



Teacher's behavior influence on integration of pupils with physical disabilities in public primary schools in Busia county

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Abstract

During the 19th and 20th Centuries, pupils with disabilities received an education separate from the non-disabled pupils. Today, pupils take advantage of full or partial integration throughout the world. Kenyan schools that offer partial inclusion, allow pupils to participate in classrooms with non-disabled pupils for the majority of the day. The purpose of the study was to establish teacher's behavior influence on integration of pupils with physical disabilities in public primary schools in Busia County. The study adopted the *Ex-post facto* research design. The survey covered more than 14,000 households in a total of 600 clusters (436 rural and 164 urban). A sample 200 subjects was drawn composed of 155 pupils 2 head teachers, 2 special needs teachers and 41 pupils with physical disabilities. The research adopted a methodology that comprised of mainly literature review and participatory data collection methodologies namely Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). A total of 22 KIIs and 10 FGDs were employed in the collection of data across the two counties and at the national level. Descriptive statistics which includes frequencies and percentages was used to present the study findings. The study concludes that teacher's behavior in teaching highly influences the self-esteem of pupils with physical disabilities in integrated schools and that the inadequate facilities for pupils with physical disabilities is a barrier to integration. The study therefore recommends that adequate physical facilities and support services should be provided to enhance integration. Regarding the training of the special needs education teachers, the Ministry of Education should enhance further training of all the teachers in integrated schools in order to enhance and update their skills. The research therefore recommends that there is need for improvement of data management for the Children with Disabilities, updating of legislative, policy and institutional responses and monitoring their results, devising a system of education appropriate for the Children with Disabilities, increasing allocation for the education of children with disabilities and structuring it to be more responsive to their needs and improvement of the general welfare of people with disabilities to increase their ability to support themselves.

Keywords: educational assessment and resource centers, education for all, individuals with disabilities, self-esteem, special schools, support services, teacher characteristics

Introduction

In developed countries like USA, there is increased focus on the right to education for all. This is sequel to the Dakar World Education Forum (2000), where it was stated clearly, that integrated education is vital if the 'Education for All (EFA) goal is to be achieved. The United States education landscape has evolved subsequently over the past 50 years. Issues of civic rights and the government's role in education ushered in an era of integration in the United States education system. Integrated education addresses problems of pupils who require special attention in a mainstream environment (Khudorenko, 2011) The idea of including special needs pupils in a mainstream environment offers a number of benefits although there are some controversies that accompany the subject.

Jerome (2012) noted that African states found it necessary to contextualize the convention on the Rights of the Child so that it reflected African perception of cultural heritage, historical background and the values of African civilization. This ideological and philosophical posturing motivated the adoption of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) by African states (Kaime, 2009). In 1990 the Organization of African Unity (OAU) adopted the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. This Charter

came into force in 1999 (Pkalya, 2010). By May 2013, the ACRWC had been ratified by forty-one (Kenya inclusive) of the fifty-four African Union States (Sakarai, 2010). Article one of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child requires member states to recognize the rights, freedoms and duties enshrined in it. It also requires the states to take the necessary constitutional steps to adopt legislative measures necessary to give effect to its provisions by the individual states (UNCEF, 2014). This knowledge on the ACRWC can only be articulated through teachers in educational fora in schools.

Rasmussen (2010) has explained that the Dakar Framework for Action recommends nations to provide primary education of good quality and to improving all aspects of educational quality. Although there is no single definition of 'quality', most attempts to define it incorporates two fundamental perspectives. First, cognitive development is a primary objective of education, with the quality of education measured against its success in achieving this objective. Second, education must promote creative and emotional development, supporting the objectives of peace, citizenship and security, fostering equality and passing global and local cultural values down to future generations (Lindsay, 2010). These perspectives have been integrated into the aims of

education set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which formulates a philosophy of respect for children as individuals, recognizing each child as unique in characteristics, interests, abilities and needs (Sakurai, 2010). It sets out a framework of obligations to provide education that promotes children's optimum development.

