'Schools need to adjust themselves toward the kid, not the kid adjusting themselves to the schools'

A social justice and capability approach exploring inclusion of dyslexic students and quality in primary education in Uganda

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Abstract

The paper explores inclusion of dyslexic children in Uganda's primary education system and aims to provide qualitative evidence on barriers and challenges impacting their educational attainments and social inclusion. The paper firstly examines scholarly research on dyslexia and inclusive education and establishes demographic patterns and development trends of inclusive primary education in Uganda. The social justice and capability approach guides the analysis of experiences of relevance, inclusion and democracy dimensions for dyslexic children in Uganda's primary education. The contribution derives from interviews and groups discussion undertaken with key informants working on inclusive education or dyslexia as well as caretakers of dyslexic children in Kampala, Uganda through an exploratory qualitative case study. Findings show a significant relationship between dyslexia and inclusion as well as experiences of quality education in Uganda. Dyslexic students are found to experience exclusion both within schools through structural and institutional barriers within the education system. Dyslexic students are disproportionately affected in educational attainments as negative perceptions and system inabilities to improve their learning hinders them in progression and completion of primary as well as transition to secondary. It is argued that experiences of social exclusion contribute to potential long-term impacts on inclusion of dyslexic children in Uganda.

Key words: dyslexia, quality education, inclusive education, primary education, Uganda

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List of Abbreviations

CELL	Centre for Lifelong Learning
CRANE	Children at Risk Action Network
GOU	Government of Uganda
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MOGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
NPA	National Planning Authority
NUDIPU	National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda
PLE	Primary Leaving Examinations
RASDO	Rise and Shine Dyslexic Organisation
SCT	Special Children's Trust
UDHS	Uganda Demographic Health Survey
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNEB	Uganda National Examinations Board
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USE	Universal Secondary Education

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1. Introduction

''I don't understand this child because he is actually very, very good in many things. And yet very bad in *the things that matter*'' (Namaganda, 18 April 2019); this quote reflects a concern raised by caretakers with dyslexic children in Kampala, Uganda. It indicates underlying challenges in Uganda's education system in enabling development of 'the things that matter' or working with things the child is 'very, very good in'. Amidst challenges in offering quality education, Uganda faces challenges in inclusion of learners disadvantaged due to reasons such as disability (Kristensen et al. 2006; Wasswa-Matovu 2009).

The World Health Organization (2011) estimated more than one in ten of countries' populations to have some form of disability influencing education and employment opportunities (Nuwagaba and Rule, 2016). Uganda's 2016 Demographic Health Survey (UDHS) estimated that twenty percent of Uganda's population had difficulty in atleast one disability; seeing, hearing, communicating, remembering or concentrating, walking or climbing steps, and washing or dressing (UBOS and ICF, 2018). Between one in five to one in ten of the world's population is estimated to have dyslexia, a type of learning disability that briefly put means challenges in reading and spelling. Dyslexia has been tied to barriers in accessing education and social exclusion (Adlof and Hogan, 2018; Anderson and Meier-Hedde, 2011; Leseyane et al., 2018).

1.1 Aim and research question

The paper aims to explore how dyslexic children can be disproportionality affected and excluded in Uganda's primary education system following continuous critiques of education quality (Wasswa-Matovu, 2009). Under the overarching quality education theme, issues of relevance, inclusion and democratic participation in education are explored through inclusion of dyslexic learners. The paper aims to provide qualitative evidence revealing barriers faced by dyslexic students in primary education and its impact through the following research question;

> *Which key barriers exist for children with dyslexia in accessing quality primary education in Uganda and how does it affect their educational achievements and inclusion?*

The paper employs the following sub-research questions;

i. What is the awareness and knowledge among primary schools and households on dyslexia in Uganda?
ii. What key barriers exist in Uganda's primary education to the learning development of dyslexic students?
iii. What is the impact of existing awareness and barriers on the educational achievements of dyslexic children at primary education levels and in transitioning to secondary education?
iv. What opportunities exist to increase learning of dyslexic students to generate capabilities valued in Uganda?

1.2 Definitions

Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a learning disability of neurobiological origin affecting difficulties in accurate or fluent word recognition resulting in reading and spelling problems despite other cognitive abilities (Leseyane et al. 2018; Olagboyega, 2008). Mismatch between intelligence and ability to learn reflects that dyslexia is not inability to learn but hindered without provision of effective teaching. Globally, reading and spelling are recognised as some of the most fundamental core skills contributing to academic achievement and lifelong learning (Trudell et al., 2012) highlighting dyslexia's linkages to sustainable development (UN, 2015). The Ugandan definition includes limitation of participation (MOGLSD, 2006).

Inclusive and special needs education

Inclusive education concerns participation and inclusion of marginalised or vulnerable groups in mainstream education (Kamenopoulou, 2018). In Uganda, inclusive education refers to mainstream 'typical' public and private schools. Inclusive education is referred to as, 'Children learning together in the same classroom, using materials appropriate to their various needs, and participating in the same lessons and recreation' (NPA, 2017:15). *Special needs education* embraces those schools that specifically seek to include and target learners with special needs (NPA, 2017).

1.3 Study originality and relevance

Information connecting dyslexia, inclusive education and development seem to evade research and legislative policies, guidelines with limited distinctions between disabilities (MOGLSD,

2017; NPA, 2017). Uganda's primary education is continuously criticised for limited quality resulting in high drop-out, poor completion and transition to secondary (Wasswa-Matovu, 2009). Amidst limited capacity, the topic is found relevant in Uganda due to challenges arising from the country's three percent yearly population growth (MOGLSD, 2017) and limited knowledge and information on dyslexia and its impact in Uganda.

1.4 Delimitations

The paper focuses on primary education as early detection of dyslexia is recommended (Fawcett, 2011). Studying dyslexia within primary helps discern patterns of its impacts on education and its influence on transformation to secondary. The study embraces both public and private primary schools due to limited knowledge on dyslexia and with the expectation to reveal influences of socioeconomic circumstances. The study narrows in on dyslexia to refrain from the dominant research discourse classifying people with disabilities as a homogenous, uniformly vulnerable category as criticised by ethics research on disability (Nuwagaba and Rule 2015).

1.5 Structure

The paper firstly provides an overview of existing research on inclusive education and dyslexia. Uganda's demographic patterns and education system are introduced with attention to inclusion. *Quality education* is conceptualised while the *social justice and capability approach* and its relevance, inclusion and democracy dimensions are presented as guiding frameworks for exploring inclusion of dyslexic children in Uganda's primary education system. The above leads to a concluding discussion on barriers to inclusion of dyslexic children and its impact on their educational attainments.

2. Navigating research on inclusive education and dyslexia

Reviewing existing literature reveals that literature on inclusive education and dyslexia is scarce in Uganda, a dominant trend from the Global South (Kamenopoulou, 2018). Rather than inclusion, research on dyslexia examined its connection to neurological and pedagogical perspectives (Blackler 2008; Le Fanu 2015; Nakibirango 2016; Okech 1999). With the paper's exploration of interlinkages between quality education, inclusive education and dyslexia, the following emphasises global frameworks and theoretical contributions.

2.1 Research on inclusive education

Attention to special needs education and inclusive education began in Western countries in the early 1980s through promotion of either partial or full integration of disabled learners into mainstream schools (Kristensen et al. 2006; Kamenopoulou 2018). Polat (2011) highlighted that integration was typically promoted without advancement of necessary support to enable full participation of disabled learners while remaining at policy not implementation levels. Here, integration referred to full or partial inclusion while inclusion embodied processes of changing values, attitudes, policies and practices within the school for disadvantaged groups. Inclusion entailed values aiming to maximise the participation of all and education through elimination of exclusionary and discriminatory practices (Polat, 2011).

Quality of education is a well-explored topic in Uganda with Universal Primary Education (UPE) bringing high enrolment levels but also increasing challenges to the education system. Quality indicators majorly explored quantitative ratios such as pupil/textbook, pupil/teacher and pupil/classroom (Wasswa-Matovu, 2009; Blumberg, 2008; Nyenje, 2016; Nyenje and James, 2016; Nyenje and Nkata, 2016). A number of authors brought issues of inclusion into the debate of challenges in offering quality education through effects and changes brought by UPE centred on the country's ability to increase *access* to education, primarily by those previously restricted by socio-economic circumstances (Ssewamala et al. 2011; Wasswa-Matovu 2009; Olanrewaju et al. 2015). Wasswa-Matovu's (2009) examination of disadvantages for learners following UPE captured groups experiencing disadvantages as girls, physically disabled children, orphans, street children, internally displaced children, nomadic children and poor children amounting to about one million children. He criticised UPE's failure

to respond to or compensate for factors in children's environments that contribute to exclusion or poor performance. The inclusion debate therefore seems to focus less on including learning disabilities as disadvantaged groups but focus on rights-based approaches. Martha Nussbaum's (2003) capability approach advanced inclusion of disability into the inclusion debate with quality education and is increasingly included globally.

2.2 Research on dyslexia

Dyslexia research revolves around neurological and pedagogical perspectives while few sources also examine dyslexia within education and development which could otherwise add to debates on barriers and inclusion. Recognised as a universal phenomenon (Anderson and Meier-Hedde 2011), dyslexia brings challenges as literacy is positioned as an essential competency to ensure effective participation in societies underpinning access to all learning areas (Adlof and Hogan 2018). Common misconceptions and misunderstandings on dyslexia has led to preferential usage of terms such as 'learning disability' or 'specific learning difficulty' being used interchangeably. According to Adlof and Hogan (2018), research on dyslexia largely explores themes of students identified as 'dyslexic', tools used to identify students, support services available and the ones providing these services (Adlof and Hogan 2018; Kamenopoulou 2018).

Definitions and causes

Scholarly research widely agrees that dyslexia involves reading and spelling difficulties without a known cause (Adlof and Hogan, 2018). Research has also persistently argued that biological traits underpin the causes of the condition (Adlof and Hogan 2018). In the 1950s, research moved away from the idea that dyslexia was inherited to connecting it to a visual disability influencing reading and reasoning skills. This was followed by the most prominently researched and developed theory - the *phonological deficit* explanation - which links dyslexia to inability in linking sounds with symbols in reading and spelling (Leafstedt et. al., 2004). A case study on a dyslexic student by Karanda and Sholapurwala (as cited in Anderson and Meier-Hedde, 2011) associated dyslexia with the occurrence of multiple other learning difficulties.

