



Decolonisation of the Education System, A Zambian Response to Redesigning an Education System for Learners with Special Education Needs and or Disabilities (LSEND)

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.4.1123.113025>

ABSTRACT

The study explored the Zambia's response to decolonisation of the education system for learners with special education needs and or disabilities (LSEND). The qualitative study was employed with in-depth face-to-face interviews with 20 participants who included Specialist Teachers, Education Administrators, parents and Civil Society Organisations. The study revealed that the decolonisation of the education is the realisation of the relevance of the education to respond to the current needs of the society and globally. This was seen to be the creation of an education system that respects and values the diversity while addressing injustices associated with provision of current education system. In order to achieve the type of education system desired for LSEND there is need for redesigning an education system that must relook into the structure of the education for LSEND, learning areas and content with artisan skill, instructional materials in accessible format, taught ICT with the relevant softwares, promote community involvement (collaborative approach), capacity building (teacher training), learning environment, policy change and equitable funding. Based on these findings, the study recommends that LSEND must follow the same curriculum, however, for some of these learners to access the regular curriculum, adaptation must be considered.

Keywords: *Adaptation, Decolonisation, Redesigning Special Education System, LSEND*

Introduction

Education is both the cornerstone for socio-economic development and a tool for transforming and steering Zambia towards the attainment of the Vision 2030. Achieving universal access to education, as espoused in the Vision 2030 and SDGs, remains one of Zambia's policy directives on education. A 21st century education is about giving students the skills they need to succeed in this new world, and helping them grow the confidence to practice those skills (Dhir, 2022). Therefore, it calls for the education system to be relevant and responsive to the needs of the individual, the society, the nation and the global dictates. Ajani (2019) noted that decolonisation of the special education system unanimously indicate great need to comprehensively reform at all the levels to diversify the education system that is making it relevant to the needs, abilities and interests of different learners. Also, to provide sufficient and relevant content in the learning areas/subjects that is to provide for meaningful learning experiences that are relevant to the individual and the nation such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which are applicable to real life situations; and the education system that include latest economic, social and technological developments (Ojo et al., 2023). While digital integration is also fundamental in the decolonisation of the 21st century education, it is not enough to simply add technology to existing teaching methods. Technology must be used strategically to benefit students (). The education system needs to emphasize what learners are expected to do rather than mainly focusing on what they are expected to know to achieve the education system desired.

The Zambian education system has been not career-oriented, it has been too bookish and theoretical, with too little alienation to practical and useful skills and had a fragmentation of subjects with similar content (MESVTEE, 2013, Muzata and Mahlo, (2019)). Most educational institutions are non-productive because many children graduate without the necessary skills because of rigidity in the delivery of the education (MOE, 1996; MESVTEE, 2013). Arising from this background, Zambia being part of the global village must the need to revise its education system with a desire to meet the abilities of all learners. As LSEND are not fully considered on the type education system that focus on guiding them towards personal, social and economic independence, so that they can feel valuable and useful person in society. Kandimba et al (2023) called for competence and skills in adapting instructional methods, strategies and techniques to make curriculum accessible to learners with moderate IDs. Therefore, their education system must look into the future and have clear goal for self-sustainability in life. Hence, decolonization education must not only on the practice of dismantling colonial systems but also to a trend of rethinking future educational frameworks as one common good (Wu, 2021).

The decolonisation of the education system for LSEND must help in transition from school to work and independent life as it creates a more inclusive, culturally diverse, and equitable educational experience (Du Plessis, (2021)). The goal is to create an educational environment that respects and celebrates

diversity, values multiple perspectives, and provides opportunities for all students to thrive academically and vocationally. Redesigning an education system for LSEND requires a thoughtful and inclusive approach that caters to the unique learning needs of each learner. Wu (2021) argued that this process is not a one-size-fits-all process and may vary significantly from one region or country to another. It is against this background the article sought to explore the Zambia's response to decolonisation of the education system for learners with special education needs and or disabilities

