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Inclusion in Educational Institutions in Africa: The Preparedness of Educators: A Transnational Research

Compiled by Therese Tchombe

Edited by Edward Kochung, John Ihenacho,

Ambrose Nwazouke, Joseph F. Azoh, Amivi Komlan

Participating Team

Ivory Coast: Azoh F.J

Kenya: **Kochung Edward**Nigeria: **Ihenacho John, Jos**

Nwazuoke Ambrose, Ibadan

Togo: Komlan Amivi-Cra

Cameroon: Tchombe Therese (Project Coordinator)

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Acronyms

AOIE: African Organization for Inclusion Education

CRC: Convention on the Rights of the Child

ICF: International Classifications of Functioning

ICIDH: International Classification of Disability, Impairment and Handicap

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

PWD: Persons with Disabilities

SEN: Special Educational Needs

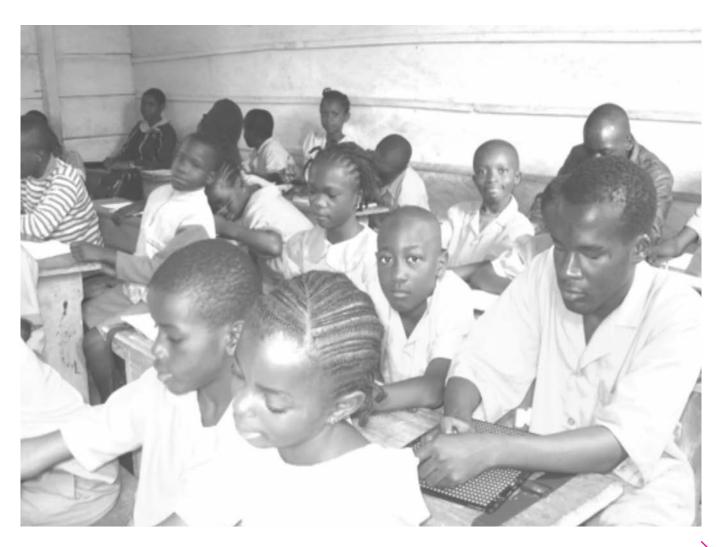
SNE: Special Needs Education

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

UN: United Nations

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

WHO: World Health Organization



Inclusion in Educational Institutions in Africa: The Preparedness of Educators:

A Transnational Research

Abstract

This article reports a transnational study on inclusive education situations in some five African countries namely: Cameroon. Nigeria, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire and Kenya. The focus was on the preparedness of institutions and educators who are key implementers of inclusion. With the use of descriptive survey research design, the study applied questionnaires, interview schedules, observation schedules and document analysis guide to collect data.. Using triangulation approach to data analysis, the empirical enquiry came out with the following results: the gap in policy inhibits inclusive practices; educators and institutions are ill-equipped to embrace inclusion; there is limited evidence of core inclusive values and profile; the role of stakeholders is limited because of their unawareness on special education needs and disability issues: the status of research and the levels of partnerships are inadequate. Consequently, while the study highlights the main characteristics of strengths and weaknesses in each country's situation, it also suggests future orientations that would help improve inclusive education services in the various investigated institutions and national education systems.

Key Terms:

Transnational, Inclusive Education, Special Needs Education, Segregation, Mainstreaming, Disability,

1. Introduction

Inclusive education is internationally well established, however it is highly contested and driven by a range of contextual factors entrenched in educational, political, social, economic, cultural, linguistic, health and socio-historical development that vary from one country to another. Though the critical questions as to; what, why and who are continuously being asked about inclusive education, it is important to note that inclusion originally emerge as a process to address the short comings of special education. Based on a holistic principle, the scope of the challenges of the inclusion/ debate embraces not only those with disabilities but all those in disadvantaged situations leading to barriers that deny them the opportunities to fully participate qualitatively in education process and access to other social services. Responses to the foregoing questions beg for a review, reform and change in educational systems and societal attitudes as a whole to enable the transformation in education and other service provision. In this regard therefore, engagement in action research was seen as a necessary starting point to find out the level of every country's policy, knowledge, awareness, attitudes, perceptions and existing practices of inclusion. It was also vitally important to judge institutional preparedness, by reviewing existing values within institutions to accommodate student diversity, to enable quality learning by all, irrespective of their individual differences. To understand the level of each of the investigated national education systems (Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria & Togo) in the practice of inclusion in this study, an operational definition of the different dimensions of inclusion was important. As observed inclusive education conveys different meanings to different people in various communities. In most countries it was generally confused with integration, placement and mainstreaming and even segregation. The concepts of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Special Needs Education (SNE) therefore requires clarification. In order to understand inclusion, there is the need to understand the difference between disability, impairment and the disadvantaged.

Inclusion

Opertti & Belalca´zar, (2008) in their review stated that inclusive education is a growing universal concern that informs and challenges the processes

There is the absence of a comprehensive policy with implementation strategies based on clear knowledge of inclusive education regarding curriculum /pedagogical/ assessment issues.

of educational reform in both developing and developed regions. They observed that inclusive education is an evolving concept, useful to guide strategies of educational change addressing the sources and consequences of exclusion within the holistic framework of the EFA goals and the understanding of education as a human right. In which case it can be said that inclusion has as a major role to respond to learner diversity through creating conditions for successful learning for all. Oliver (1996), sees inclusion as a political as well as an educational process. From most UNESCO documents, the emphasis is not to limit inclusion to only persons living with disabilities but to also embrace those experiencing barriers to learning as a function of; linguistic background, ethnicity, HIV, migrant, displacement due to various disasters and calamities including all those who are likely to be marginalized and are vulnerable. It therefore implies that inclusive school setting must be based on a curriculum that addresses the individual's cognitive, emotional and creative development and based also on the four pillars of education for the twenty-first century; learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together (Delors 1996).

