

**Re-Imaging Inclusive Education: Analysing the Gap Between Theory and Practice in  
The Kenyan Education System: A Case Study of Primary Schools Vis-À-Vis Policy  
Documents**

**Von der Philosophischen Fakultät  
der Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Universität Hannover  
zur Erlangung des Grades einer  
Doktorin der Philosophie (Dr. phil.) genehmigte  
Dissertation**

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**2022**

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**Tag der mündlichen Prüfung:** 21.11.2022

## **Declaration**

I Carol Nyathama Kinuthia hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been previously submitted, in whole or in part, to this or any other institution for certification.



Hanover, 12.06.2022

## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated with love and affection

To my family,

Husband Ndegwa Kinyua,

My daughter Isabel Wanjiru,

My son Caleb Kinyua.

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to express my warmest gratitude to all those who played a part in the completion of this doctoral study.

Foremost, I am grateful to God for His grace, care and protection throughout my studies.

I cannot express enough thanks to my professors for their commitment, guidance and support in every stage of my dissertation. I am deeply indebted to Prof. Rolf Werning who accepted my request for supervision despite us being continents apart. I appreciate the confidence he had and still has in me. His professional guidance and input were a foundation and pillar of my dissertation. His constant mental support gave me the assurance that I can turn to him at all times. My deepest gratitude to Prof. Petra Engelbrecht. Her excellent guidance, support and invaluable feedback enriched my doctoral work. They both helped me grow professionally, in terms of research and knowledge. I will forever treasure the meetings and constant emails full of knowledge, acknowledgement and sound advice.

My special thanks to Katholischer Akademischer Ausländer-Dienst (KAAD) for awarding me their incredible scholarship. I will forever be grateful for their financial and moral support throughout my studies.

During my doctoral time at Leibniz University Hannover (for which am grateful for giving me the opportunity and resources to study), I came across people who impacted my life and whom I may not be able to give a full mention. Special mention however goes to the staff at the Institute of Special Education, and more so Drs. Lichtblau, Arndt and Rothe, for their warm reception, helpful advice and inspirational support. Special mention also to Katholische Hochschulgemeinde Hannover (KHG) for its continued moral support.

My most heartfelt thanks go to my family. To my husband Ndegwa Kinyua and children Isabel Wanjiru and Caleb Kinyua for their tremendous understanding, patience and support despite the distance between us. Their perseverance in my absence and constant care and encouragement gave me the motivation to complete my studies. I am also grateful to my mum Wanjiku and my siblings for their never-ending support.

Finally, I acknowledge the schools, participants and friends who played a part during my fieldwork.

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## **Abbreviations**

NGO:	Non-governmental Organizations
KISE:	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
ICT:	Information and Communications Technology
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
EARC:	Educational Assessment and Resource Centre
TVET:	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
LRE:	Least Restrictive Environment
IT:	Information Technology
IE:	Inclusive Education
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
PWDs:	Persons with Disabilities
CBC:	Competency Based Curriculum
MoE:	Ministry of Education
MoEST:	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
KICD:	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
BECF:	Basic Education Curriculum Framework
SN:	Special Needs
SNE:	Special Needs Education
SPLTD:	Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities
KNEC:	Kenya National Examinations Council
TSC:	Teacher Service Commission
IEPs:	Individualized Educational Programs
PTE:	Primary Teacher Education

EARC:	Educational Assessment Research Centers
BOM:	Board of Management
KCPE:	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
CDF:	Constituency Development Funds
EFA:	Education for All
MDGs:	Millennium Development Goals

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## **Abstract**

Inclusive education(IE) embraces individual differences, promotes growth and values diversity. The Kenyan government has committed through international and local laws and policies to implement IE, however, questions remain if this commitment is delivered to the learners. This study purposes to generate research evidence on the actual implementation of IE in relation to its documentation. It, therefore, identifies the policy-practice gap and proposes intervention mechanisms with the aim of informing Kenya’s efforts to achieve sustainable development goal 4 on learning for all children. The study explores three main objectives; (1) Outline the concept of IE as documented in the Kenyan education policies and laws. (2) Describe IE as perceived and practised in Kenyan primary schools. (3) Compare what is documented and practised and propose intervention mechanisms aimed at bridging the gap between theory and practice.

The study is prompted by the readings on and encounter with the controversies of IE and their possible repercussion, and therefore the researcher’s urge to build more knowledge to help actualize IE. The researcher borrows ideologies and strategies from various literature and theories including the theory of educational change pioneered by Michael Fullan (1982, 1991, 2007) and the Index for Inclusion developed by Booth and Ainscow (2002, 2011), to help address the underlying issues and imperative changes in various spheres of IE.

The study adopts a qualitative research approach through grounded theory methodology to achieve the outlined objectives. Through interpretive policy analysis, the researcher first scrutinizes four key policies that influence education in Kenya namely; The Kenyan Constitution, Vision 2030, The Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities (2018) and The Basic Education Curriculum Framework (2017). Data is then collected on IE practices in the schools and a comparison is made (between what is documented and practised). To ensure reliability and consistency, the study adopts triangulation as a method of data collection. Data is collected through a) Document analysis: analyzing how IE is documented in laws and policies. b) Instrumental case studies at four selected primary schools where the researcher conducted the following; i) focus group discussions with teachers, learners and parents. ii) semi-structured interviews with headteachers and iii) observational schedules.

The locale under study is Nyeri County, Kenya. The target groups are the various stakeholders (headteachers, teachers, parents and learners) in primary schools. Purposive and heterogeneity sampling on locale and participants helped obtain the desired sample of 1 county, 4 schools and 65 participants. Data is analysed qualitatively using the MAXQDA program and presented in the form of descriptive or textual data and graphically through tables and figures. Recommendations based on the analysis and literature review, targeting policymakers and implementers are then proposed.

**Keywords:** Inclusive Education, Educational Policies, Kenya

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the background to the study, the statement of the research problem, the purpose of the study, the objectives of the study, the research questions, and the significance of the study. It also provides a list of the operational definition of key terms.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

This section presents the contextual background of the study in reference to IE. It highlights the status of IE internationally, in Africa and lower income countries, and then narrows it down to the situation in Kenya.

From its genesis, IE has had its main focus on learners with special needs who have for a long time been placed in a special school or no school at all (Srivastava et al., 2015). It has therefore taken a right-based approach resulting in a global debate by researchers, policymakers and implementers (Singal, 2008; Cooper & Jacob, 2011). This in turn resulted in increased acknowledgment and participation of diversity (Booth, 1999). However, the development of IE seems to be more politically and socially oriented and less on practice (Haug, 2017; Nes, 2010). The gap between documentation and practice of IE appears to be a thing in all countries (Haug, 2017, Graham & Jahnukainen, 2011; Nes 2010; Smyth et al., 2014). There is a tension between the policy contents and systematic realities (Engelbrecht et al., 2016). The commonality is that these countries face the challenge of a lack of clear demarcation of what really entails IE, how to create inclusive environments and systems and how to teach inclusively (Allan, 2008). The inclusivity of IE is yet to be achieved even in those countries that are said to have pioneered inclusion. In Austria for instance, the IE project is reported to have inequities subjected to immigrant students and those with disabilities with relevance to content and methodologies, physical placement, social integration and participation, work transition, and educational fulfillment and accomplishment (Luciak & Biewer, 2011). Similar challenges of IE are reported in German education systems which cluster learners in homogenous groups in different schools. For instance, inequities and inaccessibility of IE were experienced by Turkish immigrant learners from low socioeconomic backgrounds and with LD (Löser & Werning, 2011). Austria and German among other countries like USA and England

are among the first to embrace IE, (Artiles et al., 2011) yet they are still facing challenges in systematization, implementation and even the lack of lucid definition of the concept (Haug, 2017; Booth & Ainscow, 1998). The existence of so many challenges has even raised the question of whether IE is a practical principle or a concept that can only remain in policies (Hardy & Woodcock, 2015).

The challenges of lower income countries on IE are more or less like those of higher income countries. Due to the developmental stages of the higher income countries, major goals of IE have been achieved especially in school development, teacher education and policy implementation (Florian & Linklater, 2010). Most of these countries have managed to establish collaborations between regular and special schools, implement inclusive pedagogies and create barrier-free environments. However, due to historical backgrounds and economic factors of lower income countries, the pace of IE implementation is different. In these countries, the focus is on the provision of EFA, increasing literacy rates and education access for marginalized groups and hence still struggling to achieve universal education access and completion (Srivastava et al., 2015; Artiles et al., 2011; Booth, 1999). IE in lower income countries remains a big challenge because it is interpreted as more of an exception than the norm. For instance, a study conducted in Bangladesh reveals that the delay in inclusion begins at the national level, the number of people with disabilities is not clear and the efforts by the government are so far limited (Larsson et al., 2010). They further state that the national coordination of the program is underdeveloped with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) e.g. Action in Development coming in to assist in the planning of the implementation. When the gap between policy and practice became a major concern to educational stakeholders including researchers and practitioners, international organizations, for example, UN Agencies took initiatives to make IE more practical in low income countries. However, the success and sustainability of these projects remain unconfirmed (Srivastava et al., 2015). Silova and Steiner-Khamsi (2008) also observe that these organizations come with their own assistance strategies focusing on their own logic more than the local needs. The target for the support is also reported to be politically inclined. For instance, being a 'UN friend' was one variable that influenced country selection for donation during the voting at the UN conference (Alesina & Dollar, 2000). They also observed that international loans and grants from former colonial empires were mainly directed to their former colonies. International influencers have been termed as 'one who borrows your watch to tell you the time' (Bassler, 2005, p. 165). Because of this influence of the international agencies, low income countries often experience educational crises, experience instability and

become less equitable (Silova and Steiner-Khamsi (2008). This is contrary to what the international agencies promise to deliver (development, democracy and educational stability) (Silova, 2008). For example, IE in Tanzania is uneven with some regions being far ahead of others in implementation. This difference is brought about by the influence of NGOs in these regions (Larsson et al., 2010). Hummel and Werning (2016) observe that these agencies work in those countries on different, fixed and limited timelines. They fund and conduct academic projects which are unfortunately not permanent. They therefore leave gaps after termination. This means that the education development is likely to be fragmented, divergent and confusing to the education stakeholders with no common and clear path of action. This impact has recently been experienced in Kenya. Although Kenya has registered among the highest number in sub-Saharan Africa of donor programs examining the impacts of educational programs on large scale, it has reported the unsustainability of such programs (Piper et al., 2018; Kremer et al, 2009).

A study conducted by Vickery et al. (2017) on the gendered experiences of IE in West and East Africa revealed that both girls and boys in this region experienced cases of physical and social discrimination and exclusion at learning institutions. However, the researchers also note that girls with any kind of disabilities faced more societal biases and discouragement especially if they did not perform in school. The performance criteria are common in discrimination and this puts learners with disabilities and other learning challenges at a high risk of dropping out of school. Though IE is embraced in Kenya and Tanzania, there are major challenges in the identification and documentation of learners with special needs, inadequate training for professionals and paraprofessionals and misallocation of funds. Hence its implementation suffers from social, economic, cultural, political and administrative constraints (Ireru et al., 2020; Zigler et al., 2017; Mmbaga, 2002)

Research carried out by Werning et al. (2016) in Guatemala and Malawi further reveals the deficit in the concept of IE. They noted that the term is used in policy documents as a traditional medical deficit approach toward providing special needs education. Unlike what is expected in an inclusive approach where the target is all learners regardless of their differences, this approach mainly targets learners with a certain kind of impairment for example sensory or motor, and therefore may not be termed as inclusion for all.

As a way to curb education inadequacy, most of these low income countries have committed to IE. However, IE seems just like an idea that is widely researched and spoken about as a key solution to education inequality but remains just like that, an idea with no satisfactory

implementation nor exact plan on how to be implemented. The challenges of inclusion started right from its introduction. According to Gordon (2006), to those who originally developed the IDEA Law in 1975 on inclusion, the term probably meant that children with any kind of disability have the right to go to any public school and receive free education. The idea just like in many states was interpreted as bringing all kinds of learners together in the same unmodified environment which beats the logic of inclusion. Werning (2010) notes that heterogeneity in learning groups alone does not automatically mean improving the quality of teaching and therefore inclusion is much more than physical inclusion.

As countries worldwide continued to embrace emerging trends in policies and educational approaches to cater for all learners especially individuals with disabilities, a similar trend took place in Kenya. Kenyan educational system has gradually evolved with the main aim being to accommodate learners with disabilities and those at risk. Initially, there was the segregation approach followed by integration and mainstreaming to curb exclusion (Adoyo & Odeny, 2015). This however saw the students to more exclusion because of a lack of adjustments in the systems and resources (Oyugi, 2011). Before these challenges were resolved, there was the introduction of IE that saw this and more challenges being carried forward (Elder, 2015).

With diverse educational programs being put in place for the betterment of the educational situation, one may conceivably say that Kenya is in an era of large-scale improvement in reading and learning. Kenya updated the Special Needs Education Policy (2009) to help in the transition toward inclusion. However, the effect of this policy is being felt only in those schools termed as special schools. For instance, they are the only schools that are modified structurally to make them barrier-free and with teachers who are trained not in inclusion but a specific category of disability. Despite the Kenyan government's articulated commitment to IE, the well-designed education programs and the provision in the constitution, there is a mismatch between what is on paper and the practice (Kiarie, 2006). Therefore, although Kenyan policies are committed to inclusion, inequalities are still evident especially in public schools (Ireru et al. (2020). In a study they conducted in Tharaka Nithi County Kenya, disability remains the major course of discrimination in these schools. Generally, 'this is the group most excluded from the education system.' (Sigal, 2016, p 172; Ohba & Malenya, 2022; Muuya, 2002). This exclusion is attributed to the geographical location of schools, cultural perceptions, ineffective identification and assessment procedures, lack of physical resources and qualified personnel (Kawaguchi, 2020; Ohba & Malenya, 2022; Maiwa & Ngeno, 2017; Osero, 2015). Ireru et al., (2020) identify the challenges to inclusion as unmodified physical resources, poverty among

parents and lack of teacher technical-know-how. In a study on IE facilitation in ECDE Centers in Uasin Gishu County Kenya, Koskei et al. (2020) identified the need for deliberate funding by the government to enhance school environments and especially provide assistive technology for learners with special needs. While addressing the inclusion dilemma in Kenyan public primary schools, Ohba and Malenya (2022) identify barriers at the admission level citing lack of operationalization and funding, not addressing the curriculum and examination needs, and the dilemma of administrators and teachers of admitting learners with disabilities in unstructured school environments. A study carried out by the Nadia (2012) in Kenyan public schools highlighted the major IE implementation challenges as shortage of teaching and learning resources, uncondusive environment that lacks necessities that motivate learners to learn and lack of enough and well qualified and trained teachers to handle these learners.

While the Sustainable Development Goal 4 promises quality, equitable education and lifelong learning for all children, it is likely that this goal may not be met. Kenya has been offering special education to four categories of learners with disability namely, hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical disability and mental retardation, leaving out other groups like those with learning disabilities (LD), the gifted and talented (GT) and communication disorders (CD) (MoEST 2003). With the aim of reaching out to all types of learners, Kenya is in the process of implementing a new curriculum termed Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). It aims at promoting individual talents, skills and abilities to enable them to participate meaningfully in the economy and society (Akala, 2021; Katam, 2020). However, the initial shortfalls especially resource allocation and adequate teacher preparation threaten its success (Diana, 2020).

The need for educational reform is stated in the Sessional Paper No. 1 Of 2019, "Kenya Vision 2030, acknowledges the need to reform education and training to create a sector fit for purpose." This and other policy papers state the constitutional requirements and national aspirations for educational reforms in Kenya but the need remains on the realization of what is documented.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Over the last few years, the Kenyan education system has been geared towards the improvement of numeracy and literacy skills of learners. However, it has not reached the point

of utilizing the entire process of assessment, modification, procedural safeguards and individualized plans for learners with disabilities (Mukuria & Korir, 2006). A report by Uwezo East Africa on the 2011 review in Kenya shows that 4 % of class 8 students (final year in primary school) couldn't read a class 2 story. The rate of learners in the lower primary who couldn't read letters of the alphabet in order was 5.7% in both the years 2011 and 2014. The level of the individuals who could read a class 2 story, has then again enlisted just a minor change from 46% in the year 2011 to 50.9% in the year 2014. The level of children who couldn't read letters was 8.2% in the year 2011 and 7.6 % in 2014. In 2015, Kenya adopted a Program known as the Tusome Early Grade Reading Activity. Tusome was intended to drastically enhance essential proficiency results for around 7 million pupils in grades 1– 3. However, this aim was arguably not achieved as many learners continue to portray performance below average and even cases of truancy.

To achieve inclusive, equitable and quality education for all, Kenya committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) has made efforts to inclusion by adapting the curriculum for learners with certain disabilities. This includes visual impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI), physical disabilities and mental retardation (MR). During the national examination, the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) makes modifications to the examination to suit these learners' needs (MoEST, 2003). Other learners such as those with various learning disabilities are left behind and do not get individualized attention in terms of preparation and assessment. They therefore end up becoming the losers of the system. With the introduction of the new curriculum (CBC) the government hopes to develop a holistic individual equipped with both theory and practice (Akala, 2021; Katam, 2020). Unfortunately, initial challenges related to poor teacher preparation, inadequate resources, poor public participation and discordancy between content and delivery threaten its implementation (Wamichwe, 2021; Akala, 2021; Katam, 2020; Diana, 2020).

Despite the widespread adoption of policies and Acts, the Kenyan education process continues to suffer many loopholes leading to poor performance and minimum value addition to those who go through the system. Uwezo (2013) laments that a major setback facing children in Early Childhood Education is the low acquisition and retainment of knowledge necessary for proficient reading at later learning levels. The most widely affected category is likely to be learners with disabilities who require individualized, diverse, systemized, dynamic and motivating systems of learning.

To ensure quality and inclusive education for all, the Kenyan government's expenditure on education has increased over the years. It almost doubled over the period 2010/11 to 2015/16 when the expenditure increased from Ksh. 169 billion to 320 billion (MoE, 2019). However, the overall performance and mean score trend is almost flat over these years with only an increase in the number of pupils' enrolment. The majority of educational commissions in Kenya deal with education access explicitly and quality only implicitly (Oketch and Mutisya, 2013). The most comprehensive quality-oriented commission was perhaps the Koech commission 1999 but was unfortunately considered radical by the then government and was therefore delivered in piecemeal (Oketch & Mutisya, 2013). This brings the question of whether education in Kenya is a physical concept concerned with the enrollment rates regardless of the quality of education that these large numbers of enrollees get.

The current trend of results celebration in Kenya focuses on the top performers where a 'self-selecting group' (Oketch & Mutisya, 2013) performs exemplary while a large number show little or no value addition. With this 'survival-for-the-fittest' kind of a system, learners with disabilities or those at risk who require motivation, guidance, stimulation and induction in their learning, are likely to never be celebrated and their potential goes unleashed.

To sum up, Kenya places high value on education. This is seen in its effort in increasing educational funds, effort in implementing various educational programs, like the support of Free Primary Education (EFA), Education for All (EFA) among others and its support of academic documents and policy. Unfortunately, there is a big number of learners that perform below average and therefore, apart from program and policy-wise, Kenya needs to pay more attention to practical implementation and improving not just mean scores but most importantly the overall performance and value addition for each learner. The right to education that Kenya has bound to should be correctly interpreted and realized; it is not a right to mere placement in an educational setting but more so a right to meaningful and life-transforming education.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

This study purpose to generate research evidence on the actual implementation of IE in relation to its documentation. It therefore aims at analyzing the gap that exists between IE policies and practice with the view of informing Kenya's efforts to achieve the sustainable development goal 4 that commits to IE and life-long learning for all children.

## **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The study has 3 main objectives;

1. Describe IE as perceived and practiced in Kenyan primary schools.
2. Outline the concept of IE as documented in the Kenyan education policies and laws.
3. Compare what is documented and practiced and propose intervention mechanisms aimed at bridging the gap between theory and practice.

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Kenya has committed to several education documents both internationally and locally with the aim of ensuring that education is not only accessible but also meaningful to the lives of all learners regardless of their differences or disabilities. The Kenyan constitution (2010) states education as a human right and commits to ensuring that persons with disabilities, minorities and marginalized groups have equal access to educational institutions and other facilities. The Kenyan Vision 2030 also commits to ensuring inclusive development of the lives of all groups of persons. The challenge, therefore, remains in delivering the commitments which will be possible if what is documented is realized in an educational setting that molds learners to become responsible and productive citizens.

The researcher believes that if interventions based on current and upcoming knowledge were implemented throughout childhood, many young people would perform better in school, improve in the acquisition of numeracy and literacy skills and consequently enjoy a much improved quality of life. On this, William (2019) notes that evidence from carefully conducted research can help improve educational practices and outcomes. Mincu (2015) adds that research-based knowledge is essential to improving learning processes and ensuring whole school improvement. Bourke (2007) concludes that in the complex field of IE, researchers develop ways of improving school systems to support diversity and ensure individual productivity by informing policymakers and practitioners on how to reform education to effectively include all learners.

## **1.6 Limitations and Delimitations of the study**

Any research work hampers limitations and delimitations in relation to its study design, data collection procedures, population and sample, locale selection, analysis among others (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). They provide a method to acknowledge possible errors, limits, parameters and scope of the study (Baron, 2008).

### **1.6.1 Limitations of the Study**

Every study no matter how well conducted has occurrences and potential weaknesses which are beyond the researcher's control (Simon, 2011; Simon & Goes 2013). This is especially more in qualitative research that occurs in natural settings and therefore extremely challenging to control the factors (Wiersma, 2000).

This study was conducted during the COVID-19 Pandemic. It encountered several limitations mainly because of the disorientation brought to the education sector by the pandemic as well as the limitation of time and resources. The study was confined to one particular county, Nyeri County in four purposively sampled primary schools and hence low generalizability of results. It was also not possible to control some of the intervening variables such as variation in the capacity of teachers and parents and therefore generalization of findings needs to consider the diversity of the participants.

### **1.6.2 Delimitations of the Study**

For a feasible study, the researcher ought to set some boundaries in terms of population size, duration, type of participants, choice of locale, etc. (Simon, 2011). Delimitations, therefore, are the conscious exclusionary and inclusionary decisions made by the researcher on the study plan (Simon & Goes 2013).

This study was confined to selected public primary schools in one county to allow an in-depth analysis of IE in schools. This way, various stakeholders gave their detailed views through discussions enabling the researcher to look at inclusion from various angles. The choice of purposive sampling also ensured the selection of diverse participants (headteachers, teachers, parents and learners) and school types (rural, urban, slum and different economic backgrounds). This contributes to making the research findings generalizable in other environments.

### **1.7 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

The use of a theoretical framework in a grounded theory research is seen as a deflection from the traditional dogmas of GT (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Mitchell & Cody, 1993). However, with the emergence of modern GT, the role of existing literature continues to gain strength among scholars. Morse (2001) raises a concern that without a theoretical context, researchers especially new ones are likely to get stuck with junks of data unable to conceptualize their study/ findings. Mitchell (2014) points out that any study is initiated with pre-conceived thoughts, beliefs and interests about a particular topic and therefore existing knowledge cannot be fully avoided. She, therefore, clarifies that a theoretical framework helps in co-constructing the grounded theory emerging from the research. It provides the scholar with various theoretical perspectives and insights into the theoretical codes utilized in other theories (Elliot & Higgins, 2012). What the pioneers of GT oppose is the choice of a theoretical framework prior to commencing a GT study (Glaser, 1998). They acknowledge that the researcher does not approach the research as a tabula rasa (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and therefore advises researchers to explore other works in their area of study to fuel their creativity and develop theoretical sensitivity (Glaser, 1978).

### **1.7.1 Theoretical Framework**

This study will borrow ideas from various theories that are in support of inclusive education. The main theoretical framework will be the Theories of Educational changes rooted in the works of Michael Fullan (1982-2015) but will also borrow from the Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002, 2011) in gauging the current situation of inclusion in Kenya and framing recommendations.

#### **Theories of Educational Change and Index for Inclusion**

**The theories of educational changes:** These theories focus on detailed educational change by not only explaining the desired process of change but also giving emphasis on the agent of change; "the human participants taking part in the process of change." (Ellsworth, 2000). It focuses on the strategies, ideologies and roles of the various types of change agents (Fullan, 1982, 1991). According to Fullan, the change process comprises of four main stages; initiation, implementation, continuation and outcome. The initiation stage is largely determined by acceptance and advocacy by the various agents of change (education stakeholders) and the existence and accessibility of innovation. The implementation stage is mainly affected by the change agents (Fullan & Stibbauer, 1991). An implementer or a change agent is an individual who influences the client's attitude, thinking and innovation decisions in a desirable way (Rogers, 1995). These are the local implementers (board of community, principal and teachers) and the external ones (government and other agencies) (Fullan & Stibbauer, 1991). The continuation stage depends on whether or not the change has been well-founded in the system through policies, resources and planning and received continuous support from stakeholders. The outcome stage is mainly dependent on the learner referred to as the client (Rogers, 1995). The success of this stage depends on whether there is a change in attitudes, thinking, skills and actions of the client (Fullan, 1993). When all the agents of change work collaboratively while

still maintaining dynamics, a culture of change emerges that leads to the success of the systems (Shen, 2008).

Fullan (2007) maintains that the process of change entails examining both individual and collective settings in relation to what to change and how to change it. He also notes that there is a tendency of a wide gap between the low and high achieving schools and students terming it as a danger sign of a deteriorating society.

Education change has been widely supported as a good vessel of inclusion (Ellsworth, 2000; Ainscow, 2005; Liasidou & Svensson, 2012; Bartolome, 1994). Inclusivity entails focusing on levers that help bring practical revolution (Ainscow, 2005). Levers are actions that can be taken to improve the behavior and outcome of an individual or an institution (Senge, 1989). This entails developing practices by the various stakeholders to reach out to every individual learner (Ainscow, 1999). Wenger (1998) highlights that IE should be a 'community of practice' using 'appropriate resources' to achieve 'a set of shared goals'. He also notes that apart from participation, reification is also a preliminary to IE. This is the representation of the participation and practices through resources, rules and documents. This documentation is well familiarized with the stakeholders as a firm foundation for implementation. However, some considerable confusion about inclusion is traced back to policy statements (Ainscow et. al., 2000) and therefore the need for the agent of change (Fullan & Stigelbauer, 1991) to be clearly familiarized with the documents that guide their practice (Ainscow, 2005).

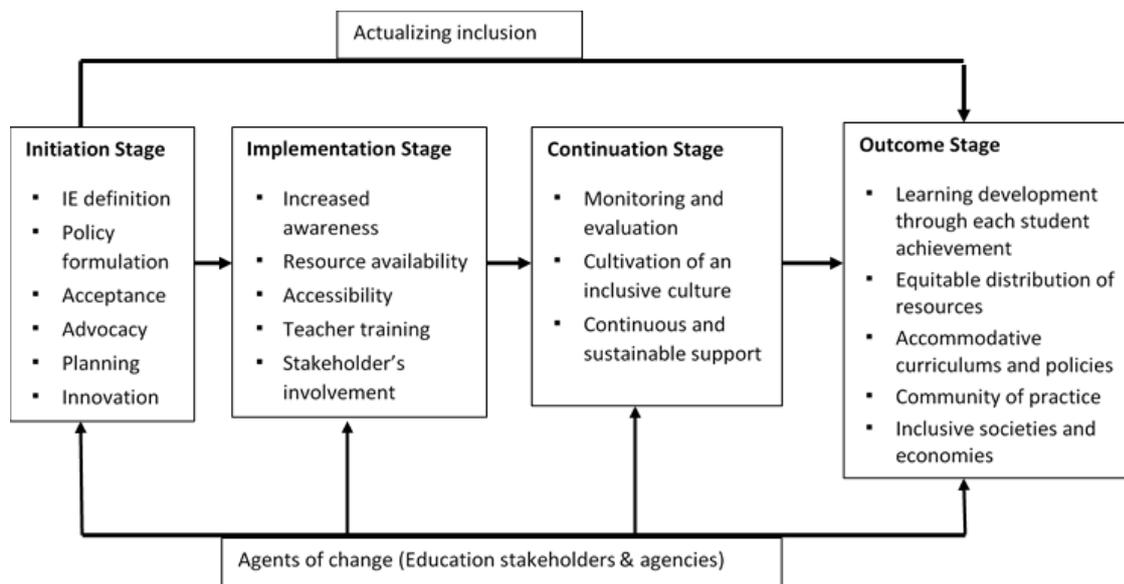
**Index for Inclusion:** Another significant theoretical framework for this study is the Index for Inclusion developed by Booth and Ainscow (2002, 2011), a tool aimed at the inclusive development of schools by building a supportive community that fosters high achievement. It addresses key values of inclusion like definition (clarifies that IE is for all students and young people in school regardless of age or special needs), participation (campaigns for a supportive

process with views from governors school staff, students, caregivers and even community members), accessibility (aims at reducing barriers of learning and participation for each student), cultural and ethical values (states the importance of embracing cultures, policies and practices that look into the diversity of the students and community) and sustainability (by recognizing that inclusion in education translates to inclusion in the society). The three dimensions of this index of inclusion include formulation of inclusive policies, engaging inclusive culture and evolving inclusive practices (Deppeler & Harvey, 2004; Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Farrell, 2000). This study therefore occasionally refers to ideologies of the Index for Inclusion to discuss a whole school approach in relation to policy formulation, inclusive practices and also in the formulation of its recommendations.

Concerning this study, these theories helped in co-constructing inclusive theories on the various agents and vessels of change and how best these educational changes can be realized.

### **1.7.2 The Conceptual Framework**

This study was conceptualized around the four stages of IE implementation (initiation, implementation, continuation and outcome) as formulated by Fullan (1991, 1982). The conceptual framework is diagrammatically represented below;



**Figure 1. 1 The Conceptual Framework**

**Source:** Author, 2021

The consideration of the factors in each stage (which are basically the variables in this study) affects the achievement in the next level. For instance, the lack of clear definitions and policies of IE (initiation stage) has greatly influenced educational accessibility for learners with special needs (implementation stage) as educational stakeholders are left to figure out what and who to include in the process (Rapp & Corral-Granados, 2021; Asamoah et al., 2021). Correspondingly, the lack of effective monitoring and evaluation program (continuation stage) has been a major IE setback as most programs designed for inclusion lapse after a certain period due to poor planning, unsustainable support and lack of follow-up (Zwane & Malale, 2018; Yates, 2018).

To successfully implement and sustain IE, the involvement of ‘agents of change’ is nonelective (Ellsworth, 2000). This implies involving all the personnel who influence education decisions, attitudes and outcomes (Rogers, 1995). These include; government and educational agencies, teachers and principals, education officers, parents, learners and the community at large.

## 1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

**Inclusive Education (a problematic term):** a clear definition of IE has so far proved elusive as divergent definitions continue to emerge from various researchers (Florian, 2014). Many have defined it as overcoming barriers to education and development of every learner but to lower income countries, it is about upgrading Education for All (EFA) to include those with disabilities (Miles & Singal, 2010). Clark et al. (1995) define it as the inclusion of a greater diversity of children through the extension of the scope of ordinary schools. It has also been defined in terms of educational philosophy as an idea about school systems and classrooms and what they should accomplish (Blake et al., 2003; Göransson & Nilholm, 2014). Uditsky (1993) defines it as 'a set of principles which ensure that the student with a disability is viewed as a valued and needed member of the community.' (p. 88). Borrowing from this and other concepts of inclusion, this study defines IE as;

“an educational process that provides a learning environment with strategic plans through collaborations, methodologies and appropriate resources to ensure each learner achieve personal, academic and professional development regardless of their differences and difficulties.”

**Low Income Countries:** These countries are also commonly known as developing countries (Patrinos & Psacharopoulos, 2020; Sacristan et al., 2021; Elfert, 2021; Belete & Saravanan, 2020), Global South (Nyiramana & Niyibizi, 2020; Biamba et al, 2021; Gwaravanda, 2021) and emerging markets or newly industrialized countries (World Population Review, 2021). The terms 'developing' and 'developed' countries have widely been used but their criticism is on the rise (Rosling, 2019; Fernholz, 2018; Khokhar, 2015; Masudsweb, n.d.); Rosario, 2016; Khokhar & Serajuddin, 2015). Rosario (2016) for instance considers the terms discriminating and simply implying 'rich' and 'poor' or 'civilized' and 'uncivilized'. This was affirmed by Rosling (2019) who viewed the term as a means of expressing superiority/inferiority by referring to 'us' (developed) vs 'them' (developing). However, the main reasons to avoid the terms are the lack of a clear agreement by international organizations on what makes a country developed or not and the assumption that the western-style of development is the way for everyone (Rosling, 2019; Masudsweb, n.d.). Hence development is only measured based on economic powers regardless of the psychological, environmental, social and cultural status.

Recently, the terms Global South/North and high/middle/low income countries have gained popularity (Hayes & Bulat, 2020; Cohee et al., 2020; Tikly, 2011). This has also come with its

criticism. Karchebnyy (2019) has considered the classification into Global North and South to be more political and economic than geographical and not any different from using developing and developed. Hall (2002) considers it as a superior view of the West and the Rest while Thompson and Reuveny (2009) question who qualifies for North or South stating an emergence of the North-South gap with the southern part benefitting less from the global relations. Rosario (2016) points out that using terminologies such as high, middle, or low income countries is still a way of showing dominance and classifying some countries as poor. Nonetheless, the terms Global south or North and low/middle/high income countries have been termed as more neutral and acceptable (Srivastava et al, 2015). Terming countries as high or low income countries have been considered more consistent and objective as it considers the per capita gross national income (GNI) and adjusts the categories accordingly (World Bank, 2017; Alvarado et al., 2018).

Low/Lower-Income Countries will therefore be employed in this study to refer to those countries commonly known as developing countries that have issues related to deprived economy, degrading infrastructure and facilities, low sanitation and malnutrition and poor educational outcomes in terms of accessibility, quality and equality.

**Educational documents and policies:** this consists of official or legal papers with laws, rules and goals that govern the provision and operation of education to ensure each learner accesses education fairly and efficiently.

**Coding:** it is an analytical process of converting concrete statements into data and involves categorizing chunks of data into words or phrases that summarize the data while at the same time accounting for every detail of the data.

**Re-imaging:** this is the process of forming a new and better picture or conception of a system by reforming policies, provisions, actions, and other aspects of the system to actualize the set goals.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW: INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN INTERNATIONAL AND KENYAN CONTEXTS**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The role and place of literature review in a grounded theory (GT) oriented research are debatable (McGhee et al., 2007; Martin, 2006). This lies in the tenets of Glaser and Strauss's initial intentions for GT methodology (Thistoll et al., 2015). They argued that undertaking a literature review might violate the intention of generating a theory from the data as the researcher is at risk of bringing in secondary information and therefore not able to remain open to new concepts and categories (Glaser & Holton, 2004). However, many researchers concede that a literature review is essential for any research regardless of the methodology. It enables the researcher to generate knowledge in a scholarly and scientific manner (McCallin, 2003), familiarize vastly with the field of research (Urquhart, 2007), know the extent of previous knowledge and identify gaps (Martin, 2006) and generally ensure the researcher is not 'empty headed' but 'open-minded' (McGhee et. al., 2007; Thistoll et al., 2015). Strauss, as a pioneer of GT also accommodates literature review and affirms that it enhances sensitivity but caution should be applied so that it does not block creativity and originality (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Reviewing literature during research does not only help in the formulation of theory but is significant in theoretical sampling, stimulating questions, maintaining the research scope and providing surplus validity (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Charmaz, 2006; McGhee et. al., 2007). It ensures that the knowledge generated is credible, scientific and scholarly and also provides a deeper view of the substantive and the methodological topic areas to ensure well-informed research (Urquhart & Fernandez, 2006; McCallin, 2003). It is in line with this knowledge that this study represents the literature below to have a broader and more dynamic scope of the status of IE.

This chapter explores the concept of IE at the global and local levels geared toward understanding IE as documented and practised in Kenya. It looks at the general status of IE in higher income countries, and lower income countries, especially in Africa, and then narrows down to the situation in Kenya.

## 2.1 General Status of Inclusive Education

The origin of IE is anchored on the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education and research on special education that questions the segregation of children with special needs (Florian, 2014; Thomas, 2013; Osgood, 2005; UNESCO, 1994). It is also rooted in the struggles for social justice (Artiles et al., 2006). Its history is heterogeneous and varies across countries (Florian, 2014; Armstrong et al., 2011). In the Nordic Countries, IE is a 1960-1970s concept that originates from parental activism after they were discontented with the segregation of children with special needs (Dyson & Forlin, 1999). In the African countries, IE is traced back to the Salamanca Statement and is influenced by international organizations and Western countries (Panther, 2019). The conceptual history is traced from the provision of basic education for these learners, then the provision of separate education (segregation), integration and now inclusion (Ainscow, 1999; Thomas & Vaughn, 2004). While inclusion is an 'education for all', a process of educating learners in a way that ensures participation and benefit for all, integration is where learners with special needs are placed in the mainstream education and helped through special services and techniques to 'fit in' (Nedha, 2015). She, therefore, notes that the difference between the two terms is in their focus; IE focuses not on fitting certain learners into the education system but on improving the participation of individual learners. On the other hand, integration focuses on fitting in learners with certain needs to regular education. The concept of mainstreaming entailed occasionally placing students with special needs in a regular classroom but remaining segregated until their goals are met (Lópe, 2016). This makes it different from inclusion in the sense that inclusionary settings entail providing individual services in the same classroom without subliming the learner apart from an extreme case where all modifications or support are unsuccessful. In mainstream settings, however, learners are removed occasionally from the classroom for supplementary services and given minimal or no support when in regular classrooms (Lópe, 2016; Hammeken, 1996). IE is therefore a multifaceted concept in terms of its evolution, content and perceptions (Dyson, 1999). Its definition is divergent with different researchers focusing on discrete yet harmonizing ideas (Florian, 2014). Inclusion has been defined in terms of valuing and accommodating the diversity of students which is in most cases interpreted as a disability (Forest & Pearpoint; 1992; Uditsky, 1993; Dyson et al., 2002), and as the maximum participation of the various groups of learners (UNESCO, 2005). However, it is the idea of inclusion as school improvement to accommodate the heterogeneity of learners and therefore shifting from special education to inclusion that outstands (Ainscow, 1991; Clark et al., 1995).

The term might have a commonality in the various definitions as it is theoretically concerned with schools and systems improvement to enhance participation of all students, accessibility, acceptance and achievement of goals (Booth et al., 2000). However, there is a lot of variance in interpretation and practice (Artiles et al., 2006; Farrell, 2000). Therefore, ambiguity is most evident in its definition and implementation but its convergence is seen in its policy documentation. This means that IE is more universal in terms of its policies and documentation but more divergent in interpretation and implementation. This, therefore, shows its lack of coordination from the formation down to the delivery. Booth (1995) as cited by Artiles and Dyson (2005) term it as a 'slippery concept' because of its ambiguity, misinterpretation and malpractice (p. 43). The other controversies arose from the link between special needs education (SNE) and IE which causes confusion and therefore a hindrance to the implementation of inclusion (Dyson et al., 2002). Yet, the link cannot be avoided as the emergence of IE can be traced back to the existence of SNE (Kauffman & Hornby, 2020; Francisco et al., 2020; Scwab, 2020; Osgood, 2005). However, Booth and Ainscow, (2011) in the Index for Inclusion clarifies these discrepancies by stating that IE is meant for all children and young people in school irrespective of age or presence of special educational needs. The relationship between IE and SNE should therefore be viewed as mutual rather than polar opposites (Hornby, 2020). He maintains that emphasizing any of the two will jeopardize equity and excellency, especially when dealing with learners with special educational needs.

Generally, the definition of inclusion has evolved through four main diversions (Nilholm, 2020). Initially, there was the 'placement definition' which concentrated on physical accessibility, the term was later improved giving emphasis to 'learners with disabilities' and an urge to meet their social and academic needs in these settings. This was then formulated to meet the needs of 'all' learners and not only those with disabilities. This has then evolved to more complex definitions of creating inclusive environments/communities in the schools. IE can therefore be perceived in the 'concept of presence, placement, participation and progress' (Ramberg & Watkins, 2020, p 89; Slee, 2018; Watkins et al., 2014).

