified, with more qualified male teachers than female" (Ministry of Local Government, 2000:3).

Based on these statistics, the average pupil-teacher ratio stands at 1:74, although it varies according to regions and rural-urban disparities⁶. The current trend indicates that "the quality of education is on the decline, and the proportion of children continuing beyond primary level is small" (Ministry of Local Government, 2000:3).

⁶According to the MOES, the teacher pupil ratio in lower classes (1-3) currently stands at 1:110 whereas that of the upper classes (4-7) is 1:55.

Private institutions and religious bodies contribute in providing education and training. Secondary and post-secondary education is highly competitive. Fewer children go to technical, vocational, secondary and other post-secondary levels.

At each level of education, there are gender, rural-urban, and disability disparities. More males, able-bodied individuals and urban populations are enrolled in school, compared to females and rural inhabitants, and children with disabilities.

There are a few special schools or annexes for children with disabilities. If they are not able to attend one of these, their only option for education is the ordinary integrated schools.

4.1 The Development of Special Needs Education in Uganda

Special Needs Education (SNE) in Uganda began in the 1950s, with the creation of programmes for people with visual impairment by the British Empire Society for the Blind, now known as Sight Savers (Okech, 1993:17). The first school for the visually impaired was established in 1955 by the Ministry of Education, the Teso District Education Committee and the Uganda Foundation for the Blind. In 1962, at Wanyange Girls' Secondary School, a programme was piloted to integrate visually impaired pupils with non-disabled pupils. The programme was later transferred to Iganga Secondary School. The programme has since been replicated in a number of mainstream schools (UNISE, 1993; Matovu, 1994). Okech (1993) states that education for people with hearing impairments was introduced in 1958 with lip-reading lessons at the Aga Khan Mosque and Mengo Primary School. In 1960, using a borrowed classroom from Mengo Primary School, a permanent class was started.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) conducted the first Baharan National Census of the Disabled in 1965. Although the results were not conclusive, the government was urged to be more vigilant and active in the provision of education for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs); paying the salaries of the teachers instructing in schools for PWDs, offering scholarships to teachers



instructing in special schools and establishing district-based sheltered workshops for rehabilitation of adults with disabilities.

In 1973, the Special Education Section/Department was set up in the Ministry of Education to co-ordinate Uganda's special education programmes. In 1982, the first school for the Mentally Retarded was opened. In 1988, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) began training Special Needs Education Teachers at the Institute of Teacher Education - Kyambogo (ITEK).

In 1991, an agreement was signed between the Government of Uganda and the Kingdom of Denmark. Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) provided the technical and financial support to establish the Uganda National Institute of Special Education (UNISE). The objectives of the institute were:

- To train teachers and other personnel in Special Needs Education and rehabilitation.
- To be a resource, producing and disseminating information on the needs of PWDs.
- To research on PWD-related development processes.
- To initiate outreach programmes, increase awareness of PWDs and their needs among teachers, families and communities.
- To promote collaboration among agencies supporting and providing education servicing for PWDs.

The institute works in close collaboration with other institutions and programmes, including the Education Assessment and Resource Services (EARS) programme, which operates at district and national levels. EARS focuses on the prevention of disabilities through early assessment and the subsequent integration of children with disabilities in mainstream schools. It also collaborates with private institutions, NGOs and voluntary organisations, which provide educational service to PWDs.

EARS implements a number of programmes aimed at establishing and operating Special Needs Education activities and departments at the district level, providing direct support to Children with Special Education Needs (CWSEN) and the schools/institutions that are responsible for their education. Teachers and educational facilities are targeted through seminars and workshops.

According to the MOES, there were 159,190 pupils with disabilities enrolled in primary school in 1998, of which 59% were males and 41% were females. Currently (2003), the teacher pupil ratio for children with disabilities is 1:49, and the strategy is to achieve a teacher pupil ratio of 1:3 (Educational Statistical Abstract, 1998).⁷

The following issues were identified from the literature review:

1. Uganda's Formal Education System operates under a centralised curriculum, which is competitive and examination-oriented. Although children with disabilities may be integrated in the ordinary schools, the environment is not conducive to their learning needs, and with the high competition, they may not excel academically.
2. Special education in Uganda can be found at the primary level, but there is little offered at the secondary level. Children with disabilities can complete their primary schooling, but may not be able to complete their secondary. This limits their academic progress.

3.3 Strengths and Weaknesses of Uganda's Education System

The strength of a country's education system is rooted in the issues of policy and infrastructure, and the structure of the curriculum.

⁷To achieve this ratio at the primary level, 53,063 teachers are required. Currently there are 3,275.



3.3.1 Strengths

Basic education is intended to provide the minimum learning needs that equip people with the skills and knowledge to enable them improve their quality of life. Education in itself is a powerful social change instrument, which greatly advances or impedes the development of any society. The strengths of Uganda's education system can be categorised as thus:

According to Colclough (1980:34), "primary schooling is beneficial to developing countries even when the school quality is low". Through Uganda's UPE policy, a goal was set to achieve universality of education by the year 2003 for children aged 6-10 (the first five years), and for the entire primary cycle by the year 2010. This is a major milestone in the education sector, as it saw an increase in enrolment from 2.5 million in 1996, and 6.5 million in 2000. Such commitment is also evidenced by the increasing expenditure in educational programmes, "accounting for 62% of the total Poverty Action Fund (PAF) outlays for the financial year 2000/01" (Deloitte and Touche, 2001:23).

- To facilitate the implementation of UPE, the government has created four grants: the School Facilities Grant (SFG) is for classroom construction, the UPE Capitation Grant is for pupils' fees, the Wage Bill is for teachers' salaries, and the Instructional Materials Grant is for buying instructional materials. Under the Poverty Action Fund, the government, with the assistance of development partners has funded the primary school construction programme since 1997. Under the School Facilities Grant (SFG), educational facilities are improved and adapted for the needs of children with disabilities, i.e. the construction of resource rooms, navigational landmarks for the visually impaired and transport for those with movement impairment (MOES, 2001:23).

Qualifying examinations at each level of the education system demonstrates a highly competitive education system.

The provision of education services has been liberalised, reducing the government's responsibility. The impacts on children with disabilities are both positive and negative. Positively, it broadens their opportunities for education through the numerous additional private schools. However, some private schools do not allow children with disabilities to enrol, as they do not have the adapted infrastructure, and they believe that maintaining them at school is quite expensive.

