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CHALLENGES OF PROVIDING SPECIAL EDUCATION TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

View of teachers and education officials

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ABSTRACT

Upon the introduction of the Universal primary education in 1997 by the government of Uganda, the idea of integrated education was put into practice. As of now, children with disabilities are accessing education through the mainstream schools though facing many challenges. However, our study has found out that CWDs are still facing many challenges in accessing special education in Uganda. This includes lack of good physical infrastructure, educational materials, easy access to classrooms, and other services.

In addition, teachers are not motivated to take care of the needs of CWDs, resulting in low morale. Corruption among officials within the system is yet another factor affecting special education provision for CWDs.

The study was conducted through qualitative method with semi structured interview questions. In one of the districts in Uganda, four teachers in one primary school and four education officials in the same district were interviewed. The aim of this study was to find out the challenges facing children with disabilities, and the possibilities of providing special education to them.

Key Words; Disability, Inclusion, Exclusion, Children with disabilities, Special schools

ABBREVIATIONS

CRC	Convention/ Committee on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CWDs	Children with Disabilities
NCC	National Council for Children
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NUDIPU	National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
SNE	Special Needs Education
UHRC	Uganda Human Rights Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
UPSE	Universal Primary Special education
UPE	Universal Primary Special education
USDC	Uganda Society for Disabled Children
WHO	World health Organization

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The concern to provide special education existed as early as the 1940s. With the Universal declaration of human rights coming into force in 1948, the realisation of Universal special education was the main agenda of the world conferences. (Bloom and Cohen, 2002). Free access to special education is a right in the Universal declaration of human rights. The 1989 Convention on Children's Rights which most countries signed to, voted on this right as legally binding. Emphasis has been put on universal primary education since the 1990s, and this has spread to many countries. The two world conferences which occurred in 1990, Jomtien conference and World Summit for children, set ten years as the target for achieving global primary special education. When the set ten years elapsed in 2000, it was evident that the target was far from reach, progressing slowly (Delamonica et al.2004). The conference held next was the Dakar Special Education conference of 2000, which set new targets of achieving the Millennium development goal 2 on universal primary education by 2015 (Maas, 2012).

Children with physical disabilities make up one of the most socially neglected groups in society today (Helander, et al, 2011). They face different forms of exclusion which affect them in different ways due to factors such as the kind of disability they have, where they live and the culture or class to which they belong (UNICEF, 2013). Developing countries have the largest number of disabled children below 15years of age, estimated at 85% (ibid).

It was noted in a World Bank report (2012) that many children with disabilities do not access special education, do not appear in school registers and are not catered for in government plans. Inclusive special education often has particular interest in disadvantaged children, i.e. those with physical disabilities and those experiencing absolute poverty. The majority of these children hail from linguistic and ethnic minorities, deserving special education in general (UNESCO, 2013/4). Inclusion of children with disabilities, however, goes far beyond the formal classroom setting to for example pre-school child rearing and community effort. Positive psycho-social impacts

have been evident, resulting from any such effort to enhance effective inclusion (Odom & Wolery, 2003).

CWDs have same rights as other children when it comes to education, but this is not the case in Uganda. There is a lot to be done in order to achieve this objective. There is no reliable data of people living with disabilities in Uganda due to the fact that the last census was carried out over 10years ago, in 2002. Even the Uganda Demographic and Health Survey that conducted a survey on the people with disabilities, was last carried out in 2005/06. The data in that survey puts the number of people with disabilities at 7% of the entire Ugandan population. The Ugandan population as at 2011 was estimated to be around 31 million, of which, 2.17 million are believed to have some form of disabilities. 1.22 million Of these, are children (USDC, 2011).

In Uganda, as in other countries, there are a variety of disabilities and factors to account for their existence. The common ones are visual impairments, physical disabilities, hearing impairments, multiple disabilities, mental and psycho-socio disabilities, intellectual disabilities and albinism. Noticeable of disability, is association to communicable diseases, congenital abnormalities and injuries (NUDIPU, 2011: para 3).

In exercising special education for CWDs, the government streamlined key policy issues, among which, all-Inclusive special education services were fronted as the best approach to imparting special education. This good development notwithstanding, society ignorantly views CWDs as a burden, especially because of the expensive special educational expenditures (Uganda Government White Paper on Special education, 1992).

The resulting stigmatization, isolation and misconceptions about these children and their disabilities, constrains the meagre effort to have these children attend school as required. This has limited the enrolment rate of CWDs to an estimate of only three percent (Uganda strategy for girls' education Vision 2035).

Similarly, in the Uganda Bureau of Statistics' (2005) results of the Uganda Population and Housing Census, the disabled constitute 4% of the population of Uganda. This means that around 800,000 persons in Uganda are disabled.

The Ugandan Constitution (1995) in article 21(1) provides that “all persons are equal before and under the law in all spheres (...) and shall enjoy equal protection of the law”. The article goes on: “a person shall not be discriminated against on the ground of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, tribe, birth, religion, social, economic standing, political opinion or disability”. On special education, article 30 provides that “all persons have a right to special education” (Constitution of the republic of Uganda Constitution 1995).

Furthermore, the National Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, highlights that; “the State shall promote free and compulsory basic special education and it shall take appropriate measures to ensure every citizen has equal opportunity to attain the highest special educational standard possible.” (<http://www.education.go.ug/files/downloads/Gendercedawreport.pdf>)

Even though the government of Uganda has made a declaration for equal rights and commitment as noted above, the reality is different, “Only five percent of children with disabilities are able to access special education within inclusive setting in the regular schools, while 10 percent access special education through special school” (UNICEF, 2012).

1.2 Problem Statement

The Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme which was started in 1997 had a main objective of giving chance to children to access primary special education at no cost, regardless of their social status, ethnic origin, religion or ability. After years of implementation, the universality of UPE to accommodate all categories of children is far from being achieved, especially for children with disabilities.

According to the Uganda Human Rights Commission (2011), the inclusive special education policy clearly states government’s dedication to providing primary special education to all children regardless of origin, social group or gender. It further calls for inclusion of children with special needs in all government funded primary schools. However, this policy does not say what inclusion means in regard to the CWDs. To this end, no such provisions have been made. The laxity has seen an ever endless rate of dropouts and hence declining enrolment among CWDs.

According to UHRC report (2011), approximately 25% of CWDs are enrolled in schools under the UPE program. The other population of the children could be on the street begging for money to help their families. Some of them are possibly staying at home with their parents who don't prioritise them as other children. However, the researchers cannot guarantee the accuracy of this data due to the fact that data collection methods in Uganda can be manipulated for political reasons such as to solicit for financial funding from international organisations.