Theoretical Framework

The Critical Pedagogy theory guided the study. Postcolonial scholars often draw on critical pedagogy to develop educational approaches that challenge colonial legacies. Critical pedagogy encourages dialogue, critical thinking, and active engagement with knowledge, fostering a more inclusive and equitable education system (McArthur, 2021). Gabel (2002) noted that that critical pedagogy theory is an inclusive educational approach that places a strong emphasis on social justice, critical thinking, and empowering students to become active agents in their own education. When applied to the process of decolonization in the education system for LSEND, critical pedagogy is powerful tool for challenging and transforming the existing educational structures and practices for LSEND.

This theory promotes the inclusion of marginalized voices and perspectives, particularly those of Indigenous peoples and other historically oppressed groups. It emphasizes the importance of representing diverse cultures, histories, and worldviews. It is used to address systemic inequalities in the education system (McArthur, 2021). This includes examining resource disparities between schools and advocating for equitable access to quality education for all students. Applying critical pedagogy theory in decolonisation of the education system for LSEND empowers teachers and learners themselves to engage in a transformative learning process. It challenges the status quo, promotes equity and social justice, and encourages a more inclusive and culturally sensitive approach to education. Through critical pedagogy theory decolonisation efforts can become more meaningful and impactful in dismantling the education systems that can must respond to the learning needs of each individual learner.

Material and Methods

A phenomenological study design was used for this study because it helps to understand complex social processes, to capture essential aspects of a phenomenon from the perspective of study participants. With the use of the phenomenological research design, the researcher was able to conduct face to face interviews with participants on Zambia's response to decolonisation of the education system for learners with special education needs and or disabilities. An expert purposive sampling technique was used in to select five Specialist Teachers and five Education Administrators participants, while purposive critical case sampling was used to select five parents and five Civil Society Organisations participants. Data was collected using an in-depth interview guide and was manually analysed using thematic analysis. The researcher organised the collected data into themes by transcribed from audio into text. The transcribed data was synthesised into common heading which were leading the data set which were now called themes. The next stage was to organise the text under the created themes which have emerged from the data so that it can make sense. Through this procedure, data from all participants was organised under the themes the data represented, and this enabled the researcher to present data in the findings using the identified themes at analysis. In order to also show data authenticity, common responses were synthesised into verbatims to bring out the actual voices of the participants in the study. Through thematic analysis, data was presented to represent the actual findings of the study as collected from the different participants who took part in the study.

Results

The Participants who included organisation, learning institutions and individuals were asked to indicate what they understood by decolonisation of the education system in a country. In their response decolonisation of the education involves re-evaluating, revising, and transforming curricula, teaching methods, and institutional practices to ensure that they are more inclusive, equitable, and reflective of diverse cultures, perspectives, and experiences. In support of the findings above, participant (CSO2) had this to say: *The decolonisation of the education is the realisation of the relevance of the curriculum to respond to the current needs of the society and globally among children with special education needs and or disabilities.*

Contributing on the same participant (ST3) had this to say:

I think it all about creating an education system that respects and values the diversity s while addressing injustices associated with provision of current education system to LSEND.

Contributing on the same another participant (EA2) had this to say:

In realisation of the decolonisation of education system for learners with LSEND it should begin by ensuring accessibility to all leaners. There is need for adapting materials, providing assistive technology, and training teachers to deliver content in an accessible manner for all learners.

When participants were asked on how Zambia can respond to the decolonisation through redesigning the education system for LSEND. The results revealed the need to relook into the structure of the education for LSENDs, learning areas and content with artisan skill, instructional materials in accessible format, taught ICT with the relevant softwires, promote community involvement (collaborative approach), capacity building (teacher training), learning environment, policy change, and equitable funding.

