REPORT OF THE BASELINE STUDY

ON

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION/SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

IN

NUBA MOUNTAINS, SOUTHERN KORDOFAN STATE SUDAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS……4

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....5

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY……7

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.....14
1.1 Introduction.....14
1.2 Statement of the problem……15
1.3 Objectives……16

2.0 REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE…….....17
2.1 Introduction…….....17
2.2 Learners with special needs.....17
2.3 Inclusive education……18
2.4 Disability.....21
2.5 Education in Sudan 26
2.6 Inclusive/special Education in Nuba Mountains…….....27

3.0 STUDY METHODOLOGY……29
3.1 Introduction.....29
3.2 Study areas 29
3.3 Target population.....29
3.4 Sample and sampling procedure…….....29
3.5 Information gathering technique…….....30
3.6 Challenges encountered in the field…….....30

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4.0 PRESENTATION OF STUDY FINDINGS…….....32
4.1 Introduction.....32
4.2 Discussion/Interview with Regional Director of Education ……....32
4.3 Discussion/Interview with MOE officers in Dilling, Kadugli and Lagawa counties/localities.....33
4.4 Discussion/Interview with head teachers..... 33
4.5 Discussion/Interview with teachers.....34
4.6 Discussion/Interview with NCDO members.....36
4.7 Discussion/Interview with local authorities' officers in Lagawa . county and Kauda…….....36
4.8 Discussion/Interview with PTA members, parents and members of the community ……..……..…….....36
4.9 Discussion/Interview with learners with special needs …….....37
4.10 Discussion/Interview with learners without special needs ….....38

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....39
5.1 Conclusion…….....39
5.2 Recommendations 42

6.0 REFERENCES…….....52

7.0 ANNEXES …… …….....54
7.1 Annex 1: Summary of Barriers …….....55
7.2 Annex 2: List of English speaking Schools in Dilling county/locality.....58
7.3 Annex 3: List of English speaking Schools in Kadugli county/locality.....59
7.4 Annex 4: List of English speaking Schools in Lagawa county/locality....60
7.5 Annex 5: Some NGOs supporting education in Nuba Mountains…....61
7.6 Annex 6: A poem entitled “Who is disabled?”…….....……..…..62
7.7 Annex 7: A poem entitled, “Education”…….....……..……63

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACES	Association for Christian Educators in Sudan
CARE	Cooperative Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSN	Children with Special Needs
EENET	Enabling Education Network
EFA	Education for All
GoNU	Government of National Unity
GOS	Government of Sudan
HSSN	Hargeisa School for Special Needs
IAS	International Aid Services
IE	Inclusive Education
KISE	Kenya Institute of Special Education
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NCDO	Nuba Christian Development Organisation
NRRDO	Nuba Relief Rehabilitation Development Organisation
REO	Regional Education Officer
SASE	Somaliland Association for Special Needs
SEDA	Sudan Education and Development Agency
SNE	Special Needs Education
SPLA	Southern Sudan Peoples Liberation Army
SPLM	Southern Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SNATC	Special Needs Assessment and Training Centre
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Educational Fund
WHO	World Health Organisation
UN	United Nations

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Stephen Mwaura
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education which is considered as a right for *all* children has been enshrined in several international documents since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The Education for All movement and subsequent international conventions have pointed out that particular groups of children are especially vulnerable for exclusion or denied the chance to optimally participate in the learning activities which take place in a formal, informal or non-formal settings. The children are educationally disadvantaged by the social, cultural, regional, political and economic environments in which they live. Some international instruments highlight the particular rights of groups such as the girl child, indigenous people and those with special needs (including those with disabilities) just to mention a few. The right to be educated within the regular school setting and not to be discriminated against is highlighted more detailed in instruments such as the World Declaration on Education for All (1990), UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993), UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child (1991) and Dakar Framework for Action (2000) amongst others.

However, the right to education does not automatically imply inclusion. The right to inclusive education was initially stated in the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Education in 1994 which emphasized that the schools need to change and adapt to the diverse needs of all learners. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities established inclusive education as a legal right. The importance of proper resourcing for inclusion is also highlighted in the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and other disability movement documents. There is however still a long way to go before Education for All becomes a reality and it will not work unless there are more participation at all levels, change of attitudes, allocation of resources and alleviation of poverty among others.

One of the major concerns of educationists and human rights activists has been the issue of Education for All. There has been an argument that to cater for the education needs of *all* the children and youth, there is need to adopt inclusive education. Inclusive education asserts that all learners in a school regardless of their strengths and weaknesses, become part of that school. The philosophy of inclusion hinges on making the learners and teachers to become better members of the community and to create new visions for community and schools. Education is an area that holds great opportunities to impact on the lives of CSN and hence the need to have an appropriate model of education. IAS is one of the NGOs that have in particular identified the education of CSN as a very vital component of its activities. This has made IAS to embark on activities geared towards the development and implementation of Inclusive Education (IE) in Nuba Mountains, Southern Kordofan State in Sudan which will eventually be extended to the whole country.

Inclusive education philosophy ensures that schools, learning environments and educational systems meet the diverse needs of all learners in the least restrictive environment irrespective of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional or linguistic needs, race, class, gender, disability, religion, ethnicity, culture, sexual preference, learning needs and language. IE thus creates a school for all, where everybody benefits resulting to an inclusive society. When included, the self-esteem of the child with special needs is improved. It's also cost effective and gives equal opportunities to all children thus promoting the rights of all to education as advocated by UN. The child will only be excluded when it is not possible to be included due to adverse factors such as, severity of disabilities.

The main purpose of conducting this baseline study was therefore to make a thorough assessment of the situation on the ground with a view to making suggestions and recommendations to IAS on how to overcome the barriers in the development and implementation of Inclusive Education (IE) in Nuba Mountains and by extension the whole country. The study was based on the consistent need to capture the educational needs of CSN and also to identify the barriers and challenges with a view to making IAS in collaboration with other development partners and stakeholders to develop an educational model that would address their needs. Such a model will make the learners with special needs to achieve self-actualization while making them participate in the society without stigmatization and prejudice of any kind. The study was thus an endeavour to assess the feasibility of developing and implementing a project on IE in Nuba Mountains and is justified on the ground that there is need to invest in the education of all children in order to make them more productive in the society (UNESCO, 1994).

In an endeavour to establish the general situation on the ground, the consultant conducted in-depth studies that reflected on all the aspects of IE/SNE. First the consultant reviewed the existing data in the IE/SNE sub-sector from various documents including a previous study in IE/SNE carried out in Southern Sudan by ACES whose findings could be applicable to Nuba Mountains. This was followed by in-depth primary data collection mainly through interviews, discussions and focus group discussions with different groups of respondents.

The data for the study was collected in schools that use English language as the medium of instruction in three of the four counties in Southern Kordofan, Nuba Mountains under the SPLA. These are Lagawa, Dilling and Kadugli counties. To understand the phenomenon of IE/SNE it was imperative to gather data from different groups. The consultant therefore visited a total of 21 primary schools, one nursery school and one secondary school in the study area. These schools had a total of 6,256 learners, 72 teachers (10 of them from Kenya). In addition to interviewing, discussing and holding focus group discussions with head teachers, teachers and learners in the schools visited. The consultant also met and interviewed MOE officials, local authority officials, parents, PTA members, NCDO members and the community in general. A total of 8 MOE officers, 5 local authority officers and about 40 parents and several members of the community were interviewed.

However, although the data was only collected from schools in the SPLA controlled areas, the results of the findings and recommendations will also be used to improve schools and general education standards in all areas including those controlled by GOS.

The study relied on non-probability sampling methods. Specifically, the consultant adopted purposive sampling procedure to get the informants. According Gall *et al* (1996), purposive sampling procedure refers to the practice of selecting cases that are likely to be information-rich with respect to the purpose of the study. Different techniques of data collection were adopted which included the use of interviews, open discussions, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. This way, the consultant was able to get detailed qualitative information from the respondents.

Theoretical literature reveals that PWDs are a heterogeneous group with different forms of impairments and degrees of severity (UNESCO, 2005). They also have different abilities to learn. Scholars of disability movements have conceptualized disability in terms of the *individual model,* where, the problem is seen as located in the individual child; *social model,* where the problem is located in the *society* and educational system as a result of impediments imposed by the social, cultural and economic barriers. For example; lack of or inadequate policies and legislation, negative attitudes and stereotyping of differences, inflexible curricula, inappropriate language used for teaching and learning, inaccessible infrastructure and environments that are not safe or friendly to those with special needs especially those with physical disabilities, inappropriate and inadequate support services, parents and communities who are neither recognised nor involved in the management of schools and education managers who are inadequately and/or inappropriately trained.

According to UNESCO (2000) IE is concerned with “removing all the barriers to learning and with the participation of all learners vulnerable to exclusion and marginalization”. It is a strategic approach designed to facilitate learning success for all children. It addresses the common goals of decreasing and overcoming all exclusion from the human rights to education. It enhances access, participation and learning success in quality basic education for all. IE is in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its proponents believe that it is the best model for all children and the community. Literature review further reveals that educating children with differing abilities in an inclusive system can improve the learning of all the children in the class, both those with and without special needs. It’s also much more cost effective than educating children with disabilities in segregated special schools.

A review of literature on the education of CSN in Nuba Mountains reveals that there is no official policy on IE/SNE. Although the Sudan Federal Ministry of Education states that the government is committed to achieving EFA and MDG goals, there is no clear strategy that has been put in place to educate all children including those with special needs to have access to quality education in Nuba Mountains (Federal Ministry of Education, 2007).

Interview and discussion with the Regional Director of Education based at Kauda indicated that IE is a good idea which should be implemented without further delay. However, while he was very positive about the development of IE, he pointed out that it requires several factors to be considered first. These include, training of teachers in SNE, adaptation of the curriculum, awareness/sensitisation among parents and communities to change attitudes towards CSN and girl-child, employment of more teachers, provision of materials to meet diverse needs of all children, improving school buildings and collaboration with all stakeholders. He was also of the view that there was need to have some special schools or units for those who cannot for one reason or another be absorbed in an inclusive classroom. These could also be used as resource centres.

Findings from the head teachers in all the schools visited showed that IE is a very good model that will improve learning for all learners. They described IE as a viable project that most learners, teachers and even parents would support. IE will assist in reaching majority of the CSN who are currently out of school due to various reasons. However, they also expressed concerns that there is need to change the attitudes of the general society about disability through awareness and sensitisation campaigns. They also suggested that there was need to have some special schools or units for those with severe disabilities, just like what was echoed by the REO.

Discussions and interviews with teachers revealed that while majority were for IE, a few of them said that CSN should be educated in special schools or units. Those who said that they should be taken to segregated settings argued that their major concern was the fear of lacking skills for teaching such children and also lack of adequate resources to meet their needs. On the other hand, the teachers who were positive about IE argued that education is a basic right for all children and currently there are many schools which had already enrolled children with special needs. They went further to say that there are many CSN who are already in regular schools. For example, those with learning disabilities, hearing impairment, low vision and physical disabilities. They therefore could not understand why such children should be denied their basic human right to be educated together with their peers in the community. They added that currently there are no special schools in Nuba Mountains and therefore these children should be included in the existing regular schools.

Majority of the parents, PTA members and the community in general who participated in the study welcomed the idea and said that inclusion will enhance social integration and also reduce stigmatization and prejudice against CSN. Children with and without special needs will be given a chance to socialize and befriend one another. Study findings also indicated that IE will expose all children to their differences and enable them to establish a working relationship that will enable them to be useful citizens in the community.

Findings from learners without special needs found out that they had no problem in being in the same class or school with those with special needs. Interviews/discussions with most of the learners revealed that if CSN are

admitted in the regular schools, they would not be teased but they would instead be supported. The finding further revealed that if CSN are admitted in such schools, there will be cooperation and this will help to reduce the stigma the society has about them.

The consultant also held discussions with learners with special needs in different schools and found out that generally they were happy and liked going to the same school with other children without special needs in the community. This will reduce stigma and prejudice against them from other children and even teachers. They said that schools and other learning environments should however be improved to cater for all learners especially those who use wheel chairs or other assistive devices. One learner with hearing impairment said that teachers should be trained on Sign Language so as to be able to communicate with them. IE was thus seen to have the potential of reaching many CSN who may be still out of school.

NCDO members said that they were determined to have IE programme implemented in Nuba Mountains. They said that it would have many benefits not only to the children with special needs but also to the whole society since it will broaden and strengthens an understanding of the diversity inherent in the community.

