

Factors Affecting Effective Implementation of Inclusive Education Policy in Primary Schools in Central Uganda

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Abstract

Despite Uganda's robust legal framework, including the 1992 Government White Paper and the 2006 National Policy on Disability, significant gaps remain between policy rhetoric and classroom reality. This study was conducted to address the limited empirical evidence regarding how IE is operationalized in everyday school practices and to identify the factors influencing its success. The primary objectives were to assess the extent of IE policy implementation, identify influencing factors, and evaluate the impact of school management practices and teaching methods on effective inclusion. The study employed a mixed-methods research approach within a descriptive cross-sectional design. The target population included 256 Students with Special Needs (SNS), their peers, teachers, school administrators, parents and education officials (DEOs and MIS). Stratified random sampling was used to sample SNS, simple random sampling for peers and parents and purposive sampling for teachers and administrators. Research instruments included structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, observation checklists, and documentary reviews. Validity was established through expert review and pilot testing, while reliability was ensured through the triangulation of data sources and methods. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation via SPSS, while qualitative data underwent thematic content analysis. Results indicated a low overall level of policy implementation ($\bar{x}=2.47$), with inadequate infrastructure (79.3%) and insufficient funding (72.4%) emerging as primary barriers. Statistical analysis revealed that School Management Practices had the strongest positive correlation with Policy Implementation ($r=.721$, $p<0.01$), followed by Teacher Capacity ($r=.684$, $p<0.01$) and Teaching Methods ($r=.659$, $p<0.01$). While general child-centered methods were common (68.5%), specialized strategies like Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) were underutilized (38.4%). The study concluded that inclusive education in Central Uganda remains fragmented and under-resourced. It recommends the deployment of trained special needs teachers, infrastructure development, intensive stakeholder sensitization, and strengthened policy enforcement. A coordinated effort from schools, communities, parents, government, and donors is essential for meaningful inclusion.

Keywords: Inclusive education policy, Special Needs Students (SNS), Central Uganda, school management, teaching methods, policy implementation

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Introduction

Inclusive Education is a fundamental aspect of human rights and a key strategy for achieving equitable, quality education for all learners at all levels (Shaeffer, 2019). As articulated in Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and supported by Brown (2016), IE mandates that all learners regardless of disability, background, or socio-economic status receive the necessary support to facilitate their full participation and development. The international trajectory toward this model was significantly accelerated by the 1994 Salamanca Statement, which championed the right of every child to learn within regular school settings, irrespective of physical, intellectual, or emotional differences (Alves, 2019; Smyth et al., 2014).

Globally, while governments have committed to these frameworks to eliminate discrimination, the practical implementation remains uneven. In developing contexts, the failure to realize inclusive ideals is often linked to a lack of instructional leadership, as school principals are frequently overwhelmed by

administrative tasks and lack the specialized training to oversee inclusive pedagogical shifts (UNESCO, 2024). Research consistently suggests that effective implementation relies on a synergy of specialized resources, the decentralization of support centers, heavy investment in human capital, and a flexible organization of schoolwork (Najev Čačija et al., 2018). Without these systemic supports, the transition from integration that is merely placing a child in a classroom to inclusion that is adapting the environment to the child remains an elusive goal.

In many regions, including Europe and parts of Africa, a significant chasm persists between policy intentions and classroom realities. Hausiku (2017) observes that inclusive education is often constrained by a lack of material resources and insufficient training for policy users, specifically teachers and administrators. This highlights that inclusive education can only be successful when schools possess a culture of inclusion backed by trained personnel and supportive environments; without these, inclusion risks remaining a

symbolic gesture rather than a transformative practice. This challenge is further illuminated by studies in South Africa, where Stofile (2008) found that implementation was undermined by deep-rooted socio-economic factors such as poverty and limited professional capacity. These findings underscore that policy designers often underestimate the contextual realities within which schools operate, a phenomenon that resonates strongly within the Ugandan landscape.

