



‘I want to go outside at playtime’, children’s perspectives on inclusion in Uganda



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Introduction

- In sub-Saharan Africa Disability Studies have largely focused on adults with and caregivers of children with disabilities, African children's narratives are almost absent in most disability literature (Curran & Runswick-Cole, 2014; Runswick-Cole, 2018).
- Cultural concepts of belonging, beliefs, attitudes, and poverty influence inclusion (Lwanga-Ntale, 2003; Ojok, 2012; Bannink & van Hove, 2016).
- In Uganda 9% of the estimated 2.5 million children with disabilities attend primary school (UNICEF, 2014).
- We explored the narratives and experiences of children with disabilities in 5 primary schools in central Uganda to inform a larger intervention study on inclusive education (2018-2019).

Method

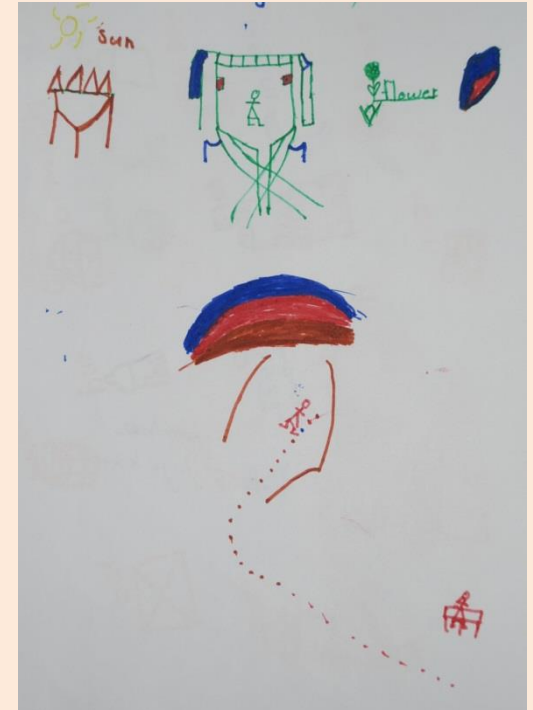
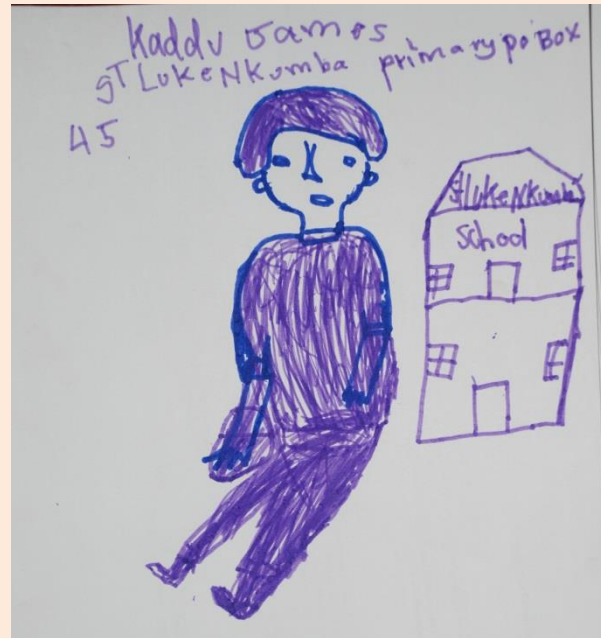
- Participants: 10 children with a disability aged 8 – 14 years, 10 peers from the same class, 20 parents of the children (action plan part only).
- Data collection: workshop discussions and action plans, drawings, photos and videos, school and home observations.
- Data analysis: case studies and thematic analysis in discussion with children, parents and teachers

Children's workshops

- Me and my school – drawings and videos
- What do you do well – ball game
- What do you like and not like in school – photo voice
- Your day, where do I need help – time line
- Who can help you and how, and who can you help – child /parent group work and discussions



My school



I do well in....

