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RESEARCH ARTICLE

EQUIPPING TEACHERS WITH SKILLS AND EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR SUCCESSFUL PROVISION OF SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION IN KAKAMEGA DISTRICT, KENYA

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Abstract

The Government of Kenya in its effort to provide education for all, regardless of ethnicity, gender, family background or physical abilities, initiated Special Units to cater for the educational needs of Children with Special Needs in a less restrictive environment through integration program. The program was to provide appropriate curriculum modification, teaching methods, education resource and learning environment so as to enhance access, retention, completion, transition and creation of awareness for the children with special needs. This paper examines the nature of training and orientation given to teachers in relation to the Special Needs Education, and the types of educational resources available for Special Needs Education based on a study of schools in Kakamega District. The study adopted descriptive survey research design and Psacharopoulos' Production Function Model. The population consisted of 753 Children with Special Needs, 1000 ordinary pupils in class seven, 82 teachers of children with Special Needs and 56 heads of schools. A systematic random sampling technique was used to pick 26 Special Needs Education teachers; 13 head-teachers of schools with Special Units and 300 ordinary pupils. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 13 schools with Special Units while Cluster sampling technique was used to draw 230 Children with Special Needs for the study. For the purpose of data collection, questionnaires were used for teachers and ordinary pupils. Interview schedules were also used to collect data from head-teachers and children with special needs while observation schedule was used to supplement the information received from questionnaires and interview schedules. Qualitative data was received in verbatim, transcribed and put into various categories and then presented in themes. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics e.g. frequency counts and percentages. Data analyzed was presented using tables, pie and bar charts. The findings revealed that most schools lacked necessary teaching-learning resource materials and did not offer orientation and staff development opportunities to SNE teachers. It was concluded that the effectiveness of SNE was hampered by insufficient teaching-learning resource materials and poor staffing. Recommendations made were that teacher training in SNE should be enhanced and that the Special Units should be equipped with relevant and enough teaching-learning resource materials. The research findings would assist the Education management personnel, planners and policy makers to enhance integration program, equip the Special Units and augment orientation and staff development opportunities for SNE teachers.

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Introduction

The role of teachers has long been recognized by several authors as central in the provision of quality education. Notable is the work of Mbiti (1981), who recognizes that the key to the success of a child's education is a teacher. Bishop (1985) maintains that experts may select the objectives and school plans; however, it is the teacher in the class who is key to the provision of quality education and innovation. The author argues that the teacher's skills and attitudes count a great deal more in curriculum renewal than do changes in content and methods. On the same point, Hadad (1985), Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1985) and Hendrikz (1986), all suggest that trained teachers are particularly important in the management of instruction and teacher-centred activities given that most educational institutions in developing countries are lacking text books.

Anderson (1991) underscores the fact that the quality of education provided highly depends on the quality of instruction teachers provide. He further argues that one reason for teacher emphasis is that there is an increasing awareness that teachers have immense power over innovations and changes even in the most highly central system of education. This is also in agreement with the work of Ayodo (2003) who also suggests that the teacher plays a very significant role in determining the quality of education provided. Ayodo further singles out the teacher as the most influential factor after the learning characteristics of the pupil followed by text books. From the reviewed literature, it is apparent that teachers play an important role in the provision of education. The study, that informed this paper, therefore, focused on the training and orientation given to primary school teachers who teach children with special needs, in relation to SNE.

Emphasizing on the importance of teacher training, orientation and development, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA, 2002), points out that pre-service training introduces and inducts the teacher trainee in the teaching profession but in-service makes the teacher professional and enhances his performance. Perraton, Creed and Robinson (2002) further state that in-service training improves teachers' general education background and provides knowledge and skills linked to the ever changing needs of a dynamic society. This is in agreement with the Gachathi Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (Republic of Kenya, 1976), the master plan on education and training 1988-2010 (Republic of Kenya, 1994) as well as in the Koech Report on Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training (Republic of Kenya, 1999), all of which highlight the need for those

already trained to be given a chance to continue with learning and training.