Learning development

Fawcett (2011) promoted early detection in early childhood or during first school year to improved learning outcomes. Failing to read before third or fourth year of schooling has been connected with adverse life-long reading difficulties. Evidence suggests that school administered tests should only identify risks, not diagnose dyslexic students. Early detection should be followed by direct and early interventions including individualised learning methods. A case study on a dyslexic child in India highlighted that teachers only noticed learning difficulties in the third grade as the student was 'bright with good oral language' during the first school years (Anderson and Meier-Hedde, 2011:67); emphasising difficulties in early detection. Early detection has been connected to improvements in long-term costs of education and learning along with peers (Esser and Schmidt, 1994).

Teaching methods must additionally be flexible to fit the needs of dyslexic students. The case study by Karanda and Sholapurwala (as cited in Anderson and Meier-Hedde, 2011) showed that the Indian dyslexic student became reluctant to learn to read and write. Information and communications technology (ICT) has been connected to improved reading capabilities (Swanson & Hoskyn, 2000; Pressley, 2001). Teaching strategies and use of instructional materials and resources should include a wide variety of options to lead to improved learning outcomes for dyslexic students (Department of Education and Skills, 2004; Marshall, 2003; Lyon et al., 2003). Olagboyega (2008) argued that learners with learning difficulties are not necessarily requiring specialist support to access curriculum but the curriculum itself should broaden to include them. Dyslexia is a permanent condition requiring continued interventions (Alexander and Slinger, 2004).

Dyslexia and inclusion

Dyslexia is mainly studied as a phenomenon within the Global North with exceptions from the Global South (Anderson and Meier-Hedde 2011). Mweli and Kalenga (2009) observed that a majority of learners experiencing learning and physical disabilities have negative experiences in schools in the Global South such as ridicule, labelling and exclusion (Selvan, 2004 as cited in Lesayne et. al., 2018). Bhengu's (2006) study showed that disabled children experience social exclusion in being accepted in classrooms in inclusive schools. Leseyane et al's., (2018) study from South Africa revealed barriers in dyslexic students' inclusion through ill-treatment by fellow students and teachers reporting that students were despised, ridiculed, bullied and

undermined. The study by Karanda and Sholapurwala (as cited in Anderson and Meier-Hedde, 2011:68) showed that school authorities did not offer guidance when diagnosing dyslexia. The study additionally showed that parents were aware but teachers were the main source. Scholars Anderson and Meier-Hedde (2011:xiv) argued that human capital is lost worldwide due to the 'ignorance and misunderstanding' of dyslexia.

2.3 Research gaps

Existing literature on learning disabilities and dyslexia in its relation to a country's education system appears limited in the Global South; increased focus on inclusive education would otherwise imply an opening for consideration of disabilities. Literature connecting disabilities to development and education most often use the homogeneous idea of disabilities as criticised (Nuwagaba and Rule, 2015). Leafstedt et. al., (2004) argued that the dominance of the phonological theory has meant, 'it is now almost impossible to define dyslexia as a category of reading disability that can be distinguished from other possible reasons for reading failure'. Other reading difficulties could be caused by external factors such of low general ability, poor teaching, family stress and lack of family support. Research examining inclusion of dyslexic learners in public primary education focused in on social exclusion elements (Leseyane et al. 2018) rather than structural or institutional barriers that may arise within the education system. The case study by Karanda and Sholapurwala (as cited in Anderson and Meier-Hedde, 2011) however brought attention to the lack of acknowledgement and action from the school administration in dealing with a dyslexic student. It becomes clear that data on dyslexic children beyond issues of social exclusion from the Global South is widely lacking to inform stakeholders such as teachers and policymakers in decision-making efforts targeting dyslexia.

3. Contextual background

The section accounts for the demographic patterns and the political environment on inclusive education in Uganda to create an understanding of the demographic dividend's role in pressuring the education system to cater for the number of students in the face of the UPE.

3.1 Uganda's population and education system

Counting more than 42 million people and a three percent yearly population growth and increase in school-age population, Uganda faces immense challenges in bringing socio-economic transformation with a three percent population growth (MOGLSD, 2017). Long-lasting high fertility momentum currently at 5.3 means that populations projections estimated Uganda will count 84 million in 2040 (NPA 2014; UNFPA 2019). Uganda has the world's second youngest population combined with a Gross Domestic Product of 25.995 billion USD and status as a low-income country (World Bank 2019a). The country's education system is challenged by its steadily growing population (MOES, 2017).

Uganda education system derives from the colonial systems (Ngaka, Openjuru, and Mazur 2012) built in a three-tier system; seven years of primary, six years of secondary (4 years of ordinary-level and two years of advanced-level) and three to five years of higher education (MOES, 2017). Its development has been largely influenced by the structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s wherein public expenditures on education reduced significantly (Heidhues and Obare, 2011). In 1997, the Government of Uganda (GOU) adopted UPE and as the first country in Africa, universal secondary education (USE) in 2007 resulting in unprecedented enrolment levels. UPE intended to develop relevant human resources with the maintenance of quality education while making basic education accessible, relevant, affordable and equitable to all (MOES, 2004; Wasswa-Matovu 2009:273). Studies showed that government funds for UPE were only able to reach 15 percent of schools' 'total student-year costs'. Currently, many schools resort to other means of raising funds (Vokes and Mills 2015). Resource allocation for education remains low with 11.08 percent of the budget committed to the education sector in 2016/2017 (MOES, 2017) declining from 23.8 in 2007 (Ssewamala et al. 2011). A large number of primary schools in Uganda are still private and accounted for 36 percent of primary schools in 2015 whereas higher quality can be expected in private school

available to people from higher socio-economic circumstances (MOES, 2017). A majority of Ugandans have either no formal education or only some primary education. 54 percent of both men and women in Uganda have not completed primary education (UBOS and ICF, 2018). Under the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES), Uganda's decentralised structure counting 122 districts (MOES, 2017) means resources are largely diverted to local governments charged with implementation of education policies in Uganda. As an autonomous institution, Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) undertakes the Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) in primary 7 determining the students' possibility of transitioning from primary to secondary schooling (UNEB 2014; UNEB 2019; Ssewamala et al. 2011).

3.2 Universal primary education - Accessible and equitable for all?

With the introduction of UPE, the gross enrolment rate rose from 81 percent for boys and 69 percent for girls in 1995 (Lincove 2012) to 113.1 percent for both genders in 2007 (MOGLSD, 2017). The 2016 UDHS showed 84 percent of girls and 83 percent of boys of school going age (6-12 years) were attending school. In 2017, 8.841 million children were enrolled in primary. The number of students completing primary in 2016 were 62 percent while the students transitioning to first year of secondary was a total of 65 percent (UBOS 2019). However, transition rates to year five of secondary – advanced level – was only 25 percent (MOGLSD, 2017). Evidence has connected UPE to increased enrolment of children from poorer households, reduced dropouts related to school costs and near gender parity in terms of enrolment in 2005; serving the government's intent of UPE to work towards poverty reduction and equality (MOES 2004; Crespo Cuaresma and Raggl 2016; Kristensen et al. 2006; Lincove 2012; Busingye and Najjuma 2015, World Bankb, 2019).

Challenges in Uganda's education system include limited skills in educators, poor infrastructure and school management practices that especially affect quality in rural schools. Similarly, lack of supportive academic practices and caretaker support has been linked to diminishing the quality of education offered in Uganda (Banda and Kirunda 2005). Teachers in public schools in Uganda are paid a low amount with teacher motivation suffering from low remuneration, delays in salary payment and even going without payment for several months (Nyenje, 2016). Wasswa-Matovu (2009:275) study showed that three years into UPE implementation, the pupil-textbook ratio was 6:1, the pupil-classroom ratio 98:1 and the pupil-

teacher ratio 65:1. The language of instruction denoting the mother tongue language in all regions until the introduction of English in grade 4 and exam format conducted in English have also been tied to disparities between outcomes for rural and urban learners (Banda and Kirunda, 2005; UNICEF, 2016). The net primary seven completion rate disaggregated by disability status for the population aged 13 years was 9.8 percent for children without a disability and 6.5 percent for those children with disabilities. Literacy rates for persons with disabilities, including those manifesting as learning difficulties, were additionally at 54.7 percent compared to a 75.4 percent for persons with no disability[1] (UBOS, 2017).

3.3 Policy environment

With the country's five-year National Development Plan 2015/2020 and Vision 2040, the GOU evidently emphasises inclusion prohibiting discrimination in areas of education, health and social security. The *Equal Opportunity Act* (2006) and *Persons with Disability Act* (2006) guarantees all with disabilities and special needs the right to education. Concrete action devoted the area more than 10 percent of all educational expenditure and established a specials needs education department at the MOES and a special needs education section at UNEB (MOES, n.d.). Policies and actions overall promote training of special needs teachers or personal, formulation of and designing of inclusive education, structural adaptations, representation in decision-making bodies, accessibility, participation, care and support, socio-economic security, research, communication and budgeting (SIDA 2014; Emong and Eron 2016). The MOGLSD plan for 2017-2019 refers to education only on matters of upgrading education facilities for students with disabilities, hence focusing on physical disabilities (MOGLSD, 2017). The national disability-inclusive planning guidelines for Uganda similarly devote little attention to dyslexia or learning disabilities (NPA, 2017).

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[1] Measured for persons aged 15 and above

4. Theoretical and conceptual grounding

The section introduces the development of conceptualisations of *quality of education* and the *social justice and capabilities approach* developed by Leon Tikly and Angeline M. Barrett (2011) to include inclusion, relevance and democracy in debate on quality education.

4.1 Positioning global frameworks on promoting and investing in education

Schools of research historically explored education's potential to bring economic growth. The 1970s dominant trend expanded with *human capital theory* linking growth and human security with rates of return and economic growth through the role education could play in alleviating poverty, promoting social welfare along with women's empowerment (Sen, 2000). The 2030 Agenda for aimed to, 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' (UN, 2015:14). Education was linked to not only educational expansion but embraced quality in education to ensure benefits are felt by individual learners (Tikly and Barrett, 2013:1; UNESCO, 2008).

