

Uganda, 14th December 2010 - more than 50% of the children with disabilities in northern Uganda are not going to school. A survey done by the National Union of Disabled Persons in Uganda (NUDIPU) in the districts of Pader, Kitgum, Amuru and Gulu shows that schools do not have user-friendly facilities for children with disabilities.

Presenting the findings in Gulu town recently, Martin Ssennoga, the programme manager for Empowering the Invisible Project under NUDIPU, said much as the Government was pursuing an inclusive education policy, many schools have not received the necessary support to implement the policy.

"Children with disabilities need equal opportunities yet the schools lack the basic facilities to support them," Ssennoga said.

Such facilities include ramps for the children in wheelchairs, user-friendly classroom furniture, toilets and brail materials for the blind, and hearing aids for the deaf, among others.

Ssennoga said that this makes the units attached to the mainstream schools difficult to operate as they become largely inaccessible and lack the basic facilities.

The Government's policy of inclusive education requires that children with disabilities should learn together with other children but should have special needs teachers to help them.

He said other challenges are lack of special needs education teachers, long distances from home to schools and reluctance by parents and caretakers to take the children to school.

Ssennoga gave the example of Pader district, which has only two schools with special needs education teachers.

Simon Ongom, the Gulu Union of Disabled chairman, said several teachers were trained in special needs but they lacked motivation to instruct pupils with disabilities.

"These teachers are paid the same amount of salary like other teachers yet they have a heavy workload on their shoulder. For instance, a special needs teacher has to translate the same lesson plan used to teach other children into the reading brail to be accessed by the blind," he said.

William Nokrach, the Member of Parliament for PWDs in northern Uganda, said most special needs teachers who were deployed in Laroo Boarding Primary School of War-affected Children and the Deaf were transferred to other schools.

In northern Uganda some of the schools that have annex for special needs are; Annex for the Blind in Gulu Primary School, Laroo School for the Deaf, annex for the blind at Angal and Pajobi in Nebbi School for the Disabled at Aduku.

Source: [All Africa](#)