

Strengthening the Capacity for Developing Employability and Entrepreneurial Skills for Intellectually Disabled Learners through Curriculum Reform in Zimbabwe; Evidence from the Skills Development Programme Developed by Harare Polytechnic in Partnership with Special Olympics Zimbabwe.

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ABSTRACT

The study provided a framework of developing employ ability and entrepreneurial skills through curriculum reform for intellectual disability[ID] learners in Zimbabwe. The research was a collaboration between two partners, Harare Polytechnic and Special Olympics Zimbabwe, through a Memorandum of Understanding, to tackle the challenges of stigma and skills development for intellectual disabled learners in Zimbabwe. Special Olympics Zimbabwe carried a qualitative assessment of potential skills that could be done by ID learners from the total list of skills offered by Harare Polytechnic and 22 learners in Special Olympics Harare Province confirmed the skills that they considered would be achievable given their interest in those skills. Harare Polytechnic studied the responses of the ID learners and provided a training methodology for the realisation of the skills development of those learners. The study makes a number of recommendations meant to address skills development of ID learners from the early stages of the development of an ID child up to technical vocational education and training college training as a livelihoods sustainable development strategy. The study concluded that it is possible to provide skills development to ID learners, in inclusive setting, in line with the constitutional values of inclusivity and non-discrimination through the training methodology developed by Harare Polytechnic which can be deployed nationally to tackle sustainable development issues, through inclusive employment practices, employment creation and entrepreneurial skills development involving ID learners

Keywords; Intellectual disability, inclusion, inclusive skills development, inclusive employment practices, entrepreneurship skills, employ ability skills, curriculum reform

INTRODUCTION

Definition of inclusion

Marimuthu [2015] highlighted the importance by educators of comprehending the rationale for implementing inclusivity and its philosophy. General educators were increasingly educating a diverse population of

students with learning disabilities that affect their learning and they were expected to lead the inclusion demands in social and educational thinking during the students' college life. According to UNESCO[1990] teacher training should enable both learners and teachers to feel comfortable with diversity.

According to the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe[2015;15], inclusivity refers to an education system that takes into account and addresses the different learners' needs and abilities without disadvantaging any group or individual.

The major thrust of inclusion for differently abled students in one class is to prepare students with disability to become members of society by developing meaningful relationships with normal peers during the process of learning together. According to Bronfenbrenner's 1979 theory of human development in education, it involves the teacher and the students being taught. The teacher must be taught to handle students with disabilities, manage a class of diverse students, use different strategies in teaching to be successful with students in inclusive settings [Marimunthu,2015]. Teaching practices that are encouraged in inclusive classrooms are those that aim to reach out to all learners and those that help to build a balanced society.

According to the principles and values guiding Zimbabwe's national curriculum, it 'must provide and enhance knowledge, skills, and values which helps the school leaver or college graduate to live better, happier and more productive lives in society which they are helping to build'[Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education;2022]

Inclusion in this study refers to full participation by students with disabilities in the general curriculum for mainstream learners but with adaptations provided by the constitution to cater for non-discrimination in the provision of inclusive training and employment opportunities for all.

Students with intellectual disability suffer from a disability that is characterised by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour which affect their everyday social and practical life styles. Intellectual functioning is associated with children's limitations in learning, reasoning and problem solving. Limitations in adaptive behaviour is reflected in conceptual, social and practical skills that are learned and performed in their daily lives. Limitations in ID learners often co-exist with strengths which will improve with time if sustained support is provided over time. As a result of their condition, the ID learners face the following challenges which require policy intervention through skills development;

- Some ID learners in Zimbabwe can go all the way up to Form 4 or Form 6 and still fail to acquire literacy and numeracy skills. The emphasis is on academic improvement to the exclusion of motor skills training and development programmes for a life-time career.
- The current curriculum does provide limited opportunities for vocational training of some sort for ID learners to prepare them for life after school or to allow them to be weaned by parents when they grow up.
- The curriculum for Intellectual disability learners is the same as the general curriculum used by normal students but does not specify how the ID learners learning would be modified to suit their training needs. The burden is left to the teacher to decide how this could be done in classroom settings and in most cases this works to the detriment of ID learners [Mudyadzo,2015]
- There are no special examinations for ID learners in line with the national policy of inclusion and non-discrimination and they are expected to sit national examinations at "O" and "A" levels when most of them cannot read or write or functionally operate at the same pace as normal learners. [Mudyadzo,2015]
- There are duties and taxes when ID learners import equipment to be used in schools for their special needs [Mutepfa, 2007].
- Parents pay same fees for their ID learners just like the normal students even in government schools thereby encouraging some parents to withdraw their ID children from the school system. The costs

also multiply when parents accompany their ID children to school when they cannot use public transport [Mutepfa].

- Parents with ID learners are also looking for government economic empowerment projects to be able to support their disadvantaged children but there is no institutional mechanism to support this challenge and to be able to wean their children from a life-time parental dependence. In the absence of a social security system which caters for the needs of these ID children from the “cradle to the grave” like in developed countries, the financial burden of looking after these children by parents is huge.[Mudyadzo,2015]
- Many students with ID are not afforded the opportunity to contribute to society through work or business entrepreneurship although they value participation in the labour market and in economic empowerment projects.

In response to the above challenges, the focus of the new Zimbabwe Education Policy and the Zimbabwe National Technical and Vocational and Training Policy[2022] is that the product of any education system should be the production of goods and services. This study sought to establish how the current education curriculum could accommodate ID learners with respect to vocational and entrepreneurial skills training in line with the non-discriminatory provisions contained in the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment No.20 Act,2013; the Education ACT [Chapter 25:04], the Disabled Persons Act [17:01], the Social Welfare Assistance Act [Chapter 17:06], the Mental Health Act [chapter 15:12]the Zimbabwe Manpower Planning and Development Act [Chapter 28;02 amendment no.12 of 2020] and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which Zimbabwe ratified in 2013.

Research Objectives

This study sought to achieve the following objectives which include;

1. How the current education and training curriculum for Zimbabwe could accommodate ID learners with respect to employ ability and entrepreneurial skills training in line with the non-discriminatory provisions contained in the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Act,2013; the Education ACT [Chapter 25:04], the Disabled Persons Act [17:01], the Social Welfare Assistance Act [Chapter 17:06], the Mental Health Act [chapter 15:12], the Zimbabwe Manpower Planning and Development Act [Chapter 28;02 Amendment no.12 of 2020 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which Zimbabwe ratified in 2013 [From Primary to Secondary Education]
2. How could discriminatory practices based on literacy and numeracy skills requirement be eliminated during entry selection requirements, teaching and examination
3. What training methodology could be used to train ID learners in inclusive classroom environments to acquire vocational skills.
4. To certain the possibility of introducing concept of competency based training programme for ID learners as part of curriculum review with its emphasis on practical teaching, practical coursework assessment and practical examination processes.
5. What assessment standards can be used to evaluate acquisition of employ ability and entrepreneurial skills by ID athletes in inclusive setting.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Persons with intellectual disability (ID) remain largely excluded from the labour and business market in many countries due to lack of employ ability and entrepreneurial skills. Employ ability skills are those transferable skills needed by an individual to make them employable [Gowsalya, G & Kumar,M.A,2015].The Zimbabwe National Development Strategy I [2021-2025] recognises skills development agenda as critical to sustainable growth and balanced development of its people and economy

which prepares learners for the labour market and inclusive growth. Skills development policy in this context is aimed at achieving social equity, social inclusion and poverty alleviation. Zimbabwe government policy utilises skill development as a solution to unemployment and as an indispensable aspect in the industrialisation and modernisation agenda of the country.[The Herald 21/10/23].

