INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: A CHANGE IN EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Education is a basic foundation for the development of any country and it is a key lever for sustainable devopment. In line with Millennium Development Goals, Kenya committed itself to achieve EFA goals by the year 2015. All learners including those with special needs and disabilities should access quality education in an inclusive setting. In Kenya learners with special needs and disabilities are excluded in mainstream education system and offered education in secluded systems and or not offered education. The purpose of the present study was to examine key changes in education systems for effective implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools. Inclusive education is concerned with all learners including those with special needs and disabilities accessing education in mainstream schools. Inclusive education is the taking back of learners who were being taught in separate education systems to mainstream schools. Inclusive education is a philosophy that emphasize that schools should be transformed to respond to the needs of learners and not the other way. Areas that were considered for change included teacher preparation and competencies, adaptations of the environment, examinations, curriculum and changes in policies and legislations. This research paper used qualitative approach and utilized secondary data. Social theory of learning and social model of disability guided the study. It was concluded that changes in teacher competencies, curriculum, physical environment, teaching resources and policies have to be made. It was also recommended that teachers have to undergo in-service courses and the curriculum, environment,

teaching materials including assistive aids have to be appropriate for all learners.

Keywords: *Inclusive education, Change in education, Development*

Introduction

Education in Kenya is considered a basic right and a basic need (Mulambula & Sitienei, 2012). The Education for All Agenda (EFA) and Salamanca statement advocate for the rights of all children including the right to access education with an emphasis on inclusive education (UNESCO, 1990 & UNESCO, 1994). This advocacy stems from the fact that through education the whole child is developed in terms of skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary for successful integration into the society irrespective of what condition the child has (Miriam-Webster, 1978). Inclusion in its broader term refers to inclusion of the marginalized groups on grounds of religion, ethnic, linguistic minorities, immigrants,

girls, and students with disabiliti remote poor population (Republic of Kenya, 2008). Inclusion is thus a

term that refers to more than inclusion of learners with special needs and disabilities.

Inclusion in education is a philosophy that transform the mainstream education system to respond to different learners in a constructive and positive way (Hejnen, 2002). Under inclusive education model, Learners with special needs spend most of their time with students without disabilities in the general class (Bowe, 2005)**.** Jha (2002) describe inclusion as a process by which schools attempt to respond to all learners as individuals by considering their curriculum organization and its delivery. Through this process, Jha notes that a school builds its capacity to accept all learners from the local community who wish to attend and in so doing reduces the need to exclude some learners on the basis of special needs and disabilities on the pretext that such children should be educated in special schools. Special needs education is considered a service and not a place and those services are included in the daily routines and classroom structures, environment, curriculum, teaching strategies and brought to the child in a mainstream school. Carey (1997) argues that inclusive education leads to a reduction of all forms of discrimination and fosters

social cohesion as children who grow and learn together, live together. There are a wide range of learning needs, interest and capabilities that are provided in an inclusive setting (Stainback & Jackton, 1992).

Kenya immediately after independence established an educational commission that recommended that persons with disabilities be educated in regular schools while Education commission report of 1976 recommended that integrating equipment be provided in regular schools system for the integrated learners (Republic of Kenya, 1964 & 1976). The presidential working party on Education and man power Training commission report (Republic of Kenya, 1988) recommended the integration of learners with disabilities in regular schools and Koech in Republic of Kenya (1999) called for Equal treatment of the unequal. This treatment was to come in the way of curriculum differentiation, different styles of teaching inclusive classes, environment and teaching learning resources adaptation suiting children with special needs and disabilities. Children's Act (2001) and Disability Act (2003) emphasized the rights of persons with disabilities which included the rights to Education. Kochung report in Republic of Kenya (2003) was a landmark in the education of children with special needs. In this report, it was recommended that special needs education in Kenya be funded adequately at all levels including Early Childhood Development programmes, Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Colleges and Universities. This report further emphasized early

identification and assessment of c creation, training of all teachers in special needs education and addressing

educational needs of all learners in terms of curriculum differentiation, adaptations of examinations, learning aids and physical facilities.

Further in 2005, Kenya government developed sessional paper No. 1 (2005) which resulted in the development of Kenya Sector Support Programme (KSSP) document. As a result of KSSP document, all special schools and integrated programs started receiving funds for various activities including infrastructural development, tuition, and sports activities among others.

