Inclusive Education

Inclusive Education

The Key to Social Transformation

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Introduction

In 2014, the UWI Centre for Disability Studies (UWICDS) held its first Regional Disability Studies Conference. Subsequently, the UWICDS has consistently held the regional conference every two years to examine diverse issues affecting persons with disabilities. At the first conference, attention was placed on establishing standards for different services the public and private sectors provide for persons with disabilities. At the second conference, we placed attention on modern technologies for persons with disabilities. At the third conference, we placed efforts on culture and sports participation. These conferences saw scholars, policymakers, technocrats, and advocates from the community of persons with disabilities making significant contribution to the rich dialogue focused on improving the lives of persons with disabilities.

Emanating from these conferences are two major publications: 'The Charter of Minimum Service' and 'Transforming and Empowering Persons with Disabilities through Modern Technologies.' At the 2018 conference, the Regional Disability Index (RDI) was launched. The index tracks and ranks the performance of countries within the Caribbean to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The first report on the RDI was published in 2019. These documents build on the

current literature on disability in the Caribbean. The UWICDS is extremely proud of its efforts to date and, as such, will continue to host the Regional Disability Studies Conference. It is within this context that this monograph has been prepared.

For the Regional Disability Studies Conference 2020, the focus was on inclusive education. Special guest to the conference, Richard Rieser, global disability advocate and author of the book *Implementing Inclusive Education: A Commonwealth Guide to Implementing Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* cites inclusive education as a system 'where children and students with disabilities can be part of their local school alongside their non-disabled peers, with the right support and accommodation to develop academically and socially' (Rieser 2008, 14). Education is a fundamental means of empowering and transforming the lives of persons with disabilities (Morris 2017). If persons with disabilities are to be fully included in Caribbean societies, they must receive quality education. Furthermore, if we are to jettison some of the myths and stigma relating to persons with disabilities, we must ensure that persons with disabilities are brought into mainstream education (Anderson 2014). Recognizing this regional imperative, the focus was on education, and the theme for the conference was 'Inclusive Education: The Key to Social Transformation.'

In 2006, the United Nations established the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and inter alia the Convention speaks to the issue of education for persons with disabilities. Article 24 states:

1. States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning directed to:

a. The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;

b. The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;

c. Enabling persons with disabilities to participate productively in a free society (United Nations 2006, 12).

In 2013, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) formulated the Declaration of Pétion Ville, which emphasized the need for education of persons with disabilities (CARICOM 2013). Several countries within CARICOM have also enacted legislation to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities, and these make special provision for education (ECLAC 2017). We thus recognize education as an indispensable tool in the empowerment process of persons with disabilities (Morris 2017). However, the education of persons with disabilities must be done within the context of inclusiveness if we are to achieve the objectives of the CRPD, the Declaration of Pétion Ville, and the diverse pieces of legislation enacted within the region. It is within this context that the 2020 conference was hosted under the theme: 'Inclusive Education: The Key to Social Transformation.'

The aim of the 2020 Regional Disability Studies Conference was to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the general education system and to use it as a means of social transformation. The objectives of the conference were:

1. To plan and effectively implement an academic conference on inclusive education for persons with disabilities;

2. To establish a planning committee to assist with the coordination and effective implementation of Conference 2020;

3. To mobilize financial and other such resources for the Conference; and

4. To ensure that the best papers are selected and published after the Conference.

The conference was a major success, evidenced by the attendance and participation of over five hundred individuals during the two days. It is out of these chernozemic discussions that these papers have been selected to formulate the chapters of this monograph.

In chapter one, Sharon Anderson Morgan of the Ministry of Education in Jamaica examines the principle of inclusive education, the supporting policies and how these impact inclusive education practices for students with special education needs. The chapter further highlights indicators of inclusive education at various levels of the education system. It concludes that inclusive education is grounded in national and international policy. However, inclusive education is a concept which is contextualized in several ways; this impacts how it is implemented.

In chapter two, Jasmin Walkin from the Ministry of Education in the Turks and Caicos Islands focuses on 'Achieving Inclusion through Passion, Data, and Intervention.' His chapter concentrates on how one should use data to drive the process of inclusive education and that one should have a passion for the advocacy.

In chapter three, Floyd Morris places the spotlight on access and inclusion of children with disabilities in the Jamaican

education system. This chapter comes within the context of research that was conducted among one hundred schools in the Jamaican education system on how accessible and inclusive these institutions are for children with disabilities. The research findings suggest that most schools within the Jamaican education system are not accessible and inclusive of children with disabilities. We make some recommendations for transformation.

In chapter four, Charmaine Gooden Monteith from the Jamaica Teacher's Association (JTA) presents her arguments for inclusive education by examining the topic 'Inclusion of Students with Special Needs in the Regular Classroom: Teachers' Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practice in Jamaica.' Through a quantitative research, she examines the extent of the knowledge, attitudes, and practice of teachers in the Jamaican education system towards an inclusive education system. She concludes that teachers have no problem in accommodating children with disabilities in the education system. However, they lack the training and resources to do so. She concludes with some recommendations for action.

In chapter five, Floyd Morris, Burnadette Mcpherson, and Sharmalee Cardoza present a model for transforming and empowering persons with disabilities through inclusive education. Under the topic 'A Model for the Transformation of the Marginalized,' the authors outlined how the University of the West Indies, which is the premier tertiary educational institution in the Caribbean, provides inclusive education for persons with disabilities and put in place reasonable arrangements to accommodate these students.

In chapter six, Tanneice Ellis of the University of the West Indies zeroes in on inclusive education by examining the topic 'Creating an Inclusive Education Environment: Lecturers' Experiences and Perspectives in One Department at The University of the West Indies.' The author delves into how

lecturers at the UWI have contributed to an inclusive education for persons with disabilities at this premier academic institution in the Caribbean.

In chapter seven, Bephyer Parey of Trinidad and Tobago presents on the topic 'Promoting Inclusive Education through National Assessments: Required Caribbean Efforts.' The author focuses on efforts to develop an inclusive education system in the Caribbean and places an emphasis on national assessments for students with disabilities. She has made several recommendations germane to establishing an inclusive education in the Caribbean.

In chapter eight, Shauna-Kay McArthur, Tisha Ewen-Smith, and Jessica Scott discuss the topic 'An Inclusive Jamaica for Members of the Deaf Community: A Situational Analysis.' These authors present a strong case for including persons with disabilities in the Jamaican society, primarily in the Jamaican education system. They make some recommendations for action that can contribute to a more inclusive education system for deaf persons.

In chapter nine, Maureen Samms-Vaughan places the spotlight on the topic 'Bridging the Gaps – Towards a National System of Early Years Care and Support.' This chapter is the executive summary excerpted from a comprehensive 2019 study that mapped available services for children affected by Congenital Zika Syndrome (CZS) and other congenital malformations at birth and developmental disorders or disabilities in the early years. It gives a lucid understanding of some of the services available to children with disabilities, and these are foundational to having a strong inclusive education system for persons with disabilities.

Finally, in chapter ten, we conclude with a summation of the major arguments for inclusive education in this monograph. We make recommendations to guide the implementation of an inclusive education system in the Caribbean. Cumulatively, the chapters in this monograph give a luminous outlook of inclusive

education in the Anglophone Caribbean. The chapters suggest that while stakeholders embrace inclusive education in the region, they still need to do more work so that persons with disabilities can enjoy the social and economic transformation to which they aspire in life. Undoubtedly, this contributes richly to the inclusive education dialectics and can contribute to further improvements in the education system within the region if policymakers heed to the recommendations contained herein.

Chapter 1

Inclusive Education: Principle, Policy, and Practice

Sharon A. Anderson-Morgan

Introduction

This chapter examines the principle of inclusive education, the supporting policies, and how these impact inclusive education practices for students with special education needs. The chapter further highlights indicators of inclusive education at various levels of the education system. The chapter concludes that inclusive education is grounded in national and international policy. However, inclusive education is a concept which is contextualized in several ways; this impacts how it is implemented. The chapter, therefore, presents various facets of inclusive education and examines indicators of inclusive education at the national, regional, and local levels of the education system. The chapter concludes that the philosophy of inclusive education is conceptualized in various ways; however, there is a solid policy framework to support its implementation. Inclusive school practices, however, require all levels of the education system to commit to investing in the various inputs and processes to achieve the desired outcome.

Inclusive Education in Principle

Twenty-first-century schools face the challenge of creating inclusive schools (Sabandoa, Puigdellívola, and Torrado 2019). According to W. L. Heward (2010), there is no agreement in

the field of special education about what inclusion means; while some see inclusion as the full-time placement of all students with disabilities in the general education classroom, others use the term to describe any degree of integration into the mainstream general education system. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines inclusion as increasing the capacity of the education system to meet the needs of all learners through adaptations and modifications of content, pedagogy, environment, and systems (UNESCO 2009, 'Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education'). Similarly, the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) describes inclusion as an educational model in which all children and youth with special needs are educated, as far as is possible, in general education classrooms in their community schools, where they are supported by trained professionals (CEC Ethics and Standards 2009). M. Friend and W. Bursuck (2009) concluded that inclusive education is based on the principle that all students with disabilities can be educated in the regular classroom, and where there are challenges in meeting the demands of the general curricular, these demands should be modified. Not only are these students educated in the same classroom and use the same curricula as their peers, but they are also socially integrated as valued members of the learning community.

P. Farrell (2004) conceptualized inclusive education around four themes: presence, acceptance, participation, and achievement. Presence shows the extent to which students attend classes in the general education setting. Acceptance, on the other hand, refers to the extent to which each learner is fully integrated as a member of the classroom and school community. Participation refers to the extent to which all students are involved in the activities of the school, while achievement refers to the extent of students' cognitive and psychosocial development. J. McLeskey and N. L. Waldron (2013), however, concluded that inclusive education is largely a way of thinking or

a philosophy of removing barriers to learning while viewing all learners as valuable members of the learning community. These authors suggested inclusion is achieved by removing barriers to education and delivering high-quality outcomes. This requires schools to adapt inclusive practices that embrace all students as valued members of the learning community.

Human rights principles and policies ground the concept of inclusive education. Inclusive education is therefore both politically and ethically motivated (Hedegaard 2012). From a political perspective, inclusion has become a policy priority of several countries as a response to the Salamanca Declaration which they have signed. On the other hand, from an ethical point of view, inclusive education is a human right (Mentz and Barrett 2011). As stated in the Salamanca Declaration of 1994, educational systems should provide programmes within the regular school that will effectively meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Including students with disabilities in the general education system is advantageous for various reasons. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisations (UNESCO), from an educational perspective, inclusion is academically beneficial to all students, with and without disabilities, since all students can benefit from the strategies, materials, and additional personnel in the classroom needed to support the learning needs of students with disabilities. Additionally, there is social merit, since by educating all children together they may develop tolerance and an understanding of individual differences which could bring about a change of attitude toward persons with disabilities in the wider society (Carter and Abawi 2018). Furthermore, inclusion has economic benefits, as it is less costly to educate all students in the same school rather than building separate schools with specialized equipment for students with special needs (UNESCO 2009).

Inclusive Education Policy

There are several policies and conventions which provide the framework for inclusive education. One fundamental policy is UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, 1960 (CADE). This convention promotes non-discrimination and asserts that every person has a right to an education. Article 1 of this convention defines discrimination as any distinction, bias, or exclusion of any group which results in inequality in education. The CADE further defined discrimination, inter alia, as being deprived of access to education, limited or inferior access to education, or maintaining separate education institutions for certain groups.

While CADE denounced non-discrimination against all groups, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) is specific to persons with disabilities. Article 24 of the CRPD expounds the obligations of state parties in recognizing and ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities to education. According to the CRPD, educational access should be provided equally as any other member of the society. In realizing this right, a person with a disability should not be excluded from the general education system as a result of having a disability. Further to this, the education system should provide persons with disabilities with reasonable accommodations and necessary support systems that will help them develop their full potential.

Jamaica was among the first countries to have signed and ratified the CRPD. Seven years later, the Jamaican government passed the Disabilities Act 2014. Section 26(1) of the Disabilities Act stipulates that an educational or training institution shall not deny a person with a disability from being enrolled at or from attending an institution, because of their disability. Section 26(2) imposes a duty on institutions to provide the support necessary for a person with a disability to ensure that persons with disabilities have reasonable access to the education or training provided. This includes access to the least restrictive

environment, based on their needs. Additionally, it is the responsibility of the state to ensure that persons with disabilities are not placed at a disadvantage and receive the support required to facilitate all levels of their education.

There is no doubt, locally or internationally, that an intricate legislative framework fully supports inclusive education. The legislation not only supports inclusive education in principle but also establishes the policy guidelines for implementation. This framework is grounded in principles of non-discrimination and access to quality education on an equal basis while being provided the accommodations, support, and general reasonable arrangements to ensure full social and educational development.

Policy to Practice

More than twenty-five years after the Salamanca Declaration, there is still only minimal progress in the practice of inclusive education. The plethora of literature surrounding inclusive education and the various national and international policies have led to what D. Armstrong, A.C. Armstrong and I. Spandagou (2011) described as 'inclusive rhetoric' (31). These researchers have concluded that, in essence, inclusion 'has been reduced mainly to a change of language rather than of practice' (37). Even though these researchers believe that only the language has changed, inclusive education continues to be a goal of countries all over the world (Galmic and Hansen 2012). However, according to J. McKleskey and N.L. Waldron (2006) it was obvious that implementing and sustaining the change has proven far more complicated task than researchers, educators, and policymakers had anticipated.

An examination of the literature, however, provides guidelines which can assist education systems in moving beyond an understanding of the principles and policies of inclusive education to effective implementation. From their review of literature, T. J. Loreman, C. Forlin and U. Sharma (2014) concluded that

there was a desperate need for an internationally accepted set of indicators that will allow stakeholders and evaluate the inclusivity of the education systems in their country or territory and to consistently measure progress towards the goals as set out in the various policies and conventions. D. Mitchell (2015) in proposing possible indicators posited that inclusive education is a multidimensional construct that requires stakeholders – at the national, regional, and local levels of the education system – to attend to critical areas in its implementation. These include vision, placement, curriculum, assessment, teaching, acceptance, access, support, resources, and leadership. According to Mitchell, educators at all levels must be committed to the philosophy of inclusive education which is demonstrated through a commitment to inclusive education which is evident at all levels of the system. This vision should be evident in the legislative and policy documents at all these levels. Secondly, this vision should translate into placing students with special education needs in age-appropriate classes in their community schools and are not being pulled out for additional assistance more frequently than their peers. These students should receive their instructions through the same curriculum as their same-aged peers with accommodations and modifications as is developmentally appropriate.

Mitchell further postulated the need for adapted assessment mechanisms. Students may be provided with accommodations which may include extended time, examination scripts in an accessible format such as Braille or large print. Alternative assessment may also be considered for students unable to participate equitably in this assessment despite being provided with accommodations. Not only should students be provided with adapted assessment methods but teaching methods must also be adapted to include evidence-based strategies inclusive of direct instruction, cognitive strategy instruction, self-regulated learning, and memory strategies.

All the aforementioned facets are only achieved in a culture of

acceptance, access, and support. Like P. Farrell (2004), Mitchell also identified acceptance as a critical facet in inclusive education. Acceptance involves recognizing the rights of students with disabilities and ensuring that all the school and classroom level students are socially and emotionally acknowledged as valuable members of the community. Not only are students accepted, but they must be provided with adequate access and support. Physical access includes but is not limited to ramps and accessible bathrooms. Access includes, inter alia, acoustics, lighting and the design and arrangement of furniture. Additionally, inclusive education requires the provision of appropriate support for teachers, including the support of a team of professionals inclusive of special educators, guidance counsellors, and various professionals and specialists. Education systems should also make available adequate resources – material and personnel – at the classroom level.

Another crucial factor highlighted by Mitchell is leadership; other researchers such as J. McKleskey and Waldron (2015) also highlight this factor. According to Mitchell, educational leaders, inclusive of policymakers, national and regional administrators, boards of governors, and school administrators should demonstrate core values that show commitment to embracing diversity. Educational leaders should consistently and effectively communicate their commitment to inclusive education. At the local level, principals play a critical role in making schools more inclusive. McLeskey and Waldron articulated the view that a strong, active principal is a key factor in establishing and leading an inclusive school. The principal needs to provide the leadership which ensures that teachers share core values regarding inclusion leading to institutional commitment to develop an effective inclusive school.

Loreman, Forlin, and Sharma (2014) examine the various indicators of inclusive education at three levels: micro, meso, and macro. The micro level is the classroom; the meso level is the

school; and the macro level involves the wider education system at the national level. To determine which indicators contribute to or detract from the goal of inclusive education, these researchers further examined these indicators using the input, process and output models. Input refers to all the resources provided to the system to achieve inclusive education; processes are the practices designed to transform the system through the inputs, while outputs are the results of inputs and processes.

Through a review of twenty-eight studies conducted between 2001 and 2013, Loreman, Forlin, and Sharma (2014) identified various themes related to including students with disabilities, which they organized as input, process, or output at the micro, meso, and macro levels. Based on the literature, the input indicators identified in the literature included policy, staff professional development and teacher education, resources, finances, leadership, and curriculum. Process indicators included climate, school practices, classroom practices, collaboration and shared responsibility, supports to individuals, and the role of special schools. Outcome indicators, on the other hand, included participation, student achievement, and post-school outcomes.

Other researchers, such as S. Tetler and K. Baltzer (2011) identified similar key indicators for inclusive education. These researchers organized these indicators as personal indicators and contextual indicators. Personal indicators included learning in school, social relationships, and participation. Contextual indicators were further divided into physical or environmental contextual variables, social context variables, and didactic contextual variables. Physical contextual variables included factors related to the environment; social contextual variables included relationships, communication, participation, and responsibility, while didactic variables included differentiation and a clear structure.

Conclusion

We may consider the philosophy of inclusive education an ideal which is conceptualized in various ways. In the broadest sense, inclusive education provides access and equity for all students by removing barriers to learning for the most vulnerable. Students with disabilities are among the most vulnerable in the school system and possibly the most heterogeneous group. Researchers agree that including students with disabilities is as much a way of thinking as it is a placement option. Therefore, for inclusive education to be realized, children with disabilities should not only be placed in the general classroom but must be fully integrated as members of the school community, in a climate where they are accepted and provided with the necessary support to ensure their full participation and positive student outcomes.

While there is a clear policy framework to support inclusive education for students with disabilities, this will not ensure that inclusion moves beyond physical placement to a way of thinking. Inclusive education for students with disabilities requires the commitment of stakeholders at all levels of the education system, macro, meso, and micro levels. Inclusive policies must be articulated clearly and supported through the various inputs and processes to achieve the desired outcomes. The vision and mission of inclusive education must permeate the educational landscape; stakeholders must also show unwavering commitment to inclusive education so that inclusive classroom practices become the norm.

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Chapter 2

Achieving Inclusion through Passion, Data, and Intervention

Jasmin S. Walkin

Introduction

Undoubtedly, everyone should have a clear understanding of what 'Inclusion' or 'Inclusive Education' is or should be after reading this chapter. But for the purpose of this chapter, I crave your indulgence and ask that you permit me to share these personal perspectives, as an educator and a person with a disability, on the concept.

Inclusion in education is the integration of students with special needs into the general education population, creating the least restrictive environment for all students to strive. Inclusion supports the direction in which the world is evolving; it is the practice where students with disabilities are not isolated or discriminated against but are embraced, and their presence adds value to the education system, their communities, classrooms, and peer groups (Skippings 2018).

If we were to accept this definition, then the next question to consider is: Do we have successful inclusion taking place in the Caribbean, and is it at a rate that affords more children the opportunity to quality access education than those without access?

The topic is personal for me. Being born with a special need, which I have only recently come to know to be a rare form of Cerebral Palsy, I have lived the challenges, disappointments, as well as accommodations and lack thereof associated with inclusive education. I entered primary school in the Turks and Caicos Islands when children with physical disabilities were scorned, segregated, and had exceptionally low expectations set for them. Special needs and much less special education were terms rarely used in the education system.

The neurological disorder and the under-development of my motor skills because of my birth injury, rendered me almost impossible to hold a 12b pencil to write, and this experience was further exacerbated by an inexperienced teacher who had never encountered a student with my type of disability in her classroom. What followed was years of frustration, calls for my segregation to a special needs class (which had no trained teacher or resources), and my mother receiving pressure to accept that I was 'different.' Thankfully, my mother became my first advocate and was adamant that since I, by a miracle, had a fully functioning brain would remain in a mainstream classroom.

That decision by my mother afforded me the opportunity to not only receive a mainstream education but also experience first-hand inclusive education. The focus of this chapter is not simply to deliver another academic soliloquy on inclusive education. Instead, I choose to use this medium to share the challenges and the progress made with inclusive education in my country, and to challenge us to reignite our advocacy for children with disabilities in a region where for far too long the focus on education empowerment has been on the strong and not on the marginalized.

As my topic suggests, it will take passion, data, and evidence-based intervention to achieve inclusion in our schools and in our society. It is not enough for Caribbean countries to include paragraphs from the United Nations Rights of a Child and Rights

of Persons with Disabilities in various education policies; it is not enough to pass or ratify special education policies and papers. More is required.

Where Is Our Passion for People?

It is hard to accept why West Indians behave so intolerant of the marginalized people in our societies when our very history is defined by marginalities. Our fore parents became marginalized when their villages were plummeted and raided by West African slave traders, who subsequently shipped us across the Atlantic to what we now call the West Indies. If the Emancipation Movement taught us any lesson, it should be the impact of compassion and passion for the marginalized on a society. Thankfully, slavery was abolished. Nevertheless, its scars continued to rare its ugly head throughout West Indian history.

Moreover, every period or great problem in our shared heritage was graced with heroes who had a passion for people. During Emancipation, we had William Wilberforce and Thomas Buxton. During the Morant Bay Uprising, there was Paul Bogle, Samuel Sharpe, and William Gordon. Their actions got the attention of Queen Victoria and ushered in a new era of governance in the British Caribbean. Perhaps the challenges we now face with the increasing number of children with disabilities or persons with disabilities in our societies call for similar action. No, not riots and fighting but consistent advocacy that holds stakeholders accountable.

Advocacy that pressures governments in the region to allocate sufficient money to fund education programmes for persons with disabilities in their respective countries. Advocacy which further highlights the need for regional institutions to fund inclusive education programmes. Finally, advocacy which gives parents a voice when they have lost theirs.

'Change Driven by Data'

Gone are the days when we should make decisions on where and how to place a child with a disability/person with a disability within an educational setting without formal diagnosis. Nevertheless, in countries like the Turks and Caicos Islands, where there is little to no qualified professionals specially trained to assess and diagnose children with various developmental and cognitive delays/disabilities, we must rely on experts from overseas. Although my office is grateful for their work and the reports generated, confidentiality laws and the structure of governance prevents the schools from having automatic access to the assessment reports. Without these reports, it is difficult for special education teachers to plan for the students, develop individualized education plans (IEPs), plan for accommodations, or effectively assimilate students with disabilities into general education classrooms.

Additionally, it is imperative to understand the difference between a school-identified special need and a clinical diagnosis. According to Peg Rosen (2020), schools may use official policies and classification to determine if a child requires special education. Alternately, clinical diagnosis is to understand the cause of symptoms and to guide decisions on treatment and may also provide information to help with the evaluation process at school. Nevertheless, a diagnosis and an identification have a common goal: to get a child the support he or she needs. Hence, developing territories like the Turks and Caicos Islands must continue to pursue opportunities to have screened or at-risk students accurately assessed and diagnosed.

Moreover, countries must tear down the barriers that prevent stakeholders from using data such as diagnostic and assessment reports to meet the needs of children with disabilities. A child's right to an education should also

be supported by local laws which make it mandatory that the medical or clinical reports associated with children, especially those with disabilities, are shared with relevant stakeholders and the professionals that will be responsible for their remediation or intervention.

Another aspect of data crucial to the development of special education in the Caribbean region as well as the promotion of inclusive practices is the collection and sharing of data. During the regional leaders' roundtable at the DISES International Conference in Montego Bay, Jamaica, in June 2019, the lack of available statistics on persons with disabilities in neighbouring countries was discussed at length. If we are going to effectively advocate for improved access to education and services for persons with disabilities within the region, we need to have more information on diagnoses, categories, those receiving remediation, and those still waiting for access to special education classrooms and special needs services. I am referring to data that is measurable, comparable, and reliable. For example, through data, the region could assess/determine the rate of new or existing diagnoses versus their remediation or access to services.

'Intervention: Inclusion in Action'

When we would have raised the advocacy for persons with disabilities in our respective countries and develop a culture of caring and implementing policies and laws to support the advancement of those persons' rights, the question then becomes 'what is next?'

As the focus of this book suggests, we need persons with disabilities to be afforded every possible opportunity to be included in a general education setting. There might be some doubters in the field of education or society who question the benefits of inclusive education. I invite you to consider the following benefits of inclusive education. Firstly, according to Lashaunda Skippings (2018), inclusion in the general education

setting offers benefits for all: teachers, students, families, and communities at large. Within the classroom, teaching approaches that meet the needs of all students are to be used. This ensures that students with disabilities receive instruction that caters to their individual needs and abilities, and students without disabilities benefit from the array of methods and resources used, reinforcing what is taught and offering different strategies in learning that build their ability to be versatile individuals. Secondly, the students in an inclusive education setting also learn to be sensitive to the needs of others. This builds respectful citizens who regard the rights of others and can function in any social setting with people from all walks of life and can build meaningful and lasting friendships.

To achieve successful inclusion, the use of technology, differentiated instruction, collaborative teaching, and peer tutoring are some methods that teachers can use to ensure that the needs of all their students are met. This forces teachers to be active researchers, implementing various learning resources, teaching methods and modes of delivery. Inclusion also forces parents to be dynamic in their child's learning experience and the community and the government to invest in up-to-date teacher training and resources needed so that students are not limited in their learning experience.

The classroom size is also an important factor in developing successful inclusive settings. The larger the class size, the least likely all students' needs will be met but most likely will guarantee teacher burnout and overwork. There is also a vital need for ongoing record keeping of all students in the classroom. The teacher must know the needs of every child and be equipped and ready to meet those needs. Grouping for instruction and the use of teacher aides have proven to be productive in teaching in inclusive settings.

Research has proven that schools that practice inclusion produce students that are exceptional thinkers, resourceful, and

cooperative workers. The opposite is achieved in environments where there is much segregation rather than unity. Ultimately, inclusion benefits the country as it promotes harmony among groups of people working together to achieve common goals. Inclusion yields team players equipped with social and learning skills that will empower their homes, workplaces, communities, and their countries.

On the other hand, ask any teacher their opinion about including students with disabilities in general education classrooms, and you will likely hear views based either firmly in support or staunch opposition. The debate can become even more heated when you talk about including students with more significant disabilities like autism spectrum disorder or down syndrome (Villegas 2019).

However, Tim Villegas (2019) argues that some education professionals may immediately see the academic, social, and emotional benefits that students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers receive when learning in an inclusive classroom. Other educators say that the increasing time that students with disabilities spend in typical classrooms is detrimental to the future of education.

Nevertheless, the implementation of a fully inclusive education model is difficult to accomplish and without the proper support, can be unsuccessful – which is the case in many schools throughout the Caribbean region. When teachers raise objections to the practice of inclusion, it may be because they have seen it fail first-hand. It is also possible that they may have experienced what they thought was 'inclusion' but really was a situation in which educators put students with disabilities and non-disabled students together and hoped for the best. We must ask ourselves, is this the reason for failed inclusion in our schools? Have our governments and other stakeholders done enough to address it?

Where Is the Turks and Caicos Islands in Terms of Inclusive Education?

Section 6.0 of the Turks and Caicos Special Education Policy states:

> The Government of the Turks and Caicos Islands will develop an education system that provides quality education for all students including children and youths with special needs, that ensures an educational and rehabilitation programme which promote access, equity and relevance through the use of creative, holistic, individualized programmes and best practices while fostering ongoing partnership and collaboration with all relevant stakeholders to enable students to live productive and useful lives and work effectively in society.

The sentiments from the above statement reaffirm the policy's commitment to not only educating persons with disabilities but to do so with equity as a focus. Additionally, the Special Education Policy Objectives support inclusion and a commitment from the government to fund special education programmes. Since my appointment as the special needs education officer in August 2017, I was primarily tasked to implement the Special Education Policy and promote inclusive practice. My first step was to meet with the special education teachers, principals, and other department administrators to assess the existing special education programmes in their respective schools. At the end of my assessment, I met with all the special education teachers and developed an inclusive model that supports best practices in Turks and Caicos schools.

Currently, we do not have the human resources and logistical space to practice effective inclusive classrooms. Instead, the goals have been to promote inclusive schools where there are special needs resource rooms and self-contained classrooms. Additionally, we revised the roles of special education teachers. The new roles of the special education teachers will allow them to assist the general education teachers more consistently

and effectively with screening, assessments, and designing individualized learning plans and IEPs. A new job description for special education teachers is now in its final draft stages and was submitted to the Human Resources Directorate for revision and ratification in September 2018.

