

Inclusive Education for Persons with Disabilities in Context of Social Change and Development in Kenya – A Case of Kenyatta University

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper was to establish influence of inclusive education for persons with disabilities in context of social change and development in Kenya - a case of Kenyatta University. The study aimed at determining whether Kenya was ready for Inclusive Education, whether Inclusive Education is an effective means for social change and development for PWDs and persons without disabilities, whether Inclusive Education leads to all round development of a person, and whether Inclusive Education facilitates social change and development more than any other mode of education. Methodology-descriptive survey design. Population consisted of all persons with disabilities and those without disabilities within Kenyatta University and a sample size of 150 persons was purposively sampled. The findings of this study showed that: Kenya was not ready for inclusive education; Inclusive Education has not been quite an effective means of social change and development as in the context of KU; Inclusive Education would only benefits persons with disabilities; KU environment is generally not Inclusive because of inadequate facilities for PWDs; Inclusive Education is not cost effective. Some of the recommendations were: stakeholders need to work together as a team to put in places all the requirements; provision of resources to remove all the barriers to change and make modifications to the curriculum and infrastructure to cater for all students' needs.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Social change and Development, Persons with Disabilities

I. INTRODUCTION

Today in the west, it is widely accepted that inclusion maximizes the potential of the vast majority of students, ensures their rights, and is the preferred educational approach for the 21st century (NAVADA partnership for inclusive education 2003).

Background to the Study

Inclusive education is a strong feature of the Salamanca statement of the principle, policy and practice in special needs education agreed upon by representatives of 92 governments and 25 international organizations in June 1994 (UNESCO 1994).

The principles of inclusive education adopted at the Salamanca conference in Spain included:

- Valuing all students' diversity and staff quality
- Increasing students' effective participation

- Reducing their exclusion from cultures, curricula and communities, and local schools (ibid cit. 1994).

The AGRA seminar in South Africa outlined some principles about inclusive education, the first of which was viewed to be broader than mere schooling in 1998. As part of the international community, Kenya signed and accepted inclusion in 2002 (Mwaura, 2009). Accordingly, Kenya declared and pledged to set in motion the mechanisms for creating an inclusive education system. In the following year in 2003, the parliament enacted the persons with disabilities act which prohibits educational discrimination against persons with disabilities among others. In 2004, Kenya and UNESCO organized and ran the Kisumu conference on inclusion, and published her first draft on inclusion two years later in 2006. Four years later in 2010, the country promulgated the new constitution which commits the government to making sure that persons with disabilities can access relevant education, training, and that all schools and colleges are able to include them freely ensuring that that every individual Child's needs are met. Every school buildings can be used by children with disabilities, getting special equipment for their learning and communication such as Braille and sign language (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). To date however, these promises remain more ideal than practical.

Benefits of Inclusive Education

According to Agra seminar report (1998), when all children are caused to share resources and facilities in an inclusive setting, education becomes cost effective, sustainable and participatory for all. Thus:

- It can help to cut down the chains of ethnicity, interpersonal and cultural differences, religion, politics diversity and disability (special Needs Education policy 2009); The Constitution of Kenya, 2010.
- It can help to break the cycle of poverty and exclusion as disability and poverty are interlinked. Through inclusion, poor children are likely to receive early intervention and support, social motivation, self-confidence and self-advocacy to speak for

themselves and to build their own future within their society (The World Disability Report, 2011)

- Inclusive education enables children with disabilities to stay with members of their families and communities against placing them in special residential schools away from their homes and families, which is a contradiction of their rights (Action network for the disabled, 2013)
- Inclusive education can improve education for all, by acting as a catalyst for change in educational practice, mainstream schools, co-teaching/ learning, social collaboration, child-centered and participatory approaches for all. (EENET newsletter 1998).
- Certainly, inclusive education can help overcome discrimination, segregation, stigma, isolation, discrimination and negative attitudes that persist in society due to lack of awareness, experience sharing and interacting with persons with disabilities (Persons with disabilities act, 2003).
- Inclusive education can promote wider social inclusion and development by supporting targeted initiatives which empower children with disabilities, their families, sponsors, community based organizations and community based.