Special schools are segregative and discriminative in nature. Learners with special needs and disabilities are eliminated from mainstream schools and lumped together in these excluded educational systems where education is of low quality (Mulambula & Sitienei, 2012).

From the foregoing, the present paper will examine policy changes internationally and locally, teacher competencies, curriculum, learning resources, and environment adaptations as key changes in education to enable inclusive education be implemented for sustainable development. This will be a paradigm shift in education in that learners who have to date been thought as not fit to learn in schools where they will live for the rest of their lives as fully integrated members of the society.

Statement of the problem

Every country must invest in its entire people and one such important investment is education through which social justice and economic development can be realized. However not all governments treat their citizens equally especially the developing nations. Some people especially those with disabilities and other conditions are segregated and denied or given less quality education in special schools rather than in mainstream education. In Kenya, policies are being put in place to ensure that all children including those with special needs and disabilities access quality education in an inclusive setting. World over about 130 million children with special needs are not attending school and 80% of this are in Africa (Republic of Kenya, 2008). in Kenya have advocated for integration and or inclusive education.

Inclusive education has haphazardly been implemented, its meaning not yet understood well and teachers not well versed in the teaching methodologies of learners in the inclusive schools. Studies conducted on implementation of inclusive education in other parts of the country have shown that teacher competencies, curriculum, teaching/learning materials and environment adaptations influen education in schools (Ndonye, 2011; Keriongi, 2011 & Okuta, 2011). It is on this premise that the present paper has examined teacher competencies, curriculum, and environmental physical and policy changes as major educational system changes for sustainable development in Kenya.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the present paper therefore was to examine changes made in education for effective implementation of inclusive education

in mainstream schools in Kenya. The objectives of this paper therefore were:

- To identify Teacher competencies necessary for the implementation of inclusive education
- To analyze the Policy changes made to implement inclusive education internationally and locally.
- To assess how schools have reorganized curriculum, examinations and environment to implement inclusive education.

Methodology

This is a qualitative research paper which utilized secondary data by reviewing literature related to inclusive education. The thrust of this paper lies on the belief that learners with special needs and disabilities should be given equal rights and opportunities thus social justice. Therefore this paper was based on social model of disability and social learning theory which emphasizes that persons with disabilities are usually handicapped by the society and on that basis are unable to perform tasks on the basis of disabilities (Mike, 1980). These models advocate for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in mainstream societal activities. Social learning theory by Albert Bandura posits that teachers should teach learners with special needs and disabilities in social contexts that promote cognitive development and social development through observation and imitation (Bandura, 1993).

Changes in Knowledge and Teaching Strategies Needed for Inclusive Education Implementation

Rodgers (1993, P.6) has suggested that teachers in inclusive schools should be competent in handling all learners including those with special needs and disabilities. The author asserts that competent teachers teach each individual student in an inclusive class addressing each child's needs at his own pace. The teachers should not teach the class as if students in that class have the same average intellectual ability. These teachers should be aware of the dynamics of their classrooms, should be versatile and comfortable using different teaching techniques.

Burstein, Wilcoxen, Sears, Cabello and Pagana (2004) notes that teachers

who teach in inclusive schools should undergo systematic and intensive training that involves research based practices. This will enable them be able to instill confidence and compe the authors assert that teachers must engage in professional training as an
ongoing activity for their professional growth and competency.

In regular primary schools, teachers who are not trained in inclusive practices set their classrooms climate for completion. Comparisons in terms of academic performance among learners and standards to be achieved by learners are predetermined. According to Falvey, Givner, Haager (2004), this climate cannot make teachers succeed in an inclusive setting. Priority areas that will ensure competency at handling learners in an inclusive classroom includes collaborative team teaching, individualization of educational plans, mulitgrade teaching, peer tutoring among others (Fisher, Frey, & Thousand, 2003). According to Jha (2002, P. 140), innovative practices that ensures participation of learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom and therefore successful implementation of inclusive education includes whole class inclusive teaching, group /co-operative /collaborative teaching, peer tutoring /child to child learning , activity based learning and team approach.