Moreover, once students have been flagged as requiring special education support or accommodations, special education teachers will work in collaboration with school principals, School Based Assessment Teams, and the Special Education Assessment and Intervention Team (SEAIT) National Steering Committee to meet the educational needs of the students. These are key targets set out in a Special Education Policy Initiative launched in April 2018. Hence, for inclusion to be more effective in the Turks and Caicos Islands, the government must commit to funding the resources needed to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities.

Conclusion

Countries like the Turks and Caicos Islands that have taken a long time to make the education of persons with disabilities a priority often feel accomplished once a policy document has been drafted and adopted. They feel accomplished because they have made provision for the employment for policymakers or some special education teachers. But more is required. When the number of diagnosed children with disabilities/special needs far exceeds the number of children currently having access to special education classrooms or support services, more is required. When parents are left disheartened and hopeless after receiving an initial diagnosis/assessment report because there are no options for their children, more is required.

Inclusive education requires all hands on deck. The institutions in the region responsible for protecting the rights of children with disabilities must continue to pressure relevant stakeholders to create the access and services necessary for persons with

disabilities to have an opportunity to not only be educated but also live successful lives. I believe this book is an opportunity for us to collectively strategize a unified approach to delivering inclusive education across the region to those who need it.

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Chapter 3

Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in the Jamaican Education System

Floyd Morris

Introduction

'Persons with disabilities are more likely to be out of school or to leave school before completing a primary or secondary education' (UNESCO 2017). This statement summarizes the educational situation of persons with disabilities across the world, and it is a perspective that is applicable and relevant to the Jamaican education system.

It is the mantra of the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Jamaica that 'Every child can learn, and every child must learn' (Ministry of Education, Youth and Information 2017). Such a statement is a profound and deep mission for any education system. It captures and gives recognition to the innate ability of every living human being to discover knowledge: A desire that is not confined to 'able-bodied' individuals but also includes persons with disabilities (United Nations 2006). The mission of the MOE is therefore inclusive. But the fundamental question that is being asked is whether the institutional mechanism is inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities? In the context of this chapter, accessibility refers to the ability of persons with disabilities to freely enter and exit all areas of school buildings

and access to modern technologies that will allow them to easily access and share information (MLSS 2014; Rieser 2008). Inclusive education, according to UNESCO is:

> a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners. As an overall principle, it should guide all education policies and practices, starting from the fact that education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just and equal society (UNESCO 2009B, 8).

The Jamaican education system is characterized by different levels. There is the pre-primary level that caters to children zero to six, and these include basic and infant schools. There is the primary level that deals with children six to eleven years, and these include all primary schools. There is the secondary level that caters to children eleven to eighteen years, and at this level, there are the high and technical schools. Then there is the post-secondary level that includes the vocational training and community colleges. Finally, there is the tertiary level that includes the universities.

Included in the Jamaican education system is a range of special education institutions that cater specifically to children with disabilities. These institutions are located in the fourteen parishes of Jamaica (Gooden Monteith 2019). Although there are special education institutions catering to children with disabilities, the regular educational institutions should include persons with disabilities. However, the number of students with disabilities enrolled in regular schools is not having a transformative effect on the population of persons with disabilities. Estimates from the World Report on Persons with Disabilities 2011 suggest that over four hundred and fifty thousand persons with disabilities live in the island (WHO 2011). There are over forty thousand children living with disabilities, but a child find initiative from the Ministry of Education identified just over four thousand children with special needs are enrolled in regular schools in the Jamaican education system (Gooden Monteith 2019).

The low inclusion of children with disabilities in the Jamaican education system is largely attributed to the poor accessibility to the physical buildings and supportive mechanisms such as teachers who are trained to deal with them. The problem is further compounded by the inaccessibility to modern technologies that will allow for children with disabilities to access and share information (Morris and Henderson 2016). When children with disabilities are excluded from the education system, it preserves negative perceptions of persons with disabilities and perpetuates the inter-generational cycle of poverty. Therefore, there is a global thrust towards transforming educational institutions to make them more accessible and inclusive of children with disabilities (United Nations 2006; Rieser 2008).

Rationale for Research Study

The University of the West Indies (UWI) is the premier tertiary educational institution in the Caribbean. It has adopted a progressive policy towards persons with disabilities and has been including this marginalized group in its operations. It has gone as far as outlining a policy on this population. The policy states:

> The University of the West Indies [hereafter UWI] is consciously seeking to facilitate the efforts of persons with disabilities to acquire university education.

> The university's goal is that as far as possible the number of students with disabilities at the institution be increasingly brought in line with the number of disabled persons in the relevant age cohorts in the wider society. It is the aim that no student whose academic qualifications are good enough to qualify for competitive entry be unable to accept a place at the UWI because of a disability. (F&GPC 1995)

Scores of persons with disabilities have been attending UWI since the adoption of this policy. However, the numbers are nowhere it ought to be. For the Academic Year 2018–19, approximately fifty students with disabilities were registered

at UWI with less than ten registering for the first time (Office of Special Students Services 2019). There are over nineteen thousand students enrolled at UWI, Mona, with just over three thousand entering in 2019–20. Expressed as a percentage, the intake of students with disabilities is 0.3 per cent. On an annual basis, approximately forty thousand students graduate from high schools (MOE 2019).

I believe that due to what is taking place at the lower levels of the education system in terms of accessibility and inclusion of children with disabilities, they are unable to matriculate to the tertiary level such as UWI. The UWI has put in place systems to enhance the learning abilities of persons with disabilities, including a special facility that provides academic support for these marginalized individuals. The institution, therefore, can accommodate members of this community, but persons with disabilities have not been able to matriculate to this institution in the required numbers because of what is taking place at the primary and secondary levels of the Jamaican education system in terms of access to the physical buildings, teachers with requisite knowledge of training children with disabilities, and modern technologies with accessible features to accommodate children with disabilities (Thomas 2019). Therefore, research was conducted to determine the extent of accessibility and inclusion in the Jamaican education system for children with disabilities.

Five research objectives guided this study:

1. The accessibility of schools to children with disabilities in Jamaica.
2. The extent to which children with disabilities are included in public schools in Jamaica.
3. To identify what school administrators know about the issue of disabilities.
4. To examine the views of school administrators in Jamaica about including children with disabilities in Jamaican public schools.

5. To ascertain the level of awareness of school administrators of policies and services relating to persons with disabilities in Jamaica.

The Global and Local Landscape Relating to Accessibility and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Education

Education is a fundamental means of empowerment and transformation for individuals within any society (Mandela 1994). This is even more so for children with disabilities. If they are to be included in society and become productive citizens, they must be given the opportunity to learn (Rieser 2008). The environment must therefore ensure that they are accepted and included in the regular school system as education is a right for all (UNESCO 2014).

In 2006, the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The CRPD is the gold standard on accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities. Specifically, the CRPD in articles 8, 9, and 24 adumbrates what are the issues that must be dealt with by state parties to deal with accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Public perception and attitude of teachers towards persons with disabilities do impact on the accessibility and inclusion of children with disabilities to the education system (De Boer et al. 2011). In fact, public perception affects every facet of life of persons with disabilities (Staniland 2011). The public's belief that persons with disabilities should be confined to their homes is why public schools have not been built with the requisite accessible facilities to accommodate members of this marginalized group. For this to change, there must be consistent public awareness campaigns, and one of the best means of doing so is through the public school system where children with disabilities are included with their non-disabled colleagues (Bantekas, Stein, and Anastasiou 2018).

Accessibility is fundamentally important to the education and empowerment of persons with disabilities (Bantekas, Stein, and Anastasiou 2018). Educational institutions must be accessible for persons with disabilities to gain an education and maximize their full potential (WHO/World Bank 2011). From the CRPD it must be noted that accessibility covers a compendium of areas and goes beyond the physical access of buildings. For example, it captures areas such as access to modern technologies and information. There are, however, major gaps between the global standards and the level of accessibility that exists in Jamaican schools (Gooden Monteith 2019; Gayle-Geddes 2015; Anderson 2014). Fundamental to the issue of accessibility to the educational institutions in Jamaica are physical access (Thomas 2019), access to modern technologies for persons with disabilities (Lafayette 2018) and public awareness on issues relating to persons with disabilities. These issues of accessibility must be addressed in any educational institution for persons with disabilities to be included.

It was also useful to look at issues of inclusion of persons with disabilities in the general education system. Consequently, article 24 of the CRPD was examined. This article comprehensively addressed the issues of inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in the general education system. Since the adoption of the CRPD in 2006, there has been a global thrust towards an inclusive education system (Bantekas, Stein, and Anastasiou 2018). Educational institutions must be accessible and inclusive for persons with disabilities to maximize their true potential and become productive citizens.

Educational institutions are major means of socialization (Munroe 2002; Rodriquez 1998). It is here that children interact with each other, and values, attitudes, norms, and perceptions are formed. When children with disabilities are included in the same education institution with non-disabled children, it serves to debunk some negative societal attitudes and stigma that

have been formed for centuries (Anderson 2014). Some of these negative attitudes and stigma portrays persons with disabilities as 'dunces' who cannot perform academically and gives the view that disability is contagious.

Including persons with disabilities in the regular education system carries several advantages:

1. It aids in eradicating the stigma associated with persons with disabilities among non-disabled persons.

2. It teaches children from an early stage to accept people who are different.

3. It demonstrates that persons with disabilities can learn once the requisite facilities are put in place to accommodate them.

4. It promotes a kinder and gentler society.

Obiakor et al. summarized it nicely when they posited that 'inclusion buttresses social justice, human valuing and teamwork' (Obiakor et al. 2013, 477).

It is, therefore, incumbent on any government to ensure that the education system is accessible and inclusive of children with disabilities. No self-respecting government or society should tolerate the isolation or exclusion of any of its citizens from such a vital service such as education. To do so is to relegate them to a life of perpetual poverty.

Scholars also suspect that the cause for the high levels of poverty among persons with disabilities in Jamaica is the low levels of accessibility and inclusion in the education system (Gayle-Geddes 2015; Anderson 2014). When educational institutions are not accessible to persons with disabilities, it contributes to them not being able to secure gainful employment and to purchase certain necessities such as computers that would contribute to their personal empowerment. Data from a survey on broadband and internet access in the Caribbean by Hopeton Dunn, indicated that only a mere 5 per cent of respondents who had a disability were employed and only 4 per cent of

those who indicated that they had a disability had access to the Internet (Dunn 2011). Whilst the information on this cohort of Jamaicans is limited, the information garnered from the survey is confirming experiences among members of this community that points to the high levels of poverty as reflected in a 2015 socio-economic study among respondents who were strictly persons with disabilities. The study revealed that 91 per cent of respondents were unemployed (MLSS 2015).

These local figures are in keeping with global trends in developing countries. According to the World Bank, unemployment among persons with disabilities in developing countries is approximately 85 per cent (World Bank 2016). Conversely, in developed countries employment among the population of persons with disabilities is as high as 48 per cent (WHO/World Bank 2011). In these jurisdictions, major efforts are being made for education to be accessible and inclusive of persons with disabilities (Hasan et al. 2017). There is an established relationship between employment and education and poverty. It is education that prepares an individual for gainful employment, thus providing the individual with an opportunity to avoid poverty (ECLAC 2017).

It is troubling circumstances such as these that prompted the United Nations, through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to confront the situation of education, unemployment, and poverty among this marginalized population (United Nations 2015). The SDG has education for persons with disabilities as one of its major targets to be achieved by 2030. However, it must be done in a systematic and strategic way.

Scientific data on accessibility and inclusion in the education system is woefully lacking in Jamaica (ECLAC 2017). This situation must change for the country to realize the objectives of the CRPD and the SDGs. For credible policies to be formulated and effective programmes developed to transform and empower persons with disabilities, scientific analysis must be brought to

the fore. The research study was therefore designed with the use of the above-mentioned literature, to measure accessibility and inclusivity of the Jamaican education system to persons with disabilities.

Methodology

The following was the methodological approach for the research:

> In developing the research project, the provisions of the CRPD were used as an axiological guide to the study. Specifically, articles 8, 9, and 24 that deal with the issues of accessibility and inclusive education were examined. Clear guidelines and obligations are documented within these provisions for state parties to implement to have an accessible and inclusive education system. Once a country signs and ratifies the CRPD, it is obligated to implement the provisions. Jamaica has signed and ratified this international treaty and is duty bound to abide by it.

To execute the research project, a survey was conducted among one hundred government schools across the island. A survey was chosen because there is the need to get a quantitative indication as to the extent of accessibility and inclusion of children with disabilities in the public schools across Jamaica.

The schools were randomly selected from the Ministry of Education (MOE)'s Directory of Schools. This directory has a listing of all the schools in Jamaica (998) and their locations. Cumulatively, there are over five hundred thousand children attending these public primary and secondary schools. Based on public policy, all children should attend these institutions, and these should include children with disabilities.

The schools were randomly selected and done in such a way that it captured a mix of rural and urban schools. This enabled the researcher to collect data from all fourteen parishes in the island and to give greater generalizability and credibility to the findings.

A questionnaire captured information on accessibility, inclusion, and awareness of children with disabilities in the Jamaican education system. The variables highlighted in the questionnaire were quintessential for the development of an education system responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities. These variables were generated from the CRPD and other global and local literature about accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities in education. As such, questions relating to access to the physical buildings, availability of modern technologies for persons with disabilities, trained teachers to deal with persons with disabilities, inclusion of children with disabilities in extra-curricular activities, perception of school administrators towards including children with disabilities in public schools, and the awareness of support services for persons with disabilities were included.

Eighty-four schools (forty-one primary and forty-three high) completed and returned the questionnaire, making it an 84 per cent response from the schools. This level of responsiveness to a survey of this nature is acceptable by international standards as seen in the 2015 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (Martin et al. 2015).

In conducting the survey, there was stakeholders' support. The Combine Disabilities Association (CDA) was contacted for their endorsement. Upon completing the design of the questionnaire and the stakeholder support, the questionnaires were distributed to the different educational institutions that were selected to participate in the study. The questionnaires were sent to the principals of the educational institutions for completion. This had to be done because the principals have ultimate responsibility for the schools, and it was important to get an individual who could account for the questionnaire.

In analysing the data, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized. This gives a truly scientific analysis of the data and made it much easier for the writing of the report.

Upon completing the analysis of the data, I embarked on the writing of the report; the findings of which are now being published in this chapter for public consumption. The facts as extracted from the questionnaire are clearly stated.

Main Findings

Education is an established right for all in Jamaica.

As it relates to education is an established right for all in Jamaica, 86.9 per cent of the respondents strongly agree, while approximately 11.9 per cent agree, and 1.2 per cent disagree.

Table 3.1:   Education is an Established Right for All in Jamaica

Answer	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Strongly agree	73	86.9	86.9	86.9
Agree	10	11.9	11.9	98.8
Disagree	1	1.2	1.2	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

Education should be inclusive and accessible to all in Jamaica.

As it relates to this statement, 85.7 per cent of the respondents strongly agree, while approximately 13.1 per cent agree, and 1.2 per cent of the respondents were undecided.

Table 3.2:   Education Should Be Inclusive and Accessible to All in Jamaica

Answer	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Strongly agree	72	85.7	85.7	85.7
Agree	11	13.1	13.1	98.8
Undecided	1	1.2	1.2	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

Has your school, in the past or present, registered a student with disability?

In total, 63.1 per cent of the respondents have registered a student with disability in the past or present, while approximately 25 per cent have not registered a student with disability in the past or present, and 11.9 per cent did not respond to the question.

Table 3.3:   **Has your school, in the past or present, registered a student with disability?**

Answer	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Yes	53	63.1	63.1	63.1
No	21	25.0	25.0	88.1
99.00	10	11.9	11.9	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

Is your school equipped with ramps to accommodate students with physical disabilities?

A total of 70.2 per cent of the respondents' schools have not been equipped with ramps to accommodate students with physical disabilities, while approximately 23.8 per cent of the respondents' schools have been equipped with ramps to accommodate students with physical disabilities; 6 per cent did not respond to the question.

Table 3.4:   **Is your school equipped with ramps to accommodate students with physical disabilities?**

Answer	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Yes	20	23.8	23.8	23.8
No	59	70.2	70.2	94.0
99.00	5	6.0	6.0	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

Are bathroom facilities at your school designed to accommodate children with physical disabilities?

Approximately 83.3 per cent of the respondents' schools do not have the proper bathroom facilities at their school designed to accommodate students with physical disabilities, while 10.7 per cent of the respondents' schools have the proper bathroom facilities at their school designed to accommodate students with physical disabilities, and 6 per cent did not respond to the question.

Table 3.5: **Are bathroom facilities at your school designed to accommodate children with physical disabilities?**

Answer	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Yes	9	10.7	10.7	10.7
No	70	83.3	83.3	94.0
99.00	5	6.0	6.0	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

Is your school equipped with adaptive technologies such as Job Access with Speech (JAWS) to accommodate students with visual impairment?

Approximately 96.4 per cent of the schools are not equipped with adaptive technologies such as JAWS to accommodate students with visual impairment, while 2.4 per cent of the schools are equipped with adaptive technologies such as JAWS to accommodate students with visual impairment, and the remaining 1.2 per cent did not respond.

Table 3.6: Is your school equipped with adaptive technologies such as Job Access with Speech (JAWS) to accommodate students with visual impairment?

Answer	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Yes	2	2.4	2.4	2.4
No	81	96.4	96.4	98.8
99.00	1	1.2	1.2	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

Are there any members of staff who is trained with the skill of sign language?

In total, 48.8 per cent of schools have members of staff who are trained with the skill of sign language, while 44 per cent of schools do not have members of staff who are trained with the skill of sign language, and 7.1 per cent did not respond to the question.

Table 3.7: Are there any members of staff who is trained with the skill of sign language?

Answer	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Yes	41	48.8	48.8	48.8
No	37	44.0	44.0	92.9
99.00	6	7.1	7.1	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

Are students with disabilities provided with reading and examination materials in an accessible format such as Braille in your institution?

Approximately 83.3 per cent of the schools do not provide for students with disabilities with the reading of examination materials in an accessible format such as Braille in their institution, while approximately 6 per cent of the schools do

not provide for students with disabilities with the reading of examination materials in an accessible format such as Braille in their institution, and 10.7 per cent did not respond.

Table 3.8: Are students with disabilities provided with reading and examination materials in an accessible format such as Braille in your institution?

Answer	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Yes	5	6.0	6.0	6.0
No	70	83.3	83.3	89.3
99.00	9	10.7	10.7	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

Are there any teachers at your school trained to teach children with disabilities?

In total, 27.4 per cent of the respondents said yes that there are teachers at their school trained to teach children with disabilities, while 66.7 per cent of the respondents said no, that there are not any teachers at their school trained to teach children with disabilities, and 6 per cent did not respond.

Table 3.9:   Are there any teachers at your school trained to teach children with disabilities?

Answer	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Yes	23	27.4	27.4	27.4
No	56	66.7	66.7	94.0
99.00	5	6.0	6.0	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

If your answer to the above is yes, how many?

Of the schools that had teachers trained to teach children with disabilities 16.7 per cent had approximately one to two, while 4.8 per cent had a visible three to four trained teachers, 2.4 per cent had a noticeable amount of five to six, and 1.2 per cent had a marginal amount of seven to eight trained teachers to teach children with disabilities.

Table 3.10: If your answer to the above is yes, how many?

Answer	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
1–2	14	16.7	16.7	16.7
3–4	4	4.8	4.8	21.4
5–6	2	2.4	2.4	23.8
7–8	1	1.2	1.2	25.0
99.00	63	75.0	75.0	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

Are teachers at your school exposed to regular training seminars on how to relate to students with disabilities?

In total, 10.7 per cent of teachers are exposed to regular training seminars on how to relate to students with disabilities, while 88.1 per cent of teachers are not exposed to regular training seminars on how to relate to students with disabilities, and 1.2 per cent did not respond.

Table 3.11: Are teachers at your school exposed to regular training seminars on how to relate to students with disabilities?

Answer	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Yes	9	10.7	10.7	10.7
No	74	88.1	88.1	98.8
99.00	1	1.2	1.2	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

Has your school, in the past or present employed a teacher with disability?

In total, 14.3 per cent of the schools assessed have employed a teacher with disability in the past or present while 65.5 per cent of the schools have not employed a teacher with disability in the past or present, and 20.2 per cent did not respond.

Table 3.12: Has your school, in the past or present employed a teacher with disability?

Answer	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Yes	12	14.3	14.3	14.3
No	55	65.5	65.5	79.8
99.00	17	20.2	20.2	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

If yes, how many?

In total, 14.3 per cent of the schools that have employed a teacher with a disability either in the past or present have only employed one to two teachers.

Table 3.13: If yes to question 12, how many?

Answer	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
1–2	12	14.3	14.3	14.3
99.00	72	85.7	85.7	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

Should students with disabilities be allowed to participate in physical education activities at school?

Approximately 36.9 per cent of the respondents strongly agree that students with disabilities should be allowed to participate in physical education at school, while 42.9 per cent agree that students with disabilities should be allowed to participate in physical education, while a noticeable 2.4 per cent strongly disagreed, 15.5 per cent of the respondents were undecided, and 2.4 per cent did not respond.

Table 3.14: Should Students with disabilities should be allowed to participate in physical education activities at school?

Answer	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Strongly agree	31	36.9	36.9	36.9
Agree	36	42.9	42.9	79.8
Strongly disagree	2	2.4	2.4	82.1
Undecided	13	15.5	15.5	97.6
99.00	2	2.4	2.4	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

Should students with disabilities be allowed to participate in all extra-curricular activities?

In total, 42.9 per cent of the schools strongly agree that students with disabilities should be allowed to participate in all extra-curricular activities, 32.1 per cent of the schools agree that students with disabilities should be allowed to participate in all extra-curricular activities, 1.2 per cent of the schools strongly disagree that students with disabilities should be allowed to participate in all extra-curricular activities, 3.6 per cent of the schools disagree that students with disabilities should be allowed to participate in all extra-curricular activities, 16.7 per cent of the schools were undecided that students with disabilities should be allowed to participate in all extra-curricular activities, and 3.6 per cent did not respond.

Table 3.15: Should students with disabilities be allowed to participate in all extra-curricular activities?

Answer	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Strongly agree	36	42.9	42.9	42.9
Agree	27	32.1	32.1	75.0
Strongly disagree	1	1.2	1.2	76.2
Disagree	3	3.6	3.6	79.8
Undecided	14	16.7	16.7	96.4
99.00	3	3.6	3.6	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

Students within the education system should be taught how to relate to persons with disabilities

In total, 84.5 per cent of the schools strongly agree that students within the education system should be taught how to relate to persons with disabilities, while 13.1 per cent of the schools agree that students within the education system should

not be taught how to relate to persons with disabilities, and 2.4 per cent did not respond.

Table 3.16: Students within the education system should be taught how to relate to persons with disabilities.

Answer	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Strongly agree	71	84.5	84.5	84.5
Agree	11	13.1	13.1	97.6
99.00	2	2.4	2.4	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

Are you aware of the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities (JCPD), which is established by the government to provide services to persons with disabilities?

In total, 89.3 per cent of the schools are aware of the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities (JCPD), which is established by the government to provide services to persons with disabilities, while 6 per cent of the schools are not aware of the JCPD, and 4.8 per cent did not respond.

Table 3.17: Are you aware of the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities (JCPD), which is established by the government to provide services to persons with disabilities?

Answer	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Yes	75	89.3	89.3	89.3
No	5	6.0	6.0	95.2
99.00	4	4.8	4.8	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

***Are you aware of the Early Stimulation Program
which has been established by the government
to assist in the early stimulation of children with
disabilities?***

In total, 53.6 per cent of the schools are aware of the Early Stimulation Programme, which has been established by the government to assist in the early stimulation of children with disabilities, while 41.7 per cent of the schools are not aware of the Early Stimulation Programme, and 4.8 per cent did not respond.

**Table 3.18: Are you aware of the Early Stimulation Program
which has been established by the government
to assist in the early stimulation of children with
disabilities?**

Answer	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Yes	45	53.6	53.6	53.6
No	35	41.7	41.7	95.2
99.00	4	4.8	4.8	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

***Are you aware of the Special Education Unit in the
Ministry of Education, which was established to give
support to educational institutions that have children
with disabilities?***

In total, 77.4 per cent of the schools are aware of the Special Education Unit in the Ministry of Education, which was established to give support to educational institutions that have children with disabilities, while 19 per cent are not aware of the Special Education Unit in the Ministry of Education, and 3.6 per cent did not respond.

Table 3.19: **Are you aware of the Special Education Unit in the Ministry of Education, which was established to give support to educational institutions that have children with disabilities?**

Answer	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Yes	65	77.4	77.4	77.4
No	16	19.0	19.0	96.4
99.00	3	3.6	3.6	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

Are you aware of the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities?

In total, 63.1 per cent of schools are aware of the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, while 33.3 per cent of schools are not aware of the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, and 3.6 per cent did not respond.

Table 3.20: Are you aware of the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities?

Answer	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Yes	53	63.1	63.1	63.1
No	28	33.3	33.3	96.4
99.00	3	3.6	3.6	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

Discussion of Results

In table 3.1, the response from respondents corresponds with the high value that Jamaicans place on education. This has been established by scholars such as Steven Rodriquez (1996) and others who have done extensive work on values and attitudes towards institutions of socialization in Jamaica (Munroe 2002;

Stone 1992). Respondents believe that persons with disabilities have the right to education, and this corresponds with the rights articulated in article 24 of the CRPD (United Nations 2006). The government of Jamaica (GOJ) has enacted the Disabilities Act 2014 to reinforce this right (MLSS 2014). However, despite its passage in the Parliament in 2014, its effective date has not been set by the ministry with responsibility for persons with disabilities (Thomas 2019). This is impacting negatively on the fundamental right of persons with disabilities to this vital developmental ingredient of education.

As it relates to table 3.2, the finding indicates that most respondents accept inclusion and access as the way to go for the development of the education system (Gooden Monteith 2019). It further suggests that there is a great acceptance of the mantra of the MOE, which states 'Every child can learn, and every child must learn.' As a means of making the public schools in Jamaica accessible and inclusive for children with disabilities, the Ministry of Education has embarked on an initiative to install ramps in schools to accommodate wheelchair users (Morris 2018). This initiative came within the context of a parliamentary resolution that was tabled and debated by the author in the Jamaican Senate in 2018 (Houses of Parliament 2018) and called for one primary and high school in each constituency to be made accessible for children with disabilities. There is a growing recognition that for persons with disabilities to be brought into mainstream Jamaican society, public schools must be made accessible (Gooden Monteith 2019). This accessibility cannot be confined to the physical buildings. It must include access to modern technologies as adumbrated by Lafayette 2018 and the CRPD 2006.

In table 3.3, the high levels of schools that have accepted students with disabilities in the past and present, indicates that administrators in the education system have some understanding of what is meant by the term 'disability.' This is

further corroborated by their response to the questions about the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities (JCPD) in table 3.16 and the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities in table 3.20. Eighty-nine per cent of respondents were aware of the JCPD and 63.1 per cent were aware of the national policy.

Disability covers a wide variety of impairments, such as hearing, physical, mental/intellectual, and visual, and some of these disabilities would be manifested in the schools whether they are in mild or severe forms. The CRPD states that persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (United Nations 2006). The Disabilities Act 2014 has a prescribed definition for 'persons with disabilities,' and this refers to an individual with a long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment which may hinder full and effective participation in society, on an equal basis with others (MLSS 2014). Both definitions treat disability as a long-term impairment and gives a lucid understanding who are to be included. A significant portion of the respondents seems to understand who persons with disabilities are and have been including them in their education institution.

In table 3.4, the finding confirms a view that has been held among the community of persons with disabilities that most schools in Jamaica are indeed inaccessible to children with disabilities. Of the over nine hundred primary and secondary schools in Jamaica, less than two hundred of them had accessible features for children with disabilities (Houses of Parliament 2018). If children with disabilities access public schools at the primary and secondary levels, they will not get the requisite qualification to transition them to the tertiary level. It, therefore, points to a possible reason a vast majority of persons with disabilities are not accessing tertiary education. A lack of basic qualification caused by poor accessibility of public schools has

contributed to them not matriculating for these higher-level educational institutions (Morris 2017).

In table 3.5, the absence of proper bathroom facilities in the schools is a major contributing factor for the exclusion of children with physical disabilities from the general education system. It would be extremely difficult for school administrators to admit children with physical disabilities in such an environment. For schools to have a truly inclusive programme, they must have accessible bathroom facilities to accommodate children with physical disabilities. This is one facility that the government must address in making public schools fully accessible to children with disabilities.