Debates on quality education is driven by the dominant theories of the human capital and human rights approaches. Human capital shifted the focus on *capital* as merely economic accumulation to include productive quality of humans. Education, learning and skill formation are all integral parts to humans becoming more productive and contributing to economic expansion (Cypher and Dietz, 2014; Sen, 2001). Government investment in its human capital will therefore act to enhance labour market participation of different social groups and affect societal inequalities (Mkandawire, 2001:5-6). The human rights approach embraces human development away from the economic focus. Human rights are the aim of development where education is central to securing rights to education, rights in education and rights granted to the human through education (Tikly, 2011; Tikly and Barrett, 2011).

4.2 Positioning conceptualisations on quality of education

Tikly and Barrett (2011:9) defines quality education as one that, '... provides all learners with the capabilities they require to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual well-

being'. Education must as a basic entity provide the individual learner with, 'threshold levels of literacy and numeracy as well as life skills, including awareness and prevention of disease' (Ibid:9). Two global frameworks, the Education for All and the Dakar Framework for Action, define quality basic education as enabling learners to acquire literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. Required and valued learning outcomes are context dependent and reliant on communities' experiences of relevance, inclusion and democracy. Tikly and Barrett (2013) pointed to critical disadvantages experienced by marginalised and socioeconomically disadvantaged communities and individuals in benefitting from education due to often unjust distributional patterns of resources. The scholars brought into consideration mother tongue, rurality, socioeconomic circumstances among others as determinants of educational inequality in addition to the macro-level focus of human capital theorists (Tikly and Barrett, 2011).

4.3 Social justice and capability approach

Putting quality of education into a low-income context and redefining what is understood by quality, Tikly and Barrett developed the *social justice and capability approach* building on Nancy Fraser's thoughts on social justice (Lovell, 2007). The approach is deemed relevant by paving the way for an understanding of quality education that considers not only means but embraces cultural norms and values that either enable or stifle development of capabilities for different groups in societies and disadvantaged learners (Tikly and Barrett, 2011). Fraser's social justice emphasises 'parity of participation' and two forms of 'misrepresentation' (Lovell, 2007). Tikly and Barrett draw linkages from misrepresentation to good governance in education embracing issues of participation, voice, accountability and decision-making at different levels of the education system and injustices in communities excluding the participation of some members. Tikly and Barrett argue that some are disadvantaged in being able to influence the form and content of education relevant for their children and in mechanisms for holding schools and the education system accountable (Lovell, 2007; Tikly and Barrett, 2011).

The inclusion dimension

Following the thoughts of Fraser's dimensions of redistribution of resources and socio-cultural recognition (Lovell, 2007), inclusion is greatly concerned with the dimension of *access* to education for all members of a society and ability to achieve desired outcomes. Efficient use

of resources is not only dependent on economic aspects but also the ability of individuals to generate useful and valued capabilities out of these resources. Inclusion requires effective distribution of resources whereas socio-cultural elements highlights the influence that curriculum, pedagogy and management practices have on the individual learner's ability to convert resources into capabilities. This is specifically where marginalised and vulnerable children may have different needs in terms of resource distribution (Tikly and Barrett, 2013).

The question of quality inputs concern both provision of items such as school meals, extra-curricular activities, school materials according to curriculum and language as well as the learner's cognitive level or sanitary facilities for especially girls at secondary levels. Quality monitoring on learning outcomes through disaggregated data is highlighted to reveal social exclusion and areas to be targeted by quality improvement interventions. The inclusion dimension also calls for more qualitative evidence to reveal barriers faced by marginalised learners in a society in their achievements. The differential impact of resources also demands attention to cultural barriers in terms of norms and values' relation to possibilities of accessing resources and converting them into capabilities and functionings (Tikly and Barrett, 2011). Choice and competition between schools is also viewed as a way to encourage better performance of schools through improvement of outcomes. Greater school autonomy such as local decision-making, fiscal decentralisation and parental involvement is positioned as central. Overall, the dimension recognises that learners come from various socio-cultural background with different resource inputs influencing how locally valued capabilities are developed (Tikly and Barrett, 2011).

Relevance dimension

The relevance dimension concerns the substance of outcomes embedded in three areas; 'the extent to which learning outcomes are meaningful for all learners, valued by their communities and consistent with national development priorities in a changing global context' (Tikly and Barrett, 2011:10). Following ideas put forth in social justice, the dimension emphasises the individual's, the community's and national government reasons to value capabilities developed to lead sustainable livelihoods through the schooling system. Disadvantage is often explored from the perspective of socio-economic disadvantage, where recognition of other identities such as faith-based, racial and disabilities are equally important (Tikly and Barrett, 2011).

The democratic dimension

The democratic dimension places emphasis on the role of public participation and voice in decision-making to increase quality of education. The social justice approach brings attention to the fundamentally political nature of the education quality debate. Research within the democratic dimension would largely explore the nature and extent of 'voice' experienced by individuals and groups in the educational debate. It further involves strategies on how to include and strengthen individuals and groups' voice. The dimension also embraces how teaching and curriculum forms citizenship education in creating awareness of and challenging undemocratic processes in the classroom and education system. On a wider political scale, the dimension explores the state's and its political and educational leaders' capacity to initiate, implement and embed change drawing not only on capacity building but also on cultural and moral dimensions of leadership. The democratic dimension additionally emphasises the need for disbanding parity of participation at both global and national levels to mark the way for public debate on and demands for quality education (Tikly, 2011; Tikly and Barrett, 2011).

5. Methodology

This section discusses data collection methods employed while presenting justifications on research design, sample of informants, techniques and processes of analysis. Reflections on ethical concerns and limitations are also included.

5.1 Philosophical assumption

The underlying philosophical assumption guiding the paper is the transformative worldview (Creswell, 2014) focusing on a marginalised group and largely including research from critical theorists including those focusing on disabilities (Creswell, 2014). The worldview guided this research in questions during fieldwork and foci during analysis in its aim to expose educational challenges faced by families with dyslexic children in order to provide a 'voice' for this group. While relying heavily on informants' view following a social constructivist worldview (Creswell, 2007), the aim was not on how meanings were constructed in interactions. It was rather on accumulating knowledge from experts and experiences from caretakers that were all interconnected in knowing barriers and challenges lived by dyslexic primary students. Inquiry sought to generate information – not for the wider political debate – but rather to address social issues by identifying challenging areas with an aim of providing solutions or areas requiring action not direct change (Creswell, 2007; Creswell, 2014).

5.2 Site selection and description

Uganda, as mentioned, has for long grappled with offering quality primary education following UPE. While policies speak to mainstreaming disability inclusion, dyslexia is mostly excluded from policies and guidelines while awareness of the condition is poor in the country. These learners may be disproportionately affected in the quality of education and Uganda therefore marks a suitable country for exploring barriers and challenges. Kampala, or the central region, has the highest level of median years of education (7.4 years for women and 8.7 years for men) which could indicate that awareness of learning difficulties and education challenges might be at its highest among people whose children are receiving education in the capital city. Urban women and men (5.6 years and 6.1 years respectively) receive significantly more years of education than their rural counterparts (2.9 years women and 3.5 years men). With a national

net attendance ratio[2] at 83.7 percent, Kampala region has one of the highest enrolment rates (UBOS and ICF, 2018).

5.3 Research design

An exploratory single case study design guides this study in detailed and intensive analysis exploring linkages between inclusion of learners in Uganda's primary education and quality education (Bryman, 2012). Flyvbjerg's (2006) critique that a single case cannot be transferred into an understanding of a wider phenomenon is recognised by focusing on identifying issues and commonality in the phenomenon experienced itself (Baxter and Jack, 2008). The study is therefore bound in space and time in the exploration of barriers and challenges arising for dyslexic learners in accessing inclusive education with interest in the 'how' and 'why' questions (Yin in Baxter and Jack, 2008; Yin, 2009:224). The research design also informs the inclusion of multiple source variations of both key informants, informants and secondary sources to support and explore arguments (Creswell, 2014). When the predominant research design is a case study, research tends to be more inductive in its relation between theory and research. This paper adopts largely deductive elements as the social justice and capability approach informed the direction of the questions in its intended exploration of the inclusion, relevance and democratic dimension. The study is not undertaking hypothesis testing as the deductive approach. Research identified only minor contributions to the theoretical frameworks (Bryman, 2012).

5.4 Sampling strategy

The relatively undocumented nature of dyslexia and education in Uganda called for a purposive and non-random sampling strategy with key informants strategically chosen and acting as an entry-point for contact with caretakers (Creswell, 2009). Key informants were professionals selected due to their work in diverse areas on inclusive education, learning disabilities or specifically dyslexia in Uganda. Interviews were conducted until saturation was reached and patterns and themes started repeating themselves among key informants (Given and Reid, 2016:135). Snowballing sampling was applied by letting key informants guide on additional

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[2] Percentage of school-age population attending primary school

study participants (Bryman, 2012:424). Caretakers were selected based on criteria of having a child with dyslexia enrolled or previously enrolled in Rise and Shine Dyslexic Organisation (RASDO). The informant's similarity in not only having lived experiences to share but all having children with dyslexia falls into the category of a phenomenological study. The paper's inclusion of multiple sources calls for maximation of cases to gain variations in perceptions underlying the papers' main findings (Creswell, 2014). Issues of awareness, knowledge, barriers, challenges and opportunities when it comes to dyslexia were explored within the overall themes of inclusion, relevance and democratic dimensions of quality education. While the research questions were only amended slightly, the key areas explored did change which partially follow Creswell's notion of the constant development of the research questions (Creswell, 2011:19).

5.5 Sample

Data collection took place during a two-week period (April 9th to April 23rd 2019) in Kampala following a longer period spent in Kampala to gain familiarity with the context and initiate contact with key informants. The themes explored in the interviews were primarily that of awareness and knowledge on dyslexia, barriers for dyslexic students to inclusion in primary schools, impacts on educational attainments and opportunities for dyslexic students in Uganda. Data collection led to a total of six key informant interviews, two informant interviews with caretakers and two smaller group discussions (2 participants in each) with caretakers.