- Maths
- English
- Being kind
- Helping others
- Cooking
- Doing the dishes
- Playing
- Singing
- Praying
- Washing clothes
- Looking after chicken
- Gardening
- Playing football

My school

- Video

Me at school



“That is my spot, I sit under that tree at break time [...] My friends meet me there”

11 year old boy with a disability

Me at school



“That is a photo of Eric when he was giving an answer and I feel good when he is giving an answer”

Peer of a 12 year old boy with a disability

What I like about my school



“I like my classroom, we learn and we have fun” 9 year old girl



“I like break time when I go out and play with my friends” 8 year old girl

What I like about my school



“It is all green and looking good, the trees make me happy. That’s our school’s water tank, we don’t have to fetch water” 12 year old girl

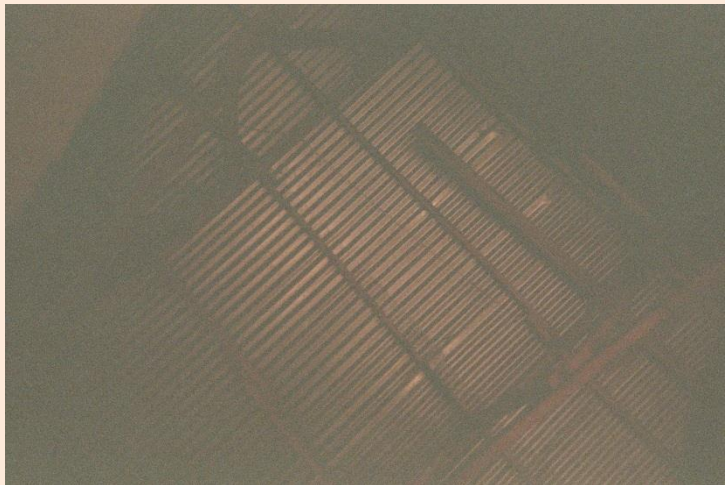


“We were going back home, it feels good. I walk back home with others, it is not far” 12 year old boy

What I dislike about my school



“That’s below the black board [...] there are potholes, I can’t move well with my wheelchair [...] there is a time I almost fell down.” 11 year old boy



“The roof leaks when it rains and we become wet [...] there are stones and I feel they might fall down and hit us while in class. When it starts raining they start shaking” 8 year old boy

What I dislike about my school



“Those are our school toilets, they look very bad. They have no doors”
12 year old girl



“I can't get in and out of the classroom without help”
11 year old boy

What I dislike about my school



“It had rained and we were going to class, I felt bad” 8 year old girl



“That’s the road back home. I don’t like it because it has stones” 9 year old girl

I need help with....