Even when the concept is understood, actual practices are still dominated by integration and even segregation. Lipsky & Gartner (1999) limited their definition of inclusion to students with disabilities having full membership in ageappropriate classes in their neighbourhood schools, with appropriate supplementary aids and support services. In addition, Antia, Stinson, & Gaustaoldd, (2002), holds the view that inclusion denotes a student with a disability unconditionally belonging to and having full membership of a regular classroom in a regular school and its community. These definitions can be contrasted with 'integration' or 'mainstreaming', both of which imply that a student with disability has the status of a visitor, with only conditional access to a regular classroom, but primary membership of a special class or resource room. Barton (2003) clarifies the concept by stating that inclusive education is not about assimilation or accommodation of individuals into an essentially unchanged system of education provision and practices. It is not about placement or removal of an individual from one context into another. Inclusive education is concerned with the provision of educational services within an environment where a learner is able to access, participate and achieve in Education (Kochung, 2011a). The concept of inclusion however is not only limited to pupils with disabilities, but also to all learners who

Infrastructure particularly at the university level are ill-adapted and other material, technical resources including assistive technologies. The non-accessibility of schools for children/youths with certain types of disabilities is problematic.

may be disadvantaged or marginalized in relation to gender, poverty, language, ethnicity, and geographic isolation. In support of the foregoing view, Skrtic, Sailor, & Gee, (1996), argue that inclusive education goes far beyond physical placement of students with disabilities in general classrooms. Inclusive education is reflected in school settings; planned and organised in ways that meet the diverse needs of all their students within common environments and activities.

Meijer, Soriano, & Watkins, (2003) reviewed 28 European countries' perceptions of inclusion. They came up with three different approaches to include pupils with special educational needs; one-track (including almost all pupils in the mainstream), multi-track (a variety of services between mainstream and special needs education), and twotrack (two distinct educational systems). In the transnational research the objective was to examine the status of one-track approach, however, the outcome demonstrates that what was obtained is the multi-track. In most of the schools studied in various countries, teachers lack the knowledge and understanding about inclusive education and do not also have the profile, skills and competences to manage the pedagogic dynamics necessary for inclusive practices.

UNESCO (2005) addresses inclusive education as a process intended to respond to students' diversity by increasing their participation and reducing exclusion from education. It further reiterated the significance of actions such as attendance. participation and achievement for all students, especially those who, due to various reasons are excluded or at risk of being marginalised. Though the argument encourages the EFA goal, it is important to posit that access does not necessarily mean inclusion. A child can be in class, yet be excluded from classroom activities. In Early Childhood Care and Education, many children are excluded by the nature of the pedagogic practices and the fact that the uniqueness of the age bracket is not respected in the educational process. UNESCO's (2005) concern is that inclusion should involve access more especially to high -quality education that does not discriminate. For this to occur, education systems require in-depth transformation, oriented by a strong policy with effective implementation strategies.

Lipsky & Gartner (1999) assert that inclusive education is a fundamental right, derived from the principle of equity, which, if recognised, would contribute significantly to a democratic society. Slee (2001), postulates that inclusive education is

about the cultural politics of protecting the rights of citizenship for all students. Recently, UNESCO (2010) postulated that equity requires securing all children's rights to education within and through education to realise their potentials and aspirations. Inclusion in education therefore is a provision for all children and young people with and without disabilities and difficulties learning together in ordinary pre-schools, schools, colleges and universities with appropriate network of support (CSIE, 2002).

Blanco's contribution in Building the Fundamental of Inclusion and Quality Education in Early Childhood, at the UNESCO 48th Commission (2008) postulated that educational exclusion is an important phenomenon which is not restricted to those who do not attend school because of a denial of access, or because they dropped out of school due to repetition, the lack of relevance of the education, economic obstacles or the students' life circumstances. Exclusion also affects those who attend school but are segregated or discriminated against because of their ethnic origin, gender, social condition, of other individual characteristics or capacities, as well as those who cannot learn due to the low quality of the education they receive (Blanco, in press).

Integration or Mainstreaming/Segregation

Integration is generally the placement of learners with SEN/disabilities in regular/ordinary or mainstream schools with little or no support while hoping they will cope on their own. It focuses on children especially those with mild impairments and individuals with disability without considering the learning environment or system. Historically, it is traceable to early practices in the US and UK in the 1970s. There is full integration into classrooms or partial integration through special units, special classes or rescue rooms (Public law, 1975; Warnock Report, 1978). All types of integration assume a form of assimilation. The scope of integration is limited and can in no way be compared to the values of inclusion. Segregation is when learners with SEN/disabilities are educated only in special or specialised institutions or in settings isolated from their non-disabled peers. In integration, the child with the disability must be made ready for the integration, while in many cases the school receiving the child with disability is hardly prepared for the child. On this account the child is expected to change to the tune of the school instead of the school changing to address the needs of the child.





2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of Inclusive Education in Africa Even in the African context the various concept of inclusion and other dimensions constitute practices in the society. As pointed out by Zimba in his key note address on inclusive education in 2009, a common cultural value is the focus on" "human dignity seen as beingness characterised by qualities of an individual's participation in valued family and community activities". This participation is availed to allpersons in the community. In addition, in the African context, exclusion on the basis of other aspects such as those of gender, race, ethnicity, region of origin, political affiliation, religion, social-economic status, citizenship (Odinkalu,2008; Naidoo, 2008) and Language (Miti, 2008) exist and needs to be part of the inclusive-exclusive debate. All these potential sources of exclusion have implications for education. From these perspectives, there is need to address inclusive education as a vehicle for societal transformation and openness.

In the African countries like South and North, inclusive education is driven by factors such as educational, political, economic, cultural, linguistic and social systems that influence its dynamics and developments throughout all stages of input, process and output. The peoples' belief systems and thoughts processes play major roles in directing perceptions and attitudes in inclusion in traditional as well as in formal settings.

Developments of inclusive education took firm roots in the early 1990s. But like all other aspects of education, its progress has been slow adopting different models. However, in the last decade, in conformity with international commitments and after the ratification of many international conventions on human rights-based social and educational services, most African countries are determined to reform their national education systems. Hence, 2000-2009 was declared the decade for disabled persons by the African Union with support from the UN. The objectives of the African decade include: poverty alleviation and reduction through economic

support and education; advocacy and lobbying for policies and legislation; raising awareness on disability issues and human rights in Africa (UN, 2000; Peters, 2003).