In table 3.6, we see that the absence of the requisite technology at the schools to give support to students with disabilities is another major factor for exclusion. Job Access with Speech (JAWS), for example, is a software that enables a blind person to interact with the computer normally. It allows a blind person to access and/or prepare documents in such a way that would enable teachers, for example, to review the work of a student who is blind. The absence of such technology from the school system would make it extremely difficult for blind students to function effectively. For schools to be genuinely inclusive, governments must ensure that accessible technologies are provided for children with disabilities (United Nations 2006).

Of all the results in the research study, table 3.7 is the most surprising. A high level of schools is indicating that they have members of staff who are equipped with the skill of sign language. A possible reason for this is related to several groups that have been establishing sign language as a means of cultural expressions in social organizations such as the church. This skill, however, might just be considerably basic or at the beginner's level.

If schools are to be inclusive, there must be teachers who are equipped with the skill of sign language to impart knowledge

to students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing (United Nations 2006). Every school in the public education system in Jamaica should have teachers who are equipped with the skill of sign language. In fact, it should be mandatory for sign language to be taught to all teachers at the teacher training colleges so that when they graduate and are in the classroom, they can interact with students who are deaf.

In table 3.9, we see where few educational institutions are providing reading and examination materials in an accessible format for children with disabilities. If schools are not equipped with the necessary technologies to convert reading and examination materials into accessible formats for children with disabilities, then the learning process for them will be compromised. Students must be provided with the opportunity to access reading and examination materials either through braille, sign language, and large print or using an amanuensis (reader-writer). A student who is blind, for example, needs to be given extra-time to complete his or her paper because of the number of actions that are involved in completing the exam. An exam is generally brailed or a reader/writer is provided for a student who is blind. A blind student will be required to read the braille and then type the response in a format accessible to the examiner. Such actions take time and provisions should be made for the student to complete within reasonable time. This is what is regarded as 'reasonable accommodation/arrangement' as articulated in the CRPD and Disabilities Act 2014 in Jamaica (United Nations 2006; MLSS 2014).

The finding in table 3.9 speaks to a major challenge confronting the education system in Jamaica. With most of the schools reporting that they have no member of staff that is trained to deal with students with disabilities, this reflects a major shortcoming in the training programme in the tertiary institutions charged with the responsibility for preparing teachers. This situation must be addressed urgently especially within the context of the

Charter of Rights, which has been adopted by the Jamaican Parliament in 2011 and enshrines the right of every citizen to have a primary education (Houses of Parliament 2011). Children with disabilities are entitled to primary education under the Charter of Rights in Jamaica, and, as such, teachers at the primary level should be trained to deal with these individuals. If there are no teachers at the primary level to teach children with disabilities, then the children would be excluded from public schools, and this would constitute a breach of their constitutional rights. Such a situation will expose the government to legal actions.

In table 3.15 we see that a cumulative 75 per cent of respondents have a positive view towards including children with disabilities in extra-curricular activities in the education system. This is consistent with the views posited by these respondents regarding the general inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular schools and in physical activities.

The public school system is dynamic and has several features inclusive of extra-curricular activities. Extra-curricular activities include sports, drama, swimming, debating, uniform groups, and other such activities. These are designed to broaden the developmental trajectory of students. Students with disabilities should be included in these activities for them to maximize their learning experience. We have seen students with disabilities excelling in extra-curricular activities in the Jamaican education system and move to make a significant contribution to the national landscape (Anderson 2014).

Table 3.16 indicates the response from the schools on the matter of students being taught how to relate to persons with disabilities. An overwhelming majority believed that students should be taught how to relate to persons with disabilities. This is an encouraging development because most school administrators acknowledge that for children with disabilities to be included in the public schools, non-disabled students must be taught how to relate with them. Teaching non-disabled students how to relate

to students with disabilities will undoubtedly help dismantle the negative perceptions and stigma relating to persons with disabilities within the broader Jamaican society (Gayle-Geddes 2015; Anderson 2014; Staniland 2011). It will highlight to the students that persons with disabilities are human beings, and once they are given the opportunity to participate in the public school system, then they can contribute meaningfully to society.

Conclusion

The research study highlighted in this chapter was generated to assess the level of accessibility and inclusion of children with disabilities in the Jamaican education system. It came within the context of experiences at the most prominent tertiary institution in the island, the UWI, where there has been low matriculation of students with disabilities. It was theorized that the low matriculation was due to what was taking place at the primary and secondary levels of the education system in terms of accessibility and inclusion. Thus, the research study was formulated to test these assumptions. Five research objectives guided the study:

1. The accessibility of schools to children with disabilities in Jamaica.

2. The extent to which children with disabilities are included in public schools in Jamaica.

3. To identify what school administrators know about disabilities.

4. To examine the views of school administrators in Jamaica about including children with disabilities in Jamaican public schools.

5. To ascertain the level of awareness of school administrators of policies and services relating to persons with disabilities in Jamaica.

Regarding the objective of the accessibility of public schools in Jamaica, the research has confirmed that most schools are

inaccessible to children with disabilities. This is evidenced by approximately (70 per cent) of schools not having ramps to accommodate wheelchair users and (83 per cent) not having accessible bathrooms. If schools are inaccessible to children with disabilities, they will not be properly accommodated in the regular education system.

The objective of the extent of the inclusiveness of the public schools indicated a reasonable inclusion (63 per cent) of children with disabilities. However, there is extremely poor support systems in the public schools for these students. Take, for example, there is almost no technological support (96 per cent) in the schools to facilitate the inclusion of children with disabilities in the classroom and limited teachers (27 per cent) who have an understanding how to relate to them. These results suggest why students with disabilities are not matriculating in any large numbers at the tertiary level. If they are not being included and given the requisite support at the lower levels of the education system, then they will not acquire the certification that will send them to university.

The research study also tested the knowledge of administrators on the issue of disability. School administrators in the public schools demonstrated a reasonable understanding of the subject of disability. Approximately 63 per cent of them indicated that they have registered children with disabilities in their schools. Furthermore, they also believed (98 per cent) that students with disabilities should be included in the regular education system, and this is a positive development among school administrators. Importantly, school administrators have a reasonable understanding of the institutions that gives support to persons with disabilities in Jamaica and the national policy framework for persons with disabilities. Approximately 89 per cent of them are aware of the JCPD that is the institution with national responsibility for persons with disabilities, and 53 per cent have knowledge of the Early Stimulation Programme that

caters to children zero to six years. Seventy-seven per cent of the school administrators indicated that they have knowledge of the Special Education Unit in the Ministry of Education, and 63 per cent of them are aware of the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities. All of this suggest reasonable awareness of the support services and policy framework that are in place for children with disabilities, but there needs to be ongoing training and public education programmes to strengthen the awareness of all the stakeholders in the public schools.

If the government of Jamaica is to realize the rights of persons with disabilities as prescribed in the CRPD and the Disabilities Act 2014, then greater efforts must be made to make public schools more accessible and inclusive for these individuals. When persons with disabilities are given access to public schools and included in all their operations, the greater will be the possibility of them getting the requisite certification to move into work or to tertiary institutions such as the UWI. Every child can learn, and every child must be given the opportunity to learn. Disability rights is not a 'talk shop'; it is an action-oriented endeavour.

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Chapter 4

Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in the Regular Classroom: Teachers' Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practice in Jamaica

Charmaine Gooden Monteith

Introduction

The problem addressed in this study was that, at a public primary and junior high school in Jamaica, most of the general education teachers lacked the skills and training to offer effectively differentiated instruction to children with special needs in an inclusive classroom setting. The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of a three-day professional-development workshop that included teacher collaboration on teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and practice regarding the placement of struggling students with special needs in an inclusive setting in a public school in Jamaica. The researcher developed, implemented, and tested the professional development workshop.

This study used a single-group, pretest-posttest design to answer the research questions. The participants were thirty-six teachers who work in a primary and junior high school in an urban area of Jamaica, who attended the professional-development workshop and anonymously completed a pretest and a posttest inclusion questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and describe the main features of the

data in the study by calculation of frequencies and a measure of central tendency (i.e., mean) for each questionnaire item. The results of the descriptive analysis were used to conduct the inferential analysis to determine if there was a difference between the participants' responses on the pretest and posttest, and if any differences were statistically significant.

The findings of the study show that the professional development intervention at the target school had a statistically significant positive impact on teachers' perceptions of (a) their knowledge and attitudes regarding best inclusive practices, (b) their ability to adapt instruction, (c) inclusion of students with specific disabilities, and (d) the availability of resources. Implications of the results and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Background

Globally, there is a thrust to promote inclusion of students with special needs in general education classrooms with students who do not have special learning needs (Bhatnagar and Das 2014). Obiakor et al. (2013) posited, 'Inclusion buttresses social justice, human valuing, and teamwork' (477). There is a consensus in the research that teachers are central to the inclusion process (David and Kuyini 2012; De Boer, Pijl, and Minnaert 2011). Therefore, the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion may be a facilitating factor or a barrier to successful inclusive practices (De Boer et al. 2011).

Special Education in Jamaica

Concerned Jamaican parents, educators, other community members, and non-governmental organizations in the early 1950s introduced formal education for children with disabilities in Jamaica, in response to the lack of preparation by the government for these students. The educational units were built to accommodate students with varying disabilities. The

McCam Child Care and Development Centre (2015), the first full inclusion school in Jamaica, was opened in 1986 with a nursery, early childhood centre, and a day care that provided educational services to young children with and without special needs. By 1987, the school enrolled students who had mild to severe disabilities along with their peers without disabilities. The programme became the benchmark for inclusive education in Jamaica.

It was not until 1989 that the government established the Special Education Unit at the Ministry of Education and took over the partnership at that time. The Special Education Unit oversees government-owned, government-aided, and non-government facilities (Jamaica Ministry of Education 2015). Although each parish has one or more special education programmes (Jamaica Ministry of Education 2015), most of the schools for students with special needs are located in Region 1, which comprises the Parishes of Kingston and St Andrew, and St Thomas. The most recent Child Find Count (Gilchrist 2015) showed an enrolment of 4,212 students being served by the Special Education Unit of the Ministry of Education across forty-four sites (Jamaica Ministry of Education 2015).

The reported figures include students with the following: (a) autism, (b) attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, (c) learning disabilities, (d) intellectual disability, (e) multiple disabilities, (f) speech-language disorders, (g) physical disabilities (e.g., blindness or visual impairments and deafness or hearing impairments), and (h) unspecified disabilities. There is one post-secondary vocational training facility serving youths and adults with special needs. Despite the educational provisions at present, the demand for special education services far outweighs the system's ability to provide for the myriad administrative, instructional, corrective, therapeutic, and professional needs.

The special education landscape has seen incremental changes in Jamaica since the taskforce report on educational

reform (Davis 2004) made its recommendations. Prime Minister P.J. Patterson initiated this task force after taking a critical look at the education sector and preparing a plan of action to create a 'world-class system' (Davis 2004, 5). In this report, Davis documented several government recommendations to improve the teaching and learning of students with special needs, including the recommendation for an inclusive setting. According to R. Davis (2004), the task force report outlined concerns about the management of special needs in Jamaica and highlighted some major issues that included the following:

1. Inadequate provision for assessment and proper diagnosis to identify the special needs population, resulting in an inability to plan for and deliver required services.

2. Inadequate provision for placement within the regular school system and special schools, and the provision of support services.

3. Refusal of schools to include children with special needs who can benefit from inclusion in regular school programmes.

4. Inadequate preparation of teachers in training to meet the needs of the special child within the regular classroom setting.

5. Inappropriate teaching methods that do not meet special needs.

6. At-risk students remaining undetected in the system and, therefore, getting little or no appropriate support services and, as a result, having low levels of achievement.

7. Ignorance at all levels of the system regarding the categories of special needs and expectations of those within each category.

After the release of the task force report (Davis 2004), the Education Transformation Team was charged with implementing the task force recommendations, primarily the improvement of behaviour management, numeracy, and literacy (Jamaica Information Service 2010). Then, in 2010, the Education System Transformation Programme, funded by the government of Jamaica, Inter-American Development Bank, and the World Bank, implemented the recommendations of the task force (Jamaica Information Service 2010). The goal of the programme was to create a 'more effective and efficient education service delivery by expanding access, improving teaching and learning, and transforming the governance structure of the education system' (Jamaica Information Service 2010, 2).

The National Education Strategic Plan for 2011–20 (Jamaica Ministry of Education 2012) stated that, although all children should have access to educational opportunities appropriate for their developmental age and stage, this aspiration has not been achieved as 'special needs students are currently underserved in the education system' (11). The plan projected that inclusive education would be promoted and supported through special education policy and programmes integrated into the education system by 2016.

In Jamaica, many students with special needs are not receiving all the educational services that they require. Meredith, co-coordinator of the Ministry of Education Transformation Programme, reported that of the more than twenty thousand general education teachers in Jamaica, only about two hundred were trained in special education (Jamaica Ministry of Education 2013). Furthermore, Meredith has stated that some of these trained educators are not involved in special education but are teaching subjects such as music and physical education (Wilson 2014). Approximately four hundred teachers work in the special education schools in Jamaica, but only 289 are trained in special education. In January 2016, the Ministry of Education advertised

for special education educators and support staff to register with the Ministry. Meredith, who is now the special education project co-ordinator at the Ministry of Education, indicated that there is a great need for qualified personnel to serve the students with special needs (Jamaica Ministry of Education 2016).

Then Minister of Education Ronald Thwaites, reported in his 2014 sectoral contribution, an annual report, that, although more improvements are needed, the following measures have taken place under the guidance of Education System Transformation Programme:

1. A Child Find programme has been conducted to identify special needs students.

2. A special education officer has been assigned to each region to support schools.

3. Diagnostic centres will be created in three of the regions served by the Ministry of Education. The centres are proposed for Sam Sharpe Teachers' College, Church Teachers College, and the College of Agriculture Science and Education.

Ronald Thwaites also announced that two pullout classes will be set up in schools across the island to accommodate students with special needs. Regarding the results of the 2014 Child Find, indicating that there are 7,171 students in primary schools who are at the borderline level of intellectual functioning or the extremely low level of intellectual functioning, Thwaites (2015) asserted, 'The fierce urgency of now requires positive responses, not the helplessness and resignation of the past' (7).

The Jamaica Ministry of Education announced a special education course for teachers in which they will learn strategies for instructing students with special needs (Jamaica Information Service 2011). The course, entitled 'Inclusive Education: Teaching Children with Exceptionalities in Mainstream Classrooms' is being organized under the Education System Transformation

Programme. The thirty special education teachers will be trained as trainers who will then train nine hundred teachers. The Jamaica Information Service (2011) reported that the planned training sessions are 'part of capacity-building and support activities planned to meet the needs of the education system sustainably, following the 2004 Task Force Report on Educational Reform and the 2011 Conference on Special Education' (para. 3).

In addition, Thwaites commented that the ministry is embarking on a rigorous special education programme that may cause a trained special education teacher to serve each Jamaican school (Jamaica Ministry of Education 2016). In January 2016, the Ministry of Education advertised for special educators and support staff to register with them. Meredith, who is now the special education project co-ordinator at the Ministry of Education, showed that Jamaica needs qualified personnel to serve students with special needs (Jamaica Ministry of Education 2016).

Diagnosis of Students with Special Needs

The Mico University College Child Care and Research Education Centre (Mico University College 2013) was the first facility to offer assessment services for Jamaican students with special needs at a reasonable cost. However, this centre has long waiting lists for assessments. One branch of the Mico Centre was opened in Mandeville, but after years of serving that region, the Ministry of Education closed it in 2012, intending to open new centres in other locations. Thwaites (2014) announced that additional centres were to be established at Sam Sharpe Teachers' College, Church Teachers' College, and the College of Agriculture Science and Education. These centres should address the problems of access low-income families experience nationally. The government also encourages psychologists, in their private practice, to diagnose students with special needs.

In Jamaica, there is no early structured screening and intervention programme in place to identify students with

special needs from the early childhood level, and, as a result, many of these students end up in the regular classrooms in primary schools without being diagnosed. S. Anderson (2012) observed, 'The Jamaican teaching-learning situation is woefully unprepared to cater to the needs of these children' (26). Brown-Campbell, a school psychologist, pointed out that the Jamaican education system needs to put in place a cadre of specialists to include school psychologists, speech pathologists, and clinical psychologists. They will be a critical part of the intervention team in the schools to deal with children with special needs and to offer support to the teachers (Riddell 2013).

The Child Find Programme

The purpose of the 2014 Child Find activity, commissioned by the Education System Transformation Programme (Jamaica Ministry of Education 2015), was to identify children with undiagnosed special needs in the general education classroom and enable them to be tested and receive the special services needed. It was reported that 302 primary schools were identified in all six regions of the Ministry of Education, and they were selected based on their performance in the grade four literacy test and on teacher referrals based on observation. There were 7,628 students from grades one to six assessed. The results indicated that 2,590 (34 per cent) of the students tested were at the borderline level of functioning, and 4,575 (60 per cent) of the students tested were functioning at an extremely low intellectual level.

Regarding the current state of the recommendations of the taskforce on education reform, the summary report from Education System Transformation Programme, A. Hastings (2015) stated that, although the students have been identified through the Child Find process, the needed services are not available for all of them. There are also not yet procedures for identifying children with special needs at an early age. Moreover,

the achievement of these recommendations is progressing but not complete:

1. Introduce mandatory training (i.e., coursework) in the nature and needs of the special child, and diagnostic and prescriptive teaching, for all pre-service and in-service teachers.

2. Embark on a public education program for awareness and understanding of special needs.

3. Include special needs students in the regular classroom setting with the appropriate support services and instructional materials for the different groups of learners, including resource rooms when necessary.

Approximately 394 children with special needs were among the 39,129 primary school students who completed the Grade-Six Achievement Test in March 2016 (Student Assessment Unit of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Information 2016). Students received special accommodations, such as prompters, extra time, scribes, readers, preferential seating, and large print for those with visual problems (Lewis 2016).

The literature highlights some major challenges in implementing inclusive education. For example, M. Warnock (2010) pointed out, 'Inclusion is not a matter of where you are geographically, but where you feel you belong' (34). Regarding challenges such as those discussed by Warnock previously, D. E. DeMatthews, and H. Mawhinney (2013) argued that there is not a definition of inclusion that is accepted by all stakeholders. For example, Ainscow et al. (2006) developed these ways of considering inclusion:

1. Inclusion as a concern with students with disabilities and others categorized as having special educational needs.

2. Inclusion as a response to disciplinary exclusion.

3. Inclusion in relation to all groups seen as being vulnerable to exclusion.

4. Inclusion as developing the school for all; Inclusion as 'Education for All.'

5. Inclusion as a principled approach to education and society.

The Research Problem

The problem addressed in this study was that, at a public primary and junior high school in central Jamaica, the majority of the general education teachers lacked the skills and training to effectively offer differentiated instruction to children with special needs in an inclusive classroom setting. The evidence to support the existence of the problem was based on anecdotal reports from teachers and administrators, as well as research conducted in all Jamaican schools that indicate this problem is not limited to the target school but exists in most Jamaican schools (Hunter-Johnson, Newton, and Cambridge-Johnson 2014; Morris 2011).

Morris (2011) surveyed principals in eighty-four Jamaican primary and high schools. The results of the questionnaires showed that, in 66.7 per cent of the schools, there were no teachers to teach students with special needs, and 88.1 per cent of teachers did not have access to training regarding how to effectively relate to students with disabilities. Moreover, the principals in 33.3 per cent of schools indicated that educators in the school are not aware of the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, which was adopted in 2000 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

Background and Justification.

One of the challenges facing the Jamaican education system is funding, and this has caused many of the initiatives slated to improve the education sector to remain unimplemented.

For example, many of the recommendations made by Bergsma in 2000 are still not implemented. At that time, Bergsma, a consultant to the government of Jamaica, observed that the government should provide the resources to make inclusion successful.

Jamaica has been a signatory to many treaties and international conventions, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations 1989) and the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy, and Practice in Special Needs (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization 1994). Despite Jamaica's agreement with the Salamanca statement, progress in providing services for all students has been slow. The Salamanca statement called on governments globally to include students with special needs in regular classrooms.

The Planning and Development Division of the Ministry of Education (2008) suggested the statement 'every child can learn, and every child must learn' (12) was the philosophy guiding the educational changes that were suggested by the taskforce on educational reform (Davis 2004), and the statement has been used regularly on the Ministry of Education website and in documents since that time (Government of Jamaica 2015). K. Mentz and S. Barrett (2011) argued that, although there are many policies documented about inclusion and special education, access to quality education in Jamaican schools for students with disabilities is negatively impacted by the overcrowded classrooms and lack of resources. They further postulated that strong leadership is required to drive the process of successful inclusion and recommended that the government should make teacher training a priority to improve the quality of teaching and learning for all.

Deficiencies in the Evidence

Researchers have argued that further research is needed regarding the relationship between inclusion and professional development for teachers and teacher attitudes toward inclusion

(Avramidis and Kalyva 2007; Boyle, Topping, and Jindal-Snape 2013; Pasha 2012). S. Blackman, D. Conrad, and L. Brown (2012) underscored the view that teachers' attitudes are a 'decisive factor to determining the success of inclusive education programmes and the philosophy of inclusion' (3). They suggested that, because teachers believe that they are not adequately prepared to include special needs students, teacher training in the Caribbean region should be re-examined. Blackman Conrad and Brown also recommended that investigators explore the factors that account for variability in teacher attitudes toward integration in the Caribbean. Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013) agreed and recommended that all teachers should receive training in special education. In addition, B. Bull and B. Buechler (1997) and E. O'Gorman and S. Drudy (2010) maintained that research is needed to specifically determine if professional development can be effective in changing teachers' attitudes and practice regarding the inclusion in general education classes of students with special needs.

K. B. Flannery, A. Lombardi, and M. M. Kato (2015) suggested that teachers with no prior experience in teaching students with disabilities should be especially targeted and that the programmes should incorporate inclusive pedagogies and the role of inclusion through professional development. In addition, Anderson (2012) strongly advocated for Jamaican teachers to gain the teaching skills necessary to serve students with emotional and behavioural disorders because these students are usually misunderstood by the educational system.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of a three-day professional-development workshop on inclusive education that included teacher collaboration on teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and practice regarding the placement of struggling students with special needs in an inclusive setting

in a public school in Jamaica. The researcher developed, implemented, and evaluated the professional-development activities.

Research Questions

The following research questions were established to guide and give answers to the study:

1. What is the impact of the three-day inclusion professional-development workshop on teachers' knowledge of best inclusive practices?

2. What is the impact of the three-day inclusion professional-development workshop on teachers' attitudes regarding best inclusive practices and their perceptions of their ability to adapt instruction?

3. What is the impact of the three-day inclusion professional-development workshop on teachers' perceptions of the availability of resources and support in the classroom and the collaboration of special education general education teachers?

4. Is there a statistically significant difference in teachers' attitudes regarding best inclusive practices and their perceptions of their ability to adapt instruction, after the three-day professional-development workshop, based on gender or grade level (i.e., primary or junior high)?

The Setting

The research setting is a large government-owned, coeducational primary and junior high school in an urban area of Jamaica. The school population has the capacity for nine hundred students, but in 2015, had 1,209 students enrolled in grades one to nine, as well as fifty-six teachers and fourteen support staff. The pupil-to-teacher ratio is twenty-two students to one teacher.

Theoretical Framework

The current study was grounded in the social cognitive theory, developed by A. Bandura (1977, 1986, and 1989), which is a causation theory to explain the development of human behaviour. Bandura (1997) proposed that changes in behaviour are influenced by personal factors (i.e., affect, cognition, and biological events), environmental factors (i.e., physical and social), and behavioural factors that influence each other. For example, individuals can influence the environment and their own behaviour purposefully (Bandura 2001). Moreover, Bandura (1989) stated, 'Human expectations, beliefs, emotional bents and cognitive competencies are developed and modified by social influences that convey information and activate emotional reactions through modelling, instruction and social persuasion' (3). In this theory, individuals are viewed as being able to be self-reflective, self-regulating, self-organizing (Bandura 1986; 1994).

For this study, the construct of interest within the social cognitive theory (Bandura 1977, 1986, 1989) is the concept of self-efficacy, as first developed in 1977 by Bandura, who later defined self-efficacy beliefs as 'people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances' (Bandura 1986, 391). Bandura (1997) argued that individual affective feelings, degree of motivation, and behaviour are influenced more by their self-beliefs than they are by facts. Therefore, a person's perception of his or her own efficacy can influence how he or she uses the skills and knowledge they possess (Pajares 2002). Bandura (1977, 1986) maintained that the sources that influence the formation of self-efficacy are master performance experiences, which may enhance or lower self-efficacy. Vicarious experiences gained by overseeing others, social persuasion by others, and physiological states related to such factors as emotions and moods.

Researchers (Hofman and Kilimo 2014; Savolainen et al. 2012; Weisel and Dror 2006) have shown that teachers' self-efficacy for

inclusive practice affects their attitudes regarding inclusion, and both teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy are central concerns of the current research. In addition, research studies have indicated that teachers' attitudes regarding inclusion determine whether students with special needs are effectively included in the general education classrooms (De Boer et al. 2011; Jerlinder, Danermark, and Gill 2010; Sharma et al. 2008). T. Loreman (2015) explained that research 'shows that teachers with high levels of self-efficacy for inclusive practice have improved attitudes toward inclusion, higher levels of persistence with students who require extra help and tend toward more effective teaching strategies' (para. 2). Loreman's research summary is consistent with Bandura's (1977) assessment of the importance of teacher self-efficacy beliefs.

Methodology

Research Design

This study used a single-group, pretest-posttest design, which is also referred to as a within-subjects design. C. L. Heffner (2014) stated that a within-subjects design is one in which the researcher conducts 'pretests and posttests within the same group of subjects, that is, one which uses no control group' (345). This is considered a pre-experimental design because, although it uses a scientific method like experimental and quasi-experimental designs, it does not use a control group (Heffner 2014). The within-subjects, pretest-posttest design involved measuring the dependent variable of professional development by having participants complete a pretest, implementing the intervention, and then having participants complete a posttest to determine changes in the dependent variable of teacher perceptions. This is the process described by M. D. Gall, J. P. Gall, and W. R. Borg (2014). Using the within-subjects quantitative design, a survey was used to gain teachers' perceptions of the inclusion model.

Participants

The participants in this study were thirty-six teachers who work in a primary and junior high school in an urban area of Jamaica, who attended the three-day professional-development workshop and anonymously completed a pretest and a posttest inclusion questionnaire. The sample was based on convenience sampling. J. W. Creswell (2012) stated, 'In convenience sampling, the researcher selects participants because they are willing and available to be studied' (145). Convenience sampling is a type of nonprobability sampling (Creswell 2012). Nonprobability sampling is a technique that does not allow equal opportunities to all the individuals in the population selected, so the sample is not random. Convenience sampling involves using participants who are easily accessed by the researcher.

Instrument

A questionnaire was used to gather data to answer the research questions. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2014) suggested that questionnaires are often used by researchers because they take less time than face-to-face interviews, can be administered inexpensively, and data analysis is convenient. An inclusion questionnaire (see Appendix A) developed by F. K. Luseno (2001) was used to gather data related to teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and practice regarding inclusion before and after the professional development workshop. Permission was granted from the developer to use this instrument. The questionnaire was adapted slightly by placing the demographic data at the beginning of the questionnaire to comply with the Jamaican cultural norms of completing questionnaires.

The demographic profile was part one of the questionnaire. Part two of the questionnaire had four main sections related to the participants' attitudes toward (a) inclusion (Items 1 through 15), (b) perceptions of their ability to adapt instruction (Items 16 through 19), (c) perceptions of the availability of resources

and support in the classroom (Items 20 through 28), and (d) knowledge about working in an inclusive setting (Items 29 through 35). On the thirty-five closed-ended items in part two, teachers were required to respond to the items on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from *disagree* to *agree* that also allowed teachers to indicate that the item was not applicable to them.

Part three of the questionnaire comprised six items related to the frequency of collaboration between special education and general education teachers. Teachers were asked to indicate if specific collaborative activities occur *daily, weekly, monthly,* or *never*. Again, teachers could indicate that the item is not applicable to them.

Results

Looking Ahead: Implications for Policy and Practice

Research Question One. What is the impact of the inclusion professional-development workshop on teachers' knowledge of best inclusive practices and their perceptions of their ability to adapt instruction? A significantly greater percentage of respondents on the posttest than on the pretest indicated that they would know some techniques to redirect the students' behaviour (96 per cent), behaviour-management strategies needed for controlling student's classroom behaviour (89 per cent), and ways to help all their students find appropriate ways to deal with their feelings (100 per cent). However, there was no significant change in teachers' knowledge regarding characteristics of students with disabilities (70 per cent), special education laws (36 per cent), or collaborative strategies needed for working with other colleagues in inclusive classrooms (56 per cent). There was also no significant change in the percentage of teachers participating in IEP meetings (39 per cent), but this would not be expected based on the short time between the pretest and posttest.