The Study Findings

Overall, the study found that IE is feasible given that it is likely to produce schools with more enriching learning environments that will acknowledge and accept diversity. The respondents also said that IE would give those with special needs a sense of belonging, widens friendship patterns, and offers more suitable learning opportunities for all children. It encourages community acceptance among others and also be able to meaningfully contribute to and participate in society throughout their life. The positive attitudes towards IE by the teachers, learners and parents will be an asset to its success and IAS in collaboration with other development partners and stakeholders should therefore undertake the necessary steps towards the development and implementation of the programme in Nuba Mountains both in the SPLA and GOS controlled areas**.**

However, while majority of the respondents were positive and embraced IE as the best system to take care of all children including those with special needs, the study found out that there are some barriers and challenges that may hamper access to quality education for all learners. These include:

- Lack of specific policy guidelines to guide the planning and development of IE/SNE programmes.
- Limited support from MOE on IE/SNE in both at the central government and the counties/localities.
- Centrally-drawn rigid and examination-oriented curriculum that does not meet the needs of those with special needs
- Inadequate human and physical resource development to support IE/SNE.

- Poor learning environment and dilapidated infrastructure (or completely lacking) in some schools
- Inadequate number of teachers resulting to high pupil-teacher ratio in most schools in the counties/localities
- Low remuneration for the few teachers currently employed in the schools by PTAs resulting in low morale.
- Inadequate educational resources, for example, text books, stationery, furniture and lack of adaptive devices for learners with special needs.
- Long distances to and from school through hilly and difficult terrains especially to those with physical disabilities.
- Education of girl-child not seen as a priority within the Nuba culture.
- Education of children with special needs not prioritised by the parents due to poverty, ignorance, cultural prejudices and negative attitudes.
- Inappropriate language of instruction and teaching, especially in the lower classes (right from nursery class the medium of instruction was English language).
- Inadequate and inappropriately trained education managers on SNE (education officers, head teachers and members of PTAs).

Despite the barriers noted during the study, it was found out that there was a considerable number of CSN enrolled in different schools although without support relevant to their diverse needs from the teachers.

Key Recommendations

Drawing from the study findings, the consultant recommends the measures listed below to be undertaken by IAS, NCDO, MOE, development partners and stakeholders to ensure the viability of an IE system Nuba Mountains and by extension whole of Sudan.

- Developing policy guidelines on IE/SNE.
- MOE to be more committed and embrace the philosophy of IE and encourage inclusion of learners with special needs in the mainstream schools.
- Enhancing and promoting community participation in IE/SNE through empowering the PTAs by training the members on basic management skills.
- Prioritizing and enhancing the training and in-servicing of county/locality education officers and teachers to support IE/SNE.
- Adapting the curriculum to be more flexible to meet the diverse needs of all children including those with special needs.
- Using appropriate language of instruction (mother tongue) especially in pre-school and lower primary classes.
- Establishing Special Needs Assessment and Training Centres (SNTAC) in each county/locality in both SPLA and GOS controlled areas to provide services for early detection, intervention and proper placement of children with special needs and also to carry out outreach services.

- Embarking on rigorous awareness/sensitisation campaigns targeting all the members of the community, right from the grass root level in all counties/localities.
- Promoting multi-sectoral collaboration, harmonising and boosting collaborative activities among all stakeholders.
- Carrying out surveys and having correct data on CSN in the area to assist in proper planning for improved service delivery.
- Creating an SNE section in the MOE office at Kadugli, the headquarters of Southern Kordofan State and also in each of the counties/localities to coordinate the IE/SNE programmes.
- Developing and enhancing strong links between schools, homes and communities through networking and partnerships.
- Involving parents, local communities, local NGOs and relevant government departments in improving and creating sufficient and appropriate infrastructure and also making sanitation facilities safe, clean and accessible to all, especially those with physical disabilities.
- Empowering and involving parents in school management
- Establishing pilot IE schools, maybe two in each county/locality which can be used to demonstrate the benefits of IE to other schools, MOE officials, school managers and the community in general.
- Improving school buildings and learning environments to be able to accommodate all learners especially those with physical disabilities.
- Rejecting segregation or exclusion of learners for whatever reason be it ability, gender, language, care status, family income, disability, colour, religion or ethnic origin.

I. 0 INTRODUCTIONS AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

One of the greatest problems facing the world today is the growing number of persons who are excluded from meaningful participation in the economic, social, political and cultural life of their communities. Such a society is neither efficient nor safe. (UNESCO, 2003). The Jomtiem World Conference on Education for All (1990) set the goal for Education for All while UNESCO along with other UN agencies and a number of international and national non-governmental organisations have been working towards achieving this goal. However, despite encouraging developments, there are still millions of primary school age children not attending schools majority of these have special needs. According to WHO about 10% of the world's population consists of persons with disabilities. UNESCO (2005) says that approximately 80% of these persons live in the developing countries, majority of them living in the Least Developed Countries of which Sudan is one of them (UNCTAD, 2006). Among these children with disabilities and other who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion, only a minority (about 2%) have access to education.

Education is the right of all children and IE aims at ensuring that all children have access to an appropriate, relevant, affordable and effective education within their communities. This education starts in the home with the family and includes formal, non-formal and informal and all other types of community based education initiatives. One of the major concerns of the people with special needs and human rights activists has been the issue of access to education. The current thinking is that to cater for the education needs of the people with special needs including those with disabilities, there is need to adopt IE philosophy. IE means that all learners in a school, regardless of their strengths and weaknesses in any area, become part of the school. Inclusion is about membership and belonging to a community. It enables children of all ages to learn and grow in environments that resemble those where they will eventually work or live.

Current strategies and programmes have not been sufficient to meet the needs of children who are vulnerable to marginalisation or exclusion. In the past, efforts have consisted of specialised programmes, institutions and specialist educators. The unfortunate consequences of such differentiation, although well intended, has often been further exclusion. Achieving EFA and MDC goals by their assigned time lines will require unprecedented inter-sectoral and interagency collaboration among partners. The goals cannot therefore be met without specific efforts being made to include all persons including those with special needs. One of the key measures to attain these goals is access to quality education. Education must therefore be viewed as a facilitator in everyone's human development and functionality; regardless of barriers of any kind, physical or otherwise. Therefore, special needs of any kind (physical, social and/or emotional) cannot be a disqualifier. (UNESCO, 2005).

There is a common viewpoint among professionals and disability rights movements, organisations and concerned agencies that an inclusive environment in the mainstream schools is the best possible option to enrol maximum number of children with special needs. IE thus involves adopting a broad vision of Education for All by addressing the spectrum of needs of all learners, including those who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion. It would also make tremendous contribution towards the ultimate goal of promoting an inclusive society and one which enables all children to participate in and contribute to that society. Within the schools, IE is seen as an approach which aims at developing a child-focus environment by acknowledging that all children are individuals with different learning needs. Teaching and learning can therefore become more effective and relevant for all.

The Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education states that, "regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, building an inclusive society and achieving Education for All." (UNESCO, 1994). Thus, in discussing IE, it is important to note that it has its origins in special needs as well as the fact that CSN remain the larger group of children out of school and the marginalised.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

IAS has been present in Nuba Mountains, Southern Kordofan since 2002. It was one of the first international organisations to respond when the area was opened up for humanitarian assistance following the ceasefire agreement mainly undertaking humanitarian projects. However, with more stability after the signing of the CPA in 2005, IAS has expanded its activities to also include development projects. IAS has identified education as one of the key development projects.

In the education sector, IAS has primarily been involved in the construction of schools, distribution of education materials and teachers' training in Maria Bai, Northern Bahr el-Ghazal and Western Equatorial. It has therefore not been involved in IE/SNE in Sudan but draws its expertise and competence in this area from managing SNE programmes in Somaliland and Puntland since 2000. One of the key successful projects in this area is the establishment of Hargeisa School for Special Needs in Somaliland in 2001. The school is now a unique centre of excellence in the wider Somalia. In addition to the school, the SNE projects in Somaliland and Puntland have especially been targeting the vulnerable and marginalised groups of children, those traumatised by the prolonged civil war and their parents. It has also developed a policy on Special Education as a guide for future projects.

Having therefore identified education of CSN as a core competence, IAS has started activities geared towards IE/SNE in Nuba Mountains. In addition, IAS Khartoum office has been contacted by some Arab speaking organisations and people of Sudan with resources wanting to start IE/SNE programmes in other

areas like Nyala and Darfur. This has revealed good support for the idea of an IE/SNE project to be implemented in Sudan.

The baseline survey was therefore intended to make a thorough assessment of the situation on the ground, identify challenges and barriers that may affect successful implementation of IE/SNE programme in Nuba Mountains and by extension the whole country. When the barriers and challenges are known, it will be easier for IAS in collaboration with MOE and other stakeholders to develop an education model that will address the needs of CSN. This will make them more productive and be able to achieve self-actualization, while making them fit in the larger society. Studies have shown that IE will not only bring satisfaction among CSN, but will also produce a more motivated population (UNESCO, 2001).

It is also worth noting that the current thinking has been that CSN learn better when they are given opportunities to learn with others. There is also the question of whether parents and children support inclusive or exclusive education. If inclusive education would be adopted, what resources would be required? What are the barriers and challenges in the education of the CSN in Nuba Mountains? Are the people of Nuba Mountains and by extension Sudan ready for IE? These are some of the key questions that made IAS to think that it was essential to conduct a baseline study so that any step towards IE is informed by the reality on the ground.

1.3 Overall Objective

The overall objective of the baseline study was to develop a foundation for Inclusive Education /Special Needs Education (IE/SNE) in Sudan.

Specific Objectives

Specific objectives of the study were to:

- establish the status quo of the IE/SNE in Sudan and in particular in Nuba Mountains, Southern Kordofan;
- establish the existing Federal Government and State policies on IE/SNE
- examine perception of MOE officials, parents, teachers, local authority officials, NGOs, learners, members of the community and other stakeholders towards IE;
- identify key areas of training needs;
- identify administrative systems required for the establishment of IE/SNE programme in Nuba Mountains, Southern Kordofan;
- capacity build the local partners (NCDO) to establish IE/SNE work in Nuba Mountains, Southern Kordofan;
- make recommendations for good practices and initiatives on IE/SNE related to identified needs, capacity building, partnerships, administrative systems, strategy and policy;
- exchange experiences and best practices in developing and implementing IE/SNE programme in Nuba Mountains, Southern Kordofan State and Sudan in general;
- develop a policy and strategy for IE/SNE for Nuba Mountains, Southern Kordofan.

2.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

There are hundreds of millions of children and youth with special needs who have no access to the opportunities and resources to fulfil their basic human rights. They form a substantial proportion of the world's poor. Education for All (EFA) and the global Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) cannot be met without specific efforts being made to include persons with special needs including those with disabilities. One of the key measures is access to quality education. (UNESCO, 2003)

2.2 Learners with Special Needs

Special needs are conditions or factors that may hinder an individual's normal learning, participation and development. They may be temporary or life-long. The conditions that may hinder progress of an individual may include disability, social, emotional, health or political difficulties. These factors can be within the learner or in the environment (society) or combination of both (Mwaura & Wanyera, 2007).

According to Stubbs (2008) and Mwaura & Wanyera (2007) learners with special needs are those vulnerable to discrimination, marginalisation, isolation and exclusion to education include but not limited to, *"all children who are experiencing barriers to learning and are directly or indirectly excluded from or denied the chance to optimally participate in the learning activities which take place in a formal, non-formal or informal settings"*

According to Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports (2002), the children maybe educationally disadvantaged by the social, cultural, regional, political and economic environments in which they live. These children include those:

- with one or multiple disabilities (sensory impairments, cognitive impairments, learning disabilities, communication difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties) whose parents do not perceive the value of taking them to school or whose physical and learning needs are not met at school;
- of nomadic communities/pastoralists who have to move from place to place to search for pasture and water;
- who are infected with or are otherwise affected by HIV & AIDS;
- living in geographically isolated areas and who often have to walk long distances to the nearest school;
- living in areas of conflict (for example, refugees, displaced and abducted children);
- who have never enrolled in school due to economic, social, cultural, attitudinal and other factors;
- in both rural and urban areas who because they must work to supplement family incomes miss school;
- who are abused by parents/relatives/guardians including not being given the chance to attend schooling;

- who although enrolled in formal schooling are denied the chance for optional participation to learning activities due to inadequate provisions of physical, material and human resources.

