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

Femke Bannink Mbazzi, post doc researcher
Ghent University, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, based in Kampala, Uganda
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).


- 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....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wake up</td>
<td>Washing clothes,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To remove me from the sticks under the table,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To take my book for marking</td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Walking to school,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Going to the church</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lunch time</td>
<td>I remove my bag on the table</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I walk to the playground</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I remove my food</td>
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<td></td>
<td>When I start eating</td>
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<tr>
<td>After lunch</td>
<td>I go and get food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When I start eating my food</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After I start playing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>When I go to the class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Back home</td>
<td>Exercises</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I walk back home</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I remove my uniform</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I wash my bottles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>After I start playing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>After I go to the bathroom and I start bathing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I wear my clothes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I take my 3 dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>I go to the bed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

**CONTEXT**

- Limited enrollment of CWD in schools
- Limited knowledge and teachers training on IE
- Poor physical accessibility and limited materials in schools
- Discrimination and poverty
- Referrals from Rehabilitation services (KCH)
- Parent support group (SHYNEA)
- Community members

**BASELINE**

- Child and School Assessment

**MODEL**

- Community Based Inclusive Development
  - Capacity building of children, teachers, and parents
  - Peer to peer support
  - Physical accessibility
  - Linkages with existing IF partners and other development partners

**OUTCOMES**

- Schools in target communities are inclusive of learners with disabilities
- DPO promotes inclusion of PWDs in education
- Children have improved living conditions

**INTERVENTIONS**

- Teachers training on job mentoring
- Life and social skills training and peer to peer support
- Physical accessibility
- Parent teachers meetings
- Parents training on inclusive education
  - Awareness raising
  - Focal parents
  - Parent teacher meetings
- Life and social skills training and peer to peer support
  - Rehabilitation: assistive devices, motor training, specific impairment trainings

**GOAL**

- Inclusive Society
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.