Maundu (1986) has conducted a study on the impact of teacher qualification on pupil achievement in Kiambu district in Kenya using two curricular subjects, using questionnaire for data collection and descriptive statistics for data analysis. The main variables in Maundu's study were teacher qualification and pupil achievement. His findings reveal that teacher's academic qualification has a significant impact on student performance. This paper takes into consideration the training and orientation in SNE given to primary school teachers who teach children with special needs. Maundu's study focused on schools that had adequate resources while the study that informed this paper focused on public primary schools with Special Units from both rural and urban setting, some with meager resources.

According to Career Advice homepage (2006), in the United Kingdom, SNE teachers work with children and young people who have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn or access education than most children of the same age. This could include teaching children with mild to moderate learning difficulties, specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, physical disabilities, hearing or visual impairment, emotional or behavioral problems. The work involves helping pupils to develop their self-confidence, independence, abilities and attitudes, teaching national curriculum subjects, which may have been adapted to pupils' needs, preparing lessons and teaching materials, marking and assessing work, putting up displays in the classroom, liaising with other professionals (such as medical professionals, social workers, speech and language therapists and educational psychologists), speaking to parents and care takers (both in formally and informally), attending meetings and in-service training, organizing outings, social activities and sporting events.

Special education needs teachers work in an ordinary class, a special class, in a mainstream school, or a special school. They teach pupils individually or in small groups and this requires specialized training in SNE hence Initial teacher training (ITT) course include a special needs element. Once one is a qualified and experienced teacher, he/she can take further training in special educational needs. As a special education needs teacher in a mainstream school, one usually undergoes an in-service training organized by his/her local education authority to boost their experience. This may be because students are known to learn more from experienced teachers than they do from less experienced teachers (Rivkin, Hanushek & Kain, 2000). This suggests that teachers with more teaching experience teach in a more

effective way than those who are less experienced. Agwada (2002) has found that the lower the number of experienced teachers in a school the lower the level of pupils' performance. Therefore, this paper aimed at determining the teaching experience of SNE teachers in Kakamega District.

Leslie and Paul (2003), in a review of Good Practice in ICT and SNE in Africa, observe that the first step within the African context appears to be ensuring that children with special education needs are provided with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). These IEPs are to be adapted to the needs of learners, particularly children who are being mainstreamed into the public education system. Leslie and Paul (ibid.) argue that this would require training and orientation of teachers within the public school system and social service providers. The current author therefore sought to find out the training and orientation given to teachers in relation to SNE. The MoE report indicates that teacher training opportunities for Special Education are available at Maseno and Kenyatta Universities for degree courses, diploma and certificate courses are offered at Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE), while in-service courses are offered at the ministry headquarters (RoK, 2004). From the report, it is clear that the teacher training colleges that train the majority of primary school teachers do not offer courses in Special Education yet they are responsible for teaching the bulk of the population of Children with Special Needs. There is need, therefore, to revise the kind of training and orientation given to primary school teachers who teach in Special Units in relation to SNE.

Oriedo (2000) asserts that the needs of children with disabilities cannot be met if most of the teachers do not have at least basic training in SNE. WERK Report (2004) points out that most teachers feel not professionally equipped to handle children with special needs and that they require training to do this. Individualized Education Programmes (IEP) put the interest of the child above those of the educational agency. They require that the education needs of the child be systematically planned and that annual objectives, including short-term objectives, be clearly stated in order to ensure that the child's learning is not haphazard but defined. According to Kirk *et al.* (2000), the central aim of IEP is effective teaching of exceptional children which can be attained if the teachers of children with special needs are trained in SNE. There is need therefore to revise the kind of training given to primary school teachers who handle children with special needs in Special Units.

Educational Resources

Educational resources refer to all factors outside and within the classroom that make teaching and learning experience more effective. They include the human resource and general educational resources (Hiuhu 2002). According to Randiki (2002), the main objective of education is to provide learners with meaningful and productive knowledge, attitudes, skills and experiences. This can be achieved when there is effective stimulation of the learners' senses with the help of human support or human resource through use of appropriate general Educational resources as noted in Kochung's Report (MoE, 2003) that learners with special needs require more materials for their education than their non-disabled peers both at classroom and at individual level.

