Inclusive Education at Primary School: A Case Study of One Primary School in Glen View/Mufakose Education District in Harare, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

There have been different attempts to make education inclusive in Zimbabwe. Such attempts have been guided by the medico-psychological perspective. The paper focuses on steps that have been taken by the Government of Zimbabwe to make education inclusive. The paper starts by defining inclusion in education. The study examines one primary school which is on the pilot programme of the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture and the Leonard Cheshire Zimbabwe Trust in Harare. The study uses the qualitative methodology and the case study design. Data is collected through the use of group discussions at workshops attended by the researcher and observations made during visits to the school. The school is purposively selected. The paper examines the different categories of students that are intended beneficiaries of the inclusive education model. These are students with learning disabilities, visual impairment, hearing impairment, the gifted students, intellectual challenges, behaviour problems and physical disabilities among other disabilities. It also examines the attitudes and perceptions of peers, teachers and parents. All these observations are made in relation to Zimbabwe Government policy on education, and the policy on inclusive education in particular and the United Nations Conventions on education and inclusive education. In the end, the study identifies areas of success and challenges experienced in the implementation of inclusive education at primary school in Zimbabwe, so as to suggest the way forward.

Keywords: *Inclusive education, impairment, learning disabilities, inclusivity.*

1.   Introduction and Background

Equity and equality in education have become major components of modern day education. It is within the context of the two concepts that we now talk of different models of education. Such models have led to calls for education for all (EFA) which have resulted in different countries adopting policies and legislation for EFA. It is within the context of such calls that we now examine the policies and practices of inclusive education in Zimbabwe. The paper aims at examining legislation on education in general and inclusive education in particular, planned inclusion, and policies and practices on inclusion in schools, colleges and universities. As it interrogates the different policies and practices it focuses on attempts that have been made to help disadvantaged students reach their full potential. The focus of inclusive education should be helping students with disabilities acquire relevant skills that they can use in and outside the school.

The issue of equality and inclusion has been on the international agenda for a number of decades now. This has been demonstrated by the different frameworks for action in order to address the different forms of inequality and disparities in education. Such inequalities are based on gender, race, religion, physical disabilities and ethnic background. UNESCO, Salamanca Framework of Action, Article 3 states that schools and the education system as a whole, "Should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional, social, linguistic or other conditions". In addition to that, that the UNESCO, Dakar Framework of Action (2000) noted that "In order to attract and retain children from marginalized and excluded groups, education systems should respond flexibly…Education systems must be inclusive, actively seeking out children who are not enrolled, and responding flexibly to the circumstances and needs of all learners".

From the different frameworks of action noted above, there are a number of key issues that stand out about inclusive education. First, it is important to note that inclusive education has to carter for disparities that can arise from the different circumstances that learners find themselves in. It is also important to note that inclusion should not be restricted to children as the framework of action appeared to suggest. Education is a lifelong process and as such it is pertinent that we examine inclusive education across the board. It should therefore be from early childhood to tertiary level. The second point noted is that it is not enough to attract students with disability in different areas, but it is important that we are able to keep the students within the system. In that regard there should be effort to attract those that have not joined formal schooling. The third aspect that is also worth considering is the issue of flexibility. Flexibility in necessary as it allows us to move away from the rigidity of mainstream education system.

Concerns about inequalities and disparities in education have also been demonstrated in other countries such as the Republic of South Africa. Two years after gaining freedom and democracy, the government of the Republic of South Africa set up teams that were to investigate the state of education in the country. These were the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and the National Committee on Education Support Services. The two committees presented the final draft to the Minister of Education end of 1997 and in February 1998 the final report was published. As a result of the report and recommendations, the Department of Education adopted a new policy in education and inclusive education. The new policy was adopted in July 2001. The policy was called: Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System. According to the Department of Education (2002) the policy gave the following guidelines on inclusive education:

> ➢ Giving all people protection of rights and fair treatment;
> ➢ Providing opportunities for all learners to fully and equally participate in education and development in society;
> ➢ Providing opportunities for equal access to a single, inclusive education system;
> ➢ Ensuring that all learners can understand and participate meaningfully in the teaching and learning processes in schools;
> ➢ Addressing and correcting inequalities of the past;
> ➢ Community involvement in changing the education system;
> ➢ Making education affordable;

All these guidelines were meant to meet the main goal of building an inclusive education and training system that provides for all learners over the next twenty years (ibid).

