

Implementation of Inclusive Education Policy in Secondary Schools in Zambia

by

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Abstract

Zambia adopted its first inclusive education policy in 1996. Since that time, teachers have been critical for the successful implementation of the inclusive education policy. With sufficient training and leadership they have been found to support policy and facilitate its implementation. However, to date the majority of inclusive education research in Zambia has been conducted at the primary school level with a dearth of studies having been conducted at the secondary level. This study explored inclusive education policy implementation in secondary schools in Zambia from the perspectives of teachers and school administrators. A Mixed-methods study was conducted across two schools in one province of Zambia. Study participants were purposively sampled. Thirty-two purposively selected teachers responded to a survey and four senior school administrators participated in semi-structured interviews. Document review examined the schools' inclusive education policies. Analysis included descriptive statistics for quantitative survey data and thematic analysis for the qualitative interview data. Triangulating the survey, interview, and document data enhanced the reliability of the study. The findings suggest that educators in Zambia face challenges that hinder the full implementation of inclusive education including a lack of clear and coordinated school inclusive policy guidelines, inadequate government

funding, and inadequate provision of teaching and learning resources. The findings also suggest that there are facilitators of inclusive education policy in Zambia, including teachers who fully support the inclusion of pupils with special education needs and communities that support schools by subsidizing finances to provide required resources for pupils. This study furthers the understanding of challenges and facilitators of inclusive education policy implementation in secondary schools and provides recommendations for the education sector at the national, provincial, and district levels.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Education Policy, Children with Disabilities, Zambia.

Background

The concept of inclusive education was adopted during the Salamanca Conference (UNESCO, 1994), wherein, inclusive education was understood as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increased participation in learning cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and outside the education system (UNESCO, 2008). A definition developed by Miles, Ainscow, Kangwa, Kisanji, Lewis, Mmbaga, and Mumba (2003), further defines inclusive education as “the process of increasing the presence, participation, and achievement of all students in their local schools with particular reference to those groups of learners who are at risk of exclusion, marginalization, or under-achievement”(p.7). This definition of inclusive education is all the more pertinent in the Zambian context given that “a disproportionate number of children with special educational needs are in the community, receiving no education at all” and that their exclusion is due to “poverty, long distance from home to school and illnesses” (Kasonde-Ng’andu & Moberg’s, 2001, p. viii). Therefore, for inclusive education to meet the rights of pupils with disabilities in Zambia, it must behold the premise that all learners have unique

characteristics, interests, abilities, and particular learning needs, and learners with special education needs must have equal access to and receive individual accommodation in the general education system (UNDESA, 2016).

The Salamanca Statement invites countries to act with a commitment to inclusive education (UNESCO, 1994). Zambia's adoption of inclusion following the Salamanca conference is similar to many countries that adopted the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (Muwana & Ostrosky, 2014). Zambia responded by adopting inclusion in its Educating Our Future (1996) policy. The policy is significant as it officially endorsed the inclusion of pupils with disabilities in general education settings and set the stage for inclusive education in Zambia (Chitiyo & Muwana, 2018). One action that reflects the priority given to inclusive education is that all trainee teachers at Zambia's Teacher Training Colleges are required to take a mandatory course on special needs (Teacher Education Department, 2016) with the Ministry of Education (2012) emphasizing that "all student teachers shall be exposed to adequate skills in special education and guidance and counseling" (p. 51). It is worth noting that it can be challenging to gauge the current priority given to inclusive education based on funding allocation as inclusive education and special needs do not have a dedicated budget line in the education budget (Government of the Republic of Zambia, 2020). This is echoed in a recent seminal report on financing of inclusive education in five African countries that concluded that inclusive education plans and strategies lack credible costing and that when costing is it is not clear how these relate to actual spending, or whether they are reflected in annual budgeting cycles (Action Aid et. al, 2020). As such it can be difficult to ascertain what resources and activities are being implemented as part of inclusion. This is because inclusive education is funded under equitable and cross-cutting issues at every education level with actual funding allocation dependent on identified priorities by respective schools and education offices (i.e., the end users). In addition, while end users have the

autonomy to decide how and which activity to support based on their needs and local circumstances this can have the effect of making inclusion less of a priority particularly in circumstances where end users have a small number of pupils with disabilities and face budgetary pressures to undertake other activities. Given this concern, the 2017 Joint Annual Review called for inclusive and special education to have a dedicated budget line within the Education budget. After *Educating Our Future* the Government of Zambia launched two specific inclusive education policies and guidelines namely *Inclusive Education Policy Guidelines (2017)* and *Inclusive Education and Special Education Focus: Implementing Education Sector and Skills 2019-2023 (2019)*.

