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**Abstract:** Kenya proudly proclaims to be one of the few Sub-Saharan African nations which has provided free primary education for all its citizens as well as achieved most of the United Nations eight Millennium Development Goals. However, many children with SEND either have limited or are entirely denied access to education despite Kenya's public commitment to inclusion as signalled by signing the 1994 Salamanca statement. Even though over 25 years have passed since signing the statement, many mainstream school teachers still seem to have a limited or negative understanding of disability and were poorly equipped to meet the needs of disabled children in mainstream settings. This study explored some of the barriers and obstacles to creating inclusive environments for all children and acts as a catalyst to ignite the debate in Kenya and other developing nations as they navigate the challenge of turning policy into practice.

# **‘One step forward, one step back’ inclusive education in Kenya**

**Violet Gachago and Sheine Peart**

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## **1. Introduction**

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Kenya has made significant progress in improving opportunities for many of its citizens and has been identified as an African success story for realising the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set by United Nations (UN) member states in September 2000 (World Bank, 2018) to be achieved by 2015. Part of Kenya’s success has been a willingness to strive to improve education opportunities for all its citizens, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or who are disabled (RoK, 2009). While the progress Kenya has made has been considerable, not all children with SEN benefit from inclusive education and many still experience significant barriers in attempting to access education at any level. Further, many mainstream school teachers continue to hold damaging or distorted views of SEN and have limited awareness of how to create supportive, inclusive learning environments for all students.

This chapter describes the general demographics of Kenya and reviews the Kenyan education system from colonialism in the 1950s to current practice. The chapter considers how historical legacies have influenced the development of education and thinking around inclusion and SEN. The chapter also explores changes in national legislation, how Kenya has coped working with children with SEN and the governments’ future plans for inclusion.

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## 2. General country overview

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Located in Eastern Africa, the Republic of Kenya (RoK) is part of Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2019, its population was 47,564,296 and before COVID-19 arrived in Kenya in March 2020, it was predicted to rise to 54 million people by mid-2020 ([World Population Review, 2020](#)). With a land mass of 582,650 km<sup>2</sup> (224, 081 square miles), it is the 48th largest country in the world. The official languages spoken are English and Swahili which are commonly used in major cities and conurbations as well as taught as compulsory subjects in the last four years of primary education (referred to as basic education) and secondary schools ([RoK, 1999](#)). Local languages dominate rural life. Economically, Kenya has a free, market-based system, although central government retains control of external trading relations. Some of the principal industries include agriculture, forestry, mining, manufacturing, energy, tourism and financial services. Kenya is the third largest economy in Sub-Saharan Africa after Nigeria and South Africa and has enjoyed sustained economic growth ([UNESCO, 2016](#); World Bank update, [2018](#)).

In 1895, the British Empire created the East African Protectorate which became known as Kenya Colony in 1920. From 1952, Kenyan nationals agitated for freedom demanding their lands to be returned by British authorities in a rebellion led by the Mau Mau; the British authorities responded by imposing a state of emergency ([Blakeley, 2009](#)). In 1956, seeking a conclusion to hostilities, the state of emergency was lifted and in 1960, the British accepted a transition to African majority rule, beginning a series of reforms and giving greater rights to Kenyans. In 2012, the UK government accepted communities suffered 'ill-treatment' under colonial rule ([BBC News, 2012](#)).

On gaining independence in 1963, Kenya was initially governed by Prime Minister Jomo Kenyatta, leader of Kenyan African National Union (KANU) and a series of elected regional assemblies with local autonomy, which later were replaced with a centrally appointed provincial commission ([Ajulu, 2002](#)). In 1964, Kenya became a Republic and the same year KANU became the only legal political party. The country was led by President Jomo Kenyatta until 1978 and President Daniel Moi until 2002. In 1991, after 26 years of

single-party rule, constitutional changes enabled opposition parties to challenge KANU who were defeated in 2002 by Mwai Kibaki, leader of the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC). Kibaki remained in office until 2013 after completing two five-year terms office (in accordance with the constitution). Uhuru Kenyatta, current president and leader of the Jubilee Alliance, will complete his second five-year term in 2022.

A new national constitution drafted in 2010 and formally introduced in 2013 devolved power to 47 political and administrative counties (RoK, 2010). Under this structure, the national government retained overall responsibility for education but devolved Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) to each of the 47 counties.