Others are:

- The girl child due to cultural attitudes (parents who may think it's valueless to educate them since they will get married), attitudes of peers and teachers.
- The primary school drop outs due to lack of school fees, interest in education, early pregnancy and marriage, discipline and oppressive school practices and teachers' negative attitudes.
- Street children who may have left home due to social, political and economic conditions.
- Other children living under especially difficult circumstances and hence in need of care and protection. These include:
    - those who are traumatised due to war and other calamities;
    - the homeless and unaccompanied (due to war, family breakages and natural calamities);
    - child mothers;
    - those heading families;
    - those from very poor and deprived families;
    - orphans;
    - child soldiers;
    - ethnic, religious and linguistic minority groups;
    - children affected by health conditions.

2.3 Inclusive Education

An increasing number of publications, workshops, policy papers, etc, are in clear support of the idea of Inclusive Education (IE) philosophy. IE is now a well-established concept that has been endorsed by various international fora and educational policy frameworks. IE differs from previously held notion of *"integration"* which sees the learner as the problem and demands that he/she must be changed or rehabilitated to fit in the system. By contrast, inclusion is about the child's rights to participate and the school's duty to change and accept.

As a follow up to the World Conference on Education for All in Dakar (UNESCO, 1990), governments, international organisations, NGOs and education specialists met in Salamanca, Spain in 1994 to discuss Special Needs Education and the concept of *Inclusive Education.* The conference adopted a Statement and Framework for Action that asserted that, "schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. Among the groups of children that should be included in schools were those with disabilities, children from nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities, children living under especially difficult circumstances, for example, street children and those from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups among others.

Definition of Inclusive Education

Inclusive Education as a concept is spreading and gathering worldwide support, yet many different understandings, perspectives and varied opinions as to its meaning still exist. There is no single accepted definition of inclusive education. Scholars define inclusive education differently. Many definitions have evolved throughout the world representing different movements or paradigmatic shifts.

The definitions range from "*Extending the scope of ordinary schools so that they can include a greater diversity"* to *"a set of principles which ensure that the learner with special needs ability is viewed as a valued and needed member of the community in every aspect"* Some define inclusion using notions of *"participation, culture, curriculum, community, mainstream and neighbourhood*". Others focus on human interaction, for example *"a way of dealing with difference"* while others adopt an institutional perspective and focus on organisational arrangements and school improvement.

For example, Clark *et al* (1995) quoted in Handicap International (2007), see IE as,

> *"Extending the scope of ordinary schools so that they can include a greater diversity of children"*

On the other hand, according to Susie, M. (2000);

> "*Inclusive education is concerned with removing all the barriers to learning, and with the participation of all learners vulnerable to exclusion and marginalization. It is a strategic approach designed to facilitate learning success for all children. It addresses the common goals of decreasing and overcoming all exclusion from the human right to education, at least at the elementary level, and enhancing access, participation and learning success in quality basic education for all."*

UNESCO's definition of inclusion stems from the pioneering 1994 Salamanca Conference, and emphasise that it is a movement directly linked to improvements in the education system as a whole.

> *"Inclusion is a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children"*

Thus this definition both refer to children's education, rather than learners of all ages, although the principles are widely applicable.

The Salamanca Statement further supported a human rights perspective which stated that, *"inclusion and participation are essential to human dignity and the enjoyment and exercise of human rights"* The Statement goes further to endorse the principle of Inclusive Education which; challenges all exclusionary policies and practices in education, is based on a growing international consensus of the right of all children to a common education based in their locality regardless of their

background, attainment or disability and aims at providing good quality education for learners and a community based education for all

Article 2 of the Statement stipulates that,

> *"Education systems should take into account the wide diversity of children's different characteristics and needs...regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all: moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the entire system"*

This together with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child endorsed inclusion as an important issue of human rights.

Stubbs (2008) gives a broader definition of Inclusive Education that spans all life stages and goes beyond the school.

> *"Inclusive Education refers to a wide range of strategies, activities and processes that seek to make a reality of the universal right to quality, relevant and appropriate education. It acknowledges that; learning begins at birth and continues throughout life and includes learning in the home, the community and in the formal, informal and non-formal situations. It seeks to enable communities, systems and structures in all cultures and contexts to combat discrimination, cerebrate diversity, promote participation and overcome barriers to learning and participation for all people. IE is part of a wider strategy promoting inclusive development with the goal of creating a world where there is peace, tolerance, sustainable use of resources, social justice and where the basic needs and rights of all are met".*

Going by the examples given above, the term "*inclusive education*" therefore stands for an educational system that seeks to address a large diversity of learners with specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children. (UNESCO, 1994) IE is concerned with providing appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in formal and non-formal educational settings. It looks into how to transform education systems in order to respond to the diversity of learners. It is also a strategy that contributes towards the ultimate goal of promoting an inclusive society, one which enables all people whatever their physical, intellectual, social, emotional or linguistic needs participate in and contribute to the society.

In IE difference is respected and valued, while discrimination and prejudice will be actively combated in policies, institutions and behaviour. It also aims at enabling both teachers and learners to feel comfortable with diversity and to see to it as a challenge and enrichment in the learning environment, rather than a

problem. The ultimate goal of IE is therefore to end all forms of discrimination and foster social cohesion (UNESCO, 2003).

It's therefore better to explore the scope of IE, rather than attempting to offer a concise definition of the concept given that the definition will depend on context making it difficult to delimit a clear definition of the concept. Inclusive Education therefore:

- Acknowledges that all the children can learn and that all of them need support.
- Acknowledges that all children have different learning needs which are equally valued.
- Acknowledges and respects differences in children whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, HIV status, etc
- Rejects segregation or exclusion of learners for whatever reason
- Maximises the participation of all learners in the schools within their community.
- Enables educational restructuring of structures, systems and policies, curricula, cultures, methodologies and practices in schools and learning environments so as to meet the needs of all children
- Acknowledges that learning occurs at home, community, and within both the formal and informal modes and structures.
- Empowers learners by developing their individual strengths and enabling them to maximizing the participation of all the learners in the culture and curricula of educational institutions and uncovering and minimizing barriers to learning participate in the learning process.
- Is part of a wider strategy to promote an inclusive society
- Is a dynamic process that is constantly evolving

It is also worth mentioning that inclusion of children with special needs and other learning barriers is part of a universal human rights movement. It has become imperative for all countries to create "*equal opportunities for all learners to learn and succeed*." IE provides a supporting environment for all to learn and attempts to overcome barriers to learning. It's also in tune with the social model of disability which sees the system as the problem. The educational system and the schools are supposed to change in order to meet the individual needs of all the learners. Schools are therefore inclusive when they are working towards full participation, community and equality through: respect for differences, respect for different learning styles and variations in methods, open and flexible curricular and welcoming each and every child.

2.4 Disability

Persons with disabilities (PWDs) in many developing countries are denied access to education amongst other basic rights. Education set up is mainly designed for the people without disabilities. The exclusion of PWDs in the education sector is an issue that demands serious attention. Today IE is a popular concept in educational discourse and disability movements.

IE first emerged as the goal of equal access to mainstream education for learners with disabilities (Handicap International, 2007). Indeed, it is also important to point out that when people discuss about PWDs being denied or being discriminated in the educational sector or in other sectors, what comes into the minds of most people are those with physical disabilities. It is also important to point out from the beginning that the discrimination and abuse of people with other forms of disability such as those who are deaf or those with mental disabilities is acute. PWDs are a heterogeneous group, with different forms of impairments and various degrees of severity. Persons with intellectual impairments are the most disadvantaged group. People who have had a disability since birth or early childhood have often been denied formal education or have lived in social isolation. As a result, they may have poorly developed social skills and they may suffer from lack of self esteem. On the other hand, people who were injured or developed impairments at a later age face different set of problems. They may require counselling and rehabilitation and training in new occupational skills to suit their situation. They are however less stigmatized and may have had the opportunity to go to school or to gain prior work experience.

Researchers of disability movement have conceptualized it in three different models. These are:

- Individual model
- Social model and
- Human rights model

2.4.1 Individual Model

The Individual model which is also referred to as the medical/charity model, conceptualizes disability as an illness or an individual pathology. According to this view, a person with disability is sick, has a health problem or impairment and that he/she requires health care. The “patient” is the problem and what is required is to give the person the necessary cure, hospitalization or rehabilitation so that he/she is able to adapt to the larger society. People who perceive the PWDs from this angle forget that not all of them can fit into educational programmes that are designed for the model. The people with this type of mentality are likely to be highly opposed to IE philosophy (Stubs, 2008).

The model also ignores the fact that those with disabilities are entitled to equal opportunities with those without. The model can be criticized for equating “disability” to “inability” or to incapacitation and for adopting a curative approach. People who buy this model would argue that if the person with disability recovers, then he/she can join the non-disabled in the mainstream schools. Such people do not support IE. They assume that disability is a fixed state. The labelling of children as “disabled” or as having “learning difficulties” can mask the failure of schools and teachers to offer appropriate instructions. (Please see figure 2.1).

2.4.2 The Social Model

In its simplest form, this model which is also referred to as the sociological model is about changing the system to fit the child and not vice versa. It originated in the early days of the disability civil rights movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s and provided a radically different definition of disability that influenced understanding and practice. According to this school of thought, disability is contributed by environmental factors and the problems facing PWDs have their roots in the marginalization, discrimination and exclusion from the social and economic activities. It locates the problem of exclusion firmly within the system and society; not the child or his/her characteristics (Stubss, 2008).

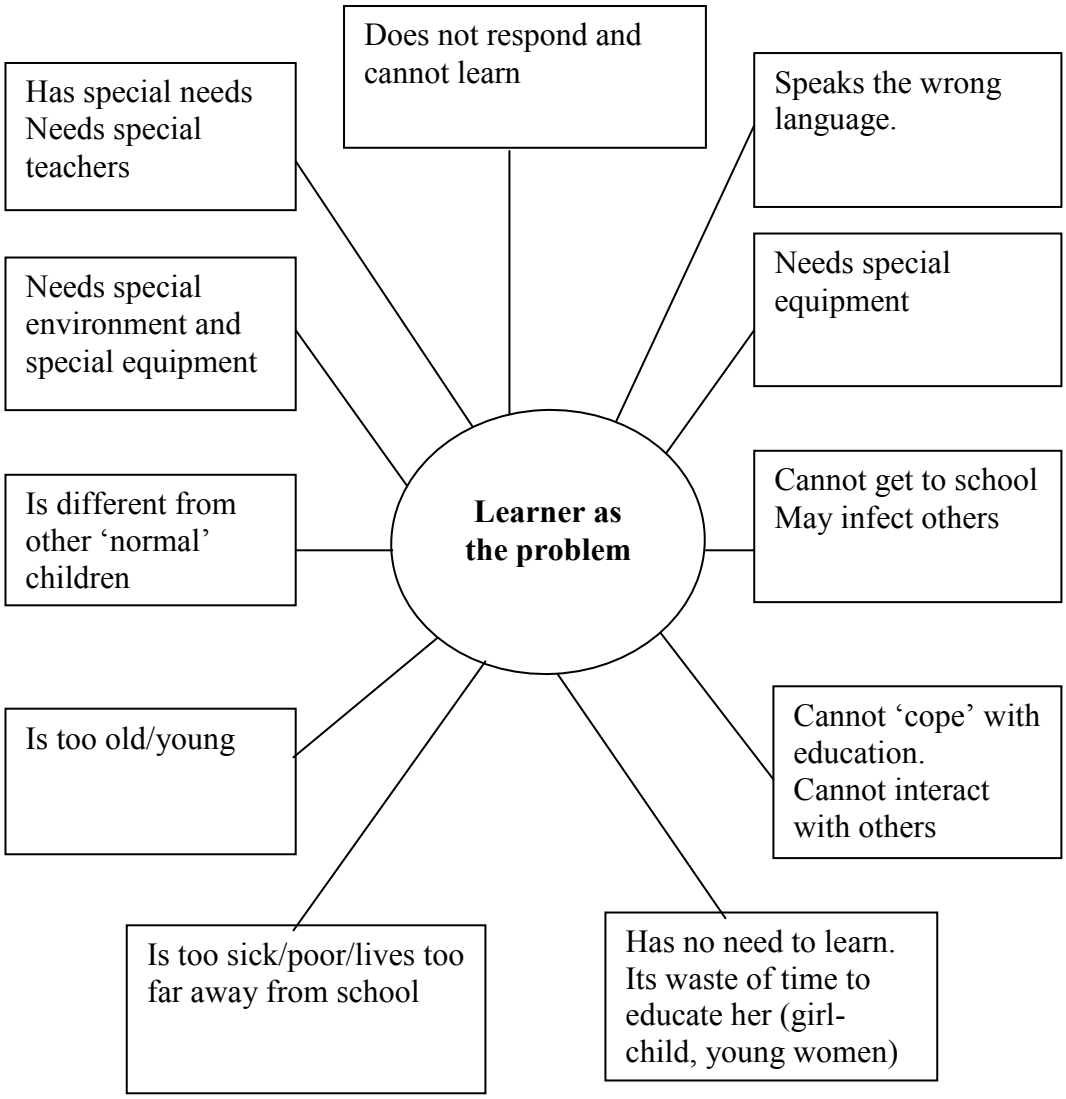
This model recognizes that the environmental factors are an impediment to the lives of the PWDs but goes further and calls for social advocacy and awareness campaigns in order to make the environment conducive. People who subscribe to this model support IE and see the PWDs as useful members of society with the capacity to excel in schools, just like those without disabilities. Thus, according to this model disability is not a fixed state. Reforms are therefore supposed to provide equal opportunities to the PWDs and to even expose the various forms of discrimination and segregation, institutionalization and exclusion. (See figure 2.2)

2.4.3 The Human Rights Model

This model attributes the problems facing PWDs to discrimination. The human rights model has its roots in the social role model discussed above. This model is based on the premise that all people must access equal opportunities to participate in society. The aim should not be to 'cure' the PWDs but to empower and to guarantee them their rights to equal and active participation in all the social, economic, cultural and political activities. It recognizes that the environmental factors are an impediment to the lives of the PWDs but goes further and calls for social advocacy and political campaigns in order to make the environment conducive. It is worth noting that with the paradigm shift from the individual/medical model to the social model, disability was reclassified as a human rights issue (Handicap International, 2007). Reforms are therefore supposed to provide equal opportunities to the PWDs and to even expose the various forms of discrimination and segregation, institutionalization and exclusion.