Key informants

The six key informants were interviewed through largely semi-structured interviews using an interview guide (See Appendix A). The semi-structured nature therefore allowed for flexibility to explore other aspects when unexpected themes and arguments arose (Bryman, 2012). Table 1 below includes a brief description of the key informants regarding their professional expertise and role in their respective organisations working either on inclusive or special needs education, disabilities or dyslexia.

Name	Title	Organisation	Date of interview
Luyima, Ronald	Programme Officer Inclusive Education	National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU)	April 9, 2019
Namaganda, Florence	Founder and Director	Special Children's Trust (SCT) (Mukisa Foundation and Dawn Special Children's Centre)	April 17, 2019
S. Kamaya, Julie	Projects Manager Education	Children at Risk Action Network (CRANE)	April 18, 2019
Semanda, Richard	Chairman Board of Directors	Rise and Shine Dyslexic Organisation (RASDO)	April 19, 2019
Nakibirango, Jesca	Executive Director & Teacher (RASDO)	Rise and Shine Dyslexic Organisation (RASDO)	April 19, 2019
Dr. Njuki, Paul	Director	Centre for Lifelong Learning (CELL)	April 23, 2019

TABLE 1. LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS

The different professional backgrounds of the key informants informed the decision of interviewing them. From the Inclusive Education Officer at the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU), the Education Manager at Children at Risk Action Network (CRANE) involved in developing the National Special Needs Assessment tool for the MOES, Uganda's certified expert on dyslexia Dr. P. Njuki to the founders of RASDO; all key informants paved the way for being able to generate in-depth knowledge on dyslexia and education in Uganda (Creswell, 2009).

All interviews were carried out in-person at their respective workplaces to provide an insight and understanding of the different organisations. The time frame mostly increased dependent on the key informants' involvement with specifically dyslexia in Uganda allowing for in-depth questions beyond those on inclusive/special needs education and lasted between 30 minutes to one hour.

Caretakers

Access to caretakers including one grandmother and five mothers of dyslexic children were facilitated through the founders of RASDO. In addition to having had a child currently or previously enrolled at RASDO, other selection criteria included to have caretakers (both parents and grandparents), both single and married caretakers and all living in the site selected; the Greater region of Kampala. Only females were selected due to the RASDO founders' advice that the male partner would typically be unwilling. This also informed the choice of exploring family relations through interviews, referring to the snowballing sampling strategy. Informants were interviewed in two interviews and two smaller groups discussion (two participants in each) to allow for the mothers to feel comfortable during the interviews. The

interviews took place either at the workplace of three of the informants or at RASDO. An interpreter was needed for two of the informants; the grandmother and the single mother. While both proved to understand English, an interpreter helped translate their responses to enable the informants to express themselves fluently (Hammett, Twyman and Graham, 2015). Table 2 presents a list of the individual interviews and two smaller group discussions including characteristics of the informants.

Participants	Sex	Region	Relation to dyslexic child	Household status	Date of interview
A. Informant interviews					
Caretaker 1	Female	Central	Mother	Married	April 22, 2019
Caretaker 4	Female	Central	Mother	Single mother	April 23, 2019
B. Group discussions					
Caretaker 2 and Caretaker 3	Female	Central	Mother	Married	April 22, 2019
	Female	Central	Grandmother	Grandmother	April 22, 2019
Caretaker 5 and Caretaker 6	Female	Central	Mother	Married	April 23, 2019
	Female	Central	Mother	Married	April 23, 2019

TABLE 2. LIST OF INFORMANTS AND GROUP DISCUSSIONS - CARETAKERS

From an epistemological perspective, interviews progressed in a way where the participant and researcher lessened the distance between us (Creswell 2007:16–18) and gained a common understanding of challenges and opportunities to dyslexic children.

5.6 Data analysis

Interviews were recorded with permission from the informants and transcribed word by word immediately, all denaturalised focusing entirely on spoken words. This was chosen to describe and gather information in an exploratory manner, it did not seek to capture 'hidden meanings' hinted by intonations and emphasis' (Mero-Jaffe, 2011).

Thematic analysis was applied to identify patterns in explanations on inclusive education (Braun and Clarke, 2012). The coding process was commenced by coding words and short phrases in pre-codes on paper to gather a significant overview of striking passages; those 'codable moments' worthy of attention (Boyatzis, 1998). Themes were explored through descriptive coding highlighting structures and processes and pattern coding helping disseminate consequences. All this helped generate some key assertions about the topic, not

formal theories. While initial coding was descriptive, focused coding was later used to code data based on thematic and conceptual similarity. Coding was conducted manually as the author as a beginner to software programmes such as NVivo felt that it initiated a stronger connection to the 'codable moments' (Saldana, 2009). Coding was initially theory-driven by incorporating values on education informed by the social justice and capability approach as in the interview guide. Objectives were to thematically structure themes that arose not frequency of codes (Creswell, 2014). Out of the coding process, fourteen main themes came forth and were categorised under the four main themes guided by the theoretical framework (see Figure 1, section 6.)

5.7 Validity and potential biases

The qualitative approach allowed for a rich dataset with coherent and complementary data achieved. Transcripts were checked multiple times to ensure accuracy and consistency in codes (Creswell, 2009). The translator was reminded of her positionality preceding the interviews (Hammett, Twyman and Graham, 2015). Field notes were taken during and after interviews to keep details in mind. Informants openly shared about challenges in dyslexic children's access to inclusive education and the caretakers openly spoke about their experiences and hardships. Their trustworthiness was never doubted. It was however noted that knowledge and understanding of dyslexia was still low among all the interviewed caretakers. Similarly, key informants at RASDO appeared to still be learning about the condition. It cannot be denied that the children of the interviewed caretakers and children attending RASDO may not only have been dyslexic and challenges in primary education may have been influenced by multiple factors.

A bias in respect to enrolment of dyslexic students may have arisen from selecting Kampala as the place of inquiry due to higher enrolment rates in the capital city but allowed for more in-depth analysis due to potentially higher awareness in Kampala. The situation for children with learning disabilities may be very different for children in more rural areas or other regions of Uganda.

5.8 Ethical considerations

The study purpose was clearly communicated to all informants when seeking informed consent (See Appendix B) from all informants who were reminded of their privacy. Caretakers have been anonymised to ensure confidentiality. Findings were additionally promised to be communicated primarily to key informants to enable them to access more qualitative data compiled on dyslexia in Uganda and share experiences reported by the informants, to give back for their time and effort (Creswell, 2007). One area that was navigated during the interviews was that of not promising any direct changes as a result of the caretakers' participation in the study. They were however very interested in hearing about experiences from other countries, where reassurance could be given that their children were at least not alone in suffering from dyslexia worldwide. Although Creswell (2007) argues that sharing minimises the 'bracketing' and reduces information shared by informants in case studies, this information was only shared at the end of the interviews following requests from the caretakers.

6. Findings

Findings on awareness and knowledge of dyslexia as well as barriers and challenges for dyslexic students to receive inclusive primary education are presented below referring back to the social justice and capability approach. Fourteen themes shown in figure 1 below came forth through the coding process and were categorised into the four main themes explored with guidance from the theoretical framework.

AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE	LEARNING BARRIERS	IMPACT ON DYSLEXIC STUDENTS	EFFORTS TO IMPROVE
MISCONCEPTIONS AND UNPOPULARITY	LATE DETECTION	POOR PERFORMANCE AND ADVANCEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOL	CONTEXT-BASED SOLUTIONS
SCHOOL AWARENESS AND PERCEPTIONS	STRUCTURAL BARRIERS IN PRIMARY		TEACHER CAPACITY
	INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS IN PRIMARY	POOR ACCESS TO SECONDARY SCHOOL	
HOUSEHOLD AWARENESS AND PERSISTENCY	HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT		HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
	FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS	SOCIAL EXCLUSION	

FIGURE 1. MODEL OF THEMES - INCLUSION OF DYSLEXIC LEARNERS

6.1 Awareness of and knowledge on dyslexia

Knowledge and awareness on dyslexia is limited in Uganda across the political, school and household and community level; 'I think the issue of not having data arises from the fact that we don't know what disability is. We are not sure what kind of disabilities we have in our country' (Kamaya, 18 April 2019). Dyslexia was generally perceived as overlooked; 'At the end of the day, people avoid the disability and look at those simple things that could be addressed' (Luyima, 9 April 2019). This was echoed, 'Unfortunately, there is no happy story that in Uganda, there was a teacher who acknowledged that I had a problem and they helped me' (Namaganda, 17 April 2019).

6.1.1 Misconceptions and unpopularity

Despite embracing disability inclusion, awareness could be low among Ugandan parliamentarians, 'The parliamentarians we were advocating to had no clue about disability' (Namaganda, 17 April 2019). Consequently, learning disabilities had increasingly become one of the key priorities of the country's national organisations working with disabilities as they are 'not always popular' (Luyima, 9 April 2019). Unpopularity of learning disabilities were also embodied in existing perceptions, 'So it has been really a bit hard to make sure that they [teachers] feel that actually she has a problem. Because they believe that the disability that they know, it has to be physical, not any mental' (Caretaker 5, 23 April 2019). Misconceptions were prevalent as it was argued that Ugandans believe dyslexia to be a disorder, not a disability; 'A disorder is something that you can always avoid, you can always correct' (Luyima, 9 April 2019). It was seen as a disease by some; ''Oh my God, this disease', like she can even, like he could even spread it to others' (Caretaker 6, 23 April 2019).

