

**KATALEMWA CHEHSIRE HOME FOR REHABILITATON SERVICES**

**PROJECT CONCEPT NOTE**

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| **PROJECT TITLE**  | Improving school readiness for Children with Disabilities through Home based Inclusive -Early Childhood Education **(HI-ECE)** in Bulopa Sub County Kamuli District**.**  |
| **IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION**  | KATALEMWA CHESHIRE HOME FOR REHABILITATION SERVICES  |
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| **SUBMITTED TO:** | GLOBAL GIVING |
| **ESTIMATED TOTAL PROJECT COST**  | $ 6292 |
| **DATE**  | SEPT. 2023 |

**Introduction**

The UN-CRPD article 24 recognizes the right to inclusive education for all persons with disabilities to participate in all forms of mainstream education with appropriate support and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989) indicate that children with disabilities must have the same rights as other children including the right to access education, social inclusion and protection from violence, abuse and neglect. Yet there are still more than 150 million children with disabilities aged 3 to 5 who do not have access to pre-primary education, with 80% of these children living in low-income countries.

Despite the tremendous strides achieved by the Government of Uganda and its development partners in promoting Inclusive education, challenges remain for learners with disabilities in accessing education across all levels, especially early childhood education.

In 2014, a situational analysis of children with disabilities undertaken by UNICEF revealed that only 9% of the primary school-going-aged children with disabilities were enrolled in primary school which was 2.0% of total primary-level enrollment. For all children with disabilities, ECE provides an important window of opportunity to prepare for lifelong learning and participation stimulating involvement that is aimed at preventing developmental delays and promoting the acquisition of competencies.

In Uganda, as is the case in many countries in Africa, investment in early learning for children with disabilities and children from rural and marginalized communities is low. Yet the need to include children with disabilities in education as early as possible is imperative if Uganda is to achieve the Education for All (EFA) targets and Sustainable Development Goal 4 which aims to ensure “inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.”

Katalemwa Cheshire Home (KCH) together with its 21 Child Empowerment Partners (CEP) have implemented since 2010 and continue to implement interventions that promote access to inclusive education by creating enabling environments in schools. Some of these interventions include building capacities and teachers and parents in inclusive education, adapting school infrastructure to increase physical accessibility, and providing inclusive learning materials to learners among others. These efforts however have been more deliberate in primary schools leaving a big gap in early childhood education consequently leading to poor and delayed enrollment of children with disabilities in Primary schools.

Through the Home based inclusive -Early childhood Education (**HI-ECE)** Project, KCH and its partners aim to strengthen the community systems of Bulopa Sub County Kamuli District to respond to the learning needs of children with disabilities through early identification of learning needs and early interventions.

The home-based Education program is one of the Child-centered Alternative Non-Formal community-based education (CHANCE) that is provided for under Uganda’s Education Act of 2008 in Part IX, Miscellaneous Provisions 49, which states that “there shall be non-formal education centers” for purposes of providing non-formal education

**The Need**

There is a general consensus in Uganda that most Children with disabilities miss out on Early Childhood education yet these are the children for whom early childhood education has most of the greatest benefits. These children then start primary education much later than their counterparts without disabilities and when not ready for these classes. According to the Ministry of Education and Sports (2017), of the 9,597 pupils who were enrolled in **pre-primary** schools only 1.6% were children with disabilities.

Numerous barriers have been attributed to poor and delayed enrollment of children with disabilities for ECE including the need for rehabilitation in the early years, the high cost of accessing ECE for an average household of children with disabilities, failure by committee to recognize the importance of ECE to in addition to the long distance to these ECE centers which requires caregivers to meet the extra costs of transport or leave their job to drop and pick these children from school.

These barriers place considerable stress on caregivers forcing them to delay enrollment of children with disabilities. These children then enroll when they are much older yet not ready for school; the age difference causes stigma and discrimination from peers leading to poor learning outcomes consequentially to a vicious circle of ignorance and exclusion. Additionally, if children with disabilities do not go to school, their employment prospects are enormously reduced. At the same time, delayed enrollment of children with dishabilles impedes on the livelihood of caregivers who have to spend most of their productive hours taking care of these children. Ensuring that children with developmental disabilities receive appropriate support and early intervention will therefore reap economic benefits, for themselves, their families and society more broadly.

Responding to the education needs of children with disabilities requires a comprehensive approach that includes early assessment and identification of learning needs, early intervention, medical and social rehabilitation, family and community engagement.