In cooperative learning program, instructional methods such as direct instruction, small group instruction, individualization of roles and accountability and independent practice are combined in a team based approach (Katz & Mirenda, 2002). This cooperative learning is also referred to as collaborative learning where learners work with their peers towards a common goal. The approach promotes the skill of sharing responsibilities, listening to each other, control of emotions and making of decisions (Kenya Institute of Special Education, 2007). This strategy has been found to enhance learning, improves good relations, develop problem solving skills, and improve academic and social skills of students with special needs in inclusive classrooms (Putnam, 1998). Peer tutoring is a specialized form of cooperative learning where students work together in learning academic content and each one of them playing the role of the
teacher to the rest of the students. in academic skills, self help, communication and social skills by learners
with special needs (King-Seers & Cummings, 1996; McDonell, 1998). Falvey et al (2004) notes that peer tutoring minimize behavior problems, increases opportunities to respond and enhance activity comprehension

in such areas as math, reading and social interaction. A study on peer tutoring on reading skills and social interactions with autism children revealed that these skills improved among all learners (Kamp, Berbetta, Leonard & Dequadri, 1994).

Team teaching on the other hand refers to a situation where teachers conduct lessons together and in so doing there is the sharing of their expertise to assist learners overc
For instance, in an inclusive class of 50, there is need for more than one teacher if those learners with spec are able to plan together, teach together, evaluate results together and
modify learning goals for each student.

Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) noted that teachers in inclusive classrooms should plan for the general class as well as for individual pupils. Literature on inclusion gi that ensures that learners with special needs access and participate in
the general classes. For instance, in USA teachers must prepare an Individualized Educational Programme (I.E.P) if they are handling inclusive classrooms. An IEP is a document which describes a child's educational performance, annual goals and objectives to be achieved by the teacher, services the child require and a description of instructional and assessment modification a child
Education Act, 1999). Other alternative ways of handling students with disabilities in inclusive classes Jossey-Bass (1993) in Kiaritha (2011) include:

Teachers should face the class when they are speaking to learners with hearing impairments so as they are able to read the lips. If they are writing on the board or narrating a desktop demonstration, teachers should try to avoid talking when they are facing the board or the desktop.

In class discussion and conversation, teachers should focus primarily on the student with the disability and not on the student's aide or interpreter. In talking to students with hearing impairments, some instructors tend to address the interpreter or to s
Instead, look at and speak directly to the student, with only occasional reference to the interpreter.

During the initial meeting, teachers should ask students with disabilities

what they can do to help them participate in class. Students who cannot raise their hands to answer or ask questions, for example, may feel isolated or ignored. They should be asked how they wish to be recognized in the classroom. Some students will want the teacher to call them. Others may prefer to meet periodically with the teacher before or after class to discuss the course content.

Teachers should consider alternatives to oral presentations, if needed. Oral presentations may be difficult or specific learning disabilities. S presentations with the help of interpreters. Others may want to write

out their presentations and ask an interpreter or another student to read it to the class. Still others may wish to give their presentations without assistance and should be encouraged to do so.

Teachers should ensure that students get the academic help they need to succeed in their class. Although a student may have an in-class aide such as a note taker or sign-language interpreter, these aides are not academic tutors. Students with learning disab help after the teacher.

In summary according to Kumar (2004), the following seven core competencies are a must if implementation of inclusive education has to be successful:

One, Teachers must possess relevant professional knowledge on special needs issues; two, Classrooms must be managed in a way that learners needs are accommodated; three, Collaboration among teachers both special educators and general teachers has to be enhanced; four, Assessment and evaluation procedures should be flex special needs; five, Instructional t six, Individualized and adaptive instruction should be utilized; and lastly

assistive technology should be used to help those learners with physical disabilities.

Changes in Curriculum, Examinations and Environment Organisation by Schools

According to Falvey et al (2004), one key competency teachers should demonstrate is the ability to select, adapt or modify the curriculum and examinations to make them accessible to all learners. The author further content that teachers should have the ability to spontaneously adapt the curriculum as he/she teaches in the inclusive classroom to respond to the needs of different learners as well as to formerly adapt the curriculum to ensure that all learners access it. For instance, teachers in Countries such as Japan have restructured their curriculum and allowed schools to experiment with different curricular.