Despite the differences in the significant changes from the pretest to posttest, regarding teachers' perceptions of their ability to adapt instruction, on the posttest, a significantly larger percentage of the respondents on the posttest than on the pretest agreed that they could assess whether assignments are appropriate for students' ability (93 per cent). However, although a larger percentage of the respondents on the posttest than on the pretest indicated they had the ability to adapt instruction in these two areas, the percentages remained low: how to increase student retention (64 per cent) and make instructional adaptations (50 per cent). Despite the variation in the significant changes from the pretest to posttest, a *t*-test for significant differences indicated overall more teachers on the posttest than on the pretest indicated that they perceived that they had knowledge about best inclusive practices. More teachers also had greater self-efficacy regarding their ability to adapt instruction.

Research Question Two. What is the impact of the inclusion professional-development workshop on teachers' attitudes regarding best inclusive practices and inclusion of students with specific disabilities? Although, on the posttest, a significantly larger percentage of the respondents than on the pretest agreed that most students with disabilities, regardless of the level of their disability, can be educated in the regular classroom, the percentage of teachers believing this remained low at 48 per cent. Moreover, there were many respondents (59 per cent) who continued to believe that educating students with disabilities in the regular classroom disrupts other students.

However, a significantly smaller percentage of the respondents than on the pretest agreed that many students with disabilities lack the skills needed to master the regular classroom course content. Although teachers' willingness to make instructional adaptions (96 per cent) and their belief that inclusion is a desirable practice (86 per cent) did not change after the professional-development sessions, the percentage of teachers

agreeing with these statements remained high. In addition, a minority of respondents continued to believe that all students should be held to similar standards.

Regarding respondents' perceptions of inclusion of students with specific disabilities, after the professional development workshop, more respondents agreed that students with learning disabilities, behavioural disorders, communication disorders, health impairments, and multiple disabilities could be educated in the regular classroom. However, only 59 per cent believed that students with learning disabilities could be included in the general classroom, and only 21 per cent believed that students with multiple disabilities could be included in the general classroom. Also, less than one-third of teachers believed that students with hearing impairments, visual impairments, or mental impairment could learn in the general classroom. Again, despite the variations in the results, a *t*-test showed that, overall, the responses on the posttest were significantly more positive than on the pretest regarding teacher attitudes concerning best inclusive practices and inclusion of students with specific disabilities.

Research Question Three. What is the impact of the inclusion professional-development workshop on teachers' perceptions of the availability of resources and the collaboration of special education and general education teachers? Significantly more teachers on the pretest (61 per cent) than on the posttest (41 per cent) said that they know various teaching strategies for helping students with disabilities master new concepts. This was a surprising result because a part of the professional-development programme was intended to give teachers some new teaching strategies. A possibility is that the programme made teachers more aware of their learning needs.

Among the other five items for which there was a significant difference between the pretest and the posttest, there was none of the listed resources that more than 30 per cent of the teachers

showed were available. Therefore, although the t-test showed there was an overall statistically significant positive difference indicated on the posttest, there is still much work to be done to provide teachers with (a) a special educator for the classroom when needed, (b) appropriate instructional material needed for educating students with disabilities, (c) a special education teacher's aide in the classrooms when needed, (d) parent support, (e) principal support, (f) smaller class sizes, (g) time to attend meetings about students with disabilities, and (h) time to educate students with disabilities in the regular classroom.

Teachers in their responses to the questionnaire item reiterated the items on this list of needs requesting that they list the areas of need that they have in working with students with disabilities in the regular classroom. The primary need listed by all teachers on the posttest was for physical and human resources, including more technological equipment, greater support from other teachers, more instructional materials, a structured curriculum, ramps for wheelchairs, and time for one-on-one instruction. In the comments section, a teacher stated, 'The current classroom and instructional setup are not suitable to facilitate inclusion of students in the regular classroom setting.' Another teacher wrote, 'While I am willing to cater to students with disabilities, I would like to receive more in-depth training to do so effectively.' A teacher willing to persevere despite the obstacles commented, 'I think it is important for this to be done. It is extremely difficult, but I am willing to try my best to get it done.'

In addition, the teachers repeated their need for additional human support in their responses to the questionnaire item requesting them to list the support that they receive in working with students with disabilities in the regular classroom. Thirty-one per cent reported that they receive support from the guidance and counselling unit in their school, and 13 per cent indicated that they get help from the Ministry of Education.

Other sources of support noted by individual teachers were the Child Development Agency, parental support and sponsorship, and Internet research. Another 25 per cent of teachers declared that they had received no form of support for their work with students with disabilities in the regular classroom.

The only statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the teachers regarding the special and general education teachers working collaboratively before and after the inclusion professional development workshop was that, on the pretest, more teachers than on the posttest indicated that the special education and general education teachers collaborated when conducting joint parent conferences. This does not explain why there was this difference. Otherwise, findings showed that the posttest was not significantly different from the pretest for the teachers' perceptions of the teachers regarding whether the special and general education teachers work collaboratively. Again, this is not unusual because of the short time frame between the pretest and the posttest.

Also, there was strong support from teachers that general education and special education teachers collaborate on developing instructional plans (86 per cent), exchange student progress information (82 per cent) and share information on effective teaching strategies (82 per cent). The results do not seem to match the teachers' stated need for more human support, but it is possible that the teachers want more in-class support. On the posttest, only 64 per cent of the teachers indicated that special and general education teachers' team teach in the regular classroom, and only 69 per cent indicated that they help each other regarding students with disabilities. Results of the t-test conducted to compare the overall pretest and posttest results related to collaboration between the general education and special education teachers indicated that there was not a statistical difference, t (10) = 0.9237, p = 0.3774.

Research Question Four. Is there a statistically significant difference in teachers' attitudes regarding inclusion after the professional-development workshop based on gender or grade level (i.e., primary or junior high)? Regarding gender differences, the sole significant difference in the attitudes of female and male teachers is the belief that most students with disabilities, regardless of the level of their disability, can be educated in the regular classroom. There was a larger percentage of male teachers (50 per cent) than female teachers (20 per cent) who supported this belief. As confirmed by a *t*-test, there was no difference in the overall attitudes of female and male teachers regarding best inclusive practices.

Discussion

The research finding relating to question one is supported by O'Gorman and Drudy (2010), who found that professional-development sessions were effective in increasing teachers' knowledge of best inclusive practices on the posttest for the nineteen regular education teachers surveyed. The teachers also believed they were able to successfully adapt the curriculum to the benefit of all learners. Santoli et al. (2008) also found that fifty-six teachers surveyed indicated that they could adjust assignments to meet the students' needs (87.5 per cent), could make instructional adaptations for students with disabilities (78 per cent), and knew collaborative strategies for working with colleagues (67.9 per cent). Similarly, when Forlin, Loreman, and Sharma (2014) conducted a system-wide study with 2,361 teachers who participated in training in inclusive education, teaching efficacy improved after the training. Moreover, the survey results from Cameron's (2014) study indicated that general education teachers who perceived that they had less knowledge of best inclusive practices also believed that they had fewer abilities to adapt instruction for students with disabilities.

The results relating to question two are perhaps not surprising given the A. De Boer, S. J. Pijl, and A. Minnaert (2011) review of twenty-six studies that found that training was an important factor contributing to teachers' attitudes about inclusive education. The results in the current study regarding teacher attitudes are consistent with those of J. Kraska and C. Boyle (2014), who conducted a study to determine the attitudes of 465 preschool and primary school preservice teachers toward inclusive education. The researchers found the teachers who had studied a module on inclusive education had more positive attitudes regarding inclusive education than those who had not. Similarly, L. Wogamon (2013), who carried out a correlational study with 245 high school general education teachers who taught students with special needs, found that there was a correlation between the teachers' attitudes about inclusion and the hours they participated in professional development and received support. However, the results of the study by T. Wilkins and J. L. Nietfield (2004), who conducted a study to examine the effect of a schoolwide training workshop on twenty-seven teachers' attitudes toward inclusion, are not supportive of the current study. The results showed that there was no difference in the attitudes regarding inclusion between the teachers who participated in the training project and those sixty-two teachers who did not.

Regarding types of student disabilities, T. A. Alquarani (2012) found that teachers were more negative in their perceptions toward students with severe intellectual disabilities being included in the regular classroom setting; however, they were more accepting of students with mild intellectual disabilities. This concurs with the findings of the current research. Also, consistent with the current study results are the findings of D. Male (2011), who indicated that, after a ten-week module on inclusion, participants had more positive views toward students with physical or sensory issues, social issues, and academic issues than students with emotional and behavioural

difficulties. Similarly, Forlin, Loreman, and Sharma (2014), in a previously cited study that involved 2,361 teachers, found that, after participating in professional learning, the teachers had significantly more positive attitudes regarding the inclusion of students with diverse learning needs.

The results of question three support the often-cited Santoli et al. (2008) study of fifty-six middle school educators who also reported that they did not have time to collaborate with colleagues for support, to attend meetings about their special needs students, or to teach them in the regular classroom. The current study's findings regarding the teachers' stated needs are also like some of those expressed years ago in the study conducted by F. K. Luseno (2001), the author of the questionnaire used in the current study. At that time, 71 per cent of general education teachers indicated that they needed further training in inclusion, and the same percentage stated that they needed support, such as instructional resources and resource personnel. Like the teachers in the current study, the teachers in the Luseno study also requested smaller class sizes.

Another study with similar results regarding teachers' needs is the study by Forlin, Loreman, and Shrama (2014), who found that after participating in professional learning the 2,361 participants' concerns regarding inclusion were reduced. The authors suggested that professional learning had 'a small but positive impact' (255). However, the teachers still had some concerns about a possible increased workload. Also consistent with the current findings were the survey results from A. A. Cameron's (2014) study, which indicated that the twenty-eight general education teachers disagreed or tended to disagree that they had a paraprofessional in the classroom when needed, parent support, time to consult with other teachers, or time to attend meetings about their students.

Similarly, the 131 kindergarten to eighth-grade teachers in the study conducted by L. Sokal and U. Sharma (2013) indicated

concerns about a reduction in academic standards, insufficient resources, an increased workload, and acceptance of students with disabilities. Comparable results were also found by J. Glazzard (2011) in his study of the barriers to inclusion in a primary school in Northern England. The results showed that insufficient training, resources, monetary support for teachers, and, to some extent, opposition from parents were cited as fundamental obstacles to successful implementation of inclusionary practices. Furthermore, teachers in Botswana indicated that they did not receive enough training to implement inclusion, had no input into training content, and there were insufficient funds for training (Mangope and Mukhopadhyay 2015). These studies indicate that teachers in a variety of locations have similar concerns regarding the implementation of inclusive education.

The results of question four regarding the gender variable corroborate the findings in Kraska and Boyle (2014), who found no significant variations in inclusion attitudes related to gender among the 465 preschool and primary preservice teachers. In an earlier study, K. Parasuram (2006) also found that there were no significant gender differences in attitudes regarding inclusion among 300 teachers in Mumbai. Likewise, S. Woodcock (2013) found no significant difference in the inclusion attitudes of the 652 male and female Australian preservice teachers surveyed. In addition, in a survey of seventy-three school administrators, T. L. Chandler (2015) found there was no variation in attitudes regarding inclusive education based on gender. Pritchard (2015) also found no significant gender difference in teachers' inclusion attitudes when they surveyed one hundred and fifty teachers in North Carolina.

However, in a study inconsistent with the current results, O. A. Fakolade, S. O. Adenyi, and A. Tella (2009), in a study that included six hundred teachers in Nigeria, found that female teachers had more positive attitudes regarding inclusion than male teachers. Similarly, the study by C. Boyle, K. Topping, and D.

Jindal-Snape (2013) of 391 educators in Scotland showed that the female teachers had more positive attitudes regarding inclusion than the male teachers. In addition, female teachers had more positive attitudes toward inclusion in a study of seventy-four teachers conducted by S. Vaz et al. (2015) in Western Australia.

In a study with mixed results, C. Forlin, N. Kawai, and S. Higuchi (2014) found that, although female preservice teachers in Japan were more aware than male teachers about inclusion law, male teachers had a more confident attitude about teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom. Other studies that have results inconsistent with the finding regarding the gender variable in the current study have also found that male teachers have more positive inclusion attitudes than female teachers. This was the finding when U. Sharma, S. Shaukat, and B. Furlonger (2015) surveyed 194 pre-service Pakistani teachers. In addition, Dapudong (2014) found that, among fifty-two teachers based in international schools in Thailand, male teachers had more positive attitudes about inclusion than female teachers. Correspondingly, M. Yadav et al. (2015) found in a survey of 175 general education teachers in India that male teachers had fewer concerns about inclusion than female teachers.

The results showed that there were no statistically significant differences for any questionnaire items related to the attitudes of primary and junior high schoolteachers regarding best inclusive practices. These results support those of T. L. Chandler (2015), who found that there was no variation in attitudes regarding inclusive education related to school level (i.e., elementary or secondary) in a survey of seventy-three school administrators. Pritchard (2015) also found no significant gender difference in teachers' inclusion attitudes when researchers surveyed 150 teachers in North Carolina. The level of instruction, either elementary or secondary, was also not found to be related to teachers' attitudes regarding inclusion when A. M. Sempek (2015) surveyed eighty-three teachers in the rural Midwest.

In contrast, when R. Ross-Hill (2009) surveyed seventy-three teachers from rural south-eastern states, the results showed elementary teachers of students in grades one to six had significantly more positive attitudes regarding inclusion than junior high teachers of students in grades seven and eight. S. Woodcock (2013) also found, in his survey of 652 Australian preservice teachers, that primary teachers had more positive attitudes regarding inclusion than secondary teachers. Similarly, in a survey of 123 teachers and interviews with fourteen of them, McGhie-Richmond, Irvine, Loreman, Cizman, and Lupart (2013) attained results showing that elementary teachers had more positive attitudes toward inclusion than secondary teachers.

Implications of Findings

The findings of this study are important because they show the areas of the effectiveness of the professional development workshop and the additional steps that need to be taken to ensure the successful full implementation of inclusive practices. The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of the three-day professional development workshop on teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and practice regarding the placement of struggling students with special needs in an inclusive setting. The findings of the study are significant because they show that the professional-development intervention at the target school had a positive impact on teachers' perceptions of (a) their knowledge and attitudes regarding best inclusive practices, (b) their ability to adapt instruction, (c) inclusion of students with specific disabilities, and (d) the availability of resources.

An important implication of this success is that the target school should continue professional learning for inclusion, and other schools should adopt the same measures. The results of the teachers' responses on the questionnaire also offer many insights regarding these clearly stated needs: (a) additional professional learning opportunities; (b) enhanced support from parents,

principals, special education teachers, and paraprofessionals; and (c) material resources.

Professional learning opportunities. There is abundant research indicating the value of professional learning for the positive impact it has on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and the skills needed for implementation (Deppeler 2012; Forlin et al. 2014; Tindall et al. 2014). Kraska and Boyle (2014) advised, 'It is clear that inclusion will remain a significant challenge if practitioners are not committed to its principles and it will be impossible if practitioners fail to embrace their responsibilities for the education of all children' (228). L. Florian and K. Black-Hawkins (2011) suggested that educational leaders should place a high priority on the provision of inclusion professional development for teachers to ensure that they successfully implement the inclusion process.

Because only 31 per cent of the teachers attending the professional development workshop indicated that they had any training in inclusive practices, the experience was a productive introduction for them. However, now they need some additional opportunities to develop their skills and self-efficacy. Researchers (Althauser 2015; David and Kuyini, 2012; De Simone and Parmar 2006; Green et al. 2013; Reeves 2010) have found that professional development presentations give teachers information; however, to implement what they have learned in their classroom, they need the rigorous job-embedded professional learning opportunities. For teachers to perform optimally in the inclusive setting, there should be more opportunities to collaborate, and a common planning time should be established.

H. Savolainen, J. Xu, and O. Malinen (2012), when analysing data from 451 Beijing in-service teachers, found that that most important practical concern of teachers was to gain the skills needed to collaborate successfully with their teacher colleagues,

parents, and special education professionals H. Savolainen, P. Savolainen, and Xu. (2012) found that this result was replicated in a study that included teachers in South Africa and Finland. Malinen, Savolainen, and Xu highlighted the need to advance the self-efficacy of teachers, especially their 'collaboration skills, in addition to training their competence in behaviour management and classroom instruction' (123).

Introducing a professional learning community process that promotes collaboration may address teachers' concerns that they have insufficient knowledge and skills to prepare them to teach in inclusive classrooms. Smith (2011) suggested, 'Evidence is building that change in instructive practice does not occur unless faculty become involved in leadership, including professional development and professional learning communities' (1). R. DuFour and D. Reeves (2016) maintained that educators in a professional learning community need to do the following:

1. Work together in collaborative teams rather than in isolation and take collective responsibility for student learning.

2. Establish a guaranteed and viable curriculum that specifies the knowledge, skills, and dispositions students are expected to acquire, unit by unit.

3. Use an assessment process that includes frequent, team-developed, common formative assessments based on a guaranteed and viable curriculum.

4. Use the results of common formative assessments to identify students who need additional time and support for learning, identify students who would benefit from enriched or extended learning, identify and address areas of individual strengths or weaknesses in teaching based on the evidence of student learning, and identify and address areas in which none of the team members could bring students to the desired level of proficiency.

5. Create a system of interventions that guarantee that students who struggle to receive additional time and support in ways that do not remove them from new direct instruction, regardless of the teacher to whom they have been assigned.

Enhanced support. In the current study, the greatest changes in teachers' perceptions from the pretest to posttest occurred in these areas: their knowledge of and attitudes toward best practices and their ability to adapt instruction. Other research support this link between knowledge and self-efficacy (Montgomery and Mirenda 2014; Savolainen et al. 2012; Sharma et al. 2015). However, the teachers' responses regarding the availability of resources and their lists of needs show that many of them have concerns in this area. Forlin, Loreman, and Sharma (2014) noted that Hong Kong teachers' greatest concerns and needs rest in areas they did not influence, and this was also clear in the current study. The authors suggested that because of this finding, initiatives for change should be across the system and not just focus on professional development. Teacher concerns about implementing inclusion resulting in a heavier workload and about a deficit in needed resources do not relate to training but school and district administrators must address these concerns nonetheless (Sokal and Sharma 2014).

It is vital that the school principal provides the support essential for teachers to fulfil their mandate to teach all students. A. L. Edmunds and R. B. Macmillan (2010) posited that 'to be inclusive, schools must establish inclusion as an overarching goal that permeates throughout everything they do, with principals leading the effort to define and redefine the direction to be taken' (3). This does not mean that the principal alone defines policy, but the principal works with teachers, parents, community members, and students to determine the course of action. The principal and district administrators are also responsible for ensuring that teachers have the time, support, and materials

needed in their classrooms. Furthermore, schools should reduce the number of students per class to prevent overcrowded classrooms. To build an inclusive school, it will also be important to create a strong alliance between educators and parents so they can work together for success (Stetson 2015).

Limitations

There are limitations to the study. Although the professional development workshop made a positive impact on the teachers' professional inclusion knowledge, attitudes, and practice, this could have been more impactful over a longer period, such as a month or a term. Also, some teachers present at the workshop could not attend school to participate in the posttest. In addition, the small number of male teachers and junior high teachers may have influenced the comparisons made in research question four; therefore, one should be cautious when interpreting these results.

The limitations of this study include possible threats to validity because of the sample of convenience, pretest-posttest design, and the survey approach. A convenience sample of participants, rather than a random sample, was used in the study so the results may not apply to other populations because of a threat of selection bias (Cuddeback et al., 2004). This means that the sample may or may not represent the entire population accurately; therefore, one must exercise caution when generalizing about the population (Shadish 2011). In addition, there may be a non-response bias because the participants were volunteers who may have different perceptions than the teachers who did not volunteer. Although a maturation threat (i.e., changes that may occur in participants) and a history threat (i.e., the intervention of an unrelated event) are possible validity threats of the pretest-posttest design (Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun 2014), the threat was mitigated because they were only two days between the pretest and the posttest (Bell 2010).

There is, however, a pretest-treatment interaction threat to internal validity, which indicates that the act of completing the pretest may influence how the participants respond to the professional development training (Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun 2014). Because we gathered the questionnaire data from teacher self-reports, there is the threat of response bias, which occurs when respondents adapt their responses to match their perceptions of the expected answers (Menachemi 2011). Survey research also has the limitation of being unable to ask respondents for more information about their responses. Although the possibility of a low response rate may also be a limitation of survey research, this was not a factor in the current study because all participants completed the questionnaire at the same time as part of the training.

Recommendations for Future Research

Researchers could replicate this study in other Jamaican schools and compare the results to those in this study to determine whether they could generalize the findings in a variety of settings. It would be helpful to include teachers' evaluation of the professional-development workshop to determine whether any part needs revision. A study using a larger sample of participants may also enhance generalizability of the results. In addition, future researchers may conduct other research to determine if professional learning for inclusive practices improves student achievement.

A study could also assess the impact on teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and practice regarding inclusion if they implemented a professional learning community process. The study could also be replicated, using a mixed-method design to gain more information by interviewing participants. As noted by S. Vaz et al. (2015), the collection of longitudinal data on the development and change of teachers' attitudes toward inclusion to gauge teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and practice over time would add useful information to the research base. Further studies in

the areas of parental involvement in the inclusion process and training for parents would provide valuable information.

Conclusion

The results of this study show that a professional-development workshop can positively influence teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and practice regarding inclusion. It is a positive beginning that shows promise of the development of an inclusive community at the target school if professional learning and addressing teachers' concerns can become universally accepted priorities. Rouse and Florian (2012) gave an interesting reason for achieving it by stating, 'The development of successful inclusive schools, "schools for all," in which the learning and participation of all pupils is valued, is an essential task because of the benefits that such schooling can bring to individuals, communities and society' (4).

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Chapter 5

A Model for Social Transformation of the Marginalized: A Case Study of Persons with Disabilities of The University of the West Indies

Floyd Morris, Burnadette Mcpherson, and Sharmalee Cardoza

Introduction

A Model for Social Transformation of the Marginalized

In this chapter, the authors articulated a model for transforming the lives of the marginalized within a developing society, using the experience of The University of the West Indies (UWI) to empower persons with disabilities in Jamaica through quality education. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will be used as an international benchmark to analyse the efforts of UWI Mona. We documented UWI while it improved its service delivery to persons with disabilities over the past twenty years and showed how a systems and participatory approach can have a transformational effect on the marginalized.

Background

Scholars and reputable international organizations have established that persons with disabilities are some of the

most marginalized groups within a society (WHO 2011). Their marginality has come about because of physical impairment and fundamental structural barriers which has impeded their growth and development (Oliver 2013; 1990). Notwithstanding these structural barriers, persons with disabilities have made significant transformation in their lives. Thanks to the conscious efforts of pioneers in the community of persons with disabilities who have consistently placed the concerns of persons with disabilities on the development agenda (Gayle and Palmer 2005).

The Problem

Persons with disabilities, according to the Disabilities Act 2014, refer to those with a long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that may hinder their full and effective participation in society equally with others (MLSS 2014). This working definition of 'disability' indicates who we are talking about. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities further states that 'Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others' (United Nations 2006). Using 'long-term' in this definition is instructive as it shows who is regarded as being disabled. The impairment must have a long-term effect on the functioning of the person for him or her to be categorized as having a disability.

Persons with disabilities have been subject to major obstruction to their development over the years as society has not adopted an inclusive approach towards them (Oliver 2013; 1990). Consequently, they have been excluded from institutions and organizations that would contribute to their development.

In Jamaica, one of the major problems confronting the empowerment of persons with disabilities is the limited access to education (Gayle-Geddes 2015; Anderson 2014). The absence

of infrastructure such as ramps, proper bathroom facilities, and modern technologies has impeded the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the general education system. The lack of these infrastructures manifests at all levels of the education system, and few institutions have made any effort to correct the problem. It is estimated that over forty thousand children with disabilities live in Jamaica. However, the Ministry of Education (MOE) can only account for approximately seven thousand of these children in the education system (Douglas 2009).

Due to the lack of infrastructure in the general education system to accommodate persons with disabilities, few receive the opportunity to matriculate to tertiary education. It is the tertiary training that transforms and empowers persons with disabilities through the professional development they receive (Gallagher 1995). But for this transformation and professional development to take place, we must create greater access at the primary and secondary levels of the education system so that more students with disabilities can matriculate to the tertiary level (Hastings 1996).

Most persons with disabilities in Jamaica have gravitated to the UWI because it is the premier tertiary institution in the English-speaking Caribbean. The UWI has shown an understanding and willingness to address the problems confronting students with disabilities by establishing mechanisms to deal with the challenges. It is this experience that we seek to document in this chapter.

The Theoretical Construct

In preparing this chapter, we looked at systems and empowerment theories as the means to anchor the arguments. The philosophy behind Universal Design for Learning (UDL) was also consulted.

Biologist Ludwig Von Bertalanffy developed systems theory in the 1920s. Over time, it became a part of the social sciences,

especially in the assessment of organizations. According to A. Kuhn, one common component of a system is that knowing about one part allows us to know something about the other parts (Kuhn 1974).

Systems can be either controlled (cybernetic) or uncontrolled. In controlled systems information is sensed, and changes are effected in response to the information. Kuhn refers to this as the *detector*, *selector*, and *effectors* functions of the system. The detector is concerned with the communication of information between systems. The selector is defined by the rules that the system uses to make decisions, and the effector is the means by which transactions are made between systems. *Communication* and *transaction* are the only intersystem interactions. Communication is the exchange of information, while transaction involves the exchange of matter-energy. All organizational and social interactions involve communication and/or transaction. Kuhn stresses that the role of decision is to move a system towards equilibrium. Communication and transaction are the vehicles which transport that system to equilibrium.

The study of systems follows two main approaches: cross-sectional and developmental. A cross-sectional approach deals with interactions between two systems. The developmental approach on the other hand deals with the changes in a system over time. In this chapter, the focus is on the developmental approach as the authors analyse the transformation that has taken place over the past twenty years at UWI Mona for students with disabilities.

> Within systems there are generally sub-systems. There are basically three approaches to evaluating sub-systems: holist; reductionist and functionalist. The holist approach examines the system as a complete functioning unit. The reductionist approach looks downward and examines the sub-systems within the system and the functionalist approach looks upward from the sub-system to determine the role it plays in the larger system. The approach adopted in this chapter is a

holist one as the authors examine the complete system which has been established by the UWI to improve service delivery for persons with disabilities.

Over the past twenty years, empowerment theory has figured prominently, especially in development research. J. Rappaport (1987) describes empowerment as:

> A psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power, and legal rights. It is a multilevel construct applicable to individual citizens as well as to organizations and neighborhoods; it suggests the study of people in context. (121)

Another definition describes empowerment as 'an intentional, ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources' (Cornell Empowerment Group 1989, 2). In summary, empowerment is the 'manifestation of social power at individual, organizational, and community levels of analysis' (Speer and Hughey 1995, 730). According to S. B. Fawcett et al. (1984), 'Community empowerment is the process of increasing control by groups over consequences that are important to their members and to others in the broader community' (679). Whichever of these definitions or perspectives we use does not matter as they all speak to the empowerment of individuals or groups and invite the involvement of the 'marginalized' groups or individuals. This has been the experience of UWI, as once they established the Committee for Students with Disabilities, students with disabilities were involved with the planning and implementation of the varied strategies that would contribute to their development.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a philosophy of education that designs and delivers education services and learning environments that are accessible and that accommodate a range of functional capabilities of students. UDL reduces the need for specific kinds of individualized services or remedial

supports by connecting the quality of the education programme with a capacity to be accessible, equitable, and accommodating to diverse student needs. UDL is achieved by flexible curricula materials and activities that provide alternatives for students with differing abilities. These alternatives are built into the instructional design and operating systems of education materials. They are not simply added on (Silver and Bourke 1998). This is the approach of UWI Mona towards the education of persons with disabilities.

The History of UWI Mona and Persons with Disabilities

UWI Mona accepted the first student with a disability in the 1960s. K.D. Edwards was the pioneer student with a disability at the institution (Morris 2017). Since his entrance in the 1960s, multiple students with disabilities have been attending the institution. However, there were no systems in place to facilitate the growth of these students in the early stages. Success of students with disabilities was primarily linked to the generosity of students without a disability. Longstanding disability advocate and former student of UWI Mona, Derrick Palmer opined: 'students with disabilities had to gather under trees to study with their able-bodied counterparts' (Palmer 2009).