3.3.2 Weaknesses

An effective education system should adapt to the society's social and economic changes quickly. It should be highly sensitive to these changes, developing the necessary training and the output of skills most needed by the country at any time. However, as noted by Brown (1982:87), Uganda's education system tends to lag behind, which affects the development of society. The weaknesses of Uganda's education system are as follows:

With increasing numbers of children enrolling in primary school, there will soon be a sudden demand for secondary education when these children complete the PLE. The existing secondary institutions will not be able to absorb this number of children. As a result of prevailing negative attitudes and a lack of accessible facilities, pupils (often from marginalized groups, including girls and children with disabilities) drop out from school.

The education curriculum is becoming increasingly irrelevant⁸, and yet in the area of skill training, there has not been an increase in opportunities at the primary and post-primary level. There is an emphasis on academics at the primary level, and

⁸According to UNICEF (1989: 66), Uganda's current primary school curriculum was established in 1977. Although there have been a few revisions, the essential structure remains unchanged in nature and emphasis on technical and practical subjects. For instance, while over 80% of the population lives in rural areas and supports itself through agriculture, agriculture is not a part of the primary syllabus and is only optional at the secondary level. Moreover, instruction at school is often offered in a language which is not local to the community.



yet for many children (especially girls and children with disabilities), primary is their only opportunity for education. To plan for their future, vocational, technical and daily living skills must be incorporated into the primary level curriculum.

- With the increasing number of CWDs enrolling in secondary school, Special Needs Education is critically important to support their learning needs, and ensure their success. If the UPE policy is to follow a logical progression, it is estimated that by the year 2003, about 21,071 CWSN will enter secondary schools, and yet little effort is invested in addressing inclusion at secondary level.
- According to Okech (1994:15), the centralised curriculum approach of Uganda's education system is mainstreamed, highly competitive and examination-oriented.
- The attitudes of teachers are often negative, and many of them have not been trained on strategies to include children with disabilities, which can affect the performance of all pupils.
- Career guidance and counselling ensure that individuals make the correct occupational choices to develop their talents. This is not widely available at the primary level, and yet, as Barton (1994) notes, lack of career guidance for children and adolescents influences the value they attach to education.

3.4 Accessibility and Relevance of Uganda's Education System to Children with Disabilities

Barton and Wamai (1994:80) argue that general access to education in Uganda is affected by high educational costs and household poverty; gender inequalities; political instability, poor distribution of schools, and low literacy among parents, which is associated with low perceived value of education. School-related and socio-economic factors acting independently or interdependently, contribute to the problem of accessibility for children with disabilities.

3.4.1 School-Related Factors

Penny (2000) and Kandyomunda (1999) concur that school related barriers to accessing education include: threatening or non-supportive learning environments, lack of confidence of children with disabilities in their ability to learn, and a lack of disability sensitive teachers/curriculum/materials. Although UPE currently targets children with disabilities as a priority group, the government has not established the necessary physical or social infrastructure for integration.

There is also an acute shortage of specialised personnel within reach of children with special education needs as noted by the Ministry responsible:

"Teachers generally lack training on how to accommodate CWDs in their regular classroom activities. Moreover the class sizes are too big. Current statistics from the Ministry of Education and Sports indicate that there are 3,275 primary level teachers countrywide for special education implying a pupil teacher ratio of 49:1 compared to the recommended ideal of 3:1" (EARS, 1998).

The current curriculum and examination system are not flexible and do not cater for Special Needs Education, as the assessment of children with disabilities has not been standardised. The Ministry of Education and Sports (2001:23) notes that the assessment is often unfair, and does not assess these children according to their capabilities. For Special Needs Education, and inclusion to work, it is necessary to have flexibility.

"A rigid curriculum tends to eliminate participation of these children in some fields, as well as exclude or disadvantage them, as it does not provide for their needs" (MOES, 2001:23).



Stigmatised by their teachers and peers, children with disabilities are often discouraged from accessing education.

3.4.2 Socio-Economic Factors

Socio-economic factors include household, financial and barriers, community beliefs, practices and policy barriers. According to Kandyomunda (1998), even with the introduction of UPE, some families cannot afford the required scholastic materials like uniforms, books, and meals.

"Large families have bigger educational expenses resulting into hard decisions about who will be attending school... Moreover, with the negative attitudes that abound in society coupled with poverty, a CWD may not be priority in attending school" (Kandyomunda, 1998:36).

Secondary and higher education in Uganda is neither free nor compulsory. Parents often see the required fees as investment for their own future. Parents of minority groups like girl children and children with disabilities, may not feel the same way about paying fees for children, who may not be 'able to advance academically' (UNICEF, 1989; MOFPED, 1992).

Intra-household relations may also affect accessibility and relevance of education to CWDs. Parents with low educational levels tend to have a low value of education and may be reluctant to invest in the schooling of their children. Children with disabilities who are neglected and rejected by their families are rarely sent to school. Enrolment statistics in 1999 indicated that out of 5.3 million children in primary schools only 150,559 of these were CWDs (MOES, 1999).

Transport to school for children with disabilities is another barrier. As in some rural areas of Uganda the nearest school may be an average 3 kilometres away. A CWD can take two hours to walk

this distance. Penny (2000) found that, transport problems greatly affect accessibility to education, as parents who cannot afford to hire transport, resort to leaving their CWDs at home. These problems associated with the distance are aggravated during extreme weather conditions (very hot or very wet).

3.5 Policy and Institutional Environment of Education

There are a number of laws and policies, both national and international, aimed at ensuring equalisation of opportunities for children with disabilities in the acquisition of formal education and the attainment of their rights.

Article 23 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which Uganda is a signatory, stipulates that:

"A disabled child has the right to special care, education, and training to help him or her enjoy a full and decent life in dignity and achieve the greatest degree of self reliance and social integration possible" (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990: 85).

Likewise, Article 28 states that:

"The child has a right to education and it is the State's duty to ensure that primary education is free and compulsory, to encourage different forms of secondary education and to make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity" (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990:87).



The Uganda National Plan of Action for Children (NPA) focuses on the protection of children, including the rights of children with disabilities in equal access to health services, education, and freedom from discrimination.

Section 10 of the Children Statute (1996) calls for parents of CW and the State to take appropriate steps in ensuring that children are assessed as early as possible, offered treatment and affordable facilities for their rehabilitation and equal opportunities in education.

Likewise, Section 6 also states that:

"A child has a right to be educated and guided..."
(Children Statute, 1996:6.)

Article 35 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995) acknowledges PWDs as having rights and human dignity. It further states that the State is responsible for ensuring that they realise their full mental and physical potential.

Article 30 states:

"All persons have a right to education" (Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995: 29).

The White Paper on Education (1992) emphasises the need of the government to support the development of education in Uganda. According to this paper:

"Basic education is the minimum package of learning which should be made available to every individual to enable him/her live as a good and useful citizen in the society" (White Paper on Education, 1992: 24).

