



WHAT MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT MUST CONSIDER AS THEY DEBATE THE HEALTH AND EDUCATION MINISTERIAL POLICY STATEMENTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2018/19

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda is an indigenous umbrella NGO of Persons with Disability that brings together all categories of disabilities, including, but not limited to physical, sensory, intellectual and mentally impairments.

NUDIPU conducted an analysis of the critical concerns of Persons with Disabilities in the sectors of health and education for the Financial Year 2018/19 detailed below:

2.0 DISABILITY CONCERNS IN THE HEALTH SECTOR

2.1 ANALYSIS OF HEALTH SECTOR FINANCING IN FY 2017/18 AND FY 2018/19

We commend the increment of the health sector budget from UGX1.82 trillion in FY 2017/18 to UGX 2.28 trillion for FY 2018/19. Uganda Heart Institute's budget is proposed to increase from 18.012bn in FY2017/18 to 19.497bn in FY2018/19. Uganda Blood Transfusion Services (UBTS) will experience an increment in its budget from UGX 9.4bn in FY2017/18 to UGX20.172bn in FY 2018/19. The funding for Uganda Cancer Institute has been increased from UGX 5.2bn in FY2017/18 to UGX93.052 bn in FY2018/19. We have also noted a 26% (UGX33.7bn) incremental allocation to the 14 referral hospitals from UGX95.6bn in FY2017/18 to UGX129.3bn in FY 2018/19. The financing for Disability and Rehabilitation services in the Ministry of health is anticipated to reduce from UGX 2.09bn in FY 2017/18 to UGX1.12bn in FY 2018/19. Funding for Butabika Hospital is intended to reduce from UGX12.520bn in FY2017/18 to UGX14.752bn in FY2018/19

2.2 CONCERNS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY IN THE SECTOR

2.2.1 Poor Compliance of the sector 2018/19 Ministerial Policy Statement to gender and equity according to the EOC Assessment Report

Though the sector's overall compliance to gender and equity has increased slightly in 2018/19 from 75% in FY 2017/18 to 78.3% in FY 2018/19, we see that the specific compliance to Persons with Disability is below 50% at 21%. We are concerned that this level of compliance is very low and requires serious improvement and prioritization.

Table 1: Overall compliance of the 2018/19 MPS with gender and equity selected dimensions:

Sector	Gender	Children	Youth	Older persons	PWDs	Location
Health	66%	59%	50%	22%	21%	82%

Source: Equal Opportunities Assessment Report on Compliance of Ministerial Policy Statements with Gender and Equity Requirements for Financial Year 2018/2019

Recommendation

- This compliance to Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) equity concerns should be improved in this Financial Year for instance capacity building of health workers in disability responsive health services; inclusion of sun screens in the minimum health care package, making health centers more accessible, among others.
- There is need for adequate disability disaggregated data for Persons with disabilities at all levels to enable the sector capture its reach to Persons with Disabilities as well as planned interventions.

2.2.2 Limited Financing for Disability and Rehabilitation Division in the Ministry of health

Article 25 of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) requires States Parties to ensure access for Persons with Disabilities to health services that are gender-sensitive, affordable, and within proximity to their communities including health-related rehabilitation. However, critical medical equipment including adjustable beds, special creams for albinos, assistive devices remain scarce thus denying PWDs access to effective health service delivery.

The financing for Community Health Program which houses the Disability and Rehabilitation Division¹ under the Ministry of Health is anticipated to reduce from 2.09bn in FY 2017/18 to UGX1.12bn in FY 2018/19.

Recommendation

- NUDIPU and other Disabled Persons Organizations recommend inclusion of a module on sign language in the health curriculum to ease communication between health workers and deaf persons to promote equitable health care.
- It is important that Government increases financing for equipping the orthopedic workshops across the country such as hearing mold laboratories, spectacle workshops; and provision of other assistive devices such as white canes, catheters and wheelchairs.