6.1.2 School awareness and perceptions

School administration

Awareness was seen as low, 'The general schooling system, they find a lot of difficulties because the schools do not understand. The teachers do not understand. Even the students themselves do not understand their problem' (Caretaker 1, 22 April 2019). Another parent implied that the administration was unable to accept dyslexic students; 'Where are they going to end up? Though they are sharp mentally, but they always tell us that - the head of academics - we don't assess in talking, we assess in writing' (Caretaker 6, 23 April 2019). The statement indicates that the school administration perceived the dyslexic student as unfit for the school, implying that both access to education and ability to achieve desired outcomes are limited for dyslexic children. Perceptions were connected to inability to tolerate these children;

> *'I find that most kids with dyslexia will have some… I don't know it is like coping mechanisms that turn out to be a bit like things that the school system, Uganda will not tolerate. Stuff like… He cannot. They hate reading, they will hate certain subjects like reading, like writing. So, in those subjects, they will act up and become really… disturb the class and all that. But it is their world basically. And because of that the teacher, they will be like what' (Namaganda, 17 April 2019).*

Teachers

Awareness among teachers were described as low by all, 'The teachers in the school, in these other inclusive schools, they really don't know much about all of that' (Caretaker 6, 23 April 2019). Namaganda (17 April 2019) expressed that children's learning difficulties would be known by teachers but would be explained by other causes, 'Most of the time they think the child is, the child is stubborn'. The children were typically seen as 'stubborn', 'not able', 'not intelligent enough', 'too weak' and 'too slow' (Caretaker 6, 23 April 2019). Teachers would also blame learning difficulties on other reasons;

> *''Your boy is too weak. Your boy is too slow'. They could complain, they could tell me that he is too slow, his book is too dirty, his work is not readable, his letters are not lined. They told me but they never knew the condition also' (Caretaker 6, 23 April 2019).*

6.1.3 Household awareness and persistency

Part of a consistent theme, Caretaker 1 (22 April 2019) reported that while knowing about dyslexia, knowledge was low, 'The knowledge is very limited. Very limited. Very limited. Yeah, now I just keep reading about it but still I am… still confused'. Informants did not always fully understand dyslexia, 'But maybe that is normal with the people with dyslexia, I do not know' (Caretaker 1, 22 April 2019). One parent expressed that others associated her son's dyslexia with him being HIV positive; ' 'Your boy does not learn well. He does not keep the things.' But most people were saying that it was because the boy was HIV positive' (Caretaker 4, 23 April 2019). Describing parents from inclusive schools, Namaganda highlighted, 'But the frustration for these parents, 'I don't understand how he is able to commit everything to memory and yet, he cannot write English'' (17 April 2019). This quote reflects parental frustrations and implies that dyslexia - hindered by structures of the education system - impacted the child's ability to learn 'the things that matter' referring to ability to develop valued capacities for community members.

Caretakers generally reported three sources of information for figuring out their children's condition; namely, health facilities, other parents and online sources. All resulted from their own persistency in figuring out why their children were having difficulties learning in school. Arguably, not all caretakers have access to such services due to socioeconomic circumstances. Rural and urban disparities were also described, 'So you see that is somebody here in the city

but how many more parents are out there and are frustrated at their children who cannot write?' (Kamaya, 18 April 2019). Information promotion is otherwise advocated for to increase the democratic dimension within quality education.

Two key informants expressed that household-level perceptions on children with dyslexia fell under the category of how it is was a 'disorder', or something that could be fixed; as echoed in awareness among parents who knew their children's condition;

> *'One girl has just been reintegrated into the mainstream. Yeah when she came she was obviously dyslexic and the school that she had been in was really struggling with her but with a few accommodations, she learned and I still feel it was premature of her to take her out because you know there are certain conditions that need those accommodations for life. But when the report card changes and the kid starts reading more than they did before, the family, the organisations are thinking 'ah she is cured of the condition now, she is okay to be mainstream'' (Namaganda, 17 April 2019).*

The situation described by Namaganda indicates that the school's knowledge of the child's dyslexia either was unable to or had not communicated clearly to the parents an understanding of dyslexia. One mother summed up awareness on dyslexia in Uganda, 'According to the people you have approached, even in your country – are there children like mine?' (Caretaker 4, 23 April 2019). Her inquiry as a mother who already had a child enrolled in a school for dyslexic children but still unsure as to how widespread dyslexia is prominently shows that awareness is limited and frustration among these parents are understandably arising.

6.2 Barriers to an inclusive learning environment

Barriers to an inclusive learning environment were tied to awareness and knowledge, community and household dynamics and structural and institutional barriers in education.

6.2.1 Late detection

Late detection due to limited awareness was reported as an issue by informants. One boy was 16 when in primary 7, whereas with a standard annual progression the child would have been twelve. Njuki indicated that dyslexia is very difficult to detect before primary 3 in Uganda;

> *'... when you are in kindergarten, you are manipulating staff and you are like looking at pictures, you are doing colouring and all these things. I think dyslexia manifests clearly*

around grade 3. (...) Some years because they are still doing okay. It is not until they have started giving them homework and so on that it becomes an issue' (Njuki, 22 April 2019).

This argument shows that there might be challenges with the current interventions as students often – following Njuki's account – primarily come to his school that teaches dyslexic students in a targeted way from grade 3 onwards. Literature suggested that early intervention should be promoted earlier than at that level to overcome long-term consequences. Luyima pointed to the role that socio-economic circumstances play on delaying detection of learning difficulties in students. He connected costs of nursery and pre-primary[3] to lower enrolment. Consequently, he argued for a correlation between those students who only access school at primary and difficulties with catching up – which is only accentuated for students with learning disabilities (Luyima, 9 April 2019).

6.2.2 Structural barriers in primary education

Class size

Limited resources allowing large class sizes was associated with hindering the learning development of primary students, 'You see the public education; one should be that we stop having these massive big classes' (Namaganda, 17 April 2019). Research on dyslexia suggested that learning should be directed towards the individual learner where large classes can be harmful. Caretaker 4 (21 April 2019) expressed that her son was still not progressing after enrolling him in a school with only fifteen students per class demonstrating the importance of targeted interventions additionally.

Learning resources and materials

Access to learning materials citing additional costs was argued to disadvantage dyslexic children. With limited expenditures on education, private schools were highlighted as a place that could offer resources and materials needed by all learners (Namaganda, 17 April 2019). Resources is highly connected to the options for inclusive education: 'You cannot include such children in a school where you have not made the resources for them to be included. And, we have to prepare children for a world out there which is full of all the other people. There is not a world for dyslexic people only' (Kamaya, 18 April 2019). This reflects a concern in the

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[3] Nursery and pre-primary institutions remain only privately-funded in Uganda (MOES, 2017)

patterns of exclusion that can arise with the current trend where students with special needs such as dyslexia have to seek out private, special needs schools instead of inclusive schools in Uganda.

Teacher motivation

Human resources, teacher salaries and teacher curriculum were connected with limited teacher motivation hindering attention given to learners with difficulties; 'For the teacher to understand or people to understand that a learner with dyslexia can learn, if a teacher is made aware of the needs of this particular learner' (Luyima, 9 April 2019). Another parent expressed how teacher motivation hindered her son's progression; 'Because they even reached to an extent, where he is now, where he has been just at some recent examination, 'Are you going to get us this person to be teaching your boy because we can't handle? We don't know the things.'' (Caretaker 6, 23 April 2019).

Barriers were associated with underlying causes such as low salaries hindering their motivation; 'And I know that the teacher may want, but their administrators may be limited' (Kamaya, 18 April 2019). As such, the school itself may not be able to offer teachers that are motivated to teach – even in going beyond that of regular teaching and offering teaching for those with special needs;

> *'The teacher motivation issue is very critical. A teacher almost earns the least in this country. (…) they set the foundation for the kids, and these are entrepreneurs to be, these are doctors to be, these are all these professions to be. So, we need to motivate them to work with less risk' (Njuki, 22 April 2019).*

6.2.3 Institutional barriers in primary education

Medium of instruction

The inclusive education officer at NUDIPU hinted that the medium of instruction may bring another level of exclusion for students with dyslexia; 'Another language which this child will then again find it the more difficult to learn' (Luyima, 9 April 2019). He continued; 'Here sometimes there has been a problem that when you can't pronounce a word in English, then you are dyslexic' (Luyima, 9 April 2019). While awareness of dyslexia is limited, Luyima's argument entailed that learning disabilities may become an 'excuse' for the inept challenges

found in the education system itself to develop the learning capabilities of its students in the English language.

Curriculum and course content

Njuki criticised curriculum focus on content rather than concept; 'They explain more of content than the concept' (Njuki, 22 April 2019). With fifteen subjects taught in secondary school simultaneously, one student had expressed difficulties in learning to the mother;

> *''I do wish they could cut some of these subjects. You know we have five languages, we have literature, we have English, we have Swahili, we have Luganda, we have French. Why can't I choose one so that when they are reading the others, I can concentrate on this one.' But you can't tell that to the school, they have their own programme' (Caretaker 6, 23 April 2019).*

The parent's concern of not being able to voice her objections regarding her son's education comes forward in the last statement, 'you can't tell that to the school'. This links back to theoretical underpinnings and the democratic dimensions of quality education where 'voice' is required to participate in discussions values in education, meaning limited democratic elements;

> *''You know Mommy, now like this subject I am sure I won't be able to do, why can't I let it slide? The school will not allow because they are not flexible. They have told me they will not follow his curricular. They have a curriculum in Uganda, which they are going to use'* (Caretaker *6, 23 April 2019).*

While these are not necessarily in-depth descriptions of content of the curriculum itself, the magnitude of the amount of subjects and brief indication of content focused teaching implies that its structure is rather unsuitable to dyslexic children following research. Through limited ability to provide input, the caretakers are disadvantaged in influencing the form and content of education relevant for their children and in mechanisms of holding schools accountable for their performance.

Assessment methods

Feedback practices were highlighted as demoralising for dyslexic students such as passing around papers with clearly marked grades (Njuki, 22 April 2019). A method commonly used was having students themselves mark correct and incorrect answers on other students' papers following teacher instructions without anonymising names. Namaganda (17 April 2019) highlighted, 'And all of us wanted to mark it. Because you just sit there and do this [check]

cross, cross, cross. And yeah, someone has a zero percent for other children it is funny'. She highlighted that this was still a common practice for marking papers through her own experience working in inclusive schools. These practices altogether led to further means of ridicule of students that were not performing well.

The structure of advancing within primary school were highlighted as hindering advancement of dyslexic students;

> 'We have a policy here that if you fail Maths and English, you do not progress to another level. But our brains are not wired that way, we are not all the, we are not all supposed to pass marks. But we can be trained to do something better and still excel in life' (Kamaya, 18 April 2019).

Kamaya here implied that the primary education system however is not built to capture and develop on the skills that a student is good in but rather maintains focus on the elements promoted as valued in policy and curriculum guidelines themselves. PLE is another barrier described in section 6.3.