To date, devolution has helped enhance the quality of political representation with more women involved in local government, improved accountability and increased public participation in governance (RoK, 2016; RoK, 2010). Devolution has enabled fundamental changes in education quality and service provision due to counties capacity to respond swiftly to emergent local needs (Ministry of Devolution and Planning, 2016).

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### 3. General education overview

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The 1884 colonial partition of Africa remains the foundation of formal education in Africa. Education systems were established by early missionaries as a means of converting the natives to Christianity. While central government retains responsibility for managing the nation's education, the church and formal Christian religions continue to influence education in Kenya.

National education initially followed a 7-4-4-3 system with seven years of primary schooling, eight years of secondary schooling and three years of higher education until 1985 when it was then replaced by the current 8-4-4 system which was divided into four levels: (i) pre-primary education (kindergarten and nursery); (ii) primary education; (iii); secondary education; and (iv) middle-level establishments of education. Government assessments showed the 8-4-4 system lacked flexibility, was unresponsive to individual needs and did not provide school-leavers with employability skills (Sifuna, 2016). The 8-4-4 will be replaced

with a new 2-6-6-3 in 2026. This date was chosen to enable primary school pupils who started in 2018 when the system was first implemented to join junior secondary. The new system is believed to be more practical and better able to nurture learners' competencies and capabilities (MoE, 2018).

## Colonial impact on education and inclusion in Kenya

Under British colonialism 'education opportunities offered to Africans were sparse, substandard and designed to permanently relegate them to secondary citizenship' (Natsoulas & Natsoulas, 1993, p. 108). 'Before British domination, indigenous knowledge was valued and transmitted locally' (Kiru, 2019, p. 181); under colonialism, traditional education systems were either controlled, dismantled or pushed to the fringes, sending a clear message regarding which knowledge was prized. While the lasting impact of colonial rule is still debated with 'some writers . . . such as Gann, Duignan, Perham and P. C. Lloyd [claiming] its impact was on balance either a blessing or at worst not harmful for Africa' (Boahen, 1983, p. 782); others bluntly state it was 'an education system wholly designed to maintain exploitative colonial relationships between white Europeans and black Africans' (Windel, 2009, p. 1). It is evident colonialism bequeathed an education infrastructure and curriculum which privileged Western knowledge and values still resonates today.

'After independence, expanding access to education for all Kenyans took center stage' (Kiru, 2019, p. 182) and the new government needed to establish a system that met the nation's education needs and provided the population with skills needed to progress government agendas. In the early stages of the republic, there were neither funds nor capacity to provide education for the whole population. Free Primary Education (FPE), initially introduced in Kenya in the late 1970s, had limited success and only became widely available after the initiative was relaunched in 2003. A major concern of the taught curriculum was its 'Western episteme (ground base of knowledge) which differed considerably from indigenous

knowledge systems' (Tikly, 2019, p. 230). However, after independence, Kenya continued to reproduce colonial approaches to education.

Kenya also replicated attitudes and behaviours towards students with special needs and although the government recognised four specific categories of disability, 'hearing impaired, mentally handicapped, physically handicapped, and visually impaired' (Kiru, 2019, p. 183), there was little centralised thinking to meet these students' needs or a coordinated national plan. Moreover, the Ministry of Education (MoE) only established a dedicated body to protect the needs of students with special needs – the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) in 1986. Further, it was not until 2004, the National Council for Persons with Disabilities was established with a specific mandate 'to develop policies and ensure that people with disabilities received improved opportunities in various sectors' (Kiru, 2019, p. 183).

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## **4. Overview of historical context of SEN, disability and inclusion**

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Special education in Kenya has evolved in five distinct phases: pre-1940; 1941–1963; post-independence 1960s–1980s; 1980s–1990s; and post-Salamanca, 1990s onwards. Pre-1940 was the historical era of neglect. During this time, most disabled children were subject to rejection and isolation from their communities created by negative attitudes, beliefs and ignorance (Ndurumo, 1993). Disabled people were not readily accepted within their families, were regarded as incompetent, cursed through witchcraft or were seen as being punished by God. Limitations caused by disability were considered contagious which could be passed to non-disabled people (KISE, 2002).