The education of children with disabilities is largely left to philanthropic and external donor support. Through the support of DANIDA for instance, Education Assessment Resource Centres (EARCs) have been established in 72 out of 149 districts to facilitate the identification, assessment, referrals and placement of children with disabilities. Unfortunately, these EARCs have failed to reach children with disabilities and to assist them correctly (Shia and Annika, 2011). As a result, many children with disabilities are not able to access basic education across the country. This both compounds their poverty and perpetuates a vicious cycle of poverty amongst people living with disabilities. In the sections below, the statistics and status of children with disabilities are discussed, alongside the legal and regulatory framework expected to protect their right to education as well as the common approaches to their education and their effect on the education of children with disability. This helps in painting a fairly complete picture of the contextual reality facing children living with disabilities when they attempt to access basic education in Kenya.

"People with disability" has received an extensive definition covering disability by physical, intellectual and sensory impairment, medical conditions and mental illness. These conditions may be either permanent or transitory in nature (EAC Disability Policy, 2013). In 1999 the World Bank estimated that people with disabilities may account for as many as one in five of the world's poorest people. In 2011, both the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Bank estimated that Persons with Disabilities constituted at least 15% of the global population. This was higher than the United Nations estimate which places the population of people living with disabilities across the entire world at around 10 per cent of the world's population. Specifically for children, the State of the World's Children 2013 report states that 93 million children in the world live with disability (UNICEF, 2014). For the East African Community (EAC), the EAC Secretariat estimates that the region has at least 18 million persons with disabilities (EAC Disability Policy, 2013), although it acknowledges that this number could even be higher due to conflict-induced disabilities. The Secretariat further estimates that on average, less than two per cent of People with Disability in Africa enjoy primary school education and that there are no real opportunities for rehabilitation.

Since 2003, the Kenya government has embraced the policy of Education for All, including free primary education (FPE). This has resulted in a large increase of enrolment rates within primary school. However, although the overall enrolment rates may have improved due to FPE, the case for children with disabilities may not have improved much. Majority of Kenyan children with special needs are not receiving any educational support. Reasons for this include non-implementation of existing pro-disabilities policies, poverty, the approaches to education of children with disabilities adopted by the government, long distance to school, parental ignorance, limited training of teachers and lack of assistive devices, like Braille books (William Aseka, 2013). In Kenya, the official response to the needs of people with

disabilities has been elaborate. To begin with, all the international, continental and regional instruments for the protection of the rights of people with disabilities identified in the foregoing are applicable to Kenya for the reasons that Kenya is state party to all these instruments and that through Article 2(6) of the Constitution of Kenya 2010, 'any treaty or convention ratified by Kenya shall form part of the law of Kenya under this Constitution.' As such, instruments such as the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the 1990 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and also the 2000 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to which Kenya is a signatory are part of the Kenyan regulatory response to the rights of special groups. In addition, Kenya also participated and endorsed the deliberations of 1990 Jomtien World Conference on EFA and the 2000 World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal). The Jomtien and Dakar conferences underscored the importance of ECD programs in improving the holistic development of children.

Specifically within the country's legislative and constitutional context, the Kenya constitution 2010 provides broad framework for the promotion of the rights of children with disabilities. It for instance explicitly prohibits discrimination on the grounds of health status and disability (article 27) and obliges the state to fulfill citizens' social and economic rights (article 43). More importantly, a person with any disability is entitled to:

- a. Be treated with dignity and respect and to be addressed and referred to in a manner that is not demeaning;
- b. Access educational institutions and facilities for persons with disabilities that are integrated into society to the extent compatible with the interests of the person;
- c. Reasonable access to all places, public transport and information;
- d. Use Sign language, Braille or other appropriate means of communication; and
- e. Access materials and devices to overcome constraints arising from the person's disability.

Further, the Kenya government is obligated to ensure the progressive implementation of the principle that at least five percent of the members of the public in elective and appointive bodies are persons with disabilities.