In East Africa, universal education is regarded as a critical strategy for realizing Sustainable Development Goal 4, which mandates inclusive and equitable quality education for all (Tonegawa, 2022). Uganda has long been a signatory to these international frameworks, progressively domesticating inclusive principles within its national legal architecture. This commitment is significantly demonstrated by the 1992 Government White Paper on Education and the 2006 National Policy on Disability. These policy instruments were specifically designed to pivot the nation away from the special schools model which historically isolated students with disabilities toward a mainstream system capable of accommodating a diverse spectrum of learning needs. In Central Uganda, the implementation of these policies is uniquely complex due to the region's diverse demographic composition, which encompasses both the nation's primary urban hub, Kampala, and expansive rural districts. This duality creates a fragmented landscape for educational equity. While the Ugandan government has promoted Universal Primary Education (UPE) as a primary vehicle for inclusion, success in the Central region is frequently contingent upon localized variables. These include the availability of assistive technologies, the architectural accessibility of both colonial-era and modern school infrastructure, and

the prevailing socio-cultural attitudes of the Baganda people and other resident communities toward disability and developmental delays. Such cultural perceptions often dictate the level of community support and parental engagement, both of which are fundamental to the efficacy of inclusive programming.

Despite a robust legal framework and the government's public commitment to education for all the implementation of inclusive education policy in Central Uganda remains inconsistent and largely ineffective. Recent reports suggest that while enrollment numbers have increased under UPE, children with special needs in the central region experience higher dropout rates and poorer academic outcomes compared to their peers. There is a widening gap between the policy aspirations formulated in Kampala's ministries and the lived classroom realities in the surrounding districts. The core of the problem lies in a trifecta of barriers: inadequate teacher preparation, a lack of essential assistive technologies, and rigid curricular structures that do not allow for individualized learning.

Teacher competence and professional development are central to this crisis. Donath et al. (2023) demonstrate that targeted professional development significantly enhances teachers' attitudes and skills regarding inclusion. However, many teachers in Central Uganda report feeling overwhelmed and under-equipped, leading to a state of hidden exclusion where learners are physically present but pedagogically ignored. Furthermore, the centralization of resources in the capital often leaves peri-urban and rural schools in the region without the specialized support staff or "itinerant teachers" required to facilitate true inclusion.

Hollings (2021) identifies that inclusive education outcomes are shaped

by a multidimensional process involving societal attitudes, capacity challenges, and governmental constraints. Without a localized investigation into how these factors intersect within Central Uganda, the goal of an equitable education system remains an abstract ideal. This study, therefore, examines the implementation of inclusive education policy in Central Uganda by exploring how policy intentions translate into practice, the factors hindering effectiveness, and the specific roles played by school management and teaching methods.

The study was guided by the following objectives: to examine the extent to which inclusive education policy is implemented in mainstream schools in the Central region of Uganda; to determine the factors influencing the implementation of inclusive education policy in Central Uganda; and to analyze the impact of school management practices and teaching methods on the effective inclusion of students with special needs in mainstream schools in Central Uganda.

Literature Review

Extent of Implementation of Inclusive Education Policy in Mainstream Schools

Inclusive education has been a widely promoted phenomenon globally as a rights-based and equity-driven reform intended to ensure access, participation, and achievement for all learners within mainstream education systems (UNESCO, 2020). Although strong efforts and commitments have been made internationally, empirical evidence has shown consistently that the realization of inclusive education remains problematic. Mitiku, Alemu, and Mengistu (2014) argue that although inclusive education contributes to improved educational quality and long-term social outcomes, persistent educational and social

inequalities continue to undermine its effective implementation. This pattern is not unique to developing contexts; even in countries with relatively advanced education systems, inclusion remains inconsistently practiced.

Studies from South Africa provide compelling evidence of the gap between inclusive education policy ideals and school-level realities. Engelbrecht et al. (2016) reveal that while inclusive education policies are ambitious and progressive, their implementation results are often questionable due to the complex realities within schools. Through a case study of a full-service school, the authors illustrate how resource constraints, competing priorities, and contextual challenges limit the realization of a truly inclusive system. Similar conclusions are drawn by Mncube and Lebopa (2019), who found that despite policy intentions, little progress had been achieved in schools due to inadequate facilities, insufficient teacher training, and negative attitudes toward inclusion. These findings suggest that policy adoption alone is insufficient and highlight the need for empirical assessment of implementation at the school level.

In Uganda, inclusive education is articulated in national frameworks such as the Government White Paper (1992) and the Education Sector Policy on Inclusive Education (MOES, 2011). However, the transition from special units to fully integrated mainstream classrooms in Uganda has been slow. Existing literature provides limited empirical evidence on the extent to which inclusive education policy is implemented in mainstream schools, particularly in the Central region. Most available studies focus on policy analysis or special needs education broadly, leaving a critical gap in understanding how inclusive education is operationalized in everyday school practices. This study addresses this gap by examining whether

inclusion in Central Ugandan schools constitutes meaningful participation or merely physical integration without pedagogical support.