It is with the consideration of the different views especially those discussed in the theoretical frameworks that this study defines IE in terms of strategic plans, learning environment, methodologies and appropriate resources. The definition by Ballard (1999) is of great interest to this study. He notes that IE is the;

"strive to identify and remove all barriers to learning for all children. This means that we must attend to increasing participation not just for disabled students but for all those experiencing

disadvantages, whether this results from poverty, sexuality, minority ethnic status, or other characteristics assigned significance by the dominant culture in their society." (p. 2)

## **2.2 Controversies of Inclusive Education**

The controversies about IE intensify with the increase in its implementation attempts (Haug, 2017; Mitchell, 2005; Brantlinger 1997). Research has been conducted ranging from strong support of it to critics against it many questioning the possibility of elimination of special schools to facilitate inclusivity (Connor & Ferri, 2007; Kaufmann & Hallahan, 1995; Cohen, 1994). It is argued that if it is a question of a right-based framework, then there is a need and a place for special school systems (Cigman, 2006). Suspicions have also been raised that IE is barely a new name for the 'exclusionary special education practices' that have been duplicated (Slee & Allan, 2001). Slee (2003) analyses the term IE oxymoronically and comments that for education systems to function, they need to sieve the performers and position some individuals as failures making the schools institutions of survival for the fittest. Boyle et al. (2020a) argue that IE is faced with so many real challenges and although it is a great idea, it may be just that; an idea that can only be imagined but not realized. In response to such an argument, IE has been viewed as a practical regulative idea that only makes sense if understood as a dialectical relationship that cancels out exclusivity and provides a reference point for increasing accessibility and maximizing learning outcomes by challenging the current education systems (Kronauer et al., 2012).

Debates on whether IE should be treated as a single or multi-oriented issue have been ongoing (Haug, 2017). As a single-oriented issue, inclusion is a dominant value and practice so that you either have it or don't (Mitchell, 2005). This also means focusing on the initial intention of viewing inclusion in terms of special education and disability (Norwich, 2014). As a multioriented issue, inclusion is a product of multiple values and practices focusing on diverse

categories of learners (Haug, 2017; Mitchell, 2005). These practices can either work for or against each other. For instance, if the basic step of placement is not accompanied by others such as collaboration and provision of human and physical resources, there is evidence of confusion and frustrations (Haug 2017; Haug, 2003). If well implemented, the broad approach will see the participation of all regardless of disabilities, gender, ethnicity, religion, etc. This broad concept has become broadly accepted (Messiou, 2017; Thomas, 2013; Miles & Singal, 2010). However, some inclusive theorists are concerned about the consequences of widening the definition (Haug, 2017). They foresee the risk of shifting the interest on multiple minority cases to the point where disability becomes a secondary concern (Norwich, 2014). Too much inclusion in the concept could obscure the inclusion of persons with disabilities (Armstrong et al., 2011; Kreitz-Sandberg, 2015). Whether with the narrow or broad concept, the results of IE implementation compared to its formulation is not yet convincing (Hayes & Bulat, 2020; Göransson & Nilholm, 2014; Smyth et al., 2014).

Most researchers and educators agree that IE is the way forward to equality and quality education: Stepaniuk (2019) views it as a means of transforming schools into institutions of excellence and equality. Anghel (2017) terms it as a principle of equality where the chance for every learner is respected. Werning et al. (2016) view it as a means of increasing access, acceptance and participation of children with diverse educational needs in mainstream schools. Dunne (2009) terms it as natural and inevitable, Barton (1997) termed it as a two-edged sword of achieving inclusive participation for all and removing exclusionary barriers. However, it is also argued that it is one social construction in the world of education that has triggered strong debates that contest its meaning and purpose (Banks, 2021; Boyle et al., 2020a, 2020b; Qu, 2020). It is prone to misinterpretation, subjectivity and negligence which is likely to be a result of vagueness in policy, generalization and openness in interpretation as highlighted by Dunne (2009). The concept is vague even in the major conventions, policies and laws (de Beco, 2018).

They tend to give an idea of what IE is, focusing on certain areas and not the whole process, and therefore do not truly articulate what an 'inclusive education system' is (de Beco, 2018, p 403).

Another underlying impasse to IE as highlighted by Derrida (1993) and Allan (2010) is the battle between achievement and inclusion. Whether teaching should be done comprehensively to ensure the 'cream' (top academic achievers) shoot to the highest performance or it should be done diversely to accommodate every individual. This can be said to be the situation in most educational settings where education value is based on grades and top achievers and the success of the systems is based on the quality of the 'chosen few' who are on the top. Most existing educational systems have what is referred to by Derrida (1992) as 'forgetfulness of the Other'- the Other here referring to those who appear different for example disabled or have learning difficulties. He further suggests that the solution lies not in debates revolving around IE but in technical solutions on how it ought to be practically implemented. This idea is supported by current researchers such as Lin et al. (2018), Feely (2016) and Oliver (2013).

IE has become so focused on the 'Other' mentioned above that it can arguably be said to be interpreted almost as special education. During a research study carried out by Dunne (2009) on the discourses of inclusion, she observes that there was intensive 'Othering Discourse' (p. 49) where individuals with disabilities and in need of inclusivity were referred to in search terms as 'the others', 'these pupils', 'them' etc., terms that highly suggest that they are in their category different from the norm. Therefore, the misinterpretation is that IE is meant to serve children with disabilities which is contrary to the idea that IE is an education process that strengthens the ability of the systems to benefit all learners (UNESCO, 2009). However, recent research has put clarity that the focus of IE is on learners' diversity regardless of disabilities,

ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, etc (Corcoran & Kaneva, 2021; Ayisi et al., 2019; Wanjiru, 2018; Kang'ethe & Karuti, 2015).

Academicians or researchers have also not been left out in the controversies of disabilities and IE (Messiou, 2017; Ballard, 2018). In a review of the trends of IE, Amor et al. (2019) identify that there is a significant gap between theory and intervention articles. Hence, research on the rationale of inclusion, who, and where out ways research on how (actual application), routine and evidence of inclusion (Amor et al., 2019; Amor et al., 2018; Schalock et al., 2017). Skrtic, 1995 notes that one of the key problems of IE is that the education researchers just engage in what he calls 'naive pragmatism' where they merely criticize the concepts surrounding IE and give what they refer to as findings without actually participating in the implementation of their analysis or looking back to gauge how useful and practical their recommendations are.

Barton and Clough (1995) have challenged those working in the field of disability especially in the area of education to take up more practical obligations and responsibilities. They outline the following triggers to self-involvement for inclusivity; utilization of social position and proximity or encounter with those with disabilities, practical utilization of knowledge and skills for the evolvement of inclusivity and generation of more practical and system-based approaches. Oliver (1999) has even taken the criticism further arguing that the academics have failed to use their power and position to impact inclusivity and improve the status of those with disabilities. He terms them as being 'parasitic upon persons with disabilities' (p. 184), arguing about what they vaguely know about disabilities and using estimates to discuss their issues. He advises that discussions on the disabled and their inclusivity should put them at the centre of discussion rather than shifting them to suit the discussions.

Alborno et al. (2017) identify what he calls a 'yes...but' dilemma where most stakeholders are willing but not able to implement it due to the many challenges encountered. He however

highlights that the process might be slow but not impossible. Boyle and Anderson (2020) hold a similar idea that IE is more of an admirable goal than a universal reality but still attainable after a lot of reflection on its implementation.

Although there is a lot that needs to be done to reach a consensus on debates and controversies about IE, research outcomes, knowledge and experiences have paved the way for better understanding, construction and practice of inclusion (UNESCO IBE, 2008; Acedo et al., 2009; OECD, 2007). Correspondingly, efforts have been made to construct or describe an ideal inclusive school setting as illustrated below.

### **2.3 An Ideal Inclusive School**

Scholars and education stakeholders have explored the notion of an ideal inclusive school some raising concerns about its feasibility and the need for its review especially in lower income countries (Elder, 2020; Muthukrishna & Engelbrecht, 2018; Duke et al., 2016; Mukhopadhyay, 2015; Tomlinson, 2015).

Villa and Thousand (2005) outline that an inclusive school is simply one that ‘creates and provides whatever is necessary to ensure that all students have access to meaningful learning. It does not require students to possess any particular set of skills or abilities as a prerequisite to belonging.’ (p. 3). This is only achievable if diversity is not seen as a problem. They, therefore, call for the creation of LRE and provision of supplementary aids and services that enhance the learning of everyone and not only learners with certain labels (like disabilities or race difference). They farther note that ‘inclusion is a belief system and not just a set of strategies.’ (p. 5), hence the need for collaborative efforts and ensuring the whole school community understands and supports the mission.

According to Booth and Ainscow (2011), inclusive school developers must pay attention to three dimensions; cultures, policies and practices. An inclusive culture entails shared responsibilities and decision-making among all education stakeholders to cultivate inclusive values and principles and hence build a community that accepts and embraces diversity. Inclusive policies deal with organizing support for diversity and developing a school for all. This includes proper planning to eradicate pressures of exclusion and ensuring that the school is in all ways accessible to all. Inclusive practices occur where all planning and learning are done with all learners in mind. Students learn collaboratively with mutual respect and proper assistance and appropriate resources. With the three dimensions, an inclusive school works toward building a community, improving opportunities and social conditions within its locality.

Causton and Tracy-Bronson (2015) highlight the following inclusive school practices; rethinking about students and getting ready for the diversity, working within a team and acknowledging that each has a significant role, providing the appropriate academic, behavioural and social support to all learners, and engaging and supporting paraprofessionals such as therapists and counsellors to create a school community that cultivates meaningful learning and a sense of belonging for all learners.

Werning (2014) notes that successful inclusive schooling requires sustainable development plans at various levels including school environment preparations and professional development since the belief, skills and attitudes of teachers towards special needs are crucial factors in creating inclusive classrooms. Werning et al. (2018) add that inclusive schools require adequate allocation of special needs resources, the positivity of teachers and school administrators, establishment of fixed teaching teams and clarification of roles, inclusive teaching through adaptive learning support and quality teams through further education of

teachers and other specialists needed in inclusive settings. Further research on IE will be needed to mitigate the complex transformation.

Robiyansah (2020) notes that the development of an inclusive school first requires an appropriate and effective learning model. This calls for the evaluation of learning variables to correct and improve teaching programs to meet the diverse needs of all students. Using the inclusive education model that is based on the whole school approach, Robiyansah highlights an inclusive school that includes input, process and output. Input entails the aspects of management including physical, physiological and social environments. The process focuses on instructional management, provision of materials and tools, inclusive pedagogy and general positive change at school, home and community. The output of this is the development of students' quality and the production of future adults.

UNESCO (1994) describes an inclusive school as a regular school with an inclusive orientation that eliminates discriminatory attitude, achieve education for all by the provision of LRE and welcoming community through practical and strategic changes. It calls for physical, social and developmental/curriculum inclusion.

Newfoundland and Labrador (2018) describe an inclusive school as one that enrolls all students with appropriate and quality programming and continuous support and services in an appropriate setting. It means going beyond the placement of children in schools to considering their unique learning styles, capabilities, experience and background. This means creating an inclusive school culture through awareness, positive attitudes and the feeling that all members are part of the success of the school. Here, diversity is celebrated rather than tolerated, learning is flexible with adequate support and a creative learning environment. At the core of this school is a committed leadership that embraces a collaborative approach.

However, the procedure for a standard inclusive school will greatly be determined by the current nature of the school. For instance, many schools in low income countries are not physically equipped for inclusion and therefore even physical placement of learners with special needs is itself a challenge (Pather, 2019; Eleweke & Rodda, 2002). This calls for basic modification of schools alongside the cultivation of attitudes and inclusive culture. For instance, UNICEF (2015) recommends certain standards of Ghanaian inclusive schools applicable in its current status. This includes improving the accessibility of schools through site planning, provision of ramps, pathways and barrier-free buildings. Secondly ensuring the health and safety of all learners for instance through the provision of adequate clean water, spacious well ventilated and lighted classrooms and standard toilets and urinals. Thirdly, ensuring quality learning for all through a well-tailored national curriculum, diverse teaching/learning strategies and skills and support services for the complex needs of learners. This is followed by monitoring and evaluation of learners' progress and programs to facilitate modification where necessary. Muzata et al. (2021) point out that an ideal African inclusive school should have a curriculum that contextualizes and localize the concept of IE by borrowing from lost African values like the Ubuntu. This way, the inclusive school will be like an African community (extended family system) that guarantees social security for all, encourage humanity and accept each other regardless of status, age, disabilities etc. On the other hand, Engelbrecht et al. (2016) explore what an inclusive school (also referred to as a full-service school) should be like in South Africa. Such a school should have sufficient budgetary allocation, adequate human and learning resources, improved physical facilities and infrastructure, an effective curriculum and properly trained teachers and support staff. These provisions are coupled with adequate support from all stakeholders and proper monitoring by the government to sustain inclusive culture.

In Kenya, Elder et al. (2016) suggest the development of an inclusive committee as the first tangible step in creating an inclusive school. This committee will work towards awareness creation on diversity, identifying the needs as per their local context, locating existing community resources and organising new ones hence coming up with a plan of action that will spearhead inclusion. Buhere and Ochieng (2013) add that an inclusive school will only be successful if the government increase funding for facility and modification of structure, teachers are freshly equipped with inclusion knowledge and skills, professional support groups are taken seriously and the school community is engaged to embrace diversity. Buhere et al. (2014) note that inclusion in Kenyan schools requires supportive cultural features and practices including inclusive values, a revised curriculum, improved school settings, engaging professional support groups and other practices that support diversity.

As illustrated above, the ideal inclusive school has been conceptualized by researchers, organizations, policymakers and other education stakeholders who have an idea of what should be done to achieve inclusion. Notably, the procedure for constructing inclusive schools should vary depending on the current status of schools, location, culture, stakeholders and community awareness and the need to ‘localize’ curriculums (Muzata et al., 2021; Engelbrecht et al., 2016; Buhere et al., 2014).

In essence, therefore, an inclusive school is a value-driven school that offers an LRE, aids and services that ensure every learner's access to meaningful learning. This calls for rethinking learners' diversity, engaging a team and acknowledging each other significant roles and creating an inclusive school community where every learner has a sense of belonging and growth. This results from sustainable development plans and policies, adequate resource allocation and teacher preparation, and inclusive curriculum and pedagogies. At the core of an inclusive school is committed leadership, a well-tailored curriculum and an enriched school

community that embrace and accommodate diversity. The outcome is learning development through each learner's achievement, fair distribution of resources and opportunities, and a community of practice on inclusion values and cultures.

## **2.4 Status of Inclusive Education in Higher Income Countries**

Before accentuating the underlying issues of IE in Kenya, this study finds it necessary to first look at IE in two bigger clusters (internationally and in Africa). This is typically due to two fundamental reasons: The first and maybe a positive and future-oriented reason is globalization. The globalization of IE aims at making it a universal and common concept yet unique in provision and implementation. Artiles et al. (2011) notes;

"inclusive education is simultaneously used to promote globalization, erase cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and indigenous identities in search of a common core within all humans; and to identify and give voice to the experiences and lives of peoples who live at the margin of social institutions" (p. 1).

Secondly, it has been argued that lower income countries borrow a lot from higher income countries in terms of ideas, strategies and funding. In a much-contradicted statement, Artiles et al. (2011) note that the second generation inclusive education nations (Argentina, South Africa, Kenya and India- a selection based on countries' historical commitment to inclusion) borrowed their ideologies and policies almost entirely from the first generation inclusive education nations (United States, England, Germany, Sweden and Austria). Therefore, the challenges, implementation, and developmental issues of IE in these countries contribute directly or indirectly to the historical and evolutionary inclusive concept of the lower income countries.

However, this view of lower income countries as second-generation IE countries has been highly criticized (Walton, 2018; Mukhopadhyay, 2015). In fact, it has been criticized to be a

neocolonial project to the lower income countries citing the fact that the Euro-America construction of IE dominates the field (Walton, 2018). She identifies 3 aspects of coloniality that emerge from the concept of inclusion; coloniality of knowledge, power and being. It is therefore thought to be no different from the historical evangelism imposed to lower income countries by the global north and international organizations like the UN (Armstrong et al., 2011). According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) and Grosfoguel (2007), IE portrays *coloniality of knowledge* where only the Euro-Western philosophy is perceived as universal, objective and conscious. Walton (2018) and Armstrong et al., (2011) also identify it as a form of *coloniality of power* as observed in the prescription of its policies through international organizations and funding policies from the high income countries. These policies are oftentimes contextually and financially incompatible with low income countries and hence become financial stress to them. Perception of IE as *coloniality of being*, questions the education system within which inclusion is supposed to take place (Walton, 2018). Bernstein (2000) and Fleisch (2007) argues that the education system in low income countries is characterized by colonialism even in concepts and curricula and its competitive culture cast certain form of being as inferior resulting in exclusion and discrimination. The unchanging school structures introduced during colonialism are therefore leading to intolerance and inequality even in the call for inclusion (Slee, 2011).

As a result of the above, many researchers are now calling for the decolonization of IE towards an African concept (Afful-Broni et al., 2020; Engelbrecht, 2020; Pather, 2019; Muthukrishna & Engelbrecht, 2018; Walton, 2018; Phasha et al., 2017; Mahlo, 2017; Mwinzi, 2016; Forlin, 2013). They raise the need to rethink IE in the African context in what Walton (2018) refers to as 'Afrocentric Inclusive Education'. This will entail incorporating African roots, traditions and cultures (Phasha, 2016) which will shift the perception of inclusion to an indigenous perspective of inclusion as a core of humanness (Mpofu et al., 2007). For instance, the African

concept of communalism will enhance collaboration and school community participation without discrimination based on the education system measures of success (Phasha et al., 2017). 'Decolonizing' and 'Africanizing' IE need however to be done with caution as certain traditional negative beliefs for example about disabilities or the position of women in the society may limit inclusion (Matolino & Kwindingwi, 2013).

Suggested strategies for contextualizing IE include connecting families to legal resources (Elder & Odoyo, 2018; Damiani et al., 2016). Domesticating and creating familiarity with legal resources shifts the discussion of whether certain students should be included to how they should be included (Elder & Kuja, 2018). Community-building strategies in the school setting, for example, using cultural resources will also develop a sense of belonging and understanding of diversity positively (Elder & Migliarini, 2020; Kamanda et al., 2013; Linton, 2006). Research conducted in the Western part of Kenya reports that decolonizing methodologies increased the participation of students with disabilities, increased the local community interest and participation, and grounded the curriculum into a more meaningful and indigenous setting (Elder & Odoyo, 2018). Decolonizing methodologies include conducting research in a local language, encouraging local participation, and utilizing the findings in the local settings (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Smith, 1999). This shifts the power of inclusion towards active participation, collaboration and a sense of responsibility and hence enhancing its implementation (Kral, 2014). It is therefore an effective way of localizing and actualizing inclusion (Naanyu et al., 2010).

The European countries are reported to have embraced the notion of IE for almost three decades now (Leaton et al., 2015). They have also made notable steps towards its implementation as is the example in teacher education. In France and Greece for instance, a teacher handling learners with disabilities should have the training and several years' experience in regular education (Vitello & Mithaug, 2009). Legal involvement and documentation are also commendable with provisions of instructional, attitudinal, and structural changes to ensure 'one school for all'

(Leaton et al., 2015). Nonetheless, there is a need to redefine the roles and responsibilities of general education teachers and special educators (Werning & Hummel, 2020). They highlight the need to reform the preparation of professionals for appropriate working environments in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. IE in these countries is still discommoded by comprehensive challenges which range from diversity of controversial practice (Hergarty, 1995), the sporadic and misallocation of resources and insufficient teaching personnel (Mittler & Daut, 1995) to the debate on the place of special education in inclusive setting (Vitello & Mithaug, 2009). In Germany for instance, inconsistencies in interpretation of what IE entails continue to manifest (Felder & Schneider, 2018). There is a question of whether it means ‘a single school type for all’ or ‘a single education system for all’ (Anastasiou et al., 2020; Jennessen & Wagner, 2012). The Politik gegen Aussonderung (2016) movement argues that special schools should be abolished and used only for a preparation period and no special intervention should be offered as this causes stigmatization. This is a call for full inclusion (Anastasiou et al., 2020). However, others argue that the focus should be on the welfare of the child regardless of the setting and therefore they should be where they develop best (Hillenbrandt, 2013). Therefore, the biggest issue in Germany lies in whether there should be a complete closure of special schools (Schmoll, 2018). The universal level of IE promotes participation for all learners, the selective level meets the learning needs not met at the universal level e.g. through a differentiated curriculum, and the additional level focuses on persistent and significant difficulties (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2020). Although all the levels are meant to be inclusive, they have been termed unclear, especially the third level which is more like special needs education and is likely to delay evaluation and intervention for special needs learners (Fuchs et al., 2010; Kavale et al., 2008; Correia, 2018). In American and Canadian education systems, gradual but significant steps have been made toward inclusion (Oosterhuis, 2002). There are school reforms and restructuring, effective team approaches, and individualized curricula and objectives (Grynova & Kalinichenko, 2018). However, there is a need for proper teacher education, clearer legislation on inclusion and non-politicking inclusion (Grynova & Kalinichenko, 2018). In the Nordic welfare states (Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Finland), IE is expected to play several roles simultaneously, as it is meant to provide safety and social connection to individual citizens and promote economic growth through human capital (Blossing et al., 2014; Arnesen & Lundahl, 2006). The social motive of IE is more stressed in these countries, particularly in the Norwegian and Swedish education policies (Nylund et al., 2018; Pihl et al., 2018; Arnesen, 2004). However, the strains of IE in these countries are still numerous (Pihl et al., 2018; Johannesson et al., 2002). For instance, due to

their democratic nature of freedom of choice and competitiveness, education reforms have been made that seem to counteract IE as seen in the case of Sweden, Denmark, and Finland where learners with special needs choose to be in separate institutions (Arnesen & Lundahl, 2006). Financial cuts and limited resources have also been reported in these countries (Johannesson et al., 2002). Just like any other country, they also encounter the challenges of marginalization and Eurocentrism (Juva & Holm, 2017; Mikander, 2016). Hence, the 'westernization' of policies and content hinders the actualization of inclusion (Kankkunen et al., 2010; ChingaRamirez, 2017).

Therefore, even in these countries and with the increase of inclusion, challenges such as the place of SNE teachers and curricula in inclusive settings, lack of preparation of schools for inclusion, shortage of qualified teachers and quality instructions, and lack of implementation plans leading to poor execution still persist (Schmoll, 2018; Anastasiou et al., 2020; Döhner & Berger, 2019; Nöldecke, 2018). In the race toward full inclusion, these countries are likely to expose learners with disabilities to 'functional exclusion' by placing them in general settings without a proper plan (Anastasiou et al., 2020).

## **2.5 Inclusive Education in Africa and other Lower Income Countries**

The evolution of education in lower income countries is usually marked by unfulfilled intentions and commitments from one phase to the other. For instance, before most of the countries could fully implement integration, they were caught in the wave toward inclusion forcing them to redirect their sail (Charema, 2010). This is in the strive to be at par with international laws and pace set by other higher income countries, mostly England, USA, Canada and Australia (UNESCO, 1994). Intriguingly, those countries with economical strains are recorded to be very committed to IE and give priority to education (Charema, 2010; UN, 1993). Some countries that are reported to be investing in education despite their economic struggle include Lesotho, Indonesia, Uganda and Cuba (Charema, 2010). Despite the substantial enthusiasm in low income countries for IE provision, the outcome remains unsatisfactory meaning that there are other factors besides economic status that largely affects the success of the implementation of IE. In Bangladesh, IE is also yet to be achieved primarily because it is taken as a priority rather than a necessity (CSID, 2005). It is highly supported by NGOs like Action in Development and Bangladesh Protibandhi Foundation which ironically becomes part of the problem of the very system they support. The NGOs are reported to work unsatisfactory, with unclear goals, and without adequate involvement of the government

(Lasson et al., 2010). They identify three main levels of challenges that beset IE in most African and lower income countries in general; national level, network (coordination) level and school level. This is to mean that IE is fundamentally faced with obstacles at all pivotal levels.

Generally, the education problem in the lower income countries or the 'African Problem' as referred to by de Souza (2021) is rooted back in the problems inherited from the colonial education system and policies left after the defeat of the colonial powers. The complex relationship between colonialism and education cannot be ignored and especially when conducting educational studies in formerly colonized countries (Kay & Nystrom, 1971). Kay and Nystrom observed that initially, the colonial agents dictated what type of education should be delivered, totally ignoring the role locals would play in the decision-making. Contrary to what was initially reported, colonizers did not introduce education to Africa but rather introduced a new education pattern (Nwanosike & Onyije, 2011). Although the indigenous education was mainly informal, it had a close link with social life, was collective in nature and produced well-rounded personalities (Walter, 1972).

The main impact of colonial education was that it was introduced without any consultation and reference to African conditions (Nwanosike & Onyije, 2011). It was used as a tool to gain social control over natives (Ccedilar, 2011). Colonial education was to help them gain not only physical control but also mental control (Nwanosike & Onyije, 2011). This diluted the indigenous sense of identity and equally limited the sense of their past (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012; Ngugi, 1981). After the defeat of the colonial power, they calculatedly left their education system to continue with their legacy, and indirectly maintain control. Secondly, many African elites despite fighting for independence believed in the foreign system. Thirdly, even if they were those who wished to refrain from it, they lacked the manpower and resources for reforms (Abraham, 2020).

After independence, many colonized nations sought to decolonize the colonial education policies (Mushi, 2009; Wandela, 2014). In Tanzania, the colonial education was Eurocentric and represented European culture and language (Mosha, 2000). The English language limited the incorporation of African literature culture and language (Wandela, 2014). The colonial era did not have such a great impact on education opportunities due to uncertain political developments as investments tended to favour neighbouring countries such as Kenya (Nieuwenhuis, 1996). The first task of the government after independence was to equalize educational opportunities and integrate the segregated educational system left by the colonizers ((Nieuwenhuis, 1996). However, despite the efforts to decolonize the system, the curriculum

continued to be Eurocentric, the English language was maintained and the teaching methods remained those of memorizing facts rather than moulding a conceptual mind (O-Saki, 2007; Mushi, 2009). However, Tanzania has made a significant revolution since independence; they have restored Kiswahili in primary education, promoting it as a national language, a symbol of unity and culture (Legere, 2006). There has also been a continuous increase in enrolment and establishment of institutions of higher learning (Wandela, 2014). In Zimbabwe, just like in other countries, the colonizers considered it their 'burden to civilize' the indigenous people to hype their knowledge to a certain level of parity as theirs (colonizers) (Masaka, 2016, p 2; Peck, 1966). Pre-colonially, their education was 'African' in the sense that it was linked to life circumstances, and was rich in culture and indigenous language (riddles, proverbs, fairytales, etc.) (Wiredu, 2004; Bâ, 1981). When colonial education came, it shifted this to promoting the colonizer's socioeconomic and political agenda (Mungazi, 1989). It also encouraged inequalities among the Zimbabweans as those who pursued it lived better lives and were perceived to be more superior and suitable to work for the colonizers (Masaka, 2016). Despite it being funded by the colonizers, it was less accessible to the natives due to insufficient financial support (Kanyongo, 2005; Zvobgo, 1994). It was also a discriminative education system as it was divided into a 'European education' and 'African education' (not the indigenous one but one which was offered by the colonizers to the Africans only and was considered to be of lower quality) (Maravanyika, 1990; Austin, 1975). After independence, a Report of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (1999) was established to address the problems of the colonial curriculum. The commission recommended a curriculum based on people's beliefs and culture (Ubuntu/ Unhu) hence an interplay of education and culture (Ramose, 2004). However, the attempt to change the system to suit the indigenous aspirations and eradicate the colonial influence has not been sufficiently utilized, therefore the need to truthfully transform and contextualize the system from the indigenous epistemological paradigms and other knowledge paradigms (Masaka, 2016; Kanyongo, 2005). The journey towards a suitable education after post-colonialism is still the same in South Africa. It has experienced diverse hiccups in the education sector owing to the problems deliberately created by European colonizers and apartheid (Abdi, 2003). During the Apartheid, an inferior type of education (Bantu Education) was offered to the majority-black race who were considered inferior, with women (especially black women) termed as weaker species (Abdi, 2003). After independence, the main struggle has been the reduction of inequalities especially based on race (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). Research conducted by Sayed and Soudien (2005) on IE policies revealed a discord between policy intention and effect. They point out the need to re-examine

the post-apartheid education policies as they may be a source of exclusion rather than inclusion. However, from around 2002, inequalities especially in the education sector have declined (van der Berg & Gustafsson, 2019). As pointed out by Fiske and Ladd (2004), South Africa has made remarkable steps in educational equity in terms of 'equal treatment of persons of all races' but is less successful in terms of 'equal educational opportunity for students of all races or as educational adequacy.' (p. x). Evidently, despite the efforts and presence of policies in most post-colonial nations, the colonial content continues to persist even in the reformed curriculum and this fails to prepare citizens to face the realities of their future (Nyambe, 1997; Jansen, 1991).

Although colonial education came in terms of control and domination, it does not defy the fact that there were elements that were socially enriching and contributed significantly to positive social-economic growth (Da Costa & Meerkotter, 1992). It also led to the development of infrastructures such as schools and roads, an increase in literacy through formal education, and improvement in social mobility and living standards across generations (Zu Selhausen, 2019; Wantchekon et al., 2015).

Controversies arise about the cost of IE especially in lower income countries (Sibanda, 2018). Literature from these countries points out that the cost of IE is less and more sustainable than the traditional way of planning and funding general and special education separately (Parekh, 2013; Sibanda, 2018; UNESCO, 1994). In fact, if well planned and executed, IE can be 41% less than the separation of the two (Sibanda, 2018). Ainscow (2020) supports that IE will be more economical in lower income countries as the available funds will be spent for the benefit of all students and so will the teachers, facilities and resources. However, according to the Open Society Foundation (2015), effective IE implementation will require investment in resources, training, infrastructure building and modification, and curriculum designs. This is what poses a challenge, particularly to the low income countries (Sibanda, 2018). Fortunately, this is a major initial cost and with time, IE becomes more cost-effective (Johnstone et al., 2018; Garuba, 2003; Parekh, 2013). Since there is no competition in the separate budgets among the various education sectors, there will be consolidation of staff, resources and management (Sibanda, 2018; Pijl & Florian, 2013). The danger of not meeting this initial cost is that IE becomes costlier and less effective (Banks & Polack, 2015).

IE has been on the rise in the Pacific countries mainly as a way to address marginalization and poor education for children with disabilities (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), 2016; Sharma et al., 2019). Although there is an agreement on the IE provision, culture plays a bigger

role in IE conceptualization and implementation (Webber & Lupart, 2011; Sharma et al., 2019). Some of the main barriers to IE sustainability in these countries include inadequate resourcing, inadequate teacher preparation, and attitudinal and cultural barriers (Page et al., 2019; Miles et al., 2014; Darrow 2009; Sharma & Michael 2017). In addition, although most of these countries have national policies on IE, there is a need for relevance to the local context and a practical implementation plan (Tomlinson, 2017; Armstrong et al., 2011). Despite being in support of IE, the educators are concerned that the institutions and human resources are not ready for the implementation (McDonald & Tufue-Dolgoy, 2013). And just like in other low income countries, the concerns of so much borrowing from the Western context are continuously raised by researchers and stakeholders (Phillips, 2015). There is therefore the concern that IE is implemented colonially with little or no consideration of local culture causing confusion and resistance (Sharma & Michael, 2017; Phillips, 2015; Armstrong et al., 2009). This calls for true partnership and engagement in these countries in definitions and content, methodologies, problem identification and solving to create an inclusion that is culturally sensitive and responsive (Sharma et al., 2019; Bines and Lei, 2011; Le Fanu, 2013).

In the middle East and North African countries, IE is greatly influenced by foreign and nongovernmental organizations causing the importation of delusive and non-applicable practices (Khochen-Bagsaw, 2020). This results in friction and resistance among actors leading to either non-commitment towards implementation or poor decision making due to the lack of in-depth understanding of the concept (Alborno, 2017; Khochen-Bagsaw, 2020). The private sector has been ahead of government institutions in the provision of IE in most African countries although they seem to be doing it in their way (Abou-Nassif, 2011). The barrier to inclusion in the middle East and North African countries include lack of modification of existing curriculum, lack of professional development on inclusion and equity, and non-adjustment of teaching/assessment methods and resources (Strogilos et al., 2020; Al-Zboon, 2020; Khochen-Bagsaw, 2020; Norwich, 2013). The level of IE awareness and attitudes of stakeholders including educators, parents, administrators, education officials and even learners is also a major setback to inclusion in the middle East and North Africa region (Khochen-Bagsaw, 2020; KhochenBagsaw et al., 2018). The care approach to learners with disabilities has also led to low expectations and unnecessary sympathy making them more 'disabled' than abled (Hehir et al., 2016). Environmental barriers to inclusion are still evident even in recently constructed schools and when accessibility efforts are made, it is in the narrow sense (for example provision of ramps) (Khochen-Bagsaw, 2020). Physical disabilities are therefore more

considered. Disability is generally approached in the medical model of being needy and deserving sympathy rather than the social model of disability that require attitudinal and environmental adjustments to enable them to reach their potential (Gaad, 2011).

In several Southern African countries, IE is well established but with many challenges to its implementation (de Souza, 2021; Engelbrecht & Green, 2007). The adoption of policies and strategies from the Western countries without modification to national or local context is evident in these countries (de Souza, 2021; Muthukrishna & Engelbrecht, 2018; Youdell, 2011). In fact, de Souza (2021) terms this as the 'African problem' (p 3) that mainly affect inclusion. In Malawi for instance, historical, cultural and resource barriers hinder inclusion and hence the need to integrate local philosophies and knowledge in the inclusion process (Chiwaya et al., 2021; Mitchell, 2017). Engelbrecht (2020) acknowledges that South Africa is gradually evolving towards inclusion, especially on social grounds and acceptance among stakeholders. She however points out the lack of sufficient technical, infrastructural, and human resources to foresee its implementation. Materechera (2021) also observes that the sustainability of IE in South Africa will highly depend on partnerships across all levels.

A study conducted in East and West Africa revealed that although inclusion is said to be taking place, girls and boys with disabilities were yet to be well accommodated (Hui et al., 2018). They noted that these learners still face social exclusion and emotional harassment hindering their performance and eventually causing drop-out. Boys with disabilities were more likely to be receiving education (Trani et al., 2011) while girls are likely to be undervalued, faced with violence, and given less consideration in education (de Silva de Alwis, 2008). In Nigeria, it was noted that a low level of knowledge on disability led to the stigmatization of children with disabilities hence affecting their inclusion (Lazarus & Oluwole, 2017; Bedini, 2000). They, therefore, recommend re-education of civil servants on IE and disability as part of inclusion. Ghana is committed to enhancing social developments for all in support of 'full inclusion' (CRPD, 2006). However, this comes with several obstructions right from its commencement. First, the term 'full inclusion' is not elucidated and therefore open to different interpretations and misinterpretations (Ametepee & Anastasiou, 2015). Secondly, there are no proper guidelines for the expert committee given the mandate of IE development and therefore, their recommendations are subject to criticism and objections from educational stakeholders and professionals (Meyer, 2013). Thirdly, there is no comprehensive plan and time frame for its implementation and therefore no pressure to accelerate it to action (Kniel & Kniel, 2008). Fourthly, there is lack of discrepancy between funding of education plus other human services

and funding of IE. (UIS, 2013; Ametepee & Anastasiou, 2015). Although Kenya and Tanzania have made notable steps toward IE implementation, especially in policy and framework formulation, there is a need to address the attitudes, perceptions and misconceptions of educational implementers (Zigler et al., 2017). They reported that inclusion is a social movement and attitudes and perceptions were paramount to its success. Larsson et. al. (2010) supports that Tanzania has fairly developed legislation and policy but lacks national-level coordination. It is highly noted for its uneven implementation in the various regions owing to the uneven funding and influence by international organizations such as Zanzibar Association for People with Developmental Disabilities (ZAPDD) and Previous education project with USAID support (MKEZA) (Larsson et. al., 2010).

Researches prove that the main issue of IE in lower income countries is not poverty since they allocate significant funds to education (Schuelka, 2018; Banks & Polack, 2015). The issue has to do more with practical planning, political will, and sensitization on the values and attitudes towards inclusion (Farell, 1999). He notes that if only the available resources are befittingly utilized, these countries can achieve major milestones towards inclusion. Generally, 5 factors influence implementation; policy content and context, the capacity of implementers, the commitment of implementers, and the support of consumers and partners (Ileri et al., 2020; Mulugeta, 2015; Puhon et al., 2014). Therefore, for successful IE implementation, there must be system and school transformation as well as strong frameworks for implementation that will guide schools on what constitutes good practice and their journey towards inclusion (Ileri et al., 2020; Schuelka, 2018). IE implementation framework fosters a commitment to IE policies and practices, encourage whole-school engagement, and provides a clear path in the practices and protocols (NCSE, 2011). However, Moullin et al., (2020) observe that despite the high value of an implementation framework in any sector, there is limited use and referral to them. In regard to IE, most countries, regardless of their economic status, have well-designed frameworks but their implementation is way below the promises of those frameworks: For instance, in Ghana, the framework for implementation was designed after a piloting program that enabled the Ghana Education Service to have first-hand information on its feasibility (Anthony, 2011). An IE model was therefore incorporated into the Ghana Education Strategic Plan (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2013). This saw the passage of the Disability Act (2006), the ratification of the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2012, and the introduction of an Inclusive Education Policy (Asamoah et al., 2021; Mantey,

2017). This would be actualized through the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and ChildFriendly Schools (CFS) models (Ministry of Education, 2013). The models aimed at redefining education delivery and management to address the diverse needs of individual students. The strategic plan includes provision of appropriate teaching/learning resources, capacity building for teachers and managers, and improvement in general education service delivery. However, despite over 2 decades of introducing the program, challenges in basic matters such as stakeholders' understanding of their roles, placement without needed human and technical support, and lack of policy document guide continue to hinder IE implementation (Asamoah et al., 2021; Subbey, 2018; Opoku et al., 2017; Opoku, 2016; Adera & Asimeng-Boahene, 2011). In Kenya, the ongoing implementation of the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (2017) holds out hope for IE actualization (Akala, 2021; Amunga et al., 2020). It aims at nurturing each learner's potential through the 'provision of excellent teaching, school environments and resources and a sustainable visionary curriculum' (BECF, 2017 p. 10). This is to be achieved through three levels; Early Years Education, Middle School Education and Senior School. However, despite the elaborate implementation framework, its implementation has so far raised concerns among stakeholders and researchers; most teachers have not grasped its contents and lack digital literacy skills, stakeholders were not adequately involved in its formulation while the teaching and learning resources are still unavailable and classes too big (Mwang'ombe, 2021; Ngwacho, 2019; Waweru, 2018). Several achievements have however been recorded among them better acquisition of life skills, more involvement of stakeholders especially the parents, enhancing knowledge construction rather than transmission and individualized selfpaced learning (Mwang'ombe, 2021; Amunga et al., 2020; Mwarari et al., 2020)

## **2.6 Towards Inclusive Education in Kenya**

Before colonization and like in many African countries, Kenya had its traditional system of education offered in different forms, times and areas for the boy and girl child (Sheffield, 1971). Different age groups were exposed to a variety of skills, taught values and social protocols geared towards making them responsible, confident and productive (Fatoba, 2022). It was therefore geared towards the acquisition of skills, moral and cultural values, socialization and societal norms.

The colonial education in Kenya was organized in 3 racial school systems namely Africans, Asians and Europeans (Brett, 1973). This was deemed necessary 'to reduce the racial relations

of production' (Mwiria, 1991 p.262). The Europeans were educated for leadership while African education was kept minimal and in preparation for manual employment (Kinyajui, 1979). This was maintained through the unequal allocation of resources and the use of biased examinations to eliminate Africans (Mwiria, 1991). The introduction of taxes and increase in school fees was also a strategy to block Africans from education access (Leys, 1975; Odinga, 1967). Therefore, the most important factor in colonial education was minimal education for labour production and the need to dominate politically and economically (Mwiria, 1991).

After independence in 1963, education reforms were undertaken through various commissions which consistently called for an education that addresses national development, unity and integration, economic growth and poverty reduction (TSC, 2005:6; Bogonko, 1991). These reforms included Africanisation and National Education Goals (GOK, 1964), National Objectives of Education and Policies in Kenya (GOK, 1976); Working Party on Education and Training for the next decade and beyond (GOK, 1988), and Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training (TIQET). However, despite the many reforms, the recommendations remain inadequately considered and Kenya still yearns for practical educational changes (Muricho & Chang'ach, 2013). Even after several decades of independence, 'Kenya's education system has not been able to tailor its content and pedagogy to the socioeconomic and cultural realities of its people' and continues to produce a people incompetent in fitting into their own socio-economic environments (Ntarangwi, 2003 p.211). In fact, the strategies used to promote inequalities during the colonial era (increase in taxes, school fees and unequal resource allocation: Mwiria, 1991) are now factors causing the same in the current education system: Alwy and Schech (2004) observe a close relationship between education inequalities (infrastructure, resources and opportunity availability) and ethnic affiliation to the ruling parties. Gachie (2020) points out that education challenges in Kenya are financial, political, social and colonially inherited and include inadequate infrastructure, unfitting curriculum, lack of clear legal guidelines on IE implementation, and unreliable records on vulnerable and special needs cases. This however does not imply that the education sector is static; it has made great achievements in the expansion of learning institutions, increase in accessibility and literacy levels, provision of free primary and secondary education and the current efforts of IE actualization through the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) (Mwang'ombe, 2021; Akala, 2021; Sifuna, 2004). Cultural hybridity has also been encouraged by scholars and policymakers to ensure a stable, globalized and democratic society (Maeda, 2009; Nyaberi, 2009).

The urge for education for all in Kenya began slightly after independence around 1964 when individuals with disabilities were indorsed in education institutions (Kiru, 2019; Kinuthia, 2009). This however began as a favour rather than a right to these individuals by church institutions (MOE 2009; Orinda, 2008). Initially, there was the segregation approach where learners with disabilities were placed in special institutions, which saw students with disabilities isolated, grouped and excluded to meet their educational needs (Adoyo & Odeny, 2015). Moreover, the international mandates and Kenyan domestic policies seemed to support the segregation of learners with disabilities in set-ups that were inequitable and promoted discrimination (Oyugi, 2011). Then came the integration and mainstreaming as a solution to the exclusion (Ohba & Malenya, 2022). This brought in more challenges as these learners were integrated into the educational set-up without adjustment of systems, personnel and policy (placement without modification) (Elder, 2015; Adoyo, 2007). It is after several evolvments of education policies that Kenya settled on IE. This is theoretically the ideal idea to cater for all learners with or without disabilities although great challenges come with its implementation (Ireru et al., 2020; Gathumbi et al., 2015; Elder, 2015; Mumbi, 2011). Kenya's potential and urge to cater to the needs of all individuals specifically those with disabilities have been commendable and more so its effort to accommodate them in institutions of higher learning (Chomba et al., 2014). However, they noted that the lack of a suitable legal mandate and framework continues to drag behind this effort.

The Kenyan government introduced free primary education in 2003 to cater to the educational needs of all learners (Muyanga et al., 2010). Though there was an increase in enrollment, the quality and outcome of this education deteriorated (Lucas & Mbiti, 2012; Muyanga et al., 2010; Tooley et al., 2008). A report by Uwezo, a large-scale assessment of learning established that 3 out of every 10 students in class 3 could not read or do math at class two-level (Uwezo, 2012). Still, around 8% of the primary school students completed primary school without the ability to read a class 2 level. To address these foundational learning challenges, the government, with financial help from USAID and DFID, initiated the Tusome (let us read) Programme in 2014 meant to address the literacy skills of learners in early grades 1-2 in all primary schools in the country. The programme is reported to have its strength and gaps (Piper et al., 2018; Zuilkowski & Piper 2017). Using benchmarks for Kiswahili and English learning outcomes,

Piper et al., 2018 found out that Tusome Programme was able to clarify expectations for implementation and outcomes nationally and that these expectations were communicated down to the school level. However, they also discovered that Tusome failed to fully exploit the available classroom observational data to better target instructional support. Teachers were not meeting instructional expectations, students were underperforming in reading and there lacked persistent monitoring of learners (Piper et al., 2018; Zuilkowski & Piper 2017).

The introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003 and later Free Secondary Education (FSE) in 2008 beamed some light on accessibility of education in Kenya but seems to backfire on the quality and inclusivity (Lucas & Mbiti, 2012; Sifuna, 2004). A research study conducted by Brudevold-Newman (2017) in Kenya on the effect of free secondary education reveals that a high transition rate was recorded without the provision of adequate resources. This led to the dilution of all the existing resources (teachers, time, attention, books, classrooms, desks etc.). A case study conducted in Kenya by Mumbi (2011) reveals the controversies of free education and inclusion. Whereas free education was meant to increase accessibility and inclusion, it seems to have greatly failed on inclusion (Oketch & Ngware, 2010). The free education led to overcrowding and overstretching of resources making it even hard to deliver education to typically developing learners leave alone those with certain special needs (Oketch et al., 2010). Major challenges of FPE include finances, facilities and pupil population in relation to teacher deployment (Ngugi et al., 2015; Mualuko & Lucy, 2013; Cheruto & Benjamin, 2010; Sawamura & Sifuna, 2008). This is attributed to the fact that FPE was a political pledge that was not well designed and necessary consultations were not made accordingly (Mathooko, 2009). He also suggests that the reason why Kenyan children continue to be out of class is due to a combination of factors such as poverty, social challenges, disabilities and child labour.

There have been many education reform policies in Kenya since independence (1963) (Imana, 2020; Muricho & Chang'ach, 2013). These reforms as noted by Wanyama and Chang'ach (2013) include; 1964 Africanisation and National Goals of Education (GOK, 1964), 1976 National Objectives of Education and Policies in Kenya (GOK, 1976), 1988 Working Party on Education and Training for the next decade and beyond (GOK, 1988), 1999 Koech Report (GOK, 1999), Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training (TIQET) with recent

programs being Tusome, 100% Transition and CBC Program. In fact, education reform and development have remained to be the main objectives of any Kenyan government at any time (Imana, 2020). These reforms are aimed at economic growth, fair income distribution, and availability of skills and manpower, with all of these under the umbrella of reducing social inequality (Muricho & Chang'ach, 2013; Abagi & Odipo, 1997). These educational reforms are documented in policy papers like Sessional Papers and Act of Parliaments. However, as noted by Wanyama and Chang'ach (2013), these reforms are only present in papers and little is done on implementation. They noted 2 major hindrances to educational reforms in Kenya: First, all these papers have recommendations that are barely implemented and secondly, despite the education reforms, the same challenges remain but the government and policymakers still use the same tactics and therefore create the same problems.

Educational reforms and programs have been more political and many times, the present government uses Power Coercive Method to ensure implementation without question (Imana, 2020; Havelock & Hubberman, 1993). At times, the reforms are done, not to meet the current need of Kenyans but to meet certain political objectives. These attempts to reform therefore meet the unwillingness to cooperate from implementers like administrators and teachers and a lack of interest and trust in the education systems from the caregivers of the learners. Research conducted by Havelock and Hubberman (1993) shows that lower income countries Kenya included use Power Coercive Strategies where decisions are made by some few powerful individuals influenced politically and force these decisions down the system. In such a time, the implementers are not even well informed and prepared on what they are supposed to implement (Anyango et al., 2020; Owino, 2019).

The teacher education program in Kenya does not include special needs education or IE as mandatory courses but is taken as one of the options in the teacher education program (Katitia, 2015). The role of the teacher cannot be underestimated in the implementation of IE (Pit-ten Cate et al., 2018). One can arguably say, the key to the practical implementation of inclusion is held by the teacher as he/she does not only teach but also provide other training such as selfcare, life skills and mobility training (Tyagi, 2016). Most of the challenges faced by this implementation revolve around the teacher. For instance, research carried out by Osero, 2015

in Kenya identifies the main challenges to IE as; teachers' unwillingness or negative attitude, lack of knowledge and training on inclusion and heavy workloads for the teachers. It is undoubtedly that teachers and school administrators play a key role in IE sustenance (Gathumbi et al., 2015). Kafu (2011) observes that the teacher education program in Kenya may be a mere education program that equips the teacher with pedagogical content only. This leaves the question of whether the same teachers can be entrusted to handle all the unique needs of the wide variety of learners. The issue of teachers which is paramount to inclusion is a major setback to IE in Kenya. They lack both the capacity (due to the high teacher-student ratio) and ability (due to inadequate training) to handle the diverse learners (Maiwa & Ngeno, 2017). Another study conducted by Angrist and Lavy (2001) shows that the outcome of inadequate and improper training of teachers is a reduction in the learners' test scores. This means that the success of IE largely relies on the preparedness, willingness and empowerment of a teacher. A study conducted on teacher preparedness reveals a general lack of specialization in teacher education and therefore has no satisfactory pedagogical skills and knowledge to handle learners with certain special needs (Gathumbi et al., 2015). In another study, the Kenyan teachers requested the revision of the teacher education model to make it inclusion-oriented so that all teachers can be adequately equipped for inclusion (Elder et al., 2016). They highlighted that teacher professional development will boost their attitude and support for inclusion. Several other studies conducted in Kenya from different regions reveal that basic teacher education does not prepare them for inclusion (Owino, 2019; Wanderi, 2015; Onywanjy et al., 2014; Muthoni, 2013). Teacher education prepares them to be either regular teachers or special needs education teachers (Muthoni, 2013). The former is prepared to teach in a regular classroom while the latter in special schools. With the shift towards inclusion through mainstreaming, a gap emerges in teacher education with an urgent need for its redesigning.

With many studies focusing on the inclusion of learners with disabilities (e.g. Ressa, 2021; Njeru, 2021; Kihura, 2020; Dombrowski et al., 2020), Wanjiru (2018) raises the need to focus on other types of vulnerabilities like gender, poverty and locational displacements. She notes for example that pupils affected by post-election and tribal conflicts face environmental pressures, societal inequalities and psychological traumas that lead to their exclusion from the regular school programs physically and psychologically. Other vulnerable groups that are yet to be given enough attention include refugees (Bellino & Dryden-Peterson, 2019), street children (Corcoran & Kaneva, 2021) and nomadic children (Dyer, 2016).

Just like in many other lower income countries, the Kenyan government has not succeeded in achieving gender equity in education as inclusion tends to focus mostly on disabilities (Mulwa & Gichana, 2020; Palt, 2018; Lee et al., 2019). Even though the female population is at 50.5%, their level of enrollment at all levels of education remains lower than that of boys (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2015; Koech, 2021). The indicators of gender exclusion include low literacy among women, underrepresentation in formal education, over-representation in certain areas like humanities and under-representation in others like Sciences and technical courses (Mwihia, 2020; Kang'ethe & Karuti, 2015; Wangu, 2014; Zalanga, 2009; Chege & Sifuna, 2006). This may be as a result of poverty which sees girls getting lesser education opportunities, social-cultural beliefs and practices which view women as subordinates and unfriendly and stereotyping learning environments (Christine, 2015; Legewie & Di prete, 2012; Ruto, 2009). Other factors include sexual vulnerabilities and lack of basic needs such as sanitary towels (Kang'ethe & Karuti, 2015). Due to these inequities, many researchers and organizations have put more effort into the education of girl-child (Mwihia, 2020). Unfortunately, this has been at the expense of the boy-child where girls are taken to be more fragile and in need of special care posing a threat to the future of the boy-child (Gibb et al., 2008; Chege, 2006). This is despite reports that in many cases, girls actually outperform their male counterparts (Mwihia, 2020; Khwaileh & Zaza, 2010; Orabi, 2007). This may be contributed to the difference in cognitive functioning and the fact that girls are more adaptive in learning (Ghazvini & Khajehpour, 2011). To tackle this imbalance, there is the need to conduct awareness campaigns to curb social stereotypes, teacher orientation to ensure equitable treatment for both gender, legal reforms that will see equal opportunities in the institution of higher learning and labour markets (Palt, 2018; Filgona & Sababa, 2017; Torberg & Linn, 2011; USAID, 2008).

However, Adoyo and Odeny, 2015 suggest that despite all these social, economic and cultural challenges facing IE, the root problem to inclusion is the lack of clarity, hence, the presence of ambiguity in the education policies, specifically the Special Education Policy of 2009 on the specific means in which IE is to be effectively achieved. IE in Kenya just like many other countries remain to be a will without a way, with the involved stakeholders less concerned about its achievement. This raises the question of whether Kenya is indeed practising IE as the

above challenges are contrary to what qualifies inclusive education to be inclusive. Lipsky and Gartner (2006) point out that IE entails placing students with all categories and ranges of disabilities in general education settings and providing appropriate services and resources, a positive attitude and atmosphere and appropriate support systems in that same setting. This radical idea of diversity and practical inclusivity is what makes inclusion different from other intervention systems that were practised earlier for example integration.

Many studies continue to focus on IE in Kenya and several findings emerge: In a study on teacher preparedness for inclusion, Carew et al. (2019) identify a critical gap in the teacher education system terming it more theoretical and therefore the need for attention on practical solutions that will see the teachers translate their teaching knowledge to inclusive classroom practices. While investigating the inclusion of internally displaced in Kenya, Wanjiru (2018) reports that pupils within a conflict-affected area become vulnerable to exclusion due to environmental and emotional pressures. They witness discrimination, social division and disadvantage (e.g. loss of people and property). For inclusion to be successful in post-conflict schools, she highlights the need for the school system to stimulate the pupils to unlearn violence, victimization and emotional pain. In another study on the acceptance of IE in Kenyan rural areas, Kawaguchi (2020) identifies the need for inclusion awareness not only in the school but also in communities. He points out that to practice real inclusion, the role of the community should be treated as important as that of the school. Ondieki (2017) identifies the need for a review of both the teachers' and learners' curricula as well as the need for special schools so that they are set aside for severe cases only. Many more researchers continue to identify the loophole of IE in Kenya (Ngui, 2019; Omamo, 2017; Luvanga, 2020; Ireri et al., 2020; Corcoran et al., 2020; Ohba & Malenya, 2022; Kabwos et al., 2020).

As highlighted above, Kenya continues to face numerous inclusion challenges despite committing to many international and national frameworks for inclusion (see chapter 4). In fact, one may agree that 'Kenya has all the relevant frameworks to ensure that inclusive education succeeds' (Zigler et al., 2017, p 13). The question then remains on why Kenya is not able to deliver its commitment to the policies. This study, therefore, seeks to find answers to the policy-practice gap in an attempt to bridge it.

## **2.7 Hope at last? The Competency Based Curriculum (CBC)**

In the past 4 years, Kenya has been in the process of implementing a new curriculum (CBC) under the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF) as a means of catalyzing the achievement of Vision 2030 (BECF, 2017). To realize IE, it sets out to promote individual growth and self-fulfillment, as well as social equity and responsibility;

“provide inclusive and equitable access to quality and differentiated education; including for learners with special educational needs and disabilities” (p12).

With one of its guiding principle as diversity and inclusion, it approaches inclusion in two dimensions; it aims at helping learners appreciate diversity of all kinds including ethnicity, race, gender, religion and culture. Secondly, through provision of inclusive learning environments for all learners considering their needs, interests, social and cognitive abilities. This is to be achieved through differentiated curriculum and learning, parental engagement and inclusive competency based assessment.

Therefore, this curriculum marks a significant era in IE actualization. The question however remains if this promise will be kept. Its implementation is reported to come with frequent confusion due to the lack of preparation in all areas (awareness, training, school facilities and resources) (Waweru, 2018). Sossion (2017) as quoted by Sifuna and Obonyo (2019) notes that the whole process of CBC seemed to be dominated by foreign ideas and consultancy limiting

its application in the country. Akala (2021) reported resistance from stakeholders, teachers lacking inclusive pedagogic skills and parents' partnership being impeded by factors such as time and financial constraints. They lack orientation on what is expected of them and knowledge on how to assist their children. She also observed explicit disparity between public and private schools. While public schools struggle with inadequate resources and preparations, private schools, through parental collaboration, are gaining ground. Ominde et al. (2021) observes that despite the reform attempts, there is still over emphasis on the academic merit and unclear philosophy of education. Although the current curriculum aims at nurturing talents and developing ethical citizenship, it lacks an indigenous touch and a criterion on how social and ethical values are to be instilled. Amunga et al. (2020) points out that successful implementation of IE necessitates deliberate efforts by teachers and parents. However, parents were unsatisfied with the increased demands in material provision and working as coeducators. Correspondingly, teachers are feeling understaffed, under-resourced and unprepared for CBC implementation. Momanyi and Rop (2020) supports that teachers have vague knowledge of CBC. Besides, evaluation is problematic as there is no clear framework from KNEC on how to monitor progress. Amutabi (2019) points out that CBC indirectly introduces the idea of 'super schools' within regions where learners are to spend 10 years with regionmates within the same environment. This becomes a risk to divergent exposure, national cohesion and integration. Additionally, teachers will need a culture change so that they are objective enough to offer assessment without emotions and prejudice. Because CBC is anchored on skills and innovation, it is likely to cause social inequalities where students from better backgrounds facily access resources, better exposure to technology and role models. Without intervention, this will result to more social clustering and exclusion of marginalized groups.

Many researchers concur that CBC is the hope and answer to educational, social and economic challenges faced in Kenya (e.g. Akala, 2021; Amunga et al., 2020; Katam, 2020; Amutabi,

2019; Sifuna & Obonyo 2019). It is clear that CBC if well-articulated through IE practices, it has great potential in improving innovation and development of each individual by considering their needs and abilities. The government has also invested heavily on it and therefore if well rolled-out, it is a panacea to unemployment and economic instability in the country.

Unfortunately, if the roll-out challenges are not adequately and objectively addressed, the effect will be a major setback to the Kenyan education system and a wastage of students and resources.

## **2.8 Educational Policies**

Education policies provide the rules and visions that ensure a commitment to providing education efficiently, fairly and safely at all levels (UNESCO, 2021; Ulla, 2018). They are meant to ensure that all aspects of education including management, funding, implementation, provision of adequate personnel, accessibility and accountability are in check (Cobb & Jackson, 2012). Educational policies are influenced by history, culture and international forces but the highest influence is politics and the national economy (Horsford et al., 2018; Dumciuviene, 2015; Bell & Stevenson, 2006; Altrichter & Elliott, 2000). They are a priority on the government agenda across the world as global pressure influences the outcomes of the policies and their impact on economic and social growth (Carnoy, 2016; Bell & Stevenson, 2006). Atkinson and Coleman, (1992) point out that policymakers tend to be primarily guided by politics and national economy with little regard to educational practices. The initiators of these policies are "too far removed from educational work, too wedded to powerful interests, too imbued with misleading ideologies and simply misinformed." (Altrichter & Elliott, 2000, p. 14).

International organizations and communities have for a while taken the role of developing declarations, treaties and guidelines that may bring a global consensus on what IE should entail

(Byrne, 2020). International policies on education include; The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) which seeks to ensure that no child faces any form of discrimination, The UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education which proscribe segregation or exclusion in education, The Salamanca Statement (1994) that focuses in IE and UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) that calls for IE at all educational levels. With time, these policies have become more refined in terms of content and objectives, a positive move as they continue to provide a baseline for local policies (Byrne, 2020). The move however remains positive only if the influence remains at the guideline level hence creating room for modification into the indigenous level of the states that borrow from them (AffulBroni et al., 2020; Pather, 2019; Muthukrishna & Engelbrecht, 2018).

The success of any policy lies in its implementation into practice. Fullan (2001) notes that successful policies go through 3 critical steps; innovation, implementation and continuation, which should be supported and facilitated by all the relevant stakeholders. Influencers of implementation tend to differ from influencers of formulation (Atieno, 2009). Implementation in terms of educational practices is greatly influenced by stakeholders at the institutional levels who are unfortunately rarely involved in policy formulation (Altrichter & Elliott, 2000). This may lead to the formulation of ineffective and ambiguous policies.

The divorce between policymaking and implementation can be imputed to the sense that policymaking is politically influenced while implementation is an administrative process (Atieno, 2009; Atkinson & Coleman, 1992). Atieno (2009) asserts that this is the main flaw of Kenya as policies become political promises and their implementation less seriously taken. With the realization of this, the Government of Kenya (GoK) established a formal mechanism of coordinating and consulting stakeholders in the education sector for example through a National Education Board, Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and Board of Management

(BOM) (Basic Education Act, 2013; Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2005). However, despite these efforts, studies continue to record less involvement of BOM in academic matters (Karimi et al., 2020; King'oina et al., 2017).

The consequences of the gap between policy formulation and implementation are dangerous and therefore cannot be overlooked (Atieno, 2009). It separates decisions from actualization as formulators tend to avoid responsibilities (Grindle & Thomas, 1991). They also argue that there are influential groups that want to exercise power in policymaking namely the society-centred and the state-centred. The state-centred ones are likely to be more influential and focus on maintaining control and position and their specific interests in the policy outcome. On the other hand, the society-centred group which is likely to have less influence focuses on social interest and provides a playing field for stakeholders to work together towards a common goal (Atieno, 2009; Atkinson & Coleman, 1992). The influence of whichever group can take place at any stage of the implementation (e.g. agenda setting, budget allocation, prioritization and choice of available options). Phillips (2015) further notes that this influence of 'elites' is not only at local levels but also from international powers. This further causes disparity between the influencers and implementers. Atieno (2009) concludes that;

“Policy formulation and implementation is a complex messy business which is not tied up in neat theoretical packages and as such, one of the way forward in reducing the dichotomy is by involving all the stakeholders at all levels in the policy process. This is crucial because it will affect the success of the attainment of the Millennium development goals.” (p 13).

Because of the above mismatch between the formulation and implementation level, most countries continue to struggle to achieve their educational mandates (Viennet & Pont, 2017). They note that because of the complexity of policy implementation, its evolving nature and the involvement of a variety of actors, there is a risk of failure if not well executed. Public policy

implementation is central to politics in countries in Africa (Ajulor, 2018). He notes that in these African countries, policies are highly affected by political interests and competition and therefore conflicts are likely to occur right from the output stage. This is aggravated by the fact that their economic and political structures are deficient. The formulated policies are divorced from any serious commitments after the acquisition of coveted political mileage (Sambo, 1999). These countries will therefore show the will to implement their policies in form of agendas but economic and political forces amalgamated with Western influence obstruct the efforts (Egonmwan, 1991; Sambo, 1999). For instance, since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, policy development in South Africa was reported to be a unique process because it involved various stakeholders, a democratic approach and modelling of its own recommendation (Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2000). However, despite the unique policies, challenges still arose. For instance, the South African Curriculum (C2005), put into practice in 1998, was criticized to be impractical and opaque (Jansen, 1999), with Harley and Parker (1999) adding that the 'right environment' stated in the policy was a hallucination since it did not exist in terms of the physical environment and teacher preparedness. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Botswana has also recorded high efforts in operationalizing inclusion policy (Dart et al., 2018). However, arguments and language in the Botswana inclusion policies were highly rooted in the western educational context (Hopkins, 2004). The western influence remained high despite the Botswana 1977 Policy calling for the integration of local principles like 'kigisano' (a culture of social harmony) and other cultural practices (Dart et al., 2018). Lesotho had recorded unsatisfactory progress in policy development be it in SNE or IE (Mosia, 2014), with the available frameworks not being translated into action (Johnstone & Kgothule, 2018). Limited awareness of inclusion by society and lack of desire by teachers was also observed (Urwick & Elliot, 2010). Namibia was also reported to provide an adequate legislative mandate for IE aiming at providing equitable, pro-poor quality education (Zimba et al., 2018; Ministry of

Education, Namibia, 2013). However, there was low societal acceptance and understanding and a curriculum that was irrelevant and decontextualized leading to duplication rather than creation of knowledge (Zimba et al., 2018; de Boer, 2012; Mowes & Engelbrecht, 2004). Zimbabwe lacked legislation that directly addresses IE but had other legislations that were inclusive-related (Mpofu et al., 2018). It has Acts and policies that address education access as a human right accorded to every child (Shumba & Chireshe, 2013). Generally, Africa faces policy implementation challenges linked to improper planning, unrealistic targets, political instability, inability to coordinate the participation of actors, intentional imposition and alteration of policy (Ajulor, 2018; Dioloke et al., 2017; Ajulor, 2016; Sambo, 1999; Egonwan, 1991).

The legal commitment to quality education in Kenya has been cognized globally as an overarching right (Elder, 2015). However, the implementation of these documents is far from being achieved (Kaberia & Ndiku, 2012). Kenya National Survey for Persons with Disabilities (2008) avers that only 39% of those with disability attend a mainstream primary school with only 9% transiting to secondary school. The National Gender and Equality Commission, NGECE (2016) reports that learners with disabilities have three variegations of education setups; special schools, integrated units and inclusive settings in regular schools. Unfortunately, even with the available options, these learners still have no access to education with the Ministry of Education, MoE (2009) fearing that more than a half of these school-age pupils do not attend school at all. Njoka et al. (2012) delineate that even with the rebirth of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003, around a million of school-going age did not attend school. Research carried out by NGECE (2016) to assess the extent to which Universal Primary Education is accessible in Early Childhood Education Centres reveals that many counties did not have records of children who required modification of curriculum due to disabilities or any other limiting factors. This already triggers doubts about the deliverance of quality education through early

intervention. As observed by Bii and Taylor (2013), precise data on children with disabilities and those who require intervention is fundamental to informing education implementation planning. Additionally, it has been reported that the quality control and monitoring of education implementation are inconsequential despite the Basic Education Act (2013) provision of education standards quality assurance council (Njoka et al., 2012; NGEC 2016)

## **2.9 Conclusion**

Inclusive education has been a global movement for at least 30 years emerging as a key topic across countries in research, practice and education policy agenda (Amor et al., 2019; Ainscow et al., 2006). There have been numerous steps in policy development and engagement of various stakeholders in search of better inclusion mechanisms for all students (UNESCO, 2008). The struggle has also led to a gradual shift of disability from the medical point of view which regard a disability as a personal problem to the social view (sociology of disability) which focuses on the social, structural and material causes of disability. It has led to an increase in issues of proper placement and quality education, increased social justice in social structures and institutions and improved teaching/learning practices (Miles & Singal, 2010). The concept of inclusion is also becoming clearer, its support more sustainable and implementation strategies more concrete (Schuelka, 2018).

However, there have also been different conceptualizations and practices of inclusion particularly on who and how it should be delivered (Ainscow et al., 2006). It is still proving difficult to define and thus difficult to implement and evaluate (Boyle et al., 2020a). Secondly, without a clear definition and understanding, measuring its progress has been problematic and the solution to IE challenges becomes as complex as its problems (Boyle et al., 2020b). The

issues also trickle down to actual implementation challenges such as lack of infrastructure, and human and technical resources.

As stated by Jokinen (2018), the factors to full inclusivity are “accessibility, universal design, nondiscriminatory practices, meeting students’ needs, reasonable accommodation, and individual support.” (p. 72). Booth and Ainscow (1998) suggest that the stride towards IE can further be achieved if exclusionary forces are considered. The simultaneous exploration of exclusion and inclusion has been identified as a requisite to properly apprehend and enact IE (Ballard, 2013). This, therefore, means that the exclusion and inclusion factors have to be addressed concurrently to ensure inclusion without exclusion. With the view of the above and more literature, this research explores educational documents and actual practice of IE and then suggests interventional strategies to help actualize IE with the aim of curbing the Kenyan inclusive educational challenges as viewed above.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH DESIGN METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter will present the research design and methodologies, research instruments, sample size and sampling procedure, data collection and analysis.

#### 3.1 Qualitative Design as the Research Approach

Qualitative research has been extensively defined with no distinct definition (Long & Godfrey, 2004; Hatch, 2002). It can simply be defined as research that produces descriptive data in form of written, spoken words or observable behaviour (Taylor et al., 2015). A more forthright definition by Strauss and Corbin (1990) as quoted by Hatch (2002) is 'any kind of research that produces findings that are not arrived at by means of statistical procedure or other means of quantification' (p.6). It is studying and collecting a variety of empirical materials to investigate routine and social problems in order to develop knowledge and interventions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). It is also a means of investigating and discovering the meaning members of certain groups attribute to social issues and problems (Creswell, 2009). It is a set of interpretive practices aimed at transforming the world by understanding and improving it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002). The development of qualitative research and social research, in general, has taken different dimensions with the field ever-expanding (Creswell, 2013). It goes beyond the scientific context as mostly observed in the quantitative approach and considers various aspects such as social, cultural and historical ones (Jovanovic, 2011).

The origin of qualitative research has also been credited to various contributors. Ormston et al. (2014) point out that the idea of qualitative research is linked to Immanuel Kant's works of 1781 on the 'Critique of Pure Reason' that emphasized that the knowledge of the world is based more on understanding rather than direct observation. A study on communities and families in 1855 by Frederic LePlay is reported to be the first authentic sample of qualitative research and impacted greatly on sociological research (Bruyn, 1966; Nisbet 1966). Durkheim (1897, 1951) also made remarkable contributions to qualitative research by equating statistical analysis to sociology by use of survey questionnaires and demographics. However, the conscious application of qualitative approach in social research is dated around the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Clifford, 1983). It became more popularized and influential with the publications

of studies based on its principles, methodologies and theories making it clear and universal for usage in social research.

The richest historical origins of qualitative research can be traced to the works of the Chicago school in a study on sociology between 1910-1940 (Bulmer, 1984; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Taylor et al., 2006). The school conducted research on urban life by use of participant observation and on the lives of immigrants based on personal documents. At around 1940, there were researchers known as 'students of society' who utilized interviewing, observation and personal document analysis in sociological research (Taylor et al., 2006). Qualitative research in the field of education was not as famous in the 1990s as it was in anthropology and sociology. However, it became the dominant design in 1991 after the works of Preissle-Goetz and LeCompte in *the 'Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning'* that questioned why qualitative research was not as common in social studies (Dinkelman & Cuenca, 2017). Presently, qualitative educational research is conducted with the aim of creating, adding or expanding knowledge and improving education practices (Creswell, 2002).

The key principles that hinge the practice of qualitative research are epistemology (construction and acceptance of knowledge) and ontology (the science of being or existence of objective reality) (Goertz & Mahoney, 2012; Tuli, 2010; Killam, 2013; de Gialdino, 2009). The other philosophical approaches include; critical theory (critique of society, culture and politics to challenge power structures) (Shaw & DeForge, 2014; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011), positivism (methods of natural science that consist of social facts determined mainly through observation) (Park et al, 2020; Ryan, 2018), interpretivism (role of human interaction in developing knowledge about the social world) (Thanh & Thanh, 2015; Willis, 2007), and constructivism (human behaviour and actions are based on individual experiences and surroundings) (Mogashoa, 2014; Perkins, 1999). Many researchers have argued that constructivism and interpretivism are one principle since they both aim at understanding the world of human experience (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Mertens, 2005; Creswell, 2003). The current study is more inclined to an interpretive approach that is both ontological (by believing that social reality is shaped by human experiences and environments and hence not objective) and epistemological (by constructing social knowledge through the subjective interpretation of participants' experiences) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). It focuses on making sense rather than testing a hypothesis, a principle employed in grounded theory methodology. The advantage of the interpretive approach is that it is helpful in theory construction and also where multifaceted

sources are involved (Howe, 2004). These varieties are significant to this research that is geared towards development of theories on the practice of IE in Kenya. The fact that IE is multifaceted in terms of practices and stakeholders made it necessary to approach the research interpretively.

Diversified methodological approaches exerted when conducting qualitative research includes: *case studies* where the researcher examines in depth a system, an individual, a group of people, an event or an activity using a variety of data collection tools within a given duration (Yin, 2009; Siggelkow, 2007; Stake, 1995), *ethnography* which is a detailed and comprehensive inquiry about a certain cultural group or social phenomenon through observation, interviews or document analysis over a prolonged period of time (Mills & Morton, 2013; Reeves et al., 2013; Pole & Morrison, 2003; Hughes, 1992), *narrative research*, an inquiry where the researcher studies the life of an individual and gives an account in a chronological order through collaborative narration with the participant (Squire et al., 2014; Andrews et al., 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), *phenomenological approach* that describes as accurate as possible a phenomenon by remaining true to the facts through the perspectives of the participants and by setting aside his/her own experience (Sohn et al., 2017; Nieswiadomy, 1993; Welman & Kruger, 1999; Maypole & Davies, 2001), *action research design* that is undertaken to investigate a practice through a cyclic process of identifying a problem, reflecting on it, designing a change, implementing it and assessing its outcome through careful observation (Collatto et al, 2018; Hatch, 2002), and *grounded theory* that is aimed at generating a theory through alternating data collection criteria, creation of categories and theoretical sampling (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2020; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2006). This study adopts the grounded theory methodology as discussed in the next section.

The main strength of qualitative analysis lies in its ability to qualify rather than quantify; it is concerned with 'why', 'how' or 'what' rather than 'how many' (Ormston et al., 2014). It is described as a naturalistic approach that makes the world visible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). They also suggest that qualitative researchers describe these world phenomena by deriving meaning from the real actors who are the participants. Qualitative research is suitable for research that seeks to understand a situation or event by exploring its totality through descriptive rather than numerical data and this widens the understanding, interpretation and generalization (Rosenthal, 2018, Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). These qualities informed the decision to employ a qualitative approach as the objective of this study is to 'explore', 'understand' and 'describe' IE, a task best achieved through an interpretative qualitative study.

Secondly, the principle of openness in qualitative design made it possible to employ a variety of data collection methods (FGDs, document analysis and interviews), since the use of explicit standardized instruments may be inadequate to generate social knowledge as aimed in this research (Charmaz, 2005). Thirdly, in a qualitative approach "attention is paid to the diversity of perspectives of the participants" (Flick et al., 2004, p. 8) and hence the actions, observations and investigations of the researcher are considered a crucial part of the discovery (Probst, 2016; Corbin-Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Additionally, the respondents are taken as crucial participants rather than mere objects (Midgley et al., 2013; Knapik, 2006; Wiles et al., 2006) This is a pivotal value to this research as the participants involved (headteachers, teachers, learners and parents) are the education stakeholders that influence, implement or consume IE and therefore their role cannot be ignored (Janmaat et al., 2016; Midgley et al., 2013). Qualitative research also applies a naturalistic and interpretive approach to make sense, interpret and describe the issues surrounding the subject matter at hand (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Unlike quantitative research which mostly emphasize measurements and causal relationship between variables, qualitative research goes into asking 'how' and 'why', giving meaning to social phenomenon and processes (Brannen, 2017; Bryman, 2017; Becker, 1996). This makes it suitable for this research that sought to explore "how IE is practised." These values of qualitative research; openness, discovery, researcher-phenomenon interaction, reflexivity and argumentative generalization in discussions informed the researcher's adoption of this research approach.

Conclusively, qualitative research is a craft and the researcher a craftsman (Miles et al., 2014; Brinkmann, 2012). Qualitative research procedures provide guidelines and not rules, hence a qualitative researcher is not a slave of the technique but a discoverer guided by methodological procedures (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Dryden, 2013; Lavis, 2010).

### **3.2 Grounded Theory as Research Methodology**

The grounded theory (GT) is an innovative research methodology that aims "towards conceptual thinking and theory building rather than empirical testing of the theory." (Khan, 2014, p. 224). Its strength lies in its provision of logical steps for data collection and analysis, flexibility in the collection and refinement of data and possibilities of generating middle-range theories (Charmaz, 2000). It goes beyond mere verification of a theory to theory justification and discovery (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019).

The GT methodology developed by American sociologists Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser in the 1960s created a rudimentary approach to qualitative research aiming at generating theories from existential data. The intellectual traditions of the founders enriched the theory with systematic and sophisticated procedures (Rieger, 2019; Walker & Myrick, 2006). Glaser's skills in survey research equipped the theory with procedural language, a structured approach and a positivist's inclination to accoutering the theory with ways of handling data collection and analysis (Stern, 2013; Glasser, 1978). Strauss was highly conversant with symbolic interactions, pragmatism and field research which enables grounded theorists to conduct research in natural settings (Corbin, 2021). The two, Glaser and Strauss, developed the theory in a period where quantification was the norm in social research (Johansson, 2019). In many cases, quantitative research was carried out and a qualitative approach would only be used as a supplement to the quantified data (Mohajan, 2018; Biesta, 2017). They argued that qualitative research could independently be used as science and be used to generate a theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In the 1990s GT took a different direction with the works of Strauss and Corbin (1990) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedure and Techniques*. This prompted a rebuke by Glaser (1992) arguing that the new dimension was not the 'intended form' of the original GT. He remained consistent with the original idea that GT is a method of discovery, with a basic social process and emergence of categories from data and adduces that Strauss and Corbin's methods force data into pre-determined categories hence contradicting the fundamental principles of GT. In their original work, Glaser and Strauss (1967) gave liberty to their readers to employ GT strategies flexibly. This has arguably led to the emergence of other versions of the theory like the constructivist GT by Charmaz, a student of Glaser and Strauss (Rieger, 2019; Charmaz, 2017; Morse, 2009). Her theory is more inclined toward an inductive approach since it begins with inductive data, doing back and forth data collection and analysis to create a theory rather than using pre-existing categories and theoretical frameworks (Charmaz, 2014). She states that the initial positivist GT is a bit strict due to the rigid procedure and that research should be flexible, less prescribed and focus on diverse worlds with multiple realities. There has therefore been an emergence of divergent traditions of GT including Classical/ Glaserian (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), Straussian (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and Constructivist GT (Charmaz, 2008). Contrasting discussions arise on the similarities and differences between the different schools of thought with some maintaining that there are significant resembling ideologies (Kenny & Fourie, 2015), while others maintain that the similarities are very minimal (Johanna et al., 2009; Stern, 1994). The common precepts in the derivatives are; "coding, saturation, theoretical sampling, comparative analysis, memos and

substantive vs formal theory" which gives them a common denominator (Kenny & Fourie, 2015, p. 1272). Their divergence is observed in approach, the analytical principle, coding techniques, writing phase and data judgmental criteria (Johanna et al., 2009).

This study borrows significantly from Strauss GT (SGT) and the works of Saldana (2013) on *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. SGT purposes to describe a full range of behaviour which is a significant aspect when describing IE because of its multidimensional nature. It also allows the researcher to start with a research question (unlike Glaserian GT) and this helps guide the research from the beginning as was the case of this research. SGT focuses on describing the area under research by starting with the data and broadening to aspects surrounding the data, a reason why it could be referred to as 'descriptive grounded theory' (and Glaserian GT as 'conceptual grounded theory' as it generates abstract theory from the data focusing on the concerns of the subject) (Van Niekerk & Roode, 2009). SGT also allows reading of descriptive literature in the beginning to stimulate 'theoretical sensitivity' and hence create room for a brief literature review as was the case in this study. It allows data sampling guided by the research question, categorizing data to form relationships that lead to the development of a phenomenon. Saldana on the other hand summarizes the coding procedure into 4 steps; the development of codes which are generated into categories. From these categories, themes and concepts are generated which are then systematically and rationally formulated into a theory (Elliott, 2018; Creswell, 2015). The success of this coding process depends on how the researcher/ analyst perceives and interprets the data and its surrounding (Elliott, 2018; Wodak, 2014; Saldana, 2013). The codifying process allows data isolation, grouping, regrouping and connection to interpret meaning and give an explanation (Creswell, 2015; Bernard, 2006; Grbich, 2007; Goodwin, 1994). Analyzing and relating categories brings out the reality of the results theoretically, conceptually and thematically leading to the development of themes or concepts (Richard & Morse, 2007; Scott, 2004; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The themes are the statements that describe the participants' ideas using the 'researcher lens' and hence making discoveries (Charmaz, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The discoveries form the theories that are the explanations of the subject matter of the research.

This research operates on the view that the GT approach entails forming a theory based on collected data rather than collecting data based on a theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2009). This involves collecting data based on the research questions, the data is then coded, grouped into concepts and categorized. These categories then help the researcher develop a theory and interventional frameworks. This approach helps to avoid preconceived assumptions

(Simmons, 2006), develop more original ideologies (Engward, 2013) and therefore lay an opportunity for change and creativity (Ullman & Townsend, 2008; Hussein et al., 2014).

### **3.3 Triangulation as the Method of Data Collection**

To ensure reliability and data consistency, this study adopted triangulation, where data was collected at different times, places and with different participants for countercheck and discovery (Moon, 2019; Carter, 2014; Heale, & Forbes, 2013; Patton, 1999). The data and methodological triangulation ensured cross-validation and exhaustive data collection and increased the credibility and validity of research findings (Santos et al., 2020; Cohen et al., 2000; Noble, & Heale, 2019; Heale, & Forbes, 2013). It explained different aspects of a certain phenomenon and was also used to confirm or confute when two or more databases from a similar situation differed (Nobel & Heale, 2019; Nobel & Smith, 2015; Flick et al., 2011; Denzin, 1970).

Data triangulation which involves data collection from different *participants*, at different *places* and *times* was employed: various educational stakeholders including headteachers, teachers, parents, and learners, participated to give a comprehensive picture of IE as it is (Wilson, 2014; Flick et al., 2011; Bryman, 2004). More so, different study locales were engaged (Wilson, 2014; Flick, 2002). This constituted two urban schools and two rural ones. They were then further subcategorized based on their socio-economic status. The data collection was executed at different times as need arose aiming at saturation to build up a theory.

Methodological triangulation by using various *methods of data collection* endorsed the spectrum of data collected (Heesen et al., 2019; Polit & Beck, 2012). At the onset of this research, a preliminary document analysis was carried out to inform the research questions and keep track of changes in the implementation of IE. FGD was used as the main tool to garner in-depth information about the perceptions, attitudes, feelings and entire practice of IE (Hennink, 2013; Vaughn et al., 1996). This was preceded by unstructured observation during the pre-visits of the study centres (Mulhall, 2003; Turnock & Gibson, 2001). Observation schedules were used to gain a first-hand account of the environment and behaviour of the target population (Phellas et al., 2011).

### 3.3.1 Research instruments

The researcher employed four instruments namely; document analysis, focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews and observation.

**Document analysis:** This involved analyzing how IE is documented in Kenyan laws and policies. The documents were used to support or provide supplementary research data (Triad, 2016) and most importantly for this research, to track developments and actualization of what is in documents (Bowen, 2009). Documents were therefore analyzed to trail their implementation in the educational settings. This included;

- a) The Kenyan Constitution, 2010
- b) Kenyan Vision 2030
- c) Basic Education Curriculum Framework, 2017
- d) The Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities, 2018

To initiate this process, the researcher obtained the documents from the Kenyan Ministry of Education based on the recent ones that govern primary education. The documents were confirmed by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) as part of curriculum materials that govern curriculum designs for Early Years Education (EYE). The researcher scrutinized each document to cross-examine clauses that deal with primary education. This was then followed by manual coding and categorization of the data to form a theory. A detailed discussion of the documents will be presented in the next chapter.

**Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** The FGD was preferred to other methods like individual interviews because it is interactive, insightful, gives an institutional view of an issue rather than individualized and help obtain a range of perspective on the research topic (Morgan, 1997; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Hennink, 2014). The discussion guides were semi-structured, allowing new ideas to be brought in while maintaining the focus of the study (Blee & Taylor, 2002). It also gave the researcher a chance to clarify what was said, seek an explanation for unexpected findings (Arksey & Knight, 1999) and provide a reliability check to eliminate false or extreme views (Patton, 1990). A total of 10 FGDs were carried out involving teachers, parents and learners. Each group contained 5-6 participants. FGDs can have 5-10 participants depending on their purpose (Hennink, 2013).

During the FGDs, the researcher acted more of a moderator than an interviewer by facilitating, moderating, probing and motivating the participants into more contributions (Bloor et al., 2001;

Hohenthal et al., 2015; Morgan, 2002). In some situations, it was observed that some participants were either reluctant or shy to contribute but with the motivation of others, they were able to open up. According to Krueger and Casey (2000), individuals tend to be more willing, natural and comfortable in a group discussion. Krueger (1994) observes that engaging a homogenous group can increase the outcome of the participants. However, this is to be taken with caution as homogeneity can cause dishonesty and impassivity (Thomas et al., 1995). In view of this, the sampled participants represented different ages, levels of teaching/ learning and mixed-gender as recommended by Freitas et al. (1998). FGDs also ignited debate among the participants and this allowed the researcher to observe the attitude and perceptions of these participants (Nyumba et al, 2018; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). FGDs offered anonymity making it possible for the participants to contribute without fear of victimization. This was also heaved by the fact that the researcher gave letters A-F instead of names for recording purposes. This increased the credibility of the data by permitting participants to state the reality rather than the ideal. Using a recording device instead of note-taking ensured that all information was captured and the researcher was at ease and able to moderate effectively.

FGD however came with its challenge in that a few participants were still reluctant to contribute maybe for fear of victimization. For this, the researcher developed a mechanism of engaging the 'brave' participants first and this motivated them to contribute. It was also eased by the fact that the researcher made it clear that the information would be treated with confidentiality and that participants' names were not necessary. There was also the challenge of participants in a few cases stating contrary to what is observed in the environment. This prompted the researcher to conduct an observation schedule for cross-validation.

**Semi-structured Interviews:** The semi-structured interviews were preferred because they help the researcher prepare research questions in advance to help keep focus and explore all relevant areas while at the same time ensuring open-ended and in-depth responses (Newcomer et al., 2015; Bernard, 2006). The semi-structured interviews were used to derive data from headteachers as foreseers of IE implementation in the schools. These important stakeholders informed the research on areas of resource, admission of learners, intervention mechanism, stakeholders collaboration and the general process of IE implementation (Gonzales & Jackson, 2020; Mihr, 2017). The semi-structured interviews were conducted flexibly and conversationally which ensured in-depth information and the possibility of clarification (Mihr, 2017; Horton et al. 2004).

**Observation:** The other data collection method within this methodological triangulation was observation. The need for observational data recording arose during the FGDs and interviews. The observation technique is normally used in combination with other techniques such as interviews (Williamson, 2013; McIlfatrick, 2008). Because this was meant for clarity and cross-validation, a structured observation schedule was used which meant fewer interactions with the target population as this had already been achieved during the discussions (Ciesielska et al., 2018). An observational checklist was formulated based on the gaps identified during discussions and was used to counter-check and qualify the already collected data. This method was time-saving and explicit as it documented first-hand information and provided a direct link to the social and physical environment (Lashley, 2017; Taylor-Powell & Steele, 1996). A sample of the observation checklist is attached in the appendix section.

In general, these data collection tools helped in the provision of perspicacity in the issue of IE, reviewing certain educational generalizations and building theories of practices and interventions (Mills et al., 2010). Below is a methodological matrix that synopsizes the activities of this research.

**Table 3. 1 Methodological Matrix**

	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Data collection</b>	<b>Data source</b>	<b>Data analysis</b>
1	Analyze the concept of IE as documented in the Kenyan education policies and laws	Educational policies and laws	The Constitution, Vision 2030, The Basic Curriculum Framework, The Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities	Content analysis Manual coding
2	Describe IE as perceived and practised in Kenyan primary schools	FGDs Observation schedule Semi-structured interviews	Headteachers Teachers Parents Learners Education officers	Grounded theory coding MAXQDA
3	Compare what is documented and practised and propose intervention mechanisms aimed at bridging the gap between theory and practice.	Educational policies and laws FGDs Observation schedule Semi-structured interviews	Data from the above sources	Grounded theory coding MAXQDA

### **3.4 The Pilot Study**

A pilot study is essential for planning and modification of the main study (Thabane et al., 2010; Arnold et al., 2009). Being a small-scale version of the main study, it improves the efficiency, validity and quality of the main study (In, 2017; Orodho 2008) It also increases the researcher's experience and assists in the selection of more suitable methods and approaches for the study (In, 2017; Orodho, 2008). This is especially crucial for novice researchers to improve their confidence and skills and help them overcome obstacles that may arise during the substantive study (Malmqvist et al., 2019). According to Janghorban et al. (2014), the general application of a pilot study can be summarized in four main areas namely; identifying participant related challenges, familiarizing with the study as a qualitative researcher, assessing the acceptability while engaging with the participants and determining the research methodology and procedure. They further state that a pilot study in grounded theory research increases theoretical sensitivity. In other words, it aids in assessing the process, resources, management and meeting scientific standards (Thabane et al., 2010; Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001).

A pilot study was conducted in a primary school within the county under study. The school was selected because it had similar features to those under study; it is a public school and the population and administration were similar to the schools under study (Johanson & Brooks, 2010; Thabane et al., 2010). The sample of the piloting consisted of one headteacher who assisted in piloting the interview guide for the administrators, 4 teachers, 4 learners and 5 parents for the piloting of the FGD guides. The participants and data collected were however not included in the actual study as this was an external pilot study (In, 2017; Arnold et al., 2009). Nevertheless, the pilot study was a fundamental stage of the research process. It helped in refining the wording and the order of the items in the questionnaires and the FGD guides. This included checking if the respondents understood the terminologies used, as well as emotive words that could offend or invalidate the participants' responses. For instance, asking them to state what they understood by IE at the beginning of the discussion seemed to lower their confidence as most of them did not have a clear idea. Therefore, this question was pushed towards the end of the discussion. Piloting also sensitized the researcher on time management and focusing on the topic of discussion. This was especially essential in parents' FGDs as they tended to divert on matters out of topic. Since this was during the Covid-19 era, it also assisted in budgeting and planning accordingly for resources such as masks and extra spacing. Piloting therefore increased the practicability and feasibility of the study.

### **3.5 Reliability and Validity**

Reliability and validity are two fundamental elements in the evaluation of any instruments/tools for viable research (Mohajan, 2017). Although there are no universally accepted criteria for obtaining validity and reliability, especially in qualitative research, they are significant in providing evidence of the quality, rigour, truthfulness, applicability and appropriateness of the study results (Hayashi et al., 2019; Arlene, 2010; Drost, 2011; Bolarinwa, 2015). The issue of validity and reliability in qualitative research is a complex and challenging concept (Noble & Smith, 2015; Creswell & Miller, 2000). Providing their evidence is a hard task as the researcher is dealing with people's experiences, beliefs, attitudes, perceptions etc compared to quantitative research that deals with statistical analysis (Rolfe, 2006; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Brick, 1993). Unlike quantitative researchers that employ tests and measures to ensure validity, reliability and generalisability, qualitative researchers need to devise methodological strategies that minimize errors and ensure the trustworthiness and applicability of their study (Noble & Smith, 2015; Brick, 1993). The major threatening factor for qualitative researchers as highlighted by Brick (1993) is the error that results from the researcher, social context, participants and methods of data collection and analysis. Methodological strategies to minimize these errors include; conscientious record taking, keeping and interpretation, data triangulation, clarity in analysis and interpretation, avoiding and accounting for biases, including rich and accurate accounts of participants to rationalize findings, exploring similarities and differences across accounts to ensure credibility and engaging with other researchers to reduce bias (Noble & Smith, 2015; Slevin, 2002; Long & Johnson, 2000; Sandelowski, 1993). A pilot study is also very significant in ensuring the validity and reliability of any type of research (Aziz & Khan, 2020; Malmqvist et al., 2019; Hazzi & Maldaon, 2015). While piloting, a researcher identifies or modifies the research questions, explores the best method of conducting the research, and estimates the time and resources that will be required for the main research (Ismail et al., 2018; In, 2017).

Oftentimes, these terms are seen as related but distinct concepts (Oluwatayo, 2012). While validity concerns how well an instrument measures what it is supposed to, reliability concerns the faith one can have in the data obtained as a result of controlling random errors (Mohajan, 2017; Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). Hence, reliability is the 'extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study' (Joppe, 2000, p1). In simplified terms, validity asks 'does the instrument measure what it is expected

to measure?’ while reliability asks, ‘does the instrument produce consistent outcomes?’ (Surbhi, 2017).

### **3.5.1 Validity**

For research to be credible, it ought to match reality (internal validity) and the findings replicable to other environments (external validity) (McDermott, 2011). Validity, therefore, deals with the accuracy and utility of inferences made from the research findings (Orodho, 2008; Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999).

To ensure the validity of this research, the FGD and interview guide drafts were read through and collected by two lecturers (one from Kenyatta University, Kenya and one from Leibniz University Hannover, Germany). After their review, the instruments were then discussed with the researcher’s supervisor for further improvement. A pilot study was also conducted to determine the suitability and feasibility of the study and also help detect logistical problems that would arise during the research. Based on the recommendations of the experienced researchers, supervisors and the survey of the pilot study, the tools were reviewed and adjusted accordingly.

### **3.5.2 Reliability**

Since qualitative research entails discussions and delves into topics in-depth, statistical evidence like in quantitative research might not be proof of reliability (NSF Consulting, 2021). Other ways are therefore employed. One technique of maintaining reliability is ensuring validity by ensuring the findings are congruent with reality (Moss, 1994). The research is also reliable if; the research result is transferable, the process is transparent and dependable and the research findings can be confirmed (NSF Consulting, 2021).

Other than ensuring the validity of the research, the researcher used triangulation to ensure reliability; data triangulation ensured that data was collected from different participants at different times and spaces. For each school, information was obtained from the headteacher, teachers, parents and learners. This ensured cross-validation and inclusive data collection. Methodological triangulation by use of FGDs, interviews and observation schedules also ensured that data was counter-checked to ensure the 'truthfulness' of what was seen and heard. Piloting of the study also improved its quality and credibility.

The researcher, therefore, observed various means of maintaining validity and reliability as recommended by various scholars (Brick, 1993; Noble & Smith, 2015; Slevin, 2002; Long &

Johnson, 2000; Sandelowski, 1993). This entailed keeping detailed field notes and recordings, discussing the instruments and results with experienced researchers and supervisors to help detect inconsistencies, piloting the instruments to help uncover problems that may arise during the research and comparing the results obtained with other evidence like trends in the existing literature.

### 3.6 Study Locale

This study was carried out in Nyeri County, Kenya. It was selected because it is metropolitan, it is both urbanized and ruralized. It is also a historically unique county since it was among the first to receive education from the missionary colonizers who settled in the county in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century after defeating the locals in the colonial wars (Kanyi & Wafula, 2020). Further purposive sampling was done to select schools based on social-economic status and urbanization/ruralization.

### 3.7 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

In this study, *purposive sampling* was conducted. This ensured the identification and selection of individuals who are at the centre of information or interest (Patton, 2002) in terms of knowledge and experience (Cresswell & PlanoClark, 2011). 4 headteachers, 20 primary school teachers, 5 from each school, 20 learners selected from grade 4 and class 8 and 21 parents were involved. A *heterogeneity sampling* strategy was employed to select parents of different ages and professions to ensure diversity. The sample size is summarized in table 3.1 below.

**Table 3. 2 Sample Size**

Institution (Primary schools)	Headteachers	Teachers	Parents	Learners	Total
	<b>T Pri. Sch.</b>	1	5	6*	5
<b>G Pri. Sch.</b>	1	5	5	5	<b>16</b>
<b>N Pri. Sch.</b>	1	5	5	5	<b>16</b>
<b>M Pri. Sch.</b>	1	5	5	5	<b>16</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>65</b>

\* During the Parents' FGDs in school T, an extra parent accompanied one of the participants and requested to be part of the discussion. Since she met the participation criteria, she was allowed to participate.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedure and Analysis**

#### **3.8.1 Ethical Clearance and Data Collection**

Before data collection, the researcher obtained ethical approval from the relevant authority as required for research involving human participants (Gelling, 2016). First, the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the university. This was then presented to the National Commission for Science and Technology (NACOSTI) where a research license was obtained. With the license, the researcher obtained a research permit from the County Director of Education to access the schools and another from the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) office for the consent to engage education stakeholders. After these protocols, request letters were delivered to the head of schools for a permit to conduct the research exercise. Pre-visits were then made for introduction and arrangement of data collection. First, the researcher engaged the head teacher in a semi-structured interview. This was then followed by FGDs from teachers, parents and learners respectively. At the beginning of each section, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and the ethical issues. Ample time was given during and in-between discussions to allow the build-up of adequate data. The same procedure was repeated in the other sampled schools.

To protect the confidentiality of the participants, their names were withheld. This was also the case with the schools as naming them would possibly make the individuals identifiable from the reports (Sieber, 1992; Kaiser, 2009). This kind of identification is referred to as deductive disclosure or internal confidentiality (Kaiser, 2009; Tolich, 2004). For instance, if a researcher names the school and its district in the research report, one would somehow identify the teachers by the participants' descriptions given (Sieber, 1992). This is a common problem for qualitative researchers who give rich descriptive reports (Kaiser, 2009). Since assurances of confidentiality are made during the fieldwork, strategies should be employed to maintain the rapport and trust with participants, as well as ethical standards and integrity of the research (Baez, 2002).

#### **3.8.2 Data Analysis**

After data collection via a recorder, the recordings were transcribed and organized for analysis. During the analysis, the researcher has to see the world from other people's perspectives (Sutton & Austin, 2015). First, the researcher attempts to understand the meaning that participants

ascribe to their views. Then the researcher interprets the meaning in the context of the study (Trent & Cho, 2020). During data processing, the researcher utilized a qualitative research software (MAXQDA) to help manage the large amounts of data and increase flexibility, validity and auditability of the research (John & Johnson, 2000). Before then, training was undertaken and assistance was sought from qualified software users. The initial steps included inductive coding where codes were assigned to segments of texts. Through creative coding, the codes were generated, sorted and organized into meaningful groups (Saldana, 2013). The emerging codes were then developed into sub-codes and categories hence reducing the number of different pieces of data and forming relationships that led to the development of ideas. These ideas commonly referred to as themes and concepts brought out the reality of the results and hence the beginning of the discoveries (theories) in form of findings or explanations of the subject matter of the research (Charmaz, 2012, Strauss & Corbin, 1998). During the coding process, memos in form of notes and remarks were made. This contained short summaries, notable ideas and hints to the development of categories and theories.

### **3.8.3 The Role of Researcher as a Primary Data Collector**

Qualitative research data is obtained using different methods one of which is the researcher herself/himself (Wa-Mbaleka, 2020). Hence, in many cases, the researcher has been referred to as an instrument (Wa-Mbaleka, 2020; Bahrami et al., 2016; Pezalla et al., 2012; Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2003). When the researcher is the primary data collector, he/she can control designs and procedures hence maintaining internal validity (Hox & Boeije, 2005). Generally, the role of a qualitative researcher is to attempt to reach participants' thoughts and feelings concerning the study topic (Sutton & Austin, 2015). This comes with a crucial responsibility of safeguarding the data and maintaining the confidentiality and trust of the participants (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Qualitative researchers play the main role and are a major factor in validating the data (Bahrami et al., 2016). They require experience and skill in the research process as well as effective communication skills that enable them to ask sufficient and appropriate questions (Bahrami et al., 2016; Simon, 2011). They also play the role of ensuring that research ethical issues have been put into consideration (Abed, 2015). To address the ethical issues of this research, the researcher obtained a research permit and the necessary consent letters from the relevant authorities. Sufficient information was also provided to the participants before engagement and voluntariness was ensured (Participants were under no pressure to take part) (Abed, 2015; Beauchamp & Childress, 2001)

As suggested by Gubrium and Holstein (2003), the researcher created study-specific questions for discussions instead of utilizing pre-established instruments to ensure discovery-oriented inquiries. This was achieved through training (insights from qualified researchers and supervisors) and practice (piloting). Since this is a GT approach and hence discovery-oriented, the researcher conducted an open-ended inquiry where the participants gave their perspectives with little or no limitations provided they remained within the study topic (Chenail, 2011).

The FGDs as the main data collection tools enhanced the role of the researcher: First, they created an interactive context that enabled the development of rich data and different insights from the participants. Secondly, by carefully planning and facilitating the discussions, the researcher attempted to maintain a non-intimidating environment that enabled the participants to openly contribute a variety of ideas. Since FGDs are not static, the researcher was able to probe more into diverse aspects of inclusion

Apart from research preparation and data collection, qualitative researchers have the role of deriving meaning from complex and ambiguous data (Barrett, 2007).

Despite the many benefits of the researcher as the primary data collection instrument, it presents the challenge of bias management and instrument inflexibility (Chenail, 2011). To avoid such, the researcher engaged several techniques that will help curb bias. This included a pilot study to identify areas of improvement, triangulation for cross-verification and collaboration with supervisors (Simundić, 2013; Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010; Smith & Nobel, 2010).

### **3.8.4 Role of Language during Data Collection and Analysis**

Qualitative data is predominantly collected in form of written/ spoken language (Seale et al., 2004; Smith, 2003; McLeod, 2001). This is mainly done through recording which is later transcribed for analytical purposes (Polkinghorne, 2005). He points out that working with this kind of data needs a researcher's awareness of the complexity of self-reports. The researcher should keep in mind that "the evidence itself is not the marks on the paper but the meanings represented in these texts." (Polkinghorne, 2005, p138).

A compounding of verbatim transcriptions and the researcher's field records on non-verbal observation increases the reliability and validity of the research (MacLean et al., 2004; Wengraf, 2001). Logically, it is efficacious for the researcher to transcribe their own data as they have first-hand experience from their involvement with participants and understands the

verbal and non-verbal cues during the actual data collection (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006). However, this transcription is open to an amplitude of errors including language error, misinterpretation and bias (MacLean et al., 2004; Easton et al., 2000). The transcription process is also costly in terms of time, funds and human resources (Britten, 1995). These factors have led some qualitative researchers to question the need for a word to word transcription of data (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006; Fasick, 2001; Wengraf, 2001). The process of transcription should have its eye on “interpretation and generation of meanings from the data rather than being a simple clerical task...” and combine the use of field notes and observation records (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006, p 40). A transcription that entails translation from one language to another is more complex and challenging and it may require an interpreter, a native speaker and/or a professional especially if the researcher is not a native speaker (Davidson, 2009; Moerman, 1996).

The transcription in this study began with the researcher developing the initial transcripts herself by moving back and forth between the recordings and transcripts as recommended by several researchers (Ashmore & Reed, 2000; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Pomerantz, 1997). After the completion of the transcripts, the researcher engaged two experienced transcribers, both native speakers and language teachers. One is culturally a native language teacher endorsed as per the community protocols. To initiate the engagement, the researcher discussed with them the ethical matters related to confidentiality and validity (Tilly & Powick, 2002). They were separately engaged to encourage independency and trustworthiness (Dressler & Kreuz, 2000). Their reports were then considered in the final drafts of the transcripts.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

Data analysis in qualitative research seeks to organize, understand and reduce data that is in form of words, language and descriptions into themes and theories (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In GT, data analysis is a systematic coding process that commences with elemental description, followed by conceptual ordering that then leads to theorizing (Patton, 2002; Walker & Myrick, 2006). Both Glaserian and Straussian GT make use of coding, comparison, memos and theoretical sampling in the process of theory creation. While Glaser has divided the coding procedure into two (substantive and theoretical coding), Strauss has divided it into open, axial and selective coding. For Strauss and Corbin, coding is a process of analyzing data while Glaser takes it deeper to conceptualizing through constant comparison of incidents.

Analysis in GT begins with open coding where the data is organized to identify concepts (Moghaddam, 2006). Theoretical sensitivity is maintained by working on the data theoretically and sensitively (Hoare et al., 2012; Birks & Mills, 2011). Here, data properties are described through dimensionalization helping the researcher break the data which in turn brings about the formation of categories (Moghaddam, 2006; Walker & Myrick, 2006; Goulding, 1999). Theoretical sensitivity at this stage helps give meaning to the data and can be achieved through literature, professional and personal experience and the analytical process itself (Hoare et al., 2012; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It entails starting the research with a few pre-determined and logical ideas, being able to detect happenings and events key to the research (Glaser & Holton, 2004), and enabling the researcher to not only collect data but also relate it to normal theory models (Glaser, 1992). Generally, open coding shows the researcher the direction to take to avoid ambiguous and excessive concepts to identify core categories (Brown et al., 2002; Goulding, 1999). Open coding is followed by axial coding which aims at bringing the data segments together and connecting categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It entails breaking down and relating codes and categories through inductive and deductive thinking (Moghaddam, 2006; Brown et al., 2002). The generic relationship between categories and concepts is well understood through the 'coding paradigm' that consists of 3 main aspects; conditions/situations that which the phenomenon occurs, actions and interactions of the participants and the consequences of the actions taken or not taken (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). At this stage, the relationships between categories and concepts developed in the open coding process are investigated and new categories emerge (Spiggle, 1994). This process of slowly and carefully developing categories through exploring similarities and differences within the data is referred to as a constant comparative procedure (Creswell, 2002; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) The intended goal of axial coding is achieved by examining the data, conditions revolving it (causal, contextual and intervening conditions) and consequences of actions taken (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019). This, they note, allows the researcher to consider other factors surrounding the raw data such as history, culture, socioeconomic background, politics and technological issues. Therefore, this process puts an axis through the data enabling the researcher to explore theoretical possibilities (Glaser, 1978). The development of the storyline is achieved in the final stage of selective coding (Moghaddam, 2006). Here, the data is integrated and refined to generate a theory (Babchuk, 1997; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The researcher selects a core category and relates similar ones until theories are generated (Walker & Myrick, 2006; Babchuk, 1997). Conditional and consequential matrixes are formed that help

the analyst to consider the relationship between categories, conditions and consequences which in turn helps form a story that gives the basis of a theory (Brown et al., 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). At the end of this stage, there is a storyline that is interpreted as an emerging theory (McCaslin & Scott, 2003; Stamp, 1999).

Several researchers have summarized, modified and elaborated the coding process (Williams & Moser, 2019; Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019; Elliott, 2018; Holton, 2007). Adopting the various authors, Saldana, 2013 in his work *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* highlights the steps that are significant to this research. The process starts with the development of codes which are then used to generate categories. After the categories emerge themes and concepts as the outcome of careful coding, categorizing and reflecting analytically on the data. With the themes and concepts, the researcher unveils their interaction and implication leading to the development of the theory (Richards & Morse, 2007; Saldana, 2013; Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Data analysis and interpretation were guided by GT analysis. This means that data collection, organization and interpretation occurred co-currently unlike other methods where data is collected and stored for later interpretation (Charmaz, 2003). The researcher personally administered the research instruments directly to the participants. Self-data collection enabled the researcher to gain a better understanding of the participants and settings, identify a pattern and regulate tools to obtain more data and clarity (Roulston, 2010). At the commencement of this research, 4 policy documents that directly impact the Kenyan Primary education were scrutinized. The data obtained informed the formulation of research questions for the collection of the second set of data through FGDs and interviews which also informed the collection of the third phase through observation and interviews. This created a cyclic relationship aimed at discovering and developing a theory.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AS DOCUMENTED IN KENYA**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the Kenyan IE as outlined in education policies and legislation in line with objective one of the study:

*‘Outline the concept on IE as documented in the Kenyan education policies and laws.’*

Charmaz (2006) highlights that extant texts which include public records, government reports and policies can be used as the main source of data but are mostly used as supplementary sources. As in the case of this study, document analysis is used in combination with other qualitative methods such as interviews and observations (Nobel & Heale, 2019; Yin, 1994; Denzin, 1970). It is also applicable in the formulation of questions and identifying areas of interest as used by Goldstein and Reiboldt (2004) to develop an interview schedule. Additionally, it helps in trailing transitions and practical developments (Yin, 1994). Document analysis is an effective form of data collection since documents are “non-reactive” (Bowen, 2009, p. 31) and “remains unchanged” (Triad, 2016, p. 3) by the research process or the researcher’s view.

#### **4.1 Interpretive Policy Analysis**

Noteworthy to this research is interpretive policy analysis that looks into the knowledge, experience and power that surround a policy (Wagenaar, 2017; Innes & Booher, 2010; Howlett et al., 2009). Generally, policy analysis is concerned with the need for and nature of actions taken by governments, non-governmental organizations or any other authority to achieve executive goals (Browne et al., 2019; Yanow, 2000). It seeks to inform a certain group of

audience, mainly the policymakers and the government, on what impact the policies will have on the intended population and how well they will achieve the desired outcome (Yanow, 2007). She further notes that policy analysis can be conducted by researchers, consulting firms, state committees, independent agencies among others. Yanow (2000) explains that interpretive policy analysis shifts from the traditional investigation of policies in terms of cost and economic implications to what is their meaning hence focusing on values, beliefs, feelings and general human action as part of the policy. Interpretive approaches to the view of social constructivism argue that facts, values and norms should not be separated during policy analysis and therefore the analyst ought to bring out the correlation (Browne et al., 2019; Wagenaar, 2017; Arrona, 2017; Fischer & Gottweis, 2013). It partially employs the spirit of discourse analysis of looking into language use to access reality (Howlett et al., 2009; Hajer & Versteeg, 2005). It also borrows from the hermeneutic approach that focuses on relevant texts such as legislative records for not only textual interpretation but also human sense-making (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003; Yanow, 1996). This means that policies can emit diverse meanings and the analysis should focus on 'shared meanings' or 'matched signals' (Innes & Booher, 2010; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012; Yanow, 2007). They highlight that policies do not have fixed absolute meaning and therefore the analyst-researcher looks at its different angles to uncover meanings and implications. Arrona (2017) suggests that the interpretive policy analysis focuses on the actors (e.g. legislators and implementers), policy-relevant language and the settings of the policy action.

Traditionally, the first step in the policy analytical process entails the identification of the context/ problem and specifying the objectives (Suthersanen, 2003; Bonser et al., 1996; Patton et al., 2015). The Great Lakes Equity Centre (2016, p.8) outlines four questions that should be considered when looking into equity-related policies; “What is the intent behind this policy? What social constructions does this policy embrace? Who benefits and who does not? What

actions will redress the inequities we see in our policy?”. The second step entails the identification of key stakeholders (Petrina, 2021). This as highlighted by Suthersanen (2003) could be persons, institutions or legal entities. It also entails shifting the focus from what is written to what is practised (Petrina, 2021). Here, important questions such as “How do people engage with policy and what do they make of it? What does policy mean in this context? What work does it do? Whose interests does it promote? What are its social effects?” are addressed (Shore et al., 2011, p. 8). Next, the researcher describes the problem as precisely as possible and identifies the factors surrounding it (Coglianese, 2004). The problems are identified independently and then in connection with the policies. This then leads to the identification of causes of the problems and consequently, possible solutions are generated (Coglianese, 2004). After identifying the problem, evaluating the fairness and efficiency in the practice of the policies, and identifying issues surrounding the stakeholders, the policy analyst can then generate possible solutions to the identified problems (Petrina, 2021; Szostak, 2005).

The analysis problem began with identification of the problem and formulation of objectives. This as evidenced by the researcher’s experience, existing literature and other research findings brought to the limelight that despite efforts to improve the quality and accessibility of education, Kenya faces myriad challenges in trying to deliver quality and inclusive education. With many researchers focusing on educational practices and stakeholders, the researcher sought to look further into the policies that govern the implementation of this education. After identifying the recent and most commonly referred to policies by the ministry of education and other stakeholders, the researcher started the journey of understanding and scrutinizing the policies to highlight the areas of concern (those that address education). Next, the individuals/groups affecting or affected by the policy decisions were identified. In line with the theoretical framework (the theories of educational changes), these individuals were considered an integral part of the policies. They were consequently engaged in discussions concerning the policies;

what powers do they have in policy formulation and selection? How and to what extent do they understand the policies? What power do they have in policy decisions?

The next step was the identification of the problem and factors surrounding the policies. By carefully scrutinizing the areas that address education in the policies, the pros and cons in relation to inclusion were highlighted. The data on policies provided a baseline to investigate further what happens beyond formulation. This meant exploring the process of implementation to analyse the gap between what is stated in policies and practised in schools. Chapters 6 and 7 will therefore address this gap\ challenges as highlighted in the field study in comparison to what is stated in the policies and suggest possible solutions to mark the last stage of the policy analysis.

Therefore, in reference to Yanow (2007) and to investigate the meanings, relationships and implications of concepts in the chosen documents and their impact on the provision of IE in Kenya, the researcher began with sense-making of the policies as they are. Then through investigation and reflection (data collection through the fieldwork) more meaning and interpretations were found. Hence, this was an 'iterative meaning-making process, rather than a step-wise one' (p. 118).

#### **4.2 Legal Documents/ Policies on Inclusive Education in Kenya**

Kenya has ratified numerous domestic and international documents, policies, laws and legislation to maximize accessibility and equality in education provision. The recent education policy and laws have devoted quality, equality and inclusion to education. Four documents selected based on *purposive sampling* are addressed in this chapter: *The Constitution of Kenya* is the law that governs the lives of Kenyans, guarantees certain rights to the people and determine the powers and duties of the government, therefore, its pertinence cannot be overlooked. *Vision 2030* is the country's developmental strategy that aims at transforming the

lives of Kenyans through an all-inclusive participatory process, a goal that will be achieved through the provision of quality and meaningful education. Similarly, *The Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities* is a transformational document for learners with disabilities and has brought a critical focus shift from the provision of special needs education to IE. The implementation of all these goals will be achieved through a considerable curriculum, leading to the sampling of *The Basic Education Curriculum Framework* that is in line with the aforementioned policies. It focuses on the provision of practical, individualized, meaningful and inclusive education. In the researcher's view, if the sampled documents are effectively implemented, then the Kenyan goal of IE will be satisfactorily achieved.

#### **4.2.1 The Kenyan Constitution (2010)**

The constitution is the Kenyan supreme law drafted by a committee of Experts and voted into action by the Kenyan citizens. It was enacted in 2010 and is arguably the umbrella for other legal documents. On education, it recognizes that every person has a right to education {Article 43 (1) (f)} and that persons with disabilities have the right to access institutions and facilities integrated into the society {(Article 54(1) (b))}. It further states the need of providing special opportunities for minorities and marginalized groups {(Article 56(1) (b))}. It commits to the provision of quality and affordable education that is free and compulsory and intends to achieve this through the provision of resources and materials especially those that help overcome constraints faced by persons with disabilities (PWDs). Its strength also lies in the recognition and respect for diversity with a special mention for PWDs, minority and marginalized groups. In addition, it commits to ensuring equality and non-discrimination for PWDs through “dignity and respect and to be addressed and referred to in a manner that is not demeaning” {(Article 54(1) (a))}. Education institutions, public places and information will also be made accessible, especially for PWDs. The constitution also commits to the use of appropriate and diverse means of communication such as braille and Kenyan Sign Language. It also commits to the training

and employment of teachers, a duty delegated to the Teacher Service Commission (TSC). Basically, the provision and facilitation of education as per the constitution is an obligation of two bodies working collaboratively, the state and the TSC. The constitution by implication pinpoints key aspects of inclusion including recognition and appreciation of diversity, educational equity, enhancing communication, school preparedness and provision of resources (Swart, 2004; Ainscow, 2005).

However, the constitution portrays some demerits. The articles that mention education (see Appendix viii) fail to satisfactorily distinguish the education that the state is committed to. The constitution does not give any mention to IE but mentions integration once in a contradictory manner by stating that persons with disabilities will access institutions that are integrated in the society but for PWDs. Does it mean that they can only access only institutions for PWDs? If so, does it then not dilute the provision of equality and non-discrimination in education?

Nonetheless, with the design and purpose of the Kenyan constitution, the above shortcomings are explicable; it is the main Kenyan legal document that embodies not only education matters but also all the other spheres of life and therefore outlines the synopsis for each sector.

#### **4.2.2 Kenya Vision 2030**

This is Kenya's guiding development programme from 2008-2030. It aims at transforming Kenya into an industrialized country with high quality of life for all its citizens by 2030. The development will be done through "an all-inclusive and participatory stakeholder consultative process, involving Kenyans from all parts of the country." (Kenya Vision 2030, p.1) The vision is based on three pillars; economic, social and political. At the social pillar is the sector of education and training which is geared towards inclusive development of lives with special mention to PWD, vulnerable groups and youths. In education, it commits to increase of accessibility and quality education for all, reduction of illiteracy and enhancement of individual

growth, provision of adequate and modernized infrastructure, facilities and resources and integration of new technology to enhance economic growth. The prepotency of this document is in its attempt to link education with economy. It gives considerable relevance to the development of modern technologies by establishing a link between education and labour market. This calls for the modernized training of teachers. Individual development is emphasized through recognition of diversity, and the provision of specialized programs and facilities that promote self-competency. It advocates for Kenya, to not only develop its education standards within its boundaries but also to international levels. Although it does not mention nor discuss IE directly, it captures significant aspects of inclusion such as individualization, provision of specialized programs and resources, increase in educational relevance/applicability and modernized teacher education.

#### **4.2.3 The Basic Education Curriculum Framework (2017)**

It is commonly referred to as the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC). It is the Kenyan current curriculum designed by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) and launched in 2007 by the Ministry of Education (MoE). It is oriented toward inclusion and development of skills and knowledge that is applicable in real life. The vision of this framework is to “enable every Kenyan to become an engaged, empowered and ethical citizen... through the provision of excellent teaching, school environments and resources and a sustainable visionary curriculum that provides every learner with seamless, competency based high quality learning that values every learner.” (p. vii). This is arguably one of the most explicit documents in the provision of practical education specifically for individuals with special needs; it is allinclusive and if implemented expertly, it will see Kenya achieve its education goals on inclusion. It explores major areas of IE including; involvement of all stakeholders, empowerment of each individual, provision of inclusive quality teaching through teacher education, provision of a physically and socially inclusive learning environment, instilling

morality and accountability, provision of education that is practical and relevance to the future and in the long run, ensure quality assessment to nurture excellency rather than competition. It is based on 7 core competencies namely; communication and collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving, imagination and creativity, citizenship, learning to learn, self-efficacy and digital literacy.

However, the ultimate success and sustainability of this CBC depend on the entire process of implementation, the facilitation, funding and participation of stakeholders. The stakeholders need also to be careful to avoid misinterpretation. For instance, CBC divides learners with disabilities into two; those eligible for IE (gifted and talented, visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical handicap, mild cerebral palsy, learning disabilities, emotional and behavioural difficulties and communication disorders) and those who require special care (mental handicap, deaf-blindness, autism, cerebral palsy, multiple handicaps and profound disabilities). This if not interpreted correctly might encourage segregation a principle contradicting that of IE.

#### **4.2.4 Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities (2018)**

This policy was a result of the review of the education and training of PWDs. It affirms that learners with special needs will be more productive and dynamic if they learn together with their peers in an equipped inclusive environment. It also acknowledges that much progress has been achieved in the education of these learners although major challenges persist due to poor policy dissemination and lack of implementation coordination framework. The policy stresses the importance of early identification, proper assessment and inclusive placements as the key start to IE. Chapter 2 of this policy tackles IE which is clearly stated in its objective; “Promote and enhance the provision of inclusive education and training for learners and trainees with disabilities.” (p.5). This is to be effectuated by the Ministry of Education (MoE) through the

provision of adequate resources, effective communication and network strategies, quality assurance and monitoring and also quality research and data-evidence structure for sustainability and improvement. Challenges facing IE for learners with disabilities as identified by this document revolve around IE policy shortcomings, infrastructure inaccessibility, inadequate human and learning resources, scanty data on disabilities and negative attitudes toward disabilities.

#### **4.3 Prevalent Features of the Policies**

After independence, all key educational policies and strategic developments have been the works of working parties, commissions and committees. Their deliberations in terms of reports inform policy formulation and reforms based on the identified needs and gaps. The first-ever report was the Ominde's Report of 1964 a year after Kenya's independence and was aimed at responding to the needs and changes of independent Kenya and more so bringing national unity. This was followed by several other reports that looked at different levels and angles of education (Gachukia, 2003). In 2000, the Koech Report that aimed at total equality and quality of education and training was released. However, it proved too expensive to implement and was therefore only realized up to the level of curriculum rationalization (Cheserek & Mugalavai, 2012). Similar challenges continue to face the well-formulated policies making them unrealistic to implement and/or sustain.

The subsequent section analyzes the general features of the policies under study which includes; review oriented policies, the policy mission/vision statement, participants in policy formulation, implementation framework and the cohesion among the policies. It eventually analyses the nature of IE as described by the policies.

### **a) Review-oriented Policies**

As stated in the documents under study, the emergence of a policy occurs after an extensive review of previous policies resulting in updated versions that address certain gaps. The development of educational related policies in Kenya is initiated by the government of the day and formulated as per the needs of the citizens. For instance, Vision 2030 was developed after a disappointing performance of the Kenyan economy in the 1990s and hence the need for a long term economic sustenance framework. Likewise, the Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities (SPLTD) was developed after the critique and review of the Special Needs Education Policy 2009 to shift the focus from SNE to IE. The Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF), the Kenyan curriculum of the day, was developed after an intensive review of the 8-4-4 education system from 1985. Various reports were considered and the need arose for a curriculum that transforms the society by enhancing its productivity. The curriculum was therefore developed to produce a flexible education that nurtures talents and interests for individual holistic growth, career progression and sustainable development. Based on the background information of these policies, they are consciously and systematically developed after identification of gaps, and formation of committees and goals. The question, therefore, lies in whether the same procedures are adhered to during the implementation process.

### **b) The Mission/Vision Statement**

One common feature of the documents under study is that they have explicit vision and mission statements that they hope to achieve upon implementation. This is significant because visions and missions foster the creation of short and long term goals thus providing a road map for the implementation phase (Papuloza, 2014). The SPLTD, for instance, states its vision and mission at the beginning and outlines how they will be achieved throughout the policy. Its vision is;

“To provide an inclusive and equitable quality education opportunity for all for sustainable development.” While its mission is;

“To provide a conducive environment in which the potential of all learners and trainees with disabilities is harnessed to equip them with skills for self-reliance and dignity.”