Research Methodology

The methodology in this research has comprised of mainly literature review and participatory data collection methodologies namely Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The study area was the counties of Busia. The county was purposively sampled because it doesn't have a national office for Children with Disability. The sampled constituencies of Busia County were Teso, Samia, Busia Town and Butula. In terms of respondents, there were two levels of respondents, namely national and county. The researchers carried out a total of 22 KIIs and 10 FGDs. The national level respondents were purposively sampled and reached through KIIs. As for FGDs, these were employed on 3 purposively sampled groups in each county. In each county, at least one FGD was held with parents/guardians of children with disability, children with disability and a mix of CBOs working in the education sector in the two counties, bringing the total number of FGDs applied to 6, with 3 FGDs for each county. Each FGD comprised of at least 7

participants and not more than 12 participants. They comprised of 1 official from the Ministry of Education, 1 official from the Treasury, 1 official from the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE), 1 official from donor agencies that support education (DFID and other agencies supporting education) and, 2 officials from at least two institutions of People with Disability (such as Kenya Association of the Blind and Kenya Association of Disabled People etc), bringing the total number of national level respondents reached to 6. There were three main tools for collecting data. These were Focus Group Discussion guides, Key Informant Interview guides and literature review. The FGD and KII guides were pre-tested prior to use in the field in order to ensure they were well designed for collection of information once the process commenced in the field. Literature review was a critical component of the data collection tools. It helped in the collection of quantitative data as well as secondary information that complimented findings in the field. Among the documents reviewed included the national budgets of financial years between 2009 and 2013; inaugural Busia county government budget, National Policy on Disabled Persons and education sector policies on the status of education in Kenya on provision and status of education since 2009 and other documents indicating legislative, institutional and policy responses to needs arising from the education sector since 2009. Efforts were also made to do a comparative analysis with non-state actor players with a view to incorporating best practices worldwide. In this regard, international organizations such as the UNICEF, UNESCO and other global education sector bodies provided valuable data. Based on the information gained through both review of literature and field data collection, several conclusions can be drawn. First, people with disability form a very significant part of not just the Kenyan but also the world population and therefore require appropriate attention. However, there is inadequate data to help in structuring response to their special needs. Although the KNSPWD undertook a first ever and comprehensive survey on PWDs in 2008, this survey has not been followed up. As such, there is no up-to-date, reliable statistics of PWDs. Without this data, planning and appropriate response to their needs is unlikely.

Results and Discussion

The study also found it necessary to determine the teacher's behavior influence on integration of pupils with physical disabilities in public primary schools in Busia County. This study objective was based on teachers' class help, guidance, discrimination and commitment to pupils with physical disabilities in public primary schools in Busia County. The study entailed 50 pupils with disability to participate the study through rating their teacher's behavior influence on integration of pupils with physical disabilities in public primary schools in Busia County. The findings were as indicated in Table 1

Table 1: Teacher's Behavior Influence on Integration of Pupils with Physical Disabilities in Public Primary Schools in Busia County.

Statement	Frequency	Percentage
Help offered by teachers to do homework	15	30
Guidance offered by teachers	10	20
Discrimination by teachers in class	5	10
Teachers commitment to their work	20	40
Total	50	100

Table 1 indicated that 30% (15) respondent pupils with disability stated that their teachers offered them help to do class homework while 40% agreed that their teachers were quite committed to their work. Those pupils with disability who agreed that their teachers offered guidance to them were 20% (10) and 10% (5) indicated that some of their teachers showed discrimination to pupils with disability in class. Discrimination is also expressed by parents themselves because they take a very long time to accept the conditions until the child's progress becomes stagnant. This discrimination is humiliating and dehumanizing (Wilkins, 2004) Persons with disabilities are looked over as though they can't hear the negative inflection in the voices, which address someone else as though they cannot comprehend or answer with efficiency, or see the disapproving glances. Pupils with disabilities would like to be viewed as people with challenges and not some human rejection defect. Pupils with disabilities are not ashamed of their disabilities and do not want to be looked upon with pity.