This paper focuses on the physical rehabilitation of existing infrastructure, reduction of illiteracy, reforming of primary school curriculum, provision of instructional materials, improving the quality of teachers through teacher training and strengthening the relationship between education and the job environment through improvement of the curriculum. Total inclusion of persons with disabilities in mainstream schools, rather than segregation, regards to the Universal Primary Education system is also highlighted in this paper.

International and national policies indicate that society and government through the Ministry of Education and Sports have a responsibility to provide education to all children, including children with disabilities.

Special needs education is designed to meet the needs of children with special education needs, either in a segregated school or in a mainstream school. The Uganda National Institute of Special Education (UNISE) Act (1998) provides for the establishment of an institution (UNISE) that is responsible for training of special needs education teachers, and the creation, distribution and maintenance of teaching aids, and learning materials. It supports government departments, special education departments in the Ministry of Education and Sports, and NGOs that focus on PWDs.

The Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act (2000) provides for the establishment of a National Council for Higher Education with a special needs education institution representative, and a PWD representative. The Act also stipulates that the Admission Boards shall consider affirmative action in favour of marginalized groups based on gender, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom.



The Education Strategic Investment Plan (ESIP) 1998-2002 prioritises accessibility and equity in education, capacity development, and improvement in the quality, and delivery of educational services

The government is committed to key human resource development. Universal primary schooling through Universal Primary Education (UPE) Policy 1997⁹ is the government's education priority and central to the ESIP. The provision of UPE was developed within a framework which ensures access, equity, quality and relevance of education to all social categories of people. This policy caters for the aspirations of disadvantaged groups in Ugandan society. The UPE has a special provision for inclusion of PWDs within mainstream school systems, with stipulation that children with disabilities and girl children among those given first priority to enrol for UPE.

At the international level, Uganda attended and is party to the World Conference on Education For All (EFA), conducted in Jomtiem, Thailand (1989). This enshrines the principle of the right to education for all persons. It is this same conference that identified the educational needs of the different social groups and agreed that such groups have the opportunity to all education according to their needs and capabilities. In 1990, Uganda signed the Salamanca Statement on SNE principles and policy practices.

The government is currently implementing the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP 1997-2017) as a basic framework for development. The goal of the PEAP is to provide an acceptable minimum set of services which will benefit the poor, disadvantaged and vulnerable by empowering them economically such that they can improve their own welfare (Uganda Debt Network, 1999; PEAP, 2002:25). Education is one of the goals of the PEAP to eradicate poverty¹⁰.

⁹The government of Uganda intends to achieve universal primary education by the year 2000 for children aged 6-11 (first five years) and for the entire primary cycle by the year 2010.

¹⁰ The PEAP aims at reducing poverty by lowering the 66.3% of population living in absolute poverty to less than 30% and those living in relative poverty from 86.2% to 30% by the year 2017. Strategies to achieve this include mainstreaming poverty reduction into all government policies, making economic growth broad-based, provision of basic services to the masses and promotion of balanced regional development among others.

"These objectives are to expand access, increase equity, and build high quality and effective education services in both public and private sector... The chief education priority of government is to ensure that all children enrol in primary school" (PEAP, 2002:27)

The objectives of the PEAP ensure that children with disabilities have an opportunity for self-reliance through access to education.

Despite the aforementioned efforts, children with disabilities still experience challenges in accessing education. Policy barriers, including an insufficient budget for education, absence or lack of enforcement of compulsory education laws, policies that favour certain social groups; absence of policies to address dropout caused by pregnancies, affect the access to education by marginalized groups. Although policy framework and programmes addressing marginalized groups and education have been established, they are not adequately implemented. This affects accessibility to education. For example, there are no specific percentages of UPE funds designated for Special Needs Education in schools. Material provision for the learning needs of children with disabilities therefore remains the responsibility of head teachers, many of whom view CWDs negatively.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS AND THEIR INTERPRETATION

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND THEIR INTERPRETATION

4.1 Factors Hindering Access to Education by CWDs

The study revealed a variety of factors related to the family, community and school environment that hinder children with disabilities from accessing education. They include:

4.1.1 Non-Supportive Attitudes

The 12 districts studied had both positive and negative attitudes towards PWDs. The negative perceptions included: viewing PWDs as a burden, apathetic and neglectful treatment. 42.3% of the children revealed that within their families, they were not considered 'normal' or the same as non-disabled kin.

Findings indicate that family perception of the disabled child greatly affects whether the child would be enrolled in school, the type of education they would receive, and the type of school they would attend (government or private).

"... Because I am blind my parents only pay school fees for my brothers and sisters who are not blind... Father believes that paying for me school fees is a waste of resources after all I cannot see..." (Participant FGD, Masaka)

"My parents do not consider a blind child as they do the normal ones... they do not even allow me to see visitors who come in the home... your place is the backyard and not the front yard..." (Visually Impaired Child, Luwero)



The child's relationship with their parents and other family members also affects their access to education. Siblings often viewed children with disabilities as a burden, and would occasionally refuse to help the disabled child.

"I often get problems when I request my brothers to give me a ride to school and they refuse, so I end up missing school... This leads to absenteeism, which affects my performance" (Physically Disabled Child, Nakasongola).

Some community members were supportive of children with disabilities, offering transport to school, or guiding a visually impaired child, others would harass and bully the child, sexually abuse them or demand them to perform child labour.

"They make me draw water from the well and do not pay me" (Mentally Retarded Child, Masindi).

At school, and outside of school, the peers of children with disabilities would participate in name calling and bullying. In extreme cases, the peers would beat the children with disabilities. If it was reported, the teachers would respond differently, some punishing the offenders, while others would ignore the problem, encouraging the continuation of the stigmatisation.

"They nick name and beat us. And when you report to the teachers, the culprits are not punished. It then becomes habitual that everyone teases you because they know you cannot chase them due to your disability and the teachers will not punish them (Physically Disabled Child, Masaka).

Many children with disabilities are not prioritised at the family, community and school levels. This discrimination affects their access to education. The responses to questions pertaining to the perceptions of disability are as follows:

TABLE 4.1 PERCEPTIONS OF DISABILITY

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Given attention	40	10.8
Not cared for	35	9.4
PWDs are normal	44	11.9
Sympathy	110	29.8
Needy	72	19.4
PWDs are a burden	69	18.7
TOTAL RESPONSES	370	100%

Table 4.1 above clearly illustrates that the perceptions of disability are still negative among community and family members with only 11.9% of the sampled population viewing PWDs as normal.

