



Scaling-Up Educational Intervention in Special Inclusive Education in Nigeria

Mary M. Aiyeleso (Ph.D)

Department of Special Education &
Rehabilitation Sciences,
University of Jos

&

Ibrahim G. Umar

College of Administration Studies and
Social Sciences
Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna.

Abstract

This paper examined scaling-up educational intervention in special inclusive education. The paper investigated the concept of inclusive education and factors for scaling-up the educational intervention in special inclusive education in Nigeria. It also discussed the benefits of inclusive education system. The paper suggested that federal and state governments should employ and provide specially trained educational administrator and guidance and counselors in the Ministry of Education. The federal and state governments should also provide the specialists in each inclusive education school to direct the affairs of special inclusive education both in the Ministry and Schools if the system must succeed. The paper concluded that with inclusion principles children with disabilities can develop interest in learning positive attitude from their normal peers (non-disabled) by interacting, competing and cooperating in all aspects of life. Likewise, this close proximity will allow children with disabilities an intimate look at proper and improper behavior of non-disabled children. This particularly will also help in the development of a positive emotional and psychological perception of the lives of children with disabilities in general.

Key words: Intervention, Scaling-Up, Special Inclusive Education,

Introduction

Inclusive education is a new phenomenon in the lexicon of special and regular education. It came about with the reorientation of the various lineages of special educators who work in synergy for the benefit of disabled children. The paradigm shift from special education program to inclusive education is to boost the educational development of children with disabilities, and at the same time free it from labeling and

stereotype behavior associated with special schools. It is in realization of this fact that inclusive education was introduced. Inclusive education is the educational arrangement whereby children with disabilities and those without disabilities are educated under the same environment without any discrimination. Inclusion assume all learners – whether with disabilities or without disabilities are treated the same in the teaching learning process.



Like most new educational policies, there are hiccups that require pragmatic animation, lest the axiom of inclusive education becomes awry. It is therefore imperative to scale up intervention in special inclusive education. Such sequence of intervention should be in the areas of early identification of impairment in the affected by way of screening and assessment, provision of assistive technology to enhance learning, equipment and materials to mitigate drawback faced because of impairment, and other services like counseling, audiological screening, ophthalmology, speech training and occupational therapy. The goal of intervention in inclusive education is to facilitate individual children's success in inclusive child's success. Furthermore, intervention in inclusive special education setting aims to ameliorate the disadvantages, both in cognitive and developmental delays, as well as provide assistance with self-help and social skills during the child's formative years of children with disabilities. Another objective of intervention program and service is to take special care of children with disabilities and evaluate their educational gains and social skills in inclusive educational setting.

The Concept of Special Inclusive Education

Inclusive special education is a new educational concept. In an inclusive classroom, children with mild to moderate form of disabilities are included in regular classroom with children that do not have disabilities for educational development. As the practice is gaining momentum, the specialists, parents and governments have begun to see the benefits in the lives of the affected from the program of inclusion. Inclusive special education also refer to a system of educating the disabled and the non-disabled in an age appropriate in regular classes and are

supported to learn and interact with other peers without any discrimination on the basis of impairment or any other hindering condition. According to Lere and Anyawu (2011), inclusive education is seen as "a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion from education and from within education". The goal is that the whole education system will facilitate a learning environment, where teachers and learners embrace and welcome the challenges and benefits of diversity. Within an inclusive education approach, learning environment is fostered where individual needs are met and every child has the opportunity to succeed.

Ozaji, Unachukwu and Kolo (2016) emphasize that inclusive education is the educational practice, which ensures that in every situation (schools, homes and communities) learning and training is facilitated for every learner by minimizing hindrances or handicapping conditions unconditionally for every learner. Thus, whether a learner has an obvious impairment/disability or not, inclusiveness means that the acquired conditions for functional learning are provided and facilitated for everyone without any form of discrimination. It is about the mantra of "no child is left out of schooling or excluded from education for any reason whatsoever".

In practice, however, inclusive special education means educational practices which make provisions for functional and effective learning and training for all learners within all settings and most readily available to them. As UNESCO (2001) declaration summed it up, "schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional, social, linguistic or other



conditions. In other words, inclusive education is about ensuring that all educational and training settings (irrespective of their nomenclature) make provisions for effectively educating every child (without recourse to exclusivity or discrimination based on their capabilities, manifest or non-manifest abilities and social background).

Factors for Scaling-Up Educational Intervention in Special Inclusive Education

From the above discussion, it is seen or understood that inclusive education is the philosophy of ensuring that schools, centers of learning and educational systems are open to all disabled children. Inclusive education entails identifying, reducing or removing barriers within and around the school that may hinder learning. This can be achieved if schools can serve all children both the disabled and non-disabled without discrimination in their communities by practising inclusive special education. Inclusion as a new system of educating the disabled may encounter some challenges. However, the following factors can ameliorate the challenges and scale-up the educational intervention in special inclusive education.