☀️

JOSEPHINE

Namweya Josephine

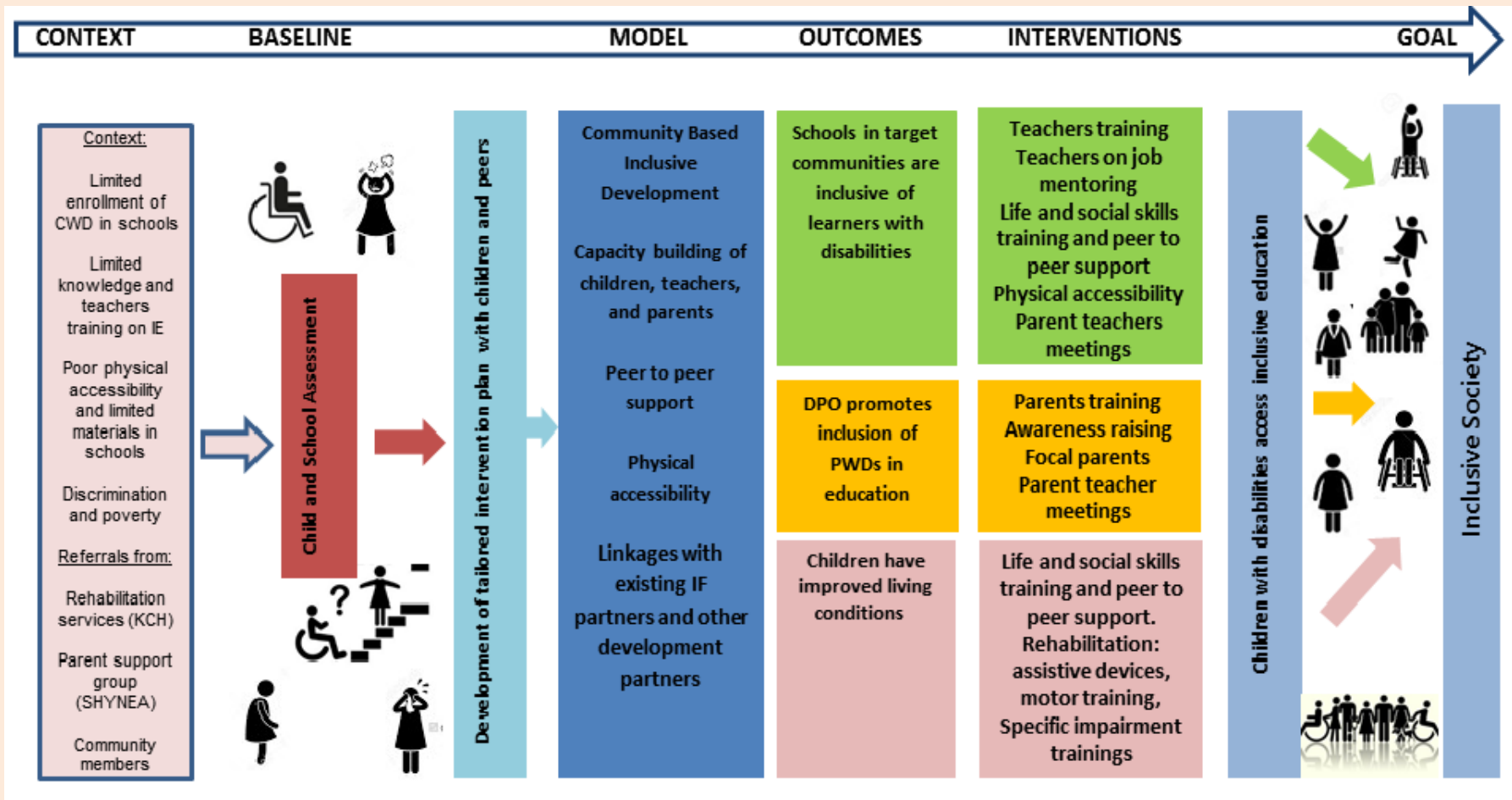
<p><u>Morning</u></p> <p><u>Wake up</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bathing Wearing my uniform. What take my tea. 	<p><u>School</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking to school. going to the church. Doing my work. taking my for marking. Wash bathtaking 	<p><u>break</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I remove my bag on the table. I walk to the playground. I remove my food. When I start eating. After I start playing with my friends. 	<p><u>Lunch</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I go and get food. When I start eating my food. After I start playing. When I go to the class. 	<p><u>back home</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I walk back home. I remove my uniform. I wash my bottles. After I start playing. After I go to the bathroom and I start bathing. I wear my clothes. I take my dinner. 	<p><u>sleep</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I go to the bed.
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<p><u>HELP</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Washing clothes. To remove for me my sticks under the table. Washing plates. To take my book for marking. Caring for my bag. Getting food. Helping me for homework. 	<p><u>Who CAN HELP.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mother. friends. Joseph. Jovia. Namubiru and Hassan. Hassan and Namubiru. Namubiru.
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Action plans for schools

- **Awareness raising:** we need to respect parents, friends and teachers, and they need to respect us. We can talk about this at assemblies and in class
- **Life and social skills training:** we want to play with our friends, we have to share and be kind, we also have to be strong when others are mean
- **Peer to peer support:** we have to help our friends and our teachers in class and school
- **Learning and sport materials:** we like to read books, we like to play football and play outside
- **Accessibility interventions:** we need good buildings and roads, we need better toilets and classrooms, we want to play outside with our friends
- **Environment:** we have to sweep the classrooms and toilets, we have to plant trees in the school compound, and keep the place clean

Intervention model



Way forward



- Start from the child in the classroom and their network, not the international standards
- Jointly develop, implement, and evaluate interventions with children with disabilities, peers, families and teachers
- Set realistic culturally appropriate goals which start with belonging and available resources rather than imposing concepts from high income countries