



Value for Money Audit

Provision of education services for
learners with Special Needs- SDG 4.5

Introduction

The Provision of education services is aligned to SDG target 4.5 that seeks to ensure equitable and affordable access to education for all vulnerable groups by 2030.

A special needs learner is a child with significant functional limitations due to physical, mental, or sensory impairments and environment barriers, limiting equal learning participation and requiring educational adjustments.

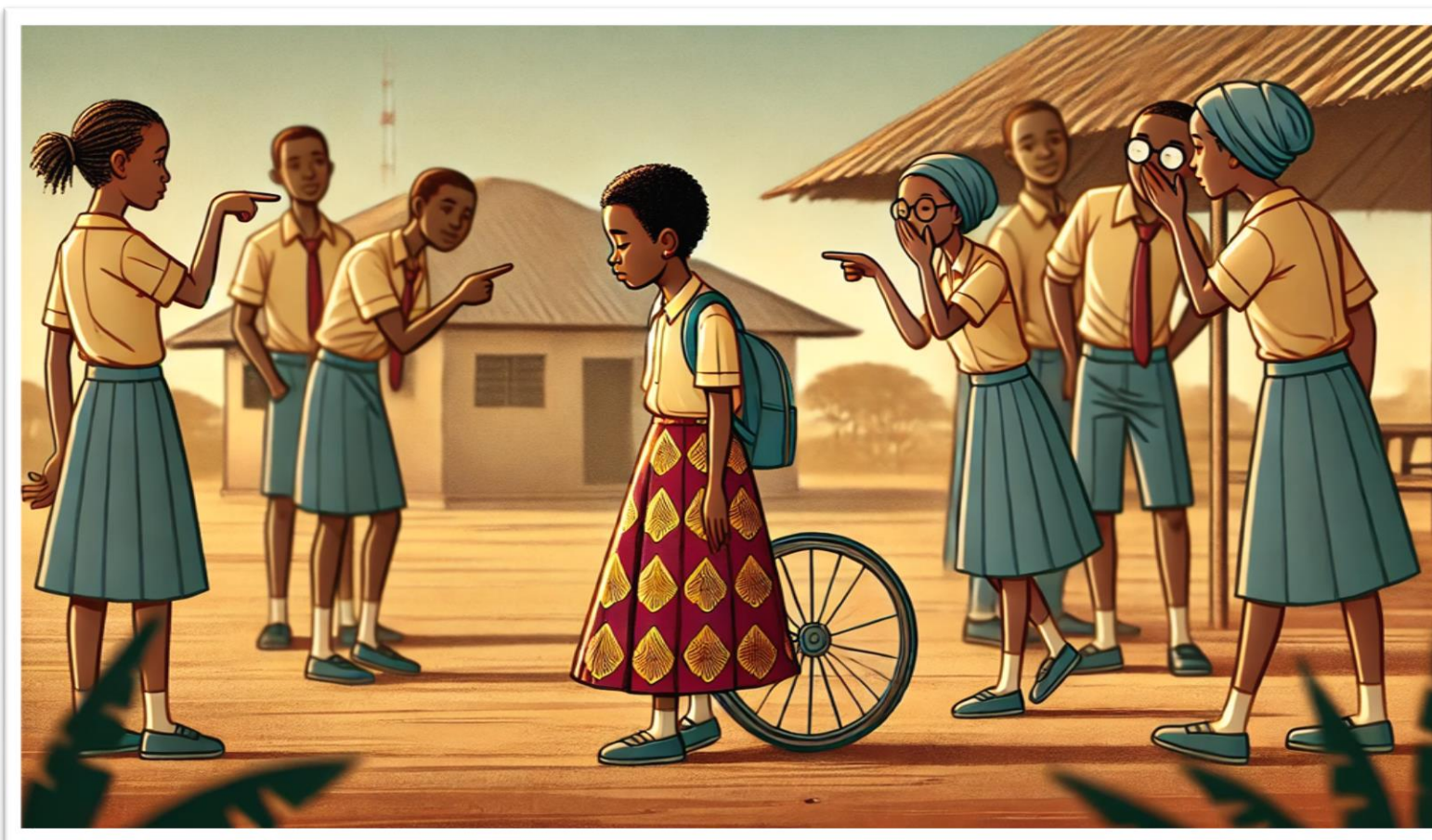
Special needs education is provided by both government-aided and private entities through:

- Special schools
- Inclusive schools
- Unit schools.