In an attempt to achieve the above stated goal, the policy and the Department of Education in the Republic of South Africa had to deal with barriers to learning. These included as noted by the Department of Education (2002) the following:

> ➢ Specific kinds of physical, intellectual or sensory disabilities that make learning difficult;
> ➢ The attitudes and teaching approaches of different educators;
> ➢ Parts of the curriculum that make learning difficult;
> ➢ Physical and emotional conditions;
> ➢ Conditions at home ;
> ➢ Community and social conditions.

If we are to address the barriers that retard teaching and learning, we should have a holistic approach to addressing these problems. Such a holistic approach calls for flexible measures in the curriculum, training of teachers in the different special needs areas, provision of material and requisite human resources and providing accessibility to all learners. Accessibility has to address both the physical barriers and the economic barriers. It would not help much to put the physical structures in place that cater for all learners, but at the same time coming up with fee structures that most of the learners could not afford to pay. That becomes discrimination on economic backgrounds.

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In view of the noted policy above, the paper examines policies in Zimbabwe on education in general and inclusive education in particular. The advent of independence in Zimbabwe in 1980, brought with it policy changes and reforms in many areas. Education was one such area. The government policy on education promoted growth with equity (Zvobgo 1997). As such there was a corresponding increase in the number of schools and enrolment. Later in 1987, the Zimbabwe government passed a new education act, the 1987 Education Act.

The Act stipulated, among other things, that every child in Zimbabwe should have the right to school education. It also declared that education would be compulsory and free at primary school in Zimbabwe. It further placed education in the category of human rights and viewed it as a vehicle for social transformation (Government of Zimbabwe, 1987).However, there was an amendment to the 1987 Education Act in 1991. The Amendment reintroduced school fees at primary school, and classified schools as either Government or non-Government (Government of Zimbabwe, 1991).Statutory instruments to support the amendment were put in place. These included Education Statutory Instruments 87 of 1992 and 70 of 1993. The education act was further amended in the years 1991 and 2006. In all cases, thus the 1987 Education Act and the amendments of 1991 and 2006 there were no provisions and sections specifically addressing the issue of inclusive education. However, it is suffice to note that the Education Act, like was the case with South Africa focused on addressing issues of inequality and discrimination. The implication therefore was that within that context, special needs education had to be provided for. On the other hand there were no clear guidelines to assist the disadvantaged children in terms of disability and accessibility

As noted above Zimbabwe does not have specific legislation to deal with inclusive education (Mpofu, 2004).However, it should be noted that within the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture there is a department that is responsible for working with schools to support children with disabilities and special needs. This is the Zimbabwe Psychological Services and Special Education which is found at every Education District in Zimbabwe. However, policy statements and mission statement of the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture demonstrated the Zimbabwe government's intentions in providing inclusive education. The mission statement of the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture is stated as: ***To promote and facilitate the provision of high quality, inclusive and relevant Early Childhood Development (ECD), Primary and Secondary Education, Special Education, Life Long and Continuing Education, Sport, Arts and Culture*** (http://www.moesac.gov.zw/index.php/departments).
The mission statement of the ministry makes reference to inclusive education and Special Education.
The role of the Psychological Services and Special Education department included the following:
  ➢ Supporting schools in their inclusive education practices;
  ➢ Providing guidance and counseling services to learners exposed to any form of abuse;
  ➢ Identifying pupils with disabilities;
  ➢ Assessing the disability levels and make the necessary recommendations;
  ➢ Placing pupils with disabilities in schools.