Factors Influencing the Implementation of Inclusive Education Policy

The literature identifies a range of structural, socio-economic, and institutional factors that influence the implementation of inclusive education policy. Hollings (2021) categorizes these barriers into societal and cultural attitudes, developmental and capacity-related constraints, and governmental or policy-level challenges. Across diverse contexts, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient funding, weak policy frameworks, and limited institutional capacity repeatedly emerge as dominant constraints. Mitiku et al. (2014) further emphasize that social inequality and poverty significantly limit the ability of schools to implement inclusive practices effectively.

Regional studies reinforce the significance of contextual and systemic constraints. In South Africa, Stofile (2008) found that poverty, curriculum complexity, lack of professional capacity, and limited policy support undermined inclusive education implementation, despite positive attitudes among some school communities. Similar challenges have been reported in Kenya, where Ireri et al. (2020) concluded that poor school-level strategies, negative stakeholder attitudes, and lack of financial resources contributed to weak implementation of inclusive education policy. Their study recommends standardized national strategies and stronger policy frameworks to ensure the sustainability of inclusive practices. In Central Uganda, these factors are further complicated by high teacher-to-pupil ratios and the urban-rural divide, where schools in districts like Mukono or

Mpigi face different resource constraints than those within Kampala's capital city.

Recent international studies confirm that these challenges persist across different education systems. Raya (2025) identifies significant implementation gaps in public schools, including insufficient teacher training, inadequate funding, and unequal resource allocation, particularly in rural and low-income areas. Likewise, Setiawan and Tohari (2025) reveal that inclusive education policies in Indonesia remain largely ineffective due to weak school leadership, limited budgets, and inadequate teacher preparation. These findings underscore that inclusive education implementation is shaped by multi-level factors extending beyond the classroom. However, there remains limited empirical research examining how these factors that is the intersection of cultural beliefs and institutional resource allocation interact within the Ugandan context, particularly in Central Uganda, thereby justifying the present study.

Impact of School Management Practices and Teaching Methods on Effective Inclusion

School leadership and management practices are increasingly recognized as pivotal in translating inclusive education policy into practice. Watkins, Meijer, and Forlin (2016) argue that the policy-practice gap in inclusive education is largely attributable to weak organizational leadership and poor coordination at the school level. Robiyansah (2020) further emphasizes that effective inclusive education requires a whole-school management model that integrates leadership, learner support, and teaching-learning processes. This model highlights management, students, and learning—encompassing specific teaching methods—as the most critical components of successful inclusion. In the

Ugandan context, this management role is uniquely bifurcated between the Headteacher, acting as the primary instructional leader, and the School Management Committee (SMC) or Board of Governors, who are responsible for the resource mobilization and community oversight necessary to sustain inclusive environments.

Empirical evidence demonstrates that leadership style significantly influences inclusive practices. Lambrecht et al. (2022) found that transformational and instructional leadership practices positively affect the implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), particularly when mediated through collaborative structures among teachers. Similarly, DeMatthews et al. (2020) identify leadership practices that foster supportive organizational conditions as essential for effective inclusive schools, noting that leadership has often been underemphasized compared to teacher training in inclusive education reforms. This lack of emphasis is particularly detrimental in Central Uganda, where school leaders often prioritize administrative compliance over instructional supervision, leaving teachers without the institutional "buy-in" or logistical support required to modify physical and social environments for learners with disabilities.

At the classroom level, teacher competence and pedagogical practices play a crucial role in effective inclusion. Donath et al. (2023) demonstrate that professional development improves teachers' knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward inclusive education, leading to positive learner outcomes. Crispel and Kasperski (2021) further show that specialized training in special education leads to meaningful changes in teachers' instructional practices, including the adaptation of teaching methods, use of appropriate strategies, and improved

responsiveness to learner diversity. Poly and Harishma (2023) similarly argue that inclusive education requires flexible, learner-centered pedagogies and collaboration beyond traditional teaching roles. However, in Central Uganda, the adoption of these flexible methods is often constrained by the rigid, exam-oriented nature of the national Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) and high teacher-to-pupil ratios. This creates a pedagogical tension where teachers may possess the theoretical training for inclusion but lack the time or classroom autonomy to implement differentiated instruction effectively.