Motivation

16% of school going age children in Uganda are estimated to have a special need. These face barriers to education, including discrimination, stigma, and limited access to schools (inclusive and special), learning materials, and trained teachers.



Motivation

- ▶ Only 5% of the children (school going age) with special needs are enrolled in school. Of these, only 10% had access to special needs schools.
- ▶ Of the learners with special needs expected in primary schools, only 9% had enrolled while the percentage was much lower (i.e 0.6%) at secondary school level.
- ▶ Poor performance of learners with special needs in Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) results. In 2022, none emerged with division one while 55 out of 263 registered learners missed the examinations
- ▶ Inability by Government to include learners with special needs in vocational interventions.

Audit Objective

“To assess the Government of Uganda's progress in providing equitable and affordable access to education services for learners with special needs, in accordance with SDG Target 4.5”



Limitations

Inadequate statistical data on learners and children of school going age with special needs. Even the limited available data was not disaggregated to ease analysis



Findings

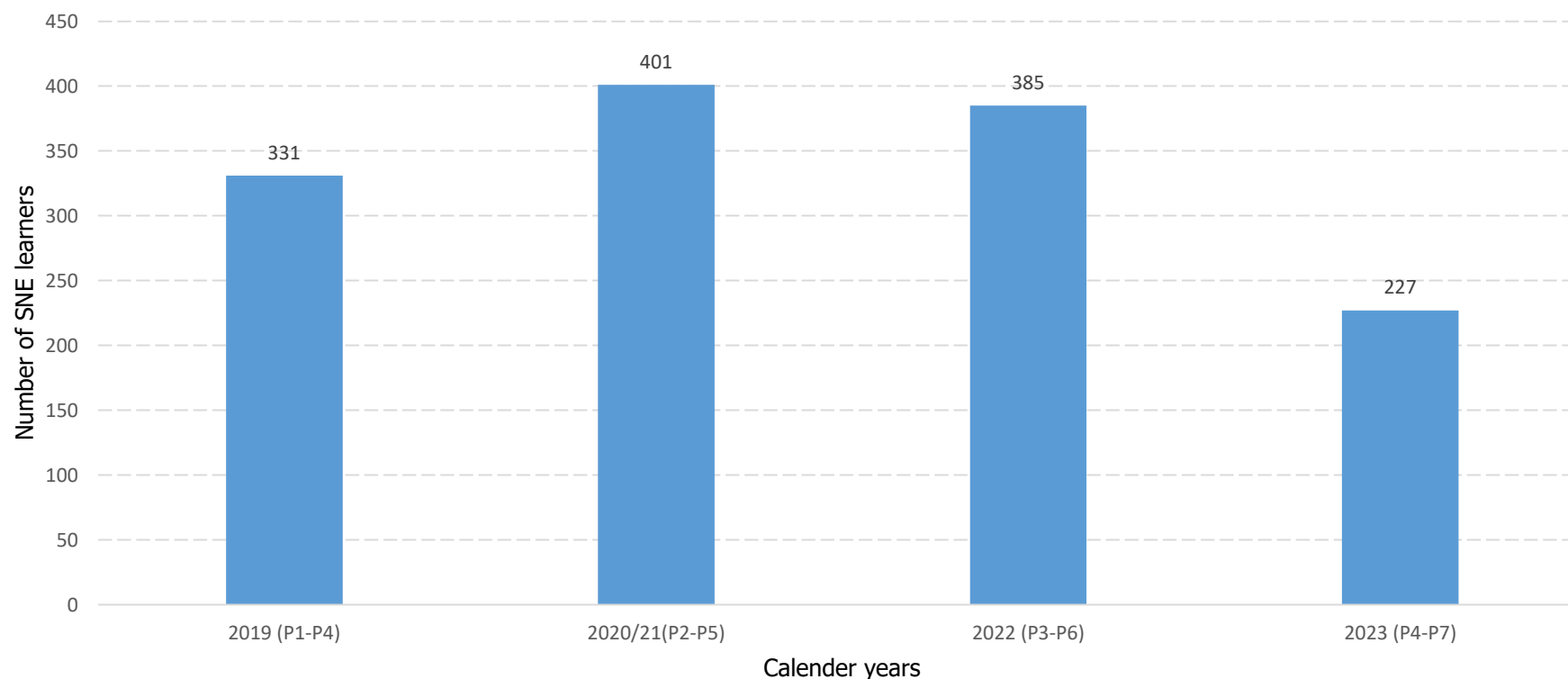
1) Low enrolment levels

DLG visited	Deaf	Blind	Physical	Others	Total SNE in th year 2023	Total Learners in the year 2023	%age SNE	Region
Kampala	537	335	301	992	2,165	89,647	2.42	Central
Jinja	238	303	257	1,478	2,276	119,219	1.91	East
Iganga	88	111	72	302	573	100,405	0.57	East
Mbale	892	142	675	2,278	3,987	85,074	4.69	East
Soroti	512	840	538	810	2,700	99,139	2.72	North
Lira	576	730	569	520	2,395	140,929	1.70	North
Ngora	180	121	494	676	1,471	50,621	2.91	East
Rukungiri	58	2	40	12	112	69,589	0.16	West
Kabale	37	37	121	237	432	74,949	0.58	West
Isingiro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	West
Masaka	26	10	256	1,238	1,530	67,577	2.26	Central
Total learners in 2023	3,144	2,631	3,323	8,543	17,641	897,149	1.97	

1.97% low considering that the Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (2016) indicated that 16% of children between 5 to 14 years had disabilities

Findings

2) High Drop out rates