Seventeen years after the landmark Salamanca Conference (UNESCO, 1994) that ushered in our present day conceptualization of inclusive education, the World Health Organization's (WHO) 2011 seminal report on disability highlighted the stark reality that pupils with disabilities face. Despite improvements in inclusive education over the decades with governments adopting official policies on inclusion, children with disabilities are less likely to start school or attend school than non-disabled children and they have lower transition rates to higher levels of education. Taking these facts into consideration, it is perhaps not surprising that the vast majority of the literature on the education of children with disabilities has focused on issues of access, participation, and quality at the primary or lower levels of education as children with disabilities are less likely to attend and complete primary school (UNESCO, 2018). The focus on primary or lower levels of education for children with disabilities has been the reality in Zambia as well, with 70% of the Education programme budget allocated for primary education (Government of the Republic of Zambia, 2020). We recognize the importance of this focus on primary education given the historical exclusion of children with disabilities from main stream education in part due to a lack of concrete data on children with disabilities, inaccessible school environments, societal and cultural perceptions on education of children with disabilities; however, we seek to shed light and

document the perspectives of key education personnel at the secondary level that are missing from the literature and who are critical to the successful progression and completion of secondary education for the few pupils with disabilities enrolled at this level of education. Lack of adequate empirical research in low and middle-income countries has contributed to the slow implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools (Kalabula, 2000). A baseline study carried out by Kasonde-Ng'andu and Moberge (2001) on inclusive schooling in North-Western and Western provinces of Zambia indicates that the idea of inclusion of children with disabilities in the general education system was widely accepted. However, the study revealed that headteachers and regular school teachers had more positive attitudes than special education teachers. Some researchers have documented that teachers' attitudes are critical in the implementation of inclusive education particularly as negative attitudes are a major obstacle to the education of children with disabilities (Prince, 2003). There is a dearth of secondary school inclusive education research that has been conducted in Zambia. The limited studies undertaken (Cheelo, 2016; Chitiyo & Muwana, 2018; Hui et al., 2018; Lifumbo, 2016; Mandyata, 2003; Mwamba, 2016; Tambulukani et al., 2012; Ndhlovu et al., 2016; Muzata, 2017; Ndonyo, 2013) have focused on primary schools. These studies confirm that despite encouraging inclusive education practices in the country, most special education teachers at primary school level do not support inclusive education because regular school teachers are lacking knowledge and skills to teach pupils with special education needs. Concerning the current study, notable lacunae in these limited studies is a focus on the challenges and facilitators of inclusive education policy implementation in Zambia. Additionally, and specific to the current study, these previous studies focused on the primary school level of education and as such little is known and documented about the effectiveness of inclusive education at the secondary school level.

Research aim

The study aimed to examine inclusive education policy implementation at secondary school level in Zambia in order to build a detailed picture of inclusive implementation in a typical regular secondary school.

Methodology

This section reviews the theory and method of multiple case studies and discusses why this study design was chosen and how it was adopted to collect data from the 2 sample schools in Zambia.

Study Design

A mixed-methods study was carried out to collect information from multiple sources with the aim of ensuring the trustworthiness of the quality of data by using surveys, interviews, and documents as triangulation sources (Rose & Shevlin, 2014; Yin, 2014). The use of case study method was thought to be a practical method of examining and contrasting inclusion policy implementation in two settings in order to construct a picture of inclusive education provided.

Recruitment of participants

The study was conducted across two schools in one province of Zambia (see Table 1). Extreme case sampling type of purposive sampling procedure was used to recruit participants because the potential respondents were best positioned to provide needed information for this study (Denscombe, 2010; Kombo and Tromp, 2014). Inclusion criteria included employment at selected school as an inclusive education teacher or administrator. All teachers had pupils with disabilities in their classrooms.

Ethical and administrative approval was sought and granted from the Ethical Committee at Trinity College Dublin and the Ministry of Education through the office of the Provincial Education Officer and District Education Board Secretary. Additional approval was sought from the Headteachers of the two schools specifically requesting permission to conduct information sessions at the school, distribution of questionnaires, conduct

interviews with the senior school administrators, and access to related school inclusive education policy and other documents.