Statement of the Problem

Inclusive models in European, American, Asian and other African countries appear to be more effectively developing than in Kenya (Siuestubbs, 2002). In 2003, Kenya began to offer Free Primary Education (FPE) to all including learners with disabilities. Nevertheless, without effective inclusion many children with disabilities are still out of school (Action network for the disabled, 2013). These children have the right to live independently and play full and active part in the life of their communities and country. They hardly access public places, buildings, transport and communication services, schools, hospitals and other work places. Public institutions, Kenyatta University for instance, require standard guidelines and financial support to make sure that they effect and implement the Persons with Disability Act (2003), and Constitution of Kenya (2010). This is because persons with disability need education and training to make them self-reliant, independent and socially interact with others in their home communities in order to achieve inclusive living.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to establish influence of inclusive education for persons with disabilities in context of social change and development in Kenya - a case of Kenyatta University.

Objectives of the Study

- To determine Kenya's readiness for Inclusive Education.
- To investigate effectiveness of inclusion as a means of social change and development.
- To examine whether Inclusive Education leads to all development of a person.
- To establish whether inclusive education facilitates social change and development more than any other mode of education.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a case study design to establish influence of inclusive education for persons with disabilities in context of social change and development in Kenya - a case of Kenyatta University. According to Bricki and Green (2007), a case study is a process or record of research in which detailed consideration is given to the development of a particular person, group, or situation over a period of time.

Research Methodology

Mixed methods were used that was both quantitative and qualitative data was employed. Triangulation method of collecting data was used through the use of observation schedules, interviews and questionnaires to find out the social change and development in persons with disabilities in Kenyatta University. Qualitative data was edited, and coded according to the themes from research which emanated objectives. The quantitative data was analyzed and presented using descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, pie-charts and graphs.

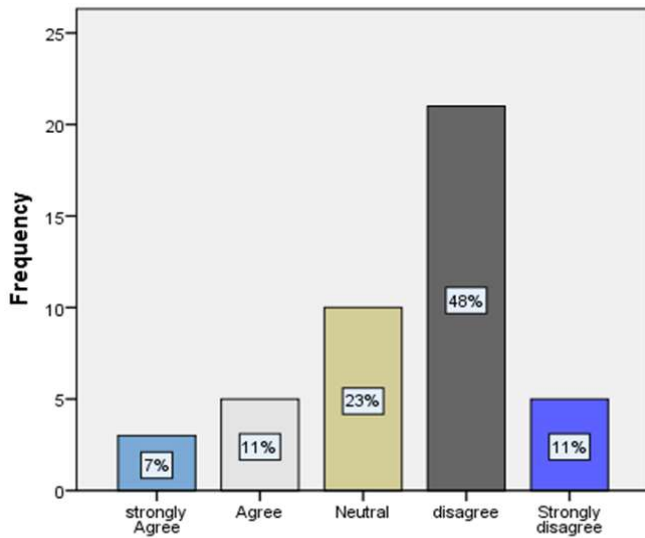
The study was carried out in a public university which was Kenyatta University main campus. Kenyatta University is situated in Kiambu County. Population consisted of all persons with disabilities and those without disabilities within Kenyatta University and a sample size of 150 persons was purposively sampled.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Introduction

This section presents the data findings on the implementation of inclusive education at Kenyatta University. Data is presented based on the five objectives of the study. The findings are presented in tables, graphs, pie charts and narrative.

Objective One: Kenya's readiness for inclusive Education



The first objective of the study was to determine whether Kenya was ready for Inclusive Education. The results revealed that only eighteen percent (18%) of the respondents agreed that Kenya was ready for Inclusive Education. Majority of the respondents fifty nine percent (59%) felt that Kenya was not yet ready for Inclusive Education but twenty three percent (23%) were not aware of Inclusive Education in Kenya. However, the launch of The National Special Needs

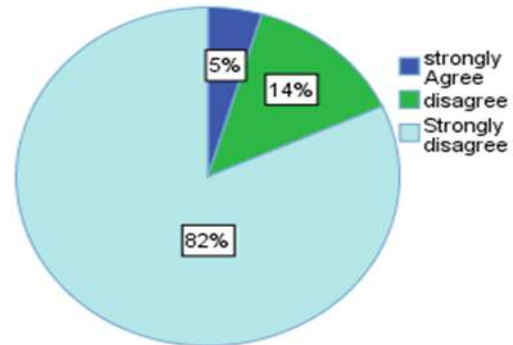
Education Policy Framework on 10th, March 2010 whose Vision was to have “A society in which all persons regardless of their disability and special needs achieve education to realize their full potential.” affirmed that Kenya is gearing towards Inclusive Education. The National Special Needs Education Policy (MOE, 2009), has eleven objectives, three of which focus on promotion and facilitation of inclusion of children with special needs in formal and non-formal education and training. Promotion of barrier-free environment for learners with special needs in all learning institutions, provision and promotion of the use of specialized facilities, services, assistive devices and technology, equipment and teaching learning materials.