Taking the different steps as enunciated above demonstrates the Zimbabwe government's concern for people with Disabilities. However, despite all these efforts Zimbabwe has not signed or ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (http://www.sightsavers.org/our work/around the world/southern Africa/zimbabwe/15053.html).

Speaking at the launch of the Inclusive Education Teacher's Handbook on 15 September 2011 the Minister of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture, David Coltart acknowledged the role and vision of such organizations as the Leonard Cheshire Zimbabwe Trust in promoting inclusive education. He noted that as a matter of policy the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture supported the vision that children with disabilities and able-bodied should learn together. Furthermore, in his speech the minister noted some of the limitations to providing inclusive education in schools in Zimbabwe. These included

inadequate resources, attitudes of families, communities and teachers, the problem of many children with disabilities who have not been enrolled and high teacher to pupil ratio in public schools.

Despite the lack of legislation on inclusive education in Zimbabwe there are policies and policy statements which appear to make clear the position of the Zimbabwe government as regards inclusive education. To demonstrate its commitment to inclusive education, the government of Zimbabwe launched the Inclusive Education Policy in 2010. The focus of the policy was that children with disabilities were to be accommodated in the same schools as their able-bodied counterparts (The Herald, 2010). The Inclusive Education for All campaign was initiated by the Leonard Cheshire Zimbabwe Trust and was meant to benefit 1000 disabled children from government schools. It was noted that the Trust would assist in the training of teachers in inclusive teaching methods; develop teaching materials; improve infrastructure; and embark on awareness campaigns (ibid).

Statement of the Problem
The different efforts at government level in terms of providing policy frameworks and legislation to guide the implementation of inclusive education in schools demonstrate that inclusive education has become a major issue in our endeavor to provide education for all. Little has been said about the implementation of inclusive education at school level. The study makes an effort to find out what is happening at school level as regards the implementation of inclusive education at primary schools in Zimbabwe. The statement of the problem is expressed in question form: How is inclusive education implemented in primary schools in Zimbabwe?

Purpose of the study
There are different policies that have been put in place to promote inclusive education in Zimbabwe. These have included an integrated approach to teaching and learning of students with disabilities and special needs. It is imperative that we match the will power demonstrated in the launch of Inclusive Education for All with practice. It was therefore imperative that we gauge the extent to which we have gone in implementing inclusive education in primary schools in Zimbabwe. The purpose of the study was therefore to assess the implementation of inclusive education in Zimbabwean primary schools.

Theoretical Perspectives
The different approaches to a large extent influence the way we view disability and as such the way we perceive inclusive education. The concept inclusive education can be embedded in different contexts that could be political, social, psychological and educational (Thomas & Loxley, 2001). Regardless of the context we perceive education and inclusive education in particular, it is significant that we develop an understanding that helps both the disabled and the non-disabled in the integration and inclusion process. There have been attempts to focus on integration rather than inclusivity. Integration has received its fair share of criticism. It has been criticized for not considering the quality placement of pupils in schools and was therefore narrow in scope; integration was more concerned with assimilation and accommodation without considering the voice of the affected. As such, it became an attempt to co-opt the disabled into mainstream education system. As noted by Barton (1998) integration was also criticized for at least two reasons. First it was criticized for support of normalisation with the emphasis being enabling the individual to fit into society. Secondly, it was blamed for continued support for the promotion and provision of segregated special education.

There are many factors that integrated education failed to address which were expected to be addressed by inclusive education. Such factors included the need to change the physical structures, the curriculum, teaching approaches, leadership and management styles and roles. In the same vain inclusive education entails the following as noted by Barton (1998):
- Participation by all pupils;
- Elimination of exclusionary practices within schools and the education system as a whole;
- Should respond to diversity;

- ➢ Empowering all pupils;
- ➢ Tolerance and appreciation of one another;
- ➢ Listening and openness;
- ➢ Elimination of marginalization of disabled pupils;
- ➢ Improvement of learning and relationship.