4.1.2 Distance to School

Transport is one of the key challenges preventing children with disabilities from accessing education. Responses from both parents and their children indicate that they want to access services, but are unable due to lack of transportation. 68.6% of the sampled population concurred that education services were still not within reach of disabled children and their families while, another 23.7% of the respondents believed that transport to school is a barrier to accessing education services, especially in rural areas. Uneven terrain and slippery roads amplifies this barrier. To overcome distance and difficulty with the terrain, children with



disabilities must depend on their families and communities if they are to get to school.

4.1.3 Low Household Income

The relationship between levels of poverty, low per capita incomes and how children with disabilities access services is still prominent. Over 70% of the respondents agreed that poverty within communities is still high. Even with the introduction of Universal Primary Education in the education sector, families with a low household income have difficulties affording the required uniforms, pens, books and scholastic materials. Without such materials, the children stated, they could not attend school. One CWD attested:

"Our parents sometimes do not have money to buy books, uniforms, etc, thereby making it hard for us to attend school. This is not exclusive to CWDs but also to other children" (Child with Epilepsy, Luwero).

It is in the rural areas where poverty levels are quite high, and the costs of rehabilitation (including purchasing and replacing aids and appliances, medical care, and the cost of attendants/guides, and specialised buying instructional materials i.e. Braille machines) are quite high

4.1.4 Unconducive Physical School Environment

With the introduction of UPE, primary school enrolment almost tripled.¹¹ This surge of pupils poses challenges for the educational facilities, and for the children with special needs who wish to access them. The enrolment of children with disabilities has increased, yet the physical infrastructure remains inaccessible,

¹¹According to the Ministry of Education and Sports, since the introduction of the UPE in 1997, primary enrolment increased from 2.8 million to 7.2 million today.

preventing them from integrating into the school system. Children with motor impairments, hearing impairments, visual impairment and mental illness have found it difficult to cope, and often decide to drop out of school.

Of all the 16 inclusive schools visited, only 13% had accessible structures like ramps, enlarged doorways, adapted toilets, widened corridors, sanitation facilities and levelled school terrain

Accessible structures were common only in the special schools. The level of physical accessibility, per school, is illustrated in Table 4.2.

TABLE 4.2: PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY IN 16 SELECTED SCHOOLS

School	Physical Infrastructure					
	Adapted Latrines	Ramp	Wide Corridors	Wide Doors	Clean Latrines	Accessibility Information ¹²
Apac District						
Kwera Negre P/School	x	x	x	x	✓	✓
Kwera P/School	x	x	x	x	✓	x
Wijwa P/School	x	x	x	x	x	x
Luwero District						
Luwero Boys P/School	x	✓	x	x	x	✓
Nakasongola District						
Nakasongola C/U P/School	✓	x	x	x	✓	x
Sasira P/School	x	x	x	✓	✓	x
Wabulime P/School	x	x	x	✓	✓	x

Key:

- x Not Available
- ✓ Available

School/District Physical Infrastructure

¹² Accessibility to information includes posters, signposts, and any other medium that increases physical accessibility.



School	Physical Infrastructure						
	Adopted Latrines	Ramp	Wide Corridors	Levelled School Compound	Wide Doors	Clean Latrines	Accessibility Information ¹³
Masindi District							
Kamurasi Dem School	√	√	x	x	x	√	√
Masindi Centre for the Handicapped	√	√	√	x	√	x	√
Biizi P/ School	x	x	√	x	x	√	x
Kigezi P/School	x	x	x	x	x	x	√
Kinume P/ School	x	x	√	x	√	√	x
Hoima District							
Ruguse P/ School	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Nebbi District							
Nguthe P/ School	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ayabu P/ School	x	x	x	√	x	x	√
Angal Girls P/School	√	x	√	√	x	x	x

Key

x Not Available

√ Available 4.1.5 Lack of Instructional Materials

¹³ Accessibility to information includes posters, signposts, and any other information that increases physical accessibility.

There are an inadequate number of instructional materials including Braille equipment, textbooks, sports equipment and other learning aids, both in the inclusive schools and in the specialised schools. In the units, the lack of resources and aids makes it difficult for the teachers to effectively instruct children with disabilities. In the inclusive schools, resources and materials are shared among the children with disabilities and their non-disabled peers. It was also observed that the few resource centres in the schools were inadequately equipped.

Specialised resources and materials are quite expensive. Instructional materials for an average of 10 children with visual impairment can cost as follows:

TABLE 4.3 AVERAGE COSTS OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED CHILDREN

Instructional Materials	Euros*	Uganda Shillings*
Instructional kit for primary schools	91.23	159,653
Braille Braille	454.04	794,570
Braille board cubes	33.19	58,083
Braille board	15.70	27,475
Materials for visually impaired (soccer ball with text, hula, dominoes, chess, playing cards, dice etc)	222.04	388,570
Page measure	23.18	40,565
Thermoflex Machine (translators to produce literature in Braille)	2089.27	3,656,200
Braille machine	368.7	645,225
Braille machine	105.26	184,205
Braille cards (assorted)	215.13	376,476
Braille (White) cane	14.38	25,165
Total ¹³	3,632.12	6,356,400

*Worldwide Blindness Worldwide Service to Blind and Other Disabled People (2002); WEM

**Please Note:**

* The instructional materials are quoted in Euros as they are not readily available in Uganda. They are often supplied by overseas agencies and donors.

** At the time of producing this report, the exchange rate for the Euro was 1 U shs = 1750 euros.

With the high cost of acquiring special equipment, and budget constraints in many of the rural primary schools, it is a challenge to meet the educational needs of children with disabilities.

4.1.6 Lack of Trained Special Needs Education Teachers

The lack of special needs education teachers is another key challenge. For example, Kamurasi Demonstration School in Masindi had a total of over 60 children with special needs yet there are only 3 trained special needs teachers for these children. The teacher pupil ratio is 1:20, and yet this ratio was one of the lowest compared to the other schools visited. The ratios observed are much higher than the recommended ratio of 1:3. The teacher pupil ratios in the eleven selected schools were as follows:

TABLE 4.4: SNE TEACHER: CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS/ PUPIL RATIO¹⁵ IN 11 SELECTED SCHOOLS

School	Number of SNE Teachers	Children with Special Needs	Teacher: Pupil ratio
Biizi P/ School	1	10	1: 10
Kamurasi Dem School	3	60	1: 20
Ikwera Negre P/School	1	13	1: 13
Ikwera Primary School	2	21	1: 11
Kinume P/ School	1	30	1: 30
Kigezi P/ School	0	10	0: 10
Bokwe P/School	1	47	1: 47
Nguthe P/School	0	20	0: 20
Ayabu P/School	1	7	1: 7
Angal P/ School	1	21	1: 21
Wigwa P/ School	2	46	1: 23

¹⁵ Please note that this teacher: pupil ratio is specific to special needs education teachers and their class sizes in the selected schools.