The second period from 1941–1963 mirrored the English system of education of the time when disabled children were taught the 3R's of reading, writing and numeracy (Ndurumo, 1993) in segregated special schools. Other skills taught were gender-specific work skills and scripture lessons (Abilla, 1988): woodworking and shoemaking for boys and cookery, laundry and needlework for girls (Richards, 2016). Though these skills were meant

to lead to gainful employment, disabled people were viewed as incapable of working (Ndurumo, 1993) and configured as a drain on community resources (Kiarie, 2014).

The third era, 1960s–1980s, was characterised by increased provision for physically disabled children in residential school settings. Three factors seemed to have contributed to Kenya's greater readiness to provide education for physically disabled students: the formation of the Association for the Physically Disabled in Kenya (APDK) in 1963; pioneering work of the Salvation Army by starting Joytown Primary School (1962) and Joyland Secondary School (1974); and some government-funded schools had successfully accommodated students with minor physical disabilities.

The fourth phase, 1980s–1990s, was the integration period. The year 1980 was declared the Year for Persons with Disabilities in Kenya ahead of the 1981 United Nations International Year of Disabled Persons. In 1986, the MoE reported there were 13,615 physically disabled children receiving education in Kenya, making them the largest group with disabilities to benefit from special education (Ndurumo, 1993). By this time, the number of primary schools accepting physically disabled children had doubled from five to ten and the MoE reported there were approximately 12,000 children attending mainstream primary schools, others were based in 40 residential hostels across the country (Ndurumo, 1993). During this time, there was intensive awareness raised by disabled people who demanded access to early education, mainstream schools, colleges and universities and emphasised the need for collaboration.

In the 1990s, Kenya introduced new policies to encourage inclusion and, in the light of international efforts, promoted the rights of all children to receive basic education. While disabled children could now more readily access education, children with SEN were often placed in classes with much younger children, labelled as 'slow learners', and did not receive the specialised teaching they required. Successful integration mostly depended on the nature of disability, the teacher and the school (Gachago, 2018).

Nevertheless, from the 1990s, education policy demonstrated greater understanding of the educational needs of disabled children, including the Persons with Disabilities Act 2003; Safety Standards Manual in Schools, 2008; and A Policy Framework for Education, 2012.



Advances also reflected changes in practice and terminology such as handicapped people changed to people with disabilities, and integration to inclusion. In addition, increasing numbers of parents of children with SEN demanded schools enrol children with SEN so that they could be educated with their family and other local children rather than in boarding schools many miles from home (Kiarie, 2014).

By 2012, inclusive education remained an elusive promise with no explicit implementation plan. At this time, it was estimated three-quarters of children with SEN were in special schools with only a quarter in special units within mainstream education (ReK, 2012). Although the 2014 quarterly report of Kenya Vision 2030 indicated that Early Childhood Development resource centres were to be established in each of the 47 counties and the recruitment of 48,000 teachers trained in ECDE, no such transformative action was evident to promote inclusive classrooms. However, under wider educational reforms, Kenya has committed to establishing special schools within the compound of mainstream schools to promote social inclusion by 2026.

## **Cultural context and indigenous beliefs**

Within Kenya, disability is understood in terms of observable physical characteristics and limitations, rather than an umbrella understanding covering impairments, limitations and participation restrictions. Disability was, and continues to be, conceptualised as a harmful medical condition. Consequently, many parents hid their disabled children and denied them education rather than let them integrate with the community to avoid attracting public shame (Stone-MacDonald & Butera, 2011). Response to disability in Kenya is gendered: a daughter's disability is easier to accommodate as daughters are not expected to preserve the family's heritage. However, because boys are expected to carry the family's name forward, great shame is attached to having a disabled son. Moreover, if the first-born son is disabled, the father's status as a man would be questioned and the family lineage would be threatened (Karisa, 2020).

Because so little was believed possible of disabled children, many families abandoned efforts to secure ‘their disabled child’s education or future’ (ibid, p. 24). This attitude may have originated from early missionaries who introduced residential care to Africans and separated children from birth families, contrary to fundamental philosophical African values which cherish the belief children should live with and be protected by families and wider society.

## **Major legislation and the move towards inclusion in Kenya post-Salamanca**

Since 1994, Kenya has been part of different debates and reforms to support free inclusive education for all. While not all of these structures have been fully implemented, Kenya’s continual engagement indicates an ongoing commitment to achieving inclusive education.