The policy also has guiding principles that address inclusion. The Guiding Principle 2 advocates for, equal access to all educational institutions by learners with special needs and disability. Guiding Principle 3: Equitable access to services that meet the needs of individual learners with special needs and disability within diverse learning environments. Guiding Principle 4: Non-discrimination in enrolment and retention of learners with special needs and disabilities in any institution of learning. Guiding Principle 5: Barrier free transition of learners with special needs and disability through the various education levels in accordance with their abilities. Guiding Principle 6: Learner-centered curriculum and responsive learning systems and materials. Guiding Principle 11: Equal opportunities for learners with Special Needs.

The policy provision has 15 target areas of which Inclusive Education has been discussed. The policy provisions

acknowledges the government’s emphasis of inclusive education through regular schools and asserts that inclusive education approach will increase access to education for children with special needs.

For inclusive education to succeed in Kenya there should be supportive legislation, finance, policy statement and political good will



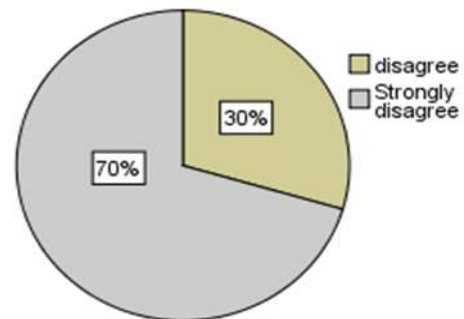
According to this study, majority of the respondents eighty two percent (82%) stated that Inclusive Education can succeed even if there were no supportive legislation and policies.

Opportunities for inclusive education in Kenya

	Frequency	Percent
More employment for disabled	28	85
Scholarships	1	3
Infrastructure to accommodate inclusive education	4	12
Total	33	100

The study revealed that in Kenya there are opportunities for persons with disabilities in the job market as supported by the Constitution of Kenya (2010). Eighty five percent (85%) of the respondents supported that there were more employment opportunities for the persons with disabilities.

Objective Two: To investigate effectiveness of inclusion as a means of social change and development.



The study revealed that seventy percent (70%) of the respondents viewed Inclusive Education as an effective agent of social change and development for persons with and without disabilities. Thirty percent (30%) of the respondents

felt that Inclusive Education may not bring any social change and development for persons with and without disabilities. Inclusive Education call for preparation of all teachers to work with students with disabilities, particularly low-incidence disabilities (Hardman & Dawson, 2008). There is need to change attitude of all educators to be responsible for the academic and social development of all students (Duke & Lamar-Dukes, 2009). In other words, no more “us vs. them”! Persistence! Our education system continues to evolve. We can potentially increase the opportunities for meaningful inclusion in the community and society in general for individuals with disabilities through our inclusive practices in schools.

K.U social environment is not inclusive at all

	Frequency	Percent
strongly Agree	15	37
Agree	18	44
Neutral	5	12
Disagree	1	2
Strongly disagree	2	5
Total	41	100

According to this study, eighty one percent (81%) of the respondents supported the fact that KU social environment is not inclusive at all while nineteen percent (19%) of the respondents were of the opinion that Ku social environment is inclusive.

K.U physical environment is not inclusive at all

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	17	39
Agree	14	32
Neutral	6	14
disagree	5	11
Strongly disagree	2	5
Total	44	100

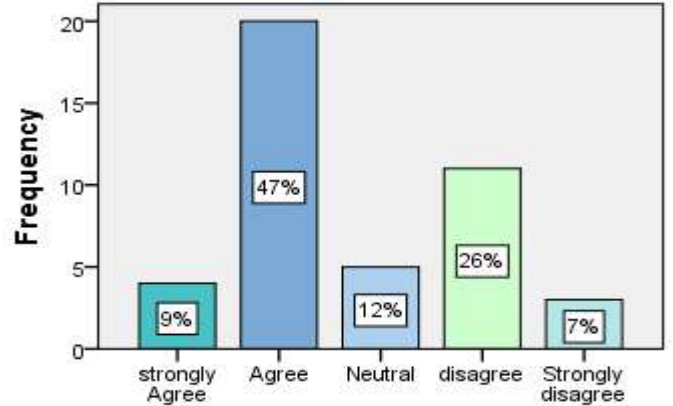
In this study majority of the respondents seventy one percent (71%) supported the fact that KU physical environment is not inclusive while the rest twenty nine percent (29%) disagreed with the statement. They viewed KU physical environment to be disability friendly.