The Process of Transformation

By the beginning of the 1990s, more students with disabilities were matriculating for UWI. Based on this burgeoning situation, lecturers were having more students with disabilities. The lecturers realized that more persons with disabilities, particularly those with visual impairment, were performing at a level in high schools which would result in them being accepted by UWI. Resultantly, lecturers such as Mark Figueroa and Michael Witter lobbied to prioritize students with disabilities. According to Figueroa, it was his reflection on his own experience and that of Michael Witter's in teaching quantitative courses to blind

students that led him to advocate that UWI create an appropriate system to meet the needs of students with disabilities (Figueroa 2009). At the turn of the 1990s, Figueroa presented a proposal to establish a Committee for Students with disabilities to then Campus Principal Leslie Robinson who accepted the proposal and an agreement was arrived at for the initial composition of the Committee. However, it was not until Marlene Hamilton became the deputy principal with oversight for student services that the Committee for Students with Disabilities was actualized. The Committee comprising lecturers, students with disabilities and senior administrative staff was established with a long-term vision of bringing the cohort of students with disabilities at UWI Mona in line with the proportion of persons with disabilities within the age cohort served by the University. The Committee's mission was to improve accessibility of UWI to persons with disabilities and to improve the service given to those students with disabilities registered at Mona.

Establishing the special committee was an important step towards developmental activities at UWI Mona. Such developmental activities were strengthened by the Statement of Intent, developed by the Committee for Students with Special Needs, and adopted by the University Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GPC) on November 22, 1995 (Morris 2017). The Statement of Intent, which is the University's overarching policy for students with disabilities, states in part:

> The University of the West Indies [hereafter UWI] is consciously seeking to facilitate the efforts of persons with disabilities to acquire university education.

> The university's goal is that as far as possible, the number of students with disabilities at the institution should be brought in line with the number of disabled persons in the relevant age cohorts in the wider society. It is the aim that no student whose academic qualifications are good enough to qualify for competitive entry be unable to accept a place at the UWI because of a disability (F&GPC 1995).

To give effect to this policy, several strategies were put in place. These included:

- A building was identified for students with disabilities to use.
- Special reading room equipped with reading machine for the blind at the Main Library.
- Purchasing of specialized equipment for students with disabilities.
- Commencement of building ramps and special parking for persons with disabilities on the Mona campus.
- Transformation of Irvine Hall, one of the halls of residence on the Mona campus, to full access for persons with disabilities.

These facilities contributed to the growth of the population of students with disabilities on the Mona campus. By the end of the 1990s, a minimum of two students with disabilities were graduating from UWI Mona annually. Subsequently, other campuses such as Cave Hill in Barbados and St Augustine in Trinidad and Tobago began to put in place measures to accommodate students with disabilities. In Jamaica, no other tertiary institution has installed any system to cater to the needs of students with disabilities.

The Great Transition

The positive developments for persons with disabilities at UWI Mona continued into the new millennium. By 2003, one of the major service clubs in Jamaica, the Lions Club of Mona put forward a plan to develop a special facility to accommodate students with disabilities. Members of the Lions Club were integrally involved in assisting students with disabilities on the campus through volunteering their time by reading for the blind. This invoked a passion in the members and resulted in them developing a project proposal to establish a special facility

for these students. UWI Mona adopted the proposal, and the Club sought funding for construction. Through the help of state agencies and private sector companies, the Club secured funds to construct the facility and by July 2007, it made a major facility available to students with disabilities at UWI Mona.

The facility is equipped with the latest of technologies for students with disabilities and allows the students to conduct their research and assignments with considerable ease. Such an environment is quintessential for the effective studying for students with disabilities as some of the equipment that they use convert texts to speech and as such, the students must be in an exclusive environment where there is limited disturbance. Additionally, the facility acts as an examination centre for students with disabilities as based on the nature of their disability, they must be in an environment where they do not disturb other students and vice versa. For example, a student who is blind and using a braille machine to prepare his or her exam could not sit among the general student population as the braille machine would act as a source of disturbance and distraction to others.

The Role of Volunteers

Amid the busy schedule of students at UWI Mona, they find time to help their colleagues with a disability. From a small cadre of volunteers in the 1980s, the list of volunteers has grown to over two hundred students who make themselves available to read, write, type, scan, and even take students to classes when necessary. According to the students with disabilities, 'their success on the UWI campus would not be possible without the tremendous efforts of the volunteers.'

The Model

From the experience at UWI Mona, there is a clear model for transforming the lives of persons with disabilities in developing societies, by using education. The model emerged out of a series of consultations with critical stakeholders both

locally and internationally. There was no established model that was patterned in terms of the system in place at UWI Mona. According to Figueroa, they borrowed 'bits and pieces' of what was being done at overseas educational institutions, guidance from students with disabilities on the Mona campus, and inputs from local non-governmental organizations catering to persons with disabilities (Figueroa 2009).
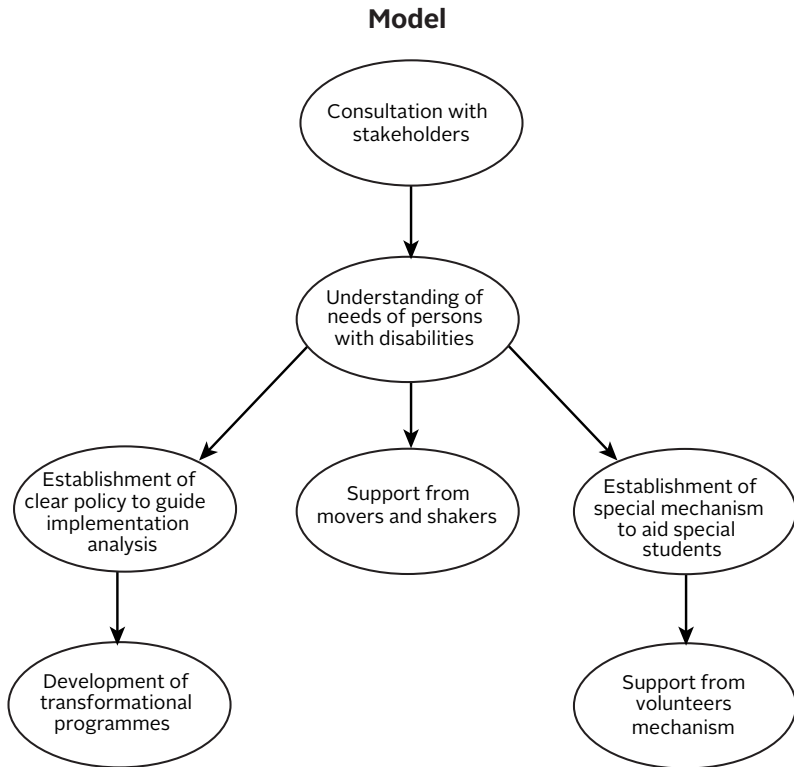
By using a systems approach, consistent advocacy from the community of persons with disabilities and the philosophy of UDL, UWI has improved its service delivery to its clientele of persons with disabilities, thus contributing to major success stories among the community of persons with disabilities. The model has thus developed with the following features:

1. An understanding of the challenges and needs of persons with disabilities. This triggered individuals such as Mark Figueroa, Marlene Hamilton, and Michael Witter to act on behalf of students with disabilities. Understanding the needs of persons with disabilities invokes empathy and will result in developing a vision.

2. Support from movers and shakers within the administrative power structure. For any vision to be successful in an organization, it must have an appeal to senior staff members. The supportive efforts of Marlene Hamilton resulted in the vision's realization of Figueroa et al. and began the process of transformation towards persons with disabilities at UWI Mona.

3. The establishment of a special mechanism to facilitate the improvement of service to persons with disabilities at UWI Mona. They must put a formal structure in place to guide the vision and to provide feedback to higher authorities. This was in the form of the special committee, comprising students with disabilities, lecturers, and senior administrative staff. The Director of the Office of Students Services and Development

(OSSD) is a member of this committee. The special committee reports to the Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GPC) through the OSSD. The F&GPC is the highest financial decision-making body at UWI.

4. The establishment of a clear policy to guide the implementation of strategies. The adoption of the Statement of Intent by the F&GPC in 1995 served as a guide to develop multiple initiatives to empower students with disabilities on the Mona campus.

5. Systematic development of transformational programmes. Programmes and policies must be put in place to realize the vision. This took the form of the special building for students with disabilities, improvement of access on the campus, provision of special reading facility at the UWI Main Library, securing of modern technologies for students with disabilities and the establishment of a sustainable mechanism for voluntary service.

6. Establishment of voluntary mechanism. Creating a sustainable cadre of volunteers has added value to the service delivery to students with disabilities at UWI Mona. In an environment of limited financial resources, there is need for a group of individuals who will consistently assist the marginalized and the student population at UWI has responded positively to this challenge.

The experience of UWI Mona is a model which can be replicated throughout the Caribbean and other developing societies to improve service delivery and the quality of life for persons with disabilities. The model has contributed to over one hundred persons with disabilities graduating from the institution with a first degree over the past twenty years.

Model

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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │   Consultation with │
                    │     stakeholders    │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │    Understanding of │
                    │    needs of persons │
                    │    with disabilities│
                    └─────────────────────┘
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Diagram nodes:

- Consultation with stakeholders
  → Understanding of needs of persons with disabilities
    → Establishment of clear policy to guide implementation analysis
      → Development of transformational programmes
    → Support from movers and shakers
    → Establishment of special mechanism to aid special students
      → Support from volunteers mechanism

Two Students completed doctoral studies. Over six individuals have completed studies at the master's level: with another five in the process of completing. There are over fifty-five students with disabilities currently enrolled at UWI Mona. Using a systems approach and the adoption of empowering strategies, UWI has accomplished the goals and objectives of the vision to improve service delivery to its clientele of persons with disabilities. The model is also a clear strategy for accomplishing the general principles as articulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Specifically, the model luminously reflects article 24 of the CRPD which strongly promotes an inclusive approach to education.

UWI Mona and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

In December 2006, the UN General Assembly accepted the recommendations of the Ad hoc Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for the establishment of a new international treaty to protect persons with disabilities. By March 2007, the Convention was available for signature and ratification by state parties. The Convention came about due to the failure of countries to implement aggressively the provisions of the Standard Rules, which the UN adopted in 1993 (United Nations 1993). The provisions within the Standard Rules were not enforceable as they were not subject to the principles of international law. Recognizing this vacuum, countries such as Mexico pushed for establishing a full convention to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. In 2002, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution sponsored by Mexico to establish the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. After five years of intense and thorough negotiations, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities became a reality. Jamaica had the distinction of becoming the first country to sign and ratify the Convention in March 2007 (Morris 2017).

There are eight guiding principles within the Convention, and in this chapter, we will see how UWI Mona has realized these over the years.

Long before the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UWI established systems to empower its population of students with disabilities. In this chapter, we looked at the general principals of the UN Convention to benchmark the performance of the UWI. Our experiences as persons with disabilities and individual working with students with disabilities, coupled with comments from graduates and students of UWI Mona, in a focus group discussion, assisted the benchmarking.

In the focus group discussion, we had ten students with various types of disabilities, drawn from the varied faculties at UWI

Mona. There were seven male students and three females, and this is approximately 25 per cent of the population of students with disabilities at the institution. It is interesting to note that the population of male students in the focus group is larger than that of females. This is because amongst the population of students with disabilities, there are more male students at UWI. This is counter to the general demography of students at UWI where an 85:15 ratio favours female students. The reasons for more male students with disabilities being at the UWI are not the subject of this chapter. However, it is an area which needs serious academic work.

The following observations must be taken into consideration in the benchmarking:

1. On the principle of freedom of choice and independence of persons with disability as stipulated by the CRPD, UWI is highly respected. Students are free to choose whatever course of study they desire and have been exercising their independence on the campus. However, because of the problem of access to some of its building and that deaf persons still face many communication challenges, some students are concerned. In the focus group discussion, one of the students opined: 'We have our independence at UWI, but it is restricted by level of access to some of the buildings.'

2. On the principle of non-discrimination, UWI Mona has extremely high ranking among persons with disabilities because the institution has allowed students with disabilities to participate in all its activities. Once you are a student on the campus, you are provided with the same opportunities as your 'able-bodied' colleagues. According to the students who participated in the focus group discussion: 'Students with disabilities can participate in any activity they choose. It is up to us.'

3.   On the principle of full and effective participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities, UWI Mona receives commendation. The institution has received commendation because of a willingness to deal with problems brought before respective authorities. It has also been commended for enabling students with disabilities to participate successfully in diverse students' activities such as student government, beauty contest, and graduations. The valedictorian in 1992, for example, was a student with disability.

4.   On respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity, UWI Mona has scored heavily. They have received remarkably high commendation because they have made genuine effort to improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities. For them to do this, they first had to accept the difference and diversity of persons with disabilities. In the focus group discussion, one student emphasized that: 'Really and truly, UWI respects persons with disabilities.'

5.   All students are presented with equal opportunities and because of this UWI Mona comes in for remarkably high commendation. For example, through the Office of Special Students Services, students with disabilities are presented with a compendium of services which allows them to participate on an equal basis with others. One student in the focus group discussion pointed out that 'With the Office, I am able to do many things, including interacting with student volunteers on a consistent basis.'

6.   Access has posed a major challenge for the UWI Mona campus. The facility was built in the 1940s when disability was less on the agenda of national and international development. However, the campus has been making

a genuine effort to transform the built environment to accommodate persons with disabilities. For example, all new facilities that are being constructed on the campus are being built with the requisite access features. However, because the institution has more work to do in this area, it only received a 'fair' commendation. Students in the focus group discussion agreed that 'Progress is being made, but a whole lot more needs to be done.'

7. UWI Mona received very high commendation on the issue of equality of opportunity for men and women. They give no preferential treatment to any of the sexes on the campus.

8. UWI Mona has been doing distinctive works with children with disabilities. Extensive research is now being done on various learning disabilities affecting children in the education system. Also, students on the campus have been doing varied outreach programmes at institutions offering care and support for children with disabilities.

Conclusion

Multiple scholars and institutions have equated the primacy of education to social transformation. It is through education that poor individuals like persons with disabilities are best able to capacitate themselves. The World Bank (2009) postulates:

> Disabled people are often excluded from school or the workplace and are forced to depend on others in the family and community for physical and economic support. In addition to being acutely vulnerable to such exclusion, disabled people are disproportionately poor, and poor people are disproportionately disabled. The Millennium Development Goals, a commitment for the international community to expand the vision of development, cannot be achieved without taking into consideration the needs of people with disabilities.

This is the harsh reality of persons with disabilities in the Caribbean. As the leading tertiary institution in Jamaica, UWI Mona has been driving the transformation of persons with disabilities through inclusive education. By establishing appropriate systems, it has been able to genuinely empower its population of persons with disabilities. The institution has planned systems that will interact with each other to actualize the policy adopted by F&GPC in 1995. Such an interactive model fits appropriately in systems theory as articulated by Bertalanffy and Kuhn. For systems to work, they must be effective interactions. The model as practised by UWI also fits appropriately in the empowerment theory. It allows for the participation and empowerment of individuals with disabilities and clearly elevates the international slogan for persons with disabilities that states, 'Nothing about us, without us' (Crowther 2007).

The philosophy of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is also reflected in the model as practised at UWI Mona. The institution has introduced a range of modern technologies that students in the learning environment can use to enhance their education.

The inclusive educational experiences of UWI Mona can therefore be used as a model for transforming the lives of persons with disabilities in the Caribbean and other developing societies. It is a prototype that evolved out of the input of concerned lecturers, students with disabilities, responsive administrators, disability advocates, and the invention of modern technologies. These factors have coalesced to form a model educational institutions in developing countries can replicate.

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Chapter 6

Creating an Inclusive Education Environment: Lecturers' Experiences and Perspectives in One Department at The University of the West Indies

Tanneice Ellis

Introduction

One aim of The University of the West Indies (UWI) is to foster an inclusive education environment as stated in its 2017–22 Triple A Strategic Plan. The UWI Office of Special Student Services indicated that students with disabilities account for approximately one per cent of the total student population. Research has found that we consider lecturers key to the experience of students with disabilities, yet most lecturers receive no training to teach students with disabilities. How then is the inclusive education environment created at the UWI? While researchers have documented the experiences of students with disabilities in higher education in literature, few studies recount the views or experiences of lecturers who teach students with disability in mainstream classes in Caribbean higher education institutions. This qualitative phenomenological study used semi-structured interviews to explore this unique experience of six lecturers from one department of the UWI, to understand how it created an inclusive education environment.

The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework provided the lens through which we identify inclusive education and pedagogy. Among the findings were that lecturers' teaching philosophies were the starting point in creating an inclusive environment. Accommodations for student were the building blocks and meant lecturers adjusted their teaching methods and used different ways to present content and engage students. The study concluded that the principles of the UDL model were effective and recommended adopting the UDL for curriculum and professional development for lecturers.

Introduction

Background

Diversity is one of the stated core values in the strategic plan of the UWI. The UWI wants to foster a culture and work/study environment that is open and welcoming, acknowledges and values diversity, and is inclusive of and affirms the dignity of all persons (excerpts from UWI Strategic Plan). According to L. Florian and H. Linklater (2010), the concept of inclusive education means students who would have previously not been included in classes because of their disability are now being included in mainstream classrooms. The Office of Special Student Services at UWI indicated that fifty-two students declared having a disability, which would equate to approximately one per cent of the student population for the 2017–18 academic year, when compared to a student population of over seventeen thousand. The UWI prepared a paper outlining a proposed disability policy which includes training staff and making physical and academic accommodation for students with disabilities. According to A. C. Orr and S. B. Hammig (2009), many factors contribute to the postsecondary experiences of students with disabilities, and research has shown that faculty-student relationship is important to student success, but many faculty members shy away from working with students with disability because they feel ill-equipped to teach these students.

I wondered about the experiences and views of the lecturers at UWI who teach students with disabilities and how they have created an inclusive educational environment. Orr and Hammig (2009) believe that it is only when institutions of higher learning recognize the inherent value of teaching philosophies and inclusive pedagogy that target inclusion and diversity, and provide adequate support for their execution, will we achieve widespread progress in equity, access and inclusion. With that in mind, I wanted to find out about the teaching philosophies and pedagogical practices of lecturers at the UWI regarding teaching students with disabilities, to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences, and how the university created an inclusive education environment.

The Problem

Historically, according to literature, including the views of persons with disabilities has been a deficiency in developing policies (Gayle 2016; Gayle and Palmer 2005; Jain 2011), and this may account for some challenges in higher education. P. C. Lippman (2010), is of the view that the learner, other students, teachers, and the physical environment compose the teaching and learning environment. While available literature in the Caribbean provided views from the perspective of students with disabilities, little literature is available that recounts the views or experiences of lecturers with teaching students with disabilities in Caribbean higher education such as at UWI. This qualitative study explored how UWI created an inclusive education environment through experiences and perspectives of lecturers in one department of UWI.

Rationale for Study

Disability, according to N. Jain (2011), is another form of human diversity. What is important for including student with disabilities L. Florian (2012) shows, is how lecturers respect and respond to human differences in ways that include learners

in, rather than exclude them from what is ordinarily available in the daily life of the classroom. As a member of staff at UWI, I am aware that there are students with disabilities, and these students are a part of the mainstream classes. One department conducted a pilot study in 2017 that explored the perspectives and experiences of students with visual impairments and found that lecturers were important contributors to the experience of these students. The Ellis (2017) pilot study noted some comments from the students who participated in that study, to include: 'I'll be honest, that, I always felt involved in their class'; 'She found ways, whilst teaching the class, [to] incorporate me in the class'; 'It [is] all down to the teacher, she tailored the course for me'; 'It is good that you can contact the lecturer outside of the contact session.'

An exploration of the experiences and perspectives of lecturers who taught students with disabilities to find out just how the inclusive education environment was created was therefore thought beneficial.

Purpose of the Study

From the pilot study in 2017, lecturers are an important part of the experience for students with disabilities in this department of the UWI, and the adaptions to teaching styles and approaches used in and out of classes, were key to the students with disabilities experience at the UWI. The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain a deeper understanding of how to create an inclusive education environment through an exploration of the experiences and perspectives of the lecturers in that department of the UWI.

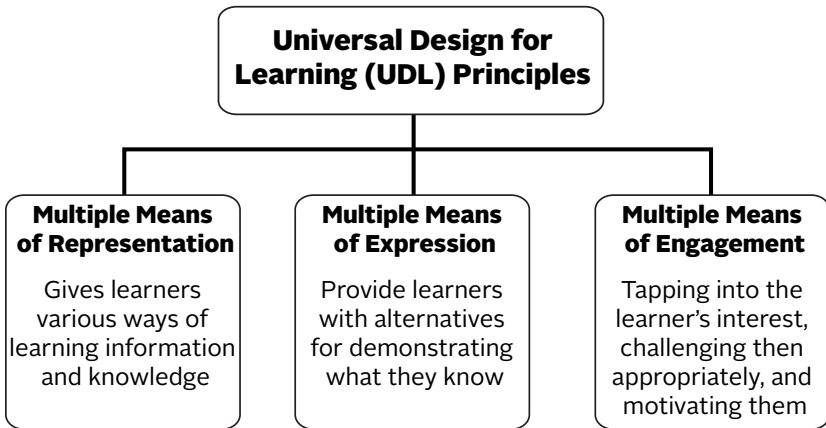## The Universal Design for Learning Framework
Inclusive Education and Pedagogy

Under the banner of Inclusive Education and Inclusive Pedagogy, the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework

was considered. The UDL was developed as a framework to improve teaching and learning. The central practical premise of the UDL is that a curriculum should include alternatives to make it accessible and appropriate for individuals with different backgrounds, learning styles, abilities, and disabilities in widely varied learning contexts (Gordon, Meyer, and Rose 2016; Rose and Meyer 2012). The UDL emanates from thoughtful planning regarding content, outcome and process. It assumes what one describes as a backward design technique.

This technique begins with formulating learning goals and objectives and then identifying and selecting methods for achieving the learning outcomes as a tool for inclusive teaching. Orr and Hammig (2009) indicate that the emphasis is then on what students should be able to do, know, appreciate, or demonstrate proficiency in. The study used the UDL framework as the lens through which I assessed the inclusive education environment. The figure below outlines the three main principles of the UDL.

Figure 6.1: Principles of the Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Principles

Multiple Means of Representation
Gives learners various ways of learning information and knowledge

Multiple Means of Expression
Provide learners with alternatives for demonstrating what they know

Multiple Means of Engagement
Tapping into the learner's interest, challenging then appropriately, and motivating them

Literature Review

The literature review was organized around four key areas of inclusive education and provide a synthesis and critique of some studies. The review starts from the genesis and development of including students with disability in higher education in the Caribbean context and then branched out globally, looking at readiness of institutions and faculties for inclusive education and what one globally considers key to creating an inclusive education environment in higher education.

Inclusive Education in Caribbean Higher Education

A. Gayle and D. Palmer (2005) provided the historical background that led to the development and growth of persons with disabilities' communities and associations in Jamaica. The paper highlighted the dictum 'nothing about us, without us' which person with disabilities embraced from as early as the 1970s. Of significance was a policy developed by the Jamaica Society for the Blind (JSB) to increase annually the number of students with visual impairment entering UWI. Also significant was the outcome of the work of the Combined Disability Association (CDA) that resulted in special facilities and procedures for persons with disabilities on the UWI Mona campus through the establishment of the Office of Special Students' Services (OSSS). The Gayle and Palmer paper, however, noted that there was still a need to incorporate and involve persons with disabilities in creating laws, and there were still barriers to persons with disabilities maximizing their potential educationally in some parts of Jamaica. This was due to lack of specialized equipment, shortage of support personnel, inaccessible educational institutions, and transportation.

S. Evering (2007) in the 2007 UNESCO country report for Jamaica stated that while the UWI indicated a steady increase in enrolment of students with visual impairment, challenges such

as language barrier and technical support mar the movement of persons with disabilities into higher education. Inclusion, the report stated, must therefore embrace not only physical space but also the support necessary and educational opportunity to enhance success. In the D. Gayle (2016) study, the findings concluded that the system failed to meet the needs of persons with disabilities and concluded that even though there are strides to inclusive education at UWI, such as the establishment of the OSSS, there was still need for improvement and progress was often slow.

Institutional Readiness for Inclusive Education

According to Orr and Hammig (2009), students with disabilities are attending colleges in increasing numbers. However, S. Paul (2000) showed that most of these students indicated encountering barriers to their education related to lack of adaptive aids, accommodations, and inaccessible buildings and grounds. T. Hall, M. Healey, and M. Harrison (2002) noted that the exclusion of persons with disabilities from higher education operates on three levels – the level of practical access and negotiation of the physical environment, the level of teaching, learning, and assessment experiences, and the level of social experiences. These three levels, according to Hall, Healey, and Harrison (2002), cut across a further dimension – the effectiveness of legislation and policy and provisions made by higher education institutions, and these can serve as barriers. They noted as well that higher education institutions poorly develop disability awareness on their campuses. The reasons for this lack of readiness of higher educational institutions were not listening to persons with disabilities and the neglect and non-inclusion of persons with disabilities in the decision and policymaking processes in the university. This is in keeping with literature from the Caribbean such as the Gayle and Palmer (2005) and Gayle (2016) studies.

Hall, Healey, and Harrison (2002), noted that while there have been efforts by higher education institutions to reach out and engage the non-traditional students, there is still a need for critical self-reflection within the academy and an examination of internally constructed discourses on exclusion that might mitigate against the drive to widen access. Barnes (2007) believes that as we move ever further into the twenty-first century and there are more students with disabilities in higher education, more support services for students, with access needs, are being put into place. However, Jain (2011) found that universities were still ill-equipped physically and academically to deal with issues related to persons with disabilities. He pointed to the little provision of ramps, or ramps that were dangerously steep, toilets being inaccessible, and classrooms not constructed in a manner usable by the student with disabilities. J. C. DeWitt (1991) pointed to the need to infuse appropriate assistive technologies at colleges for students with various abilities. Jain (2011) argued that unless there is a concerted effort to enhance facilities and bring the concerns of persons with disabilities to the forefront, they would remain alienated from academia.

Paul (2000) believed that it is the responsibility of the university community to facilitate access to an environment for students with disabilities to achieve academic and social integration and this is supported by D. K. Reid and M. G. Knight (2006) who argued that a shift in emphasis for persons with disabilities to access colleges has been happening and colleges and universities are legally required by law to provide accommodations for students who are identified as a person with disability, consequently, there is increasing recognition that educational institutions must take on greater responsibility in this regard. To this end, M. Gallego and C. Busch (2015) pointed out that today, institutions of higher education feel a greater sense of urgency in understanding accessibility and as a result, a Disabilities Services Office (DSO) is now not only common

but an essential component of student services. These student services offices, according to Gallego and Busch (2015), have the responsibility to determine reasonable accommodations for instructors to implement and provide support for students with disabilities.

Faculty Readiness for Inclusive Education

According to L. Florian (2012), as the call for classroom teachers to be better prepared for inclusive education became increasingly common, a consideration of professional development needs of teachers cannot be overstated. This was especially important to note because, as Orr and Hammig (2009) found many faculty members shy away from working with students with learning disabilities because they felt ill-equipped to teach these students. Some argue teachers lack the necessary knowledge and skills to work with such students in inclusive classrooms and often report feeling unprepared for inclusive education (Florian 2012). Fortunately, however, Orr and Hammig (2009) also found that faculty expressed a desire for pedagogical training regarding disability instructions techniques. However, even without formal training, N. Zigmond and J. M. Baker (1996) showed that many teachers altered an activity, an assignment or a test based on their perception of the needs of a person with disability.

Faculty members also often relied on Student Disability Offices on campus for direction on how best to serve student with disabilities. Orr and Hammig (2009) indicated that such instructions are usually communicated in a list of suggested accommodation to include extended time on test or modified assessments, note-taking services, or using assistive technological devices. However, it was also pointed out in Orr and Hammig (2009) that these recommended accommodations do not always meet the need of the students with disabilities or lecturers, as not all students declare their disability with the Student Disability Offices, and retroactive adjustments rarely address barriers embedded within the curriculum design and

may not increase faculty understanding of best practices for students with disabilities.

The general recommendations from Orr and Hammig (2009) and Gallego and Busch (2015) to address faculty concerns was for there to be faculty training in disability awareness and disability-related best practices to increase instructor knowledge and awareness about accommodation and how faculty behaviours affect students with disabilities. Some faculty members, however, were concerned about the lowering of standards, unfair treatment to other students and the risk of academic integrity of their courses and according to J. Hanafin et al. (2007), seeking inclusive education in universities may be opposed, challenged, and resisted by university staff. Hanafin et al. (2007) indicated that this may be so because faculty may see the call for them to adopt inclusive education practices as an attempt to undermine academic freedom and integrity and academic standards. These concerns could be prevented if according to Gallego and Busch (2015), appropriate training was provided, as many faculty members do not possess the essential knowledge regarding legal mandates, procedures, and accommodations. In addition, Florian (2012) noted that the professional development programmes within universities should involve in-depth exploration and self-study of ways in which they put theoretical ideas about inclusion in practice. To some extent this suggestion points to the purpose of this study – an exploration into how an inclusive education environment was created from the perspective and experience of lecturers.