Of the 22 schools visited, only 6 had complete data sets to enable evaluation of drop out rates among learners with special needs. Thus Graph is for these 6 only

Causes for the low enrolment and high drop out rates

- ▶ Majority of unit schools and special needs schools in the selected districts were concentrated in either cities or municipalities.
- ▶ Boarding fees which are not covered by government but have to be met by the parents.
- ▶ Limited number of unit and special schools. Only in 69 of the 135 districts.
- ▶ Limited range of learning options available in unit, special, and inclusive schools.
- ▶ Limited awareness and sensitization of communities as most parents with special needs children leave them at home and only bring their normal children to school.

Findings

3) Gaps in existing laws and policies

- Absence of comprehensive guidelines detailing the specific measures these institutions should implement to seamlessly integrate learners with disabilities into their academic environment.
- No guide on minimum requirements for teachers to be deployed in unit, special, or inclusive schools handling learners with special needs.
- The current curriculum does not sufficiently accommodate the diverse learning needs.

Findings

4) Planning and budgeting

- No needs assessment to determine the number and nature of the special need for the learners.
 - For the 11 districts visited, 338 (12,165 learners) out of 343 inclusive schools were not receiving SNE support.
 - At the national level, only 99 out of the 12,511 Government aided Primary Schools country-wide received the SNE grant.
- Budgeting for SNE interventions- much lower rates were used compared to recommended rates. Compare column (C) with (D) and (E)

Level of school (A)	Current unit of measure (B)	Current subvention per term (C)	Recommended for Special/ Unit per year (D)	Recommended for Inclusive per year (E)
Primary(UPE)	Per learner (SNE)	22,000	2,905,758	1,190,740
Secondary(USE)	Per learner (SNE)	192,500	3,000,317	1,563,743
	Per learner (3) special schools	1,230,000	3,000,317	N/A

5) Interventions implemented by Government for SNE schools

- Inadequate provision of special instructional materials and equipment- in only the 11 Districts sampled, 2,631 and 3,144 learners had been registered with visual and hearing impairments respectively.