The BECF also states its mission as "nurturing every learner's potential." While its vision is to; "enable every Kenyan to become an engaged, empowered and ethical citizen." As attested, the policies are keen on individualization and realization of one's potential, a principle that is crucial to IE. One of the key elements of inclusion is respect for individual differences and meaningful accommodation of every learner in the learning institutions (Voltz et al., 2001; Rouse & Florian, 2012). The policies have therefore directly or indirectly committed to IE and the question is whether the same zeal is carried on through the process of implementation. (This question will be explored in the subsequent chapters).

### **c) Stakeholders' Participation in Policy Formulation**

Policy-making machinery is not solely a one-man or office affair. It is a process based on contributions from various offices although, at later stages, a specific office that specializes in the matter at hand puts the report together (Marume, 2016). For policies pertaining to public matters, public institutions are engaged and include commissions of inquiry, parliamentary select members, departmental committees and staff units. While in most cases parliament, cabinets and ministries form a majority of the committee members, there is the danger of political interference and the result is the existence of equivocal policies with no clear implementation path (Marume, 2016).

The formation of Kenyan policy committees is no different from what is described above. The Kenyan constitution was written by a committee of experts, revised by a Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) and later presented to the parliament for final amendments. It was then

released to the citizens and was approved by 67% of Kenyan voters. However, major complaints arose about the political influence. A report by Kenya's Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) noted that the constitution was used politically by the then major political parties (Party of National Unity and Orange Democratic Movement), especially on matters of government powers. Vision 2030 was developed with a consultative approach. A team of experts that structured the first draft was selected by the then Kenyan president Mwai Kibaki. This was followed by consultation through workshops with stakeholders at the public and private level, civil society and NGOs. A provincial consultancy was carried out in rural and remote areas of the country. To synthesize the findings, a team of experts was drawn from the Kenyan government, research institutions, private sectors and international consultants under the umbrella of the National Vision Steering Committee. A similar consultative procedure was applied in the formulation of SPLTD that took place for around two years involving a variety of stakeholders and actors. Members were drawn from MoE, TSC, KISE, KNEC, KICD and universities led by the deputy director of SNE. Several public forums were conducted at the county and government levels, aiming at adequate representation of people. Similarly, the formulation of BECF involved various individuals and organizations led by a National Steering Committee. Consultations were done within government policies, development partners like UNICEF and UNESCO, religious organizations and MoE consultants.

Involvement of various stakeholders in policy-making whether in a bottom-up, up-bottom or parallel approach leads to informed decision making, reduction of conflict and a sense of ownership (Voinov & Bousquet, 2010). However, this does not automatically lead to legitimacy and acceptance of policies (Korfmacher, 2001). The success of the collaboration requires rational social relations among the stakeholders, a well-organized communication system and objective decision making (Campo et al., 2010). Apart from human resources, technical aspects and analysis skills are also required (Mendoza & Prabhu, 2006). For most

policies, consultation in the initial stage of formulation is observed. The task however remains in engagement in the implementation process and therefore a focus on the ‘product’ rather than the ‘process’ (Voinov & Bousquet, 2010). Though there is seemingly adequate involvement of stakeholders in education policy formulation in Kenya, the question remains on how far they are engaged in the implementation process as will be addressed in later chapters.

#### **d) Policy Implementation Framework**

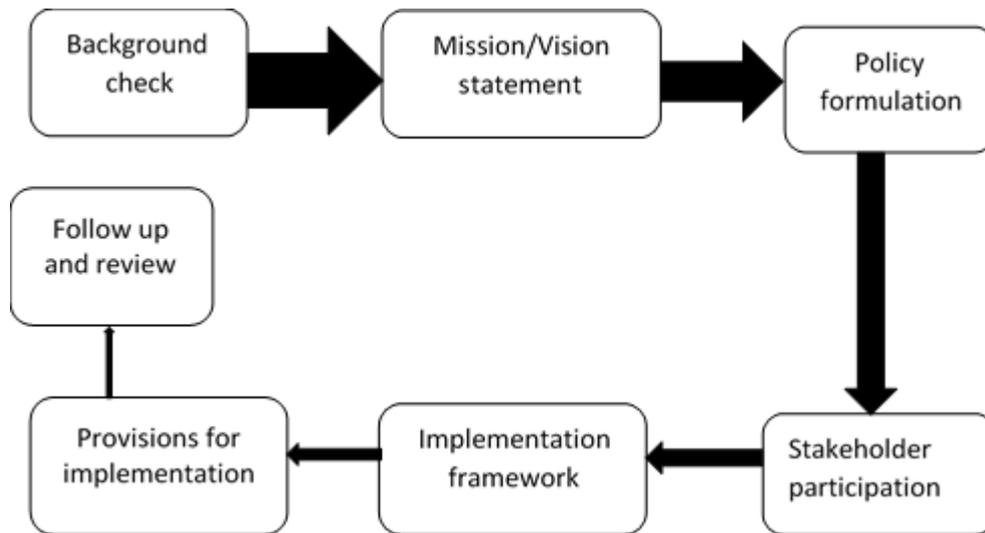
SPLTD come with an attached implementation framework to operationalize the strategies. Chapter 5 gives the details of coordination, management, quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation. Various designated desks were to be set to handle the various aspects of implementation categorized into 3 namely; management and coordination, quality assurance and monitoring and evaluation. The TSC, County government and curriculum support officers oversee the implementation through a multi-sectoral approach. However, just as observed in its old version of the SNE Policy Framework, it fails to give concrete guidelines and guidance on procedures, provisions and time frames. In education, the Vision 2030 does not provide means of implementation but mentions an all-round adoption of Science, technology and innovation as the implementation tool. The constitution promises to ensure a progressive implementation of its principles through a Constitutional Implementation Oversight Committee that will give regular reports and appropriate actions taken in case of problems. BECF plans to foresee the implementation through proper preparation of teachers, provision of assessment approaches and teaching and learning resources. Apart from SPLTD which outlines an implementation framework, the other policies barely give an implementation guideline and this may lead to laxity and misinterpretation.

#### **e) Policies Coherence**

As observed during the analysis, there is an interconnection between the policies, with close reference to each other and aiming at a common educational goal. The point of reference is provided by the constitution as it lays the fundamental rights of citizens and directs legislation making. For instance, one of the guiding principles of Vision 2030 is 'constitutional supremacy' where the rights and principles stated in the constitution are to be respected at all times. Correspondingly, one of the four objectives of the SPLTD is to align education and training with relevant policies like the Constitution and Vision 2030. BECF also commits to re-align the education sector to the Constitution and Vision 2030.

Policy coherence is significant to a diversity of policy areas including substantive areas (e.g. education and environment), certain groups (e.g. persons with disabilities and children), and specific geographical areas (e.g. rural and urban) (May et al., 2006). The commonality of policy goals gives a puissant integrative force to ensure goals are not too ambiguous or numerous (Browne, 1995). Increased policy cohesion may lead to higher policy stability and consistent policy provision (May et al., 2006). However, this does not necessarily translate to better policy implementation (Majone & Wildavsky, 1979). Therefore, the question (as will be addressed in the next chapters) is; does the policy coherence in the Kenyan education documents translate to better provision and implementation?

As observed during the analysis, the documents depict a certain pattern of formation. From a proper background check to mission statement all through to implementation and follow up. The attention given at different stages varies structurally and the emphasis tends to weaken towards implementation and evaluation as shown in the figure below.



**Figure 4. 1 The stages of policy formulation:** the decrease in the width of the arrow represents the decrease in the emphasis as the process nears implementation.

#### 4.4 Inclusive Education as documented in the Policies

Provision and description of IE in the policies have been mentioned either directly or indirectly through the provisions of elements that qualify education to be inclusive. For instance, the Constitution does not directly mention IE but gives legislation fundamental for its provision. Article 43(1)(f) states that 'every person has a right to education' while article 53(1)(b) states 'every child has a right to free and compulsory basic education'. So how does IE come in? In a study of local and international laws, Gordon (2013) reports that IE is a legal human right and in most cases also a moral human right, although the latter has to come with a lot of provisions and preparations for it to be morally right (Lomasky, 1987). The mention of 'every child' and 'every person' is also a significant element of inclusion. Hegarty (2001) asserts that IE should be a problem solving educational system for each learner with emphasis on learning for and by all learners. An issue of contention that brings vagueness in the provision of IE is article 54(1) (b) which states that;

‘a person with any disability is entitled to access educational institutions and facilities for persons with disabilities that are integrated into society to the extent compatible with the interests of the person’

Does the use of ‘facilities for persons with disabilities’ encourage segregation a principle against IE? The use of ‘*any* disability’ may also raise questions of whether the extremity of the disability matters. The two may therefore be a source of dissension concerning the provision of IE.

Similarly, Vision 2030 does not give direct attention to IE. However, under section 5.1 on Education and Training, it commits to increasing accessibility, transition, quality and relevance of education, principles crucial to IE (Hegarty, 2001; Sebba, 1996). Another goal is the integration of all special schools and although integration might not translate to inclusion, the placement of the learner in an integrated setting is a notable step towards inclusion (Lorenz, 2013).

The BECF has purposed to provide IE;

“Its purpose is to provide a comprehensive conceptualization of reforms in basic education; pre-primary education, primary education, secondary education, and *inclusive education*.” (p.3).

The Framework is anchored on Kenya's national goals that also commit to IE. Goal four commits to;

“provide inclusive and equitable access to quality and differentiated education; including for learners with special educational needs and disabilities.”

It is also devoted to diversity (gender, race, language, tribe and culture) and inclusion regardless of physical, emotional, intellectual or any other difference. This is by ensuring that

all learning institutions accommodate these learners reasonably. Insistence is also on differentiated curriculum, parental engagement, inclusive environment and assessments. This move towards inclusiveness is informed by the agreement to local and global declarations and recommendations among them the UNESCO Salamanca Statement, 1994.

The SPLTD has dedicated its chapter 3 to IE. It is the overarching principle of the policy. It defines IE as;

“An approach where learners and trainees with disabilities are provided with appropriate educational interventions within regular institutions of learning with reasonable accommodations and support” (p. vii).

It then gives provision for these 'regular institutions of learning': they should at least have a resource room where learners with disabilities are given occasional specialized instructions, a resource teacher who has been trained on special needs and assistive devices that will enhance independent functional capabilities of these learners. As noted in the policy, consistent research and data management is paramount to the sustainability of IE. Although IE is the main approach, the role of special institutions/units and home-based education programmes cannot be downplayed (guiding principle no.5). The home-based education will serve two purposes. First, during the onset of disabilities and early stages of learning, the home setting will be most appropriate to ensure maximum care as they acquire the entry behaviour. Secondly, learners with severe multiple disabilities will have to rely on home-based education because of the nature of their disability. It generally outlines the principles that should guide Kenyan education institutions across all levels in ensuring an inclusive, healthy and safe learning environment for learners with disabilities.

As outlined in the above illustrations, *recognition* of IE has been given remarkable attention in the policies. The next sub-section analyses the IE *provisions* and outlines the dimensions of inclusion noted in the policies.

#### **4.5 Dimensions of Inclusive Education as per the Policies**

The success journey of IE begins with a clear concept and definition followed by school transformation and system change (Cobley, 2018). Nonetheless, IE reforms tend to be more design-focused and less resource-intensive (Schuelka, 2018). The section below explores the IE policy design which will later guide the comparison with its practice as aimed in objective 3 of this research.

##### **a) Quality education and accessibility**

SPLTD is the document that predominantly highlights accessibility and quality education as it represents learners with disabilities. It therefore strongly believes that the goal of inclusion is only achievable if the two aspects are put into consideration. Its access policy is to;

“Enhance equal access, retention, progression and transition of all learners and trainees with disabilities at all levels of education and training.” (p. xiii).

Access should be given from early childhood development to tertiary institutions and all types of learners heedless of gender, age or disability. For Vision 2030, an increase in education accessibility is a way of curbing illiteracy and therefore aims at achieving 95% school enrollment. The Vision of the education sector is to;

“Have globally competitive quality education, training and research for sustainable development.” (p. 16).

Correspondingly, BECF calls for equal access for all, not only in institutions but also in differentiated educational programs. Learners with special needs should access the regular

curriculum with adaptations and modifications where necessary. However, those who may not benefit from the regular curriculum include those with mental challenges, severe autism and cerebral palsy, deaf-blindness, and multiple and profound disabilities.

#### **b) Individualization and non-discrimination**

Individualization is one way of ensuring active participation and personal achievement in an inclusive setting as stated in the *Index for Inclusion* by Booth and Ainscow (2011). The BECF upholds this view by stating that individualization in education provision will promote development and self-fulfilment which later leads to self-economic growth. Individuals should be able to achieve the given social goals without jeopardizing their potential and urge to achieve personal goals. It commits to the goal of the National Education Sector Plan (2015) of "providing an education system that addresses the individual needs and academics, professional and technical aspirations across a range of learning pathways..." (p. 53). For learners with disabilities, the teachers are expected to develop IEPs for individualized learning and support. For these learners, timing will also be individualized; time allocation will depend on completion ability and mastery of the task. The Competency Based Curriculum acknowledges the hidden ability of each learner and therefore encourages learners to think as individuals. The learning outcome is to "Exploit individual talents for leisure, self-fulfilment, career growth, further education and training." (p. 52). The recommendation of IEPs is also in the SPLTD as a means of enabling learners with disabilities to attain their targets easily and effectively. Furthermore, it campaigns against discrimination of these learners in guiding principle no.8 "Non-discrimination in access to education and training for learners and trainees with disabilities in all institutions of learning." (p.3).

Inclusive mentorship programmes will be developed aimed at assisting learners with disabilities and their families to overcome the psychosocial effects of discrimination. The same standpoint is expressed in the constitution:

“The State shall put in place affirmative action programmes designed to ensure that minorities and marginalized groups are provided special opportunities in educational and economic fields.” (article 56b).

It gives legal provisions for PWD, minorities and marginalized groups. Vision 2030 promotes individual development and recognition of diversity with special mention to those with disabilities, marginalized and at risk. Generally, individualization in inclusion will help achieve academic goals which translate to social and economic stability in future.

### **c) Assessment and Early Intervention**

Early intervention if done appropriately will guide teachers and other service providers in developing and evaluating interventional services. Eco-behavioural assessment displays the behaviour, competence and abilities of a child useful in planning for the child's full development (McConnell, 2000). Although these aspects have not been mentioned in the Constitution and Vision 2030, they have been prioritized in the SPLTD and BECF. The former recommends a functional assessment for learners with disabilities and defines it as "a type of sensory, developmental, physical, cognitive, or academic evaluation that helps identify the ability, level of support, supervision and resources on an individual with disability needs." (pg. vii). After this assessment, there will be the development of IEPs and intervention programmes which entails placement and adaptation of curriculum, environment and facilities to ensure they are disability-friendly. To effectuate this, the MoE will revitalize the Educational Assessment and Resource Centre (EARC) at the national, county and sub-county levels. Adequate and skilled human resources and equipment will be provided. A similar perspective is in the BCEF.

Education for learners with special needs will start with a functional assessment which will determine the placement of the child and the kind of intervention. As noted, assessment and early intervention is an obligation for learners with special needs at the onset of their schooling.

#### **d) Practical and Relevant Education**

Practical and hands-on education should form a child's early experience in learning as the association, experience and skills learnt are long-lasting (Edgeworth and Edgeworth, 1835).

Vision 2030 identifies education and training as one of the social pillars toward Kenya's prosperity and this will be better achieved through the adoption of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI). Funding will be improved in schools to empower them technologically.

Adaptation of a new curriculum to modernize IE is also a provision in SPLTD and BECF. SPLTD proposes the adoption of new technologies and devices to meet the needs of learners with disabilities. For these devices and specialized resources, the government should waive taxes to increase affordability. BECF is widely known as Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) since its centre of focus is the acquisition of knowledge and skills that learners can demonstrate and apply in real-life experiences.

Apart from the application of the knowledge, the two policies agree that IE should aim at mentoring, moulding and nurturing national values. SPLTD policy on this is to "Facilitate development of life skills, national values and principles for the holistic development through mentorship and moulding of learners and trainees with disabilities." (p. 37). Similarly, BECF aims at promoting moral and religious values as enshrined in the Constitution. This will, in turn, lead to the transformation of learners into ethical and self-disciplined citizens, and secondly enhance the productivity of every Kenyan hence accelerating the country's economic growth (BECF, P.9; SPLTD, p.26).

### **e) Human Resource Development**

As noted by UNESCO during the 48<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Education, one of the main contributors to the success of IE is teacher education which is unfortunately given little attention (UNESCO IBE, 2008). However, this may not be entirely the case in the Kenyan education policies. Part 3 of chapter 13 of the Constitution outline that the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) should oversee teacher education and supply. It should review the standards of persons entering the teaching service, ensure employment of trained teachers, review demands and supply and maintain overall discipline. Vision 2030 strategizes to modernize teacher education while SPLTD propose that teacher education should include support of learners with disabilities and also increase the intake of trainees with disabilities;

“Support the recruitment and re-deployment of the human resource in schools and TVET institutions, to ensure that skills, qualifications, competencies and attitudes are well aligned to support learners and trainees with disabilities.” (p. xiv).

Appropriate training should also be accorded to those in assessment centres. As mentioned in the Constitution, the TSC will monitor all the activities pertaining to teachers. The BECF outlines the benefits of a properly trained teacher; he/she will add value to the students, encourage curiosity and discussions and teach problem-solving skills. It recognizes;

“the need for high-quality teachers who are equipped to meet the needs of all learners is essential in order to provide not only equal opportunities for all, but also education for an inclusive society.” (p. 131).

Generally, the achievement of quality and inclusive education particularly for learners with disabilities will require trained and specialized human resources.

## **f) Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

The initial idea of LRE as highlighted in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) focused on a barrier-free physical environment for learners with disabilities. Over time, this idea has been expanded to apply to all types of learners in an inclusive setting and beyond physical accommodation. Rueda et al. (2000) argue that to bring equity to students, the focus should go beyond the physical setting toward a socio-cultural approach. According to Rogoff (1995), a socio-cultural approach to learning and development brings about ‘transformation of participation’ and has a minimum of 3 levels; personal plane, social plane and community/institutional plane. In a general statement, the Constitution under article 54(1)(c) states that;

“A person with any disability is entitled—to reasonable access to all places, public transport and information.”.

This may be translated to mean that it is the right of learners with disabilities to have physical access to schools while using public means of transport. The SPLTD commits to provision of quality learning environment "Establish barrier-free environments in all institutions of learning and training, and provide for the health, safety and physiological needs of learners and trainees with disabilities." (p. xiv). This barrier-free environment includes adequate resources, a clean environment with safe water and sanitation, feeding programmes to avoid the risks of malnutrition, basic health care services and compliance with safety standards. On the other hand, BECF commits to an environment that is conducive to learning and offers all learners the opportunity to explore their full potential. It also commits to sensitizing parents on the same so that they provide friendly and healthy environments to stimulate the child's creativity and innovation.

### **g) Inclusive Education Financing and Resource Provision**

Implementation of IE in lower income countries is faced with numerous challenges among them the absence of enabling legislation, support services, relevant materials and resources and lack of funding structure (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002). Under SPLTD, the financing and stability of IE will continuously be reviewed by the government under MoE with the objective to;

“Ensure equitable budgetary allocation and enhance resource mobilization towards higher and sustainable financing of education and training for children and youth with disabilities.” (p. 30).

This will be enhanced through accountability, public-private partnership in funding education, provision of bursaries, education loans and scholarships. Among the flagship projects of education and training in Vision 2030 is to build and fully equip schools, establish a computer supply programme to equip learners with IT skills and increase funding to enable all institutions to support the activities under the economic pillar. BECF points out that to actualize curriculum reforms several critical issues have to be put into consideration among them provision of teaching and learning resources which lead to a strong foundation of skills development. Provision of ICT resources will also be purposeful in developing modern and real problemsolving skills. These tacks are also expressed in the SPLTD. Specialized learning resources are to be provided and maintained to improve the learning of learners with disabilities. To sustain IE, the MoE has to allocate adequate resources that cater for the needs of individual learners. This includes specialized learning resources such as braille with quality storage, repair, upgrading and replacement.

### **h) Quality Assessment**

Student-centered-strength-based-assessment is one of the best practices outlined in the

*Inclusive Education Checklist* by Villa and Thousand (2016). Although the Constitution and Vision 2030 do not go into the details of educational assessment, both SPLTD and BECF emphasize the importance of individualized quality assessment. SPLTD commits to the implementation of differentiated curricula and competency based assessments that meet the needs of learners with disabilities. The strategic plan is to;

“Implement differentiated curricula and competency based-assessments that adequately meet the diverse needs of learners and trainees with disabilities.” (p. 28).

One of the strengths of CBC highlighted in the CBCF is 'balance between formative and summative assessment' which helps shift the focus from summative tests to a range of assessments that assess progress, literacy and numeracy skills and development of learning outcomes. In the new curriculum, assessment will serve two purposes; as a tool of learning and as a means of measuring the extent to which the set target/learning outcome has been achieved. The goal of the assessment will not be to just produce assessment scores but rather to define the nature of the learning gap and guide the teacher on the next step of progress. The assessment will focus on actual skills and knowledge that the learner demonstrates and apply hence the name Competency Based Curriculum (CBC). Learners with disabilities will be given appropriate modifications of the assessment tool and time allocation.

### **i) Stakeholders’ Involvement**

Collaboration is an essential component of IE (Nochajski, 2002). It brings team members together who make their contributions based on each one's knowledge and skills but work in harmony for the benefit of the students (Rainforth et al., 1992; Swenson, 2000). Under Vision 2030, the government will strengthen the partnership between public and private education sectors both in funding and decision making. In the SPLTD, MoE is the main duty bearer in IE on behalf of the government. The involvement will take place in form of partnership,

collaboration and coordination. The government will partner with actors such as Faith Based Organizations (FBO), Community Based Organizations (CBO), private sectors and other organizations to directly and indirectly support inclusion of learners with disabilities through financial and non-financial contributions. It aims to;

“Establish, strengthen and coordinate partnership and collaboration amongst various agencies and partners in provision of education and training for learners and trainees with disabilities.” (p. 32).

It also calls for the involvement of learners and their parents/guardians in decision making. Sensitization and empowerment should also be provided to the parents and caregivers to enable them to make informed decisions. Other key stakeholders include professionals, parent representatives and organizations for PWD. In the new curriculum reforms outlined in BCEF, the teacher will be enhanced with additional skills and confidence to act as a role model to the learners and enable him/her meet the needs, talents and interests of individual learners through collaboration with stakeholders like parents, other professionals and community at large. Teamwork among learners will be achieved through collaborative learning. All the stakeholders will be under the umbrella of MoE and collaboration will be the norm of the new curriculum.

#### **j) Management and Coordination**

Continuous planning and sustainability are key aspects of IE. Consistent research is paramount in providing new ideas and strategies to the inclusive community to keep up to date with the ever-growing field (Villa & Thousand, 2016). MoE has the mandate to manage quality and standards through monitoring and evaluation as noted by SPLTD. On the other hand, TSC manages curriculum support staff and the two will work collaboratively to; "Establish an appropriate institutional coordination framework for implementation of the policy." (p. 41).

Committees will be formed at national, regional, county and sub-county levels. Institutional based implementation committees will then be established and standardized reporting mechanisms developed. The research and data management on IE is also a factor of consideration that is to be undertaken regularly and evidential data obtained to establish emerging needs and create innovations for the improvement of education of learners with disabilities. Not much is said in the other policies on management, coordination and sustainability.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

In this section, four legislation policies and laws that impact the Kenyan education system are explored: The *Kenyan Constitution* is the law that abides citizens, the *Vision 2030* is the country's development blueprint for the period 2008-2030, the *Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities* is the transformational document towards inclusion of learners with disabilities while the *Basic Education Curriculum Framework* is the new curriculum that aims at provision of competency based curriculum which focuses on each learner's ability. The desired outcome of the education system, especially the focus on individual growth for sustainability and economic growth will be determined by the successful implementation of these policies.

From the above exposition, it is apparent that there are notable similitudes in the kind of education that the policies commit to. First, they are formulated after review processes of previous documents and therefore come in hand to fill identified gaps. They also outline their mission and portray the same zeal for the education process and outcome. They are keen on stakeholders' involvement in their formulation, acknowledge each other and commit to working harmoniously. Significantly, the mantle of command as started by the documents lie in the hands of the government under MoE and all these will arguably meliorate communication and

coordination. The question is then whether the same harmony is observed during implementation.

This does not implicate that there are no significant gaps observed in the documents. Several points of concern arise. For instance, the use of 'integration' rather than 'inclusion' in the *Vision 2030* may raise concerns about whether physical placement with no proper modification is enough. And although the documents are under the custody of MoE, there lacks a practical guideline for the implementation process; who are the key players? How and at what stage will they be involved? However, the SPLTD policy talks of national and institutional-based implementation committees that will foresee the implementation framework. The other concern arises from the fact that despite the attempts of the Kenyan government to formulate and review educational policies through legislation, task force and committees, the system continues to register numerous challenges of implementation that are not only highlighted in the institutions but also recognized by the policies themselves. For instance, the SPLTD outlines the challenges of learners with disabilities that are yet to be solved even as recent as 2018. This policy has evolved after several other reviews in the past and is an update of the Special Needs Education Policy (2009). It acknowledges that this 2009 policy was not effectively implemented due to certain challenges like poor dissemination and coordination and lack of implementation frameworks. It, therefore, sets out to provide a multi-sectoral approach to implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation. Similarly, the new curriculum, BECF, emanate from numerous review of the outgoing 8-4-4 system and raised concerns that it fails to adequately identify and nurture talents and potentials. The other educational challenges that are identified in the review processes include; attitudinal, physical and environmental barriers, inadequate sanitation, nutrition and hygiene, resource-oriented constraints, and unsatisfactory teacher education among others. The question remains whether these reviewed policies have curbed these challenges that they set out to, especially, when it is

not clear how this will be executed. For example, funding strategies on the resources and infrastructure has being ignored and on teacher education, it is not clear what changes will be made despite it being a constant concern.

On provision of IE, the policies clearly outline the dimensions of IE starting from the simple basics of education being a human right to more complex ones on the nature of inclusivity in the schools. They are committed to the provision of quality, inclusive and practical education to every learner. They also warrant diversity tolerance in education (recognising those with disabilities and marginalized), an aspect crucial to inclusion. Other outlined aspects pivotal to IE include early intervention, accessibility, education relevance, least restrictive environments (LRE), teacher preparedness, resource provision, and quality assessment among others. However, as observed in figure 4.1, more emphasis is on wording and formulation and less on strategies for coordination and management, leaving the question of how strong the implementation will be.

From this analysis, these documents are rich in IE provisions and the loopholes may be considered minor compared to the provisions. If sufficient implementation is realised as documented, Kenya will achieve remarkable milestones in education inclusion. The task to the realization of the national education goals, therefore, lies with the actualization of what is documented.

In the next chapter, this study outlines the situation of IE in schools. It explores educational practices in primary schools from the perspectives of various stakeholders. In a later chapter, there will be a comparison of the two (policy and school situation) to answer questions such as; what has been implemented and what has not? Are there hindrances to implementation?

This in turn will guide the researcher in formulating theories and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **RESEARCH RESULTS: IN SEARCH OF AN INCLUSIVE FRAMEWORK**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

The previous chapters outlined the underlying issues of IE and the inquiry process engaged in this study. Guided by research objective 2 '*Describe IE as perceived and practised in Kenyan primary schools*', this chapter provides an analytical discussion of the nature of public primary schools, stakeholders' perceptions of IE and inclusion practices. It analyses the perceptions and practices of inclusion by the educational stakeholders. This includes headteachers, teachers, parents and students as guided by Fullan (1991) in the Theories of Educational Change. These are the key human participants considered agents of change that influence educational reforms (Ellsworth, 2000).

The chapter presents the data from each school as per the themes and participants involved in this study. Various aspects of IE as portrayed in the schools will be outlined. In reference to the theoretical frameworks, the education practices, perception, roles and collaboration of the various stakeholders will be outlined for each school under study in the subsequent section. Aspects of inclusion emerging from the data highlighted in this section include; IE understanding and perceptions by the various stakeholders, acknowledgement and accommodation of diversity, language sensitivity, the procedure of need diagnosis in the schools, stakeholders' collaboration, policy awareness and inclusion challenges.

#### **5.1 Inclusive Education Discourse in School T**

##### **5.1.1 School T Background**

This school is one of the few day-and-boarding public primary schools in Nyeri County.

Founded in 1940, the school was initially an elementary school but pledged to be a girls' only school in 1970. It is located in Nyeri Town Constituency and has 1196 pupils both day scholars and boarders with 27 teachers and 22 non-teaching staff. It has 25 classrooms, 57 toilets, 2 dining halls, 4 dormitories, a staff room, 5 offices, a resource room, a library, an audio-visual room and a computer laboratory. It is termed a prestigious school and a performer by the Nyeri community and emerges among the top five well-performed primary schools in the county.

Table 5.1 below presents the background summary of the school;

**Table 5. 1 School Background Information of School T**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>School Specifics</b>	<b>School Structure</b>
No. of teachers	27	Levelled-fenced compound, a grassed playground, 2 ramps, 3 large electricity-connected blocks, 2 ramps, a one-floor admission block and a resource room near the library.
Non-teaching staffs	22	
No. of learners	1196	
No. of classes	25	
<b>Inclusive Facilities</b>		
Resource room	1	<b>Learners Description</b>  Girls only, boarders and day-scholars, few and mild reported cases of special needs which include, physical, hearing and visual needs.
Audio-visual room	1	
Special toilet	1	
<b>Other Facilities</b>		
Toilets	57	
Dining hall	2	
Dormitory	4	
Staffroom	1	
Library	1	
Computer Lab	1	
Other offices	5	

### 5.1.2 Participants' Profile and Experience in School T

**Headteacher:** To investigate IE implementation in the school, the researcher held a semistructured interview with the headteacher as the facilitator of IE implementation at the school level (Ottesen, 2013). Headteacher T has been in an administrative position for 13 years. She portrayed confidence while discussing IE/SNE matters which she attributed to her educational background. She had a bachelor of education (Special Needs Education), a specialization in mental retardation and a diploma in school management. She describes her role as the day to day running of the school, timetabling, teachers and resource management.

**Teachers:** To understand the teachers' perception of IE and its practice, the researcher engaged 5 teachers of this school in a focus group discussion. When asked about their profile (educational background, level of teaching profession and specific training on IE/SNE, they gave the information below;

**Table 5. 2 School T teachers' qualification**

Teacher Code	Qualification	IE/SNE training	Years in the teaching profession
T1	Degree(Kiswahili/ Sports education)	N/A	26
T2	Diploma (SNE)	SNE emotional and behavioural disorder	22
T3	Degree (English/Literature)	N/A	6
T4	PTE Certificate	N/A	26
T5	Degree (Kiswahili/History)	N/A	12

Teachers' professional qualifications ranged from a certificate (the minimum requirement for a teaching profession by the Teacher Service Commission/TSC) to the degree level. In school T, only one teacher (T2) had taken a course on special needs education (excluding the headteacher).

The impact of her training was noted by other teachers who admitted that they consulted her when dealing with learners who required special attention as shown in the excerpt below;

Teacher T5: ...mine, I would consult the teacher who has done special needs education like teacher T2 to come and assist me. And actually, I do that frequently.

The teachers highlighted the need for a 'little education background' and 'prior preparations' to deal with diversity, especially at the onset of the problem. Their concern was especially on the fact that they did not have the skills to cater for learners with disabilities.

Generally, the teachers' satisfaction was geared towards the performance of their learners. They felt low if they didn't meet their set targets and as stated by one of them it is worse when they did not know how to help learners with specific difficulties;

Teacher T3: happy moment is when you set targets and achieve them and low moments is when you teach and they fail and you can do nothing about it because the exam is already out.

This is an indicator that the performance of every learner was a concern to the teachers even though at times they did not know how to help them. They, therefore, foresee the danger of having inclusive classrooms with no skills to handle them.

**Learners:** The learners involved in this research were either in class 8 or grade 4. These learners were purposively sampled for two reasons. First, they were the ones who were allowed to fully attend school during the time of research due to the COVID pandemic. Secondly, class 8 learners (final primary school year) were considered more experienced to give feedback on their involvement in the learning process. Grade 4 was the target group for the new curriculum (CBC) and therefore would highlight their engagement in curriculum implementations.

A learner FGD was conducted with 5 learners from school T. Three were from class 8 and two from grade 4. The school experience of the learners also revolved around their academic performance and specifically examinations. Their happiness was dependent on their grades as they admitted that failing the examination was a source of stress.

Surprisingly, the fear of exam failure was not so much of their concern but the guilt of what others would say especially their teachers and parents as shown in their response below;

Learner T2: it is because of failure to reach my target and of course am like if my mum finds out that I failed, I will let her down.

Learner T4: because I will let my mum and the teachers down.

Learner T5: Sad moment is when I fail my exam and my family sees I have failed; I don't feel good.

Comparing this with the teachers' experience, there is a mutual concern between the learners and the teachers. While the latter is stressed when their learners do not meet set targets, the former are worried to let their teachers down. Failure to meet set targets, therefore, affects both learners and teachers. Yet the urge for high scores in this school seemed to be the main target leaving no room for individualized targets.

**Parents:** Six parents from school T were also engaged in a focus group discussion. Their experience as primary school parents ranged from 4 to 30 years. School T's parents were a working-class ranging from teachers, a nurse and casual workers. These parents noted that their school was one of the best in terms of the environment and performance and could not be compared with the neighbouring public schools;

Parent T2: waaah, no, you can't compare with the schools around here. The schools are so down, the parents cannot afford simple things like books, they are in a bad state.

Parent T2: in such schools, children will come to school hungry, they didn't eat at night or breakfast, and they don't even have a pencil. If the school cannot provide then the child is disadvantaged.

Two of them however were concerned that their playfield was not big enough to accommodate the high population of pupils.

### **5.1.3 School T Participants' Understanding and Perception of Inclusive Education**

**Headteacher:** As mentioned earlier, headteacher T portrayed confidence while discussing IE since her educational background was in IE and SNE. When asked to define IE, she stated that "IE is including the special children in the normal settings."

Notably, there is the use of certain terms such as 'normal' and 'special children' that are likely to be a source of discrimination.

The headteacher noted that IE was the way to go and that her school was doing its best to ensure it is inclusive;

Headteacher T: In fact, we have a new building where we have put ramps and at the same time we have put staircases... the toilet, we also have a toilet for the special needs learners especially the physically handicapped, we have also taken care of our physically handicapped pupils who might come and use wheelchairs... we have made sure that our classes are well lit because of the children who will be having problems with the eyes.

As noted in her statements, as an administrator, she has put notable effort to realize inclusion. However, her focus is on facilities and resources and little is mentioned of social inclusion.

She notes that the availability of inclusion facilities is not the case in other schools as they are still lacking the resources to implement even the educational basics. This she attributes to lack of funds from the government to facilitate IE implementation. When asked how far Kenya is in terms of IE implementation, she comments;

“We are at 50%. Because why do we have the special schools. The special schools should be for the severe cases... the severe cases who have mental retardation but not the HI of VI. Those ones should be in our normal schools.”

She suggests that special schools should be retained to serve severe cases, especially those with mental disabilities. She however considers those with visual and hearing impairment more suitable for inclusion. She notes that there is significant progress in teacher education especially for administrators as many of them have taken short courses on IE or SNE. This however comes as a personal initiative and cost.

Headteacher T notes the importance of teacher education in creating awareness and acceptance in that those who are trained in inclusion understand the children he/she is teaching. She notes that around 50% of teachers have taken courses on SNE and therefore there is hope that gradually, the Kenyan education system will become inclusive.

**Teachers:** Below are the teachers' definitions of IE;

**Table 5. 3 School T teachers' definitions of IE**

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Teacher T1	IE is whereby children that have learning disabilities and the children that are regarded as normal are allowed to learn together.
Teacher T2	IE is where all children are given the chance to attend any school of their choice without discriminating against them.
Teacher T3	IE is making an education system that will fit the special children and the others. A system that will give them an equal opportunity to learn.
Teacher T4	it is that system of education where all the learners are given an equal opportunity
Teacher T5	I think it's the system whereby an environment is being treated to accommodate each and every learner. We are having special ones but a general term. we are having all learners and all their needs are being catered for.

From the teachers' definitions above, several aspects of inclusion emerge which include, 'equal accessibility to schools', 'equal opportunities', 'non-discrimination', 'environmental modification' and 'catering for the needs of every learner'. There is however the usage of words like 'special children' vs 'normal children' leaving a connotation that those with special needs are 'not normal' but a 'special kind'.

The teachers were confident that their school was inclusive (teacher T2 rating it as 70% inclusive). This was measured in terms of the environmental modification of their school, having a teacher and administrator who had done SNE/IE, having learners with mild disabilities and creating awareness among all learners to accept diversity. They also mentioned that their school was not badly off in terms of resources.

However, unlike the headteacher, the teachers believed that teacher preparation for IE implementation was inadequate and felt that they needed to have at least basic knowledge, for example, on problem identification and how to deal with parents when addressing special needs issues.

On the practice of IE in school T, the teachers highlighted that they had planned for remedial lessons for learners with specific difficulties, the class teachers have the mandate to 'talk to the girls, not in the tradition way of making noise to them but encouraging and advising them' (Teacher T3). They however highlighted that this is a program for the school and not a written

rule and therefore it might not be the case in all schools. The syllabus was also playing part in inclusion;

Teacher T3: In addition to that, the syllabus has a topic on disabilities, class 8, class 7. So the learners get to know and accept the ones that have challenges even during the syllabus and I think that one is helpful.

However, teacher T4 disagreed that what was in the syllabus was not very useful and ‘it is just for passing exams.’

**Learners:** Unlike their headteachers and teachers, the learners in school T did not have any idea what IE was including those in class 8. This corresponds with the remarks of teacher T4 that the topic in the syllabus was not as effective. There was also differing information on what level this was taught, another indicator that its relevance may have been underrated.

They however agreed that their school was conducive, their teachers were friendly and their school environment was all-embracing.

**Parents:** Out of the 6 parents, only one parent attempted to define IE;

Parent T1: what I think is that IE is about bringing all children to learn together including those with or without disabilities.

This could be attributed to the fact that she was a teacher by profession. The parents raised concerns that they are usually forgotten in the inclusion process and only come to hear of such programs through the public and their children. She observes that parental involvement in education is often low, despite the fact that their attitudes, knowledge, and abilities are critical for effective inclusive schooling.

They cited the example of the new curriculum where they were only involved when resources were required. Otherwise, they were unenlightened of what was happening.

They did remark, however, that schools and society are becoming more inclusive, and that attitudes and accommodations are improving.

Parent T5: ...they would run away from them (those with disabilities), laugh or even fear. But now the attitude is much better.

They attributed the shift in attitude to social media, for example, the television that shows the positive side of disability and to the change in parents' and teachers' attitudes towards diversity and therefore instilling the same in their children. They however highlighted that there is a lot that needs to be done especially by the government to accommodate learners' diversity. This includes the provision of adequate resources, fairness in school admission and parental involvement.

#### **5.1.4 School T Acknowledgement and Accommodation of Diversity**

From the headteacher's point of view, the school is a 'child-friendly one with no restrictions or causes of inaccessibility.' She attributes this to the physical adaptations to the school environment. She further states that they have done this for 'physically handicapped pupils especially those who might join the school'. On diversity, she comments that the school has not so far enrolled pupils with disabilities but such cases arise after admission. They do physical modifications to accommodate them; they have a few visually impaired ones and they have made sure the classes are well lit for them, there is one who is hearing impaired but on a hearing aid and one physically challenged. She, however, did not have limitations of mobility since the environment was well adapted and the headteacher had facilitated her acquisition of a special shoe. She attributes these preparations to her training in SNE.

An important point from the headteacher's view on accommodation of diversity is the incline towards physical adaptation and little focus on social inclusion. She equates physical accessibility to inclusion.

The teachers had similar sentiments to those of the headteacher. They agreed that their school was accommodative because of their physical modification. They also acknowledged the contribution of the headteacher and teacher participant T2 who had an education background in SNE. The syllabus had also helped them to be accommodative through sensitization and familiarization.

They agreed that their learners were diverse with a few having disabilities. Unlike the other schools investigated, however, socio-economic issues such as a lack of basic necessities and school fees were not a prominent concern.