In Taiwan University, entrance examinations system has been scrapped in favor of a more holistic approach that considers grades essays and extracurricular activities (Beech, 2002). According to this author, South Korean college students are picked not because of their test scores but for their unique talents. In America, Students learn social skills and group work in environments that celebrate diversity (Elliot, 2002). The Author maintains that exams make students drop out of school especially the rural, the disadvantage and the disabled. In other words the purpose of exams is to filter the best student the author asserts that there should be a shift from norm referenced to criterion referenced evaluation.

UNESCO framework (1994) has highlighted the need for child centered pedagogy for addressing the educational needs of the disadvantaged and the disabled. The merit of inclusive schools is not just the delivery of academic content but the development of all skills, attitudes and knowledge for successful integration in the society (Katz & Mirenda, 2002).

Jha (2002) states, that success and access to education by all learners lies in the curriculum, the pedagogy, the examinations and the schools approach. The author further suggests that if the unseen barriers are taken care of, access to education by all children will be possible. Republic of Kenya (2008) notes that curriculum has been restructured to respond to the needs of learners with special needs and disabilities. For instance, specialized syllabus has been developed in the area of visual impairment and physical disabilities. The report goes on to state that sign language

has become official language in Keny

Council has made arrangements for learners with special needs. Extra time is allowed for candidates with special needs, some subjects like science have been adapted and scripts for learners with special needs are marked by examiners trained in special needs education. Some of the recommendations that were made in the special needs policy (Republic of Kenya, 2009) include:

Curriculum should be adapted to cater for all specialized areas in special needs education,

Teacher training curriculum in all teacher training colleges should include components of special needs education,

Kenya National examination Council (KNEC) should design National Examinations for learners with special needs as individuals and provide certificates to learners with specia exams due to their divers learning needs,

KNEC to ensure that time allocated to learners with special needs for examination papers is determined by the nature and severity of the special needs and disabilities, Ministry of Education should seek copyrights from publishers so as to adapt regular curriculum and have mass production of teaching /learning materials for learners with special needs and disabilities.

The recommendations were made in view of the fact that unless the teacher is prepared to implement them then inclusive education won't succeed. Kumar (2004) suggested that teachers hold the primary responsibility of providing instructions that are characterized by students' diversity, development of appropriate curriculum, its interpretation and its deliverance.

Effective implementation of inclusive education depends on the ability of teachers to ensure that the physical classroom environment, teaching learning aids are adapted to suit learners with special needs and disabilities in inclusive classes (Republic of Kenya, 2009). The provision of compensatory or assistive aids is very crucial for learners with special needs and disabilities. These devices reduce the effect of disabilities that result from impairment (KISE, 2007). The assistive aids include wheel chairs for learners with physical disabilities, hearing aids for learners

with hearing impairment and magnifying glasses for those learners with low vision. Other assistive devices include Braille machines, speech kits, white canes, communication boards and computers. Teachers should ensure that assistive aids and other specialized learning resources should be given first priority as they fac with special needs in the inclusive class (Mary berry & Lazarus, 2002 & Muka, 2009).

Lazarus and Mayberry (2002) and Muka (2009) contend that learners with special need benefit greatly word processors, digital personal microphones). In addition, an inclusive class requires teaching /learning

resources that enrich and enhances learning environment where learning abilities are improved (KISE, 2007). The abilities include knowledge retention, remembering, thinking, reasoning, interaction and imagination. Specific learning resources include – up specimen and software resources. Inclusive education is enhanced with the provision of adapted learning resources and restructuring of the classrooms, construction of ramps, paths and leveling of the school compound for those learners with mo

Ndonye (2011) and Kochung (2009) report, that learners with special needs and disabilities require barrier free environment to maximize their functional potential. Republic of Kenya report on the special needs policy (2009) recommended that the environment in an inclusive setting should be accessible and disability friendly. The policy further recommended that all primary schools should be provided with funds to remove the existing barriers that make school environment unfriendly to learners with special needs and disabilities. The areas that should be made disability friendly include libraries, toilets, furniture, steps (ramps) and pathways. With this friendly environment for persons with disabilities it was envisaged that learners with low vision and motor problems will move around in the school environment easily and will feel as part and parcel of the school community (KISE, 2007).

Kenya Project Organization (2010) noted that issues to be addressed for successful implementation of inclusive education include reduction of the number of pupil in classes to manageable sizes, provision of adapted and specialized equipment, adaptation of buildings and any construction in the school to cater for the needs of the learners with motor problems. In a

study carried out by Mukhopadyay, Nenty and Abosi (2012) in Botswana on inclusive education, it was found out that for inclusive education to succeed there was need for improvement in the school infrastructure and provision of resources.