The 2000 Dakar conference determined ‘more than 113 million children were not accessing primary education, and 880 million adults were illiterate’ (Elder, 2015, p. 21). Recognising this lack of global progress, a new framework to achieve the Salamanca objectives by 2015 was formed. Simultaneously, a UN Summit created eight MDGs which set a universal framework to promote inclusion to be achieved by 2015.

Responding to international impetus, in 2003, under President Kibaki, education entitlement became available to all Kenyans (including adults) who had previously been unable to attend elementary schooling and was also intended to ‘increase access to education for children with special needs’ (RoK, 2009, p. 37). This move was seen as a ‘key milestone towards achieving the Education for All goals’ (ibid, p. 17).

Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2006) secured the ‘full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities’ and Article 24 stated all signatories should ‘ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning’. The Kenyan government ratified the Convention in 2007 and thus has an international legal obligation to implement all articles in full. However, funds for FSE in 2008 were limited to teachers’ salaries and

learning materials and parents were still obliged to meet the costs of transport, ‘the cost of lunch, uniform and projects such as the expansion of infrastructure’ (Milligan, 2011, p. 278). For many, these additional costs were prohibitively high, and after completing primary education, numerous families simply could not afford to send their children to secondary school. Furthermore, government funds were not available for the adaptations potentially needed by pupils with special educational needs, thus mocking the concept of inclusive education.

To try and address some of these inequalities, in 2009, working with different stakeholders, the MoE ‘developed the Special Needs Education (SNE) policy framework to ensure that students with disabilities received equal access to special education services’ (Kiru, 2019, p. 183). This policy framework clarified which groups could be identified as needing additional or tailored support and helped Kenya to move forward its goal of achieving education for all.

Article 27, Section 4 of the 2010 Kenyan Constitution provided: ‘The State shall not discriminate directly or indirectly against any person on any ground, including race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, health status, ethnic or social origin, colour, age, *disability*, religion, conscience, belief, culture, dress, language or birth’ (emphasis added) (2010, p. 24). Though the Constitution outlawed discrimination, it did not overtly provide the means to enable students to demand education as a right and while added hidden costs remained in place, the end of eight years in primary schooling continued to be the point at which thousands of Kenyans concluded their education.

In 2015, the UN General Assembly set out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030, replacing the earlier MDGs. SDG 4, Quality Education, reaffirmed a commitment to inclusive provision declaring the UN would work with signatory nations to ‘ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’ (UN, 2020, p. 9). Whereas some progress had been made towards this goal, the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic produced damaging impacts on the achievement of the SDGs with projections indicating ‘more than 200 million children would be out of school, and only 60 per cent of young people would be completing upper secondary education in

2030' (ibid: 32). The effect on poorer nations was predicted to be greater and school closures enforced during the pandemic would create 'lower retention and graduation rates and worse[n] learning outcomes, in particular among segments of the population . . . already disadvantaged, including members of poor households and students with disabilities' (ibid). As a consequence, disabled students studying in Kenya are likely to experience a deterioration in learning outcomes and progress achieved to date could be reversed due to the 2020 pandemic.

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## **5. Current practice in Kenya: key issues, challenges and opportunities**

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Like many emerging nations, Kenya is still working out and working through how to provide inclusive education to all its citizens. The African Union Commission (AU) (a collective of 55/56 African sovereign states) in setting Agenda 2063 provided a route map for development and committed to becoming 'an inclusive continent where no child, woman or man will be left behind or excluded' (2015, p. 8). In addition, Continental Education for Africa (CESA) identified challenging targets which aimed to 'transform education systems' (Tikly, 2019, p. 223) and deliver opportunities to all African communities. UNESCO too has reaffirmed its commitment to change stating 'inclusion is a moral imperative . . . a prerequisite for sustainable societies' (2020, p. 14).

These broad goals have been mirrored in the Kenyan government's most recent strategic plan 2018–2022, which confirmed:

The MoE is taking concrete steps to transform provision of education for learners with special needs and disabilities to inclusive education [and] has developed relevant policies and established institutions to ensure increased access to education by learners with special needs and disabilities.

(2018, p. 12)

However, the MoE also recognised the country had not yet fully achieved earlier FPE or FSE and in 2016 ‘there were only 222,700 learners and 11,400 students enrolled in primary and secondary schools, respectively’ (MoE: *ibid*), falling far short of the total school-age population. The picture regarding inclusion of learners with special needs has been further complicated as data is still not uniformly collected or reported across different regions in Kenya. As a result, it is not possible to state accurately how many disabled students are out of school.

Further, while the MoE indicated its commitment to achieving positive change for disabled students, it is still wrestling with many persistent barriers to achieving inclusive schools such as training and ongoing support of teachers in schools. [Richards and Clough \(2004\)](#) claim trainee teachers are not supported to develop the skills needed to support children with SEN. The government therefore needs to ensure all teacher training courses support trainees to develop competencies which create stimulating learning environments for all children, including those with SEN and disability ([Elder, 2015](#); [Hodkinson, 2015](#)).

## **Teachers perspective on current inclusive practice in Kenya**

Field work conducted in a Kenyan rural education setting in 2016 comprising 17 teachers working in six different government-funded primary schools and secondary schools gave responses which demonstrated an understanding of disability based on physical and biological characteristics.

Data was collected by a Kenyan national who had taught in primary and secondary education in Kenya for over 27 years. Semi-structured interviews were used which took place on school or other education premises. When required to assist the flow of the data collection, native languages, such as Swahili, were used to enable participants to more fully express their views. Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and analysed using inductive, thematic analysis to determine the key themes of the data. Findings showed that teachers focused on

the negative aspects of disability rather than the ways mainstream education could be enhanced through inclusion. For example, Primary Teacher 4 observed:

Children who are not able-bodied [sic], who cannot do things that are done by the able-bodied. You can observe them and see they have SEN or mental problems.

Disability was conceptualised as a burden and teachers held an enduring notion of normalcy which accepted a deficit model of disability by unfavourably comparing disabled students to their non-disabled peers, as Table 6.1 indicates.

Table 6.1 Teachers' notions of normalcy	
Participant	Comment
Primary Teacher 2	. . . who cannot do some of the things that are done by the normal [sic]
Primary Teacher 4	. . . prevents them from doing normal things like normal children [sic]
Primary Teacher 6	. . . children who cannot perform duties/roles that are performed by normal children [sic]
Secondary Teacher 16	. . . they cannot perform their academic work like normal students [sic]

Using words such as 'normal', 'us' and 'others' in reference to children with SEN plays a central role in reflecting how a community perceives their disabled contemporaries (Suharto, Kuipers & Dorsett, 2016) and reveals power relations that evoke marginalisation and discrimination based on ideals of the 'normate' and 'normality' (ibid: 17). In this way, disabled people were relegated to a disadvantaged position, stereotyped and homogenised (Goodley, 2016) and considered wrongly placed in mainstream education or as Secondary Teacher 13 stated: 'I don't think they can fit here'. Such prevailing beliefs and behaviours of teachers had undermined the implementation of the government's draft SEN policy.

Some teachers held the view that traditional special schools as opposed to inclusive mainstream schools were best placed to meet the needs of children with SEN and thought inclusion was only appropriate for those with lower levels of need, as articulated by Secondary Teacher 15:

We can accommodate some of them if at all they are not severe cases, but most of them are better off in special schools.

Unhelpful staff attitudes and negative stereotyping were seen as particularly relevant during transition and enrolment and Primary Teacher 8 stated:

[C]hildren who are normal learning together with those children with abnormality is not easy.

Although the Kenyan government has introduced acts and legislation designed to safeguard and empower children with SEN, parents continuously needed to challenge the discrimination their children faced in education and most schools reported shortage of resources and facilities which would support the successful inclusion of disabled children leading Secondary Teacher 14 to comment:

I have never seen a disabled child in my class for the 22 years I have been in the service.

And Primary Teacher 7 summarised the provision as follows:

We have not done much to accommodate children with disabilities because of lacking facilities, inaccessible classrooms, muddy school paths and bad attitude from teachers.

Overall mainstream schoolteachers appeared to have limited understanding of disability.

These comments demonstrate how lack of teacher education on special needs education, professional development and confidence to teach diverse populations of children remained significant barriers to inclusive schools.