Four senior school administrators and thirty-eight inclusive education teachers were purposively selected, and they all consented to participate in the study. This comprised two senior school administrators from each sample school. Data gathering occurred over eight weeks from May to June in 2016.

Methods

Data was gathered through document review, a survey, and semi-structured key informant interviews with participants from each school. A document review was conducted to examine the schools' inclusive education policies including school timetables and co-curricular activities files.

The Attitude to Inclusive Education and Specific Disabilities (AIESD) Scale developed by Haq and Mundia (2012) was adapted for the survey questionnaire and used to explore 1) attitudes of the teachers to inclusive education and specific disabilities; 2) the challenges common to inclusive education; and 3) the extent to which these issues are addressed in the schools. The challenges identified from the literature sources were organised in seven underlying themes of inclusion policy implementation needs: policy, teacher support, government support, material and equipment, facilities, academic and social. At the end of the survey, space was provided for additional comments (if any) on the success or lack thereof about inclusion of pupils with disabilities at their school. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire was pilot tested at a special education school in the same province.

The semi-structured interviews for the consented participants were tape recorded and consisted of fourteen open-ended questions focusing on school inclusive education policies, their implementation, and experiences of students with disabilities at the school.

Document review technique was used to examine inclusive education policy documents, school timetables, administrative reports and circulars from the two schools under study. Data

from the review process was triangulated with data from the questionnaire and interviews. Additionally, the researcher took time to review secondary data from the Central Statistical Office (CSO).

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the quantitative data including frequencies and percentiles using EPI Data software. Thematic analysis guided the analysis of the qualitative data to identify themes from the interviews. Documentary analysis was used to analyse the inclusive education policy documents.

Table 1: Profiles of Schools Included in Study

School 1	School 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A grant-aided school (mission school) managed by a Protestant church. It is a co-education boarding and day school. • Built in 1965 and officially opened in 1970 with an enrolment of 560 pupils. • 943 pupils (473 boys; 468 girls) with 32 teaching staff. • 11 learners with disabilities [9 learners with visual impairments: 5 grade 11, 3 boys and 2 girls; 2- grade 10 boys; 1 – grade 9 boy; 1- grade 8 girl]; and 2 learners with physical disabilities: [1- grade 12 boy; 1 – grade 8 girl]. • 18 teachers (8 females and 10 males) participated in survey • 2 Senior administered (both male) participated in semi-structured interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government’s run (public) school built by the Government of Zambia with international donor support in 1966. It is a co-education boarding and day school. • 1,091 pupils with 72 teaching staff. • 18 learners with disabilities [8 learners with Hearing Impairments: 6 boys, 4 in grade 9 and 2 in grade 12; and 2 girls in grade 12]; 2 learners with Visual Impairments: 1 boy in grade 12, and 1 girl in grade 9; and 7 learners with Physical Disabilities: 2 boys in grade 10; 2 boys and 2 girls in grade 9; and 1 girl in grade 8; • 14 teachers (6 females and 8 males) participated in survey • 2 Senior administered (female and male) participated in semi-structured interviews

Results

Participants Demographics

Out of 38 teachers who consented to participate in the survey, 84 % (n=32) of them returned the questionnaires. There was 100 % (n=18) response from School 1 and 70 % (n=14) response from School 2. All the teachers who participated had included pupils with disabilities in their classrooms. Participants' demographics were described and analysed in terms of gender, general tertiary training, the subjects taught, grade of instruction, and years of experience in teaching the inclusive classes:

Table 2: Summary of Survey Participant Inclusive Education Training and Experience

75 % (n=23) of teachers who returned the questionnaires had general education training with no special education training
9 % (n=4) of the teachers had special education as part of their initial teacher training
16 % (n=5) acquired special education during their in-service teacher training.
Over half of survey respondents (53%) had experience of 1-5 years of teaching inclusive classes
72 % (n=23) of inclusive education teachers teach at both junior and senior classes
25 % (n=8) of the inclusive education teachers teach senior classes only
3 % (n=1) teach junior class only.

There were 32 out of 38 teachers who returned questionnaires of whom 56 % (n= 18) were males and 44 % (n=14) were females. Out of 32 teachers, 18 (10 males and 8 females) were from school 1 while 14 (8 males and 6 females) were from school 2. 75 % (n=23) of teachers who returned the questionnaires had general education training (with no prior special education training) with 9 % (n=4) of the teachers having special education as part

of their initial teacher training and 16 % (n=5) acquiring special education during their in-service teacher training. Further, 72 % (n=23) of inclusive education teachers taught at both junior and senior classes with 25 % (n=8) of the inclusive education teachers teaching senior classes only, and 3 % (n=1) teaching junior class only. Half of the questionnaire respondents had experience of teaching inclusive classes ranging from 1 – 5 years. Their overall experience was positive as indicated by their positive attitudes toward inclusion of pupils in their classrooms.

