

Teachers' and School Administrators' Preparedness in Handling Students with Special Needs In Inclusive Education in Kenya

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Abstract

The philosophy of social inclusion is embedded in current legislation of the convention of child rights and the requirement of equal opportunities for those with disability (Salamanca Statement, 1994). Inclusive education entails taking care of all students including those with special needs like physical, mental or developmental. This paper reports the outcome of a study that assessed the level of teachers' and school administrators' preparedness to handle inclusive education. The participants were 140 teachers and 13 Principals of selected secondary schools in Kenya. A questionnaire, interview schedule and classroom observation tool were used for data collection. Data were analysed descriptively and using inferential statistics. Results revealed physical infrastructure and instructional resources are unsuitable to support learners with special needs. There was general lack of teacher training on pedagogy and knowledge on how to handle students with special needs. School management policies regarding learners with special needs were not comprehensive enough to cater for all students. Collaboration among teachers to support learners with special needs falls below expectation. There is need to develop knowledge base on inclusive education, to meet learning needs of individual students. Teachers should undergo periodic refresher courses to develop personalized learning approaches, skills and competences, to effectively handle the heterogeneous nature of contemporary classes.

Key words: Inclusive education, Special needs, Preparedness, Pedagogical knowledge base

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