Structure of the Education for LSENDs

The theme that emerged from the findings was on the redesigning the Structure of the Education for LSENDs. The principles of individualization, inclusivity, and a focus on the best interests of the child are central to the structure of education for LSENDs. In support of the above findings, participant (P4) said:

There is need to include other categories to avoid the historical restriction of disabilities to the four traditional categories. The learners with disabilities from ECE to tertiary should be subjected to the prescribed regular education curriculum but there is need to adapted where necessary to suit their specific learning needs, for them to determined their career choice as they progress to Secondary education.

In contribution the participant (ST3) had this to say:

Learners with Intellectual Disabilities as well as other disabilities who cannot benefit from the prescribed regular education will have an adapted curriculum which will bring out subjects with practical contents. Whose learning needs to be organized in levels: Level One, Level Two and Level Three. After level three, they should proceed to 16 Plus Level, their alternative curriculum in additional to the learning under intellectual disabilities should include practical subjects.

Also, participant (EA1) had this to say:

The ministry should be offering Home-School Based Education programme to those LSEND who can't reach any learning institution due to the nature of the disability one has and this should be supported with e-learning

Learning Areas and Content with Artisan skill

Another theme that emerged from the findings was the need of promoting of learning areas and content with artisan skill. The results emphasized on the introduction of practical content at different levels of learning as learners are exposed to the skills early can help them make choices later in life. This confirmed by participant (CSO2) during

Learners with Intellectual Disabilities and those with other disabilities will be assisted in identifying their real interests and choose a Career Pathway that they are likely to succeed in. Adopting certain fundamental Life Skills will also help learners with disabilities discover their identities and goals in life.

The participant (ST) said:

Academic and practical subjects should be offered to LSEND, more emphasis should be on the teaching and learning of practical subject as it provides them with skills which they can apply in society to earn a living. Therefore, there is need to train and retrain special education teachers in practical subjects and skills that benefit learners.

Another participant (P1) had this to say: *the curriculum for LSEND should include entrepreneurship and financial programmes aimed at imparting such skills to students with disabilities so that upon graduation, they could use them to start their own business and create jobs, and such will enable them to survive even after school.*

Specialised Intervention Area

The theme that emerged from the findings was implementation of Specialised Intervention Area. These areas focus on providing targeted support and resources to help these students overcome their specific challenges and thrive academically and socially. In support, participant (ST2) had this to say:

At Primary School level, specific specialised intervention programmes for Learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (LSEND) in form of Activities for Daily Living (ADL) shall be offered to help them enhance their functional status. Activities of Daily Living are important for all learners with disabilities because it allows them to practice important tasks that must be done in everyday life without assistance.

Yet participant (EA5) indicated that:

The Special/Inclusive Schools, or Units to be provided with positions of speech pathologist, physiotherapist, special education coordinator, assistant teachers, social worker, braille transcriber, sign Language interpreter and trained house parents.

Methodology

Another great theme that emerged from the findings was inclusive methodology. Addressing the education of learners with disabilities requires a thoughtful and inclusive methodology that ensures these students receive the support and accommodations they need to reach their full potential. Participant (P5) commented that:

The teachers for LSEND needs to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to understand the specific needs, challenges, and strengths of learners with disabilities in educational setting. After that teachers are expected to develop Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) outlining specific goals, accommodations, and services to meet their unique needs for each learner.

Participant (EA5) said:

The teachers to encourage peer support and collaborative learning, where students work together and learn from each other in inclusive settings. Teachers need to promote inclusive classroom practices, such as peer support, cooperative learning, and collaborative projects, to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment. The teachers need to tailor instruction to accommodate the diverse needs and learning styles of students with disabilities, ensuring that the content is accessible and meaningful to each student.

In contribution, participant (EA1) had this to say:

The teacher in classroom must incorporate active learning strategies, such as group discussions, problem-solving activities, and hands-on experiences, to make the learning process more engaging. The need to use multi-sensory teaching methods to engage students with various disabilities, such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners.