Figure 1: Respondents' Work Experience in Teaching Inclusive Education Classes.

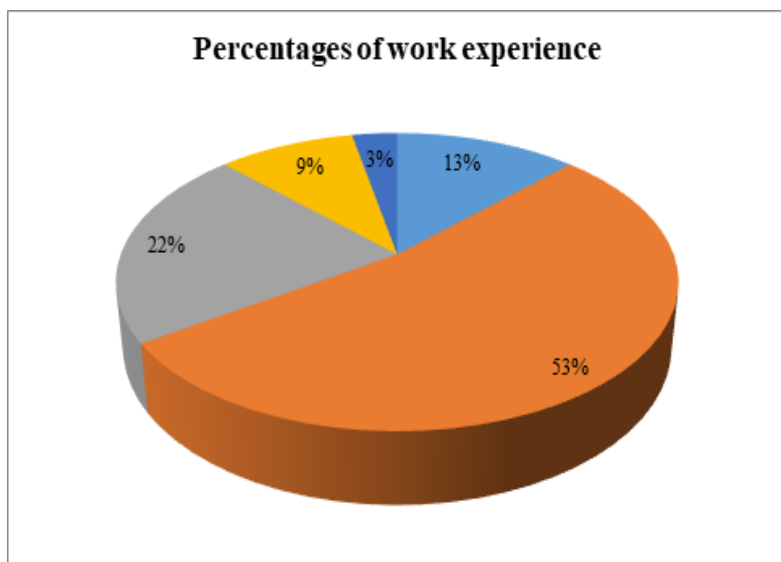


Table 3: Number of teachers who teach subjects offered to pupils with disabilities

Subject Area	N
English Language (including English Literature)	7
Zambian Languages	3
Mathematics (Ordinary)	5
Agricultural Science	1
Biology	1
Chemistry	2
Physics	1
Geography	5
History	12
Religious Education	7
Civic Education	7
Civics	1

Note: Frequency = N

It is important to mention that the subjects indicated in Table 2 are the only subjects offered in inclusive classes at School 1 and 2. Subjects like Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Civic Education are offered at senior secondary school level (Grades 10 – 12) only while Civic is offered at junior secondary school level (Grades 8 – 9) only. The other subjects indicated in the table are offered at both junior and senior secondary school levels.

Inclusive Education Policy and Guidelines at Secondary Schools Findings indicated general awareness among administrators and teachers of inclusive education policies at secondary schools. Administrators expressed great confidence in policies and strategies and provided detailed information and examples of how these policies and strategies were being implemented in their schools. Speaking of the confidence they had in work being undertaken by their schools in implementing inclusive

education, some school administrators noted in their assessment of their school's efforts to implement inclusive education:

We are very confident that the services the school is providing are appropriate to what is required by the ministry because we have produced some of our blind children who have competed favourably with everyone else, and we have sent them to universities (School 1, Administrator)

At least we are confident because, apart from the issue of signing [Sign Language], we have had no complaints from learners [disabled] or their parents (School 1, Administrator)

Understanding the principle of 'least restrictive environment' is crucial in implementing inclusive education policy in schools. In this study, 'least restrictive' means an educational environment in which each child would be most successful (Lieberman and Houston, 2009). In the interview guide, the question on LRE sought to establish the school administrators' understanding of the principle of LRE in the implementation of inclusive education policy. The following were the in response to the question of "What is LRE":

A policy to allow everyone [pupils] to participate freely in the education programmes that are offered in a school (Administrator 1)

Making schools become 'user-friendly' to all pupils (Administrator 2)

Integrating disabled pupils into the programmes that go on in regular schools and having infrastructure that is conducive to them [disabled pupils] to freely move around." (Administrator 3)

Putting less restriction on access to enrolment of children with disabilities (Administrator 4)

The above responses illustrated the mixed and varied understanding of a key tenet of inclusive education by senior secondary

school leadership. These responses indicate a lack of common knowledge of the inclusive education policy and its principles. Understanding of LRE appeared to be confined to the issue of access which while important is only a part of the conditions necessary for successful completion of secondary education.