1.3 General Objective

To examine the views of a group of four teachers and four education officials on the challenges face in providing special education for children with disabilities in Uganda

1.4 Research Questions

1. How do these teachers and education officials describe the special education needs of children with disabilities in their region of work?
2. How do these teachers and education officials describe challenges institutions face in providing special education for children with disabilities in their region of work?

1.5 Significance of the Study/ Importance of the Study

Our study will look at the challenges institutions and teachers face in providing special education for CWDs. Our hope is that the result of the study will be of help to policy makers in taking steps to ensure that CWDs have proper access to special education.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study seeks to find the challenges faced by teachers and education officials in providing special education to children with disabilities.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

PWDs: UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) states that; "persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental,

intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others” (Article 1 CRPD).

The element of disability consists of people whose activities are limited by physical disabilities e.g. individuals with visual or hearing disabilities, chronic illness, mental health and communication disorders, intellectual disabilities, genetic disorders, disfigurement, and those with problems associated with aging or delay in achieving development/cognitive capabilities (Combrinck, 2008).

World Health Organization (1996) defines disability as “any restriction or lack of ability to perform in a manner or within a range considered normal for a human being” (WHO, 1996). Uganda Society for Disabled Children (2011) defines disability as “inability to perform in a manner considered “normal” in a particular society or community. Disability can arise as a result of impairment or other causes” (UDSC, 2011).

Access: This is the right or opportunity of reaching, obtaining and using a service and for purposes of this study, accessibility means to go to school, attain special education, and make use of existing facilities.

Inclusiveness is the integration or incorporation of children with disabilities in the mainstream special education system. The principle of integration is that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic competences or other needs (UNESCO, 2009).

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2. Selection of literature

The researchers made use of relevant databases such as Sage Journal Online, Academic Search Elite, EBSCO host Discovery, Web of Science, SocIndex which are available on University of Gavle website, www.hig.se.

Only articles, journals and thesis found to be relevant were used. The search words used were: disability, education for all, social exclusion, social inclusion, integration, special schools. LIBRIS was used in the literature search and Google scholar was of help in this. From the materials found, emphasis was put on the subjects that were related to the aims of the study.

2.1 Evaluation of Special Education Needs of Children with Disabilities

There is a need to provide a school setting that will accord children with special education and an enabling environment, rather than making the children with disabilities to fit into specific educational or school settings as Evans noted in a study carried out in England. He found out that one of the key needs was to adjust education settings for CWDs to fit well in the school (Evans, 2008).. But the authors have not specifically pointed out the key needs of this so called “education setting” for children with disabilities. The setting of the school goes a long way in helping children with disabilities attain their educational goals (Ainscow, 2007).

2.2 Community Perception on Disability

Disability does not only affect an individual, but the social aspect as well (Savolainen, 2000). When trying to explain disability, the social model has an ethical and economic implication which is different from the medical model. It views disability from the medical perspective. In Savolainen’s (2000) study in Finland, he found out that the social effect of disability had a profound effect on the individual with disability than what could be seen as a disability. The weakness of this study is that it ignored children

from poor social backgrounds, for example, low income families, single parent families, orphans etc.

A study conducted in some schools in Ethiopia, a developing country, by Gezahegne and Yinebeb (2011), revealed insufficient funding as the biggest drawback to the implementation of major programs, like inclusive education, as in many countries (Tirussew, 1999 as referred in Gezahegne and Yinebeb, 2011, p.95). Furthermore, challenges like in teachers' training programs, teachers' attitudes, materials and equipment provision, are also factors that affect inclusive education for children with disabilities (Ibid).The study also revealed that the attitudes of the teachers were positively or negatively affected by the extent of a disability, either minor or complicated, in carrying out their duties diligently. Likewise, lack of special training and class size are the other challenges mentioned in the study (Gezahegne and Yinebeb, 2011).

Similarly, Peters (2003) carried out a comparative study on inclusive education between developing and developed countries on behalf of the World Bank. He focused on attitudes of teachers in the classrooms ignoring other problems children with disabilities face in accessing education. She found out that besides having necessary training skills attained from teacher training colleges, teachers must have a good will. Teachers, who change and gain a positive attitude, benefit their learners immensely (Peters, 2003).

2.3. Disability and the Development of Inclusive Education

It is believed that for inclusion to be successful, school children ought to have full participation, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other needs, as it took place in Spain (Salamanca Statement, 1994). According to the universal primary education, children would access schools near their families so that they could be monitored easily even when they did not have a disability. Therefore, inclusion of children with disabilities is a step towards achieving the goal of children with disabilities in the education system. Children with special needs feel as members of the group or class in their school when they participate fully like any other member of the group or class. There should be no special class for them. One of the major weaknesses of Salamanca Statement (1994) is that it generalized the issue of disability

and ignored the differences in socio-economic, cultural and political development of countries in the world.

Uganda for instance, may not be in position to provide adequate facilities for the realization of educational needs for children with disabilities. This actually, is the major challenge children face in accessing education.

According to an earlier study focusing on Uganda, inclusion is regarded as a process of addressing needs of the CWDs within the mainstream schools using the resources available. Factors like the quality of the education, accessibility, change of attitudes and behaviour, teaching methods, and curriculum, are the main focal points in meeting the specific needs of children with disabilities (UNISE, 2002). In the study conducted in the the South-East periphery of Europe, it was noted that inclusive education was conceived so that everyone should learn, grow and work with others from similar and diverse backgrounds in a regular school (Skjørten, 2001). This is in line with the Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on Special Needs Education (1994) which states that: “While inclusive schools provide a favourable setting for achieving equal opportunity and full participation, their success required a concerted effort, not only by instructors and school staff, but also by peers, parents, families and volunteers”.

A study conducted about children with disabilities in many countries Africa by UNESCO, (2004) has shown that materials and general curriculum are designed to facilitate the involvement of learners with special needs to move with fellow peers to subsequent grades in school. It indicated that in order to achieve inclusion in the schools, collective efforts within the society are needed as it goes beyond individual or organization. However, the study revealed a major weakness as they had not included the co-operation of all teachers, peers, families, voluntary organizations, as well as the support of the public at large.

Holbrook (1996) argued that children with visual impairment attending mainstream schools get the opportunity to interact, know one another, and share their concerns and experiences. He suggests that providing them with adapted materials like Braille books and acquiring skills on how to use these materials can promote competition with their classmates.

A further study conducted by Kristensen et. al in Uganda (2003) noted that, in order to achieve access to quality education, it is important for the support system to continue to provide competent advice both to teachers and learners. According to her, for teachers to have the competence to teach and understand the diversity of the children, they should be given proper training. Training is not the only thing the teachers need, they also need Braille materials for the blind children in the class, hearing aids and also well-designed classrooms that are easy to access for the case of the lame children. These are key issues which the writers ignore in their study.