The Zimbabwe Government's policy approach on skills development for disabled persons was to mainstream disability in all skills development programmes and interventions to ensure that they are inclusive and are accessible to persons with disabilities and that disabled people participate in society on an equal basis. The Zimbabwe National Disability Policy of June 2021 recognised that persons with disabilities have rights, just like everyone, in all facets of life including employment, education, healthcare, housing, sport and skills development for survival and sustainable development. The Zimbabwe Government policy on disability was therefore designed to address barriers, marginalisation, stigma and discrimination which prevents disabled persons from not functioning at optimal level and to allow them to fend for themselves, their families and to contribute to national development agenda. Through the National Disability Policy of 2021, the Government of Zimbabwe moved from the charity mode to the empowerment mode of disability management.

Inclusive skills development programmes in Zimbabwe are informed by the following pieces of legislation which inform disability policy and disability curriculum skills development;

- Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment No.20 Act, 2013
- National Development Strategy 1[2021-2025]
- Disabled Persons Act chapter 17:01
- Mental Health Act chapter 15:12
- Social Welfare Assistance Act chapter 17:06
- Manpower Planning and Development Act chapter 28:02 Amendment No.12 of 2020
- Zimbabwe Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy.[2022].

Disability curriculum development in Zimbabwe was also informed by international conventions and agreements to which Zimbabwe is a signatory which include;

- SADC Protocol on Education and Training
- African Union and SADC Conventions on Human Rights and Children's Rights
- United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- African Union and United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- AU Agenda 2063

In the context of ID curriculum development in Zimbabwe, it was informed by government policy provisions, international conventions and agreements as well as the Zimbabwe government guiding principles informing curriculum development, implementation and evaluation. According to the Government of Zimbabwe Curriculum Framework of Primary and Secondary Education[2015-2022]. these principles include inclusivity, balance, continuity, coherence, integration, transparency, gender sensitivity, lifelong learning, respect, relevance, equity and fairness.

The National Development Strategy of 2021 mainstreamed skills development programmes for disabled persons so that they are employed on the basis of skill, merit, qualification, knowledge and ability and not on the basis of disability. The National Development Strategy outlined the following principles to achieve in its strategic objectives of curriculum skills development for disabled persons;

- Non discrimination.
- Respect of the inherent dignity and individual autonomy and independence

- Respect for freedom to make one's own choices
- Full and active participation and inclusion in society
- Equality of opportunity
- Gender equality
- Respect for diverse cultural and religious values
- Collaborations between persons with disabilities and persons without disabilities.

ID people are marginalised and stigmatised from the moment they are diagnosed. Employment and business opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities are limited, and the employment rates are far below that of the wider population. Luecking and Luecking (2015) noted that limited support during career preparation and work experiences as one explanation for poorer outcomes for students with disabilities. Another major employment barrier for students with disabilities include inadequate employment of soft skills for example. work completion, task accuracy, punctuality, self-regulation (Elksnin and Elksnin :2001).G.Gowda and M.A.Kumar [2015] emphasised a set of skill set that are required from the employee and these include team working,problem solving, self management,self responsibility,knowledge of the business,numeracy and literacy relevant to the post; ICT knowledge, good interpersonal communication skills, ability to use own initiative to follow instructions and leadership skills where necessary.

Heavey and Morey [2023] highlighted the following factors for enhancing employ ability and recognising diversity in curriculum design;

- All students to undertake work related learning opportunities; offer work experience opportunities for students
- Development of personal transferable skills in mainstream academic curriculum
- Making links between higher education and the world of work through research collaborations, employer input into course content and project work
- Cooperation between employer and employee in curriculum development which embeds employ ability in the curriculum.
- Bring employers into course design processes
- Modifying courses to match industry needs.
- Holding regularly employ ability workshops

The Role of Vocational Education in developing employ ability and entrepreneurial skills

Section 24 [2] subsection [a][b] and[c] of the Constitution of Zimbabwe provides that the State and all institutions and agencies of government at every level must endeavour to secure;

a. full employment;

b. the removal of restrictions that unnecessarily inhibit or prevent people from working and otherwise engaging in gainful economic activities;

c.vocational guidance and the development of vocational and training programmes, including those for persons with disabilities.

According to International Labour Organisation [2018] it identified that Technical and Vocational Education and Training [TVET] takes place initially at primary and secondary level, through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary education and most Technical and Vocational Education and Training [TVET] takes place post-secondary level under the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development.Public and private TVET also provide training programmes for learners with and without disability. Danhiko Industrial Training College and Harare Polytechnic offer joint

training programmes for learners with and without disabilities.

Mhlanga, M et al [2021], stated that vocational training at primary and secondary focuses on acquiring basic knowledge, skills, abilities, understanding and attitudes needed for one's chosen career. Post secondary level TVET focuses on the development of employability skills for self reliance, self employment, entrepreneurship and national development.

In addition, many people with disabilities are not afforded the opportunity to contribute to society through work or business entrepreneurship. In Zimbabwe they value employment, but school-related factors form barriers to labour market participation. Therefore, this paper explores literature review on how to strengthen the capacity for developing entrepreneurial and employ ability skills through curriculum reform for students with intellectual disability in Zimbabwe.

Curriculum reform

The choice of educational content is crucial in a life span perspective for students with intellectual disabilities (ID). According to The Zimbabwean Curriculum Framework (2018) graduates of the education system must be prepared and have the following skills: critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, leadership skills, good communication skills, team building and technological skills.

The Zimbabwe Constitution (2013) section 83 states that “the state has an obligation to take appropriate measures to enable persons with disabilities become self-reliant, to provide special facilities for their education and to provide state-funded education and training where they need it.”

However, there is no written policy framework of skills development for learners with ID to use in schools despite its importance and the existence of a constitutional provision which prescribes that requirement.. Learners are placed in resource units from the time they are placed in schools and some in special schools, up to the age of 18 years where they use the main curriculum. However, most learners may be in schools up to twenty-one years of age because they would have been placed in schools when they are seven to ten years. Hence, they attend the reception class when they are way older than their peers. In resource units, learners with ID usually leave primary school at the age of fourteen or fifteen and get enrolled in secondary schools that also have resource units or special classes. The current trend which is advocating for inclusive education, has seen learners with different disability being enrolled in schools nearer to their homes and learning with their peers. This arrangement was creating challenges because teachers in mainstream school are not equipped to teach the learner with ID. Furthermore, The curriculum was exam oriented and the learners with ID were being margin alised.