Instructional materials/Assistive Devices procured and distributed by Govt	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total
Embossers	6	8	-	-	14
Embossing Paper	0	20	100	100	220
Braille Machines	78	20			98
Braille Kits	0	150	150	195	495
Victor Readers	-	20	-	-	20
Braille Papers	250	220	200	300	970
Drawing Slates	-	300	-	-	300
Wheel Chairs	-	20	-	-	20
White Canes	-	200	-	-	200
Screen Readers	-	20	-	-	20
Television	-	-	24	20	44
Radios	-	-	30	-	30
Talking Calculators	-		100	-	100
Taylor Maths Frames	-	-	100	-	100
Braille Maths Teaching	-	-	100	-	100
Laptops	20	10	2	-	32
Magnifying Glasses	200	-	-	-	200
Sign Language Dictionaries	250	-	-	-	250

For instance for learners with visual impairments-using only the 11 districts visited.

Highest no. of braille paper reams procured in a year is 300 yet each blind learner needs 1 ream per term in primary school and 10 reams per term in secondary school.

Thus the 300 reams procured would only be enough for 100 primary school learners (ie only 4% of the 2,631 yet countrywide such learners are more than 2,631

5) Interventions implemented by Government for SNE schools continued

3 out of 22 schools visited had introduced vocational training programmes that imparted practical skills such as knitting, bag making, tailoring, mat weaving.



6) Inadequate infrastructure for SNE learners



Laboratory turned into a classroom at Mbale SFD



Inadequate beds at Rutsya primary school.



Classroom turned into dormitory (congested) at Mulago school for the Deaf



Teacher's quarters at Rutsya primary school

7) Distribution of SNE schools in the 11 districts visited

Local Government	Unit schools	Special Schools	Total number of schools	Total SNE learners in School
Iganga	3	0	140	573
Isingiro	3	0	-	-
Jinja	4	2	150	2,276
Kabale	3	0	164	432
KCCA	0	3	89	2,165
Lira	1	2	136	2,395
Masaka	0	2	121	1,530
Mbale	3	1	99	3,987
Ngora	0	1	66	1,471
Rukungiri	1	0	216	112
Soroti	0	2	122	2,700
Total	18	13	1,303	17,641

Only 69 (51%) of the 135 districts in Uganda had a unit/special needs school

In the 11 districts visited, not only are the SNE schools few (31 out of 1,303 i.e 2%), most of these schools (28 out of 31 ie 90%) were located in urban areas- cities and municipalities leaving out learners in rural communities.

8) Deployment of SNE teachers, training and welfare

No	School and recommended teacher to learner ratio	No of teachers	Qualification in SNE	SNE enrolment	Trained teacher to learner Ratio
1	Mulago School for the Deaf (1:5)	16	2	168	1:84
2	Ntinda School for the Deaf (1:5)	13	11	215	1:20
3	Kyomya primary school (1:5)	20	5	82	1:16
4	St Francis Da Sales Primary School (1:5)	8	8	44	1:9
5	Makhai primary school (1:5)	18	2	310	1:155
6	Mbale School for the Deaf (1:5)	105	2	423	1:212
7	Buckerly High school (1:5)	5	5	56	1:11
8	Iganga SS (1:10)	7	7	20	1:3
9	Kampala School for the physically handicapped (1:25)	17	8	125	1:16
10	Masaka SFD (1:5)	7	6	123	1:21
11	Hornby High school Junior (1:5)	7	0	22	0
12	Good Samaritan (1:5)	11	5	105	1:21
13	Nyakibale Lower primary school (1:5)	9	4	34	1:9
14	Nancy comprehensive S.SFD (1:5)	33	4	137	1:34
15	St. Francis Primary SFB (1:10)	17	7	121	1:17
16	Kajaho Primary School (1:5)	7	3	227	1:76
17	Rutsya Primary School (1:5)	14	3	106	1:35
18	St Maria Theresa Rushoroza P/S (1:5)	17	1	106	1:106
19	St Francis SS For the Blind (1:10)	20	0	109	0
20	Ngetta Girls Primary School (1:5)	21	7	52	1:7
22	Ngora School for the Deaf (1:5)	10	6	99	1:17
TOTAL		382	96	2,684	