Instructional Materials in Accessible Format

Another theme that emerged from the findings was on instructional materials must be available in accessible format as it will help LSEND participate fully in the learning process. In support, participant (CSO4) had this to say:

Learning institution should ensure that LSEND are provided with appropriate resources for quality learning. There need to provide instructional materials in a variety of accessible formats, including digital text, Braille, large print, audio, and tactile graphics, to accommodate different types of disabilities.

Contributing to the same subject; another participant (ST1) had this to say:

Teachers in schools needs to ensure that digital materials, including websites, e-books, and learning management systems, are designed to be accessible to screen readers and other assistive technologies. LSEND must have access to academic resources that include e-books, databases, and descriptive alt text for images, graphs and charts.

Teaching ICT With the Relevant Softwires

The theme that emerged from the findings was teaching ICT with the relevant softwires. Using relevant software and assistive technology is crucial to providing an inclusive learning experience. Commenting on the same, participant (EA2) had this to say: *LSEND will require adapted curriculum and adapted technology relevant to their disabilities. Computer should be taught as compulsory subject to learners with visual impairment as it provides them with an avenue for accessing the curriculum.*

Another (EA3) had this to say:

All Learners with special educational needs should be taught ICT with the relevant software as it provides avenue for accessing curriculum for independent learning. There is need to integrate assistive technology devices and software into the ICT curriculum to support students with disabilities. For examples include screen readers, speech-to-text software, and communication boards.

Capacity Building (Teacher Training)

Another theme that emerged from the findings was promoting of Capacity Building (teacher Training). Teacher training programs may need to be revised to ensure that educators are prepared to incorporate decolonized teaching methods and materials into their classrooms. In support the, participant (ST5) had this to say:

There is need to scale up the capacity building for teachers in inclusive education methodologies should be included in the curriculum. the learning institution must provide training and support for educators to become more culturally competent. Also, there need to intensify on skills such as braille and sign language as well as screening and assessment for identification of disabilities This can help teachers better understand and support students from diverse backgrounds with various disabilities.

In support the, participant (CSO4) had this to say:

The ministry must recruit and train more qualified special education teachers who are equipped to provide specialized instruction and support for students with disabilities. The schools invest in training for teachers and support staff to enhance their ability to engage and support students with disabilities effectively.

Learning environment

Another theme that emerged from the findings was the ensuring of a conducive Learning environment. This includes rethinking the names of buildings and institutions, as well as the symbols and imagery used within educational spaces. This confirmed by participant (CSO5) during interview:

The ministry of education needs to provide guidelines on inclusive education using the universal design for learning framework (which naturally includes the needs for reasonable accommodations, meeting the diverse needs of all learners, including those with disabilities, assistive and digital technologies, individual planning. Learning institution must stress on accessibility for LSEND to have appropriate infrastructure such as classrooms, lecture room tutorial rooms and specialized rooms, laboratories, workshops and resource rooms

Yet participant (P2) had this to say:

The schools must create a supportive and inclusive classroom environment that addresses the emotional and social well-being of students, as this can significantly impact their engagement.

Promote Community Involvement (Collaborative approach)

Another great theme that emerged from the findings was the Promote Community Involvement (Collaborative approach). In support participant (ST4) indicated that: *there is need to intensify encouraging the active involvement of families and communities in decision-making and the development of individualized education plans (IEPs). This can help ensure that the goals and strategies are culturally and linguistically relevant.*

Yet another participant (CSO1) had this to say:

There is need for collaboration among teachers, special educators, support staff, parents, guardians, and community organizations to create a supportive network for learners with disabilities. The special schools need to collaborate with local agencies, healthcare providers, and community organizations to provide wraparound services that support the holistic well-being of learners with disabilities.

Policy Change

Another theme that emerged from the findings on policy change. Contributing to the same subject; participant (P2) had this to say:

The ministry of education needs to create and implement policies to address the education of learners with disabilities is crucial for ensuring inclusivity and equal opportunities in the education system. These policies should be designed to provide support, accommodations, and resources to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities.