Once learners with ID are enrolled in schools they must be empowered with functional skills by ensuring that these schools are properly resourced and capacitated. According to Webster (2019) functional skills are those skills a learner needs to live independently. For some learners, these skills include learning to feed themselves. For other students, it may be learning to use a bus or read a bus timetable depending on the degree or severity of their disability. These skills are the ones that help them when it comes to employment. They can be separated as Life Skills, Functional Academic Skills, Community-Based Learning Skills and Social Skills

Functional academic skills enable independent living which requires skills that are considered academic, even if they do not lead to higher education or the completion of a diploma. Those skills include: Math skills which include telling time, counting and using money, measurement, and understanding volume. For higher functioning students with ID, math skills include vocationally oriented skills, such as following a schedule. Reading skills are the ability to understand written text in one or more languages. These skills include decoding, fluency, speed, vocabulary ,understanding sentences and reading for comprehension. Being able

to read can lead to a better quality of life and better integration into the mainstream society. On the other hand, limited reading ability hinders the student from having a normal standard of life, and that can be a great disadvantage to them in finding vocational opportunities (Allor, Champlin, Gifford, & Mathes, 2010).

The most basic of **life skills** are those skills that are acquired in the first few years of life such as walking, self-feeding, self-toileting, and making simple requests. This entails that the formation of skills must be entrenched from home with parents of such children being capacitated through social work networks. Such a foundation will ensure that ID learners are capacitated early. Learners with intellectual disabilities often need to have these skills taught through modelling, Thus, breaking them down, and teaching each skill separately. The teaching of life skills also requires that the teacher completes appropriate task analysis in order to teach the specific skills (Webster: 2022).

Decoding abilities in individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID) are substantially lower than for typical readers and hence the reason for teaching them to read is vital. The underlying mechanisms of their poor reading remain uncertain and are linked to several disadvantages such as not able to read a bus schedule, a sign in a bathroom, or directions, to mention a few that enable students with ID gain independence. Many learners with ID conditions need reading texts supported with audio recordings or adults reading.

Community-Based Learning Skills are skills learners need to succeed independently in the community. These skills include using public transportation, shopping, making choices in restaurants, and crossing streets at crosswalks. Too often parents, with the desire to protect their disabled children, over-function for their children and unknowingly stand in the way of allowing their children to acquire the skills they need.

Social Skills are usually modelled, but need to be carefully and consistently taught to learners with ID. In order to function in the community, students need to understand how to interact appropriately with different members of the community and not only family, peers, and teachers.

Ideal curriculum

Access to higher education has the capacity to impact employment outcomes for people with ID (Grigal, Migliore, & Hart, 2014). However, support to access higher education in most African countries is seldom identified as a goal for learners with ID on their transition plans (Grigal, Hart, & Migliore, 2011). Education must equip the learners with knowledge and skills that allow them to define and pursue their own goals, and prepares them for participation in the life of their communities (Phillips and Siegel 2015). Little research has been conducted on curriculum access and curriculum content offered to students with ID (Ware 2014; Shurr and Bouck 2013). In general, curriculum research in this field is sparse, and is reported to be declining (Shurr and Bouck 2013, Nietupski et al. 1997). What research continuously shows is that people with ID experience for various reasons marginalisation and limited opportunities for self-determination and participation both in and out of school (Verdon schot et al. 2009, Garrels 2016, Sagen and Ytterhus 2014). Higher education has not increased employment opportunities for people with ID and there is need to empower them with employ ability skills from primary school all the way up to High School which is the gap to be filled by current efforts of developing employ ability skills.

An ideal curriculum must include **soft skills** in depth so that learners with ID are empowered to start income generating projects early in their life and are equipped with skills to become entrepreneurs in the country. Soft skills are less discussed yet they are skills that learners with intellectual disability need to succeed in the workforce. There is no curriculum designed specifically for soft skills, but that doesn't mean these skills aren't important. Soft skills include talents such as creative problem solving that are distinguished from hard skills in a few important ways. Luecking and Luecking (2015) identified limited support during career preparation and work experiences as one explanation for poorer outcomes for students with disabilities.

Another major employment barrier for students with disabilities includes inadequate employment of soft skills like., work completion, task accuracy, punctuality, social skills, self-regulation which, according to Elksnin and Elksnin (2001), may account for almost 90% of job loss.

In addition, Lindsay et al. (2014) found employers perceived youth with disabilities to be at a disadvantage compared to youth without disabilities and recommended focusing on soft skill instruction could be a way to assist youth with disabilities in obtaining employment. On the other hand employers may not have the supporting infrastructure and properly equipped human resources to manage ID workers which result in cultural stigma against persons with disabilities.

Employers have also reported that they value soft skills. For example, Casner-Lotto and Barrington (2006) found business leaders valued soft skills over academic skills which were considered fundamental for employees. They also indicated younger employees often lacked soft skills in the areas of communication, teamwork, cooperation, problem solving, and work ethic. Lastly, Ju, Zhang, and Pacha (2012) found employers felt soft skills such as integrity, honesty, following instructions, showing respect for others, cooperation, and being on time were more important than technical skills. Even though soft skills have been recognized as important for learners with disabilities in gaining and maintaining employment, over the past 20 years few studies have been conducted on how to provide soft skill instruction to students with disabilities (Agran, Hughes, Thomas, & Scott, 2016).

Therefore, the curriculum must be designed to teach soft skills to young people with intellectual disabilities from a tender age. The curriculum can focus on major skills, including communication, teamwork, networking, professionalism, enthusiasm and attitudes, and problem solving and critical thinking. Each skill must be taught using a separate approach for example the curriculum for communication skills has several activities that students can participate in that help improve their ability to communicate effectively. Having a better understanding of desirable employ ability skills aids allows professionals to develop programs that will target the needs of those who make decisions relating to human resources development.

Below are some topics that can be included in the curriculum so as to empower learners with intellectual disabilities with employ ability skills:

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication skills are important because they help them to perform their individual job well. If they can't communicate what they're doing to others there will be a challenge. Effective communication requires individuals to be strong listeners as well as communicators (Barnlund, 2008). They need to be able to understand where others stand with regards to finishing a project. Learners with intellectual disability must be taught to be good communicators from primary school level. They must be able to listen, respond and ensure that as team members the work is done. In addition, according to Daily Almanac (2012) having good communication skills is ranked as number one quality that employers want their employees to excel in. Good employees are those that are able to communicate with their bosses, co-workers, and customers.

Conflict Management

Furthermore, conflict disrupts the culture, morale, and overall productivity of any workplace. The modern workplace in general is a complex place with a range of generations, technologies, skills, cultures, and opinions. Data suggests that more employees spend almost 3 hours per week dealing with some sort of conflict resolution (Dogan: 2016). Therefore, learners with intellectual disabilities must be taught conflict resolution strategies because good communication can greatly reduce the extensive time spent in conflict management.

Creativity

One of the most underrated skills for people to possess is the skill of creativity. Creative individuals are able to work within the limits of their organization in such a way that they conceive new approaches that help improve the way their organization responds to issues arising in their organisation. Learners with intellectual disabilities must get accustomed to working according to certain rules and routines. While this is sufficient for dealing with most work issues from one day to another, they also need to be able to develop innovative solutions when novel problems arise. Those with a solid sense of creativity will also be innovative problem solvers. They have an ability to understand the problems in front of them and the solutions that have previously been used. Creative individuals will be able to assess what resources are available and develop new approaches to solving the problems within their organization.