A further study revealed that children and teachers in Uganda had a positive attitude towards the inclusion of children with disabilities and other special needs in schools (Kristensen, et. al, 2003). Implementation of inclusive education in Uganda has achieved remarkable progress. Even though much has been achieved, there is need for further preparation at the grass-root level/community level and also at the national level. Further development of support systems is needed to accommodate the different categories of all learners in the ordinary school settings.

The study pointed out that the education system should be designed in a way that it caters for all learners of different backgrounds regardless of their ethnic origin. In order to prevent problems like exclusion, dropout rates etc, the study suggested that ministry of education which is responsible for education provision in the country, should design a system, structures, and capacity at all levels to facilitate this effect (Kristensen, et. al, 2003).

Furthermore, appropriate funding for the education of learners with special educational needs in inclusive school settings, should be provided. Education materials should also be made readily available for those with special educational needs. The ratio of student to teacher should be reduced. This will make the teachers pay more attention to this group of people (ibid).

To sum up, several earlier studies have shown many difficulties in providing education to CWDs in Uganda. In our study, we wanted to address both the possibilities and challenges as described by some education officers and teachers.

2.4. Overall Evaluation of Literature Gaps

From the above literatures, different authors have noted that education needs of children with disabilities can be achieved by restructuring the general education system through inclusive process. In this case, the teachers take responsibility for the education of all learners. In preparing the curriculum to suit all the learners, the physical structures must be tailored in a way that all the different groups are accommodated.

In essence, most of the studies discussed in the chapter, were mainly carried out in developed countries, where the education system is advanced to include all the different groups of children. They mainly focused on the teacher as the sole provider of education, yet there are other challenges such as the nature of curriculum design, socio-cultural challenges, and not to mention parents as contributors to education of children with disabilities.

Secondly, while it is a fact that an individual can be born with disabilities, disability can be acquired at any point in a person's life. This therefore, should be a rallying point for those who have the responsibility of establishing an environment capable of dealing with any would-be cases of disability. Although inclusion provides enrichment for all involved, it is important not to overlook the challenges one is facing.

A curriculum which suits the educational needs of children with disabilities should be designed together with the pedagogical way of teaching as well as the educational environment that will suit the learners. It's important to design a simple curriculum so as to make it easy for the participants to understand, achieve good outcomes, and prevent lack of participation from the student. To improve upon the capabilities of children with disabilities and children with special education needs, the choice of the right curriculum and pedagogical practice for training as well as education environment is very important (Mcdermott, 1993), referring to a study in American society.

To sum up, much work is to be done in developing a principled framework for a fair distribution of educational resources and opportunities aimed at inclusion (Terzi, 2005).

Using our data, a solution which works for Uganda and is easy to finance will be suggested. Our study will look at the challenges faced by children with disabilities in accessing education in Uganda.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1. Theoretical Framework

Systems theory pays attention to immediate structures that are around clients, for example, family, organizations and institutions (Klassen, 2004; Payne, 2002). There are different kinds of system theories as we mentioned above. In this study, we will concentrate on one particular type of system theory which is the social system theory. The theory “describes person-situation interactions”. The theory will help us understand how people with disabilities interact with the environment in which they live and also how the environment affects them i.e. Understanding the social construction of society Whitaker and Tracy, 1989 (as referred in H. Hepworth, et al, 2013). System theory refers to the real world. They also represent a way to understand the process of making social order, how to integrate or include individuals in the community which include those with disabilities. In many cases, Swedish social workers preferred to use system theory perspective when identifying important determinants outside the clients (Bergmark & Lundstrom, 2006).

Another concept is Lehmann’s concept which was illustrated by Skov Henriksen, 2001 (as referred in Kihlström, 2012). When he studied the Danish social help system as a “functional system”, he found out that the complexity in a functional system which differentiated society can be reduced through putting efforts in inclusion, with the sole aim of strengthening the life chances of the individuals. Using the codes “help/not help”, the system has made a difference through an operation which separates the system from the surroundings (ibid).

Systems theory was developed to find out how the influences from the environment affect the school. Cordial relationship between children with disabilities and the school system can result in CWDs being considered for inclusion into the system. There is no proper link between exclusion/inclusion in one system to another. Being excluded from one subsystem can lead to inclusion in another subsystem, and the reverse is true.

Exclusion can serve as possible qualification for inclusion in another subsystem, and also, being excluded from one subsystem can lead to exclusion from other subsystems. For example, inclusion in an economic system is different from inclusion through school performance in the education system (grades). One does not necessarily influence the other.

The weakness of the social system to a large extent is that people with disabilities experience segregation in life. For example, the education system is one of the most prominent areas where these groups of individuals experience exclusion. There is a close relationship between education and inclusion in society. Education opens up the doors to a better life since the barriers of social, cultural, and economic conditions or an irreversible biological process, are to a large extent reduced. This is true for everyone, including those who are in a more disadvantaged condition which could be as a result of gender, social class, ethnic belonging or disability (Michailakis, 2004).

The separation process within a social system is a process of creating subsystems within that system. The education system which started in the middle of the 19th Century was relatively simple when compared to the current education system comprising of various education levels, grades and specialization in the various professions. It should be noted that the creation of a subsystem within a system, does not result into the entire system being decomposed into a subsystem. The difference is that the subsystems have changed into a system/environment different within the system. For example, in the subsystem comprising of the primary and secondary education, the secondary school education forms the environment around it. The subsystems obtain their identity and functional difference through the fulfillment of a function for the entire system (Ibid).

The idea of exclusion and inclusion as related to functional differentiation means one is not included in only one specific functional system, according to system theory. The signs for inclusion in various systems in the functionally differentiated society are different depending on the system at stake. Incomes in the economic system, grades in the school system, rights in the legal system, voting in the political system, are examples among others. This is vital because there cannot be a general sign for inclusion. Each one of them has its own measures for inclusion that are not the same and cannot be made similar to those of other systems (Muller, 1994).

Luhmann's idea of being included is to have a role in the subsystem, or actively participating in communication in a particular system. The advantage of exclusion and inclusion is that they are well positioned to analyze the involvement or non-involvement, attachment or non-attachment of individuals or groups to different subsystems. In every individual's life span, there are periods whereby the person experiences inclusion in some system and exclusion from others. This means that there is a time when an individual will not have a secure connection between them and the social systems. The implication is that most people will always move in and out of a social system during their lifetime. No individual will be included during their life span in all systems, and very few are permanently excluded from all systems altogether (Muller. 2002).

Another serious form of exclusion one can experience is to be cut off from the system altogether e.g. exclusion from labor market as a result of long-term illness, or exclusion from the school system because of disability. The overall effect of exclusion from other systems can be intense due to exclusion from education. This is because education plays an important part in our society, without it, an individual can find it difficult to enter the labor market. Luhmann refers to this as "generalized exclusion" (Ibid).