In view of this, participant (CSO4) commented that: *The ministry of education must promote inclusive education that integrates students with disabilities into regular classrooms whenever possible, while providing necessary support and accommodations This can help make education more meaningful and engaging for these learners.*

Equitable Funding

Another theme that emerged from the findings was equitable funding. Participant (ST3) said: *The ministry of education must ensure that funding for special education is distributed equitably, with an emphasis on addressing disparities in resources and support. It should invest in schools serving LSEND to provide necessary resources for them.*

In view of this, participant (ST3) commented that:

The ministry of education must allocate sufficient resources and funding to meet the needs of students with disabilities, including specialized equipment, personnel, and training. The allocation of funds must be based on the individual needs of students with disabilities. They need to consider factors such as the type and severity of disability, necessary accommodations, and support services.

In contribution, participant (CSO2) had this to say: *This calls for the ministry of education to implement a weighted funding formula that assigns higher weights or allocations to students with disabilities, recognizing that they may require extra resources to access and succeed in education.*

Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore the Zambia's response to decolonisation of the education system for learners with special education needs and or disabilities. In response decolonisation of the education involves re-evaluating, revising, and transforming curricula, teaching methods, and institutional practices to ensure that they are more inclusive, equitable, and reflective of diverse cultures, perspectives, and experiences. The decolonisation of the education is the realisation of the relevance of the curriculum to respond to the current needs of the society and globally among children with special education needs and or disabilities. This was seen to be the creation of an education system that respects and values the diversity s while addressing injustices associated with provision of current education system. In order to achieve the type of education system desired for LSEND there is need for redesigning an education system that must relook into the structure of the education for LSENDs, learning areas and content with artisan skill,

instructional materials in accessible format, teaching ICT with the relevant softwares, promote community involvement (collaborative approach), capacity building (teacher training), learning environment, policy change, and equitable funding.

The principles of individualization, inclusivity, and a focus on the best interests of the child are central to the structure of education for LSENDs. There is need to include other categories to avoid the historical restriction of disabilities to the four traditional categories. The structure of the education for LSENDs should run from Early Childhood Education to tertiary education with a well-defined education or adapted curriculum for each specific disability group. Learners with Intellectual Disabilities as well as other disabilities who cannot benefit from the prescribed regular education will have an adapted curriculum which will bring out subjects with practical contents. Whose learning needs to be organized in levels: Level One, Level Two and Level Three. After level three, they should proceed to 16 Plus Level, their alternative curriculum in addition to the learning under intellectual disabilities should include practical subjects (Kandimba et al., 2023). Also, the ministry to continue offering Home-School Based Education programme to those LSEND who can't reach any learning institution due to the nature of the disability one has and this should be supported by taking advantage of digital technology for e-learning. These results were in conformity with Linda (2019), who revealed that home-school based education programs offer a unique and highly individualized approach to special education. The learning institution to provide flexibility, personalized instruction, and opportunities for holistic development, ensuring that students with disabilities receive the support and education they need to thrive.

The LSEND from ECE to tertiary should be subjected to the prescribed regular education curriculum but there is need to adapted where necessary to suit their specific learning needs. The results emphasized on the introduction of practical content at different levels of learning as learners are exposed to the skills early can help them make choices later in life. Children with intellectual disabilities should be offered an adapted curriculum which should bring out study areas with practical contents. There is need to expose LSEND to career choice at this level either to Academic or Vocational Career Pathway so that they have already determined career choice as they progress to Secondary education. The curriculum for LSEND must include entrepreneurship and financial programmes aimed at imparting such skills to students with disabilities so that upon graduation, they could use them to start their own business and create jobs. They are critical thinking skills that will enable LSEND to survive even after school.