Despite these general continental initiatives, many African countries have shown a theoretical interest in terms of formulating national policies in special education, which suggest that there is development towards the equalisation of educational opportunities for all children both the disabled and disadvantaged. Nevertheless, the dreams of most persons with disability in the areas of educational provision, employment and support services are yet to be fully realised (Abosi, 2004; Abosi & Ozoji, 1985). Review of literature on counties studied, indicate that identified technical setbacks in the inclusive education system include: lack of a common assessment framework for early identification of special needs; effective planning of intervention

Barriers towards establishing inclusive education stem from two contrasting models with different philosophies on the education of learners with special needs. The medical diagnostic model locates the problem of learning for special needs within the child as if learning difficulties are some kind of disease, which is not the case. On the other hand, the social and educational model of disability acknowledges that education difficulties are dependent upon the education context in which the child is situated and the type and quality of teachers. Therefore, for inclusive education to function effectively, it must address the needs of the individual child, types and quality of teaching and resources including teachers' beliefs systems and attributions. These considerations are important because the rights of the child in inclusive education is to learn differently and teaching must take account of this in practice. Policy and its legislation must put in place proactive strategies to lead change required for inclusive education and its practices. (Zimba, Mowes & Naanda, 2006)

and support provision in response to the needs of diversity; putting policy into practice; development of data collection, statistics and projection; funding; availability of instructional resources; attitude change; equal opportunities and independence; early childhood education; adult education and teachers training (Abosi, 2004; Abosi & Ozoji, 1985; Eleweke & Rodda, 2000; Desta, 1995; Muthukrishna, 2000) including managing other categories of disadvantaged children found in classrooms.

These previous findings indicate that inclusion into mainstream institutions for learners with SEN/disabilities is still a big challenge in basic, secondary and tertiary levels of the African national education systems. Although the African Human Development Department of the World Bank has been funding Education Initiatives in Africa, it clearly outlines the fact that African countries must deal with the issues of financing, quality and relevance of teaching and learning. curriculum and assessment, science and technology education, teacher training and management, and equity and access (World Bank, 2010). On the whole, a child with SEN/disability encounters a number of problems in the current educational settings in Africa, where the philosophy of education professes "equal education for all children". Nevertheless, the practice on the ground does not recognise "slow learners" or learners with special needs within the school system. For example, the curriculum and scheme of work to guide teachers are designed in such a way that all children are considered the same as above average in intelligence (Abosi, 2004). The common assumption is that students with SEN/disabilities accepted in mainstream schools, would eventually cope on their own in the long run. This view considers school inclusion more like a state rather than a process (Abosi, 2004; 2007). Thus, in such school settings, learners with SEN/disabilities/disadvantages struggle, with limited or no support, to adapt to the needs of the school system in order to cope in learning and development (integration) instead of institutions

re-organising themselves and strategizing to meet the needs of student diversity through provision of adequate individualised, grouped or whole school support services (inclusion). While the former, "integration", is charity-based approach, the latter, "inclusion", is human-rights-based approach to educational services. In all of these, it is clear that policy prescriptions do not match the realities of the schooling context.

The multiple setbacks evident in the literature indicate that the area of inclusive education is still underdeveloped in many African countries. Hence, a transnational research project was conducted in five African countries, South of the Sahara, namely Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria and Togo. The aim was to analyse their situation on inclusive education provision through institutional settings with focus on policy, practice, research and cooperation. The rationale was to understand the characteristics of inclusive education in the investigated settings, the preparedness of educators in terms of conceptualising and implementing inclusion, challenges encountered and recommendations to improve service delivery. A major theoretical premise for learning and pedagogic practices to enrich understanding in an inclusive classroom practices comes from Vygotsky social constructivism on inclusive practices. Vygotsky developed a methodological framework for special education and psychology, with relevance for contemporary practical work with inclusive education. His social constructionist epistemology constitute a basis in developing a unique vision for future models of special education, of an inclusion based on positive differentiation (Gandis 2003)

Study objectives

This transitional research had the following objectives:

- > Examine policy, identify gaps and make suggestions for amelioration
- > Find out the nature of inclusive practices in the institutions being studied
- ➤ Identify the existence of inclusive values

and competences used by practising teachers and university lecturers

- > Find out stakeholders'(disabled/nondisabled learners, parents and teachers) perceptions of inclusive education
- ➤ Identify the status of research in inclusive education and collaboration network
- ➤ To establish (South/South-North/South) cooperation in inclusive education practices.

Scope of the Study

The study was limited to five African countries namely; Cameroon, Nigeria, Togo, Ivory Coast and Kenya. The rationale of this transnational study was to understand the current status of inclusive education with the emphasis on, main characteristics, areas of strengths and future orientation for improvement of inclusive education services in each of the national systems surveyed

Inadequacy of teachers' and school managers' inclusive profile require urgent attention towards addressing their competences and values. Teacher education in both pre- and in-service levels must be reformed with a view to build in the programmes attitudes, knowledge, values and skills and accompanying competences to address inclusive practices



3. METHODOLOGY

Study Design

The study employed descriptive survey research design that employed mixed methods of collecting qualitative and quantitative data through use of questionnaires, observation, interviews and analysis of official school documents.

Study area

The study sites, educational institutions and classroom settings (regular, special, public and private schools and universities) were purposefully selected in terms of their educational, geographical, cultural, ethnolinguistic, economic and social diversity in each

country. See the map of Africa below showing the five countries for the transnational study; Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria and Togo.