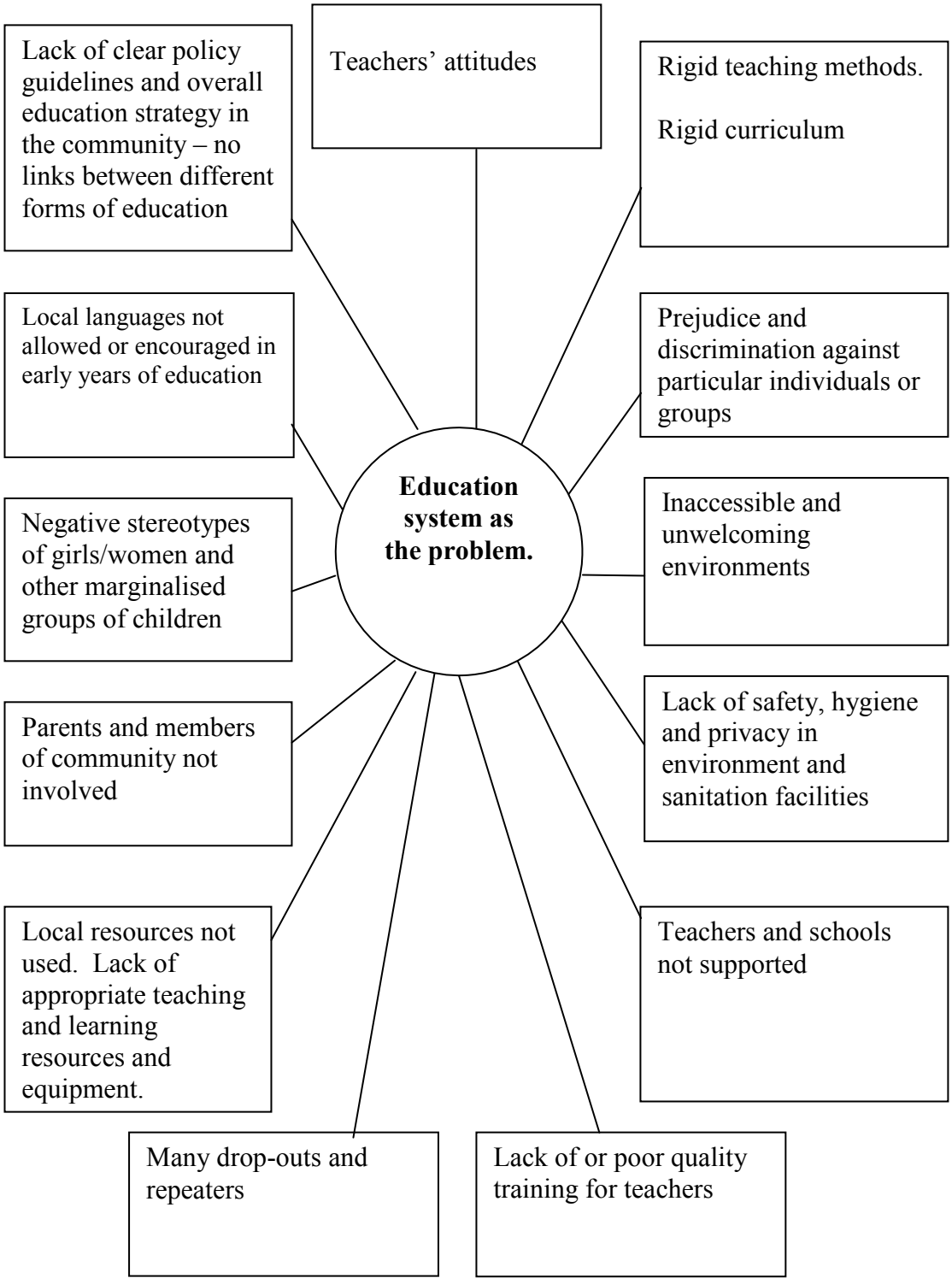
This baseline study therefore looks at the IE in Nuba Mountains taking into consideration of such global realities. So what's the situation like in Nuba Mountains and Sudan in general?

Figure 2.1: Individual/Medical Model (The learner as the problem)



Adapted from Stubbs, S (2008): *Inclusive education: Where there are few resources*

Figure 2.2: Social Model (The education system as the problem)



Adapted from Stubbs, S (2008): *Inclusive education: Where there are few resources*

2.5 Education in Sudan

Sudan is a vast country that has been torn by a devastating war and internal conflict for more than three decades. More than three million lives have been lost and about four million people were displaced due to civil wars and internal conflicts. Disruption and damage to the educational system in many parts of Sudan is a casualty of this history of crisis.

The country's general education is guided by the 2001 Education Act which stipulates the right to education for all children of eligible school age without discrimination of any kind. However, although education is free and compulsory for children aged 6 to 13 years (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004), the country has a low school enrolment and literacy rate and faces a great challenge in realizing the EFA and MDG goals (UNESCO). According to the Federal Ministry of Education Draft 5-Year Strategic Plan (2007-2011) only about 64.3 % of children of primary school-age are attending school. This implies that a significant proportion of 35.7% of Sudanese children are out of school, majority of them being those with special needs and other marginalised and vulnerable groups. The statistics also indicates that there is great imbalance and considerable disparity in education opportunities between the different areas and regions.

Factors that stand in the way of Sudan meeting the EFA and MDG goals include lack of finance to support the implementation of education programmes. According to Federal Ministry of Education Draft Strategic Plan (2007-20111), spending on education has not surpassed 1.8% of the GDP. Other factors are lack of adequate number of trained education managers, lack of enough teachers, lack of consensus on the curriculum (Primary schools in SPLA controlled areas are using Kenyan curriculum, with English as the medium of instruction while those under GOS use Arabic), inadequate schools, fragile and unsafe school structures, lack of adequate teaching and learning resources, lack of community participation in education matters, high number of out-of-school children especially girls and those with special needs and lack of reliable data. The problem of school drop out is also another factor. According to Sudan Federal Ministry of Education (2007) there is an annual average drop out rate of 15% in upper classes and 9% in lower classes.

Another factor which is listed in the 5-Year Draft Strategic Plan as one of the key challenges is the provision of education opportunities to the disadvantaged and marginalised groups which include those with special needs, the nomads and other groups vulnerable to discrimination, marginalisation, isolation and exclusion. According to UNICEF, about 10% of primary school age population has some form of special needs or impairment. These children have almost three times the risk of not being enrolled in school compared to those without special needs. They are socially, economically and politically marginalized, and are left with no options to improve their own lives.

2.6 Inclusive/Special Needs Education Sudan in Nuba Mountains

Nuba Mountains are a mountain range in the eastern part of Southern Kordofan which is one of the three areas on the boundary between Northern and Southern Sudan. Nuba people have suffered for many years of war, attempted annihilation and even slavery, a price they paid for supporting SPLA which waged an armed struggle against the GOS. Although the war ended with a CPA on 9th January 2005, the region has continued to be marginalised not only politically but also economically and socially. Again although basic education should be free for children aged 6 to 13 years, there is still little evidence of development activity in the general education sub-sector in the region and in particular, Special Needs Education.

The primary education system in the SPLA controlled areas is organised into eight grades (Standard 1-8) and follows the adopted Kenyan syllabus. This means that they use English as the medium of instruction. In schools under the GOS, Arabic is the medium of instruction. This means there is a set of two curricula used in different areas in the country. As in many developing countries, conditions of schooling in Sudan including Nuba Mountains are poor. The system lack enough teachers, under-skilled and or untrained teachers leading to poor delivery of content, lack of educational materials and inaccessibility due to long distances. Due to these and other factors many children are therefore still out of school, with those with special needs and other marginalised groups as the majority.

The Sudan Federal Ministry of Education (2004) says that there are special schools for learners with special needs in Northern Sudan. Similarly, in its Draft 5-Year Strategic Plan (2007-2011), one of the Ministry's main tasks is to prepare curricula and programmes on special education, take care of the institutions of the persons with special needs, set plans to develop and spread these institutions and train its staffers. However, due to the prevailing political and economic situation in Nuba Mountains, there are no existing institutions for learners with special needs. The country does not have IE/SNE policy guidelines and follows the general guidelines provided in the general framework outlined in the Education Act of 2001. Reliable data on children vulnerable to exclusion and those out of school was also not available during the study period.

The people of Nuba Mountains are however determined to make use of the scarce education opportunities to improve their lot. With no adequate government support, the Nuba people have depended more and more on NGOs to facilitate education and other basic necessities leading to low enrolment. According to UNICEF, the current gross enrolment rate is about 51.9% in Kordofan State where Nuba Mountains is situated.

The situation is much better in Southern Sudan where things have started to develop. The Association for Christian Educators in Sudan (ACES) which is a network of organisations is working on IE/SNE initiatives in the South. Members of ACES have started small surveys and IE/SNE initiatives in Southern Sudan. The most significant action is a study done on SNE by Dark and Light in 2006 in Yei, Bor, and Tonj counties. The findings could also be applicable to Nuba

Mountains because despite various differences between them, they both share similar political and socio-economic contexts in which education is not accessible for all, but preserved for the fortunate few.

The summary of the findings of the study included that:

- there is an acute lack of accurate information (data) on the incidence and prevalence of disability;
- its estimated that about 10% of the population in South Sudan comprise of people with disabilities, with about 15% of these estimated to be of school-going age;
- majority of children with special needs including those with disabilities did not have access to formal and quality education.

In addition to the above, a considerable number of CSN, were attending different classes in regular schools without minimal or no support from the teachers due to their unique needs.

Another study whose results could not be established (since the consultant was unable to meet the members) is being carried out by BRAA (an organisation for handicapped children care) in the eastern part of Nuba Mountains. There are therefore many challenges and barriers that may affect implementation of IE in Nuba Mountains. It is however important to note that education is a very effective way of creating a more stable environment in the long run, and that all children have the right to education no matter the circumstances**.** (NCDO Executive Committee members have organised to meet members of BRAA to share experiences).

There is therefore an urgent need for proactive interventions to include children with special needs and other marginalised groups into formal educational systems in Nuba Mountains.

3.0 STUDY METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section presents the general methodological design of the study. It includes information on targeted respondents, study area, target population, sampling procedure, information gathering and challenges encountered in the field.

3.2 Study Areas

The baseline study was conducted in Nuba Mountains, in the counties/localities of Lagawa, Dilling and Kadugli which are controlled by SPLA and GOS. However, due to logistical and unavoidable circumstances only schools that use English as the medium of instruction were covered. The results will however be used for both areas. The counties/localities were purposively selected. Special arrangements were made by members of NCDO and IAS staff to enable the consultant to visit the selected study areas.