6.2.4 Household and community barriers

Household and community support

Frustration among parents tied back to limited awareness; ''What they teach me, I don't understand. And I don't want to study'. (…) I refused to go to visitation because I was annoyed my son was performing badly' (Caretaker 4, 23 April 2019). Parents may get demoralised by having a child with dyslexia, 'because they don't see hope in this child' (Luyima, 9 April 2019). One caretaker expressed similar feelings, 'I really sometimes feel that little depression, and I am also uncertain in what the future holds for him' (Caretaker 6, 23 April 2019).

The two key informants from RASDO pointed to a gender imbalance in respect to the interest and involvement in their dyslexic child's education. The two informants highlighted that many of the fathers of the students at their school would not be willing to partake in the study and attributed this to limited involvement by the fathers. Patterns of preferential treatment came forward; 'The father of my grandson is alive, but the father doesn't even want to know about his ways. Whether he is studying or not' (Caretaker 3, 22 April 2019). Caretaker 2 expressed

that fathers was not concerned with the diagnosis and had limited engagement especially in paying school fees;

> *'The father does not mind about that. And since I brought this child here, he never bothered even to buy a book for the daughter. He doesn't mind. I just work for myself to see that my child can grow up. And it is a difficult thing because I also have other children at home. (…) Sometimes you look for the school fees, you will fail to get' (Caretaker 2, 22 April 2019).*

This ties back to the theory of how education has to be deemed relevant by stakeholders such as community, household and at a political level.

Financial constraints

Issues of financial constraints were highlighted by key informants and caretakers regarding regional disparities, socio-economic disparities and the role of both parental and external support in the education of a child. Financial constraints were listed as a barrier, 'Like we have international schools here, but now maybe an ordinary Ugandan may not afford to take this child in an international school where a child with dyslexia is well-catered for' (Luyima, 9 April 2019).

One single mother expressed that she spent years seeking out schools that would be able to teach her son while experiencing challenges in paying his school fees and negative perceptions;

> *'Everyone tried to hate him because he was not studying well, even if you get a problem you go to another relative and say please help me with some fees. And they were saying 'Why spend the money for that when the boy is not performing well?' So, I found very many problems' (Caretaker 4, 23 April 2019).*

The challenges that came forward here were that of tuition fees and lack of support from communities, school administrations and families. The mother accounted that 'Everyone tried to hate him' as the son had learning difficulties which was augmented by questioning why tuition fees should be spent on a student that was not performing well. The latter point here reflects the challenges of providing quality education if the education is not considered *relevant* by the student, household and community. Issue of the system in Uganda are illustrated in the schools' monopoly on choosing students as quality schools are difficult to come by; 'But again, they were very interested in her, because of the money we were giving them. Those schools were very, very expensive' (Caretaker 1, 22 April 2019). Economic restraints can directly

impact education attainments of students due to tuition fees being a prominent barrier for disadvantaged groups due to poverty.

6.3 Impacts on dyslexic primary students

The impact on the dyslexic students' educational attainments were mostly associated with challenges of grade repetition in primary, lack of completing primary and in accessing secondary school from the accounts from key informants and caretakers.

6.3.1 Educational attainments

Educational attainment has a strong correlation with human capital and socioeconomic development in a country. Interviews and focus groups showed that dyslexic students were disproportionality affected as part of marginalised groups hindered in completion of primary, grade repetition and transitioning to secondary education.

6.3.1.1 Poor performance and advancement in primary education

Grade repetition

Discussions with caretakers repeatedly demonstrated that most of their dyslexic sons and daughters had been retained in school. Caretakers reported that their dyslexic children typically went through many grade repetitions, which were even across many grades. Grade repetitions especially took place during changes to new schools when the caretakers sought to provide a better learning environment for their children. Within a school, grade repetitions were less common which will be described more in-depth in the following section on completion of primary. One mother described;

> *'When he finished P3 going to P4, I changed him to another school thinking that maybe the teachers were not teaching well. In the school that I took him, they knew, they told me that the boy was not supposed to be in P4. So, they told me to take him back to P1, and we started again afresh' (Caretaker 4, 23 April 2019).*

Here, the mother reported that her child not only had to repeat the previous year of schooling but return to the first year of primary when being admitted to a new school. Her son was already 12 which is otherwise the age where a Ugandan child would per guidelines graduate from primary school. As such, this speaks greatly to the patterns of grade repetition that occurs for children with dyslexia. The parent accounted that her son's challenges had become known already during nursery school age by both her and teachers. However, the son still continued until Primary 3. In some ways, the lack of intervention in the face of the awareness of the son's learning difficulties among teachers represents some of the structural and institutional challenges that lead to limited capacity of the school system to intervene in Uganda. When Caretaker 4 son's condition was finally known she was concerned about him repeating grades again; 'But trying to go back was a bit difficult, he was 12 years old' (Caretaker 4, 23 April 2019). As mentioned, grade repetition is a widespread pattern in Uganda. The accounts show how it can disproportionality affect children with dyslexia who without targeted interventions during primary may have to repeat all grades. This also transferred into schools' doubting that one child had even attended nursery school at age 14;

> 'Ah, she went there, then those people, they were also concerned. They said 'Did she pass through nursery school? Did she complete it?'. I had to carry the file, all the reports to them to prove that she had gone through that she nursery what, nursery section. Ah, she was there for one year but still there was no improvement' (Caretaker 1, 22 April 2019).

One key informant also expressed that drop-out or grade repetitions were also evident for children with disabilities in data from UNEB;

> 'I believe it is some of the consequences that affect the progression of children. And although UNEB does not really tell us the exclusion like condition, but from we will see from the statistics of UNEB that from 2012 we see children with disabilities. The number of children with disabilities reducing every year, those that are completing a level are reducing every year. And there are reasons to that – why is that? Why is that happening like that?' (J. S. Kamaya, 18 April 2019).

The data not publicly available is however not disaggregated by type of disability but the informant who works with inclusive education linked these to disability and emphasised exclusion of these children. The founder at RASDO also pointed to grade repetitions as a problem by highlighting that they had removed this practice from the learning centre for dyslexic children; 'there is no repeating of class because of the individualised education programme' (R. Semanda, 18 April 2019).

Primary education completion

Completion of primary education and admission to secondary is dependent on passing the national examinations conducted under UNEB in the seventh and final year of a child's primary education (Sswewamla et al., 2011). The decision on whether the child is ready for national examinations lies with the individual school; the primary school's denial to sit through this examination turned out to be a common experience among dyslexic students. F. Namaganda argued that it was a common practice in Uganda for primary schools to keep students in school while paying school fees but refusing to let them sit for the PLE, 'And suddenly the schools in Uganda will keep you until P7 and say you can't sit for exams. Yeah. Because no one wants a child who will have their primary exams and then gets F, 9s and all that and gets like a bad grade' (F. Namaganda, 17 April 2019). She further explained that from her experiences working in inclusive schools, children with learning difficulties would be discriminated against when it came to taking exams; 'I used to work with a mainstream school. And they would send out all the children, they felt had learning disabilities or something. And one of the boys had dyslexia, but he was about to do final exams and the school had stopped him from doing them' (F. Namaganda, 17 April 2019). This very clearly demonstrates how exclusion of students with learning difficulties are even excluded on purpose by the school administration. This takes place despite policies and guidelines in Uganda denoting that exclusion such as this is illegal.

For one of the parents, the school administration's refusal to let her dyslexic child sit for the PLE while in an international school without informing her was what led her to seek out explanations and reasons for why her daughter had learning difficulties.

> *'Normally, international schools stop at year 6, after year 6 they go to secondary. So, in fact they organised for us, we were not even aware, other paid for exams but for her she was not. They never even involved us! So, in a way, they never wanted her to perform from their school so that she lowers the standard of the school. Maybe they saw that she would get nothing or she would get a very low mark. Then the reputation of their school, maybe would be tarnished. So, she didn't do her exams'. (Caretaker 1, 22 April 2019).*

Here, the parent explains that her child did not undertake exams purely based on the decision of the school, which did not involve the parents in the decision. The reasons for such decisions seemed to lie in the school not wanting to 'lower the standard' due to low marks or 'tarnish' the reputation of the school. Another mother described, 'That even at school - where the boy was - he used not do exams' (Caretaker 3, 22 April 2013). Similarly, another expressed, 'And like when they are doing primary leaving examinations, they don't what, actually they have

made her not to take the exam in the school. They prefer taking such children to another school. Actually, those ones they called below their standard to sit from somewhere else. And that was my daughter' (Caretaker 5, 23 April 2019). Both the lack of communication from the school to the parent and the fact that it was only in the final year of school that the parents found out there was a challenge (with them expecting the child to be able to finish primary school) can be positioned as low awareness on dyslexia.

'Because the school where he was, they wanted only the children who were performing better and it was on standard. They used to do for them exams, the teachers would do for the children exams, to show the parents that they were performing well. But the second term, I checked his papers and I saw the position. I saw that the things were not matching, the position and the marks. And I was confused' (Caretaker 4, 23 April 2019). The quote implies that the teachers may have inflated the marks of Caretaker 4's son to let him continue progressing to higher grades in the school as a way for the student to stay in school. The parent changed schools for the boy again later, it is therefore left to the unknown of whether this would have been one of the cases where the boy would have been refused to sit for the PLE. This can definitely not be concluded but it reflects one of the challenges were a parent might be left in the unknown about their children's condition.

The motivation for the school administrations to let the children with dyslexia continue were continuously tied to them gaining from school fees; 'During the years of schooling, parents are still paying tuition fees. 'You pay the school fees all the seven years, and your child will probably not be able to do anything' (F. Namaganda, 17 April 2019). Furthermore, a parent mimicked this, 'But again, they [the school] were very interested in her, because of the money we were giving them. Those schools were very, very expensive. So they had to maintain her there' (Caretaker 1, 22 April 2019). Another parent described, 'We went back and gave the report to the teachers. And sometimes, because now we have this money issues and these schools are earning some bit of money. They are not so much willing to tell you to take after the child. (…) you are not seeing so much improvement' (Caretaker 6, 23 April 2019). Motivation for schools to keep the children therefore seems to tie to financial incentives. In some ways this contrasts some of the caretaker's account of some schools refusing to take in certain students; or simply show the difference in their treatment.