The general educational resources important to learners with special needs include, among others, projected resources such as films, opaque projectors, overhead projectors and slides; graphic aids such as cartoons, charts, comics, diagrams, flash cards, graphs, maps, photographs, pictures and posters; display boards such as blackboards, flannel boards, magnetic boards and peg boards and models whose work is to demonstrate a process or concept to make it easier for understanding. However, Hiuhu (2002) notes that the value of a good resource is a complete waste unless it is well used. Due to insufficient practical training, many teachers do not recognize the potential of many simple educational resources available at very low cost or how to use them to the fullest, even when they are given. Therefore, this paper seeks to establish the educational resources available in the Special Units and the orientation given to teachers in relation to SNE.

In discussing about innovations in special education, Panda (1997) points out that in Asia, the resource room concept is a promising alternative to placement in self-contained classes or regular classes without support services. Children who attend resource rooms are mildly handicapped. The resource room must be well equipped with a high variety of instructional materials and equipment to facilitate learning for children with different disabilities. It has to be staffed by a highly trained professional resource teacher capable of diagnosing the child, planning and implementing the teaching program, assisting the classroom teachers, providing continuous evaluation of the child and conducting in-service assessment with other educators and the community. Leslie and Paul (2003) observe that in many African countries, there is very low level of infrastructure, low teacher motivation and limited resources even in standard educational institutions. These make most countries struggle to provide for their mainstream schools and special educational needs remain a low priority.

The EFA forum Report (2000) cites the problem of inadequate specialized equipment and instructional materials in all schools such as hearing aids for the deaf, Braille materials and white cane for the visually impaired as well as wheelchairs and crutches for the physically handicapped. Lack of such important facilities hampers the effectiveness of SNE. Similarly, Otube (2004) observes that special schools in Kenya, especially those in the rural areas, have been affected mostly by lack of facilities. The fact that these schools require specialized expensive materials such as Braille machines for the blind, audiometers for the deaf, among others, makes the situation critical since in Kenya most children with disabilities come from poor backgrounds whereby parents are not able to afford. Otube's research employed Ex-post-facto research design which uses secondary data, with a population consisting of only teachers. However, the study that informed this paper employed a descriptive survey design which uses primary data, with a population consisting of Special Unit teachers, heads of schools, children with special needs and ordinary children with an aim of establishing whether the Special Units were provided with educational resources that enhance SNE.

Fuller (1986) suggests that the quality of instructional processes experienced by each pupil determines school quality. He maintains that factors associated with the instructional process, including availability of textbooks, teacher quality, teaching practice, classroom organization, school management and structure, are indicators of quality education. Fuller noted that facility construction and availability are not a major vehicle to quality enhancement but of critical importance is the utilization of such facilities. Mwiria (1985) also supports the idea that students' performance is affected by the quality and quantity of teaching and learning resources. He notes that schools with adequate facilities such as laboratories and text books stand a better chance than poorly equipped schools. While Mwiria and Fuller have focused on the factors that contribute to quality education in regular schools, this paper mainly focuses on finding out about the educational resources available for special needs education in schools with Special Units.

A report by MoE (2004) has indicated that the main challenges relating to access and equality in the provision of education and training of children with special needs include, among others, lack of clear guidelines and support to the implementation of an all inclusion policy, inappropriate infrastructure, inadequate facilities, lack of equipment which make it difficult to integrate Special Education in regular programs and incompetence among teachers in handling children with special needs. Furthermore,

NCNN has reported that in Kenya, lack of facilities, inadequate trained personnel, negative societal attitudes and lack of specific policy guidelines have contributed to poor delivery of special education and related services (RoK, 2001). These challenges pose a problem in the education and training of children with special needs. With such insurmountable challenges facing special education provision, it is necessary to assess the special education program offered by Special Units since they cater for the majority of children with special needs.