Closely related to the first question was the question aimed at establishing if the schools had domesticated the national inclusive education policy and if so what strategies had been put in place to implement their local policies. The administrators were very confident in explaining their school policies and strategies put in place to implement the policies. The participants shared strategies that worked well and those that did not work well. When asked to share examples of strategies being undertaken, the respondents stated that their schools provided inclusive strategies such as positive discrimination during selections for grade 8 (junior secondary) and 10 (senior secondary) places and giving 25% time allowance during tests and examinations as required by the Ministry of Education. At school 2, the administrators explained that their school had domesticated the national inclusion policy and when asked to elaborate on some strategies put in place to implement the policy, the respondents cited a capacity building programme for teachers to learn sign language, although only a few teachers had taken up the programme explaining that the programme was scheduled at the same time as another, resulting in teachers choosing sport over sign language. Administrators also shared an example of efforts to repurpose and make one of the classrooms in their school accessible with the construction of a toilet and shower for use by children with disabilities as these children found it “difficult to share the public facilities with other learners”. At School 1, one administrator explained how their school had been using the education policy developed by the school board of management (the church) to support inclusive education provision in their institution. One of the administrators provided the following response as an example of strategies being undertaken by the school:

We are improving the existing infrastructure by building ramps and also constructing a much spacious resource room for them (pupils with disabilities).... (School Administrator; 1)

The document and policy review of the Mission and Vision statements revealed an emphasis on student performance with limited attention on equity and the promotion of the rights of all children. The administrators; however, believed that despite the Zambian educational system focus on student performance and examination-oriented, children with disabilities were able to compete favourably in academic work alongside their non-disabled peers.

Administrator and Teacher Attitudes

Overall, teachers had positive attitudes toward implementing inclusive education policy in regular classrooms. However, mixed results were shown about participants' attitudes towards including pupils with intellectual disabilities (42 % agreed while 41 % disagreed) and those with hearing disabilities (43 % agreed while 38 % disagreed).

The findings indicated that school authorities also supported inclusive practices. The teachers raised concerns about inadequate funding for specialised material and equipment to meet individual needs of pupils with SEN, and lack of incentives to motivate teachers and support staff.

The findings revealed that there were no differences in the attitudes of both the teachers and administrators in implementing inclusive education of pupils with disabilities in regular schools. Generally, the attitudes of teachers and administrators in implementing inclusive education of pupils with special education were positive. To examine if years of experience in working at an inclusive school and contact with persons with disabilities had any contribution to the administrators' attitudes towards implementing inclusive education policy, participants were asked to describe their experience related to pupils with disabilities receiving education in general education setting, and the period they had been connected to their current schools. The findings revealed

that all the 4 participants had experience of between 5 – 8 years. Participants from School 1 expressed concerns about the limitation to communicate with the deaf pupils because they lacked sign language. The findings also revealed that all the participants had never had pupils with disabilities at their previous schools. Despite a few years of experience, the administrators exhibited great passion and support for implementing inclusive education in regular schools as summarised by one participant when he said, “*They [the disabled pupils] are a wonderful group to handle.*”

Teacher and Learning Resources

Teachers in the study reported not having the training to teach and include children with special educational needs. This finding is consistent with Ndonyo (2013), who found that regular teachers did not support the inclusion of pupils with disabilities because they were not trained in handling pupils with special educational needs. This may be the reason why some participants in the study preferred to teach children with specific learning difficulties than those for example, with hearing impairments.

Reflecting on professional development, participants noted that the training of all teachers in inclusive practices was really key to effective implementation of inclusive education policy. Some participants noted:

It can be helpful to improve inclusion of pupils with disabilities if teachers are taught some skills needed to help such learners while at college (Inclusive Education Teacher 1)

There is a need to sensitise teachers who are not special education trained to handle these [pupils with disabilities] learners (Inclusive Education Teacher 8).

The need for continuing professional development was raised by respondents since many teachers lack necessary skills. They believed that teachers would share inclusive education skills to enable them to effectively include pupils with SEND as commented by one participant that, “*there*

is need to support sign language lessons for teachers”.

Another key finding in this current study is the lack of specialised staff such as educational psychologists, Sign language interpreters and Braille transcribers. This is related to teacher and pupil support in the implementation of inclusive education policy.