Population

The diversified sampling population consisted of many participants (teachers, lecturers, school administrators, teacher trainers, inspectors, parents and learners) selected from different structures of primary, secondary and tertiary levels of each national education system. It was based on the role each of these stakeholders played in inclusive education services

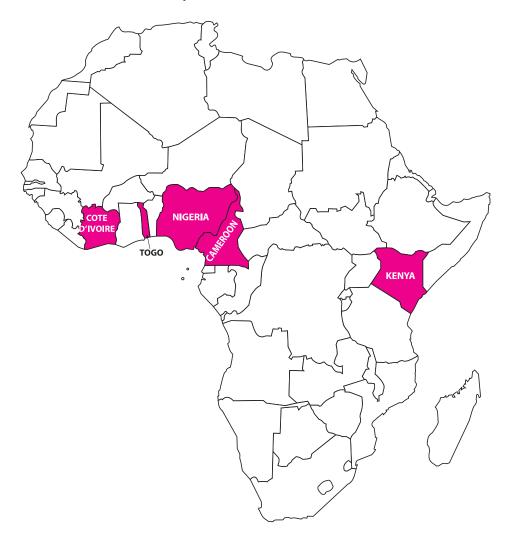


Figure I. Map of Africa Showing Five Study Sites

Instrumentation

The triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments used includes:

- ➤ Questionnaires: for lecturers, teachers and parents of children with disability/SEN.
- > Interviews: for pupils and students with and without disabilities, principals/head teachers, teacher educators, inspectors and administrators from basic, secondary and tertiary education ministries.
- ➤ Observation of inclusive physical environments and classroom practices
- ➤ Official/institutional document reviews

Instrument validation

For purpose of contextual validation, a pilot study was first conducted to check the content and language of the instrument. In this process, some items were modified after discussion with a team of specialists in Special Educational Needs.

Data collection Procedure

Data was collected within a period of 10 to 30 days in various countries in three stages: firstly, a pilot study for contextual validation of the instruments; secondly, the administration of the questionnaires and interviews; thirdly, the observation of the inclusive physical school environments and classroom practices and finally

official school document were reviewed to check the consistency of data collected through questionnaires and interviews.

Before the actual data was collected, there was a brief presentation of the project and discussion with participants on issues of confidentiality/anonymity and clarification on the nature of the instruments, the researchers used the self-delivery technique to administer the questionnaires and interviews. Observation was done with the help of a check list based on inclusive physical environment and classroom practices while official institution document reviews was done through the use of check list.

Methods of data analysis

A triangulation of quantitative and qualitative techniques of data analysis was used. Descriptive Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 1.2.0F) was used for quantitative data while content analysis of reformulating some answers to produce terms of responses to variables was used for qualitative data. These approaches to data analysis in the transnational study led to understanding of themes and subthemes deducted and induced from diverse aspects of inclusion investigated in the institutions and national education systems.



4. Findings

Discussion on findings focused on some key themes and subthemes emerging from the analysed data with relevance to the research objectives. The discussion helped to highlight the main characteristics, areas of strengths and future orientations to improve inclusive education services and practices in each of the investigated national systems. This presentation is only a summary reports on the general characteristics of inclusive education in all the investigated countries; for a detailed understanding of each country's analysed situation, the reader is advised to contact the research team of each country or the coordinator of this transnational study. However, the findings of the study, driven by the various objectives were summarised in table 1 below and explicated according to each of the themes/concepts of inclusion emerging from the data from each country.

Inclusive Education Policy

Objective I: Examine policy, identify gaps and make suggestions for amelioration

In reporting this aspect of the findings, it is worth understanding that the concept and phenomenon of policy is a general framework or guidelines plan of action with regard to input, process and output of any particular service delivery. Generally policies (a policy) operate(s) at the micro-level (schools and communities), at the meso-level (educational systems and external agency support services), and at the macro-level (national/international policy and national legislation). Other existing legal frameworks like disability, school, education, health and social welfare, laws and the constitution are usually taken into consideration in formulating a policy.

In a highly centralised education system, only one official (national) policy is imposed on all regional, local and institutional levels nationwide. In a decentralised educational system, each of the above levels may formulate its own policy drawn on the hierarchically established ones. Fundamentally, each policy has its principles, definition of key terms, vision, objectives, and strategies and assessment/evaluation procedures. Besides these issues, an inclusive education policy also addresses major areas of

support like: School/classroom environmental adaptation; staff pre-/in-service training; curriculum and learning support; Annual budget allocation by parliament for adequate human, material and financial resource; active involvement of all stakeholders/other professionals in inclusive education initiative; official code of practice of SEN/inclusion; a framework for assessment and categorization of SEN to facilitate inclusive education services in institutional settings.

Teachers in some if not most cases are reluctance to accommodate children with disabilities in their classrooms because parents would not want their children to mix with disabled children. Besides parents of disabled children are reluctant to enroll their children in mainstream schools.

Findings indicate that there are gaps in most inclusive education policy frameworks of the investigated institutions and national systems. In Kenya and Nigeria, for example, the policies exist but they are either inadequately formulated (not widened enough to address all key aspects of support services) or not fully implemented (not entirely enforced to meet the needs of student diversity) in the investigated institutions. In Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Togo, inclusive education policies do not really exist.

Consequently, only partial implementation of the fragmented legal documents is evident to inform practical inclusion. Generally, they include one or

a combination of two or more of the following: Disability, school or education laws; official circulars, ordinances or decrees; national constitution; national adaptation of the UNESCO's EFA and inclusive education goals. These gaps in policy situations underlie the bulk of charity-based (integration) rather than humanrights-based (inclusion) forms of support services implemented in the investigated institutions. While the former approach requires learners with SEN to adapt to the needs of the school to cope with the national education system, the latter underlines the necessity of schools to adapt to the needs of learners to help them progress in learning and other aspects of development in daily life.

By still struggling to launch the EFA/inclusion rights-based services which were supposed to have come into force since the year 2000 in the Dakar Framework, after the Jomtiem Declaration (UNESCO, 1990) and the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), means the five investigated African countries are still lagging behind their counterparts of the South and North, across the globe. The principles and goals of EFA were to promote access/right to education for all, whether in special, ordinary or mainstream schools, while those of inclusion were to enhance access to schooling in one setting for student diversity (disabled/non-disabled and other disadvantaged students alike) from within the same neighbourhood. These human rights-based provisions and those of other subsequent international conventions were meant to encourage national governments the world over to formulate and implement a comprehensive inclusive education policy in response to the needs of student diversity.