Adaptability

A skill that any student will use from school through their career will be the ability to adapt to any given situation. One of the purposes of schools is to get students used to the routine of a day's work, since for most people, a career will ask them to work on a regular schedule according to set hours. Although students with intellectual disabilities work better with the structure and routine of a normal day's work. They also need to be able to adapt in the face of novel circumstances. When sudden change occurs, or unanticipated problems arise, they may be unable to effectively respond. If students with intellectual disabilities learn to be more adaptable, they become better situated to respond to a wide range of problems. Hence it is imperative to teach them adaptability from a tender age. A student with disability who learns how to adapt quickly to changing school conditions is better suited to responding in the workplace when new problems arise. The following strategies are useful in the classroom at primary and secondary school level;

- Using small task (task analysing)
- Modifying teaching to be hands on
- Think visual
- Use baby steps
- Incorporating more physical learning experiences
- Encourage music in the classroom
- Use a communication book between school and home for continuity of tasks being learnt.

Source; T. Nyamande, 2023

In line with the Zimbabwe Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education(2015-2022) learners with intellectual disabilities must be awarded opportunities to prepare for a vocational skill using flexible, adaptable, critical thinking, problems solving and creativity opportunities just like any other student in the regular school.

TEAMWORK

The nature of the classroom lends itself to helping develop the soft skill of teamwork.. Teamwork requires that students with intellectual disabilities interact with others towards completing a singular goal. This is something that they will often face in the workplace as they are asked to work toward resolving organizational issues or as they work with others to meet goals set by their employers. In addition, effective teamwork draws together a number of other skills, like communication skills and interpersonal skills which they put to use so that organisational goals are met.

Regardless of their own personal styles, individuals who learn teamwork skills learn how to use their

personal styles for the good of their group rather than for their own good at the expense of the group.

In one activity, students with intellectual disability can act out a short play, with one student acting as a worker receiving feedback from the second student, who acts as the boss. After the play is over, students are asked several questions about the interaction. How did the first student respond to feedback? How did the second student communicate their concerns?

Another example can include teaching the skill of professionalism. One of the activities presents students with a different image of different people who might be applying for jobs. One image may include someone with many tattoos on their arms while another image includes an older individual in a wheelchair. The students are then asked to reflect on the perceptions people might have of these people. Interviewers may ask each individual different question based on the image they present, for better or worse.

Learners might also be asked why older individuals might be reluctant to apply for a job, including fears that their managers will be younger than them. These questions are designed around the idea of getting students to think about issues that might arise in the workplace based on various issues including age gaps, appearances, and other factors.

Personal Productivity

Not everyone has this skill, but businesses are significantly more productive if the employees have it. Being internally motivated to do your job, and do it well, is an important soft skill for all employees to master. Time tracking apps and software like Microsoft's habit tracker can help employees grow in this area.

Problem-Solving

The problem solving method involves empowering learners to apply knowledge and skills to develop a viable solution to a defined problem [Government of Zimbabwe, 2015]. Students with disabilities may generally take longer to complete similar task on their own but this is an opportunity for their teachers to step in. Team problem solving helps build a culture of teamwork and collaboration which is required for improved prospects for life, work or leisure. Creating a community of learners help ID learners to independently and collaboratively build productive skills in a motivating environment of peers.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is part of problem solving, but also helps with strategy and assessing new ideas or opportunities (Cottrell: 2011). Employees with intellectual disabilities need to be able to look at situations from multiple perspectives and find the right approach for handling each one. Hence, it is imperative to include critical thinking in the curriculum so that learners with intellectual disabilities can practice.

Professionalism

Whether a learner has intellectual disability or not, all employees must conduct themselves in a professional manner. The way employees dress, speak, and behave all reflect the company, especially at work. The curriculum needs to include opportunities to dress up and learn about different clothes for different occasions. Professionalism is also important as it relates to written and verbal communication with both co-workers and clients.

Time Management

Learners with intellectual disabilities have trouble managing their time. They might get caught up on a task that interest them and not realize how long they've been working on it. Experience in managing there

time efficiently during school years will position them to be efficient and industrious in a real working environment. (Clark, Konrad, & Test. (2018)

Leadership

According to Cottrell (2008). all workers, including those with disabilities, have the potential to lead others. Teaching learners with intellectual disabilities to give constructive feedback and clear direction while guiding and instructing others is paramount during school years. For those who lack leadership skills or simply want to grow in it, leadership training is a great way to improve this soft skill.

Positive Attitude

A positive attitude is also an important part of any curriculum that has soft skills. Workers who can turn negatives into positives and find the good in difficult situations get rewarded Clark, Konrad, & Test. (2018). A curriculum that teaches learners with intellectual disabilities to have a positive attitude is vital. It increases their self-esteem and boost their moral. Why it is a vital? This question can be answered by noting that negative or pessimistic attitudes can hurt morale and kill company culture. Keeping things on the bright-side is a must in any business organisation and this starts in the classroom.

Entrepreneurship skills

Entrepreneurship skill involves learners with intellectual disability's abilities to venture into business and work-related opportunities while creating risk awareness. This skill includes the ability to identify business opportunities and be able to prepare, build, and explore business plans which eventually leads to self-employment. Learners with disabilities must be taught how to venture into small business activities in schools from primary school level. Teaching them how to start up a business and also having incoming generating projects in schools will prepare them for greater thing. The learners with intellectual disabilities start up a poultry or horticulture project at school. They will practice chickens rearing, learn about the disease which can affect the chickens, how to market them and places to sell them, among others.

Life Goal Setting

There is also need to teach them how to find out their goals in life. When they know their goals then, their strengths and weakness can be identified in order to boost their strengths and work on making weakness their strengths. Helping them be aware of their talents and capabilities is also vital. Most entrepreneurship businesses are created from a person's hobbies and talents.

Ethics and moral skills

Learners with intellectual disabilities need to be taught good ethics and morals skill. Being able to practice with high moral standards in the relevant work environment is imperative. Employees with a strong work ethic exhibit a particular set of values and behaviour. Having these characteristics make them stand out as highly coveted team member and praise-worthy employees. They must be reliable, dedicated, co-operative and responsible people. They should also be able to understand the effects of economy environment, and social-cultural factors on their respective professional practice. In relation to ethical issues, they should be able to analyse and arrive at decisions in matters concerning ethics. Beyond the working environment, they should be able to practice good ethics while having a sense of responsibility toward society.

