

OYESIGYE SPECIAL CHILD FOUNDATION
A REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF OYESIGYE SPECIAL CHILD FOUNDATION
JANUARY 2017 TO JANUARY 2018

Oyesigye Special Child Foundation is a Community Based Organisation registered on 1st November, 2016 by the Mbarara Municipal Council to operate in the Municipality with a base in Nyakakoni, Ruti, Nyakayojo Division.. The idea was incepted in 2016 by a group of parents, Special Needs Education teachers, Community based Rehabilitation workers, and other disability related therapists, after noticing, identifying, realizing and analyzing that there was / is a great need to provide for children and youth with disabilities and other special needs in Mbarara Municipality.

The foundation was founded to achieve the following objectives;

- i. To establish a data bank on children with disability and other special needs in Mbarara Municipality.
- ii. To carry out assessment of children with disability and other forms of special needs in Mbarara Municipality
- iii. To prepare children with disability and other forms of special needs for inclusion into the community facilities including schools
- iv. To solicit & coordinate sponsorships for children with disability and other special needs for education and other social services.
- v. To offer and or /organise for vocational skills training for children & youth with disabilities and other forms of special needs.
- vi. To sensitise the community on the plight of children with disability and other forms of special needs.

Since the registration, the following activities have been carried out;

1. Registration of children with disabilities & other special needs.

Objective;

To develop a data bank of all children with disabilities in the Municipality. This helps in knowing how many, which conditions, whether in school or not etc. This will aid service delivery.

The exercise (which is still going on) was initiated with the Town Clerk's authority (see letter attached). The Foundation's field staff distributed the registration cards to the Chairpersons LC Is across the Municipality through the Division heads. All the 169 villages got the cards (attached).

So far, 66 villages responded (list attached) and 316 children were registered (statistics attached) 103 villages are yet to submit their records.

2. Training of teachers in Inclusive Education

Objective;

To equip the teachers with knowledge and skills of supporting children with special learning needs in class and school.

Uganda, like other nations of the world are working to achieve Sustainable Development Goal SDG 4 which clearly states that; nations should ensure inclusive education & equitable quality education for all by 2030. This can't be achieved unless ALL children including those with disabilities are enrolled in school. It was established that children with disability and other special needs in Mbarara Municipality don't get appropriate specialised services in terms of assessment, placement and tuition. There is evidence of child drop out (UBOS) (2011) and many of whom have disabilities and other forms of special needs. This is because teachers lack knowledge and skills in Special Needs Education and specifically how to include them in educational programmes in school and class specifically

As a result of the above, two, one day, training workshops on inclusive education were held for Mbarara

Municipality schools. One workshop was held on 16th June 2017 and took place at Uganda Martyrs Primary School. This workshop, drew teachers (one head teacher and two teachers) from 10 schools while another one was held for Moslem Primary schools from around the District. The later drew teachers from 12 Moslem Primary schools (list attached).

Topics covered

- Introduction & Background to Inclusive Education
- Barriers to learning & development
- Identification of disabilities & other special needs in learners
- Implementation of inclusive Education
- Role of stake holders in inclusive Education implementation
- Experiences of parents & people with disabilities (respectively)

Facilitators

Facilitators included:

1. Dr Kutosi George PhD SNE, Curriculum adaption specialist (Kyambogo University)
2. Dr Njuki Elia Paul (PhD SNE, Specialist in Speech language & Communication) Kyambogo University
3. Mr Oyesigye Robert Stuart M.A SEN (Team leader of OSCF, also from Kyambogo University)
4. Sr Bakuzze Vassy B.Ed.SNE (from St Helens Primary School)
5. Mr Sempijja (with Visual impairment from Uganda Martyrs University Nyamitanga campus)

Officials

1. Ms Ayesiga Sarah Principal Education (represented The Commissioner, Special Needs Education, MoES) Closed the function
2. Mr Bindeeba Henry George Mbarara Municipal Senior Inspector of Schools, Opened the workshop & facilitated

3. Sign language training

Objective;

To equip teachers and parents sign language skills to be able to communicate with their children (at school or home)

Sign language is a language of the deaf people. There are schools and homes with children who cant hear. In schools, a teacher can be able to communicate with a deaf learner and this brings the learner 'in' class and learns and progresses with other children. Similarly, when a parent learns sign language, he/she can be able to communicate with his deaf child who has learnt sign language from school. A parent plays a mediation role. September 2017 to December, 2017 we ran sign language classes and 15 people benefitted.

4. Speech therapy clinics (24th / 25th Aug and 19th / 20th Oct 2017)

Objective;

To help children with speech, language and communication (SLC) difficulties improve on speech and communication.

There is a quite number of children with SLC disorders and this affects their participation in learning. The two clinics of two days each have engaged 9 children. A Speech therapist Ms Peninah Nakato from Kampala was invited and more clinics are being planned.

5. Vocational skills training

Objective

To equip the youth with disabilities with skills to enable them become self reliant.

Many children with disabilities especially those with intellectual disability do not continue with academics because of their limited/ retarded intelligence. However, some of them can learn skills that can enable them live independent lives. The Foundation has trained three youth with Down syndrome in candle making. These youth can ably produce candles. One of them Master Mpora Gilbert (Down syndrome victim) was featured in the Daily Monitor of 29th May 2017 and 25th September 2017 displaying his candle works.

6. Children tuition

Objective;

To prepare the children for inclusive education.

The Foundation started teaching children with autism and those with Down syndrome. Currently, the centre has 7 children but hope to have twenty. The centre shall keep an Inclusive education preparatory facility. The centre focuses on the ten (10) adaptive skill areas. Once the child has acquired the adoptive skills, it becomes easy for him/ her to fit in the mainstream school.

7. Home visiting children with disabilities

Objective;

- i. **To provide therapeutic services to home bound children with disabilities.**
- ii. **To guide the parents on how to support their home bound or under school age children with disabilities.**

Some children are not in school because there are some conditions that limit their participation in school. There are other under school age children with disabilities with conditions which when handled early, the child might be able to manage with and / or overcome a disabling condition.

The Foundation has two Rehabilitation workers that have so far visited thirty (30) homes. Families have benefitted from demonstrations of setting corner seats, parallel bars/ walking frames and other homemade devices.

Challenges experienced

Negative attitude on persons with disabilities. Many people including parents still think supporting children with disabilities is a waste of time. Some families still hide their children because they don't want to be associated with 'abnormal' We also found a few chairpersons who want a token to offer a service. They thought that the activity of registering children with disabilities had huge funds behind the activity and they never participated.

We are still limited by funds. We still use voluntary contributions from our well-wishers. We see huge gaps that need more resources.

Some Head teachers didn't see having their teachers trained in Inclusive Education (to support learners with learning needs in the mainstream classes) as important. They still have a traditional thinking that special needs/ Inclusive education means the 'disabled'. They focus on 'the able'. How we wish those invited attended!

Appreciation

The Foundation wishes to thank Mbarara Municipal Council especially the Department of Education and Community Development respectively for all the support and guidance as we implemented the above activities.

We also in a special way wish to that the Chairperson Nyakayojo Division, who physically got involved in distributing the registration forms and sensitizing the LCs on the importance of the exercise.

We must appreciate that children with disabilities and other special needs are as important as other children. Some children need just little intervention to get started.

Conclusion

The Foundation will continue and complete the registration of children with disabilities and other special needs in the municipality. This will help any other service provider that would wish to support the children.

All the above programmes shall continue

Reported by; Oyesigye Robert Stuart / Team leader