6.3.1.2 Access to secondary school

Discussions with caretakers showed that dyslexia influenced their children's ability in transitioning to secondary school. Caretakers' whose children were already in the process or had transitioned to secondary expressed concerns regarding the level of attention their children were receiving in inclusive secondary schools, or even admission refusals;

> *'We want first grades. The boy should not study from here'. The parent is insisting 'No my boy should study from there. I am capable of paying fees. But the teachers are saying 'Let the boy look for a school, where the number is too small. They will be able to teach him, but for us here we want those who are getting 70-80. We cannot even transcribe for such a boy' (Semanda, 18 April 2019).*

Inability for secondary schools to accept students with dyslexia was connected with a wider problem of an infrastructural and human resources deficit. Nakibirango described that, 'Secondary teachers don't want even to hear concerning dyslexia (…) So, if the schools are built, these children also can be helped and at least they get their basic education' (Nakibirango, 18 April 2019). All caretakers indicated being worried about their child's future due to either an incoming or already transpired transition to secondary school; 'But now I am worried if he finishes Primary 7 – where is he going to study from? There are no schools which are secondary to cater for such children' (Caretaker 4, 23 April 2019). Another parent expressed, 'Every day I am like where am I going to take her for secondary?' (Caretaker 5, 23 April 2019). Caretakers concerns highlight how the child is able to contribute to society as a productive human being but that primary education's system catering for students with dyslexia is not supportive for the students;

> *'I usually sit down and think just make sure it doesn't end it primary, you have much to contribute and he is working, like he can, he is not, I don't think, he is a bad student' (Caretaker 6, 23 April 2019).*

After transitioning to secondary, one caretaker explained that her dyslexic child felt discriminated in the inclusive secondary school;

> *'But he even says, 'Mommy can I go back? When it is weekend can we go back and see these people?'. So, he felt like it is home. He felt like people they would take him as home, and there is no discrimination like other side' (Caretaker 6, 23 April 2019).*

The unsupportive system in secondary schools were emphasised by one caretaker;

> *'I remember he was moving from primary school to secondary, and we went to get for him the papers for secondary school, we had to tell them that our boy has this problem, a*

learning disability. 'Will you be able to take him up?', they said 'Yes'. Doing the first two weeks, he was about to drop out from school' (Caretaker 6, 23 April 2019).

One key informants explained that dyslexic students would often seek out vocational schools instead, 'Though some of those, actually most of them, have now transitioned to vocational because mainstream is quite difficult' (Kamaya, 18 April 2019). It is evident that dyslexia and the ability of primary education in Uganda to support this student's impacts their ability to transition to secondary. As a result, these students were reported by one caretaker to become very demotivated to study, 'he has really got too much disappointment within one term of secondary' (Caretaker 6, 23 April 2019). The impact of the barriers to accessing and succeeding in primary schools can therefore have widespread consequences.

6.3.2 Social exclusion

Teacher-student relations

Accounts from both informants showed that both verbal and physical abuse by teachers and school administrations were frequent experiences of dyslexic children in primary schools. Children experienced being called out in front of the whole class, being perceived as lazy and were subject to beating majorly due to poor performance and bad handwriting; 'Now they would keep beating the hands, you have to write well, you have to write well' (Kamaya, 18 April 2019). Caretaker 2 echoed this stating that her child felt isolated in schools due to such abuse;

> *'There was a teacher who came and blasted him in class, in front of all the other students 'You boy, you know in this school, you are the worst boy with the worst handwriting, with the worst…' Even so like tears were rolling out of his eyes' (Caretaker 6, 23 April 2019).*

Verbal abuse would arise from perceptions of students being lazy or dull; 'they just keep on abusing them. Yeah, they are stupid, they are what, they are such' (Caretaker 1, 22 April 2019). This was also reported by another parent, 'For them they know that a child who cannot write or read is dull' (Caretaker 4, 23 April 2019). Similarly, when asked about how the school and teachers were treating her daughter; 'they have always made comments, 'She is below standard. She is just lazy'' (Caretaker 5, 23 April 2019). Another mother explained that her child had never been mistreated in school. Teachers had rather not had time to give her the attention needed; 'She never complained about a particular teacher but me, I think, they, perhaps they

might, they didn't understand her case or they never had time for her. They would go with people who are going very fast (Caretaker 1, 22 April 2019).

The abuse was not just reported to be common by the school administration;

> *''Your boy', he told me that the head of academics, herself, used those deceiving words, which he could repeat. 'I even don't know how you got this school, is it true you went to primary? I am not so sure whether you went through primary. How come you are here?' It really put him down. And he came back and said 'Mom, I don't think I want to do that school' (Caretaker 6, 23 April 2019).*

As such, exclusion felt by dyslexic students in primary school expands beyond that of merely teachers into mistreatment from the school administration itself. Another mother expressed, 'I had to go back to the school and give them the what, the feedback. But it was really hard, because for them they believe she is just below their standard and she doesn't match with somebody in their school' (Caretaker 5, 23 April 2019). Negative perceptions around children with learning difficulties accumulated meant less attention in terms of teaching and the administrative side, 'The bad thing with the other inclusive schools, when you are slow, they take you to be a girl and dumb like you are not bright' (Caretaker 6, 23 April 2019).

Student relations

Caretakers described that children experienced difficulties in fitting in with their classmates; 'no she was not treated well. Because they were nicknaming her. They saw, they were seeing her as dull – that she was being seen like she was dull by other learners and at schools. And she was bullied' (Caretaker 2, 22 April 2019). Dyslexic students could be stuck in a circle of teasing both occurring from bad behaviour as a result of the treatment from teachers or through other students being aware of their difficulties in learning; 'The child will have to cope with those things so some of them will go to the extreme of bad behaviour or give up. Or, stay in class and suffer it throughout all those years and then the peers start to tease' (Namaganda, 17 April 2019).

Family relations

One parent emphasised that dyslexia did not negatively affect the family, 'It didn't. In fact, for us, we never expected that much from her. Because from day one, we know how she has been' (Caretaker 1, 22 April 2019). This description implies that the parental aspirations for the child was lowered when seeing that the daughter had difficulties in school referring back to whether

education is found relevant. Difficulties were also connected to demotivation and struggle for the individual child as well; 'we think that they are children, but at one time they get that little depression into them' (Caretaker 6, 23 April 2019). Consequently, exclusion both socially and in schools can have long-term consequences on demotivating the dyslexic child.

6.4 Efforts to improve learning of children with dyslexia in Uganda

Context-based solutions

Luyima and Njuki emphasised context-dependent solutions, therefore the following highlights key solutions brought out by the Ugandan themselves. All key informants spoke on creating a system – be it at schools or institutional systems – where individualised approaches and interventions are promoted when targeting dyslexia. Generating data and information was promoted as highly critical for improving situations for dyslexic students (Caretaker 6, 23 April 2019).

Luyima (9 April 2019) expressed, 'The situations are different (…) What the country can provide or the skills of the people'. This reflects the element of relevance within a country providing quality education according to how it is found relevant by communities, household and even at political levels. Njuki (22 April 2019) highlighted, 'If the kids cannot learn the way you teach, you teach the way they learn' stressing the need for individualised approaches to teach children in primary schools. Njuki argued for early intervention connected to early childhood development (ECD) and tied challenges to UPE;

> 'So, schools need to adjust themselves toward the kid, not the kid adjusting themselves to the schools. (…) We invite kids to come, UPE says everyone should go. But we don't prepare the environment where they are going' (Njuki, 22 April 2019).

Caretaker 6 emphasised development of specific ICT material promoting access to online lectures from Uganda to overcome issues of different pronunciations and different English accents (Caretaker 6, 23 April 2019). Kamaya highlighted challenges of connectivity in Uganda and promoted that a person from UNEB would assist in writing down answers as spoken by the dyslexic student; 'They need to involve an institution like UNEB (…) who you will have to tell you answers and they will write them for you' (Kamaya, 18 April 2019), highlighting context-dependent solutions due to limited connectivity.

Teacher capacity

Teacher skills and awareness were also emphasised; 'The very, very first thing that needs to happen is for the teachers to know that these children are there. And what can they do as a teacher to help to learn' (Kamaya, 18 April 2019). Luyima (9 April 2019) highlighted, 'If a teacher is not qualified, who does not have sufficient skills to address the needs of those children, you have, you might face a problem to address the problem yet they could be able to learn' (R. Luyima, 9 April 2019). Teacher awareness was promoted as one way in which early detection could be enhanced, 'As I tell parents that, you know, at the moment, he really needs to learn to write and write, you know, write all these things. But later on in life, he will not need that same kind of things that as long as he learns how to manage his life' (F. Namaganda, 17 April 2019).

Household and community engagement

The role of household and community inclusion in the democratic debate as well as their perception of education as relevant are apparent in the arguments highlighting the need for available information;

> *'But most parents will not invest the time, because the education belongs to the school. Why isn't my child learning? And it is always here the way it happens usually is that the teachers – the school is telling the parent what to do but I think we need to have a set of parents who are telling teachers what to do with their kids' (Namaganda, 17 April 2019).*

Mutual engagements were highlighted, 'But also the parents, willing to learn. Like say for example someone says your child has dyslexia – go and read up and find ways. And be like the champion for your child' (Namaganda, 17 April 2019). Parent support can inevitably play a major role in increasing the opportunities for a dyslexic child, especially with the current state of knowledge and intervention on dyslexia in Uganda. In turn, it had helped with improving the parents' outlook for the children, 'Okay, I can encourage her but I am not so, so much hard. Because now I know' (Caretaker 5, 23 April 2019).

Luyima argued that parental support and understanding can diminish the demoralisation experienced and lack of attention given to the dyslexic child in a family. Parental support can be beneficial for supporting the individual learner to help with demotivation and understanding of the condition; 'Then they [Parents] will understand this child and pay attention, take care, provide for this kid just like the rest' (R. Luyima, 9 April 2019).

One key informant expressed, 'Even if we had the best resources and the best everything but it doesn't meet the needs. Then I wouldn't consider that quality' (F. Namaganda, 17 April 2019), referring to the relevance dimension. The democratic dimension also came forward, 'It has participation of a number of people right from home. Parents have to be involved, how are parents preparing this learner to access education at an appropriate age? How are these parents monitoring the learning that the child has acquired from school?' (Kamaya, 18 April 2018). In ways, this dominantly refers to not only parents participation but participation occurring from the provision of a solid knowledge and information base as within the democratic dimension.

