

Transnational Study on Inclusion in Education Institutions in Africa: The Preparedness of Educators

Cameroon, Kenya, Ivory Coast,
Nigeria & Togo

Therese M. S. Tchombe
Professor Emeritus/ UNESCO Chair SEN
Coordinator

Introduction

AIM

Preliminary results of the transnational study of five African countries that set out to investigate **Inclusion in Education Institutions in Africa: The Preparedness of Educators.**

Study 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 practicing teachers and university lecturers

Cont.

- Find out disabled and non disabled pupils' and students' perceptions of inclusion,
- Find out parental perceptions of inclusive education
- Identify the status of research in inclusive education.

Methodology

- Survey research employed triangulation of qualitative and quantitative procedures, through questionnaires, observation and interview for data collection.
- Sample for data collection for each country was 400 including persons in the different structures of the education system.

Preliminary Findings

Cameroon Case / Policy Issues

- In all the regular institutions studied, there were pupils and students with various types of disabilities but the infrastructures and pedagogical practices were not disability friendly or sensitive.
- Reviewing policy showed gaps and limitations in scope. A major policy gap is the absence of orientations towards curriculum reforms, assessments, and practicing teachers' profile for inclusive education practices.

Awareness of Key Educational Actors

- Teacher Educators and even pedagogic inspectors or advisers were not even aware of the critical issues surrounding teacher quality in terms of values that guide inclusive practices and their competences in managing and orchestrating inclusive administrative and pedagogic competences.

Kenya : Parentals'/Children's Perceptions

- Parents understood the concept and were happy with the placement of their children.
- Children(69%) with disability who participated in the study were happy that their teachers paid attention to them individually.
- Those with more than one disability reported that teachers never gave them enough attention.

Teaching Methods

Regarding learning and teaching methods teachers (60%) reported that they mostly use individual and discussion methods.

Students (90%) liked their respective mainstream schools and 80% reported that their parents collaborate with their teachers during their learning process.

Policy

- Teachers (65 %) acknowledged that policies on inclusion do exist, 34% are not aware if there are any policies on inclusion.
- School administrators and head teachers (59%) are aware of policies on inclusive education.
- School administrators and head teachers (41%) have no information at all regarding the existence of policy on inclusive education.

Attitudes of Acceptance and Rejection

- Teachers from the different institutions studied (55 %) felt that students with special needs and disabilities should not be in their schools.
- Most teachers (87%) felt that the schools have a responsibility to adapt and change in order to accommodate all students.
- However, 13% of the teachers however felt that it is the students who should change in order to be accommodated in the schools.

Pedagogic Strategies

- Teachers (78%)reported they use management techniques that elicit student's co-operation and sustain their engagement in activities and create a positive classroom climate.
- Teachers (71%) indicated their ability to establish and maintain collaborative relationships with parents and encourage the active involvement of students in learning.
- Teachers also felt confident that they could remove barriers to learning and allow full participation of students in school activities.

Ivory Coast: Knowledge/ Awareness/Acceptance

- Knowledge of Inclusive education is weak among educational administrators and teachers at all levels.
- Teachers' aware of the presence of Children with disabilities in their institutions such as the visually impaired and hard of hearing exist.
- On this account 64,2% of teachers in the study state that the school must be disability sensitive to meet their needs.
- In addition 52,9% indicated that teachers must take responsibility for all learners using appropriate resources.

Problems

- Specific problems are related to the absence of comprehensive policy
- Inadequate human and material resources including ill adapted infrastructure particularly at the university level.

Togo: Policy

- Policy in the sector strategy for education in Togo is committed to providing Education For All (EFA)
- The strategy is clear on the concerns that universal primary education will not be effective if inclusion of excluded groups including girls and disabled children in the education system is not effected.

Challenges

The findings underscored the following:

- Reluctance of teachers in their classrooms to accommodate children with disabilities.
- Lack of knowledge on disability of teachers, education authorities and the community in general.
- Reluctance of parents of disabled children to enroll their child.
- Lack of awareness of the potential of children with disabilities. Fear of the mainstream education system to include within it disabled children.

Cont.

- Fear of parents to see their children in the same class with children with disabilities.
- The non-accessibility of schools for children with certain types of disabilities,
- The rigidity of educational programs that do not allow for adaptation to the pace of development of each child.
- Lack of synergies between special and mainstream schools.

Conclusions

- From the preliminary findings it is clear that only Kenya is quite closed to being prepared for inclusive education practices.
- The main message coming out is the absence of a strong policy and implementation strategies to direct action through clear knowledge of inclusive education.
- Parental and teachers' attitudes will need to be addressed through education.
- The absence of appropriate infrastructure , material human and technical resources and competences need to be addressed.
- Inclusive values would need to be reinforced

END

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING