Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre, University College London

Research Report: Summary

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Teacher Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) on educating girls with disabilities in the Lakes Region, Kenya.

Introduction

It is estimated that around 93 million children (approximately 5.1% of all children) live with a 'moderate or severe' disability (WHO/World Bank, 2011). Children with disabilities are one of the most marginalised and socially excluded groups of all children, regularly facing discrimination and negative attitudes that impede their ability to access education. Children with disabilities are less likely to attend school, and girls with disabilities are even more likely to not attend school (UIS/UNICEF 2015).

The achievement of universal primary education is one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs; UN, 2000). However, it has been argued that without the inclusion of children with disabilities, it will not be possible to achieve universal primary education (UNDESA, 2011; UIS/UNICEF 2015).

Article 28 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC; UN, 1989) recognises the right to education for all children. Article 23 of the CRC and Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD; UN, 2006) guarantee the right to education for children with disabilities. Further to guaranteeing the right to education, the CRPD demands that States ensure 'an inclusive education system at all levels'. However, the CRPD does not define what inclusive education is, which has led to a variety of interpretations and different systems of implementation.

In Kenya, inclusive education is increasingly being promoted through the government (Parliament of Kenya, 2007), though as yet there is no specific policy or agreement on what inclusive education means. Children with disabilities may be placed in mainstream ('inclusive') classes, in resource units in mainstream schools or, more typically, in 'special' segregated schools. While overall enrolment in primary education is increasing in Kenya, the number of children with disabilities (and girls with disabilities in particular) accessing primary education remains low. However, the precise numbers are not known due to weak reporting systems, and a lack of clarity about definitions of disability and assessment of impairments. It is also the case that girls with disabilities

seem to drop out of education at an increased rate, although the precise reasons for this are unclear.

In order to address these issues, Leonard Cheshire Disability (LCD) received funding from the UK Department for International Development Girls' Education Challenge fund to implement an Inclusive Education (IE) programme aimed at addressing barriers to education – including gender barriers – and ensuring that over 2,000 girls with disabilities in 50 primary schools in the Lake Region, Western Kenya, receive a full, quality and inclusive primary education.

This programme entails a partnership between research and practice in order to better understand and address these barriers. The results presented here are taken from a research study aimed at teachers – the first component of a larger research study, which in turn forms a part of the overall programme intervention.

Teacher Survey

As teachers are crucial to the effective delivery of education, one of the first research activities was to undertake a survey to measure the knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of 130 teachers in selected project schools in the five districts before any training by LCD on inclusive education was undertaken.

The sample comprised:

- **30 teachers who are the 'trainers of teachers' (TOTs)** from schools selected for the LCD IE Programme. These teachers had previously undergone special needs

training through the government system. The TOTs were selected to cascade the LCD IE training to a further 600 teachers, with the expectation that they will continue to train more in the future. During LCD training, the TOTs were led through a range of inclusive strategies to ensure participation of all learners, including concepts in special- and inclusive education; child-centred approaches in learning; and classroom management and educational resources. Gender sensitive pedagogy was emphasised to strengthen their knowledge on issues that specifically affect girls with disabilities.

- **100 teachers in the five districts.**

Survey Tools
A questionnaire was developed by the Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre, based upon previous research and practical experience in the field, and was administered to both sets of respondents before they underwent any IE training by LCD. The questionnaire was designed to assess KAP around inclusion of children with disabilities, and an additional subset of questions was included that focused on gender (and specifically on girls' education).

Results

Respondent Characteristics
Just over half the TOTs were male (56.7%) as were the majority of teachers (53.1%). It should be noted that it is mostly men who are in the senior leadership positions – a characteristic of the teaching

profession in Kenya, as well as elsewhere. This has gendered implications. Moreover, while women are represented in the teaching profession at classroom level, their participation at the education management level is low, despite discussions around the impact of female teachers on girls' enrolment, and the feminisation of teaching (Kelleher 2011). This raises questions about the nature of school governance structures, particularly in terms of the gendered composition, which were rarely mentioned in the survey (and were beyond the remit of the research), but are an important element of any education programme.

Both sets of respondents were on average around 43 years old and had an average of 19 years' professional experience. TOTs reported teaching in their current school on average 7.6 years and teachers, 6.1 years.

The majority of teachers had a certificate or diploma in primary teaching education, and a small number had obtained a diploma in Special Needs Education (SNE). Unsurprisingly, given that they were deliberately selected for their previous training and experience, all TOTs reported having being trained in SNE.

As noted above, in the Kenyan educational system, children with disabilities are either placed in mainstream classes, in resource units in mainstream schools or in special segregated schools. Regarding the type of school within which they currently taught, the majority of teachers and TOTs taught in mainstream classes exclusively.

However, as special schools were not included in this programme, this is to be expected.

Disability and Impairment Groups

The impairment groups for use in the questionnaire were defined based on previous work in Kenya (including the Kenya National Disability Survey 2008 and the terms used by education assessment resource staff):

Visual impairment: e.g. difficulty seeing even if wearing glasses - blind and low vision;

Hearing impairment: e.g. difficulty hearing even if wearing hearing aid - deaf and hard of hearing;

Intellectual disabilities: identified by educational psychologist/social worker - mild, moderate, severe (primarily trained on daily living skills) and profound (home-based programmes);

Learning difficulties: including general and specific learning difficulties;

Speech and language disorders: e.g. articulation disorders; stuttering; receptive and expressive language problems;

Epilepsy;

Physical disabilities: e.g. difficulty walking even if using prosthesis;

Health problems: e.g. children with HIV/AIDS; chronic health conditions; asthma;

Multiple disabilities: identified by educational psychologist/social worker – e.g. deaf/blind;

Other: an impairment that does not fit into any of the above categories.

TOTs and teachers reported on both their current and previous experience of teaching students with a range of disabilities. Both groups found it overall very difficult to teach children with disabilities, but teachers found it particularly difficult to teach children with sensory impairments and children with learning difficulties. TOTs found it particularly difficult to teach children with multiple disabilities. Not surprisingly, both TOTs and teachers found it easier to teach a child with physical disabilities, but also children with epilepsy. This is interesting, as other studies have highlighted stigma towards persons with epilepsy in Kenya (see for example, Mbuba, et al., 2012). However, this result may also indicate that children with managed epilepsy are seen as 'easier' to teach. This finding warrants further exploration.

Learning difficulties are amongst the most important factors hindering primary school children's attendance and achievement. The role of teachers, educationists and psychologists is crucial in recognition and treatment. However, there are few such specialist staff available in Kenya. Our findings reveal that teachers reported that the training they receive often fails to provide adequate knowledge and skills about learning disabilities and other difficulties.

Teachers were also asked about the extent to which they felt their previous training helped them deal effectively with students with disabilities. Overall, teachers recognised the importance of training in teaching pupils with disabilities. However, on average around a quarter of

teachers reported having no previous training on specific impairments, and more than half had no training on working with children with multiple disabilities.

While overall TOTs were more positive in their appreciation of their training than teachers, they nevertheless reported a lack of training on multiple disabilities and epilepsy. This raises the question of why both TOTs and teachers believe that it is not difficult to teach a child with epilepsy while at the same time feel they lack adequate training in this area. It may also relate to their experiences of actually teaching a child with epilepsy (and the severity of the child's impairment).

Barriers to Education

Challenges were identified around accessibility, with a lack of assistive devices identified as a major barrier to education for children with disabilities by both TOTs and teachers. This result may also indicate a limited capacity for assessment. However, while getting a wheelchair or hearing aid may solve these issues for some children with disabilities (even in the few cases when such devices are available), research shows that merely providing a child with assistive devices does not equate to inclusion.

Other significant barriers preventing children with disabilities from going to school included a lack of transportation to and from school, and the fact that schools were a long distance from home. For children with many types of disability these issues make the journey to and from school difficult, impossible or dangerous.

If children are able to get to school, physical accessibility within the school itself becomes an issue, including access to the toilet. However, this raises an additional question for those children now in school: are the schools they attend actually the nearest to these children's homes, or are they the nearest schools that are accessible for disabled children (or perceived to be so). This is particularly the case where the children are specifically attending schools that are part of an IE programme.

A significant number of teachers and TOTs thought that parents believe that children with disabilities should not go to school and that parents think that the children cannot learn. However, they also thought that parents were worried that their children with disabilities will be abused (bullied, teased, ill-treated, etc.). Thus it is unclear if teachers believe it is low expectations on the part of parents which make them reluctant to send their children to school, or a range of other factors, including gender issues. This needs further extrapolation, particularly with parents and caregivers.

The majority of TOTs were convinced that the lack of expertise of teachers may represent a barrier to children with disabilities going to school. Teachers themselves also recognise their lack of expertise and see it as a barrier.

Understanding Inclusive Education
Respondents were asked whether they had heard of IE, and the vast majority (81%) of the 100 teachers who responded to this question, and all of the 30 TOTs who responded to this question had heard of IE. However this implies that a not insignificant percentage (19% or almost 1 in 5) of teachers had not heard of IE at all.

Both sets of respondents were then asked to identify the most important characteristics and key elements of inclusive education.

The main characteristics of IE were unsurprisingly most comprehensively identified by the TOTs. Several TOTs and also a number of teachers showed a good understanding of key elements such as acceptance, curriculum adaptation, enabling and accessible environments, resource allocation, and the development of Individualised Education Plans (IEP). Several also mentioned a 'multidisciplinary approach', the importance of attitudinal change, and the training of teachers in IE.

However some respondents were more normative, using a medical or charity-model to understand disability (which is not what the LCD IE training promotes). For example, some mentioned words such as 'love', and 'normal' (neither are rights-based language) when talking about children with disabilities (although these may be culturally acceptable). Nevertheless, the language used to refer to people with disabilities can send powerful messages (positive or negative) into the community.

The current lack of clarity and inconsistencies within the observed sample about what constitutes inclusive education (OECD, 1999) should be more

harmonised after the intervention (and will be measureable through the re-administration of the survey).

Classroom Assistants

While classroom assistants are not being used in this programme, they potentially play a key role in providing support to children with disabilities (and teachers) in the class. Therefore questions about their role were included in the survey, and the responses given provide an interesting insight.

The role of classroom assistants was frequently seen either as carers (supporting basic activities of daily living) or as experts in specific teaching activities for children with different impairments (such as physiotherapists or sign language interpreters).

Some teachers described the classroom assistants' role as being focused on discipline, control and acting as a stand-in for the class teacher. Others felt that the classroom assistant had a separate function (sometimes even in a separate location), rather than that of aiding the teacher. Others identified them as a potential resource for the pupils. While many of these may be practiced as components of IE, on their own they are not all likely to facilitate inclusion of a child with disabilities in a mainstream class, unless they are used in combination to support the child.

Attitudes and beliefs

Teachers were asked a set of questions around attitudes and practices on children with disabilities and education, based on their experience. Overall both TOTs and teachers demonstrated the same positive attitude towards children with disabilities.

The vast majority of both teachers and TOTs agreed that inclusion facilitates socially appropriate behaviour in all students, and they also agreed they would be willing to include students with a severe disability in the regular classroom with the necessary support.

Almost all respondents believe that inclusion encourages academic progression of children with disabilities and that any student can learn if the curriculum is adapted to individual needs. Additionally, the majority of both groups would be willing to encourage social participation in the classroom, modify the physical environment to include children with disabilities, and almost all agreed they would be willing to adapt the curriculum to meet the individual needs of all students.

Almost all teachers and TOTs also stated that they would be willing to adapt the assessment of individual students in order for inclusive education to take place, and both groups agreed that they would be willing to adapt their communication techniques to ensure that all students with an emotional or behavioural disorder can be successfully included in class.

Despite all these positive statements, around half of both teachers and TOTs reported becoming frustrated when they have difficulty being understood by children with disabilities. However, a greater proportion of teachers (68.7%) compared to TOTs (53.3%) report that

they have become frustrated when they are unable to understand children with disabilities; and a smaller percentage of TOTs (23.3%) than teachers (42.4%) report that they have become upset when children with disabilities are unable to keep up with the day-to-day curriculum in their classroom.

Unlike teachers, the majority of TOTs disagreed that children with disabilities should be taught in special schools and also disagreed that they should be in special schools to ensure they do not experience rejection in mainstream schools. All TOTs disagreed with the statement that 'children with disabilities should be segregated as it is too expensive to adapt the school environment.' This is likely a reflection of the previous training they had undertaken.

However, a high number of TOTs and teachers agreed with the statement: 'I am concerned that students with a disability are included in the regular classroom, regardless of the severity of the disability'. The reasoning behind these responses warrants further research.

The main significant differences in responses between teachers and TOTs were around teaching children in special schools, with more teachers agreeing with this sentiment. More teachers than TOTs also expressed frustration at adapting the curriculum to meet the individual needs of all students. This is perhaps not unexpected given that the TOTs have already had some training in this area.

Concerns

Overall there is a less positive picture regarding teachers' concerns, with both sets of respondents expressing concerns linked to the inclusion of children with disabilities in schools and classes. In particular, both groups highlighted the potential impact of inclusion on resources (such as available funds, the need for changes to infrastructure, and the additional costs of special teachers, teaching material and teaching aids).

On average teachers were more concerned than TOTs about having enough time to plan educational programmes, maintaining discipline in class, having the required knowledge and skills, giving equal attention to all students, and coping with students with disabilities who do not have adequate self-care skills. Again this indicates that experience of both training and exposure to children with disabilities fosters a more positive view. It is therefore anticipated that the training provided over the course of this study will improve this picture.