Further, specialized intervention areas are crucial in addressing the education of learners with disabilities. These areas focus on providing targeted support and resources to help these students overcome their specific challenges and thrive academically and socially. The Special/Inclusive Schools, or Units to be provided with positions of speech pathologist, physiotherapist, special education coordinator, assistant teachers, social worker, braille transcriber, sign Language interpreter and trained house parents to promote specific specialised intervention programmes. These specific specialized intervention programmes must be tailored to the individual needs of students and informed by ongoing assessments and feedback. These results were in line with Hayes and Bulat, (2017), who saw specialized intervention programs play a crucial role in meeting the diverse needs of students with disabilities. They provide targeted support, promote individualized learning, and contribute to the overall success and well-being of students with special needs in the education system.

In addressing the education of learners with disabilities requires a thoughtful and inclusive methodology that ensures these students receive the support and accommodations they need to reach their full potential. Most of the methodologies used are not realistic in special education. This is because of the different ability levels of the learners. In order to realise that teachers for LSEND must conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to understand the specific needs, challenges, and strengths of learners with disabilities in educational setting. Teachers are expected to develop Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) for each learner and promote inclusive classroom practices, such as peer support, cooperative learning, and collaborative projects, to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment. The need to use multi-sensory teaching methods that engage learners with various disabilities. These results were consistent with Muzata & Mahlo (2019), who found that effective methodology in special education is essential for creating an inclusive, supportive, and responsive learning environment. It addresses the unique needs of students with disabilities, promotes individualized learning, and fosters the development of essential academic and life skills. By implementing these strategies and promoting an inclusive and engaging learning environment, educators can help students with disabilities reach their full potential and enjoy a positive and enriching educational experience.

The learning institution having LSEND must ensure that instructional materials are available in accessible formats is crucial for providing an inclusive education for learners with disabilities. There need to provide instructional materials in a variety of accessible formats, including digital text, Braille, large print, audio, and tactile graphics, to accommodate different types of disabilities. These results were in line with Dhirn (2022), who saw provision of instructional materials are available in accessible formats is a fundamental aspect of creating an inclusive educational environment. It not only addresses the specific needs of students with disabilities but also promotes a more flexible and responsive approach to teaching that benefits all learners. Providing instructional materials in accessible formats is an ongoing commitment to creating an inclusive learning environment.

Furthermore, teaching Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to LSEND must be highly effective when tailored to their unique needs and abilities. Using relevant software and assistive technology is crucial to providing an inclusive learning experience. Computer should be taught as compulsory subject to learners with visual impairment as it provides them with an avenue for accessing the curriculum. There is need to integrate assistive technology devices and software into the ICT curriculum to support LSEND such as screen readers, speech-to-text software, and communication boards. This is in line with Artiles (2020), who indicated that integrating ICT with relevant software into education is essential for preparing students for the demands of the modern world, fostering critical skills, and ensuring they are equipped to navigate a technology-driven society.

It was found that teachers play a pivotal role in the decolonization process. Teacher training programs must be revised to ensure that teachers are prepared to incorporate decolonized teaching methods and materials into their classrooms. There is need to scale up the capacity building for teachers in inclusive education methodologies should be included in the curriculum. The learning institution must provide training and support for teachers to become more culturally competent. Also, there need to intensify on skills such as braille and sign language as well as screening and assessment for identification of

disabilities and the ministry of education must recruit and train qualified special education teachers who are equipped to provide specialized instruction and support for students with disabilities. The schools invest in training for teachers and support staff to enhance their ability to engage and support LSEND effectively. This resonates with OECD netFWD (2019) who revealed that teacher training is of paramount importance in the field of education, as it plays a crucial role in shaping the quality of instruction, student learning outcomes, and overall educational effectiveness.

The physical environment of educational institutions can also play a role. This includes rethinking the names of buildings and institutions, as well as the symbols and imagery used within educational spaces. In respect of the physical environment there must be a stress for accessibility for persons with disabilities, however it will be important for review to reflect more Universal Design principle, accessibility and infrastructure adjustment for all people, that is learning institution should have appropriate infrastructure such as classrooms, lecture room tutorial rooms and specialized rooms, laboratories, workshops and resource rooms as they can help LSEND reach their full potential and enjoy a positive and enriching educational experience. These results were in line with Anastasiou & Bantekas (2023), who reported that the learning environment is a critical factor in the provision of special education. Creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment for students with special educational needs (SEN) has numerous benefits that contribute to their academic, social, and emotional development.