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## 6. Future perspectives in terms of inclusive ideas

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Although the Kenyan government has demonstrated its commitment to inclusive education, it still needs to ensure comprehensive enactment of these obligations to achieve full inclusion for, as Tikly states, ‘the role of education systems is to develop the capabilities (opportunity freedoms) of existing and future generations to achieve sustainable livelihoods and well-being within peaceful democratic societies’ (2019, p. 224). Equally, UNESCOs’ central message is simply ‘the future will be fashioned by our values, thoughts and actions’ (UNESCO, 1994, p. iv) and success will depend on what we choose to do now. There is global consensus that inclusion demands changes in thinking, planning, funding and training of teachers (Rieser, 2018), yet there still seems to be considerable confusion regarding what inclusive education is and how it should be implemented in Kenya. Full inclusion will only realistically be achieved in Kenya when there is a realignment of values; a fundamental change in thinking; full adoption of the social model of disability; recognition of the rights of every child; and the creation of child-friendly schools.

Consequently, mainstream schools must remove barriers to engagement and implement strategies to promote full inclusion of all children with SEN by welcoming disabled students with a meaningful, aspiration-inspired curriculum, easily accessible facilities and appropriate resources. The creation of child-friendly environments are economically justifiable and a more cost-effective way of educating all children together, rather than a complex system of different schools specialising in different groups of children (UNESCO, 1994)

Establishing practical first steps to inclusion is therefore vital to support and guide teachers. However, wholesale transfer of materials and approaches developed in the Global North should be treated with caution as this model is based on a socio-economic, political and



cultural context of that culture, not a Kenyan context. As it more accurately reflects the typical milieu, Kenya's own toolkit for inclusive schools could provide a more useful guide to school improvement. Twin track training for all student teachers would equip teachers with appropriate skills for inclusion. Track one would be on education based on principles of equality and child empowerment, while track two would focus on accommodation of different impairments and the specific needs of children with SEN (Rieser, 2014). Teachers who have already been trained must now take ownership of their own professional growth and ensure they develop the skills needed to teach disabled students (Sood, Peart & Mistry, 2018).

Policy should also reflect and support inclusive practices by reaffirming the equal right of every individual to education and which endorses all children with SEN being educated in mainstream classrooms 'unless the nature and severity of their disabilities is such that education in the mainstream classes, even with the use of supplementary aids and services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily' (UNESCO, 1994, p. ix). Since schools do not exist in isolation, policies should encourage cooperation and collaboration with schools, families, guardians and communities to prepare children with SEN to become active and productive members of society.

If inclusive education is to be effective, representation from diverse groups in the community, including people with disabilities, must be involved in creating inclusive schools to ensure children with disabilities can learn together, 'wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have' (UNESCO, 1994, p. 11). Thus, visionary leadership should mobilise communities and create awareness for families to support, influence and be part of the inclusive agenda.

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## 7. Conclusions

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Achieving full inclusion in Kenya for all children and young people at all levels of education remains a work in progress. Regardless of the legislative and policy changes which have been put into place, many children, young people and families are not yet benefiting from the

aspirational goals of government. Moreover, negative attitudes which view disabled people and students with SEN as less significant than their able-bodied peers persist in all sectors of education and among teaching staff. In addition, a mindset and culture of educational exclusion, established first by missionaries when they set up residential schools for disabled students which removed them from their communities, continues and many teachers still believe the needs of students with SEN are best served in special segregated schools.

The contemporary research completed in 2018 which informed this chapter revealed a number of relevant and challenging issues for children with SEN and their families in Kenya. A persistent problem for children with SEN was the way they were repeatedly pushed to the margins. Despite grand government claims the prevailing message appeared to be, while inclusion was supported in theory, turning this goal into reality presented a substantial challenge for many settings or as one head teacher who chose not to engage in the primary field work stated:

Inclusion is a good idea, a good indicator of development but of late, there are various foreign ideas introduced to us from abroad. I think inclusion in Kenya cannot be implemented the same way it is done in developed countries or how it is advocated in the international conferences. We need genuine inclusion; we are a unique culture, we can only do it in our way. We shall introduce them to regular education gradually, and when they are ready.

(Headteacher 1)

While illuminative, the findings of this research may only be relevant to Kenya and may not apply to other African nations. However, this research provides important information on the ways in which emerging economies can work towards achieving inclusive practice and equity for all children with SEN.

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