CHAPTER FOUR

Methodology

4.1. Research Design

We are using qualitative research approaches using interviews in our data collection. Qualitative research approach will help us get many views from both written materials and those on the ground to enable us come out with concrete conclusions and recommendations. Phenomenological approach will be used. The purpose of phenomenology is to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of individuals (Patton, 1990). By using phenomenology, we will understand how our interviewees experience some phenomenon, how they describe an extent or situation. We shall get the data through in-depth interview with our interviewees that have lived the experience as opposed to third party experience (ibid).

4.2. Sample Size and Sample Selection

Interviews with four teachers and four educational officials were conducted. The researchers used a semi structured interview, by setting out the questions as open ended questions which allow the interviewees to have the possibilities of going beyond the researcher's question. Another reason for the choice of semi structured questions is to allow the participant to have the freedom to talk about the challenges children with disabilities face in accessing education. Giving the participants the freedom to talk freely and openly, will provide the researcher with in-depth information on the research topic (Robson, 2000).

Based on a study which seeks to investigate complex challenges, it is important to give the respondents enough time to reflect and express themselves. This is because the respondents are required to relate own experiences to external systems (Hayes, 2000).

Snowball method was used to get the teacher interviewees. Tim May describes this method as "initial contact may be made with a member of the population who will lead the researcher to other members of the same population" (2011, p.101). One of the researchers hailing from Uganda contacted the head teacher of the school where we conducted the teacher's interview. The head teacher informed the teachers about our intention to carry out a study with their help and some of them willingly accepted to

participate in the study. One of the researchers is familiar with the district from which the interview was conducted. We used his connection to establish contact with the educational officials. The interviews with the teachers were conducted in a setting familiar to them, i.e. at their place of work through Skype. The duration of the interview for the teachers lasted for about 30-45 minutes.

The researchers used purposive sampling method in selecting officials for the interview because it helped in choosing respondents that were reliable and had a valid result as it could also make the data collected have value (Grinnell, 2001). The interviews for the educational officials were conducted through phone calls. The interview lasted for about 25-30 minutes.

The researchers decided not to interview children with disabilities because it would be extremely difficult to get consent from their parents due to the fact that the study is conducted from Sweden through Skype and phone. The interviewees were made aware that their participation would be of benefit to the study (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

As the researchers stated above, there are eight interviewees conducted through semi-structured interviews. Four interviews with teachers were conducted through Skype as they had access to internet connection at the school, whereas the other four interviews with the officials were conducted through phone calls.

There were some merits and short comings in using the above mentioned methods (Skype and phone calls). When connections permitted, Skype was very useful in that the voice and image of the interviewee could be heard and seen at the same time. The body language and facial expression of the interviewees could be seen in relation to the question being answered. Again compared to phone calls, Skype is cheaper to use since we have unlimited data connection and also the teachers had it through the school which was free of charge.

The shortcomings of Skype interview were that sometimes the connections were not favourable as there could be breaks in the connection. This distorted the image and at times the body language and expression could not be seen.

As regards using phone calls with the officials, this method was very costly for us though the connection was very clear and easy to record with the help of a tape recorder. However, compared to Skype interview, the facial expression and image of the interviewee could not be seen, so the interviewer was unable to see the body language of the interviewee.

The interviewees were further informed that their participation would be confidential. After getting their approval, interview times were agreed upon. The researchers and the respondents agreed that the interview would be conducted in a quiet, peaceful and safe environment. The interview questions were divided into two parts, one for the educational officials and the other for the teachers. The entire interview was conducted in English since the respondents speak English as the second language.

4.3. Conducting Interviews

Interviews were conducted through semi-structured method: “A planned and flexible interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena” (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Even though the researchers were in charge of the interview process, the respondents were given a free hand to discuss all they wanted without being interrupted (ibid). They were asked to answer every question freely. Some answers led to further questions which were meant to ascertain validity and authenticity.

We developed our questions through our main question and the help of the supervisor. We also referred to the book; “Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing”, but following the seven stages of an interview inquiry (Ibid).

4.4. Study Area

The region selected had more schools established with special educational units than any other region. So it would serve the purpose of our study.

4.5. Data Transcription

The interview with the officials was conducted with the phone on speaker while being recorded using digital audio recorder as the notes were being taken. The other interview with the teachers was conducted through Skype. A digital audio recorder was also used to record the interview. All the eight interviews were transcribed by the authors. “Researchers who transcribe their own interviews will learn much about their own interviewing style; to some extent, they will have the social and emotional aspects of the interview situation present or reawakened during transcription,” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.180). During the transcription, all expressions, emotional responses such as laughs, sighs etc, were taken note of (ibid).

To maintain the confidentiality of the interviewees, the ethical aspects of transcription were adhered to. Names of interviewees were not used in the process of transcriptions but designated codes were assigned to each interviewee. A, B, C, D, respectively.

4.6. Data Analysis

After the interviews were transcribed, the researchers reviewed the interviews a couple of times. They then carried out analysis of the data using a cross-case analysis by grouping the different answers received to find the questions that had common themes. As Patton puts it, “with an interview guide approach, answers from different people can be grouped by topics from the guide, but the relevant data won’t be found in the same place in each interview” (Patton, 1990, p. 376). The texts with the same themes were then coded and attached keywords.

4.7. Ethical consideration

In any scientific research, it is important to have ethical consideration in mind before starting. It should not be ignored throughout the study (Denscombe, 2009). We introduced ourselves and informed our participants of the aim of the study, its importance, and their right to ask questions in relation to the study. They were also informed of the right to withdraw from the study at any given time without any consequences. Sensitive questions such as personal information of the individuals were avoided in order to make the respondents feel safe.

Participants in the study were assured of their confidentiality on the information they provided and personal names would not appear on research documents. Instead, researchers opted for identification numbers. They were fully informed about their rights as participants in the study. Despite the fact that some of the interviewees already “knew” their rights as participants since they are adults and educated, it was our duty and responsibility to explain to them to understand the importance of being a volunteer participant (Grinnell, 2001).

4.8. Essay credibility

Reliability: For a study to be reliable, it must have both element of consistency and trustworthiness (Denscombe, 2009; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). To make the study more reliable, two methods were used; Skype and phone interviews. To test the reliability of the statements made by the respondents, same questions were asked several times during the interviews. The respondents’ replies were assessed to see if their answers were consistent.

Facial expression is very important when doing an interview and this may not reflect on the answer they send through phone calls. We anticipate difficulties as most of the interviewees might have limited computer knowledge (Elmholdt, 2006 as referred in Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 149).

Bearing in mind that the researchers have little experience or knowledge in conducting a research, this might affect the reliability of this study as mentioned by Patton (2002).

The researchers conducted the interviews, transcribed, coded and analyzed the interview which strengthens the reliability of the study.