7. Concluding discussion

The investigation was designed to shed light on key barriers to increase learning and access quality in Uganda's primary education and explore how barriers can impact the educational achievements and inclusion of dyslexic students. Wider patterns commonly attributed to quality education demonstrated that relevance, inclusion and democracy dimensions were dominantly perceived as evading the experiences of dyslexic students. The challenges therefore lead to a question of how Uganda's government can better provision primary education services for children with dyslexia following the context-based and individualised approaches promoted by informants.

Dyslexic students' experiences on barriers to learning during primary education arguably contributes to exclusion both in school settings and on a wider societal level. These challenges underscore the importance of turning inclusive education policies on disabilities into practice emphasising disabilities as a non-homogenous category. In addition, it emphasises relevance of generating an informational basis through awareness campaigns to extend the bounds of awareness and knowledge on dyslexia into households, community, schools and policy and into public debate. Challenges especially occur in the face of continuos critiques of the already challenged capacity of the education system wherein the government devotes limited public expenditure. Improved inclusion of dyslexic children could work to mitigate ramifications of the dyslexic learner being excluded from the benefits of education and becoming a productive human being in society, following human capital theory.

UPE sought to eliminate disparities and inequalities, inclusion has however been limited by costs or inclusion challenges ranging from socio-economically disadvantaged to persons with some form of disability. Matters of inclusion and quality expand into the debate on private schools constituting almost two in five of all primary schools in Uganda, with higher tuition fees. This follows both previous research and informants' accounts emphasising that a higher quality of education is found in private schools; arguably, the system structure can in itself chronically reproduce patterns of social exclusion and exclude socio-economically or disadvantaged learners. This can particularly impact dyslexic children due to the targeted interventions needed to improve their learning. Informants indicated that private schools and international schools may better breach the quality gap and be more able to cater for dyslexic children. However, costs associated with these schools intrinsically links this to how exclusion can inevitably happen if dyslexic children come from socio-economic circumstances where

these schools cannot be afforded. Use of only special needs schools were additionally linked to decreasing social and economic engagement of dyslexic children with others later in life.

Awareness and barriers

Awareness and knowledge on dyslexia in Uganda were poor at policy, school and community level. This was emphasised by common misconceptions of dyslexia as something 'contagious' that could be 'avoided' or 'corrected' or preferential treatment of physical disabilities in inclusive education policies. Awareness on dyslexia was low among teacher rather emphasising detecting difficulties in learning, however, teachers were found to remain without teaching methods on how to approach dyslexic students. This transferred into late detection of dyslexia, additionally with structural and institutional barriers in primary schools and limited external support hindering their learning development. In schools, matters of content-based curriculum, pedagogy lacking individualised focus, school management practices, limited human resources as well as assessment and advancement methods all hindered dyslexic students' abilities in converting resources into capabilities. Again, the *national special needs assessment tool* was highlighted as a way existing teachers could become aware of dyslexia. Meanwhile, trainings on disability and dyslexia in teacher colleges were highlighted by Njuki. Poor performance in schools was additionally linked to ridicule and embarrassment experienced by dyslexic children through the whole school spectrum; administration, teachers and fellow students. Within communities and households dyslexic students were subjected to questions of why their education was worth investing in by external environments and limited parental aspirations before the condition was known. As such, these children inevitably experience exclusion in access to schools and being disadvantaged in receiving quality education as well as social exclusion. Limited options for dyslexic children in converting their education into capabilities can therefore be considered disadvantaged compared to students.

Impacts

Barriers were directly linked with challenges in progressing at primary levels, completing primary education and transitioning to secondary school. Grade retention was indicated to be high among dyslexic students with grade repetition from grade four to one in one case. Similarly, school administrations were reported to outright refuse dyslexic students to sit for the PLE arguably to not lower the average performance of the school. This showed the school's autonomy in decision-making. Students were also directly refused admission to secondary

schools. With the admittance of one school that 'we cannot even transcribe for such a boy', this is arguably contrary to bans of discrimination in Uganda's *Persons with Disabilities Act* and not simply school policies on grades determining intake. Along with these practices' influence on educational achievements, it comes with potential side-effects of leading to limited social and economic engagement of dyslexic students with other later in life. This again prominently refers to thoughts of the human capability approach and the ability of the education to produce a students with capabilities for economic gain.

While the abovementioned primarily entails the inclusion dimensions, relevance and democracy are also key dimensions of quality education within the social justice and capability approach. Caretakers and informants did not perceive the current structure of primary education as relevant for dyslexic children in Uganda, especially on matters such as teaching methods and curriculum. Limited awareness arising from a lack of informational base for communities are perhaps one of the key areas to enable community members to participate in public debate on promoting values that they find *relevant*. Caretakers had experienced schools to not be recipient to their input on how dyslexic children could be taught in schools. Consequently, communities find themselves disadvantaged in being able to influence the form and content of education relevant for their children and in mechanisms holdings school accountable for their education and performance.

Dyslexia or quality?

In many ways, challenges dyslexic children faced in school were often generalisable challenges to children who might be affected by external factors such as slow learning, low general ability, poor teaching or lack of family support and affect the potential of many children. Referring to the literature review, this comes down to one of the dominant issues with the widespread acceptance of the phonological theory. Reading disabilities are not easily distinguished from other reasons of failure to read. Uganda's education challenges resulting from limited human resource, lack of school capacity, institutional capacity and socioeconomic circumstances hindering family support can all hinder the learning development of individual children.

While there are strong similarities between the issues of Uganda's primary education system providing quality of education and the barriers limiting the options for dyslexic students – a key difference is in the way that this may impact possibilities of a dyslexic child. It is not to know whether structural and institutional barriers as well as social exclusion that followed

harmful perceptions affect the learner in exactly the same way for a non-dyslexic and a dyslexic child in terms of completion of primary and transitioning to secondary, as the rates for this are generally low in the country. Differences lie in the fact that the dyslexic student are naturally hindered and further vulnerable by the structure of the system. Children with dyslexia may face the consequences of the system's limited quality as they may require even more *quality* effort to be able to even begin learning in schools.

Future research

In further research, it would be beneficial to dig deeper into socio-economic circumstances behind learners with dyslexia and the different effects through a mixed-methods approach. Especially in a country like Uganda where poverty and limited public expenditures on education may disproportionately affect disadvantaged learners. Once again, the qualitative approach is deemed relevant to explore the situation of dyslexic children in Uganda and challenges, consequences and opportunities for this large group of people otherwise not explored. Due to the lack of data on dyslexia in Uganda, an effort to map out children with dyslexia in Uganda through quantitative data collection under the mixed methods approach could be beneficial to inform national policies and work of CSOs. Quality monitoring through disaggregated data was highlighted to increase inclusion and quality of education. Therefore, research and government investments in disaggregating data for students with dyslexia could arguably be seen as a way to enhance inclusion in schools. Through available data, information can arguably enhance decision-making and public debate on inclusion issues.

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Appendix A. Interview Guides

1. KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Introduction

- Present the purpose of the study and explain all ethical issues ensuring privacy and confidentiality
- Obtain informed consent

Inclusive education
- Can you tell me what are the key areas of your organisation/school and how does it conceptualise inclusive education? Do you and the organizations define "inclusive education" the same?
- In which ways does your organisation/school work with inclusive primary education?

Dyslexia
- How would you describe the situation of people with dyslexia in Uganda? How does it affect the opportunities available to children at primary schooling levels?
  - o Is there awareness on the topic among parents?
  - o And teachers?
- Which perceptions exist of the condition dyslexia and people with dyslexia by parents and teachers?
  - o How does this shape the relationship between teacher and a dyslexic child in primary schools?
  - o How does this shape the relationship between the parent and the dyslexic child?
- What barriers do you see as existing to dyslexic children receiving inclusive, quality primary education in Uganda?
- What challenges do you see in improving the situation of people with dyslexia in primary education?

Opportunities
- How do you think learners dyslexia could be supported better in primary education? How could primary education be more inclusive?
- What approaches and methods do you think school administrators and teachers could use to support inclusion of children with dyslexia?
- How do you think prevalent perceptions of dyslexia could be targeted to enhance inclusion?
  - o In school and in the household?
- When you think of quality in primary school education, what does quality of education mean to you?

2. CARETAKERS – INTERVIEWS AND GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Introduction

- Present the purpose of the study and explain all ethical issues ensuring privacy and confidentiality
- Obtain informed consent

General

- Can you tell me a bit about yourself?
- How and when did you find out that your child had difficulty learning in school? How did it come to appear?
- When did you find out your child has a dyslexia? (Which grade was the child in?).
- How did you find out about your child being dyslexic? Did it come from the school or did you notice it yourself in the household?

Perceptions and awareness

- Can you tell me more about the journey your child has gone through in the education system? And processes you went through before and after finding out that your child is dyslexic?
  - How was your child treated in school before it was realised that he/she was dyslexic? (By the administration, teachers and fellow students?).
  - How did it affect the learning development of your child? Did you see your child progressing?
  - How has it affected your child's access to education?
- What did it mean for your family that your child had (difficulty) in school before you knew that it was due to a learning disability?
  - After?
  - Resource wise?
- How do you see that dyslexia are generally perceived and treated in primary education levels in Uganda?

Opportunities

- How have you seen a difference in the learning development of your child after being provided with an education that takes into consideration special needs of the child?
- How do you see your child's future? What are your aspirations for your child?
- When you think of quality in primary education, what do you think of? What should the system look like?

Appendix B. Consent form

Consent to take part in minor field study

- I ……………………….…………….. voluntarily agree to participate in the study conducted by Rebecca Friis Christensen (Student at Lund University, Sweden).

- I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time or refuse to answer any questions.

- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interviews within two weeks of the interview, in which case the data will be deleted.

- The purpose of the study has been explained to me and have had opportunities to ask questions about the study.

- I agree to my interviews being audio recorded (YES / NO).

- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially and that I will remain anonymous in any report arising as a result from this minor field study.

- I understand that disguised extracts from my interviews may be quoted in a dissertation.

- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the minor field study to seek further clarification and information.

Please provide contact details if you wish to receive an update once the report is finalised;

Name	
Contact (Email, phone (WhatsApp) and other).	

Signature of minor field study participant   **Date**

…………………………………   …………………………………