Daily Practices

Despite the gap in their skills and training, both groups were positive about their perceived teaching ability. TOTs perceived themselves as being more self-efficacious than teachers in their daily practices, and all of the TOTs' responses to the statements were more positive than those of the teachers, in particular about adapting assessment procedures to take account of specific needs and developing lesson plans to suit students of all abilities. Overall TOTs were more confident about teaching children with

disabilities effectively, whatever the specific nature of the impairment.

Teachers were less positive about teaching children with multiple or severe disabilities. Importantly, this indicates that it is the severity of the impairment and not just the presence of a disability that may be a crucial factor in determining a teacher's response to a child with disabilities. It is not clear which specific impairments may cause particular concern, and this warrants further investigation.

Finally, both TOTs and teachers showed a similar level of agreement about their ability to build relationships with parents.

Gender and Disability

The last section in the questionnaire asked about KAP around gender and disability. Overall TOTs and teachers shared very similar views regarding the importance of education for both boys and girls with disabilities. However, when asked more specific comparison questions about girls and boys with disabilities, for example, regarding the statement that 'students with disabilities are at more risk of being bullied', TOTs were more likely than teachers to think that this was a problem faced mainly by girls with disabilities.

It would appear from responses that the majority of TOTs and teachers are comfortable talking about sex and reproductive health with both boys and girls with disabilities. However, over a quarter of teachers stated that they are uncomfortable talking about these topics

regardless of the gender of the students, while about 23% of TOTs are less comfortable talking about sex and reproductive health particularly with girls with disabilities. However, due to the small sample size of TOTs (n=30), these findings need to be considered with caution.

In addition, it should be made clear that with regards to some of these issues (for example, violence against girls with disabilities) it is not possible to extrapolate from these results whether or not they are happening, or rather if it is that the teachers are unaware of them occurring. In some cases, it would seem that the TOTs, having been made more aware of issues through training, may be more sensitive to them. These issues warrant further investigation, in particular those that highlight gender differences.

Conclusion

The survey data presented here represents just one step towards developing a better understanding of the situation regarding education for girls with disabilities in the Lakes Region. Further planned research will explore the intersections between gender and disability in more detail and investigate how these relate to accessing and/or prioritising education in this region.

The results of the survey provide a rich picture of the situation in the schools where the LCD project is being implemented. They show how teachers' knowledge, attitudes and practices can potentially impact on the education of

girls with disabilities; as well as help identify the areas or issues that the programme could specifically address, for example, through adapting the in-service teaching training programmes.

The data also provide a base from which to explore a number of issues in more depth, with families, community members, and policy makers. These findings will inform subsequent phases of the research, including in-depth qualitative research with teachers, ministry staff and other professionals involved in teacher training and education.

Finally, this KAP survey was administered to the TOTs and teachers prior to the project intervention. It will be re-administered in the final year of the project after the planned interventions have been implemented. The results of the surveys will then be compared to establish the effectiveness of the training on IE; if the teachers and TOTs perceive their own efficacy to have increased and also allow future programme interventions to be adapted based on the results or changes identified over the lifetime of the project.

Interim Recommendations

- The Kenyan Government should define IE as understood and practiced in the Kenyan context

- Any training of teachers (or other related staff) must make clear that successful inclusion relies on many components of IE which must all be combined to ensure meaningful inclusion

- Further training should be provided on working with children with specific impairments (e.g. epilepsy or multiple disabilities)

- There needs to be improved assessment of children to identify specific impairments, linked to improved awareness, use and delivery of individual education plans (IEPs). This could be part of pre-service teacher training, with regular updates in-service

- There needs to be greater links, exchange of information and support between teachers and parents/caregivers to ensure better continuity and provision for the child

- Teacher training should address the gap between willingness and ability; or put differently, between attitudes and behaviours of teachers, parents, community members, etc.

- Safeguarding children with disabilities should be mainstreamed into all child safeguarding/ protection training for teachers

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About the Programme (GEC)

The overall goal of the DFID-funded GEC project 'Pioneering Inclusive Education Strategies for disabled girls in Kenya' is to address physical, cultural and social barriers to education for girls with disabilities, and to ensure that 2,050 disabled girls in 50 primary schools in in Lake Region receive a full, quality and inclusive primary education. Specifically, the project will: a) Increase awareness and capacity of duty bearers and service providers to respond to the needs of disabled girls; b) Improve enrolment and retention of disabled girls in mainstream primary schools; c) Improve quality and accessibility of mainstream education for disabled girls; d) Improve knowledge and evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of inclusive education (IE).

This is a 45-month programme which is implemented in 50 schools in five districts in the Lake Region (Mbita, Migori, Kisumu East, Kuria East and Siaya) and is composed of both research and programme components. The research component offers the possibility to gather evidence which can be fed back to improve delivery, highlight gaps and challenges, as well as develop hypotheses for further research.