Validity

Validity is a process of verifying the entire research process which checks on the credibility of the findings (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). During the study, there has been a continuous process of verifying whether the interviewees have understood the interview questions and the researchers understand the answers given by the respondents to ensure internal validity (Bryman, 2002). After the interview was concluded, the summary of the interview was made in order to crosscheck to ascertain

that the researchers had understood and interpreted the respondents' answers correctly. The interviewees were given all the necessary support to air out their views freely and as much as they could, this is also said to have increased the validity of the study (Patton, 2002).

The researchers have it in mind that using various methods in data collection may result in having different results because different types of investigations can easily change results in the real world. But experiencing such inconsistencies through triangulation, studies should not be viewed as weakening the credibility of the results. However, it gives the researcher an in-depth insight into the relationship between inquiry approach and the problem under study, which strengthens the validity of the study (Patton, 2002).

4.9. Generalization

This study consists of eight interviews. It is therefore practically impossible to generalize conclusions to the research questions asked as it is in a statistical generalization. But an analytical generalization is possible through the use of earlier research that will enable the researchers to see similar patterns, thus strengthening the results of the study (Kvale & Brinkman 2009). The purposive sampling also does allow some careful generalizations (Patton, 2002).

4.10. Limitation of the study

There were some problems with the internet connection. This was beyond the researchers' control. The option of calling the interviewees all the way from Sweden could have been intimidating to them in some ways (Esaiasson et al. 2002). The researchers were careful and tried to avoid the above effect by not using aligned questions and maintained a neutral position throughout the interview process. The other limitation was not having the opportunity to interview senior ministry officials in this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1. Results And Analysis

Before we present the results, it is important to give brief introductions of the interviewees' background.

Teacher A: Is a teacher in charge of the deaf-blind, and has been working with the unit for the last eight years.

Teacher B: Is a teacher with experience of handling children with disabilities and other children.

Teacher C: Is a trained teacher but gained experience to handle children with disabilities as a result of interacting with them at school.

Teacher D: Has fifteen years' experience of working with children with disabilities and a senior member of staff.

We divided the result of the interviews into two main themes to reflect on our main questions.

Themes 1: What are the special education needs of children with disabilities in Uganda according to the teachers?

In regard to the issues of special needs of children with disabilities, the data indicated that children with disabilities need to be motivated and necessary facilities that will ease their access to all facilities should be provided. Another issue pointed out by our participant is that the school syllabus should be modified to take into consideration this group of children.

Teacher A says; *“They need motivation from both parents and teachers to overcome the challenges of coming to school”* While Teachers B and C put it this way; *“The syllabus needs to be changed to reflect the inclusiveness of the educational system in which it takes into consideration the children with disability needs”*. While teacher D had a contrary view that, *“The government has got it all wrong from the start of the program by not involving parents in the scheme”*

Theme 2: The challenges teachers face in providing special education for children with disabilities in Uganda.

In relation to the challenges faced by institutions in providing special education to CWDs, our study has found out that the government is facing many in this regard and this is how teacher A puts it; *“Yea, the challenges are many. For example, children lack concentration in class, have inability to read and lack patience as they are easily annoyed. Some of them fight a lot. They even don’t want to associate with others. The other thing is that they always want to be sympathized with.”*

Teacher B didn’t differ from the above views. He says; *“I have challenges of managing such kids in class. I was trained as a general teacher but ended up handling children with disabilities. I feel like I need more skills and training to face these challenges”*. Teacher C agreed with A and B in which he says; *“Yes, it is true there are challenges”*. Likewise, teacher D goes ahead to say that there are some challenges faced by the children themselves and this is how he puts it; *“There are some challenges facing these children, some are mentally retarded while others don’t want to do anything, preferring to be on their own”*.

Empirical analysis for theme 1 and 2

From our respondents, we can see that the design of physical infrastructures and social schemes plays an important role in helping the disabled children in participating fully in school activities. The needed facilities are wheelchairs, accessible buildings, and public transportation, as well as the provision of different tools. All this above mention facilities are providing the connection between the individual and their environment. Other Challenges identified include financial constraints, lack of teaching materials.

Theme 3: Are some challenges harder to manage? Could you describe a typical challenging situation?

Our respondents have indicated that they have come across different kinds of challenges while teaching CWDs. According to them, some of the challenges are very difficult to manage but this is how they described their experiences. Teacher A says; *“Yes, some are harder to manage as they like to engage in sexual activities and are as active as the*

normal children .The other challenge is that when they escape from school, and are in places they don't even know, they cannot communicate and yet as teachers, they are our responsibility. So, whatever happens to them, we are answerable”.

Teacher B responds in this way; *“Definitely yes, with such children, it depends on the level of disability. Though as usual, we try to handle. The most challenging situation is where parents abandon their own children at school because they don't view them as “normal”.*

Teacher C totally agreed with teacher A and B on how hard it is to manage these challenges and described his experience in this way; *“Oh yea, some challenges can be extremely hard to manage or to resolve in actual sense. An example is a situation where a child has not yet learnt toileting and does all the easing anywhere, even in class. Also, when they are sick and cannot communicate, we are left imagining what is wrong with them”.*

While teacher D described what he, as the teacher, faces on daily basis with CWDs as; *“Yes, that is true, we face them on a daily basis. Some challenges are harder to manage and a typical example could be a child having multiple disabilities. We also expect the parents to check on their children but sometimes they don't come in a long time”.*

Theme 4: What are the solutions to the above challenges? Both for society (that is children and their parents/ guardians and other people) and institutions tasked with realising such goals.

Teacher A maintained that challenges can be overcome when; *“these children are given sufficient number of specially trained teachers just like the other children. The ratio at the moment is one teacher to four deaf- blind children which is not fair. Also, more schools should be opened up to cater for the interests of these children and may be we should seek for more donors”.*

Teacher B had a different view instead, she suggests; *“May be we should develop positive attitudes towards CWDs and sensitize stakeholders of their roles towards the education for CWDs. Above all, there is need to create an enabling environment”.*

Teacher C seemed to agree with teacher B that emphasis should be; *“through continuous sensitization to ensure attitude change”*. Teacher D had another view and this is how she put it; *“In the curriculum for children with disability, vocational work should be included”*.

Empirical analysis for theme 3 and 4

The respondents emphasize the importance of having trained teachers and providing an enabling environment for the children. Many of these children were admitted to special schools based on medical diagnosis without taking into consideration how each one of them functions, and not taking into consideration their special educational needs and the environment effect on them both in micro, macro and meso levels. Most of the special schools are boarding schools. Due to this, many of the children have to go to schools far away from their families or where they live. This results in many of the affected families losing close emotional contact with their children.

Other difficulties identified by our respondents pointed to unaffordable fees ranking high. The CWDs felt neglected by parents when admitted to boarding special schools. They pointed out that the daily requirements and that the feeding in the school was poor. Teachers need to be prepared to adapt their teaching methods to improving on the curriculum so that all learners can have access to better services.