The ratio of special needs teachers compared to the children with disabilities in inclusive schools is quite low. This strains the teacher, thereby affecting the learning challenge related to the teacher pupil ratio, is that in each school observed, class sizes averaged 78 pupils. With average teacher pupil ratio of 1:52, children with disabilities do not receive the amount of attention they require. Table 4.5 illustrates the average class size in the schools visited.

TABLE 4.5: TEACHER: PUPIL RATIO IN 11 SELECTED SCHOOLS

School	Total Enrolment	Teacher: Pupil Ratio
Hguthe Primary School (Nebbi District)	510	1: 8
Ayabu Primary School (Nebbi District)	308	1: 14
Angal Girls Primary School (Nebbi District)	706	1: 13
Ikwera Negre Primary School (Apac District)	124	1: 8
Wigwa Primary School (Apac District)	452	1: 7
Ikwera Primary School (Apac District)	411	1: 2
Kamurasi Dem School (Masindi District)	854	1: 5
Biizi Primary School (Masindi District)	420	1: 4
Kinume Primary School (Masindi District)	430	1: 6
Kigezi Primary School (Masindi District)	282	1: 5
Bokwe Primary School (Masindi District)	600	1: 4
Average enrolment and teacher pupil ratios are:	463	1: 3

4.1.7 Other General Factors

The UPE caters for teaching and ignores other factors that contribute to children with disabilities accessing education. The study found out that children, including those with disabilities, had no food to eat during the day, which would affect their academic performance. Boarding schools however, provide food to the pupils who are boarders. When schools were asked if they do not supply meals, administrators revealed that the grant monies were too little to cater for meals, and some schools either do not have enough food, or choose not to supply food, believing that the UPE provides meals for their child.

¹⁶ In the 12 districts studied, the class sizes varied between 70 to 156 for lower classes (P1-P4); and 350 to 800 for upper classes (P5 - P7).



"Father refused to pay for my meals at school so, I spend the whole day without a meal... I have to wait until 4 PM when I get home" (CWD, Nakasongola).

"Many parents think that their only duty is to send children to school... they deliberately refuse to pay for meals, uniforms, books and other scholastic materials on the pretext that all these are provided for by government in the UPE scheme..." (Head Teacher, Masindi)

Indeed a number of the teachers interviewed were concerned about the complacency of parents, and their refusal to provide meals for their children. This was attributed to the misinterpretation of the UPE believing that their only responsibility was sending their children to school.

In some of the primary schools visited the classrooms had broken or uneven floors, and in some cases pools of water. The few pieces of furniture available were old, and used by the upper classes (P4 to P7).

A lack of furniture makes it difficult for children with disabilities to access primary education. In one school in Apac District recently renovated by the Ministry of Education, pupils sitting for their PLE had to bring furniture from home or else write their final exams on their laps! In Masindi District, the children in lower classes were taught while sitting on the mud floor. These conditions affect access to education and academic performance. It is a key challenge of the UPE. In Wigwa Primary School (with an annex for the physically handicapped) in Apac District, classrooms are overcrowded; the floors are very dusty and infested with fleas. One CWD commented,

"I always suffer since I have to crawl in the dust yet the floor is a breeding place for fleas!" (Child with Physical Disability, Apac)

The UPE is an inclusive policy but it is not practical. As a result, many of the children with disabilities enrolled in school are not able to learn. Instead, they go to socialise.

4.2 Disability and Access

While some challenges generally affect all categories of CWDs, there are some which are specific according to each disability.

4.2.1 Movement Impairment

Children with movement impairment seem to access education more than their counterparts. In the schools visited, the number of children with physical disabilities outnumbered those with other disabilities. This is because they do not require special resources and materials, as compared with children with other disabilities.

Crawling was a big problem for those with movement disability especially when it is raining or in school that had rough terrain. There is nothing worse for a child than crawling on the wet floor of a school toilet. Or crawling around a rugged school compound as they find their way about and in some instances without appliances like hand boots, knee boots and artificial limbs. No wonder some children with disabilities give up on their education and drop out. Of all the schools visited during this study only two schools, two in Masindi District – Masindi Centre for the Handicapped and Kamurasi Demonstration School; Angal P/S in Iganga District and Nakasongola C/U P/S in Nakasongola District had adapted toilets that were more accessible to CWDs. Some who had the following views:



"The toilets are very dirty and slippery and since I have to crawl, it becomes a nightmare, so, I starve myself at school so that I do not have the urge to ease myself" (FGD, Nakasongola).

"When I squat for a long time over the latrine... I begin getting pain and cannot move thereafter" (FGD, Nakasongola).

4.2.2 Hearing Impairment

With inclusive education, some of the CWDs with hearing difficulties found it extremely hard to follow teachers' instruction. The class sizes in most of the schools were found to be high implying that the teachers had less time for those with hearing problems. In most schools, sign language is not introduced so far and may only be used by the special needs teacher. Moreover, there is sometimes a disparity between gesturing and the actual sign language used at school thereby confusing these children. As lamented by a teacher,

"Some children who are partially deaf face problems in class especially with big classes when they cannot hear what the teacher is saying" (Teacher, Nakasongola).

4.2.3 Visual Impairment

Visually impaired children face challenges like mobility, being dependant on other people, inadequate attention and lack of Braille. Indeed, many visually impaired children expressed

concern about the curriculum inadequacies. They did not have Braille instructional materials for practical subjects like science. Therefore, the blind are left out in the inclusive education system due to lack of scholastic and instructional materials

According to the findings from the study, accessibility challenges experienced by CWDs were categorised as follows:

TABLE 4.6: ACCESSIBILITY CHALLENGES ACCORDING TO DISABILITY

4.3 Gender and Access

Disability	Accessibility Challenge
Hearing Impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty in comprehending what is taught in class Poor perception of what is said by parents or teachers Lack of qualified personnel to teach in sign language Cannot go to the same school and attend same class with ordinary children Difficulty in accessing verbal information Cost of hearing aids is too high Making friends is difficult Few schools in the locality with special units for the deaf
Visual Impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Movement to and within school is difficult Cannot see what is written on the blackboard / cannot attend the same school or classroom with ordinary children Over dependence on someone else / guide Lack of Braille materials Inadequate attention by teachers in the big classes Social economic costs of having a guide Sitting for the same exams as the ordinary children Dark classrooms Unfriendly school infrastructures, classrooms, compound, latrines, and information sources Inaccessibility to some vital information Negative community reactions to the white cane
Speech Difficulty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability to get understood by others Difficulty in communicating with teachers, peers, and parents Inability to actively participate in class Fear of peers Nick naming and bullying e.g. use of derogatory names like 'Kassinu', 'Kiggala'