The above factors show clearly the major aims of inclusive education. It is clear that the issues at stake here have much do with equality, human rights, creation of a conducive climate for learning for all pupils regardless of whether they have a disability or not, democratization of the education system, equitable distribution of resources and efficient management in all institutions of learning.

We will focus on two contributions in the area of inclusive education. These are contributions by Slee (1998) and Soder (1989). Their views and approaches appear to converge as they both refer to essential perspectives (Slee, 1998) and the medical perspective (Soder, 1989). An attempt to explain the perspectives shows that the two mean the same in interpretation. These are at times referred to as medico-psychological model (Clough & Corbett, 2000). It is important at this stage to take note of what the approach/model involves. The model is premised on the belief that there should be some understanding between the doctor and the patient in an endeavour to prioritize health "as an integral indicator of the completeness of physical, social, and psychological well-being" (Mackenzie & Macleod, 2012). As such it derives the handling of inclusive education strategies from the notion that it is the disability experts that should be involved in the management of disability (ibid).

It can therefore be argued that the identification and placement of children with disabilities in Zimbabwe is primarily based on the medico-psychological model. This results in the diagnosis of the problem and the placement of pupils in respective schools with the assistance of the department of Schools Psychological Services and Special Needs.

There are number of approaches and models that can be used to guide our perceptions and practices in inclusive education. These include the epidemiological approach, the adaptability approach, the social constructivinist approach, materialist perspectives, post- modern perspectives (Soder, 1989; Slee, 1998). We shall not go into details about each of the approaches and perspectives. We focus on the post-modern perspectives as a response to the materialistic perspective. Where the materialistic perspective views disability as a form of exclusion created by economic conditions, the post-modern perspectives see otherwise. If we were to focus on the materialistic perspective it would be impossible to address issues of inequality caused by societal perceptions of disability until we address economic factors. Whist this might be true in some sense, it may not equally apply where the goal is to have an egalitarian society where opportunities are open to all and the state has a social responsibility to provide opportunities for all. The post-modern perspectives advocates for the removal of groups and categorization of the disabled as this could encourage a particular mindset about how we view disability (Young, 1990). It is on the premise of the view as postulated by Young and others that we find the idea and practice of inclusive education workable and applicable.

Inclusive education has generated a lot of discourse and research interest. Save the Children UK (2000: 2002) in its studies of the implementation of inclusive education in developing countries such as Somalia, Mongolia, Peru, Brazil and Vietnam among others came up with a number of observations about the implementation of inclusive education. It observed that for inclusive education to serve its intended purpose there was need to restructure the culture, policies and practices so that they are in line with the demands and requirements of inclusive education. Such requirements include the realization that all children should be provided with opportunity to learn, that differences among children should be respected regardless of gender, colour, ethnicity, creed or disability and the need to revise the methodologies used in the delivery of education.

Furthermore, Save the Children UK (2000) identified two major problems that negatively impacted on the implementation of inclusive education. Firstly, the problem had much to do with attitudes of discrimination. Such attitudes viewed the child as the problem; as such a child was perceived to be different from others and cannot learn, needing special equipment and special teachers. Secondly, the education system was seen as problematic. It continued to employ rigid methods of teaching, rigid curriculum, lack of support, lack of parental involvement, lack of resources, poor training of teachers, teachers' attitudes and inaccessible environments (ibid).

In view of the above Save the Children UK (2002) came up with a model for inclusive education. The model has improvement of schooling for all at the centre. It identifies other factors that have to be satisfied in the endeavour to improve schooling for all. These include:
  ➢ Child-centred curriculum;
  ➢ Flexible methods of teaching;
  ➢ Participation of all children;
  ➢ Support for teachers and schools;
  ➢ Access for all children;
  ➢ Involving parents and communities;
  ➢ Adapting physical environment to child's needs;
  ➢ Alternative methods of training;
  ➢ Teachers' attitudes (ibid).