Statement of the Problem

According to the MoE policy, special education should provide appropriate modification in curriculum, teaching methods, education resource and learning environment in order to cater for individual differences in learning. The provision of quality education and training to the learners with special needs is done by enhancing access, retention, completion, transition and creation of awareness.

Muuya (2002) affirms that while planning for children with special needs, there is need to think beyond just coping with behavioral difficulties to encouraging spiritual and moral development, creative abilities and personal and social development. Muuya (ibid.) further notes that only a quarter of Kenyan pupils with special educational needs were enrolled in Special Units within mainstream schools in the year 2002, and that despite limited available resources, staffing ratios were as low as eight pupils to one teacher in the Special Units.

The MoE statistics indicate that the enrolment in Special Education Institutions increased significantly from 13,683 in 1999 to 161,825 in 2003 (an increase of over 100%) with integrated primary schools recording the highest enrolment of 128,940 (MoE, 2004).

According to Kakamega District Strategic Plan 2005-2010, the primary school drop-out rate in the District was 26%. The underlying reason was the inability of parents to pay for education and lack of support to continue with education. The Plan further gives the statistics of children in need of special protection in the District as 3,258 by 2002 yet statistics from the District Education Office, Kakamega, reveal that the population in the Special Units increased from 77 in 2001 to approximately 750 in 2003 but again stagnated within 2003-2006 despite the continued new admissions. This implies a possibility of inconsistency, low enrolment or high dropout of children with special needs from schools. The study, therefore, sought to assess the nature of training and orientation given to teachers and the type of educational resources available for the provision of

Special Needs Education in primary schools with Special Units in Kakamega District.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of the study was that pupils were not able to provide exact information because of their level of understanding. However, the author tried to explain the questions in simple language to help them understand. Teachers and head-teachers were also reluctant to give the required information due to suspicion. Nevertheless, the author explained to them the purpose of the study and assured them of confidentiality. In addition, since the study was confined to Special Units attached to regular schools, its findings may not be generalized to all Special schools.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Kakamega District in formerly Western Province, Kenya, which borders Butere-Mumias and Bungoma District to the west, Nandi District to the East, Vihiga District to the South and Lugari District to the North. A descriptive survey design was used in the study. The variables considered for the study centred on the following two factors: Education for All and quality education, and training for pupils with disabilities. These factors comprised the following variables: state of special education, teacher competence in relation to SNE, availability of teaching and learning materials, and right perception about the integration program. For the purpose of the study, descriptive survey research design was employed to enable the author describe the state of Special Units in the education and training of children with special needs.

The population consisted of 753 children with special needs; 1,000 ordinary pupils in class seven, 82 teachers of children with special needs, 56 heads of schools and 56 Special Units. The head-teachers and teachers of the Special Units were used to obtain the information about the challenges facing Special Units, teacher training and orientation, teaching-learning materials, equipment and facilities. The ordinary pupils and children with special needs factored in information on their perception about the integration program.

The author first used purposive sampling technique to get the required sample of the study of 569 respondents from a total population of 1,891. Thereafter, 13 Special Units were selected using stratified random sampling technique. The number drawn from each stratum was based on the proportion of children with special needs within each stratum in the population. Thus using stratified random sampling technique, subjects were selected in such a way that the existing subgroups or stratum in the

population were more or less represented in the sample. In this study, the population strata included, 2 Units for physically challenged, 5 Units for mentally impaired, 2 Units for the visually impaired, 2 Units for the hearing impaired and 2 Units the mentally impaired with cerebral palsy.

Using systematic random sampling, 26 teachers of SNE, 13 Head-teachers and 300 ordinary pupils were selected. Using this technique, the cases in the specific population were assigned numbers and then the k^{th} case in the specific population frame of the study was selected for inclusion in the sample. Cluster sampling was used to select 230 children with special needs who were involved in the study.