K.U infrastructure is not inclusive

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	19	43
Agree	18	41
Neutral	1	2
Disagree	4	9
Strongly disagree	2	5
Total	44	100

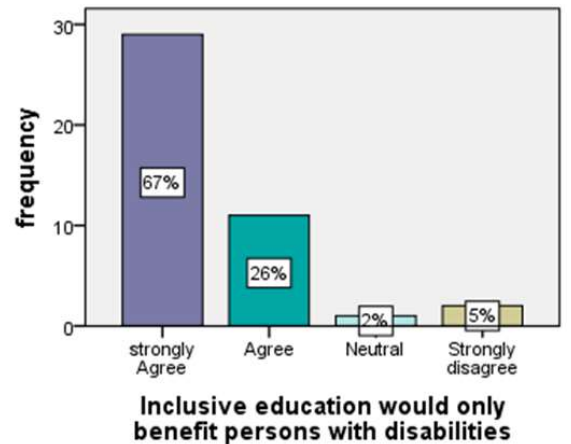
Most of the respondents supported that the infrastructure in KU was not inclusive that is eighty four percent (84%) and the remaining twelve percent felt that persons with disabilities can access almost all places in KU.

Learners with disabilities at K.U encounter communication barriers



The study revealed that persons with disabilities in KU encounter communication barriers as supported by fifty six percent (56%) of the respondents. Twelve percent (12%) of the respondents did not know the situation as it is in KU while thirty three percent (33%) of the respondents felt there were no communication barriers for persons with disabilities in KU.

Inclusive education would only benefit persons with disabilities

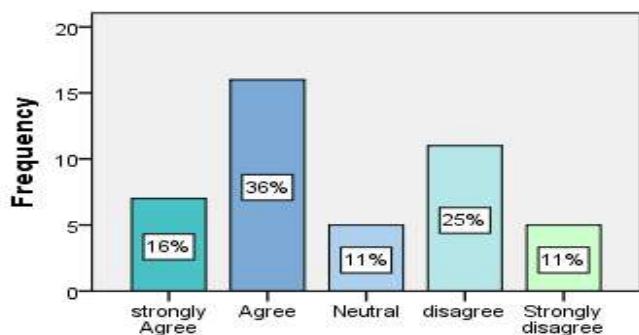


Majority of the respondents ninety one percent (91%) supported the fact that Inclusive Education may only benefit persons without disabilities while five percent (5%) were of the opinion that Inclusive Education may benefit persons with disabilities. The remaining four percent (4%) were neutral, they did not support either. On the contrary, benefits of inclusive education are numerous and favor more persons with disabilities.

Here are key findings about the benefits of inclusion for children and families:

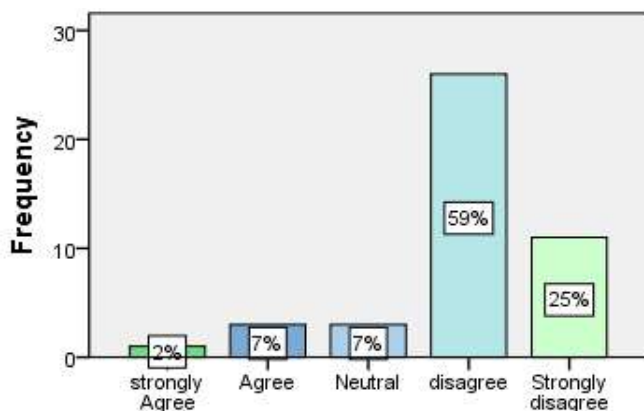
Families' visions of a typical life for their children can come true. All parents want their children to be accepted by their peers, have friends and lead "regular" lives. Inclusive settings can make this vision a reality for many children with disabilities. Children develop a positive understanding of themselves and others. When children attend classes that reflect the similarities and differences of people in the real world, they learn to appreciate diversity. Respect and understanding grow when children of differing abilities and cultures play and learn together. Friendships develop. Schools are important places for children to develop friendships and learn social skills. Children with and without disabilities learn with and from each other in inclusive classes. Children learn important academic skills. In inclusive classrooms, children with and without disabilities are expected to learn to read, write and do math. With higher expectations and good instruction children with disabilities learn academic skills. All children learn by being together, the philosophy of inclusive education is aimed at helping all children learn, everyone in the class benefits. Children learn at their own pace and style within a nurturing learning environment.