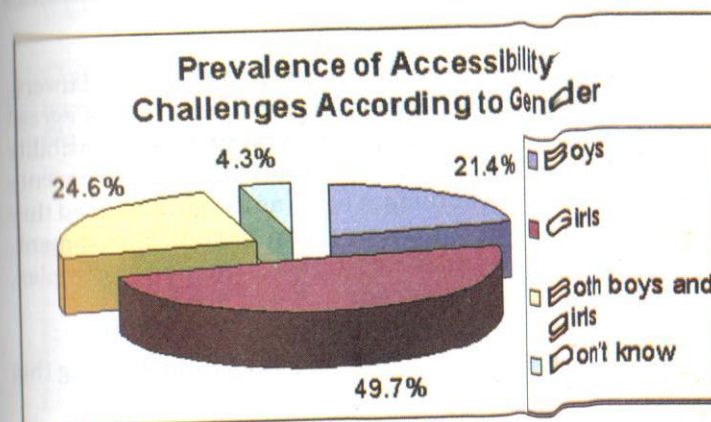


Movement Difficulty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inaccessible school physical infrastructure like classrooms, toilets, ▪ Long distances to school ▪ Lack of mobility aids and appliances ▪ Fear of peers ▪ Nicknaming and bullying e.g. use of derogatory names like 'mulema'
Mental Retardation/ Learning Difficulty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forgetfulness/ poor memory especially of what is learnt at school ▪ Negative societal attitude that they cannot attain anything at school ▪ Failure to relate to peers and siblings ▪ Feared by other children at school ▪ Isolated especially those with epilepsy ▪ Neglect by parents and teachers ▪ Slow learning ▪ Their views sometimes not understood by the teachers, parents & peers ▪ Large class sizes makes it hard for teachers to give special attention to slow learners ▪ Negative societal attitude that they cannot gain from formal education ▪ Very short attention span
Multiple Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Considered useless by society ▪ Difficulty in communicating ▪ There is a belief that they are unmanageable ▪ Teachers are not trained to handle them ▪ Lack of medical facilities at school ▪ High cost of rehabilitation ▪ Totally neglected
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The talented / gifted children's needs are not met within the normal activities

From this study, it was also apparent that boys and girls with disabilities faced different challenges in accessing education. This is because there are still imbalances that affect the access to services by the different genders.

Findings from the survey indicated that while both boys and girls with disabilities faced challenges, the girl child with disabilities faces more challenges. The graph below indicates the responses that were generated from the study as to which gender faces more accessibility challenges.

GRAPH 4.1: OCCURRENCES OF ACCESSIBILITY CHALLENGES ACCORDING TO GENDER (%)



The above graph clearly indicates that girl children with disabilities face more accessibility challenges accounting for 49.7% of the responses as compared to their male counterparts (21.4%) even within the same school. The reasons for these disparities can be illustrated as follows:

Culturally, boys are seen to undertake more responsibility in future as house heads. They need to be 'empowered' through education as compared to girls who are often viewed as useless or used as helpers in the homes.



More boys with disabilities were actually enrolled in the schools that were visited during this study as compared to girls with disabilities. And in some instances, school records indicated that a number of girls with disabilities were enrolled but were not retained, as many of them would drop out faster compared to boys. A key informant observed:

"Priority of education should be given to boys because girls have a dependency syndrome, have low self esteem, are easily confused by boys and society has very low opinion of girl CWDs" (Parent, Nebbi).

In all the focus group discussions carried out in Masaka, Luwero, Nakasongola, Masindi and Sembabule, the participants agreed that girl children with disabilities faced a number of accessibility challenges. Among these was overprotection from parents especially mothers, overworking at home as the girls claimed they worked more than the boys, rape and sexual harassment, problems during their menstrual periods, inferiority complex, torture and isolation at school.

The gender specific accessibility challenges identified during this study were summarised as *:

TABLE 4.7 GENDER SPECIFIC CHALLENGES

Gender Specific Challenges	Male	%	Female	%
Over Protection	7	11.1	9	15.7
Over working	6	9.5	7	12.2
Child sexual abuse	3	4.8	12	21.0
Torture	5	7.9	6	10.7
Inferiority Complex	9	14.5	2	3.5
Negative Attitudes	10	15.8	4	7.0
Biological problems**	7	11.1	9	15.7
Shared school sanitation facilities	3	4.8	5	8.9
Isolation	8	12.6	2	3.5
Neglect	5	7.9	1	1.8
TOTAL	63	100%	57	100%

* Please note, here, the whole sample size of 370 respondents was not used because only responses from children were used (120 children i.e. 63 males and 57 females).

** Biological problems here refer to the difficulties people face as a result of their sex like menstruation, adolescence, etc.

The above table clearly indicates that boys and girls with disabilities face different challenges whilst accessing education. While the main challenge of a boy CWD is the negative societal attitude (15.8%) closely followed by inferiority complex (14.5%), for a girl child with disability, the major challenge is child sexual abuse (21%) closely followed by biological problems and over protection (15.7%).

Child sexual abuse was highlighted as one of the major challenges faced by girl children with disabilities. Indeed, in one FGD in Masindi, girls with disabilities admitted and attested to this. Some of them confessed thus:

"I am finding a problem of defilement here at school by fellow pupils so I sometimes fear attending school" (Female Participant FGD, Masindi)

"I was repeatedly abused sexually by a close relative who used to bring me to school... I eventually started hating school... I became pregnant and that is when the culprit was apprehended..." (Female Participant, Mental Retardation FGD, Masindi)

Whereas one key informant was of the view that,



"Disabled girls are raped and defiled by normal and reputable men who identify with them at night or waylay them on the way to school or at night. When they get pregnant, they are abandoned..." (Social Worker, Masindi).

The above therefore clearly illustrates that although both boys and girls may face similar challenges, in some instances these challenges are gender specific. For instance, girls stand a higher risk of child sexual abuse as compared to boys.

While all considerable effort was being undertaken by the schools to ensure that the senior women handle sexual reproductive health issues, many girl CWDs complained that the teachers were not catering for their welfare. Some cited absenteeism during the days when they were having the monthly menstruation periods, yet others indicated that the fact that they were sharing toilets with their male counterparts sometimes made it difficult for them to ease themselves.

CWDs also expressed concern that more girl CWDs dropped out of school as compared to boys because: they are expected to undertake household responsibility, sometimes felt overgrown, were looking after siblings, parental negative attitudes towards girls, and because they got unwanted pregnancies.