Despite this growing body of evidence, limited research has examined the synergistic or combined influence of school management practices and teaching methods on inclusive education outcomes in Uganda. Most studies focus either on leadership or pedagogy in isolation, with little attention to how these factors interact to shape effective inclusion. For instance, while a teacher may be trained in inclusive pedagogy, their effectiveness is ultimately governed by whether the school management provides essential resources like braille materials, ramps, or reduced class sizes. This gap is particularly pronounced in Central Uganda, where schools operate within a wide spectrum of socio-economic and institutional contexts—from well-funded private urban schools to resource-constrained rural UPE schools. The present study addresses this gap by analyzing how school management practices and teaching methods jointly influence the effective inclusion of students with special needs in mainstream schools, moving beyond a siloed understanding of these two critical variables.

Methodology

The study employed a mixed methods approach within a descriptive cross-sectional research design because it enabled the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data on existing conditions, practices, and challenges about inclusive education (Amin, 2005; Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The study targeted a population of 2,600 participants drawn from selected districts in Central Uganda. This group included students with special needs, their peers, teachers, school administrators, parents of students with special needs and education officials such as District Education Officers and Municipal Inspectors of Schools. The study applied the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table, which yielded a sample of 256 respondents. A combination of probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used: stratified random sampling was applied to SNS to ensure representation of different impairment categories; simple random sampling was used for peers and parents; and purposive sampling was used to select teachers, head teachers, DEOs, and MIS officers based on their direct involvement in inclusive education implementation. Data were collected using multiple instruments, including questionnaires, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, observation checklists, group discussions, and documentary review of relevant policy documents such as the Government White Paper (1992), the Education Act (2008), Ministry of Education guidelines, and UNESCO reports. Questionnaires captured quantitative data on policy awareness, school management practices, and teaching methods, while interviews and group discussions provided in-depth qualitative insights into stakeholder experiences and perceptions. Observations focused on school

infrastructure and accessibility features such as ramps, toilets, and classroom arrangements. Instrument validity was ensured through expert review and pilot testing, while reliability was enhanced through triangulation of data sources and methods (Amin, 2005). Collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis with the aid of SPSS version 26.

Results and Discussion

Response Rate

Out of the targeted 256 respondents, a total of 232 questionnaires were successfully returned, representing a 90.6% response rate. In addition, all planned interviews, observations, and group discussions were completed as scheduled. The high response rate was attributed to effective follow-up, the relevance of the study topic to participants, and cooperation from school administrators. According to Amin (2005), a response rate above 70% is considered adequate for generalization in social science research; therefore, the achieved response rate was deemed sufficient for reliable analysis and interpretation of findings.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of respondents (Table 1) were analyzed to establish representativeness and contextual understanding of the findings. The demographic profile of the respondents (n=232) reveals a relatively balanced gender distribution, with a slight majority of males (54.3%) compared to females (45.7%). In terms of participant categories, teachers constituted the largest professional group at 37.9%, followed by school administrators (18.1%), students and their peers (17.7%), and parents of students with special needs

(16.8%), while education officials (DEOs/MIS/LCS) represented the remaining 9.5% of the sample. Regarding professional longevity, a significant portion of the educator and administrator cohort possessed substantial field experience, with 40.5% having served for

5–10 years and 33.2% exceeding a decade of service, suggesting that the majority of respondents were well-positioned to provide informed perspectives on the long-term implementation of inclusive education policies in Central Uganda.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	126	54.3
	Female	106	45.7
Respondent category	Teachers	88	37.9
	School administrators	42	18.1
	Parents of SNS	39	16.8
	SNS/Peers	41	17.7
	DEO/MIS/LCS	22	9.5
Teaching experience	Below 5 years	61	26.3
	5–10 years	94	40.5
	Above 10 years	77	33.2

Descriptive Results

Extent of Inclusive Education Implementation

Descriptive analysis was conducted to determine the general level of inclusive education policy implementation in Central Uganda. The findings in Table 2 reveal an overall low level of policy execution across the sampled schools in Central Uganda, as evidenced by an aggregate mean score of 2.47 (SD=0.86) on a five-point scale. Among the specific indicators, school management support