Leadership skills

Leadership skill entails the ability of novice teachers to lead in various activities. Novice teachers should have the knowledge on basic leadership theories which will enable them to lead a project. It is also essential

that they are able to understand the role of a leader and a group member and be able to carry out those roles interchangeably

Attention to detail

Last, but certainly not least, attention to detail is crucial. From emailing to ordering anything attention to detail is everything. Learners with ID must learn to identify small but important details to make sure nothing gets overlooked

How to teach soft skills to professionals

Part of mastering the skills needed to work with learners with disability is figuring out the right way to teach soft skills. When it comes to teaching them and putting together a soft skills training curriculum, the following can help to teach soft skills:

Use role-playing

Role-playing is an effective tool for helping individuals with disabilities as they learn how to handle common workplace situations. This gives them an opportunity to learn to read facial expressions, figure out the right way to respond during difficult moments, and ensure that they're abiding by their training.

Create opportunities to practice

It's important for all workers, but especially those with intellectual disabilities, to have opportunities to practice their soft skills in veterinary assistant, schools. The more chances they have to put training into practice before being out in work environment helps them fail and start afresh in a safer environment. The one-size-fits-all method doesn't work with learners with intellectual disabilities. Off-the-shelf corporate training solutions are not always inclusive and fail to meet the specific needs of learners with intellectual disability.

Potential jobs for people with intellectual disabilities

According to Indeed editorial Team (2021) in the modern job market, there are many positions that can accommodate the unique needs of people with intellectual disabilities and provide an ideal environment for career success. The following jobs are some of the career pathways that are followed by ID people; copy typist, farmer, security guard, camera operator, photographer, chef, computer programmer, graphic artist, driver, musician, truck driver, industry and community partners.

Vocational skills and/or Entrepreneurial skills

In Zimbabwe, life-skills orientation programme is integrated in the primary and secondary curriculum of the education system. The focus of the Life-skills Orientation Programme provides learners with the opportunity to practice the general and specific skills expected from school leavers in a work, social and civic environment. At every level of the education system; infant, primary, secondary level learners are given the opportunity to practice general and specific skills which include problem solving, self management, communication, leadership, teamwork, enterprise and technological skills. Career anchors established during learners' life-skills Orientation Programme may determine the pathways that may be followed by learners under vocational or enterprise skills development as a career. It is pertinent to note that at this level, there are limited skills development opportunities for self employment or enterprise development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Special Olympics Zimbabwe carried out a pilot study on employ ability and entrepreneurial skills where athletes indicated the skills training that they were interested in as indicated in the table below. Respondents chose from the list of vocational skills offered by Harare Polytechnic.

Study Design

The study carried a survey of ID learners and members of the ID community in Special Olympics Harare Province, as a pilot project, with the prospect of extending it nationally to all provinces based on the outcomes of the research.

A structured questionnaire was administered in schools for primary, secondary, vocational and tertiary education in Special Olympics Harare Province that cater for learners with ID and members of the community with ID. Participants were selected from each school or tertiary college based on their willingness to provide the required information for the research. Data was collected over a period of six months.

Study population

The study was conducted on people living with ID in the age groups of 12 – 40 years. The total population size of the ID people was 56 and 34 ID people were respondents as indicated in the diagram below.

Ethical consideration

Ethical clearance was sought from the relevant Government Ministry and schools and colleges through a letter detailing the objective of the study. Parental and learners’ consent was obtained to involve the ID learners in the study.

Summary of Findings from qualitative assessment June 2022; ID Learners Skills Preferred Survey

	NAMES WITHHELD FOR ETHICAL REASONS	AGE	GENDER	SKILL PREFERRED	Summary Respondents
1.		16	F	Baking and garment sewing	Baking x 5
2.		18	F	Baking	Baking 1
3.		18	F	Beauty and cosmetology	Beauty and cosmetology X 2
4.		17	F	Pattern cutting and designer	Cutting and designing X 2
5.		23	M	Horticulture Agriculture Poultry	Horticulture . agriculture, poultry X 6
6.		16	M	Welding and fabrication	Welding and fabrication X 1
7.		19	M	Panel Beating & spray painting	X 1

8.		17	M	Poultry	Poultry 1
9.		27	F	painting and decorating	Painting and decoarating x 2
10.		26	M	Agriculture	Agriculture 1
11.		25	M	Sports coach & management	Sports management 1
12.		27	M	Agric sector Animal Husbandry and Agric Machinery operation.	1
13.		18	F	Fashion and Designer / Baking	Fashion design 1
14.		21	F	Bakery	1
15.		18	F	Horticulture/ Agriculture	Horticulture 1
16.		21	F	I CT	ICT 1
17.		16	F	Art and design	Art and Design 1
18.		21	F	Braiding and weaving	Hair dressing 1
19.		18	F	Pastry chef	1
20.		21	M	Marketing and Communication	1
21.		18	M	Interior Décor and Agriculture	1
22.			F	Beauty and Cosmetology	1

Source; Special Olympics Zimbabwe Secretariat Survey, June 2022

Responsibility of the Partners under the Memorandum of Understanding

Both Harare Polytechnic and Special Olympics Zimbabwe had responsibilities under this research project as follows;

Harare Polytechnic Obligations;

Harare Polytechnic as the technical partner had the responsibility to study the results of the qualitative survey carried out by SOZ and come up with an appropriate vocational skills training methodology for ID people which take into account the medical examinations of doctors.

Harare Polytechnic was to arrange block release programmes during school holidays; one week blocks, weekend blocks or other arrangements that may be mutually agreeable by the parties. The courses would be in the form of short courses

Harare Polytechnic training methodology would involve practical skills training, practical assessment, and practical examinations and certification and the training would take place in inclusive settings.

Harare Polytechnic would decide the language to be used by the lecturer for conducting such skills training including vernacular/mother language in line with the Zimbabwe Constitution Amendment No.20, ACT 2013;S.6(1-4)

The key feature of the agreement was that ID people will be allowed to choose a programme of their choice from a list provided by Harare Polytechnic and not impose a course on them. That policy is in line with the Disabled Persons Act [chapter 17;01] and the National Development Strategy[2021-2025] Parents facilitate

the enrolment of the athletes with the assistance of Special Olympics Zimbabwe.

Harare Polytechnic would set a fee structure which ensures access to training opportunities by ID people

Harare Polytechnic was to partner SOZ to arrange fees partnerships for training ID athletes from the Government, the Private Sector, International Organisations like UNICEF, UNESCO and the Global Centre for Inclusion. This funding partnership will ensure that SOZ athletes have free access to training opportunities in future offered by Harare Polytechnic. The poor background of most of the learners justifies the use of scholarship partnerships as a critical intervention strategy to tackle access to skills by ID learners.

Special Olympics Zimbabwe Obligations under the MOU

- Coordinate enrolment of SOZ ID athletes and SOZ ID community members for skills training at Harare Polytechnic
- Establish database of prospective eligible ID athletes/Learners from its membership into a national database for skills training at Harare Polytechnic
- Coordinate Health Assessment reports from Medical Doctors for submission to Harare Polytechnic to facilitate training management of ID learners. Medical assessments are key in determining what skills ID learners may access.
- Participate in research that advances the inclusion agenda in skills development involving ID athletes. The papers would feed into national policies on inclusion agenda in education, training, development, employment and entrepreneurial development and empowerment.
- SOZ was to develop a strategy for empowering athletes who emerge from the skills training programme so that they are able to start their own enterprises based on the skills obtained or to help them access funding from Government empowerment schemes and other empowerment schemes that may be available on the market.