Inclusive practices

Objective II: Find out the nature of inclusive practices in the institutions being studied
This aspect explicates how the institutions' inclusive culture, ethos and attitudes on school grounds and classroom contexts enhance the accommodation of learners with SEN/disabilities. Findings from Cameroon and Nigeria distinguish

differentiated models of inclusive education. From the findings it was clear that segregation /Special schools were common. However mainstreaming and integration were some of the models employed. Findings in all the study sites also indicate that most regular and mainstream educators/institutions are not yet ready to embrace inclusive education.

Although the investigated institutions profess inclusive ethos like EFA and social inclusion, their environmental settings and classroom sitting positions have not been adapted to the needs of learners with disabilities. The constructions of the institutions' infrastructure were done without persons with disabilities in mind. Consequently, those with mobility needs using tricycles cannot access some areas of the school grounds with uneven topography. However, in some countries like Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Togo, learners with sensory impairment (hearing/sight problems) are made to sit in front of the classroom, closer to the teacher and chalkboard, as support initiative to facilitate their participation in curricular activities.

On the whole, the lack of effective inclusive

Discrepancies for inclusion arises as a function of lack of knowledge about disability and lack of awareness of the potentials of children with disabilities. There is need therefore for a strong parent, community and school partnership. Parents' and teachers' attitudes need to be addressed through education to change mindset.



culture in the investigated institutions is due to many factors: educators and stakeholders' lack of SEN/inclusive education knowledge, disability diversity awareness; institutions' lack of adequate human, material and financial resources to initiate and sustain rights-based instead of charity-based acceptance of student diversity; community's lack of understanding and utilities of SEN/inclusive education services to individuals and the society. As suggestion, the practice of implicit and explicit negative attitudes and nonadaptation of institutional environment underlie different forms of exclusion (stigmatization and marginalisation) in the institutions. These practical aspects of inclusion could be managed at individual, institutional and community levels through effective SEN/inclusive education provision and disability awareness sensitization campaign to all inclusive educators, institutional stakeholders and community members. This initiative will sensitize people on: the scientific understanding of causes and effects of disabilities; the rehabilitative/inclusive support services required to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities and other disadvantages; community spirit of constructing

eco-friendly social environments like schools, markets, hospitals, parks, roads, worship grounds, work places and social amenities in public places for those with mobility and physical needs as well as change from negative to positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and learners with SEN.

Inclusive values and competences of practitioners

Objective III: Identify the existence of inclusive core values and competences used by practising teachers and university lecturers.

From classroom observation carried out, the indicators in almost all the countries and institutions fall short of effective practical inclusive education services (see table 1). Apart from Kenya and Nigeria where some teachers/administrators'/lecturers' have inclusive competence and profile, Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Togo educators are yet to acquire such expertise. The running of special/inclusive education courses at higher education level are on-going in Cameroon and still at the embryonic

stages in Ivory Coast while non-existent in Togo. Generally, SEN/inclusive education and disability awareness issues are not yet a compulsory module in all pre-/in-service teacher education programmes in the investigated countries. Besides these, specialist teacher/ teacher trainer programmes in inclusive education services are still under way. On the whole it is clear that none of the countries can claim complete inclusive competence or have teachers/administrators/lecturers with well-developed inclusive profiles. In Cameroon, such is still being initiated, while in Ivory Coast and

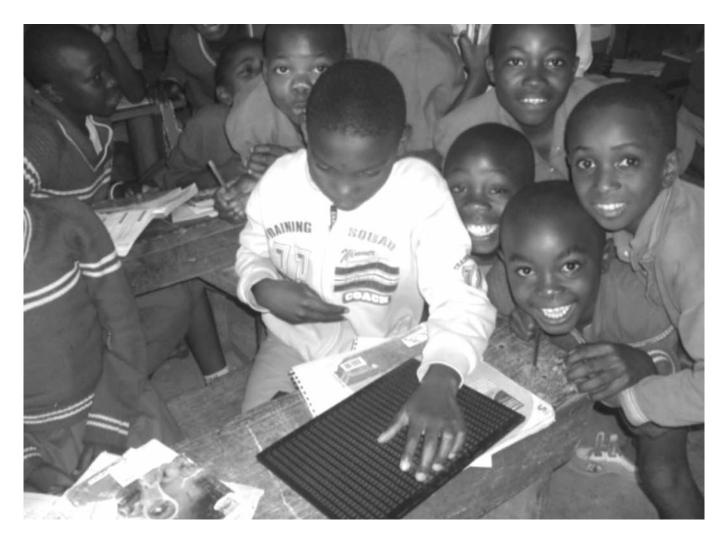
Evidently, there are many well trained specialist teachers, and regular teachers but are not equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills in assessment and identification of special needs; establishment of Individualised Educational Plans (IEP); school SEN data base and provision register; curriculum and learning/teaching support strategies and

Togo, it is still to be launched.

differentiated child-centred pedagogy, evaluation, among others. Consequently, nearly all the investigated institutions do not deliver effective support services. Obviously ordinary teachers/lecturers without previous pre-/inservice SEN/inclusive training are wanting in support skills to meet the special needs of their learners. In Cameroon and Ivory Coast for example, such educators rely on their long time teaching experiences and on pedagogy focused on cooperation, solidarity team support and encouraging learners' contribution.

Thus, they demonstrate positive attitudes and concern towards learners with disabilities, out of sympathy or charity-based tolerance rather than human rights-based acceptance. Others, for example, in Kenya, Nigeria and Ivory Coast because the teachers are ill-equipped with inclusive skills, they suggest that learners with disabilities be sent to specialised institutions that are better equipped to meet their special needs.





Stakeholders' Perception and Attitudes on Inclusive Education

Objective IV: Find out stakeholders' perceptions and attitudes on inclusive education
Stakeholders namely teachers, parents, learners and community members have an important role to play in inclusive education services. However, the extent of their engagement and attitude depends largely on their level of awareness of the concept of inclusion and the satisfaction they derived from the process in terms of their children's benefits. Table 1 indicates the degree of their awareness and satisfaction in terms of their met expectations in each of the investigated systems.