Data for the study was collected through questionnaires, interviews and participatory observation. Data collected was received, sorted, edited, and classified according to various categories, coded and tabulated ready for analysis. Qualitative data was received in verbatim, transcribed and organized into themes and sub-themes as they emerged in an ongoing process. Interpretation and reporting was then done depending on the research questions. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, e.g. frequency counts and percentages and finally presented using tables, pie and bar charts. This helped to capture the effectiveness of Special Units in the education and training of children with special needs.

RESULTS

Training and Orientation Given to Special Need Education Teachers in Primary Schools

Special Needs Education Training and Experience

The teachers teaching children with special needs were asked to state whether or not they were trained in SNE, and if so, at what level and for how long they had taught in Special Unit. .

The findings revealed that the majority of teachers (92%) teaching children with special needs were trained in SNE.

In regard to the level the teachers were trained in SNE, responses from 26 respondents were as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Level of Training in SNE

Level Of Training	Participants	Percentage (%)
Certificate	3	12
Diploma	18	69
Degree	0	0
Still undergoing training	5	19
Total	26	100

Source: Primary survey data, 2008

Results in Table 1 reveal that most of the teachers (69%) teaching children with special needs were trained at diploma level in SNE, 19% were still undergoing training, 12% were certificate holders and none had trained at graduate level.

Basing on the results, a majority of the teachers (46%) had teaching experience between 1-5 years, followed by 34% who had experience of between 6-10 years, 12% had teaching experience of one year and below and 8% had experience of between ten and above years.

Orientation in Special Needs Education

The teachers teaching children with special needs were asked whether they were given any kind of orientation in SNE by the school before starting to teach in Special Units. In response to the question, responses from 26 respondents were as presented in Table2.

Table 2: Teacher Orientation in SNE

Responses	Participants	Percentage (%)
Given orientation	11	44
Not given orientation	15	56
Total	26	100

Source: Primary survey data, 2008

Table2reports that 56% of SNE teachers did not receive orientation before starting to teach in Special Units while 44% agreed that they were given some orientation.

Those teachers who stated that they were given some form of orientation before starting to teach in the Special Units cited the following as the kind of orientation given to them; introduced to learners with special needs and their background, shown how to identify and manage children with different disabilities, exposed to the equipment and facilities used by learners with disabilities, taught how to prepare and utilize teaching-learning materials and introduced to the EARC office in the District.

It was revealed from the interview conducted with head teachers that most head teachers did not have knowledge in Special Needs Education; therefore, it became difficult to orient the teachers on the same.

Staff Development Opportunities

The teachers were asked to state whether or not the school provided for them staff development opportunities in SNE, and if so which type of opportunities were provided and whether the

opportunities were beneficial to them in teaching children with special needs.

The results revealed that 67% of the respondents agreed that SNE teachers were not provided with development opportunities while 33% agreed that staff development activities were provided. This is a clear indication that few teachers were provided with staff development opportunities.

Those respondents who were provided with staff development opportunities stated the following as opportunities provided to them; short term courses in SNE through distant learning, seminar and workshops in SNE, training opportunities by KISE and other institutions, sports and games involving learners with special needs, exposure to other schools whose Special Units were well funded hence well-equipped and internally and externally organized In-service courses in SNE.

The teachers who were beneficiaries of staff development opportunities reported to have benefited from the opportunities in the following ways as pertains to Special Needs Education teaching; attained new skills in testing, content delivery, preparation of teaching materials and in identifying and handling learners with special needs. They also received new updates of the latest strategies and approaches in SNE which assisted them to improve the learning resources and also appreciated challenges experienced by other teachers teaching children with special needs.

Educational Resources Available for Special Needs Education

Teaching-Learning Resources used by SNE Teachers

The SNE teachers were asked to mention the teaching-learning resources they commonly used while teaching and whether or not they found the teaching resources provided by their schools relevant for teaching children with special needs.

The results revealed that 55% of the respondents ascertained that the teaching resources provided were not relevant in teaching children with special needs while 45% agreed that they were relevant. This was an indication that the resources provided were to some extent not relevant in teaching children with special needs.

