

Going to School for the First Time: Inclusion Committee Members Increasing the Number of Students with Disabilities in Primary Schools in Kenya

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Abstract

This paper is an extension of a prior research project where Kenyan primary school teachers began using inclusive education strategies that proved beneficial for meeting the needs of diverse primary school students. Specifically, this paper highlights a project where these inclusive practices were expanded to a second region of western Kenya. This expansion of teacher training on inclusive education and critical disability studies promoted sustained school- and community-based discussions on inclusive education and sensitisation on issues related to disability. These practices also led to the development of inclusion committees, co-teaching practices, and stimulated the partial dissolution of the physical boundaries and categorical distinctions between 'primary' and 'special' schools. In conjunction, all of these factors ultimately led to an increase in the number of students with disabilities accessing any form of education for the first time. Furthermore, such approaches to the development and small-scale expansion of a sustainable inclusive education system led to the Kenyan government's consideration of the replication of such practices on a national scale. As a result of this work in conjunction with a growing inclusive network of governmental and non-governmental organisations, a national review on special education policy is underway.

Keywords: Inclusive education; Inclusion committee; Critical disability studies; Co-teaching; Community-based participatory research (CBPR); Decolonising methodologies

Full text:

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