Teacher T3 pointed out that, despite being taught about disability awareness, students still face societal stigma to some level. For instance, self-rejection set in for the girl who got a leg

condition. She would be the last to fetch water or go to the dorm and the other children would laugh at her. She gradually developed self-acceptance after teacher intervention. This brings out the role of the teacher in creating acceptability. However, the creation of inclusive classrooms was a hard task since the time allocated did not correspond with the learning activities (teacher T4), the teacher-pupil ratio was high hindering individualized attention (teacher T3) and teachers needed prior preparations and a little knowledge even with identification of the problem (teacher T2).

The learners also acknowledged the existence of diversity among them. They agreed that there were those with disabilities that developed at a certain stage of their lives. When asked about their relationship with these learners, those without disabilities felt that they were doing their best to accommodate them. Their teachers had played a big role in creating awareness of diversity.

However, when asked about her experience, learner T2 (participant with a physical disability) noted that not all learners were accommodative mainly due to lack of awareness or pretence;

Learner T2: Some know but some don't so they try to keep distance. Some will help and some will pretend they don't know. Like when I go there (to play) and they have not even tried, they will say they will hurt me.

She also expressed moments of sadness during some activities;

“like today, when we were going for tea, all the students ran and I was left on the verandah. I wasn't happy... I can't run.”

Just like the teachers, the learners remarked that accommodating diversity during lessons was difficult as their learning pace was different. 'The teacher is the same but the pupils are not the same.' (learner T3). Learner T1 expressed that the teacher is not able to handle their personal learning weaknesses because of syllabus coverage and fear of being left behind by other classes. They, therefore, rely on their revision to catch up with the others.

The parents complimented that unlike 'those days' the society at large is becoming more accommodative, children are accepting those with differences and becoming more concerned about them;

Parent T5: ... they would run away from them, laugh or even fear but now the attitude is much better.

They however pointed out that life in their school was a competition and not every child won (parent T2). This was mainly due to the exam-based enrolment which saw only the best academically admitted to the school. The parents also pointed out that even though the school acknowledged diversity, accommodating them was hard and a 'brain game' mainly due to the workload and shortage of teachers (parent T3). As a result, the learners' specific challenges were passed on to their parents, who provided little or no assistance, leaving the child without proper intervention.

Generally, all the stakeholders in school T acknowledged the existence of diversity in their midst but agreed that certain factors especially the teacher-related ones had delayed their effort to fully accommodate learners with differences.

#### **5.1.5 Stakeholders' Collaboration in School T**

The collaboration in this school was reported to be in form of meetings, formally organized by the school, informal ones through summons and also in rare cases, parents visiting the school to follow up on their children's progress. Due to their busy schedules, the parents did not do enough follow-ups and if not summoned, they assumed that their children were okay (parent T6). On the other side, the learners admitted that they preferred consulting their classmates when in academic need since they were more friendly and accessible. However, their teachers and parents were of great help although they feared reprimand if they 'didn't get it' (learner T2).

When asked about the collaboration when special needs arose, the headteacher reported mixed reactions from the parents. In some cases, the parents appreciated and cooperated through the intervention process as observed in the case of learner T2. However, some are either arrogant or in denial. This was especially common in cases that were not physical i.e. cases where learners were identified as having specific learning problems. In such cases, the parents would 'beat, abuse or denial the girl certain treats like paying for trips' (headteacher T). The headteacher would therefore start the intervention by counselling the parents.

Involvement during curriculum implementation was wanting. The teachers who are entrusted with implementing the curriculum admitted that they did not even understand what they were doing (teacher T3) and that they needed more time and training to be ready to implement

(teacher T5). The parents said that they were never involved or properly informed of what was expected of them. They were therefore caught by surprise, especially by the high demand for resources for the CBC. This even made some parents prefer the old curriculum which was less demanding of them (parent T6).

### **5.1.6 Stakeholders Policy Awareness in School T**

Policy awareness among stakeholders was found to be low. Though the participants were aware of the government's commitment to 'Education for All', they were not aware of the legislation on this commitment. When headteacher T was asked about any IE policy documents in the school, she responded that 'maybe they are in special schools' and also suggested that inclusion could be in the code of regulation or management books (these documents state the mandates of teachers and administrators but no reference to the kind of education to be offered). The teachers were also not conversant with the policies but 2 suggested that inclusion could be documented in the Children Act which states that 'every child counts (Teacher T3). (In actual sense, the Children Act talks about the right to education and that every child is entitled to free and compulsory basic education, section 7(1)(2). It, therefore, does not give direct reference to inclusion).

Collaboration and follow-up by regional education officers (government representatives) were very rare particularly in this school because 'the school is branded a performer and therefore they tend to go elsewhere (teacher T2).

## **5.2 Inclusive Education Discourse in School G**

### **5.2.1 School background**

This is a public educational institute found within Nyeri Municipality. The school is managed by religious organizations and neighbours two major informal settlements namely Majengo and Kiawara slums. It has an enrolment of 628 pupils (348 boys and 280 girls) making it one of the most populated day primary schools in Nyeri. It has a total of 19 teachers all employed by the Teacher Service Commission giving it a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:33. It has 16 physical classes, 8 girls' toilets, 7 for boys and 6 for teachers. It has one bathroom meant for the cultural purpose of the Muslim pupils. It has a library with no books and a dining hall building with no

furniture. The playground is relatively small and unlevelled. However, due to its proximity to public services such as the general hospital and town centre, the school is physically accessible with well-maintained surrounding infrastructure such as roads. Because of the nature, location and the type of population in the school (learners living below poverty levels), it attracts various 'one time' or 'short-lived' donations. For instance, in 2013, an NGO (the Belwop Fabric of Faith Organization) offered new uniform sets to 100 students. As reported by the stakeholders, it occasionally receives food donations and moral support from social organizations.

### **5.2.2 Participants' profile and experience in school G**

**Headteacher:** Due to some official duties, the headteacher was not available on the research appointment day. She however delegated the duty to her deputy. According to TSC, the deputy is answerable to the headteacher in the implementation of the curriculum, education policies and programs. In the absence of the headteacher, he/she will be in charge of the institution (TSC, 2019).

The deputy headteacher had a degree in education and so was the headteacher. They both had also gone for a few days of training on inclusion/special needs education as this had become a norm for administrators. He has been an administrator for 5 years and had previously taught for 10 years in other 2 schools. According to him, the administration role entailed 'making sure that learning is taking place in the right way, syllabus coverage and any other issues to do with the learning of the school.'

**Teachers:** 5 of the 19 teachers in school G were engaged in a group discussion. The information below represents their profile in terms of education background, level of teaching profession and specific training such as IE/SNE:

**Table 5. 4 The teachers' profile and experience in school G**

Teacher Code	Qualification	IE/SNE training	Years in the teaching profession
G1	PTE certificate	N/A	30
G2	Diploma	N/A	18
G3	Degree (Kiswahili)	N/A	23
G4	Degree (SNE)	SNE	10
G5	Diploma	N/A	8

When asked to describe their teaching experience and their day-to-day life in school, they were quick to connect their experience to the challenges their students go through. This was the case with this school's participants whose discussion mainly revolved around the complex issues within the school community. The teachers noted that they were content when their students achieved their targets. This was however hindered by several challenges among them not being able to do their homework (teacher G3), not being able to read or write well because of their situation (teacher G4) and lack of learning materials (teacher G1);

Teacher G1: I got mixed moments. Low moments when parents are not able to provide for the needs of the learners. Like in Mathematics they cannot provide geometrical sets and other learning equipment.

**Learners:** As mentioned earlier, the learners' FGDs engaged class 8 and 4 pupils owing to the significance of the 2 classes and the COVID pandemic. 5 learners were engaged, 3 from class 8 and 2 from grade 4. They included 2 boys and 3 girls. Like most of the learners in this school's population, they came from the nearby slums and informal settlements. This kind of environment is a situation the learners wished out of. This was reflected in their visualization of their school and ambitions. When asked to present this in a picture, 2 drew a house and one a car, a representation of the kind of life they dreamt of after school;

Learner G1: I have always admired when I see people driving cars so I think the school will help me reach my dreams and when I work hard, I will one day get a car.

Learner G2: My dream is to buy land and build a good house so the school helps me to focus on the dream.

The learners expressed concerns about the nature of their parents' livelihood. They admitted that their parents did not have stable incomes and this affected not only provisions but also their studies;

Learner G3: Sometimes I go home, mum has to go to the market (to sell groceries) and there is a lot of work that am supposed to do. It gets late and cannot finish homework. Two other learners raised concerns that there was no time for revision or homework since they had to do house chores after getting home as their parents strived for family survival. The children are involved in child labour (paid or unpaid) for long hours giving them no time for studies or even enough rest to be productive in school the next day. As a result, the students were more concerned about their living conditions and less concerned about their educational environment.

**Parents:** Five parents from school G were engaged in a FGD. Their experience in primary school parenting ranged from 7 to 33 years. None of the parents sampled was in permanent employment and they confirmed that it was the case for most of the parents of the school. Right from the onset of the discussion, they registered their struggles not only in educating their children but also in providing for their daily needs. For instance, parent G2 was an elderly man aged 71 years. He was educating his grandchildren after negligence by their parents; Parent G2: I had already educated my children. These here are my grandchildren. They were chased by their father so what else can I do?

The other notable case was that of parent G3 who was going through stress-related illness due to her life challenges;

Parent G3: Their father (husband) was arrested. I left where I was living and faced a lot of challenges. I had to go back to my matrimonial home. I have been staying at home and you can imagine the challenges at home and my husband is currently in prison... However, on matters pertaining to the school environment, they agreed that the school was in a good position to assist the learners to attain their goals owing to the good reception and understating from the administration and teachers.

### **5.2.3 School G Participants' Understanding and Perception of Inclusive Education**

**Headteacher:** The school administrators in school G had a general knowledge of IE/SNE after a 'few days' holiday training' (headteacher G). he defines IE as;

“the kind of education where we should include every person whether with disability or normal without going to the extent that this can be excluded because of this or that.”

In his definition, he acknowledges that a learner should not be excluded from education on whichever basis. However, it is not clear if this exclusion refers to exclusion from the system or schools. A discussion on admission to this school reflects this ambiguity; he cites a case where a child had a hearing problem, they could not accommodate her and therefore advised the parents to take her to a school that had a special unit. This reflects the conflict and inscrutability in the implementation of IE, an indicator that there is a gap between awareness, interpretation and practice hence the major motivation behind this study.

**Teachers:** The teacher participants in school G were a bit hesitant to state what IE meant to them. However, teacher G1 states that;

“Inclusive learning is where children of different abilities are taught together, even those with physical disabilities, they learn together with those who are able and in this case it helps to build the gap of discrimination where those who are not endorsed even those with physical handicapped do not feel as if they are lesser children than those who have all that is needed.”

Essential aspects of inclusion spotlighted in the teacher's definition include; 1) children with different abilities, 2) learning together, 3) building the gap of discrimination and 4) feeling of completeness for learners with disability.

In the discussion, the teachers agreed that inclusion was necessary as it boosted the confidence of those learners with disabilities while at the same time creating disability awareness for those without;

Teacher G1: Those who are normal appreciate that those who are handicapped can do good or even better than them and they can be able to treat them like any other children.

As evidenced in the data sample above, the teachers' language comprised of words like 'normal', 'handicapped' and 'those that are able' when distinguishing learners with or without disabilities.

On teachers' awareness and preparedness for inclusion, the teachers raised concern about the need for at least basic training on how to handle learners' differences. They noted that such training was available but many teachers did not enroll considering the course was expensive and funded by self;

Teacher G2: If at all you are to know how to handle them, you go for a special course, which is very expensive because you are the one to foot the bill.

**Parents:** School G's parents did not have any clue of what IE was. This prompted the researcher to elaborate on the term for the continuity of the discussion. When asked what they thought of the idea, parent G5 suggested that it would be hard to implement IE and maybe even impossible. Parent G4 proposed that it would be important to welcome all learners to school but be cautious with those with disabilities, ensuring they have their own teachers;

Parent G4: If they are to come, they should be kept separately with their teachers. They should be given services like the others but of importance is having their own teachers. These parents' sentiments were confirmed to be the situation on the ground. As evident from the headteachers' remarks, learners with mild disabilities are in some cases segregated in 'special units' which are found in selected schools and therefore can only be accommodated in such. They, therefore, referred any such cases to schools with special units. These special units are classes within a public school meant to cater for students with varying disabilities separately from their peers (Kiru, 2019; Elder et al., 2016).

Parents G3 was concerned that learners with disabilities would face segregation;

“I Think they will be segregated by the others. They will be laughed at, they will even segregate themselves and withdraw from others.”

From the parents' perception, IE would be practical for marginalized learners such as those from slums and streets (they praised the school for its accommodation of needy learners unlike other surrounding schools). They however presupposed that it would be an uphill to accommodate learners with disabilities.

**Learners:** Just like in the case of other learner participants, learners in school G had little to say about the concept of IE. They knew about learners with special needs although they had not witnessed them in their school (although they admitted that they had different abilities in

learning). The class 6 topic on how to deal with different people had also enlightened them on people's diversity. When introduced to the concept of inclusion, they thought that it was a wonderful idea but not applicable in their school especially in the case of learners with physical disabilities as the environment was slanted and had many obstacles.

#### **5.2.4 School G Acknowledgement and Accommodation of Diversity**

School G portrayed inclusion and exclusion at almost equal measures: On inclusion and accommodation of diversity, the school was accredited especially by the parents as one of the most accommodative in the area. 3 parents who came from the nearby slums disclosed that they had gone to other schools seeking admission but were denied on various grounds including where they came from (parent G3) and lack of admission fee;

Parent G5: They won't even say directly but some are admission exams and fees.

However, school G was accessible to all learners regardless of their needs or backgrounds (parent 4). They even admitted street children who were materially supported by a nearby private school. The parents admitted that there are times they could not even afford basic needs such as meals and uniforms but the administration was flexible and sympathetic.

The learners acknowledged their diversity. They mentioned that their ability differs. Some learnt faster and others too slow (Learner G4) and because of the huge difference in performance, some even wondered if they were in the same class as the others (learner G5). This diversity was due to their brain difference (learner G4) although some were not interested in working hard (learner G2). In some cases, however, it was a result of many issues and stress;

Learner G2: ...but then, there are those who have stressing issues and depression so those fail because of stress and issues...

Despite the apparent hindrances, the teachers admitted and the learners verified that they were unable to meet the diverse learners' needs due to issues such as a lack of internal motivation in some students, a shortage of assistive technology, and overcrowding in the classes.

Although the school was accommodative of learners with 'societal needs' such as vulnerable and poor backgrounds, exclusion was evident for learners with disabilities. As outlined in section 5.2.2, the school did not accommodate even those with mild disabilities but recommended them to a neighbouring school that had a special unit. An example is the case of the girl who had a mild hearing problem (the family had not even realized and this explains the mildness of the condition) who was sent to a special unit. From the researcher's observation, the school had also not made any physical effort to ensure the inclusion of those with disabilities as evident by the facilities and school topography.

#### **5.2.5 Stakeholders Collaboration in School G**

School G registered a network of collaboration that involved the administration, teachers, parents, individual volunteers and community organizations. The administration acted as the link between them. For instance, if a special case was identified, the teacher notified the office which in turn summoned the parent. The parents were then advised to look for special units and also consult Education Assessment Resource Centre (EARC) for appropriate assessment (headteacher G). This was however not always smooth as the few cases were met with denial from the parents.

Within the school fraternity, staff meetings were occasionally held to discuss performance and challenges. Their main principle as noted by the headteacher was 'to be able to handle them in the right way' by understanding where they came from and what they were going through. This effort was acknowledged by both the parents and the learners who were gratified by the teachers' sensitivity to their needs.

Various groups and organizations from the surrounding community made remarkable contributions to meeting the learners' needs. This was a distinct case compared to other schools owing to the nature of the learners' background. The headteacher reported that the school is occasioned by volunteers from nearby churches and hospitals to offer free guidance and counselling to the learners. As mentioned earlier, a nearby private school was also sponsoring the lunch program for street children who attended the school. Additionally, community and leaders were at times invited for spiritual and moral support.

However, poor cooperation from the government was noted. Although the government was aware of the unique needs of the school, it provided no extra support to the school (headteacher G). However, education officers came regularly to see their progress and offer encouragement. The parents also expressed their concern about how the government took their case lightly and wished it would cater for basic needs like feeding programs so that the children would concentrate and they (parents) would focus on other necessities such as uniforms and stationery.

#### **5.2.6 Stakeholders Policy Awareness in School G**

The headteacher attested that the school did not have any IE policies or guides in their custody. He commented that such documents are meant for special schools and hence likely to be found there. On what guides them when catering for learners with special needs, he clarifies that they liaise with the teachers for individual interventions like remedial lessons. This was rare since such cases were given referrals to those institutions with special units. They consequently did not have records of those who required assessment/ intervention although class teachers were supposed to know them.

The other stakeholders (teachers, parents and learners), were not informed of any documents that guide the implementation of IE. Teacher G2 suggested that maybe they would be found in the office while teacher G1 remarked that there have never been such documents;

Teacher G1: There has never been such a document in the past and even if it is there, then the teachers are not aware.

Notably, this teacher had taught for 30 years but was uninformed of the policies guiding education implementation.

### **5.3 Inclusive Education Discourse in School N**

#### **5.3.1 School Background**

The school is a regular public institution located in the Kieni-West sub-county, Nyeri County. It is under the management of religious organization and runs from grade 1 to class 8. It is a mixed-gender day school with a population of 212 pupils and 11 teachers. It has 13 classrooms, 14 toilets (2 for teachers, 6 for boys and the same for girls). The school lack other facilities such as a library, laboratory, resource room, computer laboratory or special toilets. It is located in a rural area which is characterized by low socio-economic power and poor infrastructure development. Generally, Kieni West is a rural area where agriculture is the main economic activity. The development and performance of the schools here have been reported to be lower compared to the surrounding sub-counties (Wachira et al., 2017). On two occasions, participants in other schools under study rated their school better compared to those in the Kieni area;

Parent G2: This school is trying education-wise. It is not like schools in our neighbouring Kieni.

School N was particularly not easily accessible as it was far from the tarmac road. Due to the level of development in the area, the internet connectivity was low and not even 1% of the population had an internet connection (Teacher N1). This hindered their exposure to learning especially because the new curriculum engaged them digitally. The area has also been reported to have a higher poverty level as a result of unemployment, insufficient access to resources and family-related issues such as drunkenness and negligence (Wairimu et al., 2016). This was reflected in the school under study that reported inadequate resources and low parental collaboration due to the employment structure that did not allow them time off.

### **5.3.2 Participants' Profile and Experience in School N**

**Headteacher:** Headteacher N had a diploma in education but had no background in IE/SNE.

He had been a headteacher for 10 years, deputy for 6 years hence 16 years in administration.

In this capacity, his role is to;

“coordinate teaching and learning. Ensuring proper management of time, involvement with other stakeholders to ensure the success of school, ensuring resources are taken care of. These are human resources, financial resources, material resources to ensure they go where they are required and used as required.”

Although he did not have an IE/SNE educational background, he believed he had the basic knowledge of the topics attributing it to his years of experience and interaction with teachers who had this training. The same observation had also been recorded in school T where the two SNE trained teachers proved resourceful in needful situations. However, as pointed out by headteacher N, practical experience through interaction and problem solving is critical in conceptualizing the concepts of diversity and inclusion.

Despite the lack of formal training on IE, the headteacher recognized the government's effort to equip administrators and teachers in general with basic knowledge on inclusion: It had put

policies to encourage inclusion. Occasionally, administrators' meetings included short sessions on IE though not 'real training'. He also pointed out that, from around 2003, the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE), has been enrolling primary school teachers for SNE courses and this escalates the hope for inclusion;

“There is an effort towards that (inclusion). The teachers may not be adequate, the facilities may not be adequate, the will and determination and vision is there.” **Teachers:** To conceptualize the teachers' preparedness and perception of IE, the researcher engaged 5 teachers in an FGD. Their education background, years of teaching and specialization is recorded in the table below;

**Table 5. 5 School N Teachers' Profile and experience**

<b>Teacher Code</b>	<b>Qualification</b>	<b>IE/SNE training</b>	<b>Years in the teaching profession</b>
N1	Degree	N/A	26
N2	PTE Certificate	N/A	22
N3	PTE Certificate	N/A	6
N4	PTE Certificate	N/A	26
N5	PTE Certificate	N/A	12

School N was one of the two schools lacking a teacher formally trained in IE/SNE. Most of the teachers also had the minimum qualification requirement of a primary school teacher (PTE certificate).

The teachers agreed that their best moment was when the students scored good points and did their work effectively. However, this was not always the case as the teachers 'put a lot of energy but do not bring equal results' (teacher N3). The location of the school and the salary was also a challenge;

Teacher N4: This weather is not very favourable and we walk for quite a distance, and of course, the government pay is not enough compared to what we do.

They noted that due to the nature and location of their school, they were challenged by poor infrastructural development in the school and its surroundings, low performance and inadequate facilities.

**Parents:** Five parents from school N were engaged in an FGD. They have served in the capacity of a primary school parent for between 4-12 years. Four were small-scale farmers and one operated a mini-shop. Although the parents identified many hindrances to effective learning, they admitted that the school and the education system, in general, were making progress;

Parent N1: Let me first say we have seen improvement from the old days. During our days we didn't even have windows and boys would run away through the windows and never come back.

Parent N3: I think things are better, during our days it was worse, we used to come to school barefooted, we couldn't carry lunch, and we would go home long distances for lunch. I see nowadays they have enough books, punishments are less, not many beatings, we used to have jiggers, so because of the problems, concentration was low. I think nowadays the problems are minimal.

The improvement was noted at the national, school and individual levels. The government has made notable efforts in improving the school structure (parent N1), the school environment was better and so was the teachers' attitude and tolerance such that learners were no longer humiliated for their weaknesses (parent N4). The parents were now prioritizing school provisions like uniforms and books (parent N2). Society's perception and support of education matters are promising (parent N2). However, the parents noted areas of concern related to the school location. The school lacked resources, the buildings were old and 'the roads were not worthy for their children especially when it rained.' (parent N2). They also noted that education

officers and government representatives did not visit their school and were probably not aware of their challenges.

One feature that stood out with school N parents was the huge responsibilities they had placed on the teachers. They depended on teachers for the enlightenment on academic changes, guidance and counselling and even identifying problems and suggesting solutions for their children's welfare (more so on the onset of a learning difficulty);

Parent N1: In such cases, we will rely on the teachers, as parents, we don't even know where to start, we will need the teachers to guide us. We even require the teachers to show us the way...

Parent N2 observed that they had 'abandoned' their children in the hands of the teachers so much so that when the disease (COVID-19) came, the parents were looking forward to the reopening of schools to 'get rid of the children'. This was asserted by parent N1 who noted that it was unfortunate as the teachers had many children and work to handle, hence not in a position to adequately cater for the children's needs. Parent N5 noted that the case was worse for them (fathers) as most had no interest in their children's education to the extent of not knowing their level of schooling. He cited a case of an exam candidate who requested the father for a success card only for him to be very shocked;

“You mean you are sitting for KCPE this year?”

They noted that the poor parental involvement was in most cases non-deliberate and associated it with external factors like demanding economical activities. However, as noted above, some parents were just not interested in participation.

**Learners:** an FGD was conducted with 5 learners (3 boys and 2 girls) from classes 8 and 4. Their school experience revolved around their school environment, relationship with teachers and parents and performance in the examination. According to them, a good day entailed being

on good terms with the teachers, managing to complete homework and not waking up so early on weekends. Unpleasant experiences included finding oneself on the wrong side (indiscipline), learning but not understanding and too much work in and outside school; Learner N4: I have a lot of work to do, washing uniform, sweeping the house, cleaning, doing homework...

They also wished that the school infrastructure was better;

Learner N1: What I wish was different is the window, I sit next to the window and cold days are just worse and it rains.

Learner N4 wished for better and private lockers 'because of the thieves' and also window repair because 'they would be hurt by the windows while cleaning.' The compound was also not well levelled nor slashed and it was worse during the rainy season (Learner N2). They learned best through discussions with their peers, effective teacher illustration that made everyone understand and a conducive classroom environment where the teacher is friendly and makes them laugh (learner N4). There were however unfortunate instances of harassment;

Learner N4: I hate harassment, to be laughed at. Let's say that you have failed a question and it was an accident, the others laugh and even the teacher laughs so you feel like you are down.

The general concerns for the learners were the school environment, the workload and intolerance of differences.

### **5.3.3 School N Participants' Understanding and Perception of Inclusive Education**

**Headteacher:** Headteacher N had no formal training on inclusion. However, exposure and interaction with other teachers had enlightened him;

“I have been exposed in other schools and mingled with teachers who have been trained so I learned from them out of interest and also as an administrator you find yourself learning.”

He defines IE as;

“It is where all children are integrated in a normal learning institution. Where no one is discriminated against because of their disability be it be mental, physical, intellectual. All are given opportunity to access learning.”

He believed that significant efforts had been made towards inclusion owing to the enrolment of ordinary school teachers by KISE for a short course or in-service training on SNE. This was however at personal cost and will. He highlighted that because of the increase in the number of trained teachers, awareness was also spreading through observation and consultation. He however highlighted that although administrators and teachers were positive about inclusion, there was a deficiency in terms of resources and trained manpower. This means it will be impossible to retain learners with disabilities even if they were enrolled. Consequently, schools were not ready for inclusion despite their will and determination.

**Teachers:** The teachers were not certain what IE was but gave the following attempts;

**Table 5. 6 Sample definitions of IE by teachers in school N**

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Teacher N1	I have only heard about IE where children with SN learn in the same environment as the children without.
Teacher N3	I think this is when you want to include all the learners and ensure that they get a quality education.
Teacher N5	IE is putting all learners together, whether they have special needs or not.

Generally, school N teachers perceived IE as a hard-to-implement idea that lacked clarity and focus (teacher N1) as mixing these learners would be too much to handle (teacher N5).

Inclusion will not be practical because the learners were so diverse from highly gifted to slow learners and the teacher lacked the skills to cater for them (teacher N3), the school timetable and the 35 minutes given for a lesson were not enough for individual assistance (teacher N1) while those with challenges/disabilities would be left behind and just wander around (teacher N4). Teacher N2 was however positive about inclusion citing that it will benefit learners with disabilities but only if, 'they don't include the mean scores, because the pupils will have challenges and some will not achieve at the end of the day.' Such learners remained in school but without much consideration of their progress.

They generally agreed that IE was a complex and difficult-to-achieve task with numerous challenges like unaccommodating infrastructure, lack of resources, lack of skills by teachers and fixed school programs and curriculum.

**Parents:** School N parents did not have an idea of what IE was but when the idea was introduced to them they were positive and equated it to the new curriculum under implementation;

Parent N1: For example, like I have heard it is supposed to happen in CBC, if only they can look into the talents of each learner and work along that line so that the child will leave with a specialization, it would be better.

However, this would only be implementable if a lot of changes were done; the system should not be so examination based (parent N2), the 30-minutes lesson should be prolonged to create time for mastery of skills (parent N3) and children allowed to choose subjects instead of taking similar compulsory subjects (parent N1). The government must also exert much effort since, if learners with special needs are admitted to their school, they will be accepted because it is a rule in public schools, but they will soon leave because they do not fit. The teachers will not even care or have time and these children will only grow physically (parent N1). Parent N5

pointed out that 'inclusion' is there because it is a government rule that a public school should not under any circumstances deny admission to a learner. Secondly, through the area chief, the government was enforcing the enrolment of all learners. However, apart from the rule and increased acceptance of diversity by the society, the parents felt that effort was needed in all areas including teacher training in handling diversity, provision of equipment and proper planning and funding by the government so that the burden does not fall solely on the parents.

**Learners:** Like the majority of the stakeholders in this school, the learners were not familiar with the term IE. Learner N4 however gave an attempt;

“I don't know the meaning but I think it's about lifestyle, how to leave with people, like life skills.”

Upon enlightenment, they felt that the school couldn't accommodate diverse learners because some would need assistance or equipment and the school did not have such provisions (learner N4). The environment was also not friendly and it got worse when it rained (learner N2). The fact that they were all taught the same and did similar exams was another limiting factor which would obstruct learners with disabilities (learner N2). There were also those students who were yet to appreciate differences and have a tendency of humiliating others (learner N4). Two however felt that their school was inclusive in a way because they had been taught how to create a friendly environment and make everyone feel important (learner N4). The teachers were also friendly, mindful of their welfare and encouraged them in times of difficulties. They, therefore, concluded that inclusion is a noble idea as it will make all learners feel important.

### 5.3.4 School N Acknowledgement and Accommodation of Diversity

Headteacher N: Right now we don't have any restrictions but there are shortcomings that we do have. Such that if we get children with disabilities, we may not be able to retain them.

As noted above by the headteacher, the school was willing to enrol all types of learners. This was however impractical because of the lack of infrastructure and manpower. For this reason, the school had so far not enrolled learners with physical disabilities. The school had learners with learning difficulties as demonstrated by one of the learners in FGD. Learner N5 (grade 4) had challenges in communication which prompted the moderator to switch to Swahili and mother tongue though the challenge persisted as illustrated in the data sample below;

**Moderator:** ...how do you feel you learn best?... What do teachers do in the classroom that makes us feel good or not so good?

**Learner N5:** Mathematics

**Moderator:** Ok... so what about Mathematics,

**Learner N5:** English

Teacher N1 confirmed that they had at least 2 or 3 in every class who were very slow learners which she considered 'abnormal'. They could not do much for them because of workload and lack of orientation on how to handle them. The teachers however tried to offer extra attention while teaching and marking their work.

Although the parents had heard about accommodation of all learners in regular school, it did not mean much to them;

Parent N1: That thing I think has been mentioned but no one cares, I know if I brought a child with physical or other disabilities here, they will be accepted but eventually, I will just take them away because they don't even fit.

In cases where learners were identified as having a special need, parents were advised to seek an assessment from the EARC centres which then decided on their placement. However, not all cases received attention, especially those with learning 'abnormalities' who were often disqualified as having special needs (teacher N1). The learners were left on the losing end as the teachers could also not do much for them;

Teacher N3: ...because of their numbers, and time limit, sometimes you ignore them unconsciously. Sometimes you find that a year is over and you haven't done anything because you got a lot to do and that is why inclusiveness is disadvantaged, because of the workload.

Teacher N2 notes that the 'biggest undoing of the system' is the concentration of examination marks. Those with intellectual challenges get lost as teachers focus on the grades. The other noted challenge was the lack of awareness by other learners. Learner N4 noted that those who were not fast learners desisted from participation for fear of being laughed at. This was despite the fact that they had been taught on accommodating diversity by creating a friendly environment. School N acknowledged the existence of diversity among learners but highlighted several challenges that made it impossible to accommodate them fully. this includes a lack of teacher training, workload, and lack of school modification and resources.

### **5.3.5 Stakeholders Collaboration in School N**

The school operated through the engagement of various stakeholders including educational officers, EARC centres, administration, teachers and pupils although to varying degrees. The administration (head and deputy headteacher) was at the centre of coordination. They held

meetings with teachers regularly, occasionally with parents, informally with pupils and rarely with education officers.

The discussion with the teachers revolved around performance, syllabus coverage and discipline. This was in form of staff or one-on-one meetings to address a specific issue like a decline in subject performance. This was the same case with parents who held a meeting once per term to discuss various matters such as performance, general well-being, hygiene and nutrition. Individual parents were also summoned when the need arose. This was mainly when a learner portrayed persistent and 'abnormal' problems academically or socially. The identification was mainly done by the teachers who notified the administration which in turn summoned the parents. This was however met with denial from the parents. As teachers N1 and N4 explained, most of the cases were invisible, hence the child performed any other task effectively apart from a specific learning problem e.g. dyslexia (teacher 4). The parents could therefore not understand that their seemingly okay children have a special need;

Teacher N3: when you tell the parent that they have a problem, they wonder what you are talking about.

Teacher N1: You see this is a normal child in anything else. They do other tasks like any other child...

After the identification and notification to the parents, the child is referred to the EARC centre for assessment and placement in special units. The EARC involvement was however not known to the teachers as they left the matter to the headteacher after identification. Follow-up was only done in those schools with special units. Generally, learners preferred peer discussions and consultations for fear of reprimand from parents and teachers;

Learner N4: Sometimes he/she threatens you that if you perform poorly, you won't get any surplus because you failed.

The nature of their parents' lifestyle also hindered them from participating in school affairs. According to the teachers, they were casual labourers who utilized most of their time earning a living. Others were not aware of how and to what extent they should engage in the education process.

On the government level, less engagement was recorded. The education officers, though rarely, visited the school and were more concerned about the mini-scores. This was a disadvantage to the school because due to factors such as lack of resources, background challenges and other unexplainable factors, it was not a performer;

Headteacher N: The educational officers do criticize the school because they normally look at the mini scores. They do not give room for those with physical disabilities or learning disabilities...

They were however hopeful that things would change if the implementation of the new curriculum was successful. Generally, despite the challenges encountered in the school, efforts have been made on stakeholders' involvement especially within the school (between administration, teachers and pupils) (teacher N1).

### **5.3.6 Stakeholders Policy Awareness in school N**

Like in the case of other schools under study, school N did not have any IE policy guides in their custody nor were the stakeholders aware of them.

Headteacher N did not know any policy or IE guide but guessed there could be some that touch on IE. The students and parents were also not conversant with any policies. The learners noted

that the only thing that brought them close to inclusion was the syllabus that included diversity and disability as a topic in class 6. For the parents, the new curriculum seemed like a policy toward inclusion as it was focusing on talents and hands-on activities. They however could not ascertain it as they knew very little about it apart from the regular demands from the parents. The teachers were also not aware of any policies. Teacher N1 suggested that they were there but not known to the teachers. Like teachers in school T, he suggested that such matters could be in the Children Act (As mentioned earlier, this Act has a provision for a right to education where every child is entitled to free compulsory basic education).

## **5.4 Inclusive Education Discourse in School M**

### **5.4.1 School Background**

This school is also a public institution located in Othaya, Nyeri County Kenya. It is a day, mixed-gender school running from nursery to class 8. It has a total of 201 pupils and 8 teachers giving it a ratio of 1:25. It has 13 classrooms, 1 staffroom and 22 toilets (20 for learners and 2 teacher toilets). It however lacks other facilities like a library, laboratory, computer and resource room. The school is located in the rural area of Chinga, Othaya. The main economic activity in this region is farming in small-scale or tea plantations. Over the past years, the Othaya sub-county has been leading in school performance out of the six sub-counties in Nyeri (Ndegwah, 2014). He attributed this to the existence of appropriate strategic plans in most Othaya schools and also political empowerment as Othaya is the home of former Kenyan president, Mwai Kibaki. The case could however be different in rural schools because of the difference in livelihood and lack of basic resources. For instance, school M did not show signs of having benefited from the political influence. Apart from classes, toilets and staffroom, there was no other infrastructure or resource to enhance learning. It has also been in bad shape until recently with the deployment of the current headteacher who solicited funds from the

Constituencies Development Funds (CDF) for renovation (parent M1). Like most other rural schools in Kenya, school M was disadvantaged in terms of learning resources like a library, limited affordability of stationary and low economic background (Mugisha, 2006).

#### 5.4.2 Participants' Profile and Experience in School M

**Headteacher:** Headteacher M has been a teacher for 19 years, 3 years as a deputy headteacher and 3 years as a headteacher in the current school. She holds a diploma and later a degree in education but no specialization in SNE/IE. She however has had basic training through seminars and administrators' meetings. Her role as a headteacher entailed;

“facilitation, that the learners and the teachers are well facilitated in terms of resources. Ensure that the child is taught as far as syllabus coverage is concerned. Organizing teaching, ensuring that the lessons and the child is attended to and ensuring learning takes place smoothly in the school. The welfare of the teachers, welfare of the students and even the other stakeholders in the school. You need to ensure that all these things work together for the good of the child.”

The parents reported that through the head teacher's effort, the school had evolved over the last three years. The headteacher was proactive in soliciting funds from the education offices (CDF) to renovate the school and also sensitizing the parents on the need for engagement in their children's education.

**Teachers:** the teachers' qualification and the experience was as follows;

**Table 5. 7 Teachers’ Qualification in School M**

Teacher Code	Qualification	IE/SNE training	Years in the teaching profession
M1	Degree	N/A	20
M2	PTE Certificate	N/A	16

M3	PTE Certificate	N/A	7
M4	PTE Certificate	N/A	20
M5	PTE Certificate	N/A	20

These data on teachers is closely related to those in school N which was also a rural school. Each school had only one teacher with qualifications beyond a certificate. None of the schools had a teacher with SNE/IE background.

Generally, the teachers enjoyed their profession and being of service to the children. They however expressed concerns about putting a lot of effort but getting discouraged by the results. This was mainly contributed to the lack of teaching-learning aids and general weaknesses of some learners who remain as they are despite the efforts (Teacher M2). They were concerned about low performance contributed by learners' (in)abilities, insufficient provision from both the government and parents and their lack of skills in handling all types of learners.

**Parents:** Their experience in primary school parenting ranged from 3 to 11 years. The sampled parents were farmers and three worked in the tea plantations. These plantations are the main source of income for residents who get wages based on the amount of tea leaves plucked (parent M3). Because of this, the region receives immigrants from other regions of the country in search of informal employment. This as observed by parent M1 indirectly affects the education sector. Because of the small wages and the terms of earning, the parents' provision and engagement in education are below average. They found it hard to attend meetings as this equates to a lack of payment. Culture diversity also makes it difficult to establish a school culture with some having no interest in participation;

Parent M3: ...those outsiders are here on a mission. So coming to school even for a meeting becomes time-wasting, we don't have monthly wages here.

Parents M3 and M5 also reported many cases of one-parenthood with fathers neglecting their duties. This makes the mothers play both roles and hence no time for school involvement. The school has however seen great improvement in parental participation since the deployment of the current headteacher who has taken a personal interest in the learners' welfare and managed to convince parents of the importance of participation (Parent M3).

**Learners:** An FGD was conducted with 5 learners from school M, 3 in class 8 and 2 in grade 4. The learners were optimistic that the school was the channel of change. They equipped it with a tree as it makes them grow (learner M4), each growing at different stages like branches of a tree (learner M5), a bed because they feel comfortable when in school (learner M2) and fruit because they hope it will nourish their life (learner M3). This hope was however being threatened by several factors among them their parents' economic status. At times, they even became the victims of their parents' lack;

Learner M5: You know there are times when you come to school, the teacher is angry at you, she/he starts telling you don't have this or that and sends you home. Then you go home and you are told to go back to school.

They therefore not only lack basic resources but also lose concentration as the challenges at home haunt them during class time (learner M1). Occasionally, homework was unmanageable due to quantity and home issues leading to conflict between them and the teachers. The other obstacles included peer pressure and the use of drugs which were slowly creeping into primary schools (learner M4). Although they hoped that schooling would be their life-changing factor, they hoped for an improved learning environment with electricity (learner M2), a library to cultivate a reading culture (learner M3), co-curricular activities like those in secondary school including basketball, music and trips (learner M2) and better learning methods that accommodate all learners without stress and fear of the teacher (learners M5/ M2). Overall,

they appreciated that their school was better, had adequate and clean classes, and enough desks and books compared to their counterparts in other regions;

Learner M2: I think we are better off, there are schools like those in Turkana that do not even have classes, they read under the trees. They don't even have books to write, no textbooks.

#### **5.4.3 School M Participants' Understanding and Perception of Inclusive Education**

**Headteacher:** the headteacher had acquired 'some basic training on IE during the head of institution meetings.' These meeting has been reported worthwhile by headteacher G and N in equipping them with basic knowledge on inclusion. Even though the teachers lacked adequate training, they understood the need for inclusive facilities and were willing to implement them in their schools. They however could not since the government did not provide funds for it. Headteacher M, for instance, pointed out that the school was always open to all learners but was limited in terms of resources. She however observed that the society is gradually opening up to inclusion and it is up to the government to allocate special funds for inclusion and then train and employ teachers. She defines IE as;

“where we give a room for every child, regardless of their mental or physical capacity where we give the learner the opportunity to interact with the world just like the way they will do it outside there.”

She captures the importance of ensuring the learners are prepared for the world after school.

**Teachers:** The teachers in school M admitted that the concept of IE was vague to them and defined it as;

Teacher M3: Learners with special needs learn together with learners who are ok.

Teacher M1: IE is the same as integrated.