The respondents gave the following as the commonly utilized teaching-learning resources during their teaching sessions: real objects, charts, pictures, schemes of work and lesson plans, flash cards, counters, books, adopted gadgets to make learning real, puzzles/word pictures, building blocks, plasticines, adopted syllabi, sorting tray, jigsaw puzzles, toys, letter-number cards, exercise and text books, resource books, science kit and dictionaries

for all categories of learners, vision aids and brails books for the visually challenged and audiovisual aids and communication board for the hearing impaired.

It was revealed from the observation schedules used in the study that the above-mentioned items were mainly found in schools situated in urban centres and in schools that received funding from donors besides the Government. Schools from the rural areas lacked most of the items and the few that were available were improvised.

Teaching-Learning Materials that are required but are not Available

The respondents were asked to specify any teaching-learning materials that they felt were necessary during teaching but had not been made available to them.

In response to the question of whether there were some teaching-learning materials that were required but had not been available, 26 respondents' opinion was as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3 clearly reveals that 100% of the respondents agree that there were teaching materials required but had not been provided. This is a clear indication that most teaching materials were not provided.

The respondents stated the following as the teaching-learning materials that were required but had not been provided: brail machines, sign language books, manipulative aids, audiovisual aids, well equipped resource room, manipulative wooden blocks, swings and balances, vocational and prevocational teaching materials, and abacus for the physically handicapped learners.

It was further revealed through the observation schedules used in the study that Special Units were not well equipped and most teaching learning materials available were improvised. The interview with head teachers revealed that it was at times impossible to obtain the relevant materials even when funds were available due to their unavailability in the market. They recommended that a specific shop be stocked with all materials required for learners with special needs for easy access.

Classroom Furniture Provided for Pupils with Special Needs

The respondents were asked to give their opinion and recommendations about the role of classroom furniture used by children with special needs in their Units to facilitate learning. In responding to the question of whether the furniture provided for the learners with special needs facilitated learning, responses from 26 respondents were as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Furniture Facilitating Learning

Responses	Participants	Percentage (%)
Furniture facilitates	11	44
Furniture does not facilitate	15	56
Total	26	100

Source: Primary survey data, 2008

Results in table 16 reveal that 56% of the respondents were of the opinion that furniture provided for learners with special needs did not facilitate learning while 44% of the respondents agreed that furniture provided facilitated learning. This clearly revealed that the furniture provided in Special Units was not suitable for use by learners with special needs.

The respondents listed the following as the type of furniture provided for the children with special needs: ordinary desks in majority of schools, ordinary and adopted seats, cupboards for keeping books, adopted chairs and tables, horse shoe desks and chairs and U-shaped tables and stools.

The respondents with opinion that furniture did not facilitate learning gave the following recommendations, that there was need to provide special furniture that fits various disabilities, e.g. adopted tables and chairs that are suitable for different ages and disabilities, support chairs for children with cerebral palsy and low wide tables that can accommodate large objects used during learning.

It was revealed from observation schedule that most schools apart from a few located in urban areas and those with external funding besides the government used ordinary furniture which made learning difficult for learners with special needs.

Classrooms Available for Pupils with Special Needs

The respondents were asked about the type of classrooms used by children with special needs. According to table 5 (67%) of the respondents were of the opinion that the classrooms used were not suitable for learners with special needs while 33% were of the opinion that the classrooms were suitable for use by learners with special needs. The results indicated that the classrooms provided for Special Units in most schools were not suitable for use by learners with special needs.

Those respondents who felt that classrooms available were suitable for use by learners with special needs said the rooms were barrier free thus enabled free movement of learners; were standard, well ventilated, well-furnished and spacious.

The respondents who felt that the classrooms provided for Special Units were unsuitable for use by learners with special needs gave the following recommendations on classrooms for learners with special needs: the architectural plan to be suitable for children with disabilities, e.g. for the physically challenged, the room should have big doors and ramps where wheelchairs can go through, classrooms for the visually challenged to have wide windows to allow sufficient light and also be made of sound proof materials so that sound from without does not interfere with their learning since their learning depends on their teachers sound and all Special Unit rooms be well ventilated, have enough working space and be equipped with relevant resources and facilities for use by learners with special needs, e.g. disability friendly toilets.