1. Teacher's Qualification and Attitude

Teacher quality is the most influential factor that determines children's success in school and eventual academic achievement. Teachers play a pivotal role in children's academic performance or lack thereof. The qualifications and experience of teachers are important. They influence how students learn and the learning outcome. Mutembei (2014) opined that teacher education will need to introduce radical changes in order to prepare teachers to be able to meet the challenges of inclusive education. This implies that a teacher's qualification and experience determine to a large extent the

intervention and gamut of inclusive education. Professional development of teacher is crucial in order to scale up inclusive education. This is because teachers play a crucial and important role in lives of children and classroom as well. They could create a context to enable normal children and children with disabilities to be active learners by developing social interaction competence, social group discussion and learning from each other, instead of being passive learners. Teacher qualification and professional development also help to soar the formation of positive attitudes toward inclusion. This includes both the initial and continuous training of teachers. Trained teachers in inclusive education can then become train the trainers or resource persons to train other regular teachers in the inclusive education practice.

Furthermore, Kolo (2016) emphasized that the success of inclusion also depends on the perception teachers hold. Thus, if teachers hold a negative perception of inclusion of children with disabilities, it will impede the effectiveness of inclusion of the affected. A teacher with a positive perception will have a positive attitude to inclusive special education. Teachers are integral to the implementation of special inclusive education. It is obvious that many regular teachers feel unprepared and fear to work with children with disabilities in an inclusive environment. Regular teachers in a special inclusive educational setting have the wrong notion that children with disabilities will affect academic performance of normal children without disabilities. If teachers have a negative perception towards children with disabilities and inclusion, this may block any chances of learning in a regular class.

2. Provision of Infrastructure

Infrastructure plays an important role in intervention of special inclusive education the



importance of infrastructures like classroom, library, laboratory, and special devices like hearing aids, speech trainer, audiometer, braille typewriter, stylus and other technological devices that help in scaling up inclusive education cannot be overemphasized. Public and private buildings must also conform to the needs of physically challenged to enhance learning. Mutembei (2014) assert the quality and adequacy of infrastructure, equipment and materials, teaching and learning resources determine how effective the implementation of inclusive education would be. The author notes that children with disabilities require a learning free environment to maximize their functional potentials. It is a known fact that barrier to special inclusion is related to inappropriate infrastructures such as buildings, and school capacity to procure the necessary physical facilities for children with disabilities.

3. Establishment of Resources Room for Children with Disabilities

It is an established fact that children with disabilities require specialized resources room equipped with special aids for movement, reading, writing and hearing. Other special aids in resources room include braille machine, spectacles, white canes and hearing aids among others. Badmus (2005) stresses that learning can be acquired through the five senses analyzed as follows; we retain 83% of what is learnt through sight, 1% of what is learnt through smell, 1% of what is learnt through taste, 1% of what is learnt through touch and 1% of what is learnt through hearing. The above analysis is therefore the basis for a functional resources room for an enhanced intervention in inclusive education for children with disabilities.

This should help educators know that visual learning is more important in learning

than the auditory that is commonly used by educators. If more than one sense is engaged in learning, the use of multi-sensory approach helps in teaching children with disabilities. Learning resources help the disabled to understand with more than one sense. The use of resources helps the disabled to understand the concept, being taught and enables them see learning more real. It motivates them to participate in learning exercise. In short, learning resources help teachers to teach properly and help disabled learners have a strong visual memory.

4. Provision of Equipment and Materials

Another important factor that determines scaling up educational intervention in special inclusive education is the availability of equipment and materials to promote teaching and learning. It is an established fact that children with disabilities in inclusive environment require some teaching and learning aids to compensate them for the deficiency caused by their impairment. For example, a child with disability who suffers from physical impairment requires a wheelchair to be able to move about; those who are visually impaired require braille typewriter, spectacles and mobility canes, while those with hearing impairment need hearing aids to increase their auditory mechanism. Thus, the availability of equipment and materials enhance disabled learning, it compensates them for the loss of sensory organ or impaired limb; it gives the disabled confidence in life, it motivates them and provides a positive self-perception.

5. Component of Inclusive Curriculum

Curriculum is an indicator of the viability of special inclusive education. The importance of curriculum is that it shows what children learn because of what teachers teach. Curriculum in



special inclusive education settings must incorporate the needs of the disabled and the regular children who learn at par and in the same class. To achieve the required objective of accommodating all shades of opinion in an inclusion program there is need to plan the curriculum. While the normal children follow the regular curriculum, there is need to modify the curricular of the disabled to suit their needs and circumstance. For instance, blind children will require learning materials to be brailled and to use blind assistive technology to aid them in learning. Likewise, the hearing-impaired children require the service of sign language interpreter to communicate. It is therefore obvious that curriculum plays an important role in scaling up intervention in inclusive special education.