The results showed that decolonisation is often most effective when it involves collaboration between indigenous communities, educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders. The special schools need to collaborate with local agencies, healthcare providers, and community organizations to provide wraparound services that support the holistic well-being of students with disabilities. There must be collaboration among teachers, special educators, support staff, parents, guardians, and community organizations to create a supportive network for learners with disabilities. These results were in conformity with Ajani (2019), who reported that community involvement in special education provision is essential for building a strong support system, reducing barriers to inclusion, and creating an environment where all individuals, regardless of abilities, can thrive. It promotes a sense of shared responsibility and fosters a community that values diversity and inclusivity.

The results further indicated the need to have government policies may need to be reformed to support the decolonization of education, including funding for indigenous languages, cultural programs, and inclusive curriculum development. This calls for creation policies to address the education LSEND that are inclusivity and ensures equal opportunities in the education system. These policies should be designed to provide support, accommodations, and resources to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities. These policies must be regularly reviewed and adapted to meet the evolving needs of students with disabilities and the changing landscape of education. Policy changes in special education provision are critical for ensuring that the needs of students with disabilities are met effectively and that educational systems are inclusive and equitable. In line with the results, Hayes and Bulat (2017), adds that by establishing laws and regulations, policy changes ensure that these students are entitled to a free and appropriate education, reasonable accommodations, and protection against discrimination.

Furthermore, education systems should strive for fairness and equity in the allocation of funds to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities. The ministry of education must ensure that funding for special education is distributed equitably, with an emphasis on addressing disparities in resources and support. It should invest in schools serving LSEND to provide necessary resources for them. The allocation of funds must be based on the individual needs of students with disabilities. They need to consider factors such as the type and severity of disability, necessary accommodations, and support services. This calls for the ministry of education to implement a weighted funding formula that assigns higher weights or allocations to students with disabilities, recognizing that they may require extra resources to access and succeed in education. Equitable funding for learners with disabilities is a critical component of an inclusive and just education system. It is essential to address the unique needs of these students and provide them with the support and resources necessary to achieve their full potential. In support, the study by Dhir (2022), revealed that equitable funding in special education provision is crucial for ensuring that all students, regardless of their abilities, receive the support and resources they need to succeed. It enables schools to provide the necessary resources, personnel, and services to ensure that students with disabilities have equal opportunities for academic success and overall well-being. Without equitable funding, there is a risk of disparities that may hinder the educational outcomes of students with special needs.

Conclusion

The decolonisation of the education is the realisation of the relevance of the curriculum to respond to the current needs of the society and globally among LSEND. This was seen to be the creation of an education system that respects and values the diversity while addressing injustices associated with provision of current education system. In order to achieve the type of education system desired for LSEND it calls for redesigning an education system LSEND that include relooking into the structure of the education for LSENDs, learning areas and content with artisan skill, instructional materials in accessible format, taught ICT with the relevant softwares, promote community involvement (collaborative approach), capacity building (teacher training), learning environment, policy change, and equitable funding.

Recommendation

- ❖ When procuring teaching and learning materials for mainstream learners, there should be an allocation of 10% towards the procurement of accessible teaching and learning materials for LSEND according to specific disability groups. Additionally, universally designed materials should be procured.
- ❖ Intensify screening, identification, assessment, and diagnosis for LSEND by establishing more assessment centres in each Province, in other words decentralized the identification process

- ❖ There is need for fast track training of teacher in subjects that promote skills acquisition such as agriculture science, home economic, music, Art and Design, design and technology, computer studies and crafts.
- ❖ For learner with special education needs and or disabilities must follow the same curriculum, however, for some of these learners to access the regular curriculum, adaptation must be considered.

Consent for participants

Informed consent was obtained from all participants in the research.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest, financial or otherwise.

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