In the absence of a national social security system to cater for the needs of these athletes, the inclusive skills development agenda empower parents to be able to wean these athletes from permanent parental dependence which equips athletes to lead independent lifestyles as ID people.

Vocational Skills Development ; The Approach of Harare Polytechnic.

When Harare Polytechnic was presented with the list of skills that had been established through a survey by Special Olympics Zimbabwe, it confirmed that it could offer all the skills identified as suitable for ID people. Harare Polytechnic increased the list of skills that could be accessed by ID people as indicated in the diagram below. Harare Polytechnic argued that it had been offering such skills to isolated members of the community but the SOZ project would mean that the vocational skills for ID people could be offered on a larger scale taking into consideration learner diversity, medical conditions and inclusion principles.

The approach used by Harare Polytechnic is the one which is in line with the Zimbabwe Government policy of inclusion in skills development and it meets standards on non-discrimination and equality of opportunity for all as stipulated in the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment [No.20] ACT, 2013; The Education Policy on inclusion in Education[chapter 25;04] and The Disabled Persons Act [chapter 17;01] and the Zimbabwe Manpower Planning and Development Act[Chapter 28;02 amendment no.12 of 2020.The approach used by Harare Polytechnic is in line with government policy which requires a training programme to produce goods and services as the end product of the training.

Short courses offered by Harare Polytechnic in inclusive settings which result in the provision of goods and services include;

Short Courses Offered And Duration

COURSE	DURATION/ HOURS
COSMETOLOGY	150
GARMENT SEWING	120
PATTERN CUTTING AND DESIGNING	120
INTERIOR DECO	120
SEWING MACHINE MECHANICS	120
MOTOR MECHANICS (Diesel & Petrol)	90
WELDING AND FABRICATION	120
PLUMBING AND DRAIN LAYING	150
SITE SURVEYING & CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISION	90
BUILDING MATERIAL QUANTITIES CALCULATIONS AND ESTIMATION	90
BAKERY	120
PAINTING AND DECORATING	150
CAKE ICING	120
AFRICAN WEAR GARMENT CONSTRUCTION	150
PROFFESIONAL COOKERY	90
AUTO- Cad	90
VEHICLE BODY BUILDING	120
ARTIFICIAL NAILS	120
BARBERING	100
CATERING SUPERVISION	150
AUTO ELECTRICS	100
CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION	150
PROGRAMMABLE LOGIC CONTROLLERS	120
ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS IN PREPARATION FOR TRADE TEST (3-4)	100
ELECTRICAL MOTOR CONTROL WIRING CIRCUITS/ IN PREPARATION FOR TRADE TEST CLASS 1 & 2	100
ART & DESIGN	150
GRAPHIC DESIGN	150
INSTRUMENTATION AND CONTROL IN PREPARATION FOR TRADE TEST (1-4)	100
CONSTRUCTION HEALTH,SAFETY&LAW PRACTISE	150
FITTING AND TURNING	150
BRAIDING AND WEAVING	100
BRIDAL DECO	120
COMPUTER COURSE (SEVEN MODULES)/ PREPARATION FOR ICDL	140
ROAD MAINTANANCE & TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT	80
HAIRDRESSING-PREPARATION FOR TRADE TEST	150
CONSTRUCTION PROJECT MANAGEMENT	150
SAFETY AND HEALTHY MANAGEMENT	90
SUPERVISORY MANAGEMENT	120
RUBBER LINING AND BELT SPLICING	150

PLASTERING AND SCHEMING	150
WEDDING WEAR	120
BRICK, BLOCK LAYING AND CONCRETING	150
QUALITY ASSURANCE	120
CARPENTRY AND JOINERY	120
COMPUTER AIDED DESIGN & COMPUTER AIDED MANUFACTURIN(CAD/CAM)	150
PROFICIENCY COURSE IN AMENITY HORTICULTURE	150
DIGITAL MARKETING	120
REFRIDGERATION AND AIR CONDITIONING	150
GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM	150
ARCHITECTURAL ENGINEERING DRAFTING	90
GARDEN MAINTANANCE	150
HORTICULTURE BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	150
ROOF MAINTANANCE	150
FLOOR, WALL TILING AND CLADDING	150
TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT	150
RECEPTION MANAGEMENT	120
PROJECT MANAGEMENT	150
CUSTOMER CARE	120
BASIC ACCOUNTING	120
KEYBOARD AND DOCUMENT PROCESSING	120
MANAGING EFFECTIVE MEETING	120
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE	120
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT	120
VALUATION	120
SWEDISH MASSAGE	150
PANEL BEATING AND SPRAY PAINTING	120

All these short courses are accessible by ID learners in inclusive environments based on the training methodology developed by Harare Polytechnic

The Approach to Inclusive skills Development by Harare Polytechnic

These courses are provided in a learner friendly, safe, pleasant and enabling environment of lecture rooms and workshops. The primary goal of developing ID learners in inclusive environments is to tackle stigma and discrimination that comes from isolated training and to develop meaningful partnerships with normal peers during the process of learning together [Marimuthu,2015].Partnerships formed during the training programme enable ID learners to become fully functional citizens of society.

In implementing the inclusion skills development agenda, Harare Polytechnic is guided by the concept of full inclusion which refers to full participation by ID learners in the general curriculum of mainstream students with some adaptations which enables the implementation of constitutional provisions of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity for all citizens which is reflected through inclusive education practices and inclusive employment practices. The two practices determine a common future for all citizens.

Central to the inclusive skills development agenda is a Memorandum of Understanding [MOU] between

Harare Polytechnic and Special Olympics Zimbabwe, which provides that ID learners and ID members of the community could attend skills development programme with Harare Polytechnic following a medical assessment which establishes the appropriateness of the skill identified by the learner in relationship to the medical condition. Harare Polytechnic may assist a learner with the selection of a skill to facilitate training management but the good thing is that no learner will be left out in terms of skills development. Learners are required to choose a skill of their choice in line with their career anchor, interests and perceived opportunities on the job market. Parents are discouraged from making choices on behalf of their children as learners are considered key to the choice of a skill for development.

TRAINING METHODOLOGY

The training methodology is the learner centred heutagogy and pedagogy that promotes free interaction amongst the learners and which values the integrity of each other. The role of the lecturer/facilitator is to promote a culture of respect for diverse groups of learners so that learners build confidence through the support systems established by the lecturer/facilitator aimed at valuing the work of the learners. The ultimate goal of the training is to ensure that the learners take responsibility for their learning by acquiring knowledge and skill independently and collaboratively. The lecturer/facilitator makes constructive comments and encouragement throughout the development process. The idea of the training is to produce the same goals for students with special needs and their typical peers. The ID learners are allowed to learn and accomplish their task in keeping with their own pace. The inclusive nature of the training methodology addresses the different learners' needs and abilities without disadvantaging any group or individuals.