3.3 Target Population

In order to understand clearly the phenomenon of IE/SNE in the study area, it was imperative to gather information from different groups in the society. The study sought information about IE/SNE and generally about the education of children with special needs. Specifically, the consultant collected information from the following groups of people:

- Regional Director of Education
- County/locality education officers
- Local authorities administrative officers
- Head teachers and teachers
- Children both with and without special needs
- Parents and PTA members
- Members of the Community
- NCCDO (Local NGO)

In order to get the views on how to practically develop IE/SNE programmes within the context of the study area, the consultant visited a total of 21 primary schools from the proposed 30, one nursery school and one secondary school in the study area, all with a total of 6, 256 learners and 72 teachers. To get parents views and attitudes about CSN and those who are out of school, the consultant also interviewed members of the communities in the schools neighbourhood.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

Sampling procedure is a process of selecting a number of individuals from the population that are likely to be information-rich with respect to the purpose of the study. In the absence of a readily available sampling frame, it was difficult to

predetermine the precise sizes of the samples of the target population already identified. The study therefore relied on non-probability sampling methods. More specifically, the consultant adopted purposive sampling technique to locate the informants. (Gall *et all,* 1996)

3.5 Information Gathering

The study employed different techniques of data collection. These included unstructured interviews, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and observations. The consultant opted for interviews and focuses group discussion because they are flexible. In each area visited, the consultant met people who could provide useful information on IE/SNE through the guidance of the NCDO staff and MOE officers accompanying him. He collected qualitative data from the respondents. In most cases, the consultant brought the respondents together and facilitated focus group discussions. This type of data collection is designed to obtain information on the participants' beliefs, ideas or opinions of a defined topic.

The consultant did not use standardized questions. Questions posed to the respondents varied and this enabled the consultant to develop rapport and engage the respondents in deep discussions. The consultant also used *"probes*" and *"prompts*" during the discussions/interview. A probe is a way of getting the respondent to expand on a response when you intuit that he/she has more to give. Prompts suggest to the respondent the range or set of possible answers that the interviewer expects. (Robson, 1999). During the interviews, the consultant made sure that validity was maintained mainly by rephrasing questions where the respondents seemed not to understand.

3.6 Challenges Encountered in the Field

The study enjoyed the full support of the management of IAS in Denmark, Nairobi and Khartoum; NCDO and education officers in the three counties, Dilling, Lagawa and Kadugli. Indeed the consultant was met at the Khartoum airport by NCDO Executive Officer, hosted for two nights in the IAS Team House and driven all the way to Nuba Mountains. He also accompanied him to the field in the first two days then assigned the NCDO Education Coordinator to guide him throughout the study period.

However, as in any study of this nature, the consultant faced some challenges. First, the schools were far apart through difficult and rocky terrains. Despite a strong and reliable IAS/NCDO project vehicle sometimes it took time to move from one school to another due to the poor state of roads and terrains. Secondly, the schools that use English as a medium of instruction in the region operate half day (8.30 am – 12.30 pm). This made it difficult to carry out the interviews through out the day, greatly affecting the planning because the consultant had to visit the schools in the morning sessions only. Thirdly, there was the problem of language barrier. Majority of the respondents especially parents, members of the

community and some learners could not communicate in English language. Some teachers were also not fluent in the English language. This therefore required the consultant to use interpreters (mainly the county/locality education officers accompanying him). In such cases when an interpreter is used some information from the respondents may not be captured as exactly narrated by the respondent. Care was however taken to ensure that the questions were simple and clearly understood by the respondents.

The other challenge was the encounter the consultant had with the education officials at the region office, where he and those accompanying him had to travel back to get permission to be allowed to visit schools in one of the counties/localities. This affected the study because for two days nothing happened.

Overall, the respondents were very generous with the information and the discussions were exciting. Indeed most of the respondents were very supportive and willing to talk and listen to issues on IE/SNE. All in all, the consultant was satisfied with the exercise and managed to visit all the three counties/localities as planned despite the few challenges encountered.

4.0 PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the findings of the discussions and interviews that the consultant held with various respondents. The questions posed to the respondents varied depending on the respondents and on the answers they gave in the preceding questions. Given the diverse nature of the different groups of the respondents, it was not possible to use standardized questions. The questions therefore varied thereby enabling the consultant to probe the respondents while also engaging them in participatory discussions. The questions were mainly based on IE/SNE and education in general. This way the consultant was able to gather detailed information. The findings are an attempt to address the objectives of the study.

4.2 Discussion/Interview with Regional Director of Education at Kauda (Abdulhamid Haron Tawa)

The interview was held in the offices of SPLA at Kadugli, the capital of Southern Kordofan State. On the IE/SNE issues, the director started by saying that there are many children with special needs in the count/localities and others living under especially difficult circumstances due to the devastating war and internal conflicts in Sudan for a long time. According to him the government recognizes the importance of education of CSN since it's a basic human right. He went further to say that some of these children were already being educated in regular schools although with no proper support since the teachers are not trained in SNE.

When asked about the development of IE in the country, the director said that the Government embraces the philosophy and will give all the necessary support for its development. However, he said that MOE officials and other policy makers should thoroughly be sensitised otherwise if they do not embrace it they would be the greatest barriers to its implementation. He also cited the following as some other barriers that need to be addressed for successful implementation of IE/SNE programmes in Nuba Mountains and Sudan in general:

- Lack of adequate funds to run the programmes.
- Lack of enough schools in the region which make children to walk long distances to schools. (This is very challenging for those with special needs and especially those with physical disabilities).
- Lack of clear policy guidelines on SNE.
- Lack of adapted curriculum to meet diverse needs of all children including those with special needs.
- Institutions and environments that are not disability friendly.
- Lack of enough teachers in most schools.
- Lack of skills on SNE among the education officers working in the various counties/localities.
- Lack of adequate data on CSN for proper planning.

- Poverty and cultural beliefs that make many parents to keep children at home.
- Community's attitudes and prejudice towards children with special needs and the girl-child.

4.3 Discussion/Interviews with MOE Officers in Lagawa, Dilling, Kadugli Counties and Kauda Regional Office

The consultant visited schools in the three counties which use English as the medium of instruction. Before visiting the schools, he first met and interviewed the county education officers. The interviews focused on the education in general, education of children with special needs and specifically IE. What came up from the discussions was that all of them were very positive about IE, although they also suggested that there should be some special schools to cater for those with severe and multiple disabilities.

They further said that if IE has to be implemented in Nuba Mountains the following should be considered:

- There should be an attempt to make stakeholders understand the concept of IE because it is not properly understood by many who are critical to its successful implementation. In particular, MOE which is instrumental in putting the IE in policy must first understand and subscribe to it.
- Priority should be given to awareness creation and sensitisation. Sensitisation workshops and seminars should be organised for those who will implement IE, such as educational officers, head teachers, teachers, parents and also the members of the communities.
- IE will require adaptation of the curriculum and the modification of facilities such as ramps and sanitation facilities.
- Teachers will require to be trained or in-serviced on new child-centred pedagogy.
- More teachers should be employed since the schools are seriously understaffed.
- Government should provide all schools with funds.(During the study period only Arabic speaking schools were said to be receiving funding from the government).

4.4 Discussions/Interviews with Head teachers

The consultant held interviews with most head teachers in the schools visited. Many said that they encountered many challenges in the course of their work. For example, lack of enough funds, lack of enough teachers leading to very high pupil-teacher rations (some as high as 80:1), dilapidated classrooms or in some schools none at all, poverty amongst the parents making them unable to pay levies. Other challenges are poor remuneration causing low morale amongst the teachers leading to poor quality education, cultural beliefs that affect education of girls and those with special needs.

When asked about education of children with special needs, majority said that they would welcome all children of school going age to join their schools. According to one head teacher, one of the biggest huddles would be the parents' attitudes. As in many other communities in the developing countries, societies' cultures and beliefs about disability relate to stigma, prejudice and curse from God. This means the parents and community in general should be sensitised.

The consultant further asked the respondents to state what they think should be done in order to improve education of CSN in the region. They said that:

- CSN should be educated in regular schools (Inclusive system of education)
- Abolish payment of school fees for CSN and other most vulnerable children like orphans.
- Change the attitude of the parents and community towards the education of the CSN through awareness campaigns.
- Develop some boarding special schools for children with severe and multiple disabilities.
- There should be social advocacy through groups such as the NCDO, religious leaders, organisations for persons with disabilities, village leaders, etc.

The consultant asked head teachers why they thought IE were good and they said that it:

- offers opportunities to experience diversity of society and maximise social peace;
- enables CSN access to opportunities in education and the wider community that are typically available;
- enables learners to develop respect for others with diverse characteristics and abilities;
- is cheaper and sustainable because the CSN will be in schools with more children and because of the large number of parents the school will be able to pool resources;
- makes the CSN feel to be part of the larger society and provide opportunities to develop neighbourhood friends;
- encourages and accelerates the acceptance of the CSN by the community and increase their participation in the care for CSN;
- provides opportunities for CSN to be educated together with their peers;
- broadens and strengthens an understanding of the diversity inherent in the communities.

4.5 Interviews/Discussions with Teachers

The twenty one primary schools, one nursery and secondary school visited during the study had a total of 72 teachers. The consultant was able to interview individually or through focus group discussions more than 60 of them. The interviews/discussions aimed at getting their views on general education, education of those with special needs and specifically on IE. On general

education the teachers had similar ideas to what the head teachers had and especially on the challenges that they encounter in the course of their work.

On education of CSN, all the teachers interviewed supported the idea of educating them. However, when asked the type of school, (regular or special) some of them said that they should be taken to special institutions while the others, who were the majority, said that they should be educated together with their peers in the regular schools in the community.

Those who said that they should be taken to segregated settings (special institutions) argued that their major concern was the fear of lacking skills for teaching such children and also lack of adequate resources to meet their needs. Other concerns that they raised were that; some children won't cope with learning since they are slow learners, others have behaviour problems and they would disrupt classes. They also said that the environment in schools is not conducive and especially for those with physical disabilities and hence it would be difficult for them to move around.

The teachers who were positive towards educating CSN in regular schools said that education is a human right and children should not be discriminated because of special needs. They further said that there are many schools which had already enrolled such children. These include the slow learners (those with learning disabilities), those who cannot hear properly (hearing impaired), those who cannot see well (low vision) and even those with clutches (physically disabled. One teacher commented that, "*It's a basic human right for children with disabilities to be educated in ordinary schools. They don't have to be isolated. They need to socialise with other children and that way they can feel that they are human beings and they can accept themselves"* Another one said that, "*disability is not inability and those children have the capacity of learning just like other children if given appropriate support"*

When asked to state the specific areas in IE that needs to be addressed, the teachers cited the following:

- Providing funds to all schools in both SPLA and GOS controlled areas.
- Training of teachers on SNE.
- Adapting the curriculum to be flexible.
- Improving the infrastructure and learning environments to be accessible to all children including those who are physically challenged.
- Creating room for the CSN to be offered extra teaching in order for them to catch up with the children without special needs.
- Creating awareness to the other children, community members, educational committees, head teachers, and other stakeholders.
- Providing adequate educational resources that can be used by all children including those with special needs.

4.6 Discussion/Interview with Members of NCDO

The consultant held discussions with the Executive Director and some members of the Executive committee on IE/SNE. They said that in addition to managing the water project they were also managing nursery schools in Lagawa and Dilling counties and they are therefore determined to have IE/SNE developed and implemented in Nuba Mountains.

When asked about the barriers/challenges that they thought could affect the implementation of IE/SNE in the region, they cited the following:

- Inadequate support from the government.
- Lack of adequate funds.
- Attitudes towards children with special needs and other vulnerable groups.
- Lack of adequate teaching and learning materials suitable for diverse needs of all children.
- Lack of adequate teachers resulting to high learners-teacher ratios.
- Lack of adequate skills on SNE amongst teachers working in the area.
- Lack of enough learning centres whereby some children have to walk long distances to the nearest schools.
- Poor and difficult terrains where it's difficult for those with wheel chairs to move.
- Environment in learning institutions not disability friendly.
- Poor pay of teachers resulting to low morale.

4.7 Interviews with Local Authority Officials

The consultant met and held discussions with local authority officials in Lagawa county/locality and at Kauda. Just like the MOE officials, the local authority officers interviewed were very supportive of the education of CSN. They said that since all children are the same, whether with or without special needs they should be educated in the same schools. They however suggested that it could be a good idea to have some special schools in the counties/localities or some homes for those with severe disabilities. They argued that some parents may find it hard to take children to regular schools because of severity and also due to cultural beliefs and difficult terrains.

