



## Uganda

Namirembe Bitamazire Geraldine  
**Minister of Education and Sports**



*Female, married with children, Member of Parliament, Professional Teacher and Education Administrator, Vast knowledge and experience in Social Administration and Management. Widely travelled and Member of many social organizations. From January 2005 to date, Mrs. Namirembe Bitamazire Geraldine is Minister of Education and Sports and in charge of the formulation of the policy and implementation of the Universal Secondary Education programme by the Government.*

### **Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future**

#### **Context:**

In line with international conventions, the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995) provides for basic education as a right for all Ugandans. Article 30 states that all persons have a right to education, and clauses 1 and 2 of Article 35 specify the right to education of persons with special learning needs and disabilities. Uganda's policy on inclusive and special needs education is embedded in the existing national policy and legal framework.

These constitutional provisions have been translated into various policy reforms, Universal Primary Education (UPE) and the Universal Secondary Education (USE) programmes, which were launched in 1997 and 2007, respectively. The programmes are aimed at universalizing equitable access to formal basic education for all Ugandans targeting school going age children regardless of their physical characteristics, economic status, ethnic, cultural and social background.

Access, Equity and Quality in education are key strategic objectives, which are stated in the Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP 2004-2015). The Plan provides a long term costed action framework with phased implementation programmes covering resource mobilization, allocation and effective service delivery mechanisms.

#### **Concept of Inclusive Education in Uganda:**

In Uganda today, inclusive education is perceived as provision of education beyond the traditional view of Special Needs Education which was limited only to disability in learners. The current policy education thrust embraces reforms and modifications in curricular, teaching methods, teaching and learning resources, medium of instruction and adjustment in the learning environment to meet various learning needs. The approach is learner-centered, flexible and adjustable to the individual needs and potential of the learners' intellectual capacities. The reforms take cognizance of and seek to mitigate factors that form barriers to children's learning, development and active participation in school and community life activities.

#### **Strategies to achieve the objectives of inclusive education in Uganda:**

These include the following:

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- An enabling legal and policy framework where basic education is a right;
- Teacher Training and retooling to promote application of suitable curriculum and pedagogy;
- Regular Curriculum review at all stages in the education system to address the learners needs and the needs of society in general;
- Provision of instructional materials relevant to the learners level of competences;
- Setting and maintaining adequate pupil: teacher ratios (1:6 for profound impairments, 1:10 for the less severe);
- Construction of facilities at schools and units to enhance access and full participation;
- Provision of subvention grants to schools and units to meet curriculum and learning requirements;
- Guidance and Counselling to ensure psycho-social development;
- Support supervision, monitoring and evaluation to ensure efficiency and quality.

**The Way Forward:**

Ensuring equitable access to quality basic education is a strategy to achieve Human Resource and Manpower development objectives in the developing world. Education policies and reforms should target sustainable social and economic development where individuals, communities and societies are empowered to achieve active participation and maximum benefits.