Whilst the model cannot be exhaustive, what is incumbent is that it provides a guide as to the indicators of inclusivity in our schools. As such, when we assess for inclusivity in education we should be guided by the presence or absence of some of the identified variables. It is important to note that some of the variables are easy to measure; the same cannot be said about such factors as attitude. Other indicators of inclusivity in education are the extent and level of participation of the community in the learning of their children. Participation should not be peripheral, but should be on key decisions in learning and school governance issues. On the other hand such variables as attitude, the level of tolerance of diversity by peers, teachers and parents, the physical and social environment are all key indicators of inclusive education.

Apart from the common problem of trying to provide resources for children with different forms of disabilities, there is the problem of identifying children with disabilities. What makes it difficult is that disabilities are at time created by society. The same society attaches some stigma to children's impairment. It is therefore the duty of the same society to enable the students so that they can function fully in the same society. At the same time, parents may live in denial for too long because of the stigma attached to some disabilities. Such denial is further compounded by cultural beliefs and practices. In Zimbabwe the process of identifying children with disabilities start at birth. Mothers attend baby clinics which help to identify growth and development of babies. Other forms of impairment can be identified at home and at school.

What is the philosophy guiding the implementation of inclusive education in Zimbabwe? There are two possible explanations to this. First, inclusive education can be viewed as an empowering strategy. By creating and providing resources to all regardless of ability, the government is making an attempt to harness all the potential and skill in the country for the development of the country. Such contribution from all citizens promotes the country's development as there is maximum utilization of the human capital at its disposal. Secondly, in line with the above mentioned is the concept of equality of opportunity. The concept of "equality of opportunity" focuses on the provision of educational resources to all regardless of the level of ability. It is premised on the understanding that the state has an obligation to create conditions and opportunities for citizens to fully develop their skills without hindrance emanating from different forms of discrimination. In that regard, equality of opportunity is the essence of democracy and a tenet of creating an egalitarian society.

2.   Research Design and Methodology

The study was guided by the qualitative research methodology and the case study design. Data was collected through observations made at the school. This was during a three day work-shop conducted at the school. The observations focused mainly on the physical environment of the school. The workshop was held on 19 February 2013 to 21 February 2013, in Harare. The name of the school is not revealed for ethical reasons. I became a participant in the workshop. This enabled me to make an observation of the different indicators of inclusive education at the school. I also collected data through the different group discussions with the workshop participants. There were forty participants in the workshop. These were teachers from different primary schools in the Glen View/Mufakose Education District Harare, Zimbabwe. They were sharing experiences on inclusive education at their schools. The workshop was on children with Disabilities. The workshop was organised by the Schools Psychological Services, a department of the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture. In the group discussions participants were asked to make an observation of the physical environment of the school hosting the workshop. They discussed different ways of identifying pupils with different forms of disabilities and the problems encountered at their schools. Whilst participants shared experiences on what they were doing at their respective schools, the main concern was on this primary school as it was on the pilot programme of the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture and the Leonard Cheshire Zimbabwe Trust in Harare. In that respect the school was conveniently and purposively selected.

3   Data Discussion

As noted earlier the collection of data involved the observation of the school physical environment. This involved the participants inspecting the school facilities. The main purpose of inspecting the school facilities was to establish the extent to which the school complied with inclusive education standards. It was observed that the school had 98 pupils with different forms of impairment and disabilities. The total pupil enrolment at the school was over one thousand. The following categories of pupils we found at the school: pupils with hearing impairment; intellectual challenges; visual impairment; behaviour disorders and physical disabilities. Further to that, the participants discussed some of the methods that could be used to identify pupils with different forms of impairment and disabilities within the school set up. It emerged that methods differed depending on the form of disability. Under hearing impairment the participants noted that the following can assist teachers and parents to identify children with disabilities and related problems:

> ➢ Affected children cannot make sense of the received sound;
> ➢ Such children have problems responding to verbal stimuli;
> ➢ May fail to follow instructions;
> ➢ May shout when they speak;
> ➢ When there is loud noise such children do not startle.