Teaching strategies at K.U are mainly teacher centered



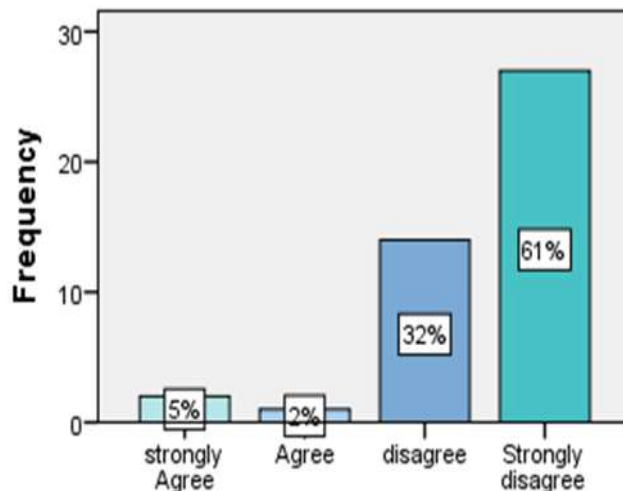
This study revealed that teaching strategies in Ku are mainly teacher-centered as supported by fifty two percent (52%) of the respondents. Eleven percent (11%) remained neutral while forty six percent (46%) felt that teaching strategies used in KU are all inclusive that is learner-centered.

Assessment model in K.U is favorable for both learners with disabilities and those without disabilities



This study revealed that assessment model in KU is not favorable for learners with disabilities as supported by eighty four percent (84%) of the respondents. Only nine percent (9%) of the respondents felt the assessment model in KU is inclusive while seven percent (7%) remained neutral.

Objective Three: Inclusive education leads to all round development of a person



Only seven percent (7%) of the respondents were in agreement that Inclusive Education leads to all round development of a person. The rest ninety three percent (93%) did not support it. Previous studies support the fact that Inclusive Education can lead to all round persons. UNESCO defines inclusive education as 'a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the state to educate all children'.

Inclusive education is not a marginal issue, but is central to the achievement of highquality education for all learners and the development of more inclusive societies.

Learners with disabilities in K.U are not given equal leadership opportunities as non-disabled learners

	Frequency	Percent
strongly Agree	19	43
Agree	12	27
Neutral	2	5
disagree	10	23
Strongly disagree	1	2
Total	44	100

This study revealed that persons with disabilities in KU are not given equal leadership opportunities as seen in the table above, seventy percent (70%) of the respondents attested to

that while twenty five of them felt persons with disabilities are given leadership opportunities but five respondents remained neutral.

Non-disabled persons in K.U are not helpful to persons with disabilities

	Frequency	Percent
strongly Agree	20	45
Agree	15	34
Neutral	6	14
Disagree	2	5
Strongly disagree	1	2
Total	44	100

Majority of the respondents that is seventy nine percent (79%) felt that non-disabled persons in KU are not helpful to persons with disabilities while seven percent (7%) of the respondents did not support the statement, fourteen percent (14%) of the respondents remained neutral.s

Students with disabilities in K.U enjoy adequate fee waiver

	Frequency	Percent
strongly Agree	16	36
Agree	6	14
Neutral	14	32
Disagree	6	14
Strongly disagree	2	5
Total	44	100