4.4 Relevance of Primary Education to CWDs

The school syllabus and mode of instruction was also found to benefit the non-disabled child more than the CWDs. This is because CWDs face unfavourable conditions as already seen above; yet they are expected to compete favourably with the others. The following were the areas of concern to CWDs:

4.4.1 Mode of Assessment

It was a major concern in this study that the mode of assessment was not popular with CWDs especially those in the upper primary section. 51.4% of the sampled population believed that the mode of assessment should suit the special needs of the CWDs especially during final examinations like the Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE). The respondents believed that CWDs face a number of setbacks that limits their performance in school. Respondents therefore suggested that it would be in order for children with special needs to have their own separate examinations or even marked according to different criteria.

4.4.2 Content

The content of instruction in the primary school curriculum includes subjects like English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Physical Education, Science and languages. Response from CWDs indicated that the content was well suited although some subjects seemed abstract especially to children with certain disabilities like the visually impaired. They felt not catered for in subjects like Science and Social studies because they lacked Braille instructional materials (like maps, and diagrams) in such subjects as attested by one CWD:

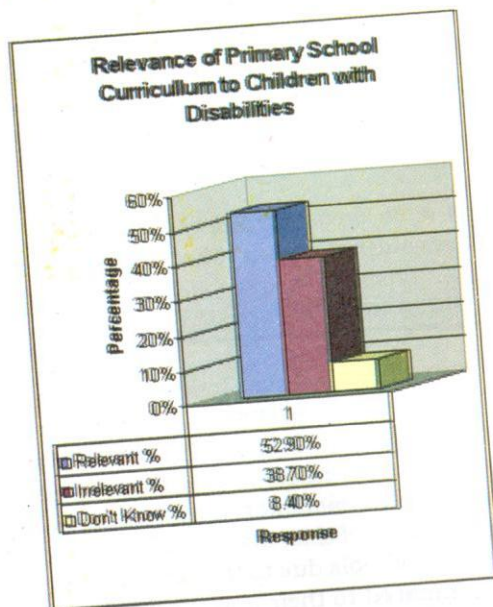
"I have never seen or touched a skeleton yet; I am required to explain what a skeleton is in the examinations..." (Visually impaired child, Apac)

Besides, the current education system is examination oriented and does not provide life skills required by certain categories of CWDs, most of whom do not make it past primary level. Head teachers are not willing to admit children who will perform poorly in examinations. As a result of this, many CWDs were technically eliminated from private schools due to the belief that they tend to perform poorly as compared to their non-disabled peers.

4.4.3 Mode of Delivery of Content

Nevertheless, during the study, it was found out that there were resource rooms in some of the schools where CWDs would interact more with their teachers and also have a hands-on experience with some of the things that were learnt in class. These resource rooms were mainly located in inclusive schools where CWDs would share some classes with their non-disabled peers. However, according to the special needs teachers and CWDs, the time spent in the resource rooms as compared to the time they spent in the inclusive classes was too little. This was attributed to the fact that the length of the school day was six hours of lessons and many subjects had to be covered. This meant that CWDs received less time in resource rooms yet; they require more time with their instructors.

GRAPH 4.2: RELEVANCE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES



Graph 4.2 above illustrates that 52.9% of the respondents were of the view that the education was relevant to CWDs at the primary level while 38.7% were opposed to this view. 8.4% were not sure whether it was relevant or not. Those who stressed the relevance of primary education to CWDs argued that it was designed to suit the learning needs of children and besides, it enables for the acquisition of basic literacy and numerical skills. Those against this view however, claimed that the primary school system has subjects that were not practical for the CWDs, whom they believed could not effectively employ these skills after their primary school as they are too theoretical. These critics went further and argued that since many CWDs drop out of school after primary seven, it is paramount to teach them practical subjects that they can employ to earn a livelihood.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS



CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The study set out to examine the levels of accessibility and relevance of education to children with disabilities in Uganda. This chapter highlights the findings of this study, makes the conclusions and also draws recommendations that can be adopted in order to increase accessibility to education by children with disabilities.

5.2 Summary of Findings and their Relevance

This section summarises the findings of the levels of accessibility to education by CWDs in Uganda today. The accessibility challenges identified are environmental, economic, social and institutional. They are summarised as thus:

Accessibility levels are still low for CWDs according to the findings of this study. In spite of the various initiatives aimed at increasing accessibility to education, CWDs are still not accessing formal education due to a number of barriers. In many instances, with UPE aimed at increasing access to primary education, many CWDs have reportedly been enrolled but are not retained due to a number of challenges that they face in accessing education.

The findings also indicate that there are a number of challenges that hinder CWDs from accessing education. Amongst these were those associated with the physical structures that are inaccessible, inadequate instructional materials, lack of trained special needs education teachers, the large class sizes, long distances to school, lack of assistive aids and appliances, lack of scholastic materials and the negative attitudes towards CWDs.



It was also revealed that, although inclusive education is recommended in Ugandan Schools today, there were still some hindrances to it like the inability of teachers to handle children with special needs at the same time with the others. The findings indicate that inclusive education is still not understood by the teachers themselves who always refer CWDs to Special Needs Teachers. There are also curriculum inadequacies whereby the curriculum is not meeting the needs of CWDs. Most of the subjects taught were not practical and too academic in nature. Even the curriculum was more of benefit to the non-disabled child and examination oriented yet a CWD may benefit from a continuous assessment system.

It was also revealed that though all CWDs faced a number of challenges in accessing education, those in inclusive schools faced many more challenges than those in special schools. Whereas for CWDs in inclusive schools, physical inaccessibility of the school structures and lack of special needs teachers were identified as the major challenges; those in special schools at least had ramps constructed, adapted toilets and special needs teachers are available. For instance, it was found out that some of the special schools had rehabilitation professionals like the resident occupational therapist at Masindi Centre for the Handicapped.

It is true that many CWDs have been enrolled in primary schools as a result of the introduction of Universal Primary Education. However, these children are not retained, as the schools do not have the favourable conditions that can meet their special needs. Basing on the findings in the 12 districts, the study found out that UPE has led to an increase in enrolment rates. In the whole study, a total of 7,711 CWDs were reportedly been enrolled as a result of the introduction of UPE.

However, the current inclusive education initiatives are 'inclusive' in policy but not practically inclusive because the method of implementation is still not well streamlined. There is also still a lot to be done so that various stakeholders understand the whole system. CWDs only get the benefit of routinely going to school (socialisation) but not learning since their needs are not catered

for in the system. This is because the big class sizes overwhelm the teachers who then only concentrate on the majority.

Although both boy and girl children with disabilities faced a number of challenges while accessing education, their challenges were quite different due to the gender relations that exist in our societies today. A number of girl children with disabilities reported that they were faced with child sexual abuse while for their male counterparts, indecent assault was not among one of their prioritised challenges.