Findings from all the institutions revealed that parents have a diversified understanding of the concept and phenomenon of inclusion. While some understand it as schools' accommodation of their children with SEN/disabilities as

integration (with limited or no support), others consider it as inclusion (with support). In Kenya where most parents are well sensitized on the concept of inclusion by some local NGOs and their international partners, they are happy to secure placement of their children in regular schools but were dissatisfied with the nature of support services which fall short of their expectations. By contrast, in Cameroon and Ivory Coast where most parents are ignorant of the concept they cannot evaluate with clear precision whether their children are adequately accommodated in regular/mainstream schools or not. It is worst in Togo where parents, because of stigma of their children's disabilities in public places, are reluctant to collaborate with schools about their children's learning needs. However, in all the countries, while some parents/ nondisabled learners show positive attitudes towards the disabled in regular schools, others show negative attitudes because of their superstitious beliefs about persons with disabilities. The latter group of parents would not allow their child to



share the same school, classroom or bench with a child with disabilities.

Generally, most parents in the investigated institutions do not only expect adequate support services from staff and institutions but also contribute material and financial contribution to support schools in their inclusive education process and other internal development projects. However in Cameroon for example some parents feel that their children are coping well in a regular school. As concerns teacher-parents relationship, majority of parents believe that effective communication between them and the teachers would be of great contribution to the success of inclusion.

Similarly, learners with disabilities also follow the trend of their parents in terms of awareness of the concept and expected satisfaction of the process of inclusion. Many express their satisfaction in the sense that, despite the absence of adequate learning support scheme, there is care, affection, socialisation and fight against discrimination in their favour. But few,

especially in Togo and Ivory Coast, also express their contempt for constant marginalisation by some non-disabled peers and teachers/lecturers. On the whole, as further revealed in table 1 below, the negative or positive attitudes manifested towards learners with SEN/disabilities in the institutions greatly influence even their degree of participation in curricular/extracurricular activities and their interest in each institution itself.

As for teachers/lecturers, in Kenya and Nigeria where many have received SEN/inclusive education and disability awareness courses, they have the necessary knowledge and skills but lack material and financial resources to administer adequate support services. Thus, most of them are dissatisfied for the fact that they are obliged by the education authorities to accept student diversity whose additional learning needs cannot be met in their institutions. Similarly, few teachers/lecturers in Cameroon with limited skills and many in Ivory Coast and Togo without skills and support resources also express their dissatisfaction about inclusion. Consequently

many teachers/lecturers recommend that such categories of learners be sent to specialised institutions. In all the countries, while some parents/ non-disabled learners show positive attitudes towards the disabled in regular schools, others show negative attitudes because of their superstitious beliefs about persons with disabilities. The latter group of parents would not allow their child to share the same school, classroom or bench with a child with disabilities.

Status of inclusive education research and collaborative network

Objective V: Identify the status of research in inclusive education

Research is an indispensable scientific tool used to support and inform theory, policy and practice in any field. Findings from this transnational study suggest that most participating countries and institutions have limited or no research literature in inclusive education. In Cameroon, Togo and Ivory Coast, this study exposes the gap between their inclusive education research, policy and practice. However, in Cameroon, the University of Buea (Faculty of Education) and partly the University of Yaounde I (Department of Linguistics only) now run specialist courses and conduct research in special/inclusive education. In Kenva, the universities of Bondo and Maseno are involved in SEN/inclusive education courses and research while in Nigeria, the universities of Jos, Ibadan among others do same. Thus, both Kenya and Nigeria have a considerable although not well developed body of inclusive education research to inform policy and practice. So far, only the University of Maseno in Kenya has already established a South-South collaboration network with Swaziland, Botswana and Uganda through the EDULINK Programme for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries. The other higher institutions in the countries involved in this study also have such initiatives under way. As suggested by all the national reports, there is a necessity to establish a collaboration network in qualitative research between member countries of this transnational research team and partners of the South and North.

Partnership cooperation in inclusive education practice

Objective VI: To establish South-South/North-South partnership cooperation in inclusive education practices.

Partnership cooperation between practitioners from around the globe (South-South/North-South) is very important in any field if various national systems are to move abreast with their counterparts in the competitive global economy. In this respect, although some of the participating universities have expressed their intention to embark on partnership cooperation from across the globe. Apart from Maseno University in Kenya, the other countries that were involved in this study have not formed partnerships on inclusive education. The limitation of this initiative in most of the investigated institutions is probably because their inclusive education services are still at the embryonic stage. Hopefully, such partnership cooperation will crystalize once effective inclusive education is conceptualised and implemented in the investigated institutions and national systems.

Educational programmes must be more flexible to allow for adaptation to the pace of development of each child suggesting that the curriculum must be reviewed to respond to the expectations of inclusive education.

The summary of the findings is presented in Table 1.