The training methodology is guided by constitutional provisions of inclusion in education and training in the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment No.20, Act which include the following;

- i. The recognition and inherent dignity and worth of each human being [S.3(e)]
- ii. Recognition of the equality of all human beings [S.3(f)]
- iii. The State must promote and advance the use of all languages used in Zimbabwe [S.6 (1) &(4)]. In terms of the constitution, all officially recognised languages in Zimbabwe are treated equitably by the state which must take into consideration the language preferences of people affected by governmental measures or communications. Chewa, Chibarwe, English, Kalanga, Koisian, Nambya, Ndau, Ndebele, Shangani, Shona, Sign language, Sotho, Tonga, Venda and Xhosa are the officially recognised languages which validates their use to conduct an inclusive training agenda by Harare Polytechnic.
- iv. An inclusive training agenda by Harare Polytechnic ensures equal opportunities in skills development for all people in Zimbabwe [S.13(3)]
- v. The inclusive education curriculum promotes the constitutional provision of the right to education [S.75] for every citizen of Zimbabwe.

It is these inclusive constitutional provisions embedded in the constitution which justifies and validates the modification of mainstream education and training curriculum to ensure equal opportunities in skills development for every citizen in Zimbabwe.

Inclusive, Non-discriminatory Entry Qualifications framework

Harare Polytechnic had adopted Constitutional provisions in the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment No.20 ACT, 2013 and the Disabled Persons Act [Chapter 17:01] to eliminate discrimination based on entry qualifications, disability, language or literacy and numeracy skills to enable ID learners to have equally

access to skills development opportunities in line with Government policy and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs]. This constitutional guidance followed by Harare Polytechnic is in line with section 24[b and c] of the Constitution of Zimbabwe which removes unnecessary restrictions on people from engaging in gainful economic activities and it also guides the development of vocational and training programmes for persons with disabilities. The focus of the vocational skills training is the development of a skill which produces goods and services and therefore unnecessary restrictions on access to training opportunities are not required in line with the constitution and disability legislation.

Addressing barriers, marginalisation and discrimination criteria which prevents ID learners from accessing national training programmes is the foundation of the training methodology that was developed and implemented by Harare Polytechnic. The inclusion policy framework and philosophy does not require academic qualifications as these may not be available in most ID learners. The approach taken by Harare Polytechnic and Special Olympics Zimbabwe was to facilitate medical examinations for learners to understand the various impairment challenges that may impact on training delivery and manage these during the skills development programme. Learners are also deployed to vocational skills in keeping with their medical condition, capabilities and passions. The overall goal of the selection process is to implement an inclusive training agenda which produces a balanced society. Understanding a learner's disability will facilitate differentiated teaching methods and instructional materials needed [Marimuthu,2015]

MODE OF STUDY

Skills development for ID learners by Harare Polytechnic takes many forms which include the following;

- Part time learners will be attended to after hours or during specifically designated and agreed times for working class learners.
- Holiday blocks/weekend blocks/visiting blocks for those in community who may not be able to attend at the institution .Normally some adjustments are made to suit the requirements of the learner/student if the learners are located away from Harare Polytechnic.
- E-learning- although it is still in its infancy, it is sometimes deployed to cater for some learners.

In all the vocational skills training programming, soft skills are taken into account as they are a prerequisite for social, business and employment interactions. These soft skills include communication, conflict management, adaptability, teamwork, personal productivity, professionalism, problem solving, critical thinking, time management, leadership, entrepreneurship, ethics and moral skills and ICT skills.

Duration

All the Harare Polytechnic courses with 90 hrs and above are spread into 3 levels; Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3.

For a learner to progress to the next level he/she must satisfy the requirements of each stage. Learners in most cases progress at different stages in response to their capacity to cope with the learning processes and workload. This training strategy fits well with ID learners who may want to take their time in the programme due to health challenges.

Title and Level of Award

1. Certificate of attendance (participation certificate) in levels. This is a certificate issued to learners/students who would have attended all the hours of the course but no examination is written.
2. Certificate of achievement, certificate of proficiency and certificate of competence is awarded to a candidate who has completed all the three levels and passed the practical components of the

examination which are designed as per the needs of the learner.

Practical oriented method of training which delivers skills, abilities and knowledge

The training methodology is hands on practical oriented throughout to meet constitutional provisions of inclusivity. ID learners are taught the practical knowledge of vocational skills that result in the provision of goods and services. The lecturer/facilitator demonstrates the competencies that should be exhibited by the learner to develop the required skill. The learner is made aware of progress and shortcomings of his/her work and benefits from guidance and counselling that comes with the skills development programme.

Practical demonstration with the involvement and participation of learner/student is another method of training. The interaction and synergies that learners and the lecturer create evolves independently and collaboratively into skills and competencies that produce goods and services.

Interactive-led training method is a training method where learners are expected to interactively engage in the learning processes by taking ownership of the learning process through the creation of a community of learners in which they learn independently and collaboratively in inclusive environments. The lecturer ensures that each learner achieves success through practical support to ensure learners take responsibility for their learning. Lecturers are also expected to give constructive comments to learners to encourage them to succeed. Lecturers are also expected to account for the needs of learners beyond the lecture room to enable learners to understand, adapt and participate in society based on skills learnt in the lecture room/workshop.

The role of the lecturer is that of a methods and materials developer, advocate, process specialist and motivator.

A practical example will be given here to demonstrate the practical oriented training methodology.

Assume you are a lecturer and you are delivering a training course on **Beauty Therapy**, the following practical oriented approaches will be implemented to a group of learners;

- The lecturer will outline practical aspects of personal hygiene and health safety and request students to give feedback on their practical understanding of personal hygiene and health safety.
- The lecturer will identify contraindications to manicure, pedicure and makeup and ask students to give feedback of their understanding of these issues to gauge their knowledge acquisition.
- The lecturer will explain the benefits of manicure, pedicure and wearing make-up and seek students' participation in the process.
- The lecturer will prepare treatment area while students observe so that they are familiar with the procedure when they do it on their own.
- The lecturer prepares a client for treatment and request the students to practice the procedure among themselves
- The lecturer perform manicure, pedicure and make-up treatment and the students are requested to practice the procedure among themselves.

Most vocational skills follow this approach to skills training where the lecturer facilitates skills acquisition in a practical oriented way thereby eliminating barriers to skills acquisition due to discrimination based on lack of numerary and literacy skills which is a key challenge with ID learners. The approach to learning is participatory by students.

The skill development approach used by Harare Polytechnic is in line with the competence-based training and development strategy which focuses on demonstrating ability to perform a task, process or function to a pre-determined standard of performance of a defined skill. Emphasis of the training is the development of a

coherent system of vocational qualifications based on national standards of Technical and Vocational Education and Training [TVET].

Practical methods of continuous assessment of learning [coursework]

Practical assessment of skills acquired is done by the facilitator/lecturer to identify learning gaps experienced by the learners during the training and bridge the gaps in order to produce the intended outcomes. When the lecturer/facilitator ask the learner to create the end product after demonstration, the focus will be on whether the learner had developed the skill required to produce the intended quality of goods or services over a specified period which is subject to continuous review.

Continuous assessment takes the form of peer assessment where learners diagnose their own weaknesses and strengths arising from the goods and services produced for the benefit of the lecturer who must come up with training interventions.