Creating Inclusive Educational Environments

Orr and Hammig (2009) spoke about the concerns of curriculum design and the demands on faculty to meet the needs of a diverse student population by adapting principle of more inclusive pedagogies. They referred to the A. Broderick, H. Mehta-Perekh, and D. K. Reid (2005) study that proposed the

differentiated instruction (DI) model. This model takes the view that the lecturer should expect students with varying abilities and experiences, interests, and learning styles and acknowledge that these will affect a student's performance in the class. The DI is like the Universal Design for Learning Framework that also expects and addresses the needs of a variety of learners. K. Hadjikakou and D. Hartas (2008) pointed out that the goal of providing accommodations for students with disabilities is to modify material or testing procedures to help students to become as successful as they can be. Effective provision for students with disabilities was thought to rely on a culture of acknowledging and responding to differences by linking policy to practise and having the legislative framework to support this.

Overall, the literature pointed to challenges that still exist to create the inclusive education environment and the opportunities for higher education to develop policies that reflect diversity and inclusivity. There is a need for professional training and development programmes for lecturers in the inclusive education environment. Adjustments to physical environment, use of appropriate assistive technologies and academic accommodations is critical. Important as well was a shift in curriculum towards inclusion that is both supportive and tolerant of diversity and using inclusive pedagogies and strategies that were universal in design.

Methodology

Research Questions

To guide this qualitative study, I chose the following questions to keep the study focused:

How is the inclusive education environment created in this department of the UWI?

Research Sub-Questions

1. What are the teaching philosophies and practices of lecturers that created an inclusive education environment?

2. How do lecturers feel about accommodating students with disabilities?

3. What support is given to, or received in, the process of creating an inclusive education environment?

Research Design

The study adopted and followed the standard characteristics of the phenomenological qualitative research design. This design, according to S. Lewis (2015) is one in which the researcher conducts a study around a unique experience, intending to report multiple realities, includes the use of multiple quotes based on the actual words of different individuals presenting the different perspectives and therefore reports how individuals participating in the study view their experiences. The phenomenological research design was considered the most appropriate to answer the research questions of this unique experience of teaching students with disability at UWI.

Research Site, Setting, and Sample

The study was completed in one department of UWI. UWI caters to Caribbean and international students and the campus where the study took place had over seventeen thousand students enrolled at the time of study. The setting of the study is a department in the Faculty of Humanities and Education. A criterion sampling approach was used, which according to Patton (as cited in Suri 2011), involved selecting participants who met some predetermined criterion of importance. The criteria for participants were they had to be lecturers in that department of UWI, and they had to have taught a student(s) with a disability. A previous pilot study with visually impaired students in that department provided information on the lecturers in the department who met those criteria.

Data Collection and Analysis

Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with six lecturers over a three-month period. Data from

observation field notes were also used and an extensive literature review that formed the secondary data source. The analysis of the data followed what is described as an inductive analysis, which, according to S. Suri (2011), meant that the patterns, themes, and categories of analysis come from the data. The two-tier coding technique was used to determine themes that were defined and supported from the primary data. Evidence of principles of the UDL framework by the lecturers were highlighted and discussed.

Access, Trustworthiness, and Ethical Considerations

Although I am a member of staff at UWI and the department at which the study took place, the standard procedures for access and permission to conduct the study was followed and formal approval was received from the Head of Department. Issues of trustworthiness were addressed through systematic regular/constant peer reviews and triangulating data from the interview, observation, and literature. Ethical considerations have also been adhered to, such as the use of pseudonyms and consent forms for participation.

Findings and Discussion

The purpose of this study was the answer to the question of how an inclusive education environment was created in this department of UWI. The study found two main themes that revealed how an environment that was inclusive and welcoming to a diverse student population was created within the department. The two themes are having a student-centred teaching philosophy and accommodations for students with disabilities. These are discussed in turn using quotes from the interviews and information from observation and literature.

A Student-centred Teaching Philosophy

The student-centred teaching philosophy means that lecturers focus on the students as the primary reason they teach. One lecturer said, 'My teaching philosophy is to put students

first.' Students with disabilities were therefore given extra attention, effort was made to include the student and to create an atmosphere that facilitated the successful achievement of learning outcomes for all their students: – 'the role of the lecturer is to really facilitate the transference of that knowledge.' While another described herself as a life coach – 'I don't see myself just as a teacher you know. I see myself as a life coach.' G. O'Neill and T. McMahon (2005) believe that the philosophy required for the inclusive education classroom is a paradigm shift away from teaching to an emphasis on learning, to include active learning, choice in learning, and the shift of power in the teacher-student relationship.

Having core learning objectives, being deliberate in being clear in teaching, and teaching from an understanding that one size does not fit all, also came up as important in teaching-philosophies – 'I do believe that at phase one is what is the core objective. It is especially important for me to let them know what is required of them.' This view is in keeping with the UDL, which requires, according to Orr and Hammig (2009) and O'Neill and McMahon (2005), having set and planned out learning outcomes that students would know from the beginning, and it is the learning outcome that is being assessed.

There was a realization preparing for a diverse classroom from early would have been beneficial – 'It's worth thinking about, how what we do assumes for mobility, for full fine gross mobility skills, full visual activity and or hearing.' This way of thinking also fits exactly with the UDL design that calls for a way of thinking about and designing instruction that anticipates and plans for the needs of a more diverse clientele, according to the Orr and Hammig (2009) article. This, they explained, starts from identifying learning objectives and then working from there backwards to look at lesson plans and activities that can achieve this. Assessment practices using different means was also critical to the lecturers – 'It's useful to remember that we can test the same thing in different ways, it's almost like if you

think about it beforehand, [so] you are not struggling to think of something.' The teaching philosophies that are student-centred, open, and responsive to the diverse needs of students meant – 'a willingness to make the changes necessary to accommodate the special needs of the student.'

Accommodations for Students

The other theme that came out of this study was accommodations for students. Accommodation for students meant – 'you have to be prepared to spend extra time making arrangements that can accommodate and assist the student, whether this means that you have to spend more time with them or change the method of delivering the teaching, but some accommodation has to be made.'   Accommodations for students became the evidence of the student-centred philosophy in action, which meant giving extra time and attention. Extra time and attention were reflected in the class sessions and activities and out-of-class time with the student with disability – 'I recognized that I had to give them a little more attention than I would the other students.'

Using multiple ways to present content was among accommodations for students with disabilities – 'it is important that the lecturer try to break it down and take the time, to explain in different ways.' The lecturers were deliberate in using different ways to present content – 'there is no one size fits all.' One UDL principle according to Orr and Hammig (2009) is multiple means of presentation and the lecturers indicated that they had to find and use different means and ways to present content. However, coming up with different ways was not always simple – 'It was a bit challenging, particularly at the outset, because one had to make some obvious adjustments dealing with the student' and 'when you have a (visually impaired student) man, it mek (*makes*) you have to think; you have to be innovative; you have to be creative; you have to put yourself in their place.'

Calling students by name in class was a common practice among the lecturers to engage the students with disability – 'I would call his name, and I would ask him to nod if he understood, if he heard, if he was in agreement...' or 'I would go near to where he is, I would rest my hand on his desk and would say – 'give me your views on that.' The lecturers were however careful to point out that care must be taken in how special attention is given to the students with disabilities in class – 'You do not want them to feel that they are a special case, being treated differently, because that I think could have a negative side effect psychologically, we want to make them feel a part.' Calling the student with disability by name was done during my observation of some lecturers. Florian (2012) noted that diversity in today's classroom demands more inclusive approaches and teachers make countless decisions and take innumerable actions in response to the learning of the students. However, as useful as some of these practices were, the lecturers pointed out that these kinds of accommodations could not be done as easily in large classes – 'If the class is very big, I am not able to do that.' Lecturers acknowledged that the adaptions made to accommodate students in class settings varied and this was particularly easier with small classes – 'My experience then varies based on the class size...very little interaction takes place in a larger class size.' This was confirmed in my observation in the classes that had less than twenty students compared to another session with over seventy students. With the smaller class, lecturers called students by name and engaged them in conversation, while in the session with over seventy students, that direct interaction was not observed.

Accommodations were also made to coursework assignments and revealed the lecturers' knowledge of the student with disability interests. Spending time with the students with disabilities out of class to get to know more about the student was important. 'One student, I found had a special interest in sports, so for about three or four Thursday afternoons, I spent time with him talking about

sports,' and 'you have to be interested, but definitely when they have a disability, you have to show more interest, because they need more support.' This deeper knowledge about the students and their interests was applied appropriately in assignments and in the classroom engagement. 'You know, he loves football. I made him, in his own mind's eyes and do a commentary (assignment) on it, and he did it.' This lecturer allowed a visually impaired student to prepare an assignment using a topic and method he was comfortable with. These actions reflect two of the UDL principles outlined in Orr and Hammig (2009), multiple means of expression – allowing alternate ways to demonstrate learning and multiple means of engagement; knowing and tapping into the interest of the students. 'He was interested in cricket..., so sometimes I would gear the discussion to use examples of cricket and ask him to address them.'

Being prompt with giving feedback was also an important accommodation in facilitating students – 'I ensure that assignments are graded and given back on time with the adequate comments.' Integral as well was being mindful of the goal, that is, for the students to attain the desired learning outcomes – 'Whatever the task is and the teaching, it's to think what the core skill is, what is the core objective. Once you know what the core objective is, then it is going to be easier to adapt that.' All these teaching adaptions help accommodate the students and kept the teaching and learning environment inclusive. These adaptions are in keeping with Chickering and Gamson's (as cited in Orr and Hammig 2009) Seven Principles for Good Practice, which is what the UDL model has, a variation in assessment process and product, and moving away from the one-size-fits-all approach and providing prompt feedback.

Accommodating students was not only the role of the lecturer, others in the teaching and learning environment helped to create the inclusive classroom environment – 'I don't think it is one body or one person that has to take this on, I think that it has to

be a community.' Support from others in community included involving other students in the class to help and provide support to the student with disability – 'You want to make sure that they are working with other students who are opened to that and sensitive.' Support from others also meant being open to allowing personal assistants of the student with disabilities to be in the class with them – 'One of the things that I think was very important is that if the student has a guide or a helper, is to be polite to them' and 'Somebody who assists him, for me as a lecturer, that, it eases some burden off me, for I know that he has some support.' Orr and Hammig (2009) purports that what lecturers do, the support they provide or permit, determines the flexibility of the course and in turn, the likelihood that a greater number of students will be successful. In two of the class sessions observed, the lecturer asked students to describe what they were seeing on the screen for the benefit of the student who had a visual impairment and called aside both the student with a disability and the assigned tutor/assistant to discuss a class activity.

However, there were challenges with involving others, that of the societal culture in relation to persons with disabilities – 'Culturally we have our perspectives about disabilities…we do not embrace, those of us who are persons with disabilities, we discriminate, we stereotype as a culture.' The importance of trying to influence the culture in the class among the students was thought to be important and all the lecturers mentioned seeking ways to positively change the mindset of the members of the class, because of how important it was for others to be supportive of the inclusive environment:

> One thing that don't take money is attitude. It is something that we need to have as staff, and we need to exemplify to our students, because the sense of society is not sensitive, and so we need to be forgiving of them, but also show them a way.

Using and allowing the use of technologies that can assist students with disabilities was considered helpful accommodations

among the lecturers. One of the assistive technologies used was a software called JAWS which translated text to audio. Lecturers found this especially useful. 'Those I have taught, had it (JAWS), and it really works because when it was a take-home assignment that required them to hear what the assignment was, then that's how they did it.' While the use of assistive technology was helpful for out-of-class or take-home activities and assignments, not all students had the software and depended on the services of the OSSS or what may be available in the library, which meant that they had to be on campus to complete their assignment. However, one lecturer recounted being able to get a short-term loan support from the OSSS for in-class use: 'I was able to then call OSSS, and they were able to arrange for a computer with JAWS on it to be placed in the lab where one of the modules that required [a] computer was to be.' That arrangement, however, could only be accommodated and provided for a three-week period at the end of the semester. Paul (2000) supports and encourages having special equipment in the classroom and saw this as critical in creating an inclusive learning environment that benefits all students. Lecturers supported using technology in the department – 'The department, administratively (is) to ensure that all the facilities that are possible and helpful to the student are in place.' Computer with the JAWS software is not a standard available facility in classrooms (labs) in departments, and this was thought as helpful to support the in-class teaching and learning activities. T. Ellis (2017) also reported the suggestion coming directly from a student with visual impairment for there to be a computer in the department with the JAWS software for students to have access to.

The accommodation services that came through the OSSS represent the formal institutional support UWI provides to accommodate student with disabilities in mainstream classes. One of the common concerns identified by all the lecturers was not being informed beforehand of students with disabilities

being in their classes. 'I was not warned or anything' or 'no one…had bothered to advise me that I was going to be teaching a [student with visual impairment].' The communication from the OSSS to the department was thought to be slow in coming. Further, when there was communication from the OSSS, it was when the student with a disability had a formal examination. The preference among the lecturers was for communication to be earlier – 'Prior warning should be given so that the lecturer can be on the lookout for students and give them more support.'

While all the lecturers used and appreciated the services provided by the OSSS, the general view was that lecturers needed more support from the university. All indicated that they were not aware of UWI providing any training or professional development programme that would prepare lecturers for teaching students with disabilities. 'I have not gotten any support from the university in relation to training, in relation to guidance on how to deal with students with any type of impairment.' Florian (2012) points out that lecturers were not sufficiently prepared in teacher training colleges to deal with student diversity and disability in the typical classroom. The feeling was that of being unprepared – 'we are prepared for the student who doesn't have any impairment or learning disability, that is what we are prepared for, so we are unable to cater to a wide variety of needs. We are just not equipped for that,' and 'the lecturers need I think, tips, guidelines, sessions that will bring our awareness to a higher level, so that we are meeting the need of all people.'

'We are not afraid, apprehensive I think is the word, we are apprehensive to widen the doors of the university to accept a varied number of disabilities.' While some lecturers expressed this as a fear, many had a desire and openness to being educated and receive training – 'A lot can happen if we are educated, we are educators, but we still need to be educated.' For this to happen, however, there was also need for clear action by the University that indicates that lecturers who teach in the diverse

and inclusive environment are valued – 'I recommend for the lecturers, that the University takes the time and put an investment in equipping us to become better lecturers to that diverse group, we definitely need that.' Not all lecturers felt that teaching was valued by the institution administration or given recognition or support – 'You have people who are passionate about teaching, but the university don't value that, they don't value teaching, they have it as part of their mission, but it is not valued.' Orr and Hammig (2009) argued that institutional support is essential, and universities need to offer opportunities for faculty to receive needed training, and the university needs to change how it values pedagogical skills. Orr and Hammig (2009) also argued that it is only when institutions of higher learning recognize the inherent value of teaching philosophies and inclusive pedagogy that are geared towards inclusion and diversity, and provide adequate support for their execution, will widespread progress in equity access and inclusion be made.

Significance of the Study

There is available literature which provides useful information of lecturers' views on the inclusive education environment as well as what is expected and involved; however, most of that literature comes from research done outside of the Caribbean context and region. This study, although small-scale and specific to one Caribbean university and a single department of that university, will contribute to filling this gap in available literature from the Caribbean region.

The study will also provide useful information about inclusive pedagogic approaches that decision makers at the department level of UWI can encourage, to foster an inclusive environment that is supportive of all the players in the teaching and learning environment. This can feed into policy development and operational practices and procedures at the level of the department.

The study is also significant to the higher level of the university's administration, as the information provided could be used to strengthen existing and proposed institutional policies that supports inclusive education practice that would reflect its stated core value of diversity. The UWI administration may also be able to gain greater buy-in from lecturers for its disability policy, if the policy also reflects the views of the lecturers, who interact directly with the students in the diverse and inclusive classrooms.

Limitations

The study looked for evidence of the UDL principles through a phenomenological research design. A qualitative research design such as this is generally considered to be limited in its use of the typical scientific standards of verification and therefore the outcome cannot be generalized. The study was therefore 'boxed-in' to the experiences and perspectives of six lecturers and specific to one department in its attempt to explore the creation of an inclusive educational environment. This limits the extent to which it can be applied to the whole university and may be considered subjective. However, as Mack (2010) argues, because this type of research pulls on data directly from the participants experiencing the situation in a particular site and setting as well as in a specific period, it can deliberately intervene in the research setting to achieve change or improvement.

Another limitation may be that the UDL is not Caribbean based and therefore would not have considered that social context and organizational reality. Mack (2010) noted that a framework and research design may neglect to acknowledge the political and ideological influences on knowledge and social reality. However, looking for evidence of the UDL in the creation of an inclusive education environment from the experiences and perspectives of the lecturers in the Caribbean does not negate the usefulness that the rich data collected can provide. The data was

used to confirm or refute the usefulness of the UDL model in the Caribbean context and revealed areas for further research in the Caribbean on creating an inclusive education environment. The outcome of the study could also contribute to the development of related policy within the department and UWI generally.

The limitations of the phenomenological research design to identify use of the UDL framework and principles for inclusive education and pedagogies, do not weaken their use. Atieno (2009) purports that if the purpose is to learn from the participants the way they experience a phenomenon, the meanings they put on it, and how they interpret what they experience, the researcher needs methods that will allow for discovery. According to Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), gaining an understanding of how teachers enrich and extend what is ordinarily available in a classroom lesson or activity offers an alternative perspective by which to consider inclusive education.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The views and experiences of these six lecturers at this Caribbean university add more voices to the discourse about inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy, towards an education accessible to all and embracing human diversities. The lecturers who participated in the study all reported that their experience with teaching students with disabilities was good – 'Oh, it's been a very good experience.' They learnt from the experience and found it empowering – 'Let me tell you why it is empowering; it challenges me to find new ways and that is important.' The teaching philosophies were student-centred, and the evidence of this philosophical position came out in the various teaching styles and practices used in this department. The teaching approaches which accommodated the student with disabilities mirrored the principles of the UDL framework of multiple presentations, expressions, and engagements. This gives strong support to the effectiveness of the UDL model and approach, even if used

unknowingly, to create the inclusive education environment in this department of UWI.

The adaptions to pedagogy towards being inclusive, which led to the principles associated with the UDL being used were however reactive, situational and not without challenges such as class size and available assistive technologies within the department. The recommendation then is for departments to consider small class sizes, especially if the required time and attention is to be given to students with a disability. Additionally, departments should install assistive technology such as JAWS on computers that are accessible and available for in-class work. Finally, while there is need for improvement in communication flow between the relevant offices about students with disabilities, what was important and critical is for a review of the curriculum towards making it more inclusive and anticipating a diverse classroom, so lecturers can prepare from the very outset for a diverse classroom – 'that we have a more inclusive curriculum or way of expressing it and finding a way.' To this end, the UDL framework and related principles that are fundamentally student-centred and built around learning objectives and outcomes for the learner should be considered for adaption to the curriculum design.

The disability policy being proposed by the UWI refers to working with lecturers and training of staff. The UWI needs to show that it values teaching and lecturers, especially those who have adapted and are using inclusive pedagogic approaches and would therefore already be demonstrating the core value of diversity through being welcoming and open to teaching students with a disability. An investment in the training and professional development of lecturers in how to teach students with disabilities is one of the main institutional support mechanisms called for by the lecturers in this study. Therefore, the UWI should ensure that the relevant department responsible for professional development offers this type of training.

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Chapter 7

Promoting Inclusive Education through National Assessments: Required Caribbean Efforts

Bephyer Parey

Introduction

There is a growing literature on the importance of accessible national assessments in improving inclusive education. In places like the US, national tests are accessible to various subpopulations of children, including those with disabilities. These assessments provide meaningful information, such as whether access and high-quality instruction have been achieved, which leads to improvements in the inclusive education system. In the Caribbean, such endeavours are lacking. In fact, many efforts to include Caribbean children with disabilities in respective education systems seem futile. This chapter highlights four recommended practices to promote inclusive education in the Caribbean. These are a shift from special education to inclusive education, the provision of accommodations to ensure the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools, increased access to the general education curriculum, and the adoption of a broader view of inclusive education. Several recommendations are made based on the literature supporting Caribbean children with disabilities gaining access to national tests and an equal and quality education endorsed by the Conventions on the Rights of the Child and on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Background

Global strides to promote the right of the child to education on an equal opportunity basis started in 1990 with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the establishment of Education for All (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO] 1994; United Nations 1990). Following this, the Salamanca Statement of 1994 promoted inclusive education (UNESCO 1994). Although schools were expected to be expanded to include all children despite any differences, more than thirty years later, inclusive education is still unrealized, and the levels of progress vary globally. Furthermore, sovereign states in the Caribbean (referred to hereafter as the Caribbean) seem to lag on the inclusive education agenda, with various levels of commitment towards inclusive education in the different nations. While there are many constraints to inclusive education in the Caribbean, this chapter focuses on the use of standardized national assessments to promote inclusive education and highlights issues requiring attention in the region to ensure universal access to national assessments. More specifically, this chapter provides a brief overview of national assessments in the US and Australia before presenting four recommended practices to facilitate engagement among diverse learners in national assessments in the Caribbean.

Standardized national assessments are an important part of education systems. The information collected via assessments are used to describe the status of students and schools at a national level, for accountability purposes, and for designing educational policies (Klenowski and Wyatt-Smith 2012; Smith and Douglas 2014). The US are the forerunners in including students with disabilities in accountability processes. At first, students with disabilities were excluded from national assessments and accountability systems in the US. In fact, K. S. McGrew et al. (1992) reports that the education system excluded forty to fifty per cent of students with disabilities were excluded from

various points in the education system at some point, including the development of assessment instruments and the reporting of results. Reasons for the exclusion of student with disabilities included concerns of overall lower school performance, invalidity of assessments, and perceived discomfort for students with disabilities (Elliott et al. 2000; Kettler and Elliott 2010). Over time, the need to also account for the education of these students gained recognition. Several legislations thereafter endorsed access to the general education curriculum and participation with reasonable individualized accommodations in associated assessments for children with disabilities (Elliott et al. 2000; Kettler and Elliott 2010). These were the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (reauthorized in 2004) and the Leave No Child Behind Act of 2001. Resultantly, there have been reported increases in participation and performance of students with disabilities (Thurlow 2007). Moreover, M. L. Thurlow (2007) shares that inclusive accountability requirements have led to improved test accommodations, instructional methods for children with severe cognitive disabilities, and assessments for all students in general.

A case in point for having national assessments as part of its accountability system is Australia. More specifically, it has established a National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) with legislation and policy supporting inclusive assessment for all (Davies 2012). Standardized national tests in reading, writing, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and numeracy started in 2008 (Davies 2012). The Australian government saw the development; Klenowski and Wyatt-Smith 2012). Development of national and school-level assessments was seen as necessary to inform future teaching practices and to measure student achievement against national standards to improve student outcomes (Davies 2012; Klenowski and Wyatt-Smith 2012). Davies (2012) shares that even though legislation supports the assessment of all students under the NAPLAN

programme, children with disabilities and special needs are exempted or withdrawn from the exam. No data are gathered for these students; exempted students with disabilities are reported as having below the national minimum standard, and withdrawn students with disabilities are reported among students recorded as absent or suspended (Davies 2012). Based on lessons from the US, Davies (2012) identified the need to expose all children to the general education curriculum, to expand testing accommodations to support more students, and to change existing tests or possibly develop new tests to reduce access barriers in Australia.

A prerequisite to inclusion in national assessment is the opportunity for all students to learn the assessment material (Thurlow 2007; Davies 2012). Over the years, there has been an increasing number of children with disabilities in regular schools. However, the number of special classes within regular schools has also been increasing (Tomlinson 2012). Notably, R. Slee (2011) argues that special education, whether occurring in separate institutions or within regular settings, is based on traditional conception of disability. Here disability is seen as an innate problem contrary to the social conception promoted by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) where disability is seen because of social restrictions (Barnes 2000; United Nations 2006). Importantly, the dominant global education ideology according to the Salamanca Statement is that every child should have the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning within an education system designed to accommodate diversity (UNESCO 1994). A first recommendation in including children with disabilities in national assessments would be to shift support from special education schools and classes to inclusive education (Parey 2020).

Caribbean states (except for St Lucia where ratification is outstanding) have signed and ratified the UNCRPD, where article 24 refers specifically to the right of the child to education

(United Nations 2006). Governments are, however, only expected to make accommodations that are reasonable and not beyond available resources (United Nations 2006). A noteworthy point is that special education schools and special education classes within regular settings also require resources. B. Parey (2020) suggested that Trinidad and Tobago can achieve much if it redistributes special education resources to inclusive goals and it transitions children from segregated schools to more inclusive settings. This step is moreover appropriate since teachers in Parey's (2019) study specifically iterated the need for government actions to align with national policy and education documents. For example, Trinidad and Tobago committed to the inclusive education agenda when it signed the Dakar Framework for Action (Ministry of Education 2004), yet it committedly disburses its resources to projects not aligned with inclusive education goals such as homes and schools for single disability types (Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago 2017). This gap between policy and practice is arguably Caribbean-wide. To this end, M. Amadio (2009) states that one challenge of inclusive education in the Caribbean is the disparity between the principles of international and national documents and actual actions. It therefore requires urgent effort to decrease the gap between policy and practice.

A. Armstrong et al. (2007) explores a partial withdrawal programme at Bocage School in St Lucia, which accommodates students of various potentials. Both children with special education needs and advanced learners are withdrawn from their regular classes to engage in several activities which brings them up to their grade level or fosters continuous stimulation (Armstrong et al. 2007). While the authors recognize the possibility of exclusion since the students are withdrawn from their regular classroom, the programme benefits both the students and the regular teacher, and the exclusion is only partial since the special education teacher also visits the classroom to work with students of the programme during their regular classes (Armstrong et al.

2007). This partial withdrawal programme serves as evidence that inclusive education is possible in Caribbean countries despite resource constraints.

T. Mushoriwa (2001) highlights that inclusive education has been practised as simply inclusion in the classroom, with no effort regarding social and academic inclusion. Importantly, following from the Salamanca Statement, inclusive education means simultaneously accommodating differing needs of students, and not just promoting access and counting the presence of children with disabilities in the classroom but maximizing their participation within the education system (Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre 2002). It follows then that ways to maximize participation is necessary for inclusive education. Accommodations for the maximum participation of students with disabilities is another crucial step towards making national tests accessible. M. L. Thurlow (2007) establishes that children with various disabilities can meet the academic standards of the regular education system if the accommodations are in place to support their learning. There are three types of accommodations according to R. Yeo and K. Moore (2003): attitudinal, environmental, and institutional. Attitudinal accommodations refer to attitudes towards marginalized or often excluded groups, environmental accommodations relate to the environment, and institutional accommodations refer to legislation and policy. Teachers' attitudes towards including children with disabilities have been examined by Caribbean scholars, but they have been limited to just Trinidad, Barbados, and Haiti. Teachers in Haiti had a moderate level of acceptance of students with disabilities (Dupoux et al. 2006) while Parey (2019), Blackman et al. (2012), and Conrad and Brown (2011) reported ambivalence among teachers towards including children with disabilities in Trinidad and Barbados.

Researchers identified several reasons for the ambivalence of Trinidadian, including a lack of the professional development

among teachers (Parey 2019). Parey (2019) examined perceived self-efficacy among primary and secondary schoolteachers in Trinidad and reported moderate self-efficacy among them, with the lowest self-efficacy scores related to creating an inclusive environment. Unfortunately, self-efficacy studies for other Caribbean countries are non-existent, but S. Blackman et al. (2017), S. Blackman et al. (2012), S. Blackman and D. A. Conrad (2011), and E. Dupoux et al. (2006) discuss the importance of teacher training in inclusive education in Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and Haiti. Armstrong et al. (2007) reported that primary and secondary schoolteachers from Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines indicated that they were not equipped to teach children with special educational needs owing to the inadequacy of teacher education programmes. Importantly, Parey (2019) recommends that teacher education programmes should arguably increase knowledge of and exposure to various disability types. Moreover, these programmes might boost teachers' self-efficacy by educating them on various inclusive instructions that can be used in the classroom, promoting effective collaboration techniques for fostering harmonious relationships with other professionals and parents, and using effective management strategies regarding students' behaviours (Parey 2019). Regression results in Parey (2019) indicated the importance of completing modules in inclusive education for improving attitudes and lowering concerns among teachers in Trinidad regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities in schools. Notably, trained regular teachers are just one type of human resources needed for inclusive education. Parey (2020) also identified school aides, para-professional staff (speech therapist, occupational therapist, and physiotherapist), sign language interpreters, qualified special education teachers, social workers, and guidance counsellors as important in inclusive education systems both in terms of quantity and quality.