Table1. Summary of Findings on the Transnational Study

Country	Cameroon		Cote d'Ivoire		Kenya		Nigeria		Togo	
Policy/ Practice/ Research/ Co.	+/-	%	+/-	%	+/-	%	+/-	%	+/-	%
Disability / Education/ School Law(s) /Constitution	+		+		+		+		+	
UNESCO EFA/Inclusive goals	+		+		+		+		+	
SEN/Inclusive policy: National (centralised) policy- School (decentralised) policy-	-		-		+		+		-	
Teachers/Lecturers/Teacher Trainers/ Administrators' inclusive competences/ profile: Pre-service training- In-service training-	-		-		+	-50 -50	-+ -+	-50 -50	-	
School inclusive values/ethos	-+	-50	-+	-50	+-	-50	+-	50+	-+	-50
Teachers/lecturers/ Administrators' awareness	-+	-50	-+	-50	+		+		-+	-50
Stakeholders' awareness/ Satisfaction: Parents of learners with SEN- Learners with SEN-	+-	-50 -50	-+ -+	-50 -50	+-	50+ 50+	-+	-50 -50	-	
Attitude of acceptance by teachers/schools	+-	50+	+-	50+	-+	-50	+-	50+	+	
Attitudes of acceptance by other parents-by non-disabled peers-	+-	50+ -50	+-	50+ 50+	+-	50+ 50+	+-	50+ 50+	+	-50
Inclusive physical environment	-		-	-	-				-	
Framework for Assessment/ categorisation of (SEN)	-		-		-+ -+	-50 -50	-+ -+	-50 -50	-	
School SEN data-base/ Provision register/ Inc. Models	-		-		+		- -+	-50	-	
Inclusive curriculum	-		-		+		-		-	
Inclusive teaching methods/ classroom management-	-+ -+	-50 -50	+		+	-50	-+ +-	-50 50+	+-	50+ -50
Inclusive learning/ teaching support/ resources	-+ -+	-50 -50	-+ -+	-50 -50	-+ -+	-50 -50	-+ -+	-50 -50	-	
Learners' participation/ Interest in mainstream institutions' activities	-+ +	-50	-+ +	-50	-+ -+	-50 -50	-+ -+	-50 -50	-+ -+	-50 -50
Institutions' cooperation with parents/external bodies	+		+		+		+		-+	-50
Status of research network	-+	-50	-		+		-+	-50	-	
Practical cooperation between South/South-South/North-	-		-		+		-		-	

⁺ Positive indicator far above 50%; - Negative indicator far below 50%

^{+- (-+)} Positive/Negative indicators slightly above or below 50%

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

conclusions

From the above themes and concepts discussed, it is evident that the participating institutions and national systems experience many challenges which are similar and different.

In the investigated institutions, inclusion/exclusion is seen as a provision for equal opportunity for all and a sense of belonging to a group by all (Cameroon), equality and diversity (Kenya) and education of all children with varied learning capacities (Nigeria). Exclusion which opposes inclusion means failure to provide the above facilities including access to curriculum, learning, evaluation and teacher education.

Findings from the transnational study reveal that Cameroon, Togo and Cote d'Ivoire still practice integration while Nigeria and Kenya are on their way but have not yet embraced full inclusion. The literature review and the results of the transnational study indicate that there is a blend of the SEN and the SNE forms of inclusive education services in some of the investigated national education systems.

The study found out that in Nigeria statutory assessment is carried out by the Local Education Authorities, when a problem is raised by parents or schools, to identify the special needs of learners experiencing some learning difficulties (Buttriss & Callader, 2010). In Kenya there is established system of educational assessment and resource services and no child is enrolled for special education without being assessed

An additional learning support plan in form of Individual Educational Plan (IEP) drawn for learners with severe, specific or multiple needs after a formal assessment procedure was reported in Kenya and Nigeria. In the transnational research findings, statutory assessment, Individual educational plan, multiagency support services of inclusive education services have been indicated only in the Kenyan and Nigerian national education systems. It was evident that inclusive teacher training/resources and early childhood education are indispensable

areas to tackle if inclusion is to become a reality in the investigated national education systems.

Findings summarised in the summary table 1 above, indicate that while Kenya and Nigeria are relatively better established in terms of their SEN/inclusive education policy, practice, research and cooperation, Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Togo are still at the threshold of the initiative. While the former group of countries require a push to kick-start, the latter group require a big push to get started in effective inclusive education services. On the whole, the active involvement of the researchers. institutions, national governments and external partners like UNESCO Teacher Education Taskforce is indispensable. Hopefully, from these preliminary results, further research studies will be carried out to inform policy makers and practitioners in order to launch or improve inclusive education services in the investigated institutions and national education systems. In each of the national situational analysis, recommendations made by each team of researchers and suggestions put forward by this executive summary should be taken into consideration.

Recommendations

Policy: In order to ameliorate the contemporary policy situation, each national education system including the Basic, Secondary and Tertiary Education Ministries as well as the supporting Health and Social Welfare Ministries should iointly embark on educational reforms with inclusive orientations. After this transnational study, an inter-ministerial committee of experts led by educators should be sent to the field again to study the national inclusive education situation and to come out with a comprehensive report. The report will serve as a bill for parliamentary debate on inclusive education law and policy to be enacted. Only such a framework encompassing the key aspects of inclusive policy will guarantee sustainable resources provision like: annual budget allocation; specialist pre-/in-service teachers training programmes in SEN/inclusive education; target of different areas

of competencies and capacity building namely curriculum and instruction, assessment, resource management, SEN coordination and liaison with external services/bodies; framework for assessment/categorisation of needs and official code of practice for SEN/inclusion in institutions; school/classroom environmental adaptation

arrangements and material resource like ICT, adaptive and assistive technology among others for curriculum and learning/teaching support.

Besides that, disability awareness and SEN/inclusive, education module should be made a mandatory component in professional



training programmes for all ordinary school teachers, head teachers, administrators, inspectors and those involved in the implementation of SEN/inclusive education at basic, secondary and tertiary education levels. Inclusion or rights-based educational services can be effective only where there is education and democracy (decentralised education system). Thus, there is the necessity to grant autonomy, professionalism and accountability to local education authorities (not appointed educational delegations stripped of powers) and schools so they may effectively manage their internal inclusive education services at individualised, group or whole school levels. This process ensures cost-effectiveness and costefficiency for adequate support service delivery to student diversity including those with SEN/disabilities.

Inclusive Practices: What emerges as recommendation suggests the need for transitional programme for SEN children from special schools or integrated settings to inclusive orientation. Most important is the adaptation of institutional environment to avoid different forms of exclusive practices that are implicit or explicit. An important recommendation calls for a transition period for transfer into regular institutions for children from special schools.