Number of Basic Education Institutions that are Disability-Friendly

Based on the study findings, respondents indicated that there are a number of institutions in Busia County that cater for the needs of disabled children. In fact, respondents in Busia indicated that most of the institutions in the county cater for children with disability from other counties within Kenya. These institutions include:

1. St. Catherine Primary and Technical/Vocational Institute for the Mental Handicapped
2. Odiado Rehabilitation Centre
3. Apegei Special School
4. Ekirapa Chakol Special Unit for the Mentally Challenged
5. Bumbe School for the Physically Challenged
6. Apokor Special School for Physically Challenged.
7. Kakapel Special Unit for the Mentally Challenged
8. Kisoko Special Unit for the Mentally Challenged
9. Nangina Special Unit for the Mentally Challenged

The National Council for Persons with Disabilities on the other hand acknowledged that learning institutions for the disabled children were not well equipped across the country. According to the majority of the respondents, the learning institutions in Busia County are not adequately equipped to cater for all the needs of CWDs.

Kakapel Special Unit in Busia County for the Mentally Challenged, CWDs conducted their classes under trees while able-bodied children on the same compound were in well-built classrooms. Ekirapa High School for the Deaf which was initially meant for the deaf was diverted into a school for able-bodied students. On the other hand, St. Catherine Primary and Technical/Vocational Institute for the Mentally Handicapped in Butula district had a national outlook and took in children from across the country.

Respondents agreed that the government has put in place several mechanisms to ensure CWDs access education at national as well as the county levels. Establishment of assessment centres for the children with disabilities for the purposes of disability assessment and school placement, establishment of different types of special education institutions countrywide, hiring and paying for the specialized teaching staff through Teachers' Service Commission

(TSC) and sub-ordinate staff in the institutions for example house mothers and cooks and giving aid inform of funding to specialized institutions for purposes of purchasing specialized learning equipment, such as crutches, wheelchairs and Braille materials among others were listed as areas that government has invested in.

The NCPWD pointed to various legislations including the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2004, the Constitution of Kenya 2010, and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as education support programmes as indicative of the national government's commitment towards the education of children with disabilities. At the county level however, interviewees indicated that county governments are as yet to come up with a structured modality of investing in education for children with disabilities. There are efforts, nevertheless, towards bringing together stakeholders to come up with programmes for the education for CWDs at the county level.

Respondents indicated that the learning institutions for the disabled in the two counties have been staffed with qualified teachers specialized in handling different forms of disabilities. The teachers hold various certificates from Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) and universities in different special education training courses. The study established that most of the teachers are employed by the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC). On average it was indicated that about 50% of the teachers in the institutions are specialized although their figures were not adequate to handle the increasing number of CWDs who are coming out to seek education.

Conclusion

People with disability form a very significant part of not just the Kenyan but also the world population and therefore require appropriate attention. However, there is inadequate data to help in structuring response to their special needs. Although the KNCPWD undertook a first ever and comprehensive survey on PWDs in 2008, this survey has not been followed up. As such, there is no up-to-date, reliable statistics of PWDs. Without this data, planning and appropriate response to their needs is unlikely. Such information as dropping out school for the CWDs and the reasons for this is mostly based on guesses. The same inadequacy applies to the number of teachers available for CWDs education. The study therefore concludes that teachers are professionally trained to handle the pupils with physical disabilities. However the study found out that the trained special needs teachers are inadequate to meet the individual needs of the pupils with physical disabilities.

Recommendations

1. Pay more attention to physical and mental disabilities, since these are the most prevalent across the country;
2. Provide relevant support to CWDs in school e.g. ICT, assistive devices such as Braille, hearing devices, wheelchairs, etc;
3. Build appropriate infrastructure, increase rehabilitation services and make them more affordable; and,
4. Increase the level of training of teachers beyond certificate and hold refresher trainings for them.

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