Recommended teacher to learner ratios are:
Blind 1:10
Deaf 1:5
Physically handicapped 1:25

only 2 qualified teachers trained in Braille mathematics in the entire country

The Ministry does not have a database of SNE trained teachers or their duty stations

9) Building Partnerships

- In line with Agenda 2030 which encourages partnerships to mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources for achievement of SDGs, partnerships and collaborations were noted at various levels

Partnership with	Description
World Bank, UNICEF	In kind grants like infrastructure, instructional materials, assistive devices eg wheel chairs, hearing aids, plastic prosthetic legs
CSOs and NGOs	Financial assistance- school fees, instructor salaries, food, medical treatment & physiotherapy, study materials, assistive devices eg braille machines, white canes

10) Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

Agenda 2030 obligates governments to monitor and evaluate progress made in achieving SDG goals and targets

The Education MIS (EMIS) does not incorporate specific targets or indicators to monitor SNE programmes and outcomes. Thus no documented performance data to measure progress towards equitable and affordable access to education services for learners with special needs.

SDG Dashboards and Trends

Click on a goal to view more information.



Dashboards: ● SDG achieved ● Challenges remain ● Significant challenges remain ● Major challenges remain ● Information unavailable

Trends: ↑ On track or maintaining SDG achievement ↗ Moderately improving → Stagnating ↓ Decreasing ●● Trend information unavailable

Recommendations

- Undertake a comprehensive assessment to establish number, category and location of the children with special needs to facilitate planning, distribution of schools, instructional materials and support infrastructure.
- Prioritize the implementation of the EMIS to enhance collection and management of data to enable tracking of enrolment of learners with special needs in school, their progression, and dropout rates.
- In collaboration with relevant stakeholders, engage with the NCDC to develop and adopt curriculum that provide alternative pathways that suit the competences of learners with special needs.
- In collaboration with relevant stakeholders, lobby for deployment of essential support staff, such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nurses, sign language interpreters, and social workers, to special schools, units, and inclusive schools.
- Devise mechanisms to enhance access to SNE training for all teachers including the specialised training in Braille mathematics.
- Utilize the EMIS to create and maintain a comprehensive database to SNE trained teachers to facilitate their deployments and transfers.

Lessons Learned

- ▶ Given the existing data gaps, primary data collection methods such as interviews, and physical inspections were prioritised.
- ▶ Have frequent meetings/brainstorming sessions to keep everyone accountable and on track.
- ▶ Coordination/collaboration between Government and relevant stakeholders can enhance implementation of SDGs.
- ▶ Policies should be more inclusive to ensure no one is left behind.



Audit Impact

- Sparked interest among policy makers, leading to discussions on equitable access. Media publications of key sections of the report which increases awareness.
 - ❖ <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/why-only-2-special-needs-children-enroll-in-primary-4662636#story>
 - ❖ <https://parliamentwatch.ug/news-amp-updates/tayebwa-tasks-govt-on-the-performance-of-special-needs-schools-report/>
- Improved funding for special needs- specialized learning materials from UGX 200m to UGX 1.2Bn annually, UGX 200m annually provided for assessment of special needs amongst learners, UGX 3m allocated per Education officer in charge of SNE per district for Education Assessment and Resources Services (EARS)
- The Ministry of Education and Sports is in the process of implementing the Education Management Information System (EMIS).

<https://parliamentwatch.ug/news-amp-updates/tayebwa-tasks-govt-on-the-performance-of-special-needs-schools-report/>



Tayebwa tasks Gov't on the performance of special needs schools report



Thank You