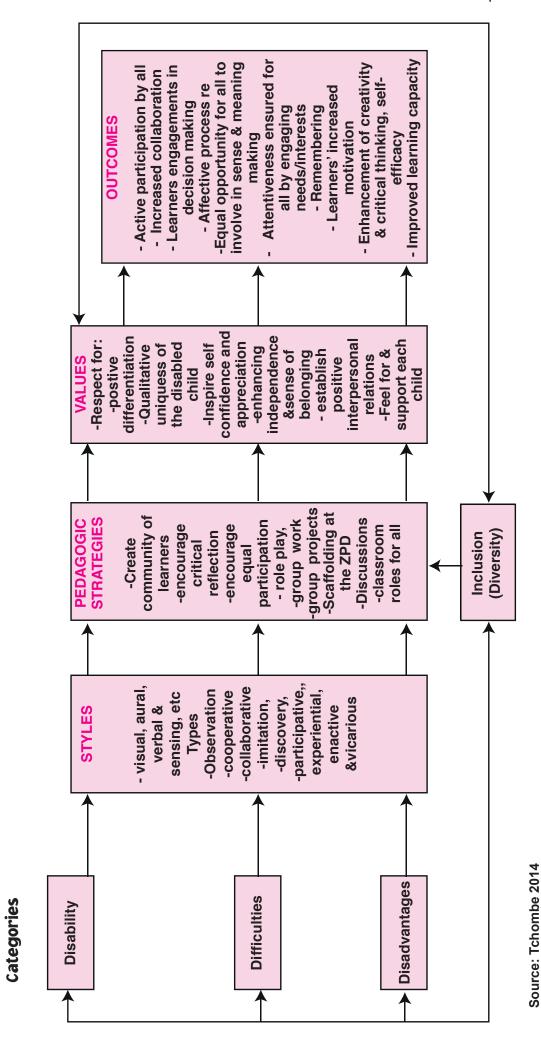
Core values and competences of practitioners in inclusion: Regular basic and secondary institutions should collaborate with teacher training institutions and higher education institutions to enhance initial teacher training/ continuous professional development programmes. It is increasingly becoming important to address inclusive pedagogic practices; teacher's generic and specific competences and their meta-profile should be developed. Teacher education should ensure that at national level, the school curriculum should be flexible, broad and balanced for easy adaptation at national, regional, local or school level so that all learners may have access to it. The pedagogy should also be child centred because each learner has unique learning/development needs. Generic and specialized courses in

SEN/inclusive education should be run at tertiary education level for specialist peripatetic teachers who may shuttle between special and regular schools and school administrators who function like SEN/inclusive education coordinators or managers.

Regular/mainstream schools should set up inclusive exchange programmes with specialised institutions for peripatetic teachers and learners with disabilities. In a multidisciplinary approach to service delivery for learners with complex needs. institutions should collaborate with external bodies like community-based rehabilitation centres, educational psychology, mental health, speech and language therapy and social welfare services that can help to facilitate the academic (learning/ development), linguistic, psychological and social inclusion of such categories of learners. Teacher education at pre-service/ inservice should develop teachers' competences in engaging diversity in the use of inclusive values: Equal opportunity in classroom engagements giving a sense of belonging and ability to contribute. Teacher education must begin to reflect on new dimensions for teacher formation. Figure 2 below presents dimensions for reflections.

There is need for collaborative research and appropriate baseline data to inform policy, capacity building and practice for the way forward in inclusive education

Dimensions for Reflections to ensure Inclusive Practices for Possible Impact on all Categories of Learners: Learning, styles/types Pedagogies strategies Values for Teacher & Pupils **Expected Learner Outcomes for all Employed**



inclusive practices. It also provides some initial perspectives to be reviewed for teacher education. Kochung (2011b) provides an important training manual Figure 1, illustrates possible dimensions based on teachers' beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, values and skills that can be employed in classrooms for for building teachers' capacity for inclusive practices.

Perspectives for enhancing learning in inclusive education

Further reflections on figure 1 shows that to remove barriers to learning and allow full participation for all in school activities, a full range of teaching strategies must be identified. From empirical findings, it was evident that schools must assume the responsibility to adapt and change in order to accommodate all pupils and not to expect pupils to change. Therefore successful practices for inclusion demands that classroom interactions must not only be rich and distributed equitably but must expose the values inherent in an inclusive situation. An important explanation according to Vygotsky (1983) as cited by Gindis (1999) points to the fact that development of individuals with a disability is not slowed-down or missing variations of normal development. The qualitative uniqueness of a disabled child's development is mediated by the social implications of disability. "A child whose development is impeded by a disability is not simply a child less developed than his peers: rather, he has developed differently" (Vygotsky, 1983, p. 96 cited in Gindis, 1999). Accordingly, an inclusive pedagogic practice must engage all learners in the class by enabling each and every one to have their own individual set goals and be encouraged to be fully involved in collaborative learning. Teacher education should strive to build teacher's capacity that will encourage pupils' imagination, creativity and discovery with flexibility so that all pupils must feel success since their needs are accommodated.

Stakeholders' Perception and Attitudes on Inclusive Education: Prior to launching inclusive education services in all institutions nationwide, the national education authorities should identify the key stakeholders, define their roles and collaborate with the national/ local NGOs to help educate them in disability and learning barriers awareness issues and SEN/inclusive education services. At Parent Teacher Association meeting, and the communities, parents should be educated on the diversity and difference issues

and their collaborative roles in giving each child a sense of belonging. Positive parent-teacher relationship must be encouraged at all levels through accountability and good school governance

Status of inclusive education research and collaborative network: The few available research studies conducted by universities, NGOs, community-based rehabilitation centres and other professional bodies in specialised institutions need to be pieced together on each nationally established research data-base. Besides that, each national education authorities should be encouraged to fund research at national, regional, local and institutional levels to inform decision makers', administrators and practitioners. This will help to prepare the participating countries of this transnational research better and to develop a solid status in South-South/South-North collaborative research network.

Partnership cooperation in inclusive education practices: Practitioners' partnership cooperation could be launched initially between the institutions and national systems involved in this transnational study before extending beyond. Other institutions could emulate the good example of the Maseno University in Kenya while striving for partnership even in the North. Generally, the initiative could incorporate exchange programme for pre-/in-service teacher trainers and trainees, professional bodies' representatives and lifelong learning courses in Learning/Teaching in Higher Education (LTHE) for university lecturers

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