As for those with visual impairment participants took note of the following problems among pupils:

> ➢ They have problems identifying bright colours;
> ➢ They have oscillate eyes;
> ➢ They have problems finishing given work; this could be written work or reading.
> ➢ They have problems with locating small objects;
> ➢ Have problems following demonstrations.

Participants also identified characteristics associated with behaviour disorders. These included the following:

> ➢ That they are hyper-active;
> ➢ Can demonstrate aggressive behaviour;
> ➢ Can be depressed and unhappy;
> ➢ May be isolated.

The other category discussed were children with physical disabilities. Major characteristics of such children that the teachers have to take note of were identified as follows:

➢ They have poor fine motor skills;
➢ The co-ordination of the hand and finger is poor;
➢ They have problems with drawing and writing;
➢ They have problems picking small objects.

As noted earlier these are some of the contributions that came from the four groups that were formed at the workshop. The responses on how to identify pupils with disabilities problems demonstrated at least two issues. First, it could be noted that the participants as teachers were quite aware of the characteristics to identify in order to help pupils. Such knowledge could be based on the training that they received at college and consolidated by in-service workshops. As reported in one case the Leonard Cheshire Zimbabwe Trust was assisting with the training and staff development of teachers in that regard.

There are different interventions that are expected to ameliorate the problems associated with different forms of disabilities. Such interventions may include medical interventions, therapeutic interventions, technical interventions, and educational interventions. Some disabilities can call for a combination of these cocktail of interventions at the same time. All these are important in order to empower the affected individual. Since our focus is on inclusive education, the implication is that our focus should be on educational interventions. As noted earlier, each intervention should be related to the nature of the disability. This involves taking cognizance of the special needs of children with disabilities. Such special needs include assistive devices such as hearing aids, Braille, computers, wheel chairs, specialist teachers, and other related equipment. In addition to the provision of all these, educational intervention should be able to provide ambulation training for those with physical disabilities. Education should also aim at developing self-help skills to make the individual self-reliant and employable. There is also need to revise the curriculum. Such revision of curriculum should cater for the provision of individual instruction. In that regard, such issues like teacher pupil ratio come into play. In an inclusive set up, the teacher should be able to provide individual instruction without disadvantaging the rest of the class. Such educational interventions should be able to increase the individual's productivity, independence and participation in school activities and society as a whole.

When one takes into consideration the different variables and indicators of inclusive education, it became easier for the researcher to assess the level of inclusivity of the education provided at the school studied. It is also important to note the significance of involving and having all citizens participate in the development of the country. The Zimbabwe government to demonstrate its concern for all citizens and persons with disabilities has included the rights of persons with disabilities in the new constitution. A summary of the draft constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe of 2013 notes that persons with disabilities now have these additional rights in the new constitution:

➢ That they should be enabled to become self-sufficient;

➢ That they should be enabled to leave with their families and participate in social, creative and recreational activities;

➢ That they be protected from exploitation and abuse;

➢ That they should be given access to medical, psychological and functional treatment (The Sunday Mail, March 3-9, 2013).

The additional rights as noted above give recognition to the role of educational intervention as a strategy to promote inclusivity at school and society as a whole. The above takes cognizance of the role that families have to play in order for persons with disabilities to become self-sufficient.

In view of the above, participants were asked to observe the physical environment to assess the extent to which it accommodated pupils with various disabilities. A number of observations were made. The sign post at the school entrance clearly pronounced that the school was an inclusive education school and it was being supported by the Leonard Cheshire in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture. The school plan and buildings originally had no provision for pupils with disabilities. However, it was noted that there were improvements right from the school administration office, classrooms and toilets. All these structures were observed to have ramps instead of steps. This is a clear indication of the physical changes and improvements that had to be undertaken to accommodate pupils with disabilities at the school.