Growing evidence is showing that home-based approaches are well-positioned to meet the needs of children who face the greatest barriers to accessing early learning opportunities, including those with disabilities and developmental delays. Home-based ECE approaches are adapted to the needs of the most vulnerable or socially marginalized families and offer parents and children a safe environment to learn and play together without having to leave their homes.

The home-based education program has been pioneered by a number of community organizations in Uganda including CSU, LABE, and USDC, and has been found to be very effective in improving the readiness of children with disabilities to start school at the right age consequently retention and completion of successive levels. This project will complement the community-based rehabilitation project currently implemented by KCH in Kamuli District and will not only promote the holistic development of children with disabilities but also ensure that they are visible to the community.

**Project Objectives**

The overall objective of this project is to improve early school enrollment, retention, and completion for children with disabilities in Buloopa Sub-County, Kamuli District through disability-inclusive Home-based education.

The specific objectives will be to:

1. Improve the physical functionality, emotional and social skills of Children with disabilities
2. Improve the numeracy and literacy skills of children with disabilities through early identification of the learning needs, development and adaptation of learning materials.
3. Improve knowledge and attitudes of parents and Community to provide disability-responsive early childhood learning
4. Generate evidence and best practices to inform policies and programs in support of early childhood education

**Expected outcomes**

1. Improved early enrollment and retention of children with disabilities in school
2. Improved attitudes and practices of family and community about the importance of early childhood education to children with disabilities.
3. The community has increased capacity to respond to the learning needs of children in an inclusive manner
4. Generation of evidence and best practices that promote inclusive education to inform policy and legislation

**Project Scope**

In the first year, the project will be implemented in 3 parishes of Bulopa Sub County (Bukutu, Mpakitonyi, and Nagamuli). The primary target group is children with disabilities and other vulnerable children in the community who are of school-going age but not in school. At least 15 home based learning centers targeting 225 children with disabilities and other vulnerable children will be formed in the first year.

**Methodology**

**Strategy**

The HEIL project will engage caregivers, communities, trained and untrained teachers, and Governments to respond to children’s needs, particularly children with disabilities. This home-based model will require families to volunteer to provide space within their homes for children who do not have access to formal ECE centers due to various reasons including those that are undergoing rehabilitation, lack assistive devices to aid their mobility to ECE centers, children whose parents cannot afford costs in ECE centers among other reasons. The learning schedule will revolve around a five-day weekly routine that involves parents and teachers engaging children in play and learning activities, as well as provision of meals.

Among other outputs, the project will form 15 learning centers in its first in Bulopa Sub County Kamuli district. At least 5 Community Government primary schools will be identified and teachers of these schools will be trained in inclusive Education to facilitate linkage with the established Home-based Learning Centers.

The project will also work closely with Education officials at the district level to conduct training for parents and caregivers, support the establishment of the centers and work. The project will also work with officials from the special needs departments, of Kamuli local Government to conduct assessments and further referrals for children with disabilities and developmental delays. At the national level, the project will be engaging the Ministry of education to review and institutionalize play-based learning into Uganda’s ECE curriculum.

**Management**

The project will be managed by the center management committee (CMC) which will be composed of representatives of parents and teachers. The oversight role will be played by the Community Education Committee (CEC) composed of representations of CMC, Community leaders, and education officials at the district level.

**Activities**

1. **Inception meeting**
* Meeting with the district local Government Education Officials
* Meeting with local committee leaders
1. **To improve the physical functionality, emotional and social skills of Children with disabilities**
* Train caregivers on early identification and management of disability
* Train children with disabilities on activities of daily living (ADLs)
* Provide customized assistive devices to children with disabilities
1. **To improve the numeracy and literacy skills of children with disabilities through early identification of the learning needs, and development and adaptation of learning materials.**
* Establish parent support groups (**psgs)**to support the Home-based Learning Centres
* Train **psgs** on how to deliver ECE in an inclusive manner
* Train teachers from mainstream schools in Inclusive Education to prepare for the transition of children from Home-based learning centers.
* Create synergies between **Home-based learning Centres** and mainstream community schools
* Provision of training and learning materials
* Adaptation of the learning environment
1. **To improve the knowledge and attitudes of parents and the Community to provide disability-responsive early childhood learning**
* Educate caregivers and the community on the relevance of ECE to children
* Establish parent support groups composed of parents of children with disabilities and other vulnerable children
1. **Generate evidence and best practices to inform policies and programs in support of early childhood education**
* Continuous data collection for learning
* Meeting with like-minded organizations for reflection and learning