In the first definition, the teacher identifies learners without special needs as okay leaving the question of whether those with the needs are not ok. According to teacher M3, the concept of inclusion was appealing as an idea but will be hard to accomplish fair treatment for all. Three of the teachers felt that learners with disabilities are better off in separate institutions because there is no value addition in regular schools;

Teacher M1: ...but if he (child with a disability) was in a place where they have been the same, they would have learnt at the same speed, slowly and beneficial. But when they are here, they are lost in the crowd because they cannot move together.

At the end of the discussion, the teachers attempted to define IE as sampled below;

Teacher M3: IE is the type of education that incorporates all learners despite the challenges; physical, environmental or whatever and learners are able to achieve their dreams.

Teacher M2: It is an education system that involves all kinds of learners regardless of whether they have a disability or a special need, ensuring they are all catered for like the others.

The clearer definition at the end of FGD is an indicator that engaging teachers in IE research provide a platform for a generation of ideas that would otherwise remain unearthed. The teachers attached the impossibilities of inclusion to the rigid syllabus, lack of teacher preparation for it, 'ego' issues hence lack of cooperation from parents and lack of resources to support inclusion programs.

**Parents:** Like most of the parent participants in this study, parents in school M were not familiar with the IE concept. Upon explanation, some felt it was a complicated concept for

regular schools. Parent M3 felt that it would be a great idea to integrate learners with special needs but in separate classes for fear of stigmatization;

Parent M3: We need to have special classes. So that they are taught separately. You see, if they are put together, there will be intimidation but when they are put separately, they can learn.

Parent M2 noted that inclusion would require immense efforts as they were already facing serious challenges in the current education system for instance the lack of good toilets or even a kitchen. The school did not have a computer (parent M3) or even a library (parent M4) to enhance learning for these learners. More so, when changes are introduced in the education system, the main funders are the parents and this brings instability in implementation. Because of these reasons, they deemed their school not ready for inclusion. Parent M3 concludes that;

“We can’t really equalize them. We are not yet at that level. The school will not be able. The only time we can give them equal opportunity is when we provide schools with the resources but as long as it remains the parents’ responsibility, then they cannot be equal.”

**Learners:** when asked what they thought IE was, the learners gave the following response;

**Table 5. 8 School M learners’ definition of IE**

<b>Learner Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>
M4	it is including people like teachers and students to give their opinion
M2	it is including other people to get their opinion
M5	it is about reading and revising in order to understand.
M1	it is about reading and being able to understand

Upon discussion, the learners expressed the same concerns as their parents. Learner M4 suggested that 'it would be hard to control', and those with disabilities would face discrimination and bullying. They however accepted that they had learnt about accommodation of diversity in religious studies and guidance and counselling although not everyone practised

it. The school was also not accommodative as those with disabilities especially physical ones would not fit. Therefore, even though the idea of inclusion was new to the learners, they already saw the challenges to its implementation including the lack of environmental adaptation, and lack of awareness by the school community to the extent of some blaming individuals with disabilities for their condition (learner M1).

#### **5.4.4 School M Acknowledgement and Accommodation of Diversity**

Headteacher M reported that accommodation of diversity was a complicated situation in public schools. In her school, enrolment of all types of learners was impractical despite the awareness of it. Some were sent to a nearby school that had a special unit. She noted that there were several learners with learning disabilities (4-5 per class) who were there because they could not fit elsewhere;

“We usually allow them to stay in the school because if you look at the level of their disability, you realize they cannot even fit in, you see their disability is not severe, physically they are ok. So if you look for placement or institutions for such, you don’t get. If you take them to those places of those with disabilities, you find severe cases, so you find that they don’t feed fit. So we would rather have them here than take them to extreme cases.”

As outlined above, the accommodation of learners with learning disabilities was haphazard. Their parents knew their situation but did not know what to do. The EARC centre acknowledge their condition but could not offer placement or assistance as their condition was not severe. The government offered no directive or assistance to schools. Hence they were placed in schools just for interaction;

Headteacher M: Here at least they can write their name, they may not be able to read or write but they are able to interact with the rest of the children.”

As evidenced above, learners with learning disabilities are physically integrated but with little or no intervention and are often socially segregated.

The teachers also recognized the existence of diversity in the school. There were no cases of physical disabilities but several had behavioural challenges and learning difficulties that made them too slow to learn. Although the teacher-pupil ratio was not a challenge to them, the syllabus was. Because of the demands of the curriculum, they were unable to give sufficient attention to deserving learners. They however sensitized the other learners on acceptance and equal treatment of all regardless of performance and behaviour differences (teacher M3). They wished they were adequately equipped with knowledge and resources to handle learners' differences as 'many are the times they struggled to get solutions' (teacher M1).

The different reaction was expressed by the parents to the placement of learners with special needs. They thought the best option was to have special classes in their schools rather than send them to other schools to avoid embarrassment. This is contrary to what most headteachers did (send them to special units). Nevertheless, they preferred them to go through the system even with no value addition rather than take them to special schools because of 'ego' or fear of stigmatization (teacher M1). The parents identified another category of learners who required intervention; those who could not afford basic needs like food (parent M2) and school fees (parent M5). For full inclusion to take place, the government needed to identify and support such cases.

The learners affirmed that there were those among them who just fail exams no matter what they do, with the teachers offering little intervention because of time limits and workload. They however acknowledged that with time, the diversity of learners was being embraced by their peers although there were still cases of segregation (having no friends) (learner M4), low self-esteem (learner M5) and bully-ism (learner M1).

#### **5.4.5 Stakeholders' Collaboration in School M**

The chain of collaboration in school M involved the administration, teachers, education officers, EARC centre, area member of parliament (MP), the Board of Management (BOM), parents and learners. The administration worked closely with the teachers to identify and assist children with vulnerabilities. In extreme cases, they engaged the area chief and even empathized with those who could not pay fees. Learners acknowledged this effort and appreciated the teachers' empathy. They preferred to consult their teachers because they were educated and hence in a better position to guide them (learner M4). The parents were also a point of consultation, especially those who were educated (learner M3). The teachers pointed out that engaging parents was challenging with less than 5% showing constant concern in education (teacher M1). Moreover, their interest in education increased towards the final year of examination with the notion that they could support their children in passing the examination.

In terms of school development, the area Member of Parliament was dedicated to supporting the schools. Through the CDF, he built classes and toilets and offered books and sanitary towels for needy girls.

In this particular school, unlike other schools, the BOM representative was proactive in supporting the learners and provision of revision materials. This could be attributed to the headteacher's effort in reaching stakeholders as reported by teachers and parents. Occasionally, the education officers called the head of institutions for meetings but they rarely tackled the inclusion or welfare of learners with special needs.

The major loopholes in the collaboration attempts were the lack of time and commitment by parents, insufficient support from the national government and lack of education empowerment

to the implementers of inclusion. There was also a lack of clear intervention guidelines and procedures in assessment and intervention as witnessed at the EARC centres.

#### **5.4.6 Stakeholders Policy Awareness School M**

Like in the other schools, headteacher M did not have education policy documents in custody. She was also not aware of any that guided IE implementation. The teachers were also not certain of such policies although teacher M5 suggested that 'the Right to Education Act' would be the IE policy. Teacher M1 noted that they were somehow seeing inclusion in the new curriculum as it emphasizes quality education for all children (this will be addressed in chapter 6). The parents and learners were not aware of the existence of educational policies.

### **5.5 Conclusion**

From the data above, inclusion and acceptance of diversity are gradually gaining momentum in Kenyan public schools. The impact is however minimum at all the 4 stages of implementation as highlighted in the theoretical framework. At the *initiation stage*, there is increased awareness among stakeholders on the need for inclusion. This is however accompanied by a lack of clear plans and innovation for it and unfamiliarity with inclusion policies. There seems also to be no coordination in the *implementation stage* with schools practising inclusion in the best way they know-how. This directly affects the *continuation stage* which is dependent on the success of the first two stages and how much effort has been put into policy, budget and planning. With little success in the initial stages, the *outcome stage* is compromised. The success of this last stage is reflected by a change in thoughts/attitudes, skills and actions.

Data from the participants' profiles indicate the lack of stakeholders' orientation towards inclusion. The teachers particular were concerned by the lack of inclusive skills that hindered

their classroom management and ability to cater for diversity and especially for learners with disabilities. Their concern is widely supported by scholars who believe that the general teachers' knowledge of the characteristics and needs of learners with disability largely determine the success of their inclusion (Sharma & Nuttal, 2016; Al Khatib, 2007; Koay et al., 2006; Jobe et al., 1996). According to Nilsen (2020) as long as the teachers are not sure how to deal with learners with special needs, even if they are inside the inclusive classrooms, they are still on the outside.

The satisfaction of teachers and learners in their school environment was triggered by their achievement of the set targets and in this case the passing of examinations. Some researchers also affirm that teachers' accountability for their students' performance can be a source of dissatisfaction and stress for the teachers (Ryan et al., 2017; Cochran-Smith et al., 2017). An important factor in teachers' satisfaction is their friendship with students and their success in school and life after (Nyamubi, 2017). Likewise, the learners were determined to meet the set targets for the satisfaction of their teachers and parents. Falchikov and Boud (2007) remark that learner interaction with assessment can have an emotional impact that even inhibits new learning, influences behaviour and jeopardize the general school experience. This shows the importance of measuring achievements differently by setting individualized goals that will ensure every learner is an achiever in the inclusive setting. This will reduce unhealthy competition, and stress in teachers and learners and ensure personal progress is celebrated.

The participants' understanding of inclusion and more so the headteachers focused on physical inclusion. They measured it in terms of modification of the environment and provision of resources while ignoring the aspect of social inclusion. Koster et al. (2009) observe that social inclusion and social participation to maximize interaction among peers of different diversity is a vital part of inclusion that is commonly ignored. Implementers tend to focus on physical

placement ignoring the fact that integrated learners need to take a full and active part in school life (Farrell, 2000).

The choice of words by the participants in the IE discussion is also an area of concern concerning language sensitivity for inclusion. Usage of words such as 'not normal' 'handicapped' or 'not ok' when discussing learners with disabilities was noted, denoting segregation or the 'Othering discourse' (Dunne, 2009) as highlighted in chapter 3. The choice of words or language sensitivity has raised concerns in the inclusion agenda. GOV.UK (2021) criticises the use of passive victim words such as 'handicapped' and 'abnormal' and advocates for words that portray these individuals as people abled differently and in control of their lives. For instance, replacing 'handicapped' with 'people with disabilities' and 'subnormal' with 'persons with learning disabilities'.

There is also a contradiction in how effective the syllabus is in preparing students for inclusion. While some teachers were positive that it was instilling inclusive skills in learners, some thought that it was just for passing examinations. This observation is also highlighted in several other findings (Standish, 2017; Khalili, 2009; Lujan & DiCarlo, 2006). Khalili (2009) observes that the main focus tends to be on testing points and exam passing ignoring the crucial goal of developing skills and abilities as well as life and socialization skills essential for a fulfilling life after school. The role of the syllabus in the socialization of learners has been highlighted in various researches (Sulik & Keys, 2014; Schwalbe, 2008; Collins, 1997; Danielson, 1995; Emerick, 1994). It may be used in cultivating a classroom environment by establishing the norms for social interaction and instilling skills that bring a sense of community and civility (Sulik & Keys, 2014). Danielson (1995) and Emerick (1994) also note that the syllabus plays an integral part in classroom socialization and etiquette. This shows the need for long-life learning geared towards the application of knowledge and skills rather than passing an examination and increasing scores.

Below are some other highlights on inclusive practices in public schools emanating from the data presented;

- Significant efforts towards inclusion were noted in form of acknowledgement of diversity, teachers taking personal initiatives to acquire knowledge and skills, some schools having disability friendly environments and others the will to implement. Accommodation of diversity was now a topic in the syllabus aiming at equipping learners with basic knowledge of diversity.
- There is evidence of inequalities in public primary schools mainly based on family's economic status and home location.
- There are exclusion tendencies within the school community based on socio-economic powers, presence of a disability, non-sensitization on inclusion and cultural prejudice.
- Teachers and school administrators lack professional preparedness for diversity as well as clear curriculum and pedagogy guides towards inclusion.
- There is an effort to collaborate among stakeholders but still, the need for more sensitization and organization to enhance communication and community participation.
- There is a presence of diversity among individual learners in public primary schools ranging from learning disabilities to vulnerabilities and lack of basic human needs.
- Government involvement in the efforts towards inclusion is wanting. There is no consideration of the nature of schools or the needs of individual learners in the provision of funds and teacher deployment.

These findings are now explored in the subsequent chapters.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **6.0 Introduction**

Chapter 5 above outlines the aspects of inclusion/ exclusion in the schools under study cutting across policies, cultures and practices according to the themes generated during analysis and as recommended in the Index for Inclusion by Booth and Ainscow (2002, 2011). The next two chapters (6 and 7) focus on objective 3 ‘Compare what is documented and practised and propose intervention mechanisms aimed at bridging the gap between theory and practice.’ This chapter presents the discussions emanating from the findings on school differences in their perception and practice of IE and the resultant challenges of IE implementation. It also explores the policy-practice gap in relation to the policy analysis in chapter 4. First, it outlines the inequality in Kenyan public primary schools. Inequalities and related factors such as socioeconomic imbalances construct difficulties to inclusive learning (Thomas, 2013) hence the need to look at the indicators, triggers and consequences of these inequalities. The concept of IE in the schools is then presented with its achievement and hurdles. Finally, the policypractice gap in the Kenyan inclusion policy is outlined and the major factors contributing to the existence of the gap are highlighted.

#### **6.1 Inequalities in the Primary Schools under Study**

“I think it (implementation of IE) will depend on where the school is. Like our school here is not like those in the arid areas.” Parent N1

“You cannot compare our school with the schools around here. The schools are so down; the parents cannot afford simple things like books. They are in bad state.” Parent T2

Internationally, education inequalities based on gender, race, region, and political and socioeconomic status continue to exist in all stages of schooling including enrolment, retention and achievement despite the commitment to inclusivity and education for all (Alwy & Schech, 2007; Watkins, 2001; Challender, 2003). As highlighted in the data samples above and as observed in several research projects in Kenya (Alwy & Schech, 2004; Oyugi, 2000; Oucho, 2002; Abagi, 1997) there is an ‘unwritten’ hierarchy of schools contributed mainly by the social and economic classes. Despite the government’s efforts to invest heavily in education, researchers have reported disparities in financial allocation, teacher-pupil ratio, facility and resource availability (Oyugi, 2000; Alwy & Schech, 2007; Kimalu et al., 2002; Abagi, 1997). Access to quality education is therefore determined by the socioeconomic status of the parents making education equity questionable. The wealthier certain groups are, the better the chances of quality education while those from poor backgrounds, minority groups and those with disabilities are likely to miss out on educational opportunities (Lucas & Mbiti, 2012; Ojok, 2020; Nishimura & Yamano, 2008)

Generally, social inequalities exist based on various social status indicators including gender, religion, disability and socioeconomic power (Dunn, 2021; Owens & Candipan, 2019). The latter consists of the disparities in income, education and occupation which control economic, political and social powers (Simon, 2016). Controversies about social inequalities question whether these inequalities are natural/ unnatural, inevitable or personalized. Østby (2008) and Stewart (2000) term the inequalities as horizontal inequalities (occur between groups) and vertical inequalities (occur between individuals). The former, also referred to as systemic inequalities are more likely to cause social conflicts and instabilities (Østby, 2008). Horizontal inequalities account for the role played by political, social, economic and cultural differences in the education outcomes of certain groups (Tesfay & Malmberg, 2014). To counteract it, there is a need for acceptance of diversity across groups, regional policy development and

antipoverty programs (Tesfay & Malmberg, 2014; Stewart et al., 2008; Stewart, 2000). Vertical inequalities are associated with individual differences, households and income levels (Stewart et al., 2009). Individual-related inequalities may be a result of biological structure since individuals have unique brains and genetic structures and therefore life milestones are obtained relatively independently (Taziki, 2017; Ahlsen, 2006). These inequalities affect education outcomes at the individual level and hence the need to consider both levels. However, reducing vertical inequalities will be difficult and have less impact without first reducing horizontal inequalities (Stewart, et al., 2005).

The societal inequalities trickle down to the schools leading to the existence of school ranks mainly based on the socio-economic aspects (Otieno, 2019; Inziani, 2013). Although there are other dynamic factors affecting students' achievement, high scores are mainly associated with privileged backgrounds while those with low scores are mainly from low economic status (Christensen et al., 2014). Though social inequalities in education have been documented for almost 40-50 years now, researchers still conclude that it is still a modern problem and the gap between the most disadvantaged and most advantaged students continues to increase (Hochschild, 2021; Van Zanten, 2005). The inequalities in educational outcomes affect an individual's national participation, income, well-being and health (Codioli McMaster & Cook, 2019; Melhuish, 2014; Conti et al., 2010) resulting in a national economic instability and conflict (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2008). In Kenya for instance, various studies highlight the inequalities and their implication for education; Lee and Burkam (2002) point out that schools attended by low-income students, especially in the rural areas have fewer resources, are nonattractive to qualified teachers, receive less monitoring and evaluation and less support from the community. Keriga (2009) attributes the inequality in access to education to the vicious inequality cycle in areas such as class, gender, ethnicity and region. Mulongo (2013) concludes that in Kenya, education and social inequalities are a back-and-forth affair, the social

surroundings influence the quality of education and life and this in turn results in more social instability and inequalities. The section below explores the disparity in schools based on their location and the socio-economic status of their community. The assumption here is that if institutional inequalities are dealt with, the chances of eliminating discrimination arising from individual differences are high (Unterhalter, 2012). In Oliver's words, "it is not individual limitations, of whatever kind, which are the cause of the problem but society's failure to provide appropriate services and adequately ensure the needs of disabled people are fully taken into account in its social organization" (1996, p32).

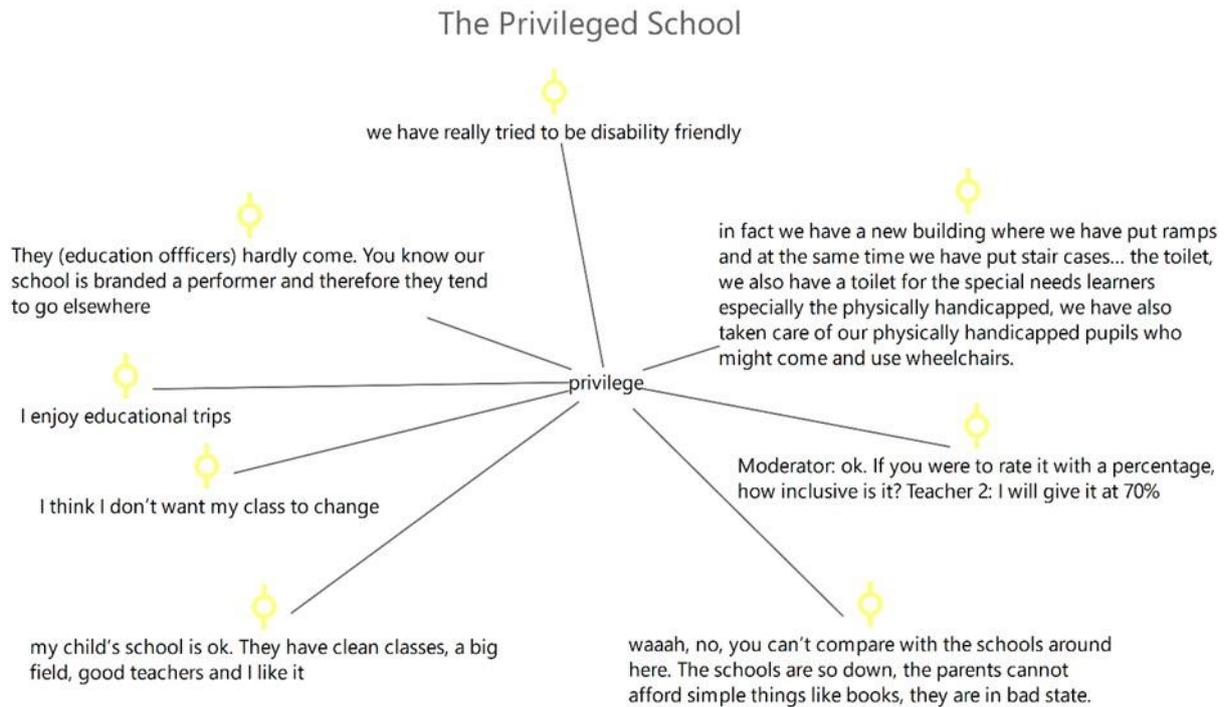
## **6.2 School Categories**

For the data analysis and development of the inductive categories, differences and similarities among the schools were explored resulting in the emergence of school categories (Thomas, 2003; Elliot & Gillie, 1998). Although not directly said, a hierarchy of schools consisting of privileged and less-privileged ones was obtained from the data as evidenced in the discussion below:

### **6.4.1 The Privileged Public School**

"Our school is a child-friendly school; we don't have any restrictions or causes of inaccessibility because we have made it a child-friendly school whereby we have put ramps... In fact, we have a new building where we have put ramps and at the same time we have put staircases... the toilet, we also have a toilet for the special needs learners especially the physically handicapped, we have also taken care of our physically handicapped pupils who might come and use wheelchairs." (Headteacher T).

As outlined in the sampled data above and below, the participants in school T find the school disability friendly and well equipped for inclusivity, a participant rating it as 70% inclusive.



**Figure 6. 1 School T participants' perception of IE implementation**

**Source:** Author, MAXQDA MAXMAPS

*How does the nature of these privileged schools impact inclusion?* Although the stakeholders are satisfied with the conditions of the schools, these same conditions become a source of 'hidden segregation' for the less privileged (Haugen, 2020). In reference to the IE definition in this study, it constitutes of appropriate learning environments (physical and social), appropriate and adequate resources, inclusive pedagogy, stakeholders' collaboration and equal accessibility regardless of individual differences. With close reference to these factors, the section below looks at factors contributing to inclusion or exclusion in the privileged type of school.

### **Factors contributing to Inclusion in the Privileged Public School**

Creating an inclusive school is a tough journey and a never-ending process that requires continuous efforts and modification of structures and systems. Hence, identifying an effective inclusive school is a hard task. However, as observed below and by several other researchers,

remarkable efforts toward inclusion have been noted in various schools worldwide (Azorín & Ainscow, 2020; Opoku et al., 2019; Carew et al., 2019).

The school registered notable efforts towards architectural and physical environmental modification compared to the others under study; it is well levelled and has ramps, special toilets and a resource room. Provision of an LRE by providing an accessible physical and human environment is paramount for inclusive education for learners with or without disabilities (IDEA, 1997; Gal et al., 2010). As mentioned by the head teacher, the modification of the environment was done before the existence of any notable physical needs of the learners. Therefore, when the need arose (one learner developed a physical challenge and another partial visual impairment), accommodation was smooth.

Parental involvement and collaboration was also notable strength of this school. Unlike in other schools, the teachers confirmed that many parents in this school did a regular follow-up on their children's performance even without summon. The head teacher affirms that they 'try and give advice to the parents, not to show sympathy to these children but to empathize with them'. For instance, when referring to the most recent case of special need (a girl who developed a leg deformity), the head teacher advised the parent to buy a special shoe. He was able and willing to do so. Manilal (2014) noted that parental involvement in a privileged school is higher compared to an underprivileged one. She attributed this to parental aspiration and expectations, the adequacy of communication and school leadership support.

In terms of resources and facilities, this type of school seems to be far ahead of others. For instance, school T had inclusive facilities such as a special toilet, an audio-visual room and a resource room. More so, this type of school attracts a high number of students and therefore receives more grants from the government (the Kenyan government offers grants per headcount) hence more room for improvement (Ngugi et al., 2015). The availability of

resources in this kind of a school is also influenced by the nature of parents; due to their abilities and aspirations (Manilal, 2014), they can provide needed and extra materials (Schneider et al., 2018). This however becomes a disadvantage to other less privileged schools which are likely to receive fewer funds from both parents and the government making development towards inclusion a challenge (Sawamura & Sifuna, 2008).

Teacher retention and attraction to this type of school could help create the right attitude to facilitate inclusion (Toropova et al., 2021). The status of the school and improved working environment as noted in school T improve the motivation and productivity of teachers (Toropova et al., 2021; Hakanen et al., 2006; Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). As noted in their choice of words, 'our school is not like the others', 'our school is rated a performer', they had a sense of pride for this particular school. Therefore, the factors of certain schools such as location, socioeconomic status and performance rate influence teacher attrition and satisfaction (Geiger & Pivovarov, 2018; Borman & Dowling, 2008) as they tend to avoid schools serving low-income and minority students (Boyd et al., 2011). With the contentment of teachers, they are likely to assist in implementing IE through attitudinal change and provision of learning support, tools critical for inclusion (Kunter et al., 2013; Klusmann et al., 2008).

### **Factors contributing to exclusion in the privileged school**

At the core of the struggle towards IE is a deep system of social inequalities and exclusions (Slee, 2019). Despite the efforts of the school systems to embrace inclusion, the social systems; culture orientation, resource mobilization, population distribution, power influence etc., will have profound implications on the outcome (Slee, 2019; Marshall 2018; OECD 2012). Noted barriers to inclusion in this school included some instances of attitudinal barriers. As asserted by Heyne (2003) and Parasuram (2006), this comes in many forms such as labelling, fear, stereotypes, resistance and denial of opportunities. For the latter, the admission in this type of

school as noted by one of the parents is non-inclusive. It is a common-exam-based competition without special provisions (e.g. in time allocation, exam presentation or assistance). Secondly, the admission and related fees are higher in this school compared to other schools and this hinders admission of economically disadvantaged learners. They may therefore be environmentally prepared but close out those in need of it. The fact that the head teacher and teachers believed that their school was inclusive proves the misconception that IE is physically modifying the school while ignoring instances of social discrimination. Despite the other signs of exclusion and especially the mode of admission, teachers' workload and high focus on students' grades, the stakeholders felt that they are indeed an inclusive school. Yet, modification for inclusion goes beyond physical to administrative, attitudinal and programmatic adjustment (Gal et al., 2010; Cross et al., 2004; Heyne, 2003).

The classroom environment may also bar inclusion. First, due to the high population with a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:50 (Teacher T3). This translates to teachers having a high workload and a lack of individualized attention (Ibrahim, 2020; Namai, 2018; Owuor & Too, 2018). Learners who require learning or emotional regulation either temporarily or permanently are likely to go unnoticed and unassisted (Gray et al., 2017). Secondly, due to the performance demands of these highly ranked schools particularly in Kenya, the attention is almost purely on examination performance at the expense of other needs and potentials of the learners (Amusavi, 2021). As noted by learner T3 'Sometimes they (teachers) even go with the fast people, the higher performers and if you are a bit slow. You will not be able to understand.' The result of ignoring learners' needs is emotional and behavioural problems which reflect not only within classrooms but also in the wider society (Voorman et al., 2006; Law et al., 1999). As evidenced in this study and noted by international research, the existence of privileged schools is a common phenomenon (Calarco, 2020; Kenway & Fahey, 2015; Wanjiru, 2013;

Holte, 2013; Howard, 2010; Oketch & Somerset, 2010; Bush & Heystek, 2003). They are generally characterized by remarkable concern and involvement of parents, improved facilities and resources, more support from educational stakeholders and government and are ordinarily located in more developed and modernized environments (Haugen, 2020; Dixon et al., 2013; OECD, 2012; Apple, 2006). They however portray internal segregation mainly based on socioeconomic status, child's abilities and ethnicity (Haugen, 2020; Valenzuela et al., 2014; Spaul, 2013). The contradiction lies in their ability to afford resources and facilities necessary for inclusion and their tendency of segregating the less-privileged and minority groups who require inclusion (Haugen, 2020).

#### **6.4.2 The Slum-based Public School**

“...vulnerability is very high here because the school caters for slum children.”

(Headteacher G)

Generally, children in an urban setting have been considered to have better educational opportunities than those in rural settings (Astalini et al., 2020; Logan & Burdick-Will, 2017; Muliavka, 2017). This is mainly contributed by what Mugisha (2006) refers to as 'urban advantage' which exposes the children to technologies and more facilities. However, data has also shown that some sections of the urban settings, particularly the slum areas, expose children to vulnerabilities (Mugisha, 2006).

At the expense of their education, children living in slum areas like those in school G face challenges in various life sectors. Poor nutrition and sanitation pose a health threat. The nature of the social-economic systems exposes the children to poor parenting, negative peer pressure, drug and substance abuse, child labour and sexual activities (Githaiga, 2020; Mugisha, 2004; Zulu et al., 2002; Berhe, 1999). For instance, parent G2 was an elderly man who was parenting his grandchildren after their father abandoned them. Similarly, parent G3 reported mental

breakdowns after the arrest of the husband, which she confirmed was also affecting the wellbeing of her two children. These factors directly affect their school life (Waweru, 2019): The high population in and outside schools contributes to a shortage of resources and infrastructure, lack of basic needs such as food that keeps the children out of school, early marriages and sexual activities, labour provision, uncondusive learning environment among others (Githaiga, 2020; Abuya et al., 2019; Woldu et al., 2019; Nyariro, 2018; Maina, 2017).

***How does the nature of the slum schools affect inclusion?*** Children living in the slum are one of the most vulnerable to exclusion from education (Stubbs, 2008; Wanjiru, 2018). The main challenge lies in the definition and interpretation of IE which tends to focus more on disabilities and less on vulnerabilities such as slum-based children (Pather, 2019). With the social problems in their environment, high rates of poverty, malnutrition and unsanitary conditions, limited resources and facilities, overcrowding and inadequate infrastructure particularly in schools, IE becomes an imaginary goal that is hardly thought of (Wanjiru, 2018). However, from an optimistic point of view, the parents and learners in the slum-based school, felt that their school was inclusive in its own way. Schools that enrol learners from these areas have to develop survival mechanisms that will help them cope. This includes organizing for their spiritual, emotional, academic and social mentorship with volunteers, sourcing donations from well-wishers, encouraging them to remain in school despite their lack and working together as a school community to maintain their hope and focus in education for the betterment of their future (head teacher G).

### **Factors Affecting Inclusion in a Slum-based Public School**

***Lack of basic needs:*** Stakeholders in school G reported constraints in the provision of food, uniform and decent housing. Parents confirmed the lack of adequate feeding before, during and after school. There are cases of children who report to school without taking breakfast, some

remain hungry in school as their parents cannot afford to pay for the lunch program while others will go home with no assurance of a decent meal. Studies confirm that hunger and poor nutrition hinder a child's ability to learn (Ochieng, 2020; Powell et al., 1998). It affects their concentration, cognitive functioning and emotional wellbeing (Ochieng, 2020; Pollitt et al., 1996). The effect is the same when the learners cannot afford basic school requirements like decent uniforms and stationery. As revealed by a parent, they experience humiliation and low morale making it hard for them to feel fully integrated into the school.

***Low involvement of parents:*** As reported by Abuya et al. (2012) and evidenced in this study, parents in Kenyan primary schools especially in slum areas do not follow up on their children's progress unless summoned by teachers. This is attributed to their busy schedules trying to earn a living, some being semi-illiterate and hence cannot assist academically, broken/hostile marriages are also prevalent and some result in alcoholism and hopelessness (Obonyo, 2018; Abuya et al., 2012). With all these life struggles, they lose track of their children's education. Parental attention contributes amicably to children's emotions and wellbeing (Fomby & Cherlin, 2007; Graziano et al., 2007). As noted by parent G2, these children carry emotional burdens at a tender age, yet their parents and teachers are too busy to give them the attention they require. The learners are therefore socially, economically and academically disadvantaged compared to their peers who are in stable households and environments.

***School constraints:*** Because families in the slums are socially, educationally and economically disadvantaged, their level of achievement is relatively low compared to their counterparts who come from conducive environments and are exposed to scholastic materials (Okore, 2018; Considine & Zappala, 2002). As observed in the school under study, the learners lack basic learning equipment such as Mathematical sets and other stationery. Others wear worn-out uniforms making them uncomfortable and easy targets of humiliation. They face a lack of or

low-quality food and some often survive by sharing with others. Another constraint confirmed by other Kenyan studies is the lack of time and a conducive environment for private studies and assignments (Okore, 2018; Muriungi, 2017).

***Non-consideration by the government:*** While the provision of FPE by the government cannot be downplayed, its benefit remains deficient for minority groups such as those with disabilities and from poverty-stricken homes (Okore, 2018; Sawamura & Sifuna, 2008). Slum-based schools became over-enrolled, infrastructure insufficient and teacher workload increased (Chuck, 2009). Yet the government provided no extra funding or intervention to improve the education standards of these learners (Sana & Okombo, 2012). Despite the government's commitment to IE by ensuring equality and quality in education, minority groups continue to struggle. As observed in school G, there is no extra funding, program or any type of intervention by the government to cater for the basic, academic and social needs of these learners especially when they are in school. They consequently rely on their struggling parents and well-wishers to meet their academic and emotional needs.

***Societal Discrimination:*** People living in slums encounter diverse disadvantages including unemployment, poor housing, inadequate health care and poor sanitation (Ilesanmi et al., 2020; Sehra, 2018; Alagbe, 2006; UN-Habitat, 2004). They face social discrimination and are often forgotten in national discussions (Tulibaleka, et al., 2021; Odeny, 2020). Parents in the slumbased school confirmed that in some instances, they were denied admission to schools based on where they came from. Inadequate guidance and role modelling account for the disorganized families and systems (Nyariro, 2018). Due to the poverty level, child labour and excess house chores become a survival tactic making children drop out or perform poorly in school (Ozoh et al., 2022; Rahaman, 2018). Children easily indulge in crime, sexual activities

and drug abuse in search of acceptance and a more fulfilling life (Ngware et al., 2021; Abuya et al., 2012; Mugisha, 2006; Berhe, 1999).

It is for these and more reasons that learners living in slums should be given special attention in the inclusion debate and considered as having 'special needs' that need intervention to deliver quality and life-changing education.

### **6.4.3 The Ordinary School**

In several instances, the FGDs participants especially in schools T and G compared their schools with the 'other' schools. According to teachers in school T, the other schools were not as lucky as them in preparation for inclusion. They lacked infrastructure and learning resources such as a library and computers. Also, unlike school G, they were reluctant to enrol vulnerable learners such as slum dwellers. This type of school represents an ordinary public school distributed across regions and attended by the majority of learners. They encounter many but not extreme challenges with mild cases of special needs. The ordinary school in this discourse, therefore, represents a majority of the public schools referred to as regular or government schools. These schools are influenced by the pro and cons of FPE and face common educational challenges seen in other lower-income countries such as inadequate infrastructure, outdated or inappropriate curriculum, and shortfall of teachers among others (Zimu-Biyela, 2019; Bashir et al., 2018; Bold et al., 2017; Ogola, 2010).

### **Exclusion Factors in the Ordinary Schools**

Despite the commitment of the government to ensure inclusivity in these schools, they have undergone minimal or no changes towards inclusivity in terms of the provision of supportive facilities and services. They, therefore, lack appropriate curriculum and pedagogy, trained personnel, physical facilities and resources and general mechanisms to accommodate diversity.

There are no clear guidelines on how learners with learning difficulties are to be assisted. There lacks also additional facilities or services designated for them and this poses a challenge to both learners and teachers. As observed by headteacher M these challenges are considered mild by the EARC centres and therefore not recommended for intervention. The learners are therefore retained in schools with minimum and informal intervention (depends on availability and willingness of teachers). As observed by headteachers M and N, these learners neither fit in ordinary schools nor special schools/units. Their case is considered not 'severe enough' for placement but they also do not fit in the ordinary setting because they portray unique difficulties compared to other learners. they are however retained in ordinary schools just to interact with other learners with as little achievement as just learning how to write their names and this makes them the losers of the system. According to Gillborn and Youdell (2000) and Rouse (2008), learners who are considered difficult to teach and learn are at risk of exclusion in mainstream settings, especially where competition is encouraged. Therefore, dealing with the exclusion and underachievement of these kinds of learners should be a logical economic and social sense to ensure achievement and success are for all (Black-Hawkins et al., 2007; Rouse, 2008).

The study also established that the teacher preparedness and exposure to IE in the ordinary school settings, especially in the rural zone was wanting. As noted by the headteacher N, most teachers are not even aware of what and how they are supposed to implement. He notes that due to the lack of attention from teachers, mild disabilities become extreme with time, a situation that could be avoided if teachers were equipped to intervene. The lack of even a single teacher with an IE/SNE background places them in a disadvantaged position as such teachers are a reference point in terms of need (school T). generally, teachers in rural schools express specific challenges such as lack of initial teacher certification for SNE, inaccessibility to inservice teacher training and less support from parents.

Parental factors also contribute to exclusion in ordinary schools. The headteachers face opposition from parents who do not see the need for intervention. Some do not see the need for involvement in their children's education beyond the provision of basic needs. They also contribute to the stigmatization of their children in case of underachievement due to their lack of diversity awareness. In case of learning persistent difficulties, the parents develop denial and helplessness and this hinders the urge and action for intervention. This results in continued academic failure of the learner due to the lack of understanding and assistance both in school and at home.

School-based factors and the lack of orientation towards inclusion were direct indicators of exclusion in ordinary schools. The government has not taken seriously its commitment to the provision of quality and inclusive education. For instance, it was evident that schools M and N needed a resource room and personnel for the provision of appropriate support for learners identified as having specific and persistent learning challenges. On the contrary, the school lacked these provisions including programs and equipment for intervention. The government effort in making the schools inclusive in terms of funding and facilitation of IE was inadequate and hence the schools are unsuitable for learners with special needs. This includes lack of teaching-learning resources, libraries to enhance learning and modern resources such as computers that would help diversify achievement. The playing grounds were also not equipped for co-curricular activities but instead unlevelled with obstacles such as stones that expose learners to danger. Because of these school-based factors, the Kenyan regular schools are in a dilemma. On one hand, schools are willing to accommodate a diversity of learners but on the other hand, the condition of these schools do not encourage inclusion (Ohba & Malenya, 2022).

***So, what makes the three types of schools different?*** The *privileged schools* enjoy some exemptions such as better infrastructural development and parental support which help them

to some extent overcome most educational challenges. In terms of inclusion, it is to some extent physically inclusive but socially discriminative owing to its high social ranking. The *slumbased school* represents marginalized schools which encounter ‘extra’ challenges beyond school environments such as poor housing, health and nutrition. It is therefore physically and environmentally lacking for inclusion but socially adjusted towards acceptance of the lessprivileged. The ‘other’ school is a representation of a majority that may not have extreme cases of need but are also not fortunate enough to have adequate support from various sources such as parents and the government. It is both physically and socially not adequately equipped for inclusion.

### **6.3 Indicators of School Inequalities**

“Schools serve as a screening device to fill positions of unequal status.” (Dunn, 2021, p. 8.1.2)

Inequalities among public schools have been attributed to factors which may be termed socially unacceptable such as urban/rural contexts, parents’ education level, income and social status (Mills & Gale, 2007; Thomson, 2001; Connell, 1993). While almost all governments globally commit to the substantial duty of providing equal education opportunities, this remains a policy commitment that is hardly delivered (Adroque, 2013; Hanushek, 2004).

During this study, major discrepancies in education opportunities were identified. Although the schools were all categorized as public primary schools under the Ministry of Education (MoE), inequalities mainly based on geographical location, socioeconomic status and learners’ performance were recorded. Thomson (2001) as cited by Mills and Gale (2007) observes that the public education system fails to be democratic nor fair despite being termed as a basic right and a social equalizer. In an ideal situation, schools in the same category such as these would offer equal education opportunities as they ideally operate under the same policies and have a

central resource supply and coordination (Gale, 2006). However, horizontal inequality in educational opportunities in public primary schools especially in lower income countries is apparent (Adroque, 2013). In Kenyan public schools, disparities have been observed right from enrolment, availability of resources and infrastructure to performance output (Sifuna, 1991). School inequalities were evident within 2 main scopes namely physical and social factors, indexes that were also constructed and used in other studies on school inequalities (Llach & Schumacher, 2005; Adroque, 2013).

### **Physical Indicators**

“...about infrastructure we are not disability friendly at all”. (teacher N1, school N)

“I feel like our school is a bit friendly because we have ramps for wheelchair, we have special toilets... we have really tried to be disability friendly.” (teacher T2, school T)

The physical factors encompass the physical environment, facilities and learning resources.

The provision of a Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is a core requirement in delivering Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) (IDEA, 2005). The adequacy of these resources will depend on the quality and quantity of material resources and physical facilities (Okongo et al., 2015).