The participants also took note of the social environment at the school. The interaction between pupils as they conducted their day today activities was described as tolerant, friendly, respectful, caring, polite, accommodative and conducive to learning. These are some of the words used by the participants as they interacted with different pupils and teachers at the school. Some of participants observed pupils with disabilities playing with those that had no disabilities. It was observed and reported that children without disabilities mixed well with those with disabilities, for example at assembly. It was also reported that all pupils were learning the sign language and could all sing the national anthem in sign language.

In the discussion groups, participants were asked to assess the attitudes of teachers, parents and other pupils towards children with disabilities. Most groups noted that whilst there were positive changes in their schools, much depended on the form of disability. It was noted that for the school under study the attitudes had changed very much. This came about as a result of counseling sessions between teachers and parents, and the training of teachers. However, responses from other groups that were not in the pilot scheme but were making attempts to have inclusive education at their schools showed that the change of attitude was to a large extent influenced by severity of the disability. They noted that for physical disabilities that were mild and moderate attitudes had changed for the better, whereas for severe and profound disabilities the attitudes had not changed that much.

Apart from the challenges related to the attitudes of peers, parents and teachers, there were problems related to teacher-pupil ratio. It was noted that teachers are already overloaded, because of that being given pupils with special needs in education makes them resentful at times. This appeared to support concerns expressed by the Minister of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture at the launch of the Inclusive Education Teacher's Handbook on 15 September 2011. Whilst the official teacher-pupil ratio at primary school in Zimbabwe is one teacher to forty pupils, in practice some schools have teachers with classes of well over fifty pupils. If such a problem is ignored the essence of inclusive education may be defeated as such children may be neglected.

Another problem noted as the school was lack of resources. These included both material and human resources. Whilst there were attempts to provide such equipment as wheel chairs, Braille, computers, furniture among others in some instances they were found to be inadequate. This was attributed to weak financial support from parents.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study made the following conclusions and recommendations about inclusive education at the school. This is a case from which we can learn to improve our strategies for inclusive education. Whilst the study did not focus much on other schools that were not on the pilot program, from the discussions it could be noted that there was a marked difference between the school on the pilot program and those that were not. It could be concluded that inclusive education can be a reality if there is support from the government, the community and teachers. The case of this school can be described as a success story. The school has addressed the main indicators of inclusivity. The training of teachers through teachers' colleges for example the United College of Education in Special Needs Education has helped ameliorate the

availability of teachers in special needs education. Collaboration between Leonard Cheshire Zimbabwe Trust, and the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture has helped in staff-developing teachers. We therefore note that the success of such programs and education policies cannot be left to government alone. There is need for partnership between governments, Non-governmental organizations and the corporate world.

In view of the observations above I make the following recommendations:

- ➢ The model of inclusive education at the school is worthy introducing in all schools in Zimbabwe, without the need for schools to apply to be granted authority to be inclusive. All schools should be inclusive in every respect.

- ➢ The government should train more teachers in Special Needs education.

- ➢ There is need to address the issue of teacher-pupil ratio. Teacher overload may result in them neglecting pupils with disabilities.

- ➢ There is need for a psychologist or counsellor at every school, to provide counselling to parents and teachers. It was noted that some the problems that children with disabilities experienced were very much related to parents living in denial for a long time and at times cultural practices.

- ➢ There should be a collaborative approach in staff-developing teachers in the area of Special Needs Education.

- ➢ There should be an improvement in the provision of resources to support inclusive education. There should be an improvement in accessing technology by teachers and pupils. Inclusive education should be everyone's responsibility. Organizations and companies that support and provide resources for inclusive education should be granted special tax rebates.

- ➢ There is need to create a resource unit within school clusters to cater for special needs education.

- ➢ There is also need to be clear on which cases need medical intervention and which ones require educational intervention. This calls for a tripartite arrangement between the parent, school and clinic.

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