- There is need for training and deployment of orthopedic technicians; namely physiotherapists, orthopedics, optometrists and ophthalmologists is critical in Health Centre IVs.

2.2.3 Stagnant funding to Butabika Hospital despite increasing mental health cases

The total number of admission and outpatient numbers for the hospital increased from 57,338 patients in FY2015/16 to 78,803 patients in FY 2016/17². Despite this, the budget for the hospital has been increased by only 15% from UGX12.520bn in FY2017/18 to UGX14.752bn in FY2018/19. Furthermore, the budget for supplies has reduced from UGX1.145bn in FY 2017/18 to UGX1.045bn in FY2018/19, yet there have been complaints of side effects of cheap drugs procured by the hospital in an effort to provide mental health services within the given budgetary constraints³.

For example, the hospital is forced to procure Largactil, a cheap drug to treat mental illness which has known side effects including: drowsiness and limited attention span. This ultimately affects people's ability to live productively. Additionally only 29 out of the 57 vacant positions have been cleared to be filled in FY2018/19.

Recommendations

- We recommend increased financing for supplies including medicines, capital purchases such as X-ray machines to accommodate the increasing number of mental health cases, starting with at least doubling the budget for **Supplies and Services** from the proposed UGX1.045bn in FY2018/19 to at least UGX 2bn.
- The Ministry should also prioritize the roll out of the Community Health Extension Worker Strategy (CHEWS) to facilitate early detection of critical health care needs including those of persons with intellectual and mental disabilities. The roll out of this strategy will also enable provision of rehabilitation services especially in hard to reach places.

2.2.4 Delayed enactment of the Mental Health Bill, 2014

The Mental Health Bill, 2014 seeks to provide for protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for persons with psychosocial disabilities in Uganda. These include: the right to respect and human dignity, right to privacy and non-disclosure of health information, right to non-discrimination, voluntary hospitalization, and freedom from exploitation, among others. The enactment of this bill is critical in ensuring the mental treatment, liberty and security of persons with psychosocial disabilities on an equal basis with others.

Recommendation

Though there are efforts by the Parliamentary Committee of Health to conduct consultations on the Mental Health Bill 2014, we urge that this process is fast tracked to institutionalize the protection of the needs of Persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities.

3.0 DISABILITY CONCERNS IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

3.1 ANALYSIS OF EDUCATION SECTOR FINANCING IN FY 2017/18 AND FY 2018/19

The Ministry of Education will receive a budget cut amounting to 37.944bn from UGX 618.017bn in FY 2017/18 to UGX580.073bn in FY 2018/19. Local Governments will receive budget increment from UGX1.43trillion in FY 2017/18 to UGX1.64 trillion in FY 2018/19. Universities will also receive budget increments amounting to UGX 92.833bn from 626.446bn in FY 2017/18 to 719.279bn in FY 2018/19. The funding for the Special Needs Education Program is anticipated to reduce from UGX 3.494bn in FY 2017/18 to UGX 3.315bn in FY 2018/19.

3.2 CONCERNS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY IN THE SECTOR

3.2.1 Reducing budget for Special Needs Education

In FY 2017/18 the program was allocated UX3.494bn and in FY 2018/19 the budget projection is 3.315bn, a drop of UGX 0.179bn. The financing for SNE has been limited to construction of 2 dormitories, 1 block of teacher's houses of 4 units and 1 block of 2 classrooms in Mbale School of the deaf at a cost of 1.036 bn. Furthermore, UGX 1.433bn will cater for Special Needs Education and career guidance which provides for procuring of specialized equipment.

CSOs acknowledge the increased number of schools that will receive subvention grants from 100 in FY 2016/17 to 200 in FY 2018/19 and 300 in FY 2019/20. However, the stagnant number of schools that will be provided with specialized equipment at 40 schools between FY 2018/19 -2020/21. Furthermore, the number of learners identified, assessed and placed will remain at 1000 between FY 2018/19 and FY 2020/21. The program can only fully be efficient if it strives to reach the 155,000 students as highlighted in the 2015 Education Statistical Abstract.