6. Provision of Adequate Funding

In every working situation, money is vital. Money is required to pay many different costs. For example, money is required to make or maintain infrastructures. There is also the cost of day-to-day running of inclusive education program. Of particular importance is teachers' personal emolument. For a pragmatic development of inclusion, both regular and specialized teachers must be paid. A good salary and other allowances will motivate teachers to put more effort in their work. On the other hand, a poor salary and hindrance to other personal emolument will have negative effect on teachers' performance and consequently influence the climbing up of educational intervention in inclusive special education.

7. Inculcating of Positive Attitude among Children with Disabilities

Special inclusive education has a positive effect in the life and social interaction of children with disabilities. This is because of the negative behavior or attitude of the so-called normal, children towards their peers with disabilities, such negative attitudes include relegation, neglect, rejection, discrimination, stigmatization, segregation, giving or calling them such degrading names such as idiot, imbecile and so on. Special inclusive education will serve as a way of instilling love and integration among children without disabilities (normal children) and those with disabilities. Inclusive education is the best way to respond to their good social interaction, positive attitude and meeting the special needs of children with disabilities in all aspects. This will also reduce the inferiority complex, feeling of isolation and withdrawn behaviors experienced by children with disabilities.

Benefits of Scaling-Up Educational Intervention in Special Inclusive Education System

Inclusive special education will be beneficial to children with disabilities because it will enhance academic performance and social interaction. It will create a healthy competition and, above all erase the stigma that children with disabilities suffer in segregated schools. In an inclusive environment, apart from classroom learning activities, there is a tendency for the disabled and non-disabled to work together during recreational activities. This social interaction can also create love as well as partnership between each other, families and teachers. This programme will help children with disabilities reach their developmental potentials and make their learning more productive. Strategies that



are embedded in special inclusion are those that promote meeting the disabled at their individual developmental level.

This is the reason why Osewalt (2018) emphasized that children learn differently. This assertion supports the principle of inclusive education. One important key of inclusive teaching strategy is to break the children into small groups for effective teaching and learning. Furthermore, in an inclusion classroom general and special education teachers work in synergy to meet the needs of these children. This type of classroom gives children with disabilities the support they need and allows them to stay in a least restrictive environment. Both disabled and non-disabled can benefit from additional resources and supportive techniques used in a special inclusion settings. In other word, children with disabilities benefit from learning in a regular classroom while the non-disabled gain from being expose to children with diverse characteristics, talents, temperament and behavior disabilities inclusive setting. The inclusive special education is also beneficial to children with disabilities because it prepares them for a life after school, when they will have more contact with non-disabled people at work, hospital, market, mosque and recreational places or in the community where they live.

Other benefits of inclusive special education intervention to children with disabilities include:

1. **Healthy Competition:** There will be opportunities for children with disabilities and those without disabilities to master activities in the same environment by practicing and teaching others. There will also be peer role models for academics, social and behavior skills among these children.

2. **Removal of Stigmatization:** Special inclusive education intervention will remove mark of disgrace, inferiority complex and isolation from children with disabilities. Children with disabilities will also develop a sense of belonging and become better prepared for life in the community as children and adults.

3. **Collaboration:** It will increase school staff collaboration among the regular and special teachers as well as parent's participation in school. Also, it will create greater opportunities for interaction between children with disabilities and those without disabilities.

4. **Staying Together:** As children with disabilities and those without disabilities learn together in the same environment, it will increase their social initiations, relationships and networking. Again, there will be increase in understanding, appreciation and acceptance of individual difference. It will also create meaningful friendships and respect for all people.

5. **Developing Potentials:** These will enhance skills acquisition and generalization among children without disabilities and those with disabilities. It will prepare all children for adult life in an inclusive society. Children needs will also be met and there will be greater resources for everyone.

Conclusion

Inclusive special education is operated because of the principles of promoting equitability in learning, equalization of learning and daily environmental experiences; ensuring commensurate learning opportunities for all learners; prioritization of meeting of functional learning for all children irrespective of their abilities and social backgrounds and inclusiveness of special educational services delivery (UNESCO, 2001). Scaling-up educational intervention in special inclusive



education is a process of addressing and responding to the needs of hierarchical development of inclusive education for children with disabilities. It involves the various ways in which inclusion is beneficial to the special needs of children with disabilities as it increase academic performance, foster unity between the disabled and non-disabled. It also erases stereotype behaviors among the affected and prepare them for a lifelong education, work and living in a diverse society.

Recommendations

Based on the above submission the following recommendations are made:

1. Federal and state governments should provide ancillary services for the disabled in the inclusive classroom, for effective learning.
2. Governments should make provision for the supervision of the management of special inclusive education programme.
3. Provision of incentives by the government, and parent-teacher association for both regular and special teachers working in inclusive schools is of paramount importance.
4. Governments, with the help of the community, should provide conducive learning environment for the affected children taking the categories of their disabilities into consideration.
5. Regular and special teachers should be up and doing in their work-places for the success of special inclusive

education in their communities and Nigeria at large.

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