Lastly, it was also found out that the education of CWDs at the post primary level was still at stake. The post primary training is not yet developed to suit the learning needs of CWDs. In the case of the visually impaired, the main option was joining special schools. This is especially so for some disabilities like the visually impaired and those with hearing and speech problems. Besides, the post primary education of this category of CWDs is not yet developed. This implies that post-primary education mainly benefits children with physical disabilities.

Basing on the case study of 12 districts of Uganda, it can be seen that accessibility and relevance of education by CWDs is hindered by a combination of economic, institutional, social, political and environmental factors.

While many initiatives have been directed towards sustainable poverty reduction, many household incomes in Uganda are still low. Such economic factors imply that the needs of CWDs are sometimes not met because disability may compete with other household needs like food. Poverty levels are still alarming hence economic factors affect the ability of CWDs to access formal primary education.

Institutionally, although there are some initiatives towards education for all, there is still a lot to be done. Universal primary education still has hindrances. CWDs only get the benefit of routinely going to school and socialising but not learning because their needs are not met. This is because there is lack of qualified trainers, instructional and learning materials and



curriculum inadequacies that impinge on the education of CWDs. Also, post primary education of CWDs is still not well developed with many of them failing to continue due to the accessibility challenges identified in this study. There are also very few options for CWDs at the post-primary level with these options mainly being technical or vocational skills training. The mode of assessment at primary level was also found to be highly competitive and examination oriented thereby disadvantaging the CWD.

Socially, the negative societal attitudes that abound in society have limited CWDs from accessing primary education through isolation and stigmatisation. Accessibility levels of CWDs to education also vary according to gender.

Intra-household relations come to play in whether or not CWD educational needs will be prioritised.

Politically, the policies, laws and programmes that can be used to enforce CWDs access to education exist but are not well implemented. There is still lack of knowledge among civil society (especially communities) about the policies that exist that can be used to deliver educational services for CWDs. This lack of knowledge about the policy arena makes it hard for CWDs, families and communities to demand for educational services to be provided.

Environmentally, the long distances to the education service points hamper CWDs from getting to school. Transport problems are faced due to the exorbitant cost of hiring bicycles or motorcycles to transport the CWDs to school. Parents therefore resort to leaving them at home. Roads and classrooms are inaccessible, school terrain is rough, doorways are narrow and latrine facilities are unfavourable. All these make life difficult for the disabled child to access formal primary schooling.

Basing on the findings of this study, accessibility to education by children with disabilities is still very minimal. The findings herewith are important to all stakeholders.

6.3 Recommendations:

From the ongoing discussion, the following are the recommendations that were made to increase accessibility and relevance of education to CWDs:

1. Since the current efforts aimed at making education accessible to the disabled child are general, it is recommended that special consideration for children with multiple disabilities be put in place. It is therefore suggested that the Ministry of Education and Sports design special learning programme for children with multiple disabilities (like the Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja- AB EK). This could be through a "home-based programme" that suits the learning and special learning needs of children with multiple disabilities. This is because; the findings of the study indicate that children with multiple disabilities could neither benefit from special schools nor inclusive schools.
2. There should be empowerment of education committees at the parish level so that there is efficient monitoring of the implementation of the UPE. Since district education officers are poorly facilitated they cannot follow up on the implementation at the lower levels. And, in order to allow for effective implementation of policies at all levels, government, civil society and all stakeholders should endeavour to raise awareness about the different policies that exist and how they should be implemented.
3. There is need for massive awareness raising about the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in the UPE system. This is because there is general lack of knowledge of what UPE should and should not provide. There is therefore a lot to be done so that the different stakeholders know their roles and responsibilities in the implementation of UPE. Parents, education officers, government (central and local) and teachers should all be aware of what roles they are to play if UPE is to achieve its long-term objectives. Otherwise, CWDs and all children in general would end up staying hungry and lacking scholastic materials because some parents imagine that

government under UPE provides everything. Such awareness raising could be through seminars, workshops, information leaflets and other channels of civic education.

4. It is also recommended that lobbying initiatives and sensitisation programmes be undertaken to include special representatives of parents of CWDs on School Management Committees and Parent Teacher's Associations so that CWDs concerns are adequately addressed through such representation.
5. UPE needs review so that the needs of the disabled child are met. Although CWDs are among the target groups in UPE, they are not benefiting from the system because of the barriers they face in the current mainstreaming system. It is therefore recommended that annexes and resource rooms are opened in schools to provide for the educational needs of CWDs.
6. In addition, UPE funds should be utilised to benefit CWDs as well through increasing special needs teachers, equipping resource rooms, libraries and buying instructional materials like Braille books. In addition government should put in place disability sensitive institutional mechanisms to enable for the proper implementation of UPE.
7. Since physical accessibility is a major hindrance to most CWDs, it is recommended that the government stipulates the minimum standards of construction of all school buildings to include at least ramps, rails, adoptable toilets and wide classroom doors. In addition, it is also recommended that CSOs and communities lobby the local government and education officials at LC5, LC3 and LC2 levels to consider improving the structures in primary schools. This could be through improving accessibility of the school structures to CWDs like construction of ramps, adapted toilets and, acquisition of low cost instructional and compensatory aids through the on-going World Bank funded Local Government Development Programme (LGDP). Instructional materials for CWDs should also be made available in all primary schools

8. District education departments should prioritise post-primary education of CWDs. Due to the limited options that CWDs have, they often stop at primary level. Prioritization could be through the provision of bursaries for the disabled children who make it to post-primary institutions like the community polytechnics, vocational institutions, and secondary schools.
9. Although the study was carried out in 12 districts of Uganda, the findings may not be representative for the whole of Uganda. This is because the country is made up of a total of 56 districts, which have different circumstances that may not necessarily be the same with what was found out in this study. It is therefore recommended that a bigger study be carried out so that the challenges faced by CWDs are fully identified and addressed. The findings in this study could have been influenced by the interventions USDC has done in these districts.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following operational definitions are used in this study.

Accessibility – The right or opportunity of reaching, obtaining and using a service. For the purposes of this study, accessibility refers to the ability to go to school, opportunities to attain a formal education.

Child – Any person under the age of 18.

Disability – The lack of ability caused by impairment to perform an activity within a range considered normal for a human being.

Education – The act or process of systematically acquiring knowledge (instructive or informative).

Integration/Inclusion – The system of incorporating children with disabilities in the ordinary school system.

Relevance – The way or means of making use of something.

Special Needs Education - Education designed specifically to meet the learning needs of children with disabilities.

Special School – A school for children who cannot successfully integrate into the public/regular school system.

Universal Primary Education – A government programme providing free primary education to all children in Uganda.