Theme 5: Do you think (or know) if children with disabilities drop out more often than other children? Do you know what happens to them after that? Can you describe some scenarios?

To a certain extent, all respondents admitted that it is true children with disabilities drop out of school more than the other children. Teacher A acknowledged this by saying that; *“Ok, they do, but with a valid reason of lacking sponsors. Yes some of them stay at home with their parents while others go for casual work. One of them whom I know well dropped out of school and started his business and is now doing well”*.

Teacher B agreed by saying; *“Of course, here, children with disabilities drop out more due to financial reasons. It may also be because their parents don’t see the reason of*

them furthering their education. I can't really tell so much. All I know is that some get married as others stay at home with their parents".

Teacher C was in agreement with the rest; *"I know that they drop out more often than others. Most of them just become dependents on their families".* Teacher D agreed to all the other participants had said, *"Yes, the parents can't afford to maintain these children in school. They are extremely needy; requiring a lot of attention. So, they are costly to the parents".*

The respondents pointed out that the dropout rate among CWDS was high due to the difficulties in special schools and the high cost being unaffordable to many parents. Another reason given for the children dropping out was the poor feeding in the schools. They could not indicated the precise number in comparison to the mainstream schools but they believe that more children dropout than the so called normal children.

Theme 6: What are the learning achievements of CWDS compared to other children?

All participants openly commented on this issue. Teacher A stated that; *"Ok, mainly they are very good at craft whereas other children may be good at academic and paper work".*

Teacher B had this to say; *"I can say that CWDS are generally slow and require their time to comprehend things. I can sum it up that they are low achievers".*

Teacher C agreed with what the other participants had said. His response was; *"As for the deaf children, they are good at handy work. So they develop quickly in this area. Our school prefers to emphasize on vocational studies".*

Teacher D did not differ from the rest; *"If trained in handy work and other vocational skills, they can improve and concentrate better. They prefer to be outside the class as opposed to other children. In fact, the unit is encouraging that now."*

Empirical analysis of theme 6

Our entire respondent agreed that CWDs are better in vocational training, achieving higher in handy work. They have observed that their concentration is more in handy work, implying that they prefer vocational studies. Teachers encourage them in this preference of theirs.

Officials' responses

Official A: Is an instructor at the district educational office and has been working with children with disabilities for over fifteen years.

Official B: Is an Inspector of schools in charge of children with disabilities and has been at this post for the last ten years.

Official C: Is a sign Language interpreter in charge of policy implementation and has been working with children with disabilities for the last twenty years.

Official D: Works as an overseer for the monitoring of the Universal Primary Education Program and has been working at this post for over ten years.

Theme 1: What would you consider as successes for policy implementation in the education and why?

Official A, had this in his response; *“Almost 90% of the children have basic education despite disabilities due to a certain level of awareness in many schools and also coming up to provide education to the needy.”*

Official B, differed from the teachers and his view was; *“There is affirmative action, specific examination, all geared towards helping CWDs attain academic excellence”.*

Official C differed from his colleagues. His view was; *“Yes, there is some success registered though there is need for more. A big number of children have got a chance to access basic education”*.

Official D seemed to agree with teachers A and C and he said this of the successes; *“Ok, there has been a huge turn up in response to UPE. Parents have sent their children to school unlike in the past where they engaged them in family activities at home.”*

Empirical analysis for theme 1

According to our respondents, the program has been a success due to many actions taken by both the government and the parents. One of the successes of policy implementation is that all the primary schools in Uganda are grouped in clusters of 15 to 20 (MOES 2004b). Each cluster has either a Special Needs Education Co-coordinator (SNECO), or a Centre Co-coordinating Tutor (CCT), who are supposed to visit all the schools within their clusters, including special schools.

Theme 2: What are the major complaints raised by CWDs in education?

All the officials had similar views when it came to complaints raised by CWDs. However, official A reflected on it like this; *“Oh yea, parents don’t prioritize them, teachers don’t give them attention and the government does not also prioritize them in its planning.”*

Official B agreed to this and even went in depth to say that; *“Of course, not all centers are accessible. In some cases, toilets may lack ramps or sign language trained teachers in school. Teachers are demoralized because they are in hard to reach areas. We also face problems of transfers. In such cases, the cost of training new teachers to replace those transferred has to be met. Yet grants are not enough for children with disabilities”*.

Official C approached the same issue from another angle though in agreement with rest; *“Ok, there is a complaint of failing to apply teaching methods as various children have different kinds of disabilities and other needs.”*

Official D agreed to all the above that; *“the teachers neglect them. They do not treat them like the normal children. Similarly, other children don’t help them when they need help. I think this is bad because it reflects lack of proper training of the teachers.”*

Empirical analysis for theme 2

The biggest educational challenge facing CWDs is lack of educational facilities. These include trained sign language teachers, Braille, and other educational materials. Teachers in UPE schools also lack the necessary knowledge of operating Braille.

Other challenges mentioned are lack of ramps and accessible toilets. Help from both teachers and the other student is sometimes withheld when most needed. This could be due to lack of proper training of the teachers as earlier noted by one of the respondents.

The CWDs need the support of their respective schools and families. Unfortunately, they experience marginalization and discrimination both at school and at home. Their families need to be supportive and helpful by counselling and giving any other form of help. By receiving school and family support, CWDs may overcome some of the many difficulties they encounter.

Theme 3: What challenges did you experience in your role?

These experiences are similar to those faced by officials who drive the UPE program.

Official A narrated his experience in this way; *“Yes, the first challenge is the little knowledge and skills teachers have despite their training. In addition, there are so many children in the UPE program since it is free to all, compared to the few with disabilities. This leaves the disabled children with little priority.”*

Official B’s experience was that; *“of course, some children don’t understand most of the things being taught since it is done in sign language grammar”.*

Official C had a contrary view. To him, corruption ranked at the top of the hierarchy and these were his words; *“The biggest one was, and still is, corruption. Most of the*

equipment procured for delivery to UPE schools never reaches the grassroots hence limiting the program implementation.”

Official D sees these challenges coming from both the parents and teachers. In his words; *“I experienced the negative attitude towards children with disabilities. This came from both the teachers and the families of these children.”*

Empirical analysis of theme 3

The issue of the training of teachers keeps coming up from almost all our respondents' answers. For the first time, we had one of our interviewees mention corruption as one of the challenges. He noted that most of the equipment does not reach the schools because it is diverted to personal gain. We also came across issues like negative attitude towards CWDs which was coming from both the parents and the teachers.

Theme 4: What do you think has contributed to the failures in UPE when focusing on CWDs literacy needs and why? What aspects of policy implementation do you think needs to be changed and why?