The officials also suggested that the MOE and NGOs should establish workshops in various institutions where learners who complete school can learn skills on specific areas like tailoring and dressmaking, carpentry, etc to make them self-reliant.

4.8 Discussions/Interviews with PTA Members, Parents and the Community

According to the head teachers and MOE officers, each school had a Parents Teachers' Association (PTA) with eleven members. The consultant therefore had

an opportunity to meet and interview some of them in various schools and also parents and members of the community in the schools' neighbourhoods and market places. When asked about the local beliefs towards persons with disabilities, they said that, as in many other societies in Africa, many of the beliefs and attitudes about disability relate to stigma and prejudice. Some members of the community consider them to be incapacitated with some saying that disability could be a curse from God.

Some of the parents said that IE is good for those with mild problems; otherwise there should be special schools for those who are severely disabled. Some said that they would be worried if their children with special needs are enrolled in regular schools since they maybe mistreated and teased by those without special needs.

The few parents who were against IE argued that, CSN should be taken to special schools since they would face a lot of stigma and discrimination in the regular schools. Parents may also not have money to buy equipment such as, wheelchairs, crutches, hearing aids and other devices that may be required by such children. They further said that education is an investment and hence wondered what they could gain by educating CSN who will never be able to work and assist them in their old age.

Those who were positive on IE said that it had many advantages. These include:

- Community will learn to support those who are different.
- IE leads to the social integration of the CSN.
- IE removes the stigma faced by the children.
- IE supports social value and equality and also maximises social peace.

4.9 Discussions with Learners with Special Needs

In almost all schools visited, there were various groups of children with special needs. Majority were those with learning disabilities and orphans. Others had hearing impairment, vision impairment, mild mental disabilities and physically disabilities among others. The consultant held discussions with them through interpreters (class teachers).

The consultant specifically held lengthy discussions with a boy with physical disabilities who was using a wheel chair and a girl who was hearing impaired in different schools. When asked generally about school life, they said that they were happy to be in school. They further said that they were happy and would continue to learn together with those without disabilities. They went on to say that attending same school with those without special needs have many advantages since it would:

- improve and widen the friendship patterns and also enhance equality;
- enhance self-respect;

- make them feel wanted and be part of the community;
- provide opportunities to be educated learn with peers;
- increase self-esteem and acceptance by classmates.

When asked about what they didn't like in school they said that:

- The environment wasn't good enough since it was difficult to move with his wheel chair.
- The toilets doors were narrow and the wheel chair cannot enter. This forces him to leave it and crawl inside.
- Teachers didn't know sign language and don't help.
- Sometimes some naughty children tease them thus lowering their self-esteem.
- Some teachers didn't assist them during the learning process and hence gets difficulties to cope.

4.10 Interviews with Learners without Special Needs

In every school that the consultant visited, he held discussions and or interviewed learners in different classes about education of CSN and specifically inclusion. Majority said that they would not mind being in the same class with CSN and would support them. They continued to say that CSN are just like them and hence should be in school. However, they said that the problem was that some of their parents do not want to take them to school due to cultural beliefs and ignorance.

On being asked the advantages that they would get by having CSN in the same class, they said that:

- It would assist them to develop an appreciation that everyone has unique characteristics and abilities;
- It would enhance the development of emphatic skills;
- It would provide opportunities to experience, understand and accept diversity in the society;
- It would provide an opportunity for them to interact and learn from those who are different from them.

Overall findings from the learners without special needs indicated that majority welcomed the idea of IE. Indeed, scholars have argued that learners with and without special needs should be given an opportunity to participate and support one another. A supportive environment will mean that no one is stigmatized for having special needs or "being different". Learners with special needs will therefore be welcomed in the mainstream schools and reduce stigmatization and prejudice.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

As has been discussed earlier in this report, Inclusive Education is about the education of all children in the mainstream learning institutions. It differs from the previously held notions of "*integration" and mainstreaming"* which tended to be more concerned primarily with disability and implied that learners had to *change* so as to be accommodated in the system and society. By contrast, inclusion is about the child's right to participate and the school to accept! It's about schools changing and rejecting segregation or exclusion of learners regardless of gender, age, ability, social and emotional status, HIV status etc! It means changes in the curriculum, changes in how teachers teach and how children learn, as well as changes in how children with and without special needs interact with and relate to one another. It also means identifying barriers within and around the school that may hinder learning and participation and reducing or removing these barriers so that all learners can be included in all aspects of school-life. IE practices reflect the changing culture of contemporary schools with emphasis on active learning, authentic assessment practices, flexible and applied curriculum, multi-level instructional approaches and increased attention to diverse learner needs and individualisation.

However, implementing IE may have many challenges and especially in the developing countries like Sudan, where poverty, hunger, diseases, illiteracy, rural isolation and internal conflicts are common. The main challenges relating to access and equity in the provision of education and training to CSN include; lack of clear policy guidelines and support in the implementation of programmes, lack of adequate data to facilitate proper planning, inadequate qualified personnel and necessary tools for early identification, assessment and appropriate placement. The situation may also be compounded by inappropriate infrastructure, inadequate facilities and lack of equipment, inadequate capacity among teachers, lack of coordination among service providers. Inadequate supervision and monitoring of programmes may also further complicate implementation of IE.

With this background, this study attempted to assess the situation on the ground and identify the barriers and challenges that may prevent children with special needs access quality and relevant education in Nuba Mountains and by extension Sudan in general. The ultimate goal is to develop and implement IE/SNE in Sudan in order to make quality education accessible to majority of the CSN and other vulnerable groups of children who are currently out of school.

The general finding was that there are many CSN in Nuba Mountains who do not have access to education due to various barriers/challenges. Some parents are ignorant that CSN should be taken to school or they may know but think that educating them is pointless and they thus give priority to the education of the

children who do not have special needs. Awareness creation is a key issue if the education of the CSN is to be realized.

The study also indicated that the curriculum does not comprehensively meet the needs of the CSN. The study findings also revealed that there was a very poor learning environment not only for those with special needs but also those without special needs. There is also the problem of getting to schools which may hinder most children with special needs especially due to the rocky and difficult terrains and long distances from home to the nearest school. Overall, the school environment in the study areas was found to be discriminatory to the CSN because the facilities were not designed with them in mind.

The findings also revealed that there is inadequate human resource development to support IE/SNE. Most of the teachers are not even trained and hence would find it difficult to assist those with special needs. Indeed one of the major constraints to IE/SNE is the shortage of teachers.

One issue that arose in the study was whether IE would have an impact on the quality of education in Nuba Mountains. It was clear that the issue of quality does not arise given that education in Sudan already lacks quality. It was therefore suggested that the concern should be to try and reach as many CSN as possible and not necessarily pedagogical. To achieve this, it was said that the government should address the issue of support to all schools both in the SPLA and GOS controlled areas.

An analysis of the parents' views on IE revealed that majority were supportive of IE. The findings concur with those of most scholars, that parents are the drivers and movers of IE. Parents have therefore a big role to play in the care and provision of education to the CSN. The challenge is however to get parents and families of the most poor and marginalized to participate and to invest in the education of the CSN. IE is very strongly supported by the parents who said they have no problem taking their children to the inclusive schools. Similarly the few CSN who were interviewed were very supportive of IE. They were of the view that IE would improve and widen their friendship patterns and enhance equality. Inclusive education was also strongly supported by the learners without special needs.

Some parents, teachers and even the MOE officials added that it's good to have a few special schools. Their argument was that there are some learners who may not be able to learn with those without special needs because of the severity of their disabilities. They said that while it is important to have inclusive schools, special schools should also be established those with severe and multiple disabilities. The special schools can also provide a useful first step for some children before moving into inclusive settings. Their view concur with the suggestion of the Education Officers who also argued that although they were very positive about IE, a few special schools should be established, at least one

in each county/locality to take care of those with severe disabilities and also serve as resource centres for teachers, parents.

In summary, the study findings revealed that the respondents think IE is important because it:

- will offer CSN more suitable opportunities for learning;
- is cheaper and more sustainable, because there would be no need of building different schools for CSN;
- will give the CSN a sense of belonging;
- encourages social integration and accelerates community acceptance and community participation thus reducing stigma;
- makes CSN accept their condition and difference as “normal”;
- makes it easier for teachers to develop a friendly and flexible curriculum;
- will reach majority of the CSN of poor background;
- will widen friendship patterns of CSN.

The study findings indicated that some of the barriers and challenges that need to be looked into to make IE feasible are:

- Lack of policy guidelines.
- Inadequate teachers.
- Physical barriers and inadequate school infrastructure.
- Inadequate teaching and learning resources.
- Rigid curriculum.
- Poor teaching methods.
- Long distances to the school through difficult terrains.
- Inadequate or no support by the MOE.
- Low levels of community awareness and insensitivity to disability issues. and negative community cultural beliefs and perceptions of the girl child and those with special needs.
- Lack of early identification and assessment of those with special needs.
- Poverty, illiteracy and cultural prejudices.

When the respondents were asked what could be done to address some of the identified barriers and challenges, they said that:

- MOE in collaboration with stakeholders to develop policy guidelines on IE/SNE.
- Teachers should be in-serviced on IE/SNE.
- Pilot IE schools should be established, at least one in each of the counties/localities. These schools can help policy makers to visualise what IE is and also act as a place to put into practice new approaches which can be scaled up to other schools.
- The curriculum should be adapted to meet the diverse needs of those with special needs.
- Community to be actively involved to participate in putting up schools (they can provide labour and or some materials if they have no funds).

- Payment of school fees for those special needs and other vulnerable and marginalised groups should be abolished or reduced.
- Awareness workshops and sensitisation meetings should be organised to change the attitudes of parents, teachers and learners towards education for CSN.
- Collaborative efforts by the MOE, NGOs and other stakeholders to mobilise resources should be enhanced.
- Teachers to be trained on how to make or improvise educational resources using local materials and craftsmen.

Thus, it is clear from the study findings that IE in Nuba Mountains is feasible given that learners, teachers, parents, and the community in general demonstrated formal support. According to many of those interviewed, IE will produce schools with more enriching learning environments that will acknowledge and accept diversity. The positive attitudes depicted by parents, head teachers, teachers and learners will be a great asset in the success of IE in Nuba Mountains and Sudan in general. Studies globally have shown that negative attitudes by teachers and parents especially are a major barrier to inclusion- *"children do not have prejudices unless adults show them*!"

5.2 Recommendations Based on the Study Findings

On the strength of the study findings, the consultant made the following recommendations that should be considered as a way forward for the development and implementation of IE/SNE in Nuba Mountains, in both SPLA and GOS controlled areas and by extension the whole of Sudan. Deliberate attempts should be made to address them by developing short, medium and long term strategies.

5.2.1 Policy on IE/SNE

Inclusion describes the principle that all learners including those with special needs are entitled to equitable access to learning, achievement and pursuit of excellent in all aspects of their educational programmes. This goes beyond just placement a child in a school but also includes meaningful participation and promotion of interaction with others. However, policy makers who do not understand or accept the concept of IE maybe great barriers to its implementation. CSN have traditionally experienced exclusion, marginalisation, discrimination and segregation from the mainstream education.

The consultant therefore recommends that IE/SNE policy guidelines be developed to guide the implementation of IE/SNE programmes in Sudan. In the development of the said policy all stakeholders in the education sector should be involved right from the grass-root (village) to the national level. The said policy should be holistic, covering not just disability, but should also take into consideration all aspects of a child with special needs, relations with the different

professionals, parents' and communities' contributions and opportunities for further education or employment.

Education for all children including those with special needs will be attained only by adopting a renewed genuinely expanded vision of education, which trusts and invests in the people, in their capacities and potential in the development and mobilisation of resources and in the efforts of society at large to work together to make education a basic need for all children. The policy should therefore ensure equitable access to quality basic education for all children in response to the barriers experienced by the children because of varied attitudes, disabilities, gender disparity, conflict, ill health, various forms of abuse and school drop outs.

5.2.2 Organisation of the Education System

Education systems are often centralised and this can inhibit change and new initiatives. Responsibility decisions tends to be located at the highest level and the focus of management remains orientated towards staff complying with rules rather than ensuring quality service delivery. There is also lack of information within many systems and often there is no accurate picture of the number of learners who may be excluded from the school system due various reasons, especially special needs.

The consultant therefore proposes adjustments in the current system and put in place structures for implementing IE/SNE in the MOE offices in the state and counties/localities in addition to the national Federal Ministry of Education headquarters in Khartoum. For example, there should be an officer based at Kadugli to oversee the IE/SNE programmes in Southern Kordofan State and others to be based in each of the four counties/localities. Officers manning these sections should be given in-service training on IE/SNE. This will enable them to support teachers and hence improve quality in the delivery of service to learners with special needs. The government should also establish a budget line for provision of facilities for the implementation of IE/SNE at all levels.