In Trinidad, Parey (2020) examined environmental and institutional accommodations and revealed that existing environmental accommodations, law, and policy do not fully support the inclusion of children with disabilities in Trinidad. Very few schools in Trinidad had the qualified human resources, educational materials, physical access, supportive learning systems, and supportive school policies and rules required for including children with disabilities (Parey 2020; Blackman et al. 2017; 2018; Conrad and Brown 2011). M. Davies (2012) shares that education standards (in several areas including participation) were legalized (through the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Disability Standards for Education 2005) in Australia and resultantly, students with disabilities are entitled to participate equally as students without disabilities. The education provider is expected to make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities to participate in learning experiences including assessment. It requires stronger legislation in some Caribbean countries as current laws do not explicitly support the inclusion of children with disabilities in schools. As an example, the Education Act of Barbados states that schoolchildren may be exempted from compulsory attendance at school if they are receiving special education (Barbados Education Act 1997). Parey (2020) states that the recommendations entrenched within the UNCRPD should be translated into national legislation to avoid challenges with the enforcement of inclusive practices. The author wrote about Trinidad, but stronger legislation in the Caribbean would improve inclusive education outcomes. Moreover, the legislation in the US and Australia are good examples of the language needed to ensure children with disabilities are included in the education system.

Testing accommodations go hand in hand with accessible national assessments. However, while there is a growing literature on testing accommodations (Lewandowski et al. 2015; Royer and Randall 2012; Fuchs et al. 2005; Sireci et al. 2005;

Bolt and Thurlow 2004; Thurlow et al. 2003), for the Caribbean region, research on these accommodations is non-existent. In terms of policies, for Trinidad, Parey (2020) highlighted the need for national discourses to move beyond access to maximum participation. More specifically, the 2017–22 Draft Education Policy Paper for Trinidad and Tobago only speaks of providing access for students with disabilities (Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Education 2018). The status of policy documents for other Caribbean states are indefinite (M. Williams 2019; R. Williams 2019).

Emphasis is placed on universal access to education, however, access to the curriculum requires further attention (Amadio 2009). In this regard, a third recommendation would be education reform. Parey (2019) indicates that for secondary schoolteachers in Trinidad there is a focus on academic achievement. Armstrong et al. (2007) identify a similar issue for Eastern Caribbean countries. Thus, the inclusion of children with disabilities in schools seems like a hindrance to the goal of academic excellence. Notably, J. Elliott et al. (2000) argue that children with disabilities would only be included in education reforms if they are part of the accountability system. If they are not given access to the general curriculum and cannot take part in the national assessments and accountability systems, then there is little hope for an education system with students with disabilities. Armstrong et al. (2007) state that the curriculum for children with disabilities in the Caribbean is based on functionality which emphasizes vocational skills for them, and vocational education is separate from the general education curriculum. In countries like Trinidad and Tobago, the Ministry of Education explicitly acknowledges a disparity in curriculum for special and regular schools (2004). It requires more efforts on the part of governments to ensure all children have access to the general education curriculum to promote inclusive education in the Caribbean.

The lack of access to the curriculum has huge implications. There is a challenge to produce persons equipped for the workplace in the Caribbean, especially those from marginalized groups including persons with disabilities (Lochan, 2000). A re-examination of the school system to ensure an equipped labour force including persons from marginalized groups, such as those with disabilities is recommended (Lochan, 2000). Specifically, S. Lochan (2000, 34) encourages the use of a mixed curriculum related to both academia and work coupled with a curriculum that promotes 'a stronger sense of self-affirmation and cultural confidence'. This type of education reform is arguably required to ensure that the potential of students with disabilities and students from other marginalized groups is maximized in the inclusive education system. The curriculum also must be tailored to ensure various disability types have access. Armstrong et al. (2007), for example, reports that the Office of Education Reform Unit has rewritten the primary school mathematics and language arts curriculum for the Eastern Caribbean so that children with special needs could also achieve a set of core learning outcomes.

A final recommendation would be to expand the view of inclusive education. Amadio (2005) shares that the target group for inclusive education in many Caribbean countries are persons with disabilities and persons with special education needs. The view of inclusive education is not comprehensive in that little emphasis is placed on the poor, rural populations, drop-outs, persons without schooling, illiterate, and migrants (Amadio 2005). As illustrations, poor persons may be excluded entirely from the education system or, as UNESCO (1996; as cited in Armstrong et al. 2007, 74) shows, persons experiencing poverty are likely to regress academically and require special education attention while at school, resulting in their exclusion from the parts of the education system with the most opportunities for maximum participation. A comprehensive view is important in many Caribbean nations such as Trinidad and Tobago where

many migrant Venezuelan children now reside. Importantly, intersectionality is recognized as a crucial lens for analysing deeply entrenched educational equities (Annamma et al. 2013) and expanding the view of inclusive education means children with disabilities with intersecting identifiers such as socio-economic status, race, etc., could also access equal and quality education. Interestingly, Armstrong et al. (2007) spoke about the need to harmonize the activities by various ministries, including Social Services, Health, and Transport, explaining that such multi-sectorial planning could ensure inclusion of various marginalized groups in the education system.

This chapter highlights four issues regarding recommended practices to promote inclusive education in the Caribbean, namely, a shift from special education to inclusive education, the provision of accommodations to ensure the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools, increased access to the general education curriculum, and adoption of a broader view of inclusive education. The recommendations here are not stand-alone items. For example, access to curriculum depends on teachers being sufficiently educated to implement the curriculum (Armstrong et al. 2007), which means efforts should simultaneously be placed on education reform and the professional development of teachers and other human resources. For education accountability systems and by extension inclusive education systems in the Caribbean to improve, concurrent efforts in the highlighted areas above are needed.

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Chapter 8

An Inclusive Jamaica for the Deaf Community: A Situational Analysis (Kingston and St Andrew)

Shauna-Kaye McArthur, Tisha N. Ewen-Smith, and Jessica A. Scott

Introduction

Jamaica has shown an increased willingness to support persons with disabilities over the past decades and was among the first signatories to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2007 (United Nations 2006). However, have these efforts led to an inclusive deaf-friendly space for members of the Jamaican deaf community? Given that the deaf community has unique complex multilingual and cultural needs (Parks, Epley, and Parks 2011), efforts for inclusion must consider these needs.

Using a qualitative design, focus groups and interviews were conducted with members of the Jamaican deaf community. This chapter will discuss the findings on the milestones that Jamaica has achieved on a macro and micro level within the past twenty years to ensure it is a deaf-friendly, inclusive society. These include emerging legislative framework, social security provisions for deaf and hard of hearing citizens, increased deaf engagement, and donor funding for special projects.

Gaps discussed include failure to recognize Jamaican Sign Language as an official language; inadequate legislation;

low educational outcomes at various levels; inadequate communication access and participation at national and social events.

Introduction

The Jamaican Deaf Context

Over the past decades, Jamaica has been making a positive move toward supporting persons with disabilities by being a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994), and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2007. Inclusiveness of persons with disabilities was made even clearer with the passing of the Disabilities Act in 2014, including disability in the country's Vision 2030 plan, and designing a Special Education Policy.

Statistical data shows that Jamaica's population stands at approximately 2.7 million people, with fifty-four thousand being the deaf. About 2.7 per cent of the population has some level of hearing loss. However, the number of those that constitute the deaf community is not known. The Jamaica Association of the Deaf (JAD) recorded that in 2012–14, 1,213 adults and 519 children were diagnosed with hearing loss through its hearing clinic, and 67 per cent of this group experienced mild to moderate loss, while 33 per cent had severe to profound loss (The Planning Institute of Jamaica 2015).

Padden and Humphries (2005) defined members of the deaf community as members of a minority cultural group with their own norms, shared experiences, and use of a signed language (as cited in Brathwaite 2015, 20). Jamaica has made moves toward making the society inclusive of persons with disabilities. However, given the unique language and cultural needs of the deaf, some of these moves do not complement these needs of the deaf community (Laur 2017, 36). To better understand this phenomenon, a situational analysis of Jamaica's level of inclusion

was conducted with members of the deaf community in Kingston and St Andrew to investigate their perspectives of Jamaica's efforts in this regard. This chapter will discuss the findings of the perspectives of the milestones that Jamaica has reached on a macro and micro level within the past twenty years regarding international standards, local policies, and practices. These include emerging legislative framework, supportive programmes and environment, access to education, and advances in deaf education, social security provisions for deaf and hard of hearing citizens' barriers to inclusion, and donor funding for special projects.

Holistic Inclusion of Persons With Disabilities

D. Anastasiou and J. M. Kauffman (2013) cite some main tenets of the Social Model of Disability as differentiation between impairments and disabilities. They posit that a disability has its origin in social structures and that disabled persons are an oppressed group. The discourse in this chapter is premised on these tenets of the Social Model of Disability as opposed to the medical model and agrees with A. Szarkowski (2007) who emphasizes the importance of holding societal structures accountable for their actions against persons with disabilities (as cited in Tregaskis 2004). Szarkowski (2007) encourages continued exploration of the oppressive situation and the involvement of persons with disabilities in creating/changing policies and legislation (142).

According to the United Nations (2016), a society views someone as necessary when it facilitates his or her full participation. This facilitation by the government is especially important to persons with disabilities, a vulnerable group that has long been excluded from leading productive lives in society. However, social inclusion of vulnerable groups must be done right. Social inclusion is achieved when opportunities abound, there is access to resources, their voices are heard, and their

rights are upheld (United Nations 2016, 23). Understanding disability and the issues that disabled people face has grown and continues to improve. The environment, be it physical, social, or attitudinal can either render someone with impairments disabled or engender a context of belonging where one's full participation and inclusion are clear (World Health Organization 2011). S. Smith and N. Chin (2012) reinforced this concept by stating that it is important to consider the built environment, neighbourhood cohesiveness, access to health care, education, and affordable housing, as all these factors combine to shape the health of individual deaf and hard of hearing people as they do hearing people.

Within the Caribbean, little focus has been given to researching and responding to the needs of deaf communities – their languages and cultures (Brathwaite 2014). Deaf and hard of hearing people in the Caribbean face systematic inequalities, many of which have origins in the lack of understanding of their special linguistic and cultural traditions and needs (Brathwaite 2016, 14).

Some factors affecting the deaf community were revealed in several reports, specifically in accessing public services, including the lack of awareness of 'frontline staff' resulting in communication difficulties and failure to provide adequate interpreting services (The British Deaf Association 2014, 8; Citizens Information Board 2017; Canadian Hearing Society 2013; Naseribooriabadi, Sadoughi, and Sheikhtaheri 2017).

The educational system for deaf and hard of hearing children across the world appears to be lagging that of their hearing counterparts. The World Federation of the Deaf (2018) has argued that a 'stronger focus is needed in terms of the recognition and achievement of the human right to sign language in education' (5). There is also a paradigm shift in deaf education towards a bilingual approach over the last decades that calls for teachers competent in a signed language and the simultaneous use of a

sign language and a written language to promote literacy in deaf and hard of hearing students (Hoffmeister and Shantie 2000; Rice 2019).

A situational analysis conducted in Morocco showed gaps and inadequacies in the number of teachers trained in special education and low awareness of disabilities among general education teachers (RTI International 2016). The lack of communication between the hearing teacher and deaf and hard of hearing students has been a common recurrence in deaf education in many Western countries (Van Herreweghe and Vermeerbergen 2010, 134). Closer to home, B. Brathwaite (2015) describes a failure of the school system in the Caribbean to prepare deaf students for successful entry into higher education. This has implications for the number of deaf professionals and academics who can effectively contribute to the policy development for deaf education and nation-building.

International Standards, Policies, and Practices

Of all the vulnerable groups in society, the deaf community is the most excluded because they have difficulty having basic communication with the general hearing population. This is evident in school, home, and community. According to the Citizens Information Board (2017), 'members of the Deaf community experience severe difficulties in accessing public information in their preferred language' (2). Furthermore, deaf and hard of hearing individuals have limited or no access to information that comes through various media without special accommodations (Harvey 2008, 42). Ultimately, they end up being excluded from social, educational, and employment opportunities (The Planning Institute of Jamaica 2015, 25).

The US has done impressive work passing and enacting laws on accessible technology, making access to information and communication for persons with disabilities easier (World Health Organization 2011, 187). These include sections of the

Rehabilitation Act; the Communication Act (1996); Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), and the Television Decoder Act (1990) among others. These legislative frameworks undoubtedly serve as legal precedent to guide how other nations draft policies (World Health Organization 2011, 187).

According to the World Report on Disabilities by WHO (2011), television broadcasters also have a responsibility to provide sign language interpretation for news programmes or other broadcasts. In addition, emergency alerts can be communicated by sound and caption. The report further stated that several European nations including Italy, Finland, and Portugal provide sign language interpreters for news programmes. Asian countries such as Vietnam and Thailand also provide sign language interpretation for deaf and hard of hearing persons. India has a weekly news programme that caters to the deaf community, while China, Japan, and the Philippines encourage television broadcasters to provide such programming. Colombia has enshrined it in law that public television services must include closed captioning, subtitles, and sign language (WHO 2011). In Jamaica, sign language interpretation is provided for live broadcasting of parliamentary procedures, but neither interpretation nor closed captioning is provided for local news programmes.

Several countries, according to RTI International (2016), are looking into the reformation of the education system so it will better suit the 'educational needs of individuals with disabilities' (1). This introspection has sprung from the laws and policy frameworks that are emerging worldwide. There is a plethora of legislation that seeks to protect the rights of the deaf (Laur 2017, 36). As policies increase, the concern regarding the specificity and enforceability of the law to truly ensure equal rights and access by the deaf continue to increase (RTI International 2016, 2; Brathwaite 2015).

Several articles in the UNCRPD (2006) clearly support sign language rights. Sign language has been placed on equal

standing with the spoken languages, and it has been explained that deaf people may choose how they give and receive official communications, including in sign language. The promotion of sign language has also been placed on the government in articles 21e and 24.3b which state that the government has a responsibility to encourage the learning of sign language and promote the linguistic identity of the deaf community (United Nations 2019). In article 23.3, the government is being called out to offer 'early and comprehensive information in services and support to children with disabilities and their families, including information about Deaf culture, sign language and bilingual education' (World Federation for the Deaf 2018).

The arms of the government of Jamaica most concerned with ensuring inclusion in the education and welfare sector are the Ministry of Education and Information (MoEI) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS). They are also responsible for developing policy in this area and have developed the draft Special Education Policy, Language Education Policy (2001) and the Disabilities Act (2014). Specificity and alignment with current best practices and standards remain as issues. For example, the nation's Language Education Policy speaks to 'adequate and appropriate programmes should therefore be available for teacher training in exceptionalities…to include programmes for…the development of competence in Jamaican Sign Language and signed English for teachers' (Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture 2001, 27).

Despite the nation's signatory to the various international agreements/conventions and several legal and policy support for persons with disabilities in Jamaica to include the aforementioned and the Child Care and Protection Act (2004) and the declarations of the National Vision 2030 Development Plan, the question of the society's friendliness toward the deaf still exists.

This chapter will explore the following using a mixed-methods approach:

1. What have been Jamaica's efforts to be more inclusive for deaf and hard of hearing students in the education sector within the past twenty years?

2. What have been Jamaica's efforts to be more inclusive for deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the social welfare sector within the past twenty years?

3. What are the factors affecting the inclusion of deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the education and social welfare sectors in Jamaica?

Methodology

Design

A qualitative approach using focus group discussions and interviews as methods were used to conduct this study. Two focus group sessions were conducted with twenty-three participants who were selected using the convenience sampling approach (See table 8.1 for the demographics of participants). Focus group one was conducted during a reading boot camp for deaf and hard of hearing students and comprised deaf tutors who were involved in the camp activities, while focus group two was conducted at the Knutsford Court Hotel, Jamaica, during a training for deaf adults to become tutors (See appendix 1 for guiding questions). Participants were contacted prior to each session, and all agreed to take participate in the discussions. The purpose of the focus groups and interviews, according to P. Gill et al. (2008), was to probe into participants' experiences and views to understand, in-depth, the progression of the opportunities for the deaf and hard of hearing in the Jamaican society, particularly those in Kingston and St Andrew.

Table 8.1: Participants in Two Focus Groups: 23 Deaf Adults

Gender		Employment Status			
Male	Female	Employed	Self-Employed	Unemployed/ Retired	Student (Post-Secondary level)
11 (48%)	12 (52%)	12 (52%)	1 (4%)	7 (31%)	3 (13%)

Table 8.2: Description of Interviewees

	Gender	Age Group	Years of Employment in Deaf Education	Hearing Status
Respondent 1	Male	45–50 years old	20 years	Profoundly Deaf (from birth)
Respondent 2	Female	35–40	18 years	Profoundly Deaf (from age 3)
Respondent 3	Female	30–35	5 years	Profoundly Deaf (from birth)

Most of the participants (56 per cent) in the focus group discussions were female. Fifty-two per cent of the participants were employed while 31 per cent were unemployed or retired. The other participants were students who were studying at the post-secondary level.

Three profoundly deaf adults were selected for interviews as a purposive sample based on the following factors: age, years of employment within the field of deaf education, and personal histories (See appendix 2 for questions). A description

of the participants who were interviewed is given in table 8.2. Permission to record focus group sessions and interviews was sought prior to the commencement of each session. A fluent Jamaican Sign Language interpreter was used during each discussion and interview session to ensure clear and accurate interpretations as the researcher used spoken English to conduct the sessions. A note-taker was also present at each session who tracked key points for further discussion. Both focus group sessions and two of the three interview sessions were video recorded and fully transcribed based on the voicing of the interpreters for each session. As a result of time inconvenience, the third interviewee agreed to receive interview questions and gave a written response for each question. Responses from interviews and discussions were initially grouped based on the general topics: education and social welfare. Transcripts were then constantly reviewed and compared, as was recommended by B. G. Glaser and A. L. Strauss (1967) to find recurring data. Thematic categories were then identified, a summary statement made for each element and transcripts re-group under each statement, appropriately, for analysis (Burnard et al. 2008; Strauss and Corbin 1998).

Results

Two focus groups were organized to generate discussions about the progression of Jamaica toward a fully inclusive society for the deaf community with a focus on education and social welfare. When asked if they thought that Jamaica was inclusive for deaf persons, the focus group participants' and the other interviewees' responses were similar. They strongly felt that despite much effort, the Jamaican society is still not fully inclusive to the needs of the deaf. One participant expressed, 'It's a yes and no. Reason being, [in] some organizations and some public areas, the deaf are included but others [are] not.'

Nevertheless, they do acknowledge a glimmer of hope given the marginal increase in the efforts made toward Jamaica a more inclusive society for the deaf, despite several critical elements which deter the nation becoming a fully deaf-friendly society. One interviewee said 'Today, the country is becoming more cognizant of the services and accommodations required to include the deaf as equal contributors to the national development of Jamaica.'

The responses from the focus group discussions and interviews are presented in themes and are in either narrative format or direct quotations. The results are presented in the research questions below:

What are Jamaica's successful efforts to be more inclusive in the education sector within the past twenty years?

Advancements in Deaf Education

Discussions revealed that over the years, deaf and hard of hearing students have benefited from educational services provided by Jamaica Association for the Deaf, Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf, Abilities Foundation, and Jamaica Christian School for the Deaf. Specifically, participants noted that partnerships with other professional organizations and agencies have resulted in improved education for deaf and hard of hearing students in Jamaica. One participant said specifically, 'JAD helps Deaf Schools through Partnership.' This was further reflective in their response to whether they have benefited from funded programmes by international and local donors 'USAID helps us.' This is likely to be in response to the current USAID-sponsored three-and-a-half-year Partnership for Literacy Enhancement for the Deaf (PLED) project, the funding for which supports a variety of partnerships within Jamaica and internationally. Another respondent indicated:

> ...the projects facilitated by the JAD through education and deaf community development with regards...the recognition

and inclusion of JSL as a first language for the [students] in schools for the deaf, which has then been recognized and accepted by the Ministry of Education at the national level, and the development of JSL resources to support the bilingual approach to deaf education.

…The success stories book series written and published by the JAD helped to establish a sense of pride and confidence in me and others.

Participants expressed that 'improvements in the JSL curriculum' have resulted from these partnerships. This is about the development of the Jamaican Sign Language Grammar Curriculum (JSLGC), created under the USAID-sponsored PLED project, which gives structure to the JSL and the 'involvement of DCFs [Deaf Culture Facilitators]' in the classrooms at the schools for the deaf.

Regarding teacher attitudes about JSL, one participant noted that, 'Teachers accept JSL and use it to teach the kids.' This was not commonly the case prior to the partnerships noted above.

Participation of the deaf and hard of hearing students in regional examinations was cited as an improvement, as several decades ago, not all schools for the deaf at the high school-level offered deaf students the opportunity to take regional examinations. One participant said 'The Ministry of Education is open to offer CXC exams to the deaf students. So, because of that I am truly happy. I've seen great improvement.'

Improved Access to Tertiary Institutions

Some participants believed that there have been improvements in the accommodations being provided at the tertiary level, particularly the University of Technology, with one saying, 'The University of Technology is to be applauded for being the first university to cover the interpreting costs for the deaf to pursue undergraduate studies there.' Another expressed that 'I feel comfortable at UTech. They try to employ deaf tutors there, like

myself. I feel really comfortable there. And the universities are open where deaf can now access education.'

There has been a steady increase in the number of deaf and hard of hearing students enrolled at tertiary level institutions.' Currently, there are approximately ten deaf and hard of hearing students enrolled in at least three major universities/colleges in Kingston – The University of the West Indies, University of Technology, and Edna Manley College of Visual and Performing Arts. This has the potential to not only improve significantly both the educational experiences of deaf adults in Jamaica, but also the potential for benefit in terms of future employment.

What are Jamaica's successful efforts to be more inclusive in the social welfare sector within the past twenty years?

There was a consensus during interviews and focus groups that there has been an increase in providing welfare benefits evidenced by more supportive programmes, increased deaf engagement, and improved access to communication and daily services.

Supporting Programmes and Environments

There has been the implementation of programmes by the government, private, civil, and religious sectors. Among these organizations are the Programme for the Advancement of Health and Education (PATH), National Housing Trust (NHT), Deaf Church, and small business loans from some financial institutions. Four participants expressed the following:

> 'NHT has been more open to the deaf to acquire houses.'

> 'For example, for the National Housing Trust, if you want to buy a house, I have seen where they provide a 5 per cent discount for persons with disability.'

> 'I praise [Prime Minister] Andrew Holness for housing.'

> 'There is the PATH programme. Some students get sponsorship. Some persons get insurance, a cheaper insurance because they are from JAD.'

Secure housing is an essential issue, and from the responses provided by participants it appears, through the efforts of these organizations there is greater opportunity for deaf adults in Jamaica to acquire adequate housing.

The JAD and the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities (JCPD), which is an agency under the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, anchored public education efforts regarding the needs of the deaf:

> With the engagement of the JAD and the JCPD as well as other disability bodies, there has been a variety of public education activities to raise awareness of the need to accommodate the needs of diverse persons, including all persons with disabilities and persons without disabilities among the public and private sectors – including the government. As a result, Jamaica has slightly progressed towards improved inclusion.

> For example, the JCPD, they provided access to the deaf. They provided us with IDs. We have become members, and if you are a member, you have access to some discounts provided. If you want to go on the bus, you have to prove using your ID that you are a person with disabilities, so there are some benefits.

Brief mention was made of the nation's special provision for employment of deaf youth through the NYS programme, 'NYS has [a] course for Deaf Adults.' While it is noteworthy that much more discussion was not given to this area, the nation appears to be heading in a direction like that of Russia, where deaf people are granted privilege in comparison with other disability and minority groups in that nation (Szarkowski 2007, 137).

Private sector companies were listed among those providing services to accommodate the needs of the deaf community in finance and utility provisions. Specifically, the respondents noted: 'The deaf persons have access to small business loans.'

The JCPD has been providing such access to the deaf for several decades. However, for deaf individuals to now have enhanced access to these types of resources notes a marked improvement in their ability to support themselves through self-employment.

Access to Day-to-Day Services

The participants reflected positively on conducting day-to-day business with different service providers in the fields of banking, health care, and application for social services:

> For my personal doctor, I am comfortable going there. Why? Because he communicates with me. He tries to sign. He gives me information and tells me how to care for my body. That allows me [to] feel as equal as others. It doesn't allow me to feel different. That's why I feel comfortable going there. I can go there every day.

This individual reported a positive experience with the medical establishment which suggests promise in this person's relationship with his doctor. There are other agencies that participants felt were working towards being inclusive for deaf individuals, with varying degrees of success. Two participants said the following:

> 'The first thought is the Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency (PICA) where I went to apply for and collect my passport in 2018. They had call numbers, which was helpful for me to know whose turn it was to meet with the agent.'

> 'JPS [Jamaica Public Service Company] has been doing a good job with communication access.'

Having a visual number displayed made visiting PICA a more inclusive experience for the first participant, rather than having a number called orally.

> The NIS Office on Rippon Road also had call numbers to receive NIS applications from the applicants when I last visited it a month ago. It is a good attempt at inclusion, but they also still call out names for the applicants' receipt of the NIS card, which suggests it is not adequately inclusive for the deaf as it is still auditory-oriented.

Unlike PICA, the NIS did not appear to have visual indications for whose turn it was to be served, despite the waiting system being otherwise largely the same. 'I am only comfortable to go to the JAD because they are always ready with access to communication, and they provide leadership and support for the deaf. So, I'm most comfortable going there.'

Unsurprisingly, places that are designed for deaf individuals appear to be the most positive experiences for deaf adults in Jamaica. This is likely because communication needs are at the forefront of such organizations, as well as the presence of fluent signers.

> The driver's licences examination depots, being guided by the past legislation, refused to admit deaf applicants and the issuance of driver's licences to successful applicants for numerous years. After endless advocacy efforts of deaf advocates, the country finally passed the law to permit the issuance of driver's licences to successful applicants. However, the legal issue remains that deaf applicants cannot apply for a general driver's licences, although I have seen in some situations where some examination depots make exceptions.

Participants shared that they were most comfortable conducting business with banks and other agencies that provided a visible number system. They expressed that it was 'helpful…to know whose turn it was to meet with the agent.' The banking industry, over time, 'improved its services in accommodating the diverse needs compared to their restricted allowances for deaf individuals to communicate with them in the past.' They agreed that '[banks]…set up an app for ease of access,' including establishing online interactive systems which eradicates the need 'to call a specific number' to activate services such as credit card activations.

Access to Communication

Participants shared that they have also 'seen some more interpreters' working with the JAD to provide access to communication at general functions and in the court system:

'Lately, I have seen where the national government makes greater efforts to have interpreting services available for their national/ political events and their televised/broadcasted parliament meetings.'

Another stated that 'Also, at the court, they have also hired interpreters. As deaf persons we have a deaf interpreter and a hearing interpreter. We have now realized that they are now recognizing the deaf.'

According to respondents, making interpreting generally available for important national events and in the courts is a necessary step towards inclusion.

Increased Deaf Engagement

Another theme noted by participants increased engagement of deaf persons in a variety of settings. For instance, there has also been a noticeable increase in the deaf person's involvement in political activities such as the National Youth Awards and the National Youth Parliament. One interviewee highlighted that 'The Prime Minister's Youth Parliament has...included at least two deaf persons, with interpreting support provided, in their national development discussions and to strengthen their skills in influencing change at the national level.'

Participants expressed that there was an increased engagement of deaf children and youth in various activities to include advocacy groups such as the Youth Ambassador of Commonwealth; Deaf Dance festivals, and 4H Clubs. This was noted by several participants, who shared:

> 'Children are more included.'

> 'I have now realized that for the younger deaf children, they are now being included, meaning that it is not just about the hearing, but the deaf are now [included] in policies being made. They are providing training and are allowing the deaf to do presentations expressing themselves on different topics. So, I have noticed that before there was none, we are starting with the younger deaf children, making them feel included.'

> 'I have seen some improvement. The government has
> provided that, and the MOE are now engaging deaf schools
> when we have national events, for example, at the National
> Stadium where all schools are invited inclusive of the deaf
> schools going there. That was the first experience for me, and
> an interpreter was provided, and I was very impressed.'

These participants note that this increased participation is a change from their own childhood experiences, where such opportunities were presumably limited or even not present at all. They have noted a remarkable change from one generation to the next – from exclusion to inclusion for deaf youth in a range of activities across the country.

Barriers Affecting the Inclusion of Deaf

Participants of FGDs and interviews hold the perspective that 'Jamaica, despite its efforts to apply inclusion of the deaf, is not inclusive of the deaf yet.' The common themes emphasized throughout the interviews and discussions as barriers to inclusion for the deaf included inadequate access to communication and daily services, weaknesses in the current educational system, and a weak legal framework.

Inadequate Access to Communication and Day-to-Day Services

Interacting with essential service providers and those that support day-to-day living have proven to be a significant challenge for many of the participants, which is troubling given the necessity of these services. Despite the improvement in the efforts of organizations to provide the deaf with access to their services, a communication barrier still hinders the effective access to these services.

There is a consensus across the participants that while they recognize positive efforts from many organizations, access to communication and information remained lacking. Participants expressed that conducting business in organizations such as

some banks still poses 'a problem.' One participant said, 'I have to ask one of the staff at JAD to accompany me to assist me in understanding.' Another expressed that 'I still need to make sure that I employ an interpreter who is female and acting as me when doing phone calls on my behalf.'