(\bar{x} =2.62, SD=0.79) and teacher preparedness (\bar{x} =2.58, SD=0.84) were rated highest, though they still fall below the moderate threshold, suggesting that while human resource capacity is present, it is not fully optimized. In contrast, the lowest scores were recorded for availability of instructional materials (\bar{x} =2.36, SD=0.91) and inclusive infrastructure (\bar{x} =2.41, SD=0.88), indicating that a lack of physical resources and assistive technologies remains a critical bottleneck.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Inclusive Education Implementation

Indicator	Mean	Std. Deviation
Inclusive infrastructure availability	2.41	0.88
Availability of instructional materials	2.36	0.91
Teacher preparedness	2.58	0.84
School management support	2.62	0.79
Overall level of policy implementation	2.47	0.86

(Scale: 1 = Very Low, 5 = Very High)

Factors Affecting Implementation of Inclusive Education Policy

The first objective examined factors affecting inclusive education policy

implementation. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Factors Affecting Implementation of Inclusive Education Policy

Factor	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inadequate infrastructure	184	79.3
Lack of instructional materials	173	74.6
Insufficient funding	168	72.4
Limited trained special needs teachers	157	67.7
Negative attitudes toward SNS	143	61.6
Weak monitoring and supervision	124	53.4

Inadequate infrastructure was identified as the primary barrier, cited by 79.3% of respondents (n=184), a finding corroborated by field observations which noted a significant lack of ramps, adapted washrooms, and accessible classroom layouts. This was closely followed by a lack of instructional materials (74.6%) and insufficient funding (72.4%), underscoring a severe resource gap that cripples policy execution. Additionally, 67.7% of participants pointed to the limited number of trained special needs teachers, while 61.6% identified persistent negative attitudes toward students with special needs (SNS) as a significant socio-cultural hurdle. Finally, over half of the

respondents (53.4%) cited weak monitoring and supervision as a limiting factor. Observation findings confirmed the absence of ramps, adapted toilets, and accessible classrooms in many schools. These findings support Hollings (2021) and Mitiku et al. (2014), who argue that structural and governmental barriers are major impediments to inclusive education implementation.

School Management Practices in Handling Students with Special Needs

The second objective focused on school management practices. The findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: School Management Practices Supporting Inclusive Education

Practice	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Admission of SNS	164	70.7
Parental involvement	150	64.7
Teacher support and supervision	137	59.1
Collaboration with DEO/MIS	129	55.6
Budget allocation for SNS	112	48.3
Regular training/workshops	96	41.4

The most prevalent practice is the admission of students with special needs (SNS), reported by 70.7% of respondents, indicating that schools in Central Uganda are adhering to the open door policy of Universal Primary Education. This is supported by parental involvement (64.7%) and teacher support and supervision (59.1%), suggesting a moderate level of engagement between school leaders and immediate stakeholders. However, more resource-

intensive and systematic practices are significantly less common; only 48.3% of schools reported a dedicated budget allocation for SNS, and a mere 41.4% provided regular training or workshops for staff. This disparity suggests that while management focuses on integration the physical presence of students it struggles to provide the financial and professional development frameworks necessary for true inclusive transformation. Limited training and weak collaboration with

education authorities constrained effective policy implementation, reinforcing findings by Stofile (2008) and Watkins et al. (2016).

Teaching Methods Used in Inclusive Schools

The third objective examined teaching methods used in inclusive classrooms. The findings are presented in Table 5. The evaluation of pedagogical strategies within inclusive classrooms indicates a preference for collaborative and learner-centered methods, though highly specialized instructional techniques remain underutilized. Group work and peer learning were identified as the most frequent methods, utilized by 73.7% of respondents, followed by child-centered approaches at 68.5%. While these

interactive strategies foster social integration, more targeted interventions were less prevalent; only 58.2% of teachers provided individual learner support, and less than half (47.4%) utilized specialized methods such as Braille or sign language. Most notably, the use of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) a cornerstone of effective inclusion was the least common practice at 38.4%. These findings, which highlight a reliance on general classroom management over specialized clinical instruction, align with the observations of Donath et al. (2023) and Poly and Harishma (2023), who suggest that large class sizes and limited specialized training in Central Uganda significantly hinder the implementation of high-intensity inclusive pedagogies.