It was revealed through observation schedule used in the study that some classrooms used by learners with special needs in schools in the rural setting were semi-permanent; made out of mud, had roofs that leaked during rainy season and had no window panes.

DISCUSSION

The study findings in regard to teacher experience and training showed that a majority of teachers in the Special Unit had a teaching experience of more than one year and were trained in special needs education at diploma level; therefore, they were well experienced, and professionally qualified in teaching children with special needs. These findings are consistent with the research findings of other researchers like Bishop (1985), who argues that teacher's skills and attitudes count a great deal more in curriculum renewal than do changes in content and methods. Hadad (1985), Psacharapoulos and Woodland (1985) and Hendrikz (1986), all underscore the same by suggesting that trained teachers were particularly important in the management of instruction and teacher-centred activities, while Oriedo (2000) asserts that the needs of children with disabilities could be met if most teachers had at least basic training in SNE.

The study findings on teacher orientation and provision of staff development opportunities showed that most teachers were neither given orientation nor staff development opportunities in special needs education. However, these findings are not in agreement with Special Needs Education teacher learn-direct career advice (2006) recommendation that a special educational needs teacher in a mainstream school once qualified and experienced, should take further training in special needs educational and undergo special orientation and in-service arranged by his/her local education authority. There is therefore need to regularly in-service SNE

teachers and provide orientation and staff development opportunities for them. As suggested by head teachers, those going for training in SNE should be vetted by their head teachers to avoid the tendency of looking for special allowance and promotion at the expense of teaching children with special needs.

The findings on the Educational resources provided by schools and their relevance in teaching children with special needs revealed that schools provided basic resources though some were not relevant in teaching the specified category of the disability in the Unit. The schools most affected by lack of facilities were mainly from the rural setting. This might have been due to the low regard the rural society has for people with special needs hence, treating them as lesser human beings. It might also have been due to inadequate sensitization of the rural population about people with special needs. Those schools which had funding besides the Government grants were highly equipped. This concurred with the findings by Otube (2004), that special schools in Kenya, especially those in the rural areas, are affected mostly by lack of facilities since in Kenya most children with disabilities come from poor backgrounds where parents are unable to afford to pay.

Likewise, the EFA Report (2000) underscores the problem of inadequate specialized equipment and instructional materials in all schools as a cause of ineffectiveness of SNE. It was noted that schools' infrastructure and physical facilities that are required to enhance learning for learners with special needs were lacking. Physical barriers included, among others, ordinary furniture used by learners with cerebral palsy and doors that are too narrow for wheel chairs, steps/stairs leading to buildings instead of ramps, narrow toilets without free space to turn that were used by learners that are physically challenged. The architectural plan for the school buildings did not take into consideration needs of children with special needs. These barriers resulted in discrimination and isolation leading to frustration and dependency of pupils with disabilities. This is as opposed to the views by Mwiria (1985) who notes that schools with adequate infrastructure and facilities stand a better chance of offering education better than poorly equipped schools.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the study findings and discussion held in this paper, it is clear that teachers teaching children with special needs have adequate training and experience in SNE despite the fact that most schools do not give sufficient orientation and staff development opportunities after training. It is also noted that head teachers lack the requisite knowledge on SNE, thus being the probable reason they did not orient the staff

nor provide staff development opportunities. Moreover, the Special Units do not have relevant teaching and learning resources in SNE due to inadequate funding.

Based on the study findings, it is recommended that the training of teachers in SNE should be enhanced to cater for the increased numbers of children with special needs. In addition, all the head teachers and the regular teachers in primary schools should be in-serviced in SNE so as to attend to the children with special needs effectively. Moreover, schools with Special Units should be equipped with enough and relevant teaching and learning materials for SNE. The government should also increase its funding for schools with Special Units and involve experts in SNE in acquiring educational resources.

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