5.2.3 Role of MOE

In most countries the ministries responsible for education play very active roles in the implementation of education programmes. Curriculum development, training of teachers, provision of teaching and learning resources and monitoring and supervision requires government support through the MOE. The MOE should therefore take a more active role in the implementation of IE/SNE in Nuba Mountains. MOE should appoint officers to foresee the implementation of IE/SNE in each county/locality. The said officers should be in-serviced and given the necessary skills and knowledge to improve their performance and also support teachers in their work towards inclusion and other IE/SNE programmes.

Supervision and monitoring of programmes and delivery of service is also another important role of the MOE. Schools supervision systems should be established at state and county/locality levels. There is also need to develop clear terms of reference to the supervision/inspection staff.

5.2.4 Curriculum

In any education system, the curriculum maybe one of the major obstacles or tools to facilitate the development of more inclusive system. In many contexts, the curriculum is extensive and demanding or centrally designed and rigid leaving little flexibility for local adaptations or for teachers to try out new approaches. The content might be distant to the reality in which the learners live, and therefore inaccessible and unmotivating. Sometimes it may also be gender biased and degrading.

Curriculum can facilitate the development of more inclusive settings when it leaves room for the school or the individual teacher to make adaptations so that it makes better sense in the local context and for the individual learner. According to UNESCO (1999), some key elements for curricula that aims at developing more inclusive education are:

- Broad common goals defined for all, including the knowledge, skills and values to be acquired;
- A flexible structure to facilitate responding to the diversity and providing diverse opportunities for practice and performance in terms of content, methods and level of participation;
- Assessment based on individual progress and content, knowledge and skills relevant to learners' context.

In Nuba Mountains, schools using English as the medium of instruction are using Kenyan curriculum, which is mainly exam-orientated. It was noted that it's giving challenges not only to the learners but also to the teachers, something that may contribute to school mass drop outs. Similarly, many schools rely on volunteer teachers majority of them having been educated in Arabic and therefore find it difficult to teach in English, leave alone Kiswahili which is a compulsory subject in the adopted curriculum from Kenya. This may cause challenges and frustrations among them which may affect quality of teaching leading to more exclusion and drop out.

There is therefore need to adapt the curriculum so as to be flexible and culturally sensitive to meet the diverse needs of all children including those with special needs. There need to be improvements and adjustments in the way teachers teach, use individualised education plan (IEP) and also ensure that there is appropriate assessment/exam methods for all children.

5.2.5 Awareness/Sensitisation Campaigns

One of the greatest barriers to inclusion may be the society's attitudes and not by special needs or particular impairments in the child. Negative attitudes towards differences result in discrimination and can lead to a serious barrier to learning. Negative attitudes can take the form of social discrimination, lack of awareness and traditional and cultural prejudices. For example, children without special needs may not be accustomed to other children who "look and behave differently". Some parents may also be worried that special needs and especially disability was contagious and that it may infect their children. On the other hand, teachers may be worried that children with special needs will lower the academic standards and disrupt classes.

During the study, it was noted that some of the parents think that educating children with special needs and girls is of no use. They argued that girls are expected to get married as soon as they are of age and hence pointless to invest in their education. Similarly, some think that children with special needs are incapacitated and hence it would be valueless to educate them.

There is therefore great need to carry out vigorous sensitisation/awareness campaigns among the communities in all counties/localities. NCDO and specifically the four teachers who are currently being trained by KISE should spearhead the campaign in view of educating parents and the community in general on the promotion of education of all children including those with special needs and girls.

5.2.6 Nuba Christian Development Organisation (NCDO)

In recent years, IAS has been encouraging most of its senior staff in the countries where they operate to form development organisations as a means of reaching out to their own communities to provide sustainable solutions even after it withdraws from the areas. This will guarantee sustainability of the projects. NCDO is therefore one of such organization which was established in 2005 with the vision to cater for the needs of the communities in Nuba Mountains. It's now fully recognised by relevant governmental bodies' right from county/locality level to state and national levels. It has become a well-founded local organization working in partnership with other local and international organizations.

Considering that majority of the members of NCDO are not teachers, it should be strengthened to take a leading role in the development and implementation of IE/SNE and other education programmes in Nuba Mountains. The consultant also recommends that ***Jonathan Richard*** who is currently the NCDO Education Coordinator be sponsored for 3-months Certificate Course on SNE at KISE so as to get the necessary skills and knowledge on IE/SNE. This will greatly assist him in his work of monitoring, supervising and advising teachers in the implementation of the IE programme in collaboration with MOE officers.

As a long time strategy, NCDO should open up branches in all counties/localities in Southern Kordofan then move to other areas.

5.2.7 Educational Resources

In many developing countries like Sudan, education of children with special needs suffer from lack of resources, both human and financial to meet their diverse needs. At times, existing resources are also often insufficiently used. IE/SNE requires specialist equipment and adapted assistive devices. These needs must be assessed and provided right from the school level where the greatest needs exist. Provision of these educational resources is one of the key factors to a successful IE/SNE programme. It would therefore be cost effective to use local materials and artisans to make the resources.

The consultant therefore proposes that teachers be trained on how to design, produce and maintain such resources using local resources (both human and materials). IAS in collaboration with NCDO, MOE and other stakeholders should start a workshop at Kadugli or any other appropriate place in the counties/localities that can be used for training and also making relevant teaching and learning resources. Some members of NCDO should also be sponsored to visit KISE or HSSN workshop in Hargeisa to get the insight on how this is done.

As a key partner in SNE, KISE can assist to give guidelines and practical sessions (if required) to start such workshops. The long term plan would be to have at least a well manned workshop in every county/locality.

5.2.8 Resource Mobilisation

As has been discussed earlier in this report, IE/SNE is about providing opportunities so that all children have equitable access to learning opportunities for achievement and pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their educational programmes. One of the major constraints identified in the study was shortage of resources and inadequate facilities, lack of teachers, lack of teaching and learning materials and assistive devices just to mention a few. Thus, to implement a successful IE/SNE programme in Nuba Mountains, efforts should be geared towards resource mobilization and expertise relating to the basic requirements. Some of the areas that pooling of resources could be critical are training of teachers, building schools and proper sanitation, supply of educational resources including furniture, stationery and textbooks and starting school feeding programmes.

It is also important to appreciate that IE is cheaper than segregated special education system and lack of resources should therefore not be taken as an excuse for failure to implement it!

5.2.9 Special Needs Assessment and Training Centres (SNATCs)

Early identification, assessment and proper placement is very important for proper planning of the education of children with special needs. The consultant therefore recommends that SNATCs be established in each of the counties/localities and or in selected schools. Staff to man these centres should be trained to provide the following services among others:

- Identifying, screening, early identification, intervention, assessment, proper placement and referral of children with special needs to schools, health institutions and other service providers.
- Offering guidance and counselling services to parents of children with special needs.
- Organising seminars and workshops for teachers, field officers, local administrators, parents, health and social workers on IE/SNE.
- Facilitating outreach services to enable follow ups and dissemination of information about disabilities/special needs.
- Collecting information about children with special needs for use as a basis for central planning for Special Needs Education.
- Carrying out advocacy and sensitisation awareness on Special Needs Education, disability issues and other emerging issues.

The SNATCs can also serve as resource centres where teachers, parents and other stakeholders can get guidance when required.

5.2.10 Infrastructure and Accessibility

Physical access and learning environment might pose barriers to learning and participation. In addition to factors such as long distances, the schools might be inaccessible for those learners who have difficulties in mobility. Most of the schools in Nuba Mountains are physically inaccessible to some learner, especially to those who have physical disabilities. The schools and other learning centres are inaccessible largely because they lack proper infrastructure and where they are available are either dilapidated or in very poor state making them inaccessible to some learners, especially those with physical disabilities.

Although UNICEF, CARE and some other UN agencies and international NGOs are supporting in the construction of schools and equipping them, there is need to address the status of the physical environment and infrastructure. If not addressed, they may create more barriers to learning and development especially to those with special needs. There should be systematic adaptations of schools and other learning environments which should include passageways, ramps, expansion of doors and windows, adjustment of sanitary facilities and recreational areas.

5.2.11 Community Participation

Schools and other learning centres are sometimes isolated and even in opposition to the families and communities of the learners they are supposed to serve. (Bernard, 2000). An inclusive approach to education recognises that parents and communities have a contribution to make in the provision of quality education and that they have a right to be involved in the decision making process. Therefore partnership with the community is increasingly seen as essential to the effective and efficient delivery of quality IE/SNE.

The study revealed that communities are quite positive to the idea of IE/SNE. There is however need to strengthen the participation of parents and community in general. This is possible by capacity building of PTAs, religious and community opinion leaders and parents to ensure they understand and also embrace IE philosophy and SNE in general. Efforts must also be put geared towards making parents and community members to participate in IE/SNE activities. They can help to investigate exclusion problems in a school, develop appropriate solutions and also provide links to help share awareness information with a view of changing attitudes. They would also be in a better position to expose parents who could be hiding CSN at home.

The idea of IE should not be restricted to schools but must also be extended to the communities and adapted to the needs of the adults including vocational training centres. This will also require a lot of awareness, sensitisation campaigns and community participation.

5.2.12 Collaborative Efforts by Stakeholders

Proper IE/SNE programmes will require continued collaborative efforts from all stakeholders – MOE, PTAs, school managers, teachers, and parents, learners with and without special needs, organisations of PWDs, local and international NGOs and UN agencies. IAS and NCDO should network with other organisations such as SASE, KISE, UNICEF, ACES (an alliance of Christian organisations and churches working in the area of education in South Sudan), SEDA and BRAA (Organisation for handicapped children care) which operates in eastern part of Nuba Mountains with a view to identifying areas of IE/SNE that they can collaborate on. But most importantly, the collaborative efforts should focus more on making communities to own IE/SNE; and know that it is for the benefit of all the members of the community whether they have special needs or not.

MOE should therefore coordinate the services provided by all the various groups to ensure that duplication does not occur and that quality of service delivery for those with special needs and other marginalised groups is guaranteed.

5.2.13 Lack of Teachers

Although some schools visited had teachers from Kenya courtesy of NRRDO, it was established that there was a serious shortage of teachers in almost all schools. It was also established that the government does not employ teachers for the schools in SPLA controlled areas. Therefore, other than teachers from Kenya who were paid by NRRDO, the teachers are paid by the parents (through PTAs). The schools are therefore only able to employ the number of teachers that the parents can afford to pay regardless of the number of children and classes. Some schools had over 400 learners with only 3 or 4 teachers!

An urgent measure should therefore be undertaken to hire more teachers. Otherwise, with the current situation of shortage of teachers in almost all schools in the counties/localities, it will make it difficult to implement a successful IE/SNE programme.

5.2.14 Capacity Building

It has been shown that teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusion depend strongly on experience with learners who are perceived as "being challenging; teacher education; availability of support; class size and workload (UNESCO 2001). As noted earlier in the report, majority of the teachers have positive attitudes towards IE/SNE. However, all of them lack skills to teach learners with special needs.

There is therefore need to design both short term and long term training strategies or in-servicing for teachers and other educational managers. Generally, all the actors in IE/SNE should be offered basic training. However, teachers training need to be given priority. The target would be to have at least one trained/in-serviced teacher on SNE in every school in every county/locality in the region.

The training can follow the KISE Certificate Course in SNE or any other nationally approved and suitable training programme. Teachers in schools with many CSN should be given first priority in the training. NCDO and in particular, the four teachers who are currently undertaking the Certificate Course in SNE through KISE should be used to identify teachers for the training. Also as a short term strategy the four teachers who are currently being trained by KISE can act as TOTs and train others. These are ***Alaff Boaz, Joyce Small, Saleh Habib Saleh*** and ***Tia Ibrahim Kuwa.***

As a long term strategy a training institution for training teachers on SNE should be established. It can either be in an existing institution or develop a new one.

5.2.15 Language of Instruction

Teaching and learning through a language which is not the first language of learners in the first years of school life, places them at a great disadvantage and may lead to significant linguistic difficulties which may contribute to learning breakdown and even school drop out. During the study, it was noted that the schools in the SPLA controlled areas in Nuba Mountains are using English as a medium of instruction from as low as the nursery school. This may cause learners to develop learning problems.

Although some of those interviewed said that they preferred to use English because they deem it more relevant to their future, its important that teaching in the early years of learning, mainly nursery schools and lower primary classes should use “mother tongue” for teaching and learning purposes.