Learner self-assessment

Self-assessment requires learners to judge their own products and services in order to improve performance as they identify discrepancies between current and desired performance. The merits of self-assessment is for the learners to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and to improve from this feedback.

Practical performance based assessment /Examination

This is the final practical assessment on products and services produced by the learner at the end of the training without any assistance from the lecturer. The learner must demonstrate to the facilitator that he/she had acquired skills as a result of training which could solve a real world problem.

Practical based examinations are based on the achievement of prescribed national standards for that level of skill performance. Harare Polytechnic applies the use of continuous practical assessment to the final score of the learner which becomes a key component of the examination.

Proposed strategy of integrating this training methodology with skills development during early childhood development [primary level]

From an educational perspective there is no short cut to integrating the involvement of persons with disabilities in acquiring requisite life changing and supporting skills. Like any other program it is fundamental that the early childhood training and development should build a firm foundation and shock absorbers to be used later in life. It would be prudent, given the various pieces of legislation put in place regarding persons with disability that a wholesome approach be implemented commencing at community level. This would ensure that stigma and discrimination are dispelled and that this category is afforded and accorded their rightful learning space. Creation of resources centers as well as capacitation of teachers/facilitators is key to unlocking full potential in persons with disabilities. Furthermore, curricula development must involve persons with disabilities, government, parents, teachers, industry, churches and other cooperating stakeholders. The good thing about all these is that various pieces of legislations related to persons with disabilities are in place.

There is need for the development of an integrated vocational skills development curriculum which links Early Childhood Development, Primary, Secondary and Technical Colleges as a national strategy of developing critical skills at an early age and to plan the transition in skill development from ECD to Technical colleges in line with the career anchors of learners.

The current Government of Zimbabwe Life-Skills Orientation Programme at Primary and Secondary level

should provide learners with the opportunity to practice specific skills which are expected to define a career path for skills development after school or at tertiary training colleges.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STUDY

The following recommendations are made to relevant stakeholders to facilitate vocational skills development for ID learners which are necessary for the defence of their livelihoods. Vocational skills fit into the category of employ ability skills and entrepreneurial skills which are critical to the sustainable development of the live hoods of ID learners and ID members of communities

- There is no evidence of curriculum modification in Zimbabwe to sustain inclusive training and development which is crucial for the development of vocational skills for sustainable development of ID learners. The case study of Harare Polytechnic has made the case for full inclusion by students with disabilities in the general curriculum for mainstream students with constitutional adaptations to overcome the challenges of ID learners. This approach can be adopted by other technical colleges and the primary and secondary education system to advance the skills development agenda for ID learners.
- The case of Harare Polytechnic emphasises the need to conduct medical examination of learners by qualified government doctors who will give their expert opinion on the career paths chosen by learners before a learner can commence a skills training programme. This requirement is standard practice in both the public and private sector and it is meant to defend the interests of the learners, the learning community, the parents and the institution hosting the training to ensure precautionary measures are put in place before the training.
- It is important for educators to have a coherent understanding of full inclusion and the reasons for its implementation in inclusive settings to be able to operate a successful skills development programme. Understanding constitutional provisions, disability inclusion policy [Disabled Persons Act,17;01] and Zimbabwe's National Development Strategy of 2021 is key to developing curriculum for disabled people in Zimbabwe. The policy frameworks also outlines how the disabled people would be empowered in partnership with government and other stakeholders in society.
- Focus of the education curriculum for ID learners should teach practical oriented subjects, in inclusive settings, which results in the development of a skill or skills. The current Life-Skills Orientation Programme at Primary and Secondary level should provide learners with the opportunity to practice specific skills which are expected to define a career path for skills development after school.
- Lecturers/facilitators must be trained to work with intellectually disabled learners. As Marimuthu [2015] argued, general educators are sometimes given in-service courses for professional development which are inadequate as most of the courses focus on special education and not on inclusive education for diversity.
- Develop a system to facilitate and support inclusive programming for primary, secondary and tertiary institutions based on the principles of inclusion and provide on-going support systems for inclusive practices.
- Inclusive education curriculum should be compulsory as a component of all Teachers Training Colleges, Polytechnics and Vocational Training Centres and all University Faculties to accommodate students with special educational needs. Currently, the education and training environment is now made up of a diversity of learners and educators who need knowledge of inclusive education and training practices.
- Learners with intellectual disability must be empowered with vocational training from upper primary, secondary, post-secondary and higher education. Vocational skills training prepares them for skilled craft-competency or work-competency and promotes inclusivity, sustainable economic growth and social equity by being gainfully employed or self-employed.
- Learners with intellectual disability must learn by watching, imitating, engaging in real world problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration and creativity/innovation

- The results of this research should be publicised so that the ID community could be made aware of the employ ability skills and vocational skills that are being offered by technical colleges and the school systems to defend the livelihoods of the disability community
- There is need to bring employers, communities, churches and civil society groups in the curriculum design of vocational training courses so that the products of the lecture rooms are in line with the expectations of key stakeholders who are expected to benefit from such courses.
- The sustainability of skills development of ID learners is dependent on key stakeholders applying for scholarships to support the training programmes. In the context of this project which is an MOU between Special Olympics and Harare Polytechnic, the two organisations are expected to raise awareness of the skills development facility and apply for scholarships to directly support learners through Harare Polytechnic. Recommended potential partners are Government of Zimbabwe, UNICEF, UNESCO, Global Centre for Inclusion in Education, International Organisations, Non Governmental Organisations and Zimbabwe's private sector. Majority of ID learners/athletes who join Special Olympics are from poor background and they need all the support they can get to defend their livelihood and transform their lives through skills development.
- There is need for the key partners, Harare Polytechnic and Special Olympics Zimbabwe, to establish funding partnerships that support entrepreneurial projects of ID learners which emanate from the skills that they would have acquired at Harare Polytechnic and other national polytechnics. Establishing funding partnerships with the Ministry of Youth, Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training would be key to accessing funding for ID learners' projects. Lobbying Government of Zimbabwe, through the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare would be key to opening employment opportunities for the graduates of polytechnic colleges and other skills development centres scattered in all provinces of Zimbabwe.
- Key training institutions like Harare Polytechnic and Government should lobby employers to take on board ID learners for internship as their contribution to national skills development and the promotion of a non-discriminatory 'working nation'.

CONCLUSION

The study recommends curriculum reform for ID learners to focus on vocational and entrepreneurial skills development, through adaptations provided by the constitution and disability legislation, to advance the values of non-discrimination, equality of employment and entrepreneurship opportunity for all and sustainable development of ID learners' live hoods. The Harare Polytechnic has demonstrated that skills development for ID learners in possible and should be adopted as a national strategy of vocational skills development. The partnership research between Harare Polytechnic and Special Olympics Zimbabwe had produced a universal accessibility framework for skills development of ID learners in Zimbabwe which could be replicated by all technical colleges and the primary and secondary system to create a skilled disability community competent in employ ability skills and entrepreneurial skills for livelihood sustainable development and national transformation and development of the disability sector. The focus of curriculum reform for ID learners should be the development of a skill or skills which produce goods and services for sustainable development.

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