Recommendation

- NUDIPU and other Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs) recommend that Ministry of Education and Sports allocates resources to the Special Needs Education program to enable it progressively achieve the 10% proportion of the education sector budget as stipulated in the Persons with Disabilities Act 2006.

3.2.2 Poor compliance of the sector to disability concerns in FY 2018/19

Though the sector's overall compliance to gender and equity has steadily increased from 78% in FY 2017/18 to 87.3% in FY 2018/19, we see that the specific compliance to Persons with Disability concerns is below 50% at 45%. We are concerned that this is still low and needs to be improved.

Overall compliance of the 2018/19 MPS with gender and equity selected dimensions:

Sector	Gender	Children	Youth	Older persons	PWD	Location
Education	49%	18%	53%	0%	45%	83%

Source: Equal Opportunities Assessment Report on Compliance of Ministerial Policy Statements with Gender and Equity Requirements for Financial Year 2018/2019

Recommendation

This compliance to Persons with Disabilities (PWD) equity concerns should be improved in this Financial Year through training and deployment of special needs education teachers; provision of adequate assistive devices and promoting inclusive education for all. There is need for adequate disability disaggregated data for learners with disabilities at all levels to enable the sector capture its reach to Persons with Disabilities as well as planned interventions.

3.2.3 Limited releases and performance to the sector for FY 2017/18 affecting overall implementation of sector plans

In the Certificate of Compliance issued by the National Planning Authority for FY 2017/18, it was noted that there was limited financing for the sector, where by Half year results indicated that 9 of the 15 MDAs had received at least 98% of their half year budget allocation. On the other hand, 6 of the MDAs including the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), Muni University, Uganda Management Institute (UMI), and Makerere University Business School (MUBS) had received less than 90 percent of their half year budget allocation.

Of the funds released, only 7 of the sector MDAs managed to spend at least 98%. There is general under dose of the various segments of the sector particularly the budget and projects. Furthermore, there was evidence to suggest that MDAs still face difficulties in absorbing the meager resources released to them.

It is important to note that limited budget releases and expenditure are a critical hindrance to effective functionality of the sector MDAs and achievement of the required skills to achieve the middle income status.

Recommendations

NUDIPU and other DPOs call for timely and adequate resourcing to the sector to enable it achieve its objectives including gender and equity compliance.

3.2.4 The review of the secondary education curriculum without considering the specific needs of students with special needs

The Ministry of Education and Sports announced the shifting from an obsolete model of Secondary Education to a broader and more inclusive curriculum that can satisfy needs of different abilities. This was through merging 40 subjects at O' Level to 20 subjects. We anticipate that subjects including: Principles of Accounts and Commerce have been merged into Entrepreneurship while Technical Drawing, Wood Work and Metal Work have been merged into the newly-introduced subject; Technology and Design. The dropping of subjects such as Office Practice and Textile and Clothing pose a threat to the choice of subjects that can be attempted by these persons. While Persons with Disabilities appreciate this move, we are concerned that this has not been effectively reviewed to consider the need to effectively equip the teachers/tutors of these subjects with the necessary skills to teach learners with disability under this new arrangement.

Recommendation

The Ministry should recruit teachers with skills to teach learners with disabilities under the new curriculum taking into consideration students with visual impairments and the deaf blind.

CONCLUSION

Effective and equitable education and health service delivery is critical for the equipping and productivity of labor and as such require prioritization by Government. Persons with Disability remain committed to continually engaging Government to plan and execute disability responsive budgets that cater for the needs of Persons with Disabilities in the 2 sectors.

¹ This program caters for, among others provision of assistive devices such as wheelchairs, trainings for rehabilitative personnel namely physiotherapists, orthopedics, technicians, optometrists and ophthalmologists.

² The Annual Health Sector Performance Report FY 2016/17
³ <http://observer.ug/news/headlines/56465-mental-health-patients-battling-cheap-medication-side-effects.html>