Officials A, B and C provided the same answer about the failures of UPE program. Their response was; *“Yea, we had donors supporting the program but now that they are gone, government cannot sustain this program fully by itself. We were depending on the donors from developed countries at the very initial stages.”*

Official C added that, *“The government together with the curriculum designers should modify the curriculum to suit the needs of all children”.*

Official D viewed the UPE program as having a political agenda and his view was that; *“This UPE program was just a political thing. It was only taken serious in its initial stages. It had some loopholes in its design. Only four kids per family was the original idea but it ended up being open to all. There is need to redesign this program to meet the educational needs of Ugandans.”*

Empirical analysis of theme 4

The failure of UPE policy according to some of our respondents was mainly due to lack financial support since the program depended mainly on foreign donors. When they pulled out of the program, the government of Uganda could not sustain it.

Another problem was that the teaching curriculum was not designed in a way that it would accommodate the needs of CWDs. From some of the answers we received, these children are more interested in vocational training and that was not something that they were doing as much as they had wanted. Overall design of the problem should be done in order to correct some of the problems identified and the government needs to look at the funding issues for the program to survive.

Theme 5: What role do you think the ministry of Education plays in helping the CWDs achieve the UPE goal?

Official A had a positive answer when it came to this. His view was that, *“The government through the ministry of education has trained teachers in CWD needs though the effort is not yet sufficient. This has been introduced in all the teacher training colleges such that the teacher gets a dosage of disability training. More effort is still needed in this area.*

Official B had a similar view with Official A and went ahead to say that *“Many sensitization programs have been carried out besides working with the Non-governmental organizations which have education programs as their core focus.*

Officials C and D agreed that the ministry has given all the necessary support needed for the UPE program to succeed. *“The ministry, with the help of the government has aided by providing materials like wheel chairs.”*

Empirical analysis for theme 5

Effort should be made in creating awareness about the program since the present uncertainty about the effectiveness of the program calls for it. This will ensure that parents and the teachers have a better understanding of the program. Non-governmental organizations should be involved. Teachers’ training should be improved as mention

earlier because even with the provision of the necessary materials, without adequate knowledge and training, the goal of the program can never be achieved.

Theme 6: What type of support would you need for more effective implementation of education programs of CWDs?

Officials A and B had the same view when it came to the support needed for the effective implementation of education programs for CWDs and this is what they said; *“To effectively implement a unit for special needs, the attitudes of teachers towards children with disabilities should be changed. Similarly, there is need for a special allowance or salary for teachers who handle such children. This would help in motivating them to carry out their duties with one heart”*.

Official C on the other hand looked at it in terms of awareness within the community as a whole and he said that; *“Oh, perhaps we should have something like seminars and tours to create more awareness in the communities”*.

Official D views it in terms of attitude change and creating channels for monitoring the UPE program and she answered it this way; *“Well, there is a lot to do besides the funds part of it, there needs to be a proper channel for monitoring this education system. And may be the children with disabilities have to be treated as other children when it comes to this needs and programs allocation.”*

Empirical analysis of theme 6

The need to motivate the teachers by the appropriate authority will by all means encourage the teachers to work harder. Creating more awareness is important for the program as mentioned earlier since it will improve the way the community looks at CWDs. Other areas that were mentioned by our respondents were the monitoring of the CWDs educational system which will help in having accurate data of the progress being made and the lapses encountered so that the program will achieve the desired result. Equal treatment of CWDs is an important part for the program to succeed.

5.2. Empirical analysis of the result

Our analysis is based on the results of our interviews in relation to our chosen theory, system theory, focusing on the interaction between the environment and the people living around it, in this case the CWDs.

People with disabilities face a lot of obstacles in carrying out their day to day activities. They are in most cases excluded from the society. This makes them look like outcasts within the society. This is common in the developing countries such as the one our study was conducted in.

The researchers therefore used system theory, in particular Social system theory in order to understand how CWDs interact and relate within the school environment and the society at large and also how the environment affects them.

System theories have shown that each system is an open system subject to influence from outside and has the possibilities of influencing what is beyond its boundaries. From our respondents, we can see that the design of physical infrastructures and social activities plays an important role in helping the disabled children in participating fully in school activities.

The respondents emphasize the importance of having trained teachers and providing an enabling environment for the children at a micro level. Many of these children were admitted to special schools based on medical diagnosis without taking into consideration the level of disability and their special educational needs. Most of the special schools which CWDs attend are boarding schools located far away from their families or where they live. This results in many of the families losing the close emotional contact with their children. In some cases, contact either stops or is limited. From the above statement we understood that the teachers lack the basic knowledge to teach and train CWDs.

Other difficulties identified by our respondents suggested difficulties such as the high cost of maintenance. The CWDs felt neglected by parents when admitted to boarding

special schools. They pointed out that the daily necessities were lacking and that the feeding in the school was poor. Teachers need to be prepared sufficiently and should adapt their teaching methods to improving on the curriculum so that all learners can have access to modified learning methods according to prevailing situations.

According to Ackoff, in every environment, there are three levels of purpose for social system: "the purpose of the system, of its parts, and of the system of which it is a part, the suprasystem." (Ackoff, 1981).

When we perform a systems analysis of the problem or the situation the CWDs are facing in accessing special education, we look at the problem first, not with any idea of what the result will be. After we have identified what the challenges and the needs for CWDs are, then we proceed inward to the sub-systems which are the teachers, the education officials, parents, their interaction with their peers at school and outward to the environment or the society in general. All these systems can be categorised in three levels that is micro, meso and macro levels which helps us understand the functioning of all actors within the environment they live e.g. the family, the school environment and the government which are responsible in providing the necessary tools for the student to enrol and have proper access to the school facilities.

The biggest educational challenges, according to our interviewees, facing CWDs were lack of educational facilities such as trained sign teachers, Braille, educational materials, among other needs. Teachers in Universal primary education schools lack the necessary knowledge of operating Braille. Another challenge mentioned was lack of ramps and accessible toilets. The lack of help from both teachers and the other children to the CWDs was yet another challenge mentioned. This could be due to the lack of training of the teachers as one of the respondents said. Due to lack of necessary teaching materials and equipment that will help CWDs to participate fully in the school activities could be one of the main reason why they rate of enrolment is low and that the dropout rate is higher than those children without disabilities.

CHAPTER SIX

6.1. Discussion

Despite the challenges institutions face in providing special education to CWDs, still CWDs have the opportunity to attend special schools. The result showed the respondent's experience and this was based on different themes such as the needs of CWDs and challenges faced by CWDs.

According to our results, there seems to be many challenges that CWDs face in accessing special education in the region of our study. The results of the study revealed that teachers' training in handling CWDs is an important part of inclusiveness because without teachers having the necessary skills needed to handle CWDs, this group of children will always experience exclusion from the mainstream schools.