Community Support

Regarding parents and community support, the findings in this current study reveal that parents give financial support to schools to construct and modify school buildings to increase the number of buildings and also make the buildings accessible to all pupils.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that inclusive education is a desirable education practice in Zambia. There were no differences in the teachers and administrators' support in implementing inclusive education policy in the schools. Both groups argued that non-disabled pupils can accept pupils with disabilities and those pupils with disabilities can attain self-concept in an inclusive atmosphere.

Attitudes toward inclusion pupils with disabilities The study findings highlight novel information from previous studies, that were conducted in Basic [primary] schools in Zambia and revealed that teachers regardless of their training were not in favour of implementing inclusive education policy because schools lacked specialised teaching and learning materials (Mandyata, 2003). The results were also not consistent with the findings of Ndonyo (2013) who found that ordinary Basic schools in North-Western Province of Zambia were not yet ready to implement inclusive education policy because ordinary schools lacked qualified teachers for children with disabilities, suitable infrastructure and educational resources. Instead, the findings suggest that in secondary school settings, teachers can be in favor of implementing inclusive education with appropriate administrative, material, and school leadership support. Similar to Ndonyo (2013), the findings do point to a need for more qualified teachers and additional in-service training to support teachers at

secondary schools. This additional training would benefit both teachers and administrators. It was notable in the responses and discussions of LRE, administrators offered a narrow view of inclusion focusing largely on access rather than a holistic view that considers successful education progression and inclusion in all aspects of the educational experience of learners with disabilities.

Having learners in the classroom and the school is an important and very crucial aspect to inclusive education; however, attendant issues particularly the quality of the education experience deserve equal attention. In the findings, administrators identified a need for building sign language capacity among teaching staff and responded by developing and offering an optional sign language programme. With teachers opting not to subscribe to the training programme, it was not clear what alternative strategies and activities had been reviewed or were being pursued to ensure learners with sign language received comparable quality of education instruction in the school. While the challenge of providing appropriately trained sign language personnel was specific to the school in the study, it does highlight the need for great flexibility and direction from the Ministry of Education of how to address these particular challenges. With inclusion included in the budget under equity issues, the school had access to limited resources to address identified needs. It is important to also set reasonable expectations for teachers on what they can and cannot do with respect to implementing inclusive education. Not subscribing to the training programme can be due to many reasons including perceived difficulty in sign language and no professional interest. Some of these issues can be addressed at the Teacher Training College with more training (e.g., more than one introductory course) and the creation of specialized teacher resources within provincial education authorities that can directly support teachers through mentorship and modeling inclusion. Closely aligned to this, is the need to increase funding for specialized learning materials and equipment for learners with disabilities which the study participants noted was needed in both schools.

Inclusive Education Policy and Guidelines

Similar to other studies on inclusive education (e.g., Mitiku, Alemu & Mengsitu, 2014; and Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2014), the findings suggest a lack of holistic information about school inclusive education policies and their implementation when findings from other sources of data (e.g., survey, document review) are taken into consideration. These earlier studies detailed mixed results on participants' views on mainstream policies and practices. The studies indicated that even though there were opportunities to enhance understanding through inclusive education training, teachers did not take up these opportunities in significant numbers and therefore lacked holistic knowledge on implementation and usefulness of inclusive education. The findings of the current study indicate that the existing school inclusive policies and policy guidelines were not availed to many teachers, a significant contributory factor to the inadequate implementation of inclusive education policies. This circumstance was visible within the schools and appeared to be affecting the effectiveness implementation of the policy strategies put in place. There was a gap in policy intent and implementation from the document review and the teacher responses in the survey. Despite well-intended plans, there was insufficient capacity at school level to implement some strategies in place at the schools. Using an example of school 2 that is promoting capacity of teachers in sign language at school level, it was not clear that the school could do so. The capacity gap appeared to compromise the ability of the school to organise training of teachers in Sign Language. It was clear that school 2 lacked qualified teachers in sign language to be able to train others. The need for an implementation framework as argued by Tambulukani et al (2012) was reflected in some of the survey responses with respondents drawing attention to the need for schools to localize and provide guidance of how inclusive education policy can be operationalised at the school level with one teacher noting *"As a school, we need to domesticate the national education policy regarding inclusion of persons experiencing disabilities at our school"*. This

response is in stark contrast to the responses from the school administrators at the school who discussed in detail how they had operationalised policies and strategies within their schools.