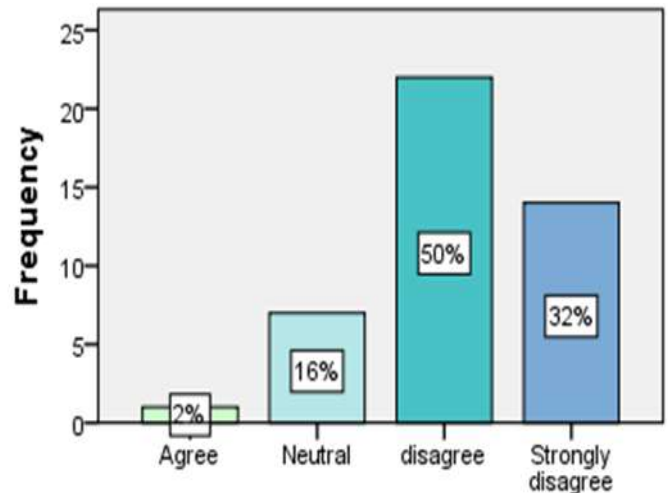
This study revealed that students with disabilities in KU enjoy adequate fees waiver as supported by fifty percent (50%) of the respondents while five percent (5%) did not support it but thirty two percent (32%) of the respondents remained neutral.

In K.U all learners with disabilities queue for special services.

	Frequency	Percent
strongly Agree	24	55
Agree	14	32
Neutral	2	5
Disagree	1	2
Strongly disagree	3	7
Total	44	100

In this study eighty seven percent (87%) of the respondents supported the fact that learners with disabilities in KU do not queue for special services while the rest of the respondents nine percent (9%) felt that learners with disabilities queue for special services but five percent (5%) remained neutral.

Objective Four: Inclusive education facilities social change and development more than any other model of education



The findings of this study revealed that two percent (2%) of the respondents supported that Inclusive Education can facilitate social change and development more than any other mode of education, while sixteen percent (16%) remained undecided, the rest of the respondents that is eighty two percent (82%) did not support this objective.

According to previous researchers, Ballard (2003), says that inclusive education is concerned with issues of social justice, which means that graduates entering the teaching profession should ‘understand how they might create classrooms and schools that address issues of respect, fairness and equity. As part of this endeavor, they will need to understand the historical, socio-cultural and ideological contexts that create discriminatory and oppressive practices in education. The isolation and rejection of disabled students is but one area of injustice. Others include gender discrimination, poverty and racism’ (p. 59).

Inclusive education is cost effective

	Frequency	Percent
No need for special schools	40	91

This study revealed that inclusive Education is not cost effective because as it in Kenya today there are very few schools offering inclusive education. Ninety one percent (91%) of the respondents attested to this.

Opportunities for inclusive education in KU

	Frequency	Percent
More employment for disabled	26	87
Scholarships	1	3
Infrastructure to accommodate inclusive education	3	10
Total	30	100

According to this study eighty seven percent (87%) of the respondents supported that there are more employment

opportunities for persons with disabilities in KU while the rest thirteen percent (13%) did not agree with this statement.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Children with disabilities remain marginalized across the region, with their right to education far from being fully realized. Although significant efforts have been made to overcome the historic discrimination and exclusion they experience, too often such measures are fragmented and un-coordinated both across and within ministries. The study concludes that persons with disabilities can learn in an inclusive set up.

However, there are challenges that teachers experience in the teaching them. The challenges include:

- 1) Lack of clear policy guidelines on inclusive education.
- 2) The curricula used to teach these students are those meant for students without disabilities and not adapted to suit the individual needs of all learners.
- 3) The support service in place such as occupational therapy, braille transcribers, sign language interpreters and speech therapists are inadequate, too expensive for most parents cannot afford.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made in order to ensure effective implementation of inclusive education for persons with disabilities:

- i. There is the need for clear government policy on inclusive education and the role of each teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, significant others and the community. The Government needs to commit to the introduction of legislation, policies, financing, data collection, capacity building, and partnerships as the vital building blocks in the creation of the infrastructure needed to support inclusive education. They will provide the basis for establishing the specific education measures required to achieve the right to access quality education on the basis of equality of opportunity for every child, which is also respectful of the human rights of those students.
- ii. Stakeholders need to work together as a team to put in place all the requirements for making inclusive education practical.
- iii. Provision of resources to remove all the barriers to change. Most important is the political will to invest in measures at all levels to create the necessary environment to support and facilitate inclusive education.
- iv. Modifications to the curricula and infrastructure to cater for all students' needs.

Finally, this goal is attainable and it is not only the right way to go; but an obligation on the part of all governments. It will bring long term benefits for all children and the wider society.

Recommendations for Further Research

- 1) There is need to carry a similar study to investigate the attitudes of the parents on inclusive education for students with disabilities in Kenya.
- 2) There is also the need to investigate the attitude of students without disabilities towards inclusive education.

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