The data excerpts above point out some of the disparities in public schools. When asked how different they wish their schools were, a learner in school M was concerned about the lack of a library "I wish our school would have a library, you know, I like reading books." School T however had a well-equipped library located in a double-storied building (the only school with such a building). Other physical differences in the schools are sampled below:

**Table 6. 1 Evidence of inequalities in resource availability in public primary schools**

<b>Resources</b>	<b>School T</b>	<b>School G</b>	<b>School N</b>	<b>School M</b>
Classrooms	25	16	13	10
Learners' toilets	52	15	11	10
Teachers' toilets	5	6	4	2
Special toilet	1	0	0	0
bathrooms	0	1(for Muslims)	0	0
Library	1	1(no books)	0	0
Resource room	1	0	0	0
Dining hall	2	1(empty)	0	0
Computer lab	1	0	0	0
Audio Visual room	1	0	0	0
Electricity	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>School Population</b>	<b>1196</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>201</b>

Schools M and N recorded the availability of the 'bare minimums' required for regular education. They were missing out on those geared towards interventions when needed for instance an accessible toilet, consultation/ resource room or a library. School T seemed a step ahead of the others in the provision of LRE. For instance, although at the time of research no learner required modification of the toilets, it was equipped with a special toilet 'friendly for learners with physical challenges in case the need arose' (head teacher T). The environment was generally well levelled and modified to ease movement in all areas of the school. However, environmental accessibility was considered wanting in schools N and G. For instance, since the data collection was conducted during a rainy season, flooding was observed around some classes and the staffroom making movement a challenge. This difference in environmental modification could be attributed to the fact that parents' financial support plays a big role in the school's development as it compensates for the deficit in government funding. Therefore, the more economically empowered the parents are, the better the school infrastructure.

Research conducted in Africa and particularly in Kenya on the availability of resources for inclusion observed that many of the schools were lacking the easy-access resources (e.g. ramps or pathways) and the facilities to support learners with special needs lacking or inadequate (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002; Okongo et al., 2015). As affirmed by this study (see table 6.1), Eleweke and Rodda (2002) noted that few inclusive facilities were likely to be found in urban schools and none in rural ones. School T (urban school) was more disability-friendly compared to schools N and M (rural schools) which recorded no physical evidence of modification towards inclusion. The shortage of resources in the rural areas is a source of social injustice between rural and urban environments (Ritzhaupt et al., 2018). This may be attributed to the shift of priorities and the difference in exposure (Khan et al., 2019) as evident in the data samples below;

Headteacher N: We are very much aware that they are required, like special sanitary facilities but not yet...

Teacher G2: ...there is a link given so the children are supposed to go and access the internet. This is very unrealistic.

For schools in informal settlements and some of those in rural areas, inclusive facilities might not be their priority as they are faced with more pressing challenges like the provision of books and food. Although digital assignments are currently a curriculum requirement, internet connectivity seemed 'very unrealistic' because of the nature of the learners' backgrounds and limited technological learning resources. As noted by Khan et al. (2019), urban learners are quite familiar with the digital world and technologies which act as a booster and a platform for more learning, particularly in language and knowledge application.

## **Social Indicators**

“...I wish there were activities like those in high school like playing things like basketball, drama and music and *trips*.” (Learner M2, school M)

“Ok. Before the COVID thing, *trips*...educational trips.” (Learner T3, school T, when asked what she enjoys doing in school).

The social indicators were established in terms of a school culture which entails attitude, values, practices and socio-economic activities (Lawton, 2013; Corbett, 1999). From the data samples above, learner M2 wishes for school trips which to her are activities meant for the high school. On the other hand, a learner in a different school misses the school trips which were suspended due to COVID 19. Similarly, discrepancies emerged from the parents' FGDs even though heterogeneity sampling was employed to ensure diversity. Their education levels, source of income and IE awareness differed. For instance, the parent participants in school N were casual workers at various sectors with one operating a mini-shop, none of them had an idea of what IE was. However, the parent participants in school T were under formal employment ranging from teaching to nursing and some had a convincing idea of what IE was. Their participation and awareness of the curriculum were also relatively high compared to their counterparts in other schools. This could be one of the reasons School T emerges among the top schools in the county. Teacher and parental awareness of educational processes can be a source of encouragement or discouragement to the learners' achievement especially if the learners are in any way disadvantaged (Torgbenu et al., 2021). IE is a ‘whole school approach’ and a ‘community of practice’ which requires the support of the stakeholders and the community at large (Torgbenu et al., 2021). As noted by head teacher M,

“We just need to work on changing people’s attitude and also equipping the ‘normal’ learners and making them be receptive and positive to other learners. It is very possible.”

However, creating inclusive societies and schools is not as easy as it sounds. Social inequality in the school setting has been a tectonic concern for decades. Burns and Homel (1985) identified certain social measures including parents' occupation and education, cultural background and neighbourhood quality that affects the school quality of a particular region. These structural inequalities in the school systems have a long-term effect on the career and economic paths of individuals. A relatively poor neighbourhood is associated with low school achievement and a high rate of unemployment as the children are isolated from potential role models, lack access to educational resources, encounter conflicting sub-cultures and have to deal with socio-economic challenges (Sampson, 2001; Massey, 2004; Wodke et al., 2012; Wilson, 1996).

Although few studies have reported a lack of neighbourhood influence on the school life (Ginther et al., 2000) and others reporting minor influence (Brooks-Gunn et al., 1993; Harding 2003; Aoronson, 1998), recent research projects continue to document a strong relationship between the surrounding community and school outcome (Wodke et al., 2012; Sharkey & Elwert, 2011; Nieuwenhuis & Hooimeijer, 2016; Otero, 2017). The same findings were recorded in this study; because of the environment and parents' economic activities in school G, the learners do not find adequate time for their studies as they have to take up house chores to compensate for their parents' busy schedules. This also hindered their parents' participation in their school life.

In this era of IE implementation, the question of social equity and equality of educational opportunities among public schools cannot be ignored and especially the lack of consideration of the needs of individual students and schools during funds and resource allocation, particularly those disadvantaged in one way or another (Adroque, 2013; Gasparini, 2002).

Berne and Stiefel, (1984) term the inequalities among public schools as;

“unacceptable, because the governmental unit that finances education should assign the resources in such a way as to compensate for existing disparities and provide equal treatment of equals.” (p. 6)

Unfortunately, the inequalities in schools are both a symptom and a trigger of wider societal problems in systems and processes (Alwy & Schech, 2007). They reflect the unequal distribution of powers, resources and privileges.

#### **6.4 Triggers of Inequalities in the Primary Schools**

As highlighted in the discussions above and as noted by Bonal and Bellei (2020), the factors contributing to school inequalities are complex emanating from regional, social, ethnic, economic and political differences. However, as observed during this research, several direct factors influence the quality of schools accessed by learners. This includes; the hidden cost of Free Primary Education (FPE), enrollment procedures and urbanization.

***The hidden cost of FPE:*** FPE particularly in Kenya is a joint responsibility between parents and the government (Bellon et al., 2017; Somerset, 2011). However, it was a top-bottom policy and came without prior consultation of parents leading to misconceptions about the program (Langat et al., 2021). Lemmer (2007) notes that parents assumed that the government would cater for all the learning costs. Because of this, parental involvement in public primary school is as low as a mean rate of 2.93 (Langat et al., 2021). While the government commits to major costs such as facilities and resources, parents are left to cater for the other essentials leaving the question of how free is the free education (Ngwacho et al., 2013). As noted during the study and confirmed by Langat et al., 2021, the parents’ requirements include registration fee, interview fee, extra tuition and examination fee, meals, transport and school uniform. The amount allocated to the parents varies from one school to another (Somerset, 2011). Parental contribution to the FPE programme improves the quality of learning and compensates for the

limitation of the government's provision (UNESCO, 2009). Therefore, the ability and willingness of parents, influence the education quality accessed by their children as observed in school T. The higher the school's financial demand from the parents, the less the admission of the less privileged.

**Enrolment procedure:** “The targets of admission are not as inclusive because only the best are picked. It is a competition and the child may not win.” (parent T2). In the primary school model, household wealth is a significant determinant of enrolment (Kabubo-mariara & Mwabu, 2007; Handa 1996b). Gormly and Swinnerton (2004) also observe a link between household income, parental educational background and schooling decisions. The enrollment based on the child's performance as observed in school T would also lock out the less privileged from such a school. First, because of the use of the non-modified norm-referenced tests, those with certain special needs especially related to reading and writing may not score as expected. Secondly, although the constitution states that preschool should be free, parents provide the majority of the funding including teacher salaries (World Bank, 2016). Consequently, those who afforded the best preschools are likely to be enrolled in high-ranked schools as a result of a quality foundation. Hence ‘privileged’ type of schools is likely to enrol the most advantaged academically and financially.

**Urbanization:** As discussed earlier and as affirmed by Mugisha (2006), an urbanized non-slum neighbourhood usually offers more educational opportunities and yield better educational outcome than rural settings. McCracken & Barcinas (1991) report that urban schools tend to be larger, well equipped, more support staff and extra-curricular activities, findings that were confirmed by this study as seen in table 6.1. Zhang (2006) observed a significant difference in the performance of rural and urban learners owing to various factors such as late enrolment in rural areas and the poor educational background of the parents. Ngware et al. (2013) also note

a tendency of late school enrolment in the rural areas attributed to culture, parental priorities, aspirations and abilities. The case is however different in an urbanized slum area as discussed in the slum-based type of school.

### **6.5 How are school inequalities significant to inclusive education?**

Chiu and Khoo, (2005) observe that school inequalities come with clustering of privileged students, unequal distribution of resources and consequently, unfair variation in performance. This translates to unequal access to opportunities in community life leading to disparities in economic, social and political participation of certain individuals or groups of people. Logan et al. (2012) observe that school categories not only imply that children from different locations, economic and social backgrounds attend different schools but also that these schools are unequal in resource availability and performance. Unterhalter et al. (2012) note that inequality in schools was contributing to the construction of marginality and poverty in the Kenyan education sector and calls for the need to reflect on cultural perceptions, practices and policies to ensure inclusion and social justice in schools. These segregation and inequities experienced in schools contradict the goal of IE: The long-term goal of IE is to ensure maximum inclusion of all learners especially those with special needs in community life (Hornby, 2021). It seeks to curb exclusion from and within schools and communities to ensure equal access to opportunities and participation for all (Walton, 2018). To achieve these goals, there is a need to address the discriminations and opportunity imbalance that comes with the clustering of schools as such is a representation and prediction of the greater society.

### **6.6 Barriers to Inclusive Education in the Primary Schools**

In the Index for Inclusion, Booth and Ainscow (2002) challenge the traditional labelling of diversity using terms such as disabled, disorders and challenged and encourage a focus on the environment as the limiting factor. They, therefore, replace the term *special education needs*

with *barriers to learning and participation*. Likewise, in South African policies, the term *inclusive education barriers to learning* are also preferred to *special educational needs* (White Paper 6, 2001). In this regard, the section below delves into IE barriers identified during the fieldwork and by other Kenyan research projects. They will be classified into informational, economic, environmental, socio-cultural and institutional barriers.

***Informational barriers:*** As observed in this study, IE awareness among the various stakeholders was relatively low even among the main implementers (teachers). They reported their lack of information on how to navigate IE practices. This was aggravated by their lack of basic training on what IE is about and what is expected of them. More so, they were not aware of what document to consult for guidance. The case was worse for parents and learners most of whom had not heard of the concept and were unaware of the ongoing implementation. This brings concern about their ability to support IE when they do not even know about its ongoing implementation. These findings are congruent with those of Mumbi (2011). She identifies the need for an explicit plan by the Kenyan government to facilitate mass awareness among all stakeholders on the need for inclusion, understanding diversity and working collaboratively. Hence, as noted by Lucy et al. (2015),

“the success of the inclusive education will largely depend on aggressive sensitization campaigns to enable all stakeholders in education understand their roles in the provision of inclusive education and this will debunk the idea that the government is the only body that should take full responsibility over inclusion” (p. 48).

***Economic barriers:*** The implementation of IE and FPE comes with economic constraints at the national and household levels. Though the schools are funded by the government, the endowment is limiting and the criteria of fund allocation need reconsideration. The funds are given uniformly, not according to the needs of the learners but the head count (headteacher N,

Ngugi et al., 2015). These findings deprecate the aspect of inclusion by not considering the level of school development, the needs of learners in a particular school and that of the surrounding community (Sawamura & Sifuna, 2008). As observed in school G, economic barriers related to households include poverty and marginalization which hinder the parent's contribution to education. This includes the provision of tuition fees, uniforms, lunch, transport and stationery. As noted during the study and asserted by Moyi (2019), Kenya has not fully managed to fund SNE, assessment centres and inclusion services. The situation is, therefore, worse for parents living below poverty levels such as slum dwellers and those whose children have special needs who will need to provide equipment and services such as therapy and wheelchairs. Also, the new curriculum meant to improve relevance, quality and equality in education comes with a financial burden to parents as noted by research participants and affirmed by Ajuoga and Keta, (2021). They are intermittently required to buy project materials, submit printed work, provide gardening and cleaning equipment et cetera. The financial strength of the parent will therefore highly determine the quality of learning and subsequently affect equality. The unequal funding coupled with social challenges for instance informal settlements leads to inequalities in schooling opportunities (Migosi et al., 2012). Ngugi et al. (2015) caution that if there will be no intervention to compensate for the disadvantages, the provision of equal education opportunities as aimed by IE/FPE will remain unfulfilled and in the long run, Kenya will continue being a nation of inequity.

***Environmental Barriers:*** As observed during this study and confirmed by Wanjohi (2010), Kenya has registered poor preparation of schools in terms of school buildings and grounds, the condition of toilets, drainage systems, playgrounds and the general provision of LRE. Schools lack access roads and paths within the school compounds, classrooms are inaccessible (especially for wheelchair users) and the grounds are rough and full of obstacles. This limits the mobility of all students but more so those with physical or visual challenges (Wanjohi,

2010). During the FGDs, physical barriers were reported to deter parents from enrolling children with disabilities in mainstream schools. Parent T2 cited a case of a mother who was always carrying a 'big child' on her back to school for lack of better means. In a nearby school, a boy with physical impairment relied on friends to carry him to and from school (parent T5). Since the schools are not physically modified for inclusion, these learners have to rely on others for mobility and outdoor activities. Consequently, parents do not enrol children with special needs in mainstream schools despite knowing they are welcome. The others withdraw soon after enrolling due to the disappointment of lack. Research and practice in mainstream schools especially for learners with special needs often concentrate on individual ability/disabilities and less on the establishment itself (Hemmingson & Borell, 2002). Accommodating learners in mainstream schools will remain a theoretical concept if the relationship between the learners and their environment is not explored. Generally, environmental inclusion in and outside school has been considered a political necessity and a moral obligation. As Dolšak and Prakash (2016) puts it;

“Access to the outdoors should be a human right. If connection with nature is important for the human soul and mind, we need to ask what structural problems prevent the underprivileged from enjoying such experiences” (para. 1).

***Socio-cultural barriers:*** As noted by the parent participants, despite the significant evolution in acceptance of persons with disability in Kenya, they still experience discrimination due to built-in social and cultural stereotypes. The attitudinal barrier was evidenced in the parents' reaction when informed that their children had academic needs that may require special attention. Their reaction included denial, hopelessness and shame (the identification of a child's disability will lower the parent's ego). As confirmed by Jelagat and Ondigi (2017), parents of children with disabilities live in denial, shame or exhibit overprotection. One of the participants

with a short leg confirmed that some of the schoolmates thought she was fragile and were overcautious while others avoided her. Physical and social inequalities, therefore, hinder inclusion in Kenyan schools. As observed in this study, schools that are considered privileged attract a higher social class population, more development and support from the government. However, schools from remote rural and informal settlements such as slums encounter multiple challenges that hinder their well-being and productivity in school. The teachers' attitude toward inclusion is diverse and seems to be dependent on IE/SNE education background. Those who were not trained or had not interacted considerably with SNE-trained teachers considered the idea far-fetched and likely to backfire. Nandako et al. (2019) confirm that inadequate training on IE results in low confidence and hence negative attitude among teachers. There is therefore a dire need for the Kenyan government through the MoE to strategize on sensitization in schools and the community to obliterate negative attitudes and cultural beliefs toward diversity (Jelagat & Ondigi, 2017).

***Institutional barriers:*** Institutional barriers are the first forthright hurdles to IE (Genova, 2015). As noted during the policy analysis, Kenya has expressed the will to implement IE but not the preparation, especially in public schools. Some of the institutional problems at the onset of colonial education were still recorded in this study. This includes the lack of appropriate resources, inapposite curriculum, lackadaisical teacher training on inclusive methodologies, high teacher-pupil ratio and poor collaboration. Schools also lacked spacious classrooms, modified desks for learners with disabilities, friendly playing grounds, resource rooms and teachers to assist learners in need of intervention, findings also recorded by Buhere and Ochieng (2013) and Carew et al. (2019).

## **6.8 The Gap between Inclusive Education Policy and Practice**

The discrepancy between IE policy and practice is a major focus of this study. After outlining IE policy intentions in national and education legal documents and thereafter exploring the condition and practices in primary schools, this section combines the two dimensions to outline the mismatch between documentation and implementation. While many researchers tend to focus on inclusion at the institutional level, McBride and Al Kahteb (2010) denote that the policy-practice gap cannot be bridged if discussions remain at the institution level. There is therefore the need for researchers to link the implementation issues with the target because in most cases, there is a complicated and unsupervised flow from government policies to implementation (Benson, 2020; McBride and Al Kahteb, 2010). In other words, keeping track of IE as defined versus how it is implemented on regular basis could lead to more relevant and practical programming that increases its actualization (Benson, 2020). Ireri et al. (2020) note that consulting IE policies enables schools to formulate their strategies within the given objectives to ensure full participation of all learners in all school activities and assessment is aimed at competency rather than competition. Research on policy implementation has imparted that the success of any policy lies in its connection with its implementation (Hess, 2013).

However, the establishment of this connection is not always a downhill task. In fact, the failure of many developmental efforts across countries emanates from a lack of organizational systems for the implementation and sustenance of practices (Bell & Stevenson, 2015). In other words, the commitment and collaboration of policymakers and implementers is arguably the most salient factor. This is unfortunately not always the case with education policies. The implementers are normally reluctant or uninformed on how to design effective strategies in line with policy objectives (Pont, 2017). In Kenya, the lack of policy awareness and consultation among stakeholders is perhaps the immediate gap between policy and practice (Ireru et al.,

2020). There is also a lack of fund mobilization, lack of environmental modification, weak stakeholders' orientation towards inclusion and poor monitoring and evaluation (Ireru et al., 2020; Njoka et al., 2012). By applying a comparative lens, this study highlights the contradictions in theory and practice in IE implementation to provide a precise idea of the discord between the two. Sub-chapter 4.4 highlighted the aspects of IE presented in the policies. The following is a synopsis of these aspects in policies vis-à-vis the implementation status:

**a) Quality education and accessibility**

The various policies call for equal access to quality education for all types of learners. The BECF calls for a differentiated educational program and modification of the regular curriculum to suit learners with special needs. However, the case is different in schools as evidenced by the low enrolment of learners with disabilities and the lack of modification and differentiated programs.

**b) Individualization and non-discrimination**

The BECF address the individual needs and academic aspirations of learners through IEPs and individualized learning support. The policies campaign against discrimination of learners with disabilities, minorities and marginalized groups. The situation in the schools is however different as learners with disabilities continue to face stigmatization and non-enrollment in regular schools due to non-consideration of their needs. Still, those in schools lack individualized attention due to the nature of the curriculum and the capacity of teachers.

**c) Assessment and early intervention**

Early intervention through proper assessment and empowerment of EARC centres has been prioritized in the SPLTD and BECF. The procedure entails the identification of learners with potential disabilities, proper placement, the adaptation of curriculum and provision of

supportive environments and facilities. It also calls for skilled human resources. The case is however different in schools. The identification is usually informally done by teachers in later stages of learning, and the process thereafter depends on their knowledge and keenness. The EARC centres when involved seem to offer insufficient help as noted by the headteachers. The intervention is normally interpreted as physical placement in special units found in several schools. The teachers are also not equipped for the process and hence, learners with special needs may miss proper assessment and/or appropriate intervention.

#### **d) Practical and relevant education**

Vision 2030 calls for adequate funding for schools to empower them technologically.

Adaptation of the curriculum to increase its relevance and inclusivity is also promised in SPLTD and BECF. This is to be achieved through the adoption of new technologies and specialized resources to ensure learners acquire modern skills applicable in real life. The capacity to achieve this was however lacking in schools. They lacked technological adaptations and equipment such as computers and laboratories. The assessment strategies are still paperoriented with minimum focus on the application of acquired knowledge.

#### **e) Human resource development**

Vision 2030 strategizes to modernize teacher education. Likewise, SPLTD proposes the incorporation of SNE in teacher education. This will ensure that teachers acquire appropriate skills and attitudes to accommodate the diversity of learners. However, as observed during this study, this was far from being achieved. The teachers lacked both the skills and the capacity to accommodate learners with differences due to the lack of inclusive training and rigidity of the curriculum.

#### **f) Least Restrictive Environment**

The constitution states that PWDs are entitled to reasonable access to all places and information. The BECF and SPLTD commit to the provision of quality and barrier-free learning environments that provide for the safety, health and psychological needs of learners. This includes adequate resources and infrastructure, safe water and sanitation, and feeding programs. They call for parental sensitization so that the same environment is availed beyond school. However, this is yet to be actualized. The school environments are still physically and socially limiting. Most of the aforementioned provisions, for instance, the feeding program are at the expense of the parents who might not be economically empowered to meet their basic and academic needs.

#### **g) Inclusive education funding and resource provision**

The government commits to ensuring equitable budgetary allocation and resource mobilization for inclusion. This will be enhanced through partnerships and accountability. Schools will be equipped with ICT resources for modern and real-problem solving skills. Adequate resources to cater for individual learners' needs will be provided. However, the school administration reported insufficient funding by the government, low collaboration and lack of individual and school needs consideration during budget allocation.

#### **h) Quality assessment**

BECE and SPLTD aim at shifting the focus from summative examinations to a range of assessments that monitors individual learners' progress. The focus will also be on actual skills and demonstration of knowledge application. Learners with special needs will be given special attention to ensure they achieve their individualized learning outcomes. However, due to the lack of appropriate modern resources, modification of assessment tools and teacher factors, there is still a dire need for individualized and quality assessment.

### **i) Stakeholders' involvement**

Under Vision 2030, the government, through MoE, aims at strengthening partnerships in the public and private sectors in both funding and decision-making. The MoE will ensure partnership, collaboration and coordination in offering financial and non-financial support to schools. Collaboration and engagement of all stakeholders in decision-making will be the norm in the new curriculum. Although there was improved parental engagement in the new curriculum implementation, coordination and contribution in decision-making were lacking. The level of involvement depended on headteachers' strategies as government coordination and collaboration were inadequate.

### **j) Management and coordination**

Although not much is documented on the coordination and sustainability of IE, MoE commits to its continuous monitoring and evaluation. Through curriculum support staff and selected committees, progress will be monitored, emerging needs established, and innovations for improvement recommended. However, coordination and evaluation of IE are inadequately executed with little awareness and attention to IE amongst the stakeholders. The establishment of emerging needs and the subsequent innovations were also lacking.

Below is a tabulated report showing other controversies in the policy statements in relation to practice:

**Table 6. 2 Comparison between policy statements and the practice in schools**

<b>Statements in national/IE Policies</b>	<b>Implementation in schools</b>
<b>The Kenyan Constitution (2010)</b>	
PWDs have a right to access institutions/facilities integrated into the society	Learners with disabilities are enrolled in special schools/units because schools are not accommodative
Provision of special opportunities for minority/marginalized groups	There is a lack of tangible consideration of marginalized groups e.g. slum dwellers

Provision of free, compulsory, quality education	Though primary education is free and compulsory, there is a great concern about its quality due to poor funding
Provision of resources/materials for those with constraints e.g. disabilities	Schools registered inadequate resources, especially for learners with disabilities whose parents had to bear the burden
Education institutions/public places/information will be accessible for PWDs	Most schools and public places lack basic modifications e.g. levelling, ramps for accessibility
Commits to training and employment of teachers through TSC	Teachers' workload and lack of appropriate training hinder them from accommodating diversity
<b>Kenyan Vision 2030</b>	
Increase accessibility and quality of education for all	The enrolment rate has greatly improved. However, schools are in poor conditions, limited resources, poor funding and hence low-quality education.
Reduction of illiteracy/enhance individual growth	Individual growth has been hindered by the lack of teachers' preparation for diversity, poor collaboration with parents and improper assessment methods
Provision of adequate and modernized infrastructure/resources	Schools registered incomplete projects e.g. computer rooms with no computers and old toilets. There is a need for school renovations.
Integration of new technology and resources	Schools are not technologically enabled. Basic resources e.g. electricity are missing in some schools.
Link education with the economy through all-inclusive stakeholders' participation	Learning is theory-based with little exposure to application skills. There is limited practical assessment.
<b>The Basic Education Curriculum Framework (2017)/ CBC</b>	
Provide IE for the development of skills applicable in real life	IE provision is lacking. Skill acquisition needs more resourcing and teacher specialization which is lacking in the schools
Engage and empower every Kenyan	schools lack individualised attention. There is also social clustering of schools signifying the danger of social inequalities
High-quality learning that values every learner	The education quality of learners with physical and financial limitations is jeopardized due to a lack of intervention strategies to meet their needs
Provide inclusive quality teaching through teacher education	Teacher education lack inclusivity. Training on inclusion is teachers' personal initiative and extra cost
Provide a physically and socially inclusive learning environment	Most schools are neither physically nor socially inclusive. School environments, beliefs and attitudes are still hindering inclusion
Provide relevant and practical education	The relevance and applicability of education are affected by the improper curriculum that borrows heavily from post-colonial education and the lack of technology empowerment in schools

Ensure quality assessment to nurture excellency rather than competition	School ranking is still evident in the Kenyan system. Teachers and learners are also evaluated based on exam mini-scores
<b>Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities (2018)</b>	
Learners with SN will learn together with their peers	Although schools are open to all learners, they are not ready for those with SN. Their parents opt to put them in special schools because of frustration in regular schools
Provide equipped inclusive environments	Schools are not physically or technically equipped for diversity
Ensure early identification, proper assessment and inclusive placement	Identification is at the mercy of teachers who are also not equipped for it. There is no procedure for placement. Suspected cases are directed to special units. EARC involvement is minimal
Provide adequate resources and network strategies	Strategies for inclusion and collaboration are not clear
Provide resource room, resource teachers and occasional specialized instructions	The provision of specialized services depends on the school's potential and will
Facilitate quality assurance and monitoring	Monitoring of IE is minimal. Education officers tend to follow up on school exam performance and have no concern for individual and school needs

After exploring the obstacles in the general and inclusive education system through fieldwork and other recent findings in Kenya, the existence of the policy-practice gap can be attributed to a number of factors as outlined below:

***Non-sensitization and non-consultation of the policy documents:*** With regard to this study data, the government is not doing enough to inform and involve education key players in the policy process. Information on IE policies is skimp leaving teachers and head teachers wondering what exactly is expected of them. The direct indicator of IE policy nescience is perhaps the fact that head teachers and teachers cannot pinpoint the policy documents that address inclusion. Secondly, these policy documents are not in school custody nor are there clear programs on how IE is to be implemented. This shows the lack of government collaboration with implementers in actualizing policy promises. The government, therefore, needs calculated strategies on how to engage and educate stakeholders on IE matters to avoid

opposition and haphazard implementation. There is therefore the need for regular consultation of the policy documents as the practical guide to implementation.

***Non-integration of IE policy and practice in the teacher education courses:*** Research indicate that appropriate teacher education programs improve teachers' self-efficacy, concerns and positive attitude towards inclusion (Wapling, 2016; Emam & Mohamed, 2011; Miles, 2009). The teacher participants also expressed concerns about their lack of skills in handling the challenges encountered in inclusive classrooms. Although the schools are now open to a diverse population, teachers are not equipped for the same. The training on IE/SNE is open for 'willing and able' teachers who wish to self-sponsor the course. In a Kenyan study on teacher preparedness for inclusion, Carew et al. (2019) observe that although it is not obvious that teacher education instils a positive attitude, it increases it at high levels and also improves selfefficacy and inclusion skills. The government, therefore, need to integrate IE training as part of pre-service teacher education. For the teachers who are already in service, there is a need for strategies to facilitate in-service training so that lack of skills and strategies of inclusive classroom management will be the least of teachers' concerns.

***A mismatch between the policy agenda and the school culture:*** The social and cultural components within the mainstream schools were initially designed to cater for 'regular' learners (Ileri et al., 2020). This includes the curriculum, school co-curricular activities, classroom atmosphere and school community with its beliefs, values and practices. Realization of the policy agenda will therefore call for operative strategies to instil a school system and environment that embrace inclusion. Instances of discrimination are still evident in the school system. For instance, economically disadvantaged learners and those from minority groups encounter social discrimination. Parents also noted the exclusion of learners with special needs from mainstream schools. Teachers admitted that they were not able to cater for diversity some

expressing that these learners were better off in special schools. There was also the use of language that denotes negative beliefs such as 'slow learners', 'abnormal' or 'children who are not okay'. There is therefore the need for a whole-school approach in orientation towards inclusion where diversity is taken as an advantage to the school/ society and not a weakness. Practices of IE need to be incorporated into the school mission, vision and programs so that inclusion becomes part of school culture.

***Non-preparation of schools for inclusion:*** The call for inclusion tends to focus more on learners and less on schools and pedagogical change leaving school inclusivity at crossroads. There is a lack of appropriate infrastructure needed for the provision of equitable and quality education such as empty libraries and computer rooms, muddy and barrier-full grounds, lack of resource centres and consultation/ counselling facilities. There is also poor sanitation, lack of electricity in some cases and uneven pathways around and within schools. Schools also lack programs and pathways to cater for specific needs of learners such as feeding programs for street children and those from informal settlements. For the government to fulfil the policy agenda, there is a need to restructure schools for inclusion.

***Scanty monitoring and evaluation of IE progress:*** Data from the school administrators indicate that there is no regular monitoring and evaluation of inclusive programs and physical resources that would ensure constant improvement of programs and environments. Ileri et al. (2020) observe that since the onset of inclusion in Kenyan schools, there is little evidence of physical resource modification and evaluation resulting in environmental barriers to inclusion. Proper monitoring and evaluation will ensure that IE successes and struggles are identified so that schools are updated in terms of technologies, playgrounds, resources and facilities renovated for inclusion. There is also poor record-keeping on learners' diversity, needs and progress making it hard to determine IE progress. The lack of monitoring and evaluation at the

school and national level may be a result of lack of proper communication channels, poor collaboration and lack of accountability (Ireru et al., 2020).

## **6.9 Conclusion**

As outlined in the theoretical frameworks, the development of an inclusive school entails producing inclusive policies and creating inclusive cultures and practices. Evidently, there are traces of these aspects in the Kenyan primary schools to varying degrees. Although inclusive policies have been formulated at the national level (in the form of SNE policies, integration, right to education and guarantee for equality and quality in education), their implementation in schools is wanting. The lack of implementation frameworks, low policy awareness among stakeholders and non-preparation of schools for diversity are indicators of a sceptical foundation for inclusion. In inclusive cultures, school stakeholders understand diversity from different viewpoints. Socially oriented diversity such as below-poverty-level backgrounds as well as individual differences such as disabilities faced some resistance in terms of attitude and accommodation. However, society was gradually improving attitudes and discarding stereotypes about disabilities. Despite the improved attitudes and cultural integration, inclusive practices remained low as evidenced by the lack of individualized attention in classes, inadequate learning aid and resources and even lack of records of learners in need of intervention.

To maintain the momentum of inclusive changes, there is a need for collaboration and communication between the national and institution level. At the national level, basic considerations such as the provision of inclusive infrastructure and resources as well as inclusive education for teachers in all schools are paramount. At the institution level, the unique needs of individual schools and learners need to be given attention if quality and equality in education are to be achieved.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **7.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary of this study, the conclusions derived from the findings and the resultant recommendations. The conclusions and recommendations are based on the research purpose, objectives and results of the study.

#### **7.1 Summary**

The study set out to analyze the IE policy-practice gap in Kenya through an investigation of its implementation in schools and a comparison of the findings with policy statements. To accomplish this goal, specific objectives were set which include describing IE as practised and perceived in Kenyan primary schools, outlining the concept of IE as documented in policies and comparing the practice with documentation to understand the gap and propose intervention mechanisms. To address these objectives, the study adopted a qualitative research approach through grounded theory methodology.

A review of related literature on the status of IE internationally and in the Kenyan context, controversies of IE and inclusion policies provided a scholarly and dynamic scope and informed the methodological point areas. The theories of educational changes rooted in the works of Fullan (1985-2015) and the Index for Inclusion by Booth and Ainscow (2002, 2011) provided the theoretical context of this study. Through document analysis, FGDs, semistructured interviews and observation and the involvement of four schools and various educational stakeholders (headteachers, teachers, parents and learners), the researcher constructed an IE discourse in the various schools.

The research findings indicate that although IE is gradually gaining ground in Kenyan schools, more effort is needed in the various stages of its implementation. The major findings include the existence of school inequalities that lead to unequal access to education opportunities, lack of awareness and consultation of IE policies, non-integration of IE concept in teachers and administrators' preparation, cultural and attitudinal barriers and insufficient preparation of schools and the general education system for inclusion. Conclusions and recommendations are therefore derived from these findings.

## **7.2 Conclusion**

This section summarizes the research findings presented, analyzed and discussed in the previous chapters. It presents the conclusion based on the objectives of the study.

*Objective 1:* The first objective set out to describe IE as practised and perceived in Kenyan primary schools. Under this objective, the study established that although there are some efforts toward the implementation of IE, multifarious challenges continue to hinder its actualization. Noteworthy milestones have been achieved in the formulation of inclusive policies, enrolment rates and curriculum development. However, the perception and practice of inclusion in primary schools need to be re-constructed and barriers related to funding, environment, culture, institutions and the entire education system resolved. There is a lack of consideration and provisions for individual schools and learners' needs, inadequate teachers' preparation for inclusion, inadequate infrastructure and inclusive related services, cultural and attitudinal resistance to diversity and unapt curriculum and pedagogy for inclusion. Also, school inequalities in public primary schools continue to hinder equal accessibilities and opportunities in education. With such inequalities mainly based on socio-economic status, schools continue to fuel the existence of an imbalanced society with unequal distribution of power, resources

and privileges. This is contrary to the long term goal of inclusion that seeks to curb exclusion within and outside schools to ensure equal opportunities and participation for all.

**Objective 2:** The second objective set out to outline the concept of IE as documented in the Kenyan education policies. Under this objective, four legislation policies and laws that have a great impact on the Kenyan education system are explored. They include the Kenyan Constitution, the Vision 2030, the Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities and the Basic Education Curriculum Framework. Under this objective, the study registered significant IE provisions in the documents. First, there is a notable review of education policies resulting in updated versions that are more inclined towards inclusion. Secondly, the documents distinctly outline the mission/vision statements and goals providing a blueprint of what is to be achieved. Thirdly, there is the involvement of a committee of experts and several bodies in the formulation of policies. Fourthly, there is policy coherence and interconnection of what goals to be achieved in the inclusion drive. These policies lobby for the provision of IE directly or indirectly through recognition of diversity, provision of inclusive and equitable access to education through LRE, non-discrimination and individualized services and creation of inclusive schools and societies for individual empowerment and economic growth. However, the documents fall short of workable implementation frameworks, strategies for financing and resource provision, quality need assessment, stakeholders' involvement at all levels especially the school community and sustainable management and coordination. Therefore, although the documents may be weighty in the provision of inclusive, quality and equitable education, the lack of implementation framework and strategies impede implementation.

**Objective 3:** The third objective set out to compare what is documented and practised and propose intervention mechanisms to bridge the gap. After exploring the IE policy intention and

exploring the situation in schools, this study recorded a mismatch between the two. The policy practice gap was mainly attributed to informational barriers leading to limited awareness and consultation of policy documents. There is also a mismatch between policy agenda and the school culture as the schools were primarily designed for 'regular' learners and therefore inappropriate curriculum design and school beliefs and practices. The schools, as well as the teacher education courses, are therefore not restructured towards the provision of LRE as outlined in policies. Moreover, there is inconsistent monitoring and evaluation that would help ensure implementation is in accordance with the policy.

Based on the findings and conclusions from the specific objectives, it is rational to make a general conclusion that there is a need for a strategic and empirical implementation plan that will steward the transformation of Kenyan education from the traditional mainstream education to an inclusive, quality and equitable education as willed in the policies.

### **7.3 Recommendations**

After evaluating the research findings, summary and conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

#### **7.3.1 Policy Recommendations**

- Consistent sensitization of stakeholders on policy vision and goals is needed to ensure that stakeholders are not only enlightened on IE policies but also in support of the mission. This could be achieved through seminars, public platforms like social media and the integration of IE in teacher education. The policy documents need to be made publically available especially in schools so that they can be used as a reference point in making IE decisions.
- The Kenyan IE policies and legal documents need to be contextualized to ensure their mission and intended practices are in line with Kenya's needs and circumstances. In

particular, the new curriculum (CBC) needs to be re-visited by the curriculum developers and consultants putting into consideration the reality of schools and classrooms, availability of resources and teacher capacity in accommodating learners' diversity.

- To avoid misinterpretation and limited commitment to IE, the general ambiguous statements of inclusion need to be clearly illustrated. For instance, the common commitment to 'education for all' need to be elaborated and direct reference given to inclusive education. Diversity needs to be redefined so that it is not interpreted to refer to disabilities only.
- The policy formulation should include clear implementation and evaluation strategies that will enhance the commitment and actualization of IE. The implementers and evaluators at each level should be identified and clear channels of communication established. This will ensure that the developments and loopholes of policies are tracked and adjustments made accordingly.

### **7.3.2 Government Recommendation**

- For successful implementation of IE, the roles of the various stakeholders need to be clearly outlined and stakeholders made aware. The government need to consider parents as central players and ensure that they are sensitized and involved. The parents and community at large need to be oriented to ensure they support and advocate for inclusion. IE need to be integrated into teacher education at all levels. Paraprofessionals and specialists need to be consulted and involved in schools and the implementation process.
- The government need to ensure equality in public primary schools. This can be achieved by ensuring that personal and social circumstances are not obstacles to admission to

schools. Secondly, the government ought to consider fairness in funding more than equality so that schools are funded according to their needs and circumstances surrounding the school community.

- There is a need for adequate provision of IE. The government need to strategize on meeting the diverse needs of learners. First, need assessment procedures and centres need to be empowered. Individual learners' needs ought to be identified and catered for. Intervention should not only target learners with disabilities but also other needs such as socio-economic disadvantages and marginalization.
- The government representatives such as education officers and curriculum overseers need to establish a relationship with schools through regular follow-up and communication. Record keeping and accountability of learners' needs and subsequent intervention plan should be observed.

### **7.3.3 Institutional Recommendation**

- Institutionalizing inclusive education will make it more practical. Individual schools need to define their needs and innovate accommodation strategies. Local resources and cultural heritage need to be innovatively incorporated into learning.
- Creating an inclusive school community is paramount to IE's success. This can be achieved through discarding stereotypes regarding differences and instilling inclusive values in the young generation so that they conceptualize diversity positively. This will curb any form of discrimination in schools and society. The teachings on diversity should aim at life-long lessons and not just for examination purposes.
- Through collaboration with the government, the schools should prioritize the creation of LRE by the provision of physical facilities, inclusive education services and

instructions. The school compound and infrastructure should be made barrier-free not only for learners with disabilities but for all. Special services with appropriate resources and support should be offered to learners in need. Classrooms and co-curricular activities should be flexible and diverse to accommodate all learners. This means that teachers' workload should be regulated accordingly to ensure they have enough time and energy to cater for diversity.

- Measurement of achievement needs to be diversified. Short and long term goals should be set for individual learners depending on needs, interests and potential. The achievement of the schools should not be determined by collective examination mean scores but by the ability to unleash individuals' potential and help each learner attain their maximum. The school target should be to ensure each learner will be self-reliant and productive in society.

#### **7.3.4 Research Recommendation**

- Findings from this study indicate that there is a weak communication channel between the government and the schools. Since this research focused on schools and policies, there is a need for research targeting educational officials and the role they play in IE implementation.
- Since this study focused on primary schools and identified significant areas of concern in IE implementation, there is the need for studies in other levels of education such as nursery schools, secondary and tertiary to identify the policy-practice gaps if any and strategies for improvement.
- Having focused on public primary schools, this study recommends similar research in private schools to establish IE practice and gaps in the spirit of ensuring education equality for all.

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