5.2.16 Data on SNE

An important prerequisite for IE/SNE is to know how many and which children are out-of school and why. It’s therefore critical to know who, where and why children are not attending school or dropping (or dropped) out. Therefore availability of correct data is important for proper design and planning for education that responds to the needs of all children. Although NCDO tried to carry out a survey on those with disabilities within Lagawa County and BRAA is currently carrying out a survey in the eastern part on Nuba Mountains, there is no available data on the number of people with special needs. NCDO should therefore collaborate with MOE and other relevant stakeholders to carry out a survey on children with special needs in and out of school.

5.2.17 Exchange Visits between SASE and NCDO

Sudan and Somaliland share similar political and socio-economic contexts in where education is not accessible for all. The two countries have also been torn by devastating wars and internal conflicts for a long time. However, Somaliland is far much ahead in SNE (courtesy of IAS) than Sudan. This is especially the establishment of HSSN in 2001 which was the first of its kind in the larger Somalia. The school which is currently run by SASE in collaboration with the Ministry of Education has gone a long way to change the lives of children with special needs and especially those with mental disabilities. It has also a great impact on the families of those children.

In view of the above, although SASE members are expected to visit Nuba Mountains to exchange experiences with NCDO, the consultant recommends that the members of NCDO are sponsored for an educational tour to Somaliland so as to get practical examples and experiences on the management of SNE programmes.

5.2.18 Pilot IE Schools

Many countries trying to establish an Inclusive Education system have found that the development of pilot schools is useful. The pilot schools could be used to demonstrate the benefits of inclusion to other schools, education administrators, head teachers, parents and the wider community. The schools could also serve as resource bases for the training of teachers. Once the pilot schools prove to be effective, the methods used can be introduced on a wider scale.

Although the ultimate long term objective of IAS is to start IE/SNE programmes in all schools in Nuba Mountains and indeed whole of Sudan, the consultant therefore proposes the establishment of pilot IE/SNE schools which will incorporate best practices and developing local strategies. Each county/locality could ideally have one or two pilot schools as a starting point. Examples of schools that could be established as pilot IE programmes are Karalanya Primary School in Lagawa county/locality and Mandari Primary School in Dilling county/locality which have successfully included a girl with hearing impairment (deaf) and a boy with physical disabilities respectively.

5.2.19 Special Institutions

One of the key aspects of IE is to respond to the needs of all children, including those with special needs. While IE is a viable idea, it's good to have a special school (s) to take care of children with severe and multiple disabilities who may find it difficult to cope in the regular school system. Indeed in principle, IE does not mean placing all CSN including those with severe disabilities in the general education process. In some cases, children with severe and multiple disabilities may be placed in special institutions as a necessary temporary measure. As stated by UNESCO (2003), "adopting inclusive ways of thinking and working is not a project but a process"

5.2.20 Consultancy

Although KISE was only to provide a consultant to undertake the baseline survey, capacity build NCDO members and also mentor them through out the process of this project, there is need for the consultant or any other SNE professional to continue working with IAS/NCDO until the IE/SNE programme takes off. This could be either through occasional visits to Nuba Mountains and or by use of e-mail or other communication modes that maybe agreed upon from time to time.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: SUMMARY OF BARRIERS TO IE AND POSSIBLE WAYS ON HOW TO OVERCOME THEM

Introduction

Inclusive Education is a constantly evolving concept. It is inseparable from the concept of quality education. Making education more inclusive requires schools, education authorities and all stakeholders to remove the barriers that may prevent all children to have access to quality education. There are many different types of barriers to IE.SNE but often people focus on the resources and physical barriers only. There are other types of barriers which can equally affect the quality of IE/SNE.

The table below shows a summary of the barriers to Inclusive Education as given by the various respondents and how they could be overcome.

S/No	Barriers to IE/SNE	Possible ways/suggestions to overcome them
1.	Lack of clear policy guidelines on SNE	○ MOE, NGOs and other development partners to develop SNE policy guidelines as soon as possible. ○ Develop SNE sections/departments in MOE at Kadugli and all counties/ localities MOE offices. ○ Develop language policy especially on the teaching of nursery schools and lower primary classes.
2.	Rigid curriculum	○ MOE to collaborate with NGOs and other stakeholders to adapt the curriculum and make it flexible for all learners including those with special needs.
3.	Lack of SNE skills among MOE officers and inadequate supervision of schools	○ Schools supervision to be enhanced by MOE. ○ MOE officers to be in serviced on IE/SNE.
4.	Lack of adequate teachers to handle the large enrolments in schools	○ MOE, parents, communities and development partners to employ teachers. ○ NGOs e.g., UNICEF, NRRDO and others working in the education sub-sector in the region to increase sponsorship to the schools.
5.	Lack of teachers trained in IE/SNE adequate skills amongst teachers	○ Train teachers for Certificate using KISE or any other relevant curriculum. ○ Using teachers/officers already trained in SNE as TOTs. ○ Organise short in-service courses for teachers and MOE officials on IE/SNE.

6.	Poor teaching methods/strategies	○ Supervision of schools to be enhanced. ○ Teachers to be in-serviced on child centred teaching methods.
7.	Children walking long distances to school	○ MOE, NGOs and communities put up more learning centres so that children do not walk long distances to the nearest schools.
8.	Lack of SNE skills amongst the school managers/ administrators	○ Capacity build head teachers, PTA members and community leaders.
9.	Inadequate school infrastructure and lack of funds for recurrent expenditure	○ Resource mobilisation to be enhanced so as to build more schools and other learning centres. ○ Communities to be encouraged to contribute towards building of schools (they can provide labour if they have no money to buy materials). ○ Government to give funds for improving all schools in both SPLA and GOS controlled areas (NGOs and development partners to assist).
10.	Infrastructure and environments that are inaccessible to all children and especially those with special needs	○ Improve school buildings and environments to be accessible by all children including those with physical challenges. ○ Toilets to be improved to be accessible to all children including those using wheel chairs and other assistive devices.
11.	Negative cultural/community beliefs	○ Organise awareness/sensitisations meetings, workshops and seminars on IE/SNE aimed at key stakeholders in education (MOE officials, faith based organisations, teachers and members of the community) from school and village level on IE/SNE, girl-child and gender issues in general. ○ Development of advocacy/awareness materials, e.g., brochures/manuals, T-shirts, caps, etc. ○ Organise school based awareness raising on IE/SNE.
12.	Education of girl child not seen as a priority within Nuba culture	○ Creating awareness amongst parents and the community in general.
13.	Duplication of services/activities by various stakeholders	○ MOE to harmonise and coordinate all stakeholders working on IE/SNE related activities to avoid duplication.

14.	Lack of data on children with SNE	○ MOE, NGOs, other government agencies to carry out survey on those with special needs for proper planning for service delivery. ○ Establish SNATCs in each county/locality or selected schools for assessment and placement of children with special needs.
15.	Inadequate teaching and learning resources	○ Provision of materials by MOE, NGOs. ○ Collaboration with NGOs working in education sub-sector to provide resources. ○ Teachers to be in-serviced to produce ○ materials using local artisans and local resources. ○ Workshops for materials production to be developed in all counties/localities. ○ Community to be mobilised to support local schools by donating materials and or funds.

ANNEX 2: ENGLISH SPEAKING PRIMARY SCHOOLS UNDER SPLA CONTROLLED AREA IN DILLING COUNTY

1. El-Kuk Primary School
2. Julud-Basha Primary School
3. Julud-Katangara Primary School
4. Kabila Primary School
5. Kakari Primary School
6. Kamarie Primary School
7. Katik Primary School
8. Katla Primary School
9. Karuku Primary School
10. Kitango Primary School
11. Kulan Primary School
12. Mandri Primary School
13. Shangal Primary School
14. Shergan Primary School
15. Temin Jougba Primary School
16. Tiemin Saraf Model Primary School
17. Tondai Primary School
18. Walij Kurum Primary School
19. Waliji Suk Primary School

Source: Dilling County Education Office (2009)

ANNEX 3: ENGLISH SPEAKING PRIMARY SCHOOLS UNDER SPLA CONTROLLED AREA IN KADUGLI COUNTY

1. Achurn Model Primary School
2. Abulella Model Primary School
3. Agiri Primary School
4. Alabu Model Primary School
5. Alkenesia Primary School
6. Almara (SCOC) Primary School
7. Anokta Primary School
8. Arpu Primary School
9. Atura Primary School
10. Changaro Community Primary School
11. ECS Hope Tomolo Primary School
12. Ekowartng Primary School
13. Ekuia Primary School
14. Enbal Primary School
15. Ingbong Model Primary School
16. Jekeba Model Primary School
17. Kadirma Primary School
18. Karm Primary School
19. Karka Model Primary School
20. Karkaria Kayam Primary School
21. Karkari-El-Birra Primary School
22. Kayan Mixed Primary School
23. Korarak Primary School
24. Korera Primary School
25. Kurchi Primary School
26. Lao Community Primary School
27. Logman Primary School
28. Lomon Primary School
29. Mubarak Sarafadin Primary School
30. Ngorban Model Primary School
31. Noke Primary School
32. Ramala Primary School
33. Rekifi Primary School
34. Saraf-Aljamus Primary School
35. Tabari Primary School
36. Tangal Model Primary School
37. Tawulu (SCOC) Primary School
38. Unfua Model Primary School

Source: Kurchi Education Office (2009)

ANNEX 4: ENGLISH SPEAKING SCHOOLS IN SPLA CONTROLLED AREA IN LAGAWA COUNTY

1. Karalanya Primary School
2. Lumrick East Primary School
3. Lumrick West Primary School
4. Saada Model Primary School
5. Shuwa Model Primary School
6. Tabak Primary School
7. Tima Nursery Scchool
8. Tima Secondary School

Source: Lagawa County Education Office

ANNEX 5: SOME OF THE AGENCIES AND NGOs SUPPORTING EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN NUBA MOUNTAINS

CARE	Cooperative Assistance and Relief Everywhere
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
IAS	International Aid Services
IRC	International Rescue Committee
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NCDO	Nuba Christian Development Organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NRRDO	Nuba Relief Rehabilitation and Development Organisation
SCD	Save the Children Denmark
SCUS	Save the Children USA
SCUK	Save the Children United Kingdom
UNDP	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees

Source: Regional Education Office, Kauda

ANNEX 6: A poem on "Who is disabled?"

Who is disabled?

If you fail to **see** the potentials in the person but only see the person's disability, then who is **blind?**

If you cannot **hear** your brother's cry for help and justice, then who is **deaf?**

If you cannot **stand up** for the rights of all people, then who is the **cripple?**

If you cannot have the **patience, tolerance and understanding** for individual differences, then who has **mental disability?**

If you do not **communicate** with your sister but separate her from you, then who is **disabled?**

If your heart and mind do not **reach out** to your neighbour, then who has the **handicap?**

Your **attitude** towards persons with **disabilities** can be the biggest handicap!

Remember, behind every person with **disability** there is a **human being** and every human being is equal in the eyes of the Almighty God!

Source: Adapted from the Group Charter of Cape Able Community

ANNEX 7: A poem on "Education?"

EDUCATION

Education! Education! Education!
Oh! With education, ignorance, poverty, tribalism and religious
And internal conflicts will be eradicated!
My dear brothers and sisters, education is the key to life;
The key to success!

Education! Education! Education!
Oh! With education, our off springs will be free to roam anywhere on
Earth and in the garden of Adam and Eve!
With education, common ideologies and communication is possible!
My dear brothers and sisters, education is the key to life;
The key to success!

Education! Education! Education!
Oh! With education peace and stability is possible in our motherland!
My dear brothers and sisters, education is the backbone of our flesh!
The Egyptians are educated, Kenyans are educated and Ugandans are educated!
Where are we Nubians?
My dear brothers and sisters, education is the key to life;
The key to success!

Education! Education! Education!
Oh! With education, we shall get the best and competent farmers, doctors, teachers,
Pilots, engineers and God's servants in our motherland!
Please God help us, help the people of Nuba Mountains to accept education!
My dear brothers and sisters, education is the key to life;
The key to success!

Education! Education! Education!
Oh! Without education, the youngsters of Nuba Mountains will escape and get lost in
Deep escarpments!
They will drown in the pools of illicit wine under a forest of trees!
They will be doomed forever and have no future!
Without education, Nubians will remain slaves of other people forever!
My dear brothers and sisters, remember that education is the key to life;
The key to success!

Thank you!

Poem by: Ms Mariam Malik Tutu
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