Administrator and Teacher Attitudes

Consistent with previous studies (e.g., Muthukrishna et al., 2016; Forlin & Chambers, 2011), the findings of this current study revealed that the shortage of specialised teachers to support regular teachers impeded the implementation of inclusive education policy in regular schools. Related to the inadequate number of specialised teachers in regular inclusive schools are inadequate teacher development and support programmes. Muthukrishna et al., (2016: 138) state that “unqualified or under-qualified teachers contribute to pedagogical barriers to learning”. Concerning instructional barriers, Forlin and Chambers (2011) in their study observed that there was a problem in the way teachers were being prepared in inclusive education knowledge and skills. This results in new graduates’ inadequacy in effectively supporting students with Special Education Needs. The positive attitudes of teachers revealed in this study may be attributed to their short professional experience in inclusive education. The experiences of working with learners with disabilities for the majority of the teachers ranged from 1 – 5 years. Muwana (2012) revealed in her study that despite inclusion of students with disabilities in general classrooms in Zambia being in its infancy stage, many student teachers at the University of Zambia who participated in the survey supported inclusive education. It could be that those participants, after graduating from the University of Zambia, were some of the current young teachers who participated in this current study. The positive attitudes of administrators uncovered in this current study may have been due to positive and affective experiences with learners with disabilities. In Muwana’s study, participants’ demographic information about their contact with individuals with disabilities indicated that they had positive contact with persons with disabilities (Muwana, *ibid*). It is possible that the administrators’ positive contact with the pupils with disabilities influenced their overall

attitudes towards inclusive education of pupils with disabilities. The findings are inconsistent with findings by Dagnew (2013) who found that negative attitudes of teachers impeded the implementation of inclusive education in schools. In contrast, other studies found that abuse and bullying of children with disabilities in schools resulting from the barring cultures and customs had led to resistance towards supporting inclusive education policy implementation in schools (Charema, 2010; Jonas, 2014; Mutara, 2008).

Teacher and Learning Resources

The lack of support personnel in schools uncovered in this current study may explain the reason as to why policy for School 1 recognizes the need to conduct locally based in-service training of teachers in sign language even though the school seemed not to have the capacity for such an ambitious programme due to lack of qualified and competent teachers to train others in sign language skills. This reality is indicated in the world report on disability that “the majority of teachers lack sign language skills creating barriers to learning for deaf pupils”, (WHO & World Bank, 2011: 215).

The findings in this current study also reveal that schools lack specialised learning resources to give support to teachers and pupils in inclusive classrooms. Gronlund et al (2010) revealed that teachers’ failure to use or insufficient use of the available technological innovations that would assist children with disabilities in their learning stemmed from inadequate training and support for teachers. However, the teachers in this current study expressed concern about the inadequate supply of specialized learning materials and equipment for the learners with SEN. This issue was also expressed by the administrators. Related to this was the concern of inadequate funding (GRZ, 2020). The need to address the issues of specialised materials and financial support to schools were recognised in the provisions of the school policies. The participants noted that government grants were inadequate, and that schools could not fully manage the provision of the necessary material and equipment for pupils with special educational needs. These findings are consistent with the previous findings from the study carried out in northern England by

Galazzard (2011) who found that funding was one of the barriers to inclusion. The current findings also agree with findings by Musukwa (2013) and Ametepee & Anastasious (2015) who found that inclusion implementation in Africa was hindered by lack of or inadequate funding towards specialised materials and equipment.

Role of Parents and Communities

Respondents reported the involvement of parents and the community in fundraising and the construction of accessible buildings; however, a limited involvement in classroom activities. While acknowledging the role of parents, it is important to take into account the socio-economic status of the parents, the majority of which are poor and living in challenging circumstances. For most parents, school fees and buying materials is an incredible strain in addition to the specific costs associated with raising a child with a disability. Policies and strategies need to take this into account and not outsource or place the burden of providing inclusive learning environments on parents. Similarly, while Parental Teacher Associations have a long history in Zambia, it can be argued that the involvement of parents in classroom activities of their children has not been a regular feature in Zambian and indeed most African settings. Parents are committed to the successful completion of education of their children and will provide what they can to support this; however, direct classroom involvement would be new to most parents particularly those working far from school, likely in manual labour work and likely with limited educational attainment themselves. Findings from previous studies (e.g., Carter et al. 2009; Muthukrishna et al., 2016; Tambulukani, Banda & Matafwali, 2012) revealed that the lack of parental involvement emanated from failure by schools to promote the principles of networking and partnership in their community, and the failure by schools to involve the community disadvantaged schools from community support to provide necessary facilities for the children with special needs. There was little documented parent and community involvement in actual classroom activities in line with the findings from Wapling's (2016) report that draws attention to the limited literature