Table 5: Teaching Methods Used in Inclusive Classrooms

Teaching Method	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Group work and peer learning	171	73.7
Child-centered approaches	159	68.5
Individual learner support	135	58.2
Specialized methods (Braille/sign language)	110	47.4
Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)	89	38.4

Correlation Analysis

To assess the strength and direction of the relationships between the study's key variables, a Pearson product-moment correlation was computed. This

analysis is key for determining how infrastructural, human and administrative factors synergistically contribute to the realization of inclusive education goals. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Pearson Correlation Matrix showing Relationships between Study Variables

Variable	Infrastructure	Teacher Capacity	Management Practices	Teaching Methods	Policy Implementation
Infrastructure	1				
Teacher capacity	.482**	1			
Management practices	.536**	.591**	1		
Teaching methods	.447**	.628**	.564**	1	
Policy implementation	.612**	.684**	.721**	.659**	1

p < 0.01

The correlation results presented in Table 6 indicate that all independent variables have a statistically significant and positive relationship with the implementation of inclusive education policy at the $p < 0.01$ level. School management practices exhibited the strongest positive correlation with policy implementation ($r = .72$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that administrative leadership and institutional support are the most influential drivers of inclusive success in central Uganda. This is followed closely by teacher capacity ($r = .684$, $p < 0.01$) and teaching methods ($r = .659$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting the critical role of pedagogical competence and classroom-level interventions. Infrastructure also showed a strong positive correlation ($r = .612$, $p < 0.01$), emphasizing that while physical accessibility is vital, it must be complemented by strong leadership and skilled personnel. Furthermore, the robust correlation between teacher capacity and teaching methods ($r = .628$, $p < 0.01$) pointing out that teachers with higher specialized skills are significantly more likely to employ effective inclusive pedagogies. The findings suggest that the implementation of inclusive education is a multi-dimensional effort; while infrastructure provides the foundation, the impact is significantly amplified by strong school management and teacher competence.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this investigation reveals a low overall level of inclusive education policy implementation in Central Uganda, affected primarily by inadequate infrastructure, lack of instructional materials and insufficient funding. Statistical analysis indicates that school management practices serve as the primary catalyst for success, demonstrating the highest positive correlation with policy implementation,

followed by teacher capacity and pedagogical techniques. This suggests that while physical infrastructure is a necessary foundation, the shift from basic integration to authentic inclusion is largely determined by effective instructional leadership and the capacity of educators to transcend generic child-centered approaches in favor of specialized, individualized instruction. Consequently, these results highlight the urgency of targeted interventions designed to bridge the gap between policy discourse and classroom reality, ensuring that students with special needs experience genuine educational equity.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), local government authorities and school-level stakeholders to bridge the gap between policy and practice.

The Ministry of Education and Sports should prioritize the standardization of inclusive infrastructure by mandating that all mainstream schools adhere to universal accessibility requirements. This involves the systematic construction of ramps, adapted washrooms, and accessible classroom layouts to ensure that the physical environment does not remain a primary barrier to entry. Alongside these physical modifications, the government and its development partners must ring-fence funding specifically for inclusive education. Dedicated and predictable financial allocations are essential to address the current resource deficit, particularly for the procurement of assistive devices and specialized instructional materials that are currently beyond the reach of most mainstream schools.

To ensure institutional commitment, there is a critical need to

strengthen school management accountability. Given that management practices are the most influential driver of policy success, Headteachers and School Management Committees (SMCs) should be required to develop and implement specific inclusive education action plans and budgets. This administrative shift must be complemented by institutionalizing continuous teacher professional development. Regular, compulsory in-service training should focus on high-impact inclusive pedagogies, such as the development of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and the use of specialized communication methods like Braille and sign language, to move beyond general classroom management.

Furthermore, local authorities, specifically District Education Officers (DEOs) and Municipal Inspectors of Schools (MIS), must enhance monitoring and supervision mechanisms. Through integrating clear inclusive education indicators into standard school inspection protocols, authorities can address the current lapse in oversight and ensure that schools are held accountable for the progress of learners with special needs. Finally, it is imperative to promote positive socio-cultural attitudes through targeted sensitization programs. Engaging teachers, parents, and the wider community in disability awareness initiatives is essential to dismantle the negative perceptions and stigma that continue to undermine the social and academic participation of students with special needs in Central Uganda.

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