Policy Changes

International efforts to recognize the right of persons with disabilities started way back after Second World War and United Nations organization formulated universal declaration for human rights of 1948 which culminated in the establishments of elementary care of children with disabilities and rehabilitation in institutions. This was as a result of neglect, ignorance, superstitions and fear of persons with disabilities. Over the years the UN Convention on the rights of the child of 1989 was declared to continue the recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities. It stated that children were to be guaranteed effective access to education where they were to achieve fullest possible social integration and individual development.

The Jomtien conference was a landmark in recognition and consolidation of the previous thinking about the rights of all children including those with disabilities and special needs (UNESCO, 1990). The thinking was further reinforced by UN standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities' education (1993). Additionally, Salamanca statement and Framework for action on special needs education of 1994 embraced the thinking of inclusive education by laying down four fundamental principles. The principles included accommodation of all children by schools, community participation and attendance of neighboring schools by cost effectiveness of inclusive education (UNESCO, 1994).

During the review of education for all Agenda in 2000 at a world education conference in Dakar, one of the challenges that faced National governments, included non- reflectio on account of disability and provision of education in regular classrooms (UNESCO, 2000). As a result, the United Nations organization committed itself to EFA goals by drafting the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be achieved by the year 2015.

The goals were interpreted as a broader commitment towards a better world in the 21st Century. They included elimination of global poverty, promotion of gender equality, education and environmental sustainability among others. These were the measures the countries world over were to take for a better world. Education was one of the main strategies to achieve these goals. All children were to be taught together irrespective of their condition in mainstream schools (UNESCO, 2000). Kenya

Government ratified the cited inte them it has from time to time set up various educational commissions since independence up to recent which have been tasked with the mandate to

look into the welfare of persons with disabilities and special needs among other educational mandates. These commissions have recommended the integration and or inclusion of learners with special needs and disabilities in mainstream schools (Republic of Kenya, 1964; 1976; 1980; 1988 & 1999). As a result laws and policies have been written to effect the recommendations made and they include The Disability Act (2003), Children's Act (2001), KSSP document (2005) and Special Needs Policy (2009). They have emphasized the education of special needs learners in least restrictive environments. More recently the ministry of education has embarked on putting in place structures including training of teachers to implement inclusive education to match with the trends in education internationally (Republic of Kenya, 2008).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The writer has concluded that implementation of inclusive education cannot be done overnight and it is a process that will take time to be undertaken as it involve changes in educational systems. Some countries have implemented inclusive education in their own way depending on how they have understood the concept of inclusive education. However, generally the writer further concludes that education systems are being changed in terms of policies, curriculum reorganization, teaching strategies, restructuring of physical environment, teaching/learning materials and assistive aids to accommodate all learners including those with special needs and disabilities.

The writer has recommended in line education system in Kenya should be changed in a way that all teachers
are trained to handle all learners in their classrooms, the curriculum should

be changed according to the different needs of learners, environments are modified, assistive aids are provide these changes.
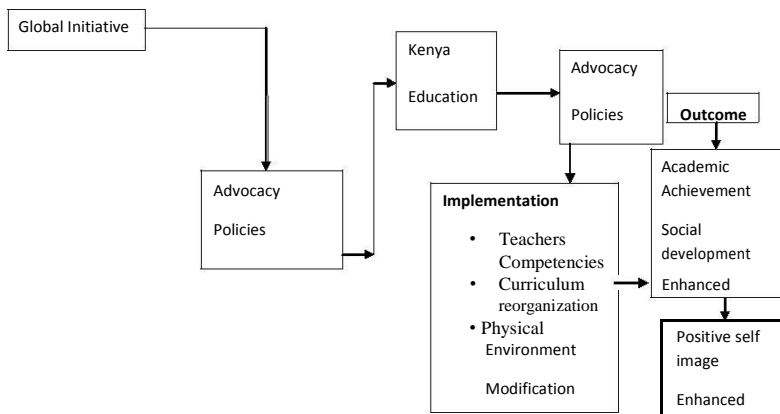

Figure 1: Model of change

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