on the impact of community-based rehabilitation programmes on school inclusion. The study revealed a lack of parent/ caregiver/ community involvement in classroom activities. Consistent with previous studies (e.g., Muthukrishna et al., 2016) the current study made it clear that despite the parental/ community financial and material support provided to schools, parents/ community were not involved in classroom activities. Muthukrishna and colleagues (Ibid) believed that lack of parent/ community involvement in classroom activities was due to lack of sensitization for teachers and the community to know and appreciate the roles of parents and community in the implementation inclusive education activities especially in academic affairs of children with special educational needs. The effects of lack of parent/ community participation in academic issues unearthed in this current study may explain the reasons for absence of provision of expertise in capacity building of teachers for instance, in the weekly sign language lessons programme for teachers at School 1. While the limited involvement of parents in classroom activities is notable, what the findings do point to is a scope for greater parents and community involvement in classroom activities which can be essential to the retention and progression of children with disabilities

Limitations of Study and Future Research

The study contributes to the literature on inclusive education in Zambia by providing perspectives of secondary school teachers and administrators. As important as these secondary school perspectives are, other stakeholders particularly children with disabilities at that level and that of their parents are significant. A limitation of the study was that these perspectives were not explored. This is an important avenue for future secondary school inclusive education research. The study relied on much on the use of survey questionnaires with teachers. A limitation of this method of data gathering is that it did not allow for deeper exploration of respondents' opinions and feelings as responses were restricted to suggested choices. The study was restricted to one of the ten provinces of Zambia due to time, transport and money constraints. Future research could focus

on more regional or provincial coverage including interprovincial comparisons of inclusive education policy implementation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study furthers the understanding of inclusive education policy implementation in secondary schools in Zambia with recommendations for the education sector at the national, provincial, and district levels. The inclusive education policy (MoE, 1996) enables all children, without any form of discrimination, to be educated in schools near to or within their communities. The findings show that educators held predominately positive attitudes toward implementing inclusive education policy in secondary schools of Zambia. However, many believed that specialised resources and government support were inadequate to effectively implement inclusive education policy in regular classrooms. Although respondents cited many facilitators of inclusive education policy implementation, some participants noted some challenges that impede the implementation of inclusive education policy in secondary schools of Zambia.

The results revealed among others a lack of clear school policy and policy guidelines to guide teachers. The respondents also expressed the need for increased specialised supports and resources for the effective implementation of the inclusive education policy. As Wapling (2016) argues, despite the challenges, it is also clear that there is an increase in general understanding and acceptance of education as a right for children with disabilities. Teachers are more open to including children with disabilities in their classrooms and when supported, can come up with innovative ways to accommodate their needs. For inclusive education to become effective as a system however, much closer scrutiny is needed over how it is being implemented in relation to children with disabilities and what this is doing to improve their overall education outcomes. Closely related is the involvement of parents and communities in the education of learners with disabilities but this has to be done in a nuanced manner, in a way that recognises the attendant issues of raising a child with a disability. Additional financial demands should not be placed on parents

particularly as learners with disabilities have the same right to education as their non-disabled peers and should not have to pay additional costs to receive education in the same schools.

Recommendations

National Level

1. To train more teachers in inclusive education and be deployed to regular schools.
2. To make Sign Language and Braille compulsory and as independent examinable courses in all teacher training institutions of Zambia.
3. To establish a budget line for inclusive education.
4. To give guidelines to the end users on the expenditure of the currently budgeted equity allocations to prioritize inclusive education.

Provincial Level

1. To establish a specialised provincial resource centre and a province assessment centre
2. To strengthen the implementation and monitoring of SEND programmes and activities. District Level
1. To prioritize the use of allocations through TESS and Equity to activities such as the child finding, screening and monitoring SEND activities.2. To set up District Inclusive Education Team

School Level

1. To develop clear and well-coordinated inclusive education policy and policy guidelines.
2. To review and strengthen school-based Continuing Professional Development – CPD for all teachers.
3. To encourage parent/ community involvement in the classroom activities. In this way, they would be able to provide their expertise in certain skills which teachers may not poses.

Parent and Community Level

1. To continue partnering with the government soliciting finances for the education of their children.
2. To encourage parents/communities to get involved in Disabled Peoples' Organisations working with schools.

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