The study also revealed that the curriculum used in schools is not friendly to CWDs as it does not take their needs into consideration. The main interest of CWDs according to our findings is that they are more interested in vocational training.

Sourcing of funds has become a big problem for the program. This has been one of the reasons as to why the many needs of CWDs cannot be met by the institutions. This study reveals that there seems to be corruption within the system where some of the stakeholders who have access to funds and equipment divert the little resources to personal use. The funding problem began when the countries supporting the program (donor countries) ended their financial support.

The results of the present study revealed that existing facilities at the schools e.g. toilets, classrooms, hostels were not CWDs user friendly. According to the teachers, there is lack of ramps, Braille materials, and hearing aids. Even where such equipment is available, they are in a bad state and need repair or replacement.

The attitude of teachers and parents promote exclusion. Some of the teachers and parents seem to neglect children with disabilities. The finding is probably a valid generalization for most children with disabilities. In addition, some parents are not fully supporting CWDs. This could be due to lack of awareness and poverty since most of the

CWDs who attend this program are from poor backgrounds, hence parents prefer their children to go out on the streets begging. This is because CWDs are sympathized with in the community. The researchers think that this could be the reason why the rate of enrolment is low compared to other children.

According to our interviewees, the majority of CWDs had not been properly diagnosed before joining the UPE program. The admission criterion was based on physical appearance without considering the CWD's attainments and special educational needs. Hearing tests were not carried out on those who were deaf or hard of hearing and those with any other form of disabilities (Gezahegne & Yinebeb, 2011).

The study revealed that many of the parents never turned up to check on their children after being admitted in the school. Parents play an important role in their children's education. The missing links and connections between teachers and parents can be attained when parents and teachers fulfil their role and the part they have to play (UNESCO, 2001).

From our investigation, the exact data relating to drop out rates is not readily available. However, the reasons vary. They include lack of public awareness of the importance of education for CWDs, lack of availability of schools that can accommodate children with disabilities, and very often, the schools that accommodate them lack the necessary facilities to ease their movement and accessibility to the necessary facilities within the school environment.

From our understanding, if the above mentioned are provided or done, the rate of the drop out for CWDs could be dramatically reduced. Even though we didn't interview the children, from the teachers' and officials' response, we arrived at this conclusion.

6.2. Recommendations

After we understand the needs and the challenges CWDs face in accessing Special education, we have come up with the following recommendations. For CWDs to achieve quality standards of education there is need for the ministry of education to

establish special units for them. The ministry should set up a team responsible for designing a curriculum to suit the needs of the different categories of disabled children.

The concerned authorities should investigate the procedure of enrolling CWDs in schools in Uganda. It was noted that since CWDs have various needs and levels of impairment and disability, if a proper diagnosis is conducted, some may not require special support hence suitable for mainstream schools. Schools need to be equipped with functioning structures such as ramps, wheel chairs, Braille materials etc. The relevant authorities should also ensure that these materials meet the individual needs of the children with disabilities.

There is need for CWDs to be properly diagnosed on the level of their disability or the nature of disability they possess. This will ensure that the right service is provided to meet their needs. Government should embark on an awareness campaign to enlighten the public, that is, parents, community leaders, and stakeholders on the importance of CWDs embracing the UPE program. We recommended that continuous training of teachers should be given priority.

Government should implement a strict monitoring system both on the schools and the ministry officials in charge of budget utilization to make sure that all the money is spent towards service delivery for the benefit of CWDs. Any official or teacher found guilty of misappropriating or lacking discipline should be sacked and legal action taken against them.

6.3. Further Research

The researchers thought that since CWDs was the group that faces the most form of exclusion within society and in the school, there is need for further research to be carried out to understand the specific needs of each form of disability in order to provide the best possible help they can get for them to access special education. Further research might include changing people's attitudes especially the parents, teachers and the country at large. This could be done through awareness campaigns together with all the stakeholders involved such as government officials, Non-governmental organisations and International Non-government organisations. A quantitative study

could help in getting the exact data of enrolment of CWDs in special schools. It will also possibly provide data on those who have withdrawn from the program.

There is need for a comparative study across counties to see if they are experiencing similar challenges in relation to CWDs. Through this, there will be knowledge and sharing of experiences in order to be able to implement reforms both at community level and national levels.

One of the major shortcomings of our study is in not having the opportunity of interviewing the children with disabilities. The reason was due to the fact that the study was conducted from Sweden and there was no possibility of getting consent from parents to interview the CWDs which is a requirement for conducting any kind of interview with under age children. The researchers see this as the major short coming of the study. Interviewing the children would give us chance to hear from their own experience because this study is basically about them.

Another shortcoming is that the whereabouts of the children could not be traced when they dropped out or left school. As such, information was maintained by neither the school nor the ministry of education. We know this information would have definitely enriched our study.

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Appendix 1

Interview questions for teachers

1. Designation.....

2. Age (approximately)
3. Gender a. Male b. Female
4. Length of service::

1. What are the challenges you face in providing special education to children with disabilities in your school?
2. From your point of view, what hinders the participation of children with disabilities in your school?
3. Describe a typical day with Children with Disabilities in your class?
4. How many children with disabilities are included in your class? Which kind of disabilities do they have?
5. Do you feel any challenges in managing Children with Disabilities in the class?
6. Are some challenges harder to manage? Could you describe a typical challenging situation?
7. When you find any problems with them, where do you seek for help?
8. Do you have any teaching assistants or teaching staff to help them? Could it be of help to have them? What could this person do for example? Do you think it is important to have them?
9. Approximately how many CWDs enrol in school?
10. Do you think (or know?) if children with disabilities drop out more often than other children? Do you know what happens to them after that? Can you describe some scenarios?
11. Do you have knowledge regarding UPE policy statement by the government?
12. Do you find any difficulties in teaching CWDs in any subject?
13. What are the learning achievements of CWDs compared to other children?
14. How do you communicate with CWDs in class?
15. How can equal access to education be improved?
16. How do the CWDs children access the class rooms and other school premises?
17. Do they participate in any sports activities?

Appendix 2

Interview questions for officials

1. What are the challenges you face in providing special education to children with disabilities in your district?
2. What hinders the participation of children with disabilities in your district?
3. What role did you play in the UPE?
4. What challenges did you experience in the role played?
5. Do you have knowledge regarding UPE policy statement by the government?
6. What would you consider as successes for policy implementation in the education and why?
7. What are the major complaints raised by CWDs in education?
8. What do you think are the failures of policy implementation in education, if any?
9. What do you think has contributed to the failures in the UPE when focusing on CWDs literacy needs and why? What aspects of policy implementation do you think needs to be changed and why?
10. What type of support would you need for more effective implementation of education programs of CWDs?
11. What role do you think the ministry of Education plays in helping the CWDs achieve the UPE goal?