Also, while the visual number systems to indicate the next person to transact business exist at some agencies, other agencies 'still call out names for the applicant to receive [service]....' Another expressed 'I couldn't hear when the numbers were being called, so that was a bit of a problem for me.' A third interviewee expressed that '...it is not adequately inclusive for the deaf as it is still auditory-oriented.' Language barriers also exist at other agencies which provide critical day-to-day services for people. Critically, this is a continuing problem in accessing health care. 'For the clinics, when it comes to health care, communication access is just awful because there is no interpreter,' one interviewee said. Another added that '[The] deaf community cannot communicate well at the hospitals because there are no interpreters.'

Visiting doctors and hospitals that do not employ interpreters to help communication with deaf patients is a significant barrier to receiving quality medical care.

One interviewee expressed that often he had to 'give up and leave' when shopping and a problem occurred, and he tries to communicate that problem. Others may rely on their hearing family to aid communication, with one participant explaining, 'My husband is hearing, so I often rely on him when it comes to communication access or accessing auditory services.'

One group expressed that when they go on vacation or work at a hotel in Jamaica, they 'realize that the information is limited.' They expressed 'there is nothing there that includes us, no interpreters provided, information is limited, no access to communication there...' One male respondent gave a scenario: 'If the elevator doesn't work, there is a phone that is connected. You have room service. If you want to stay in the room, you can call, and they can bring but how do we access that?'

Discussions about experiences at national events such as the Grand Gala and football games revealed the need for more interpreters to support these events. This will lead to increased participation of deaf at these events. 'I don't really go to those places – I think it's not for me. It is not the place for me because I have no access to communication there...What's the point of going there, if I don't have an interpreter?'

Many also expressed that they do not go to movie theatres because there is no captioning in movies. Additionally, the opportunities to attend university are limited as there is a 'lack of communication at universities' and other tertiary institutions. These barriers are problematic and must be addressed if Jamaica is to continue working towards being an inclusive nation for deaf persons.

Access to Information

Inadequate communication was also demonstrated in deaf persons' inability to access local news programming and emergency helplines. The participants expressed an urgent and desperate call for closed captioning and implementing text helplines. 'If we have a situation or emergency at home, if there is a hurricane coming, we have no internet to give us information, the TV didn't provide captions,' a participant expressed. Others expressed: 'I have family members who are disappointed in the lack of CC for regular local news and televised programmes and are often resigned to watch cable TV that has better CC services for most channels.'

Not only for emergency information conveyance but also for opportunities to watch programmes that one enjoys, the lack of closed captioning appears to be a frustrating barrier for many participants.

One example of the lack of captioning is this: On the Highway 2000 North-South highway, there is a speaker at the toll card issuing station that welcomes drivers, advises how to collect

the toll cards, and wishes them a safe journey. I drive that way frequently for three years for work commitments and never knew that until last week.

> This quote highlights the differential experience that a deaf person and a hearing person undergoing the same activity may have in some public places.

Solutions to Jamaica Becoming Fully Deaf Friendly

Participants and interviewees felt that improving access to assistive technology and communication support systems would aid the process of Jamaica becoming a fully deaf-friendly society. They provided a few specific suggestions that could improve accessibility to information and services, such as using texting, captioning, and video relay to convey important information.

> 'Texting services for emergency and general support services to be made available for the deaf.'

> 'Captioning to be readily available in movies and videos and any other visual media such as TV.'

> 'Video relay services to make phone calls through interpreters with the availability of video phone devices for the deaf provided whether at a cost or not.'

Using these technologies may allow for better communication between government agencies and the deaf community in Jamaica.

> Participants also noted the need for a stronger focus on JSL in terms of recognition and the provision of interpreters as possible next steps: 'JSL interpreting training services at the tertiary level [is needed] to properly train interested persons for a career in the interpreting field.'

'[I want] JSL to be recognized as one of the languages [of] the country and [be] a requirement [in] all schools of the deaf. JSL [should be seen] as a subject area or a "foreign" language [and] be provided as an option at schools for the hearing.'

The participants believe that improved training for interpreters and recognition of JSL as a national language would provide greater opportunities for more individuals to become fluent language users. This would in turn naturally make society more inclusive.

Limitations to This Study

This research represents an attempt to understand the experiences of deaf persons in a wide variety of sectors in Jamaica. Though it fills a unique need in the research literature, there are some limitations to this study that should be noted. First, the sample size of the research participants could have been higher to reflect a wider cross-section of the population of the deaf community. Specifically, all the interview respondents had a profound hearing loss and communicated using JSL, and therefore their responses may not reflect the experiences of individuals with varying hearing levels and using other communication modalities. Additionally, best practices indicated that the focus group discussions should have been facilitated by someone who is a native user of JSL or competent in using JSL in conversations, rather than these discussions being facilitated through an interpreter. Future research should include native users of JSL in this process. However, despite these limitations, these findings have important implications for deaf individuals, and persons who work with deaf individuals, both in Jamaica and internationally.

Discussion

The results in this research are in line with the deduction that the deaf community is the most excluded group in the society (Planning Institution of Jamaica 2015). However, amid the hindrances experienced by the deaf community, there have been noticeable advancements in deaf education and social welfare over the past twenty years.

Jamaica's Effort towards Inclusion in the Education Sector for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students

Most of the participants indicated that there have been commendable advancements in deaf education over the past few decades. The ongoing work of the JAD was cited as such. The JAD is the oldest non-governmental organization (with charitable status) for the deaf in the Caribbean. Established in 1938 and with one-third of the persons employed to the organization from the deaf community, the JAD provides various services for deaf persons and their families such as hearing screening, general guidance for access to support services and independent living, deaf education, school placement, student sponsorship, school to work transition support, family support and guidance, interpreting services, and advocacy for awareness and access. Educational services for the deaf and hard of hearing are also provided by Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf, the Abilities Foundation, and the Jamaica Christian School for the Deaf. Respondents indicated that the JAD's work with development partners and its efforts to create an environment that is welcoming to deaf persons were factors that they were pleased with.

Secondly, the JAD has implemented several special projects to support deaf education such as the development of Jamaican Sign Language Grammar Curriculum (JSLGC) through the USAID-sponsored project – Partnership for Literacy Enhancement for the Deaf. The JSLGC helps to give language structure for the grammar of the sign language, aids in the students' transition to written English literacy and is a positive development that promotes the language identity of the deaf community. Other local and internationally sponsored projects that supported Jamaican deaf education system over the past two decades include the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica–funded *I'm Deaf Too Book* series, the OAS Project – Language and Literacy

Development for Deaf Children and Youth – and the DeafKidz International/Comic Relief–funded Advancing Deaf Kids Jamaica! Project.

The third point noted as a significant advancement was the inclusion of DCFs serving as language models in schools for the deaf. This, which was an establishment of JAD, was applauded by some respondents, and in keeping with the view of deaf education scholars within and outside of the island (Scott, Dostal, and Ewen-Smith 2019; Soutar 2012; Brathwaite 2015). DCFs are deaf adults who are paired with hearing teachers and function as language and cultural models to help deaf and hard of hearing students establish self-identity, and they make the classroom environment more conducive to effective teaching-learning dynamics. This is important because prior to the addition of the DCF position, virtually all teachers of the deaf were hearing and had varied ability to communicate in JSL. The addition of the DCF into the classroom not only supports language access for deaf and hard of hearing children but also provides them with deaf role models.

Finally, the participants commended the changes at the tertiary level to increase accommodations for persons who are deaf. Advanced education is integral to the upward mobility of many and the improvement in their earning power as well as their ability to fill posts of influence in society which they can use positively to advance their cause. Respondents felt that there was a glimmer of hope regarding deaf and hard of hearing individuals accessing education at the tertiary level, with specific reference to the University of Technology. The results highlight the increase in the number of deaf students matriculating into tertiary institutions due to improvements in accommodation by tertiary institutions. Some tertiary institutions have begun providing the service of Jamaican Sign Language interpreters, which is necessary to bridge the teaching-learning barrier that initially caused the small number of deaf matriculation (World Health

Organization 2011). Other universities such as the University of the West Indies, Mona, and the Edna Manley College of Visual and Performing Arts have also made commendable steps towards enrolling and accommodating deaf and hard of hearing students. The tertiary education sector at large should be encouraged to continue to strengthen its accommodation of the deaf, with other colleges following suit.

Jamaica's Effort to Be More Inclusive in the Social Welfare Sector within the Past Twenty Years

Focus group discussions revealed there has been an increase in welfare benefits through increased deaf engagement, improved access to communication and services for day-to-day living, and supporting programmes. Positive moves have been made in these directions resulting in the interpretation of parliamentary proceedings, increase in the number of visible interpreters and signers and JSL classes, and advocacy efforts with the deaf.

To build relationships, destroy stereotypes and prejudices, engagement is necessary to know people better. This notion appears to have influenced the increased engagement of the deaf through various governance contexts to include Youth Parliament and Youth Ambassador programmes. Deaf Youth representation continues steadily at local and international events such as the Integrated Sports Day by the Council for Voluntary Social Services (CVSS) and in co-curricular activities like the annual Deaf Dance Festival, 4H Club Programme, the Optimist International Communication Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCDHH) and Deaf Sports Jamaica.

Though this is a good start, there are other opportunities to make social welfare more inclusive for deaf individuals in Jamaica. For instance, increased consultations to ensure that programmes respond to their unique needs and then including the deaf and hard of hearing in the policymaking and programme design and

development phase. Closed captioning or interpretation for local news programming should also be provided.

Factors Affecting Inclusion in the Education and Social Welfare Sectors within the Past Twenty Years

The results highlighted several factors that may negatively affect Jamaica's efforts to becoming a truly inclusive society for the deaf. These include inadequate access to communication and services for day-to-day living, weak legislative framework, the current educational system, and negative attitudes and awareness of JSL and deaf culture.

Access to communication is necessary for survival and getting by in everyday life and like the rest of the population, members of the deaf community use different services in society such as education, healthcare, legal, work, and financial services (Laur 2017). Many sign languages are rarely used outside the deaf community, and in most countries the number of hearing people who know sign language remains significantly low. M. Van Herreweghe and M. Vermeerbergen (2010) cite this as one of the principal reasons significant barriers to communication may exist between members of the deaf community and members of the mainstream hearing society. S. Smith and N. Chin (2012) proffered that given the exorbitant costs of accommodations for the deaf to include interpreters, legislation should be changed for the government to absorb these costs through dedicated funding. The cost of interpreting and the availability of adequately trained interpreters are noted as major barriers affecting the use of interpreters within the educational and social systems in Jamaica. A. Laur (2017) refers to some countries refunding to the deaf, the cost of interpreters up to a maximum of five hundred hours per annum. These issues that appear in other nations appear to be similarly challenging in Jamaica.

Being informed affects how decisions are made; therefore, if the deaf persons are not given adequate information, they become vulnerable. The inability of deaf people to access fully the same amount of information and knowledge from their environments as hearing people also has important implications for their employment opportunities and performance (Smith and Chin 2012, 453). Jamaica is woefully lacking support in this area. Common service providers such as hospitals, hotels, supermarkets, banks, airports, transportation centres, government offices, etc., are not positioned to provide full access to information for the deaf. This was evident in the responses from the focus group discussions.

The government has made improvements in how it addresses issues with the deaf community, but they have a far way to go in making life easier for such individuals. Organizers and promoters of national events still are ignorant of how exclusive they are to the deaf community. The deaf community shies away from national activities such as independence galas and political rallies because they do not feel the environment is conducive for their participation, nor are their communication needs considered.

Additionally, the concerns of Jamaican deaf adults regarding the current educational system, including teachers' readiness, signing competence and conversance, and use of the bilingual approach reflect similar perspectives of the deaf community in the Caribbean islands (Brathwaite 2015, 23) and within schools for the deaf in South Africa (Van Herreweghe and Vermeerbergen 2010, 130). Brathwaite (2015) identified these as 'long-standing problems' in the Caribbean within the educational systems for the deaf in the Caribbean (18). However, such practices directly contradict tenets proposed by the World Federation of the Deaf and the UNCRPD. Although observations about DCFs and training opportunities through JAD by respondents are

promising, work needs to continue to ensure JSL competency of teachers of the deaf and teacher candidates.

Notwithstanding the many improvements to advance the cause of the deaf community, discrimination and stereotyping is still a challenge. This study found that attitudes of the populace towards deaf culture and their needs were found lacking and particularly demonstrable in the workplace and at business places. This, it is believed, arises from a lack of knowledge of the unique needs of the deaf community (Brathwaite 2015). Evidence suggests that where the society is exposed to sign language and deaf culture, a significant positive impact on the attitudes towards the deaf follows (Szarkowski 2007, 144).

There was a call among participants for Jamaican Sign Language to truly be recognized as an official language. Given international trends, this is a reasonable expectation (Brathwaite 2015), as this is already practised in many countries globally such as in South Africa (Van Herreweghe and Vermeerbergen 2010, 125) and many others. The JAD currently offers standard JSL training to the public and customized JSL training packages to organizations. More organizations could tap into this resource to increase their employee's exposure to JSL. Increased advocacy by the deaf community to include videos using JSL could also enhance awareness, serving as a catalyst for the advocacy efforts towards recognizing JSL as an official language.

Finally, enforced legislation with clear descriptions and expectations for the deaf community was cited as inadequate, which has the potential to result in human rights violations specific to the deaf, with no repercussions for violators. It appears there is no political will to ensure legislations support the best interest of the deaf. For example, some individuals in the deaf community still have a challenge obtaining general driver's licences because the evaluative framework does not support their disability. However, the nation's appending of its signature to various international agreements such as the Salamanca

Statement and the UNCRPD, as well as the development of its own suite of legislation begs a reflection on this misalignment between policy, practices, and experienced realities. The responses suggest a lack of adequate awareness by the deaf community regarding legislation that governs their rights, and as such the community also needs to be informed about the current laws that affect their well-being.

Although there have been attempts over the years, Jamaica is still falling short of being a truly inclusive society. According to Szarkowski (2007), the factors that support or prohibit persons with disabilities from full participation in society must be considered and understood. This research shows that there is some disparity between the current policy positions of Jamaica and how the deaf community describes their experiences.

If Jamaica is to be more inclusive of the deaf community, several things need to be done in keeping with the findings of this research, international standards, and the social model of disability. Of paramount importance is the need to include the voice of the deaf in the design, development, and implementation of policies and programmes to ensure these reflect their unique needs. Szarkowski (2007) has shown successful measures in Japan where the deaf are being engaged and even employed as policymakers. This would address the need for the deaf community to be more aware of the policies that govern their rights and responsibilities, resulting in increased and continued advocacy on their part.

Ensuring communication access for the deaf community should be of paramount importance. Laws and policies need to be drafted and passed with a high level of enforceability when the rights of anyone from the deaf community are violated. Policies should speak to the government making fiscal provisions to cover the cost for interpreters in national events and public educational settings, the provision of closed captioning for local programming and revisit how service providers do business

with deaf persons in particular issues, dealing with call numbers where texting would be more suited.

It is also recommended that professionals in key agencies such as hospitals and other MDAs be provided with training in JSL and deaf culture. Public education needs to be increased to inform the populace about the community, the challenges they face, and how the society can help improve that.

Conclusion

This study explored the experiences of deaf individuals in several public sectors in Jamaica, including the education and social welfare sectors. The findings from this study showed that although there have been some strides taken to improve the experiences of deaf persons in these areas in recent years, including improved opportunities for educational growth and accessible communication, there are still some barriers that Jamaica faces in becoming a truly inclusive society.

Further research is warranted, as this area remains lacking in the Caribbean (Brathwaite 2015) and given the findings and the small sample size used in this research, it is recommended that a similar research be replicated with a wider sample of the deaf community to include representation from other counties within Jamaica. An exploration into the health and security sectors should also be considered. The results of this chapter in addition to that of the recommended research should provide a robust contribution for an effective policy review. They should also ensure a greater alignment for an inclusive society for the deaf, under international standards and in keeping with the expectations and perspectives of the deaf community.

Policymakers, however, are cautioned to keep an open mind about what kinds of deaf communities, cultures, and languages might exist in different places around the world (Brathwaite 2014, 4). Therefore, increased stakeholder engagement to include the deaf community is key to continuing the dialogue.

Acknowledgement

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Focus Group Discussion Guiding Questions

Question: Do you think Jamaica is inclusive for deaf Persons?

Question: What do you think has been most successful in Jamaica's efforts to make the island more inclusive for the deaf community?

Question: What are the barriers affecting the inclusion of deaf in the education and social welfare sector?

Question: Which agencies have you felt most included?

Question: What kind of special accommodations do you receive when you visit various businesses, social and education sectors? What kind of accommodations do you need?

Question: What has been your experience at national social events such as grand gala, sports activities, political rallies, etc.?

Question: What can Jamaica do to be more inclusive of the deaf community?

Question: What do you want to see in Jamaica to make it an inclusive society for the deaf?

Appendix 2 – *Interview Questions*

1. Share some of your experiences doing business in Jamaica.
2. Which agencies do you feel most inclusive when doing business?
3. Why do you feel included at these agencies?
4. Do you think Jamaica is inclusive enough for the deaf?
5. Are you aware of any policies that speak to including the deaf in Jamaica? What are they?
6. How do you feel about deaf access to information? (New broadcasts, emergency broadcast, etc.)
7. What are your experiences at National events? (Grand gale, etc.)
8. Comparing the past with present, do you think Jamaica has progressed towards inclusiveness of the deaf? What are some of the efforts made over the years by Jamaica to include the deaf?
9. Have you benefited from any project geared toward the deaf? If yes, how have you benefited?
10. What do you want to see in Jamaica to make it an inclusive society for the deaf?

Chapter 9

Bridging the Gaps – Towards a National System of Early Years Care and Support

Maureen Samms-Vaughan

This chapter is the executive summary excerpted from a comprehensive study that mapped available services for children affected by Congenital Zika Syndrome (CZS) and other congenital malformations at birth and developmental disorders or disabilities in the early years. The full study is available at https://www.unicef.org/jamaica/reports/bridging-the-gaps -2019.

Background

Jamaica is one of eight countries benefitting from a USAID-UNICEF supported undertaking entitled 'Prevention of the Spread of Zika and Provision of Care and Support to Children Affected by Congenital Zika Syndrome and Their Families.' The initiative was primarily intended to strengthen childcare and family support for those affected by Congenital CZS and other congenital malformations. In Jamaica, the USAID-UNICEF undertaking mainstreamed childhood disability and inclusion within the overall Early Childhood Development (ECD) programming for the country.

This report represents a part of the overall USAID-UNICEF undertaking and provides the foundation for a wider multi-

sector effort to increase Jamaica's national capacity for early intervention and support to families of young children affected by CZS and other congenital malformations. Specifically, this report maps Jamaica's current national capacity and service provision of comprehensive care for young children with developmental disabilities, including CZS.

Methodology

The research methodology included a review of the international literature on optimum services for children with disabilities; review and analysis of the Jamaican legal and institutional framework supporting children with disabilities; review of existing systems for screening, early identification, diagnostic, therapeutic, and psycho-social support services in Jamaica; and determination of the perceptions of professional and parent stakeholders about the existing systems through interviews and focus groups. Gaps and strengths in the available services and pathways became clear through the review, and these formed the basis for a detailed SWOT analysis, from which preliminary recommendations for systems improvement were made. The information obtained was shared with a group of first contact professionals from the health, education, and social sectors; NGOs; community and faith-based organizations. Their perceptions and recommendations were received, and a final report produced.

Findings

Prevalence and Impact of Childhood Disabilities

Recent studies in the US show the prevalence of the ten most common childhood disabilities to be as high as 17.8 per cent by parent report, affecting one in five to six children. Consistent with the limited prevalence data availability for children in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), there are no accurate figures available for the number or proportion of children with

disabilities in Jamaica. Nonetheless, estimates from household surveys, national school readiness assessments, and registers of persons with disabilities offer some insight into the prevalence of developmental disability in the island.

Specifically, the findings of the Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI) administered as a household survey in 2011 indicated that 11 per cent of children in the age group thirty-six to fifty-nine months had developmental challenges. While more than 97 per cent of children were developmentally on track in the physical and learning domains, only 79 per cent were on track in the socio-emotional domain, and 66 per cent in the literacy and numeracy domain. The Jamaica School Readiness Assessment (JSRA) administered to four-year-old children nationally in 2017 and 2018 identified that 32.6 per cent of those assessed had at least one developmental problem, the most common problems were in understanding and learning. Boys and economically vulnerable children had higher levels of developmental problems on both the ECDI and the JSRA pilot evaluation, consistent with the international literature. The voluntary register held by the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities (JCPD) reported five thousand children with recognized disabilities (physical and otherwise) in 2017.

The existence of childhood disability has been associated with stigma and discrimination, increased likelihood of family poverty, and child vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. There are no studies on the impact of childhood disability in Jamaica, but congenital abnormalities contribute significantly to child mortality and morbidity.

Service Provision for Children with Disabilities

Children with developmental disabilities require a comprehensive range of diagnostic and, therapeutic, intervention, and support services across many sectors. Those who present with physical findings of disability at birth are usually identified

at birth and referred for services immediately. However, children whose symptoms of developmental disabilities emerge later, access the health system in several ways: via well child clinics, private paediatricians, private physicians, education institutions, and specialist doctors. A doctor can identify children without obvious symptoms through screening – the evaluation or testing of individuals to identify an undiagnosed problem or a high risk of developing a problem. Of the many medical conditions that exist, only a small proportion is screened for, using globally tested, validated, and recognized screening tests. For young children (zero to six years, doctors have recommended and implemented, in several countries, five conditions for routine screening programmes: (i) congenital metabolic conditions, (ii) hearing, (iii) vision, (iv) developmental and behavioural disorders, and (v) autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Internationally recommended screening tools exist, which guide the processes through which medical staff, parents, and other care givers can initially assess the development of young children.

Most parents and young children ages zero to three years in Jamaica receive health services from the public sector, through preventative antenatal care, well childcare, and primary curative care. The government facilitates children with developmental disabilities and their families in accessing specific health sector assistance by removing user fees at public health facilities. The Family Health Manual, used by public health workers and available in public health facilities, outlines early childcare procedures, which advises of schedules of well visits for children between birth and eight years, as well as growth and development evaluation and screening guidelines.

General paediatric services in the public health system can be accessed at almost all fourteen parishes (geographical units) in Jamaica, except for the parishes of Trelawny and St Thomas. More specialized paediatric and rehabilitation medicine services are available only in Kingston, at the University Hospital of

the West Indies (UHWI) Child and Family Clinic, Paediatric Neurology Clinic and Rehabilitation Medicine Clinic; and at the Bustamante Hospital for Children (BHC) Paediatric Neurology Clinic. Likewise, specialist paediatric surgical services are only available at public health facilities in Kingston. Public facilities across the island also limit investigative and therapeutic services, which are required for children with complex developmental disabilities. These services are primarily available in Kingston, although some therapeutic services are available via the Early Stimulation Programme in special facilities in Portland and St James.

Jamaica offers education through public and private institutions. The public education system is the purview of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Information (MOEYI), and has offerings from the early childhood to tertiary level. Private schools also offer services from early childhood to tertiary levels. Schools refer children with suspected developmental disabilities for diagnosis and treatment to both the private and public medical systems. The MOEYI provides support to young children with disabilities through two undertakings of the Ministry: the funding of the MICO University College Child Assessment and Research in Education (CARE) Centre, which is the main public testing agency for children with learning difficulties, and the Ministry of Education Special Education Unit, which provides shadow support, placement in private schools, and technical help to teachers.

The Early Childhood Commission (ECC) is the agency of the Ministry of Education mandated in law to co-ordinate and develop the early childhood sector. Support for children with disabilities is provided through regulating pre-schools (with specific regulations related to support for children with disabilities), using the Child Health and Development Passport (CHDP) (a parent held booklet with child development and screening information) in early childhood institutions, applying

the national readiness evaluation for four-year-old children (Jamaica School Readiness Assessment), and establishing and monitoring parent places which provide support to families of children with disabilities.

The social sector supports persons with disabilities through a conditional cash transfer programme (CCT) – the Programme of Advancement through Health and Education (PATH), the Early Stimulation Programme (ESP),), and the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities (JCPD). The ESP is an early intervention programme of the Ministry of Social Security for children under the age of eight years who have developmental disabilities. It is constrained by funding, human resources, and location; however, it offers community (home/school) services, centre-based services, and school-based services to children with disabilities. The JCPD is the agency responsible for ensuring that the rights of persons with disabilities are upheld and ensuring implementation of the Disabilities Act 2014.

System Strengths for the Support of Children with Disabilities

Areas of strength in the support for children with disabilities include Jamaica's political stability and existing political will to support children with disabilities. There is also policy and legislative support through signing international treaties, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), and the existence of national policies, laws, and plans that include support for children with disabilities. These include draft Disability Regulations; National Parent Support Policy; draft Early Childhood Policy, and a National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development (ECD). The government agencies that are focused on young children include the (Early Childhood Commission (ECC), for persons with disabilities; the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities (JCPD), and the National Parenting Support

Commission (NPSC) Established agencies for child protection are the Child Protection and Family Services Agency (CPFSA) and for ensuring that child rights are upheld, the Office of the Children's Advocate (OCA).

There are also areas of strength in health, education, and social sector service provision. In the health sector, there is a well-developed primary health care system with universal access for antenatal and well childcare; most births take place in hospital attended by trained personnel; doctors screen pregnant women for chronic and infectious conditions known to be damaging to the foetus, and screen newborns for sickle cell disease. Public paediatric services are accessible to most of the population.

A Child Health and Development Passport (CHDP), issued to all children at birth since September 2010, includes screening tools that follow international recommendations for general developmental screening. There is a clear referral pathway for children with obvious congenital disabilities identified at birth.

In the education sector, there is almost universal access to early childhood institutions (ECIs) between the ages of three and five years. The EC Act prevents exclusion of children because of disabilities. There is a regulatory system for ECIs that includes standards for teacher training, classroom toys, the physical environment, and developmental monitoring and reporting, which support children with disabilities in the classroom. The state has deployed elements of a comprehensive national ECD screening system, including the CHDP, the Family Support Screening Tool and a four-year-old school readiness evaluation Jamaica School Readiness Assessment (JSRA).

In the social sector, there is a successful Conditional Cash Transfer programme, and there is an established early intervention programme. Psycho-social support systems exist through the local parent support groups and foundations that support families and children with disabilities. There are also successful parent support initiatives by the ECC and the NPSC.

Several international and local development partners have provided financial and technical support to public sector programmes, and several local parent support groups and foundations provide diagnostic, treatment, and support services to children with developmental disorders.

System Challenges for Children with Disabilities

Despite the many strengths, there are system challenges. Implementing policies, laws, and programmes has not occurred as anticipated. The Disabilities Act is not yet in force, and the Disability Regulations and Early Childhood Policy have been in draft format for some time. There is no accurate data available on the prevalence, distribution, and aetiology of childhood disability, including limited voluntary registration. Household surveys are less accurate than surveys which include some diagnostic evaluation. The absence of accurate data precludes adequate planning for services.

There is also inadequate co-ordination of programmes and services for children with disabilities, as shown by focus group discussions and case reports of parents of children with disabilities. No clear pathway exists for the diagnosis and provision of services across health, education, and social sectors and for developmental disabilities identified after birth, and there is limited cross-sectoral co-ordination.

There is significant stigma and discrimination co-existing with limited public and parent knowledge and understanding of developmental disabilities, the importance of screening and early identification, and the processes that have been developed to support children with disabilities.

There is inequity in access to tertiary paediatric medical and therapeutic services within Jamaica. Some of the international recommendations for screening immediately after birth are not in place, such as newborn screening for a range of congenital conditions and newborn hearing screening. There have been

recent concerns about the sustainability of newborn screening for sickle cell disease, which the government does not fully fund. Health care workers do not receive adequate training in the existing screening mechanisms and in early intervention support, including psycho-social support. There is limited access to tertiary diagnostic and therapeutic services, and psycho-social support services such as counselling or mental health services for parents.

Access to educational services for children zero to two years is scarce. While there is almost universal access for general ECD services for children three to five years, there is inequity in quality because of a fee for service structure. There is limited access to special education or inclusive education services for children with disabilities in both the public and private sectors. Though the ECC has developed ECI standards to support children with disabilities and elements of a comprehensive national ECD screening system, monitoring of and compliance with standards is low, and elements of the screening system are not fully implemented. Teachers in ECIs and in special schools do not receive adequate training to support children with disabilities.

There are no national social protection mechanisms specific to children with disabilities. Children with disabilities and their families must first satisfy the poverty criteria of the existing CCT programme to receive government social support. There is limited access to regular and high quality public early intervention services. There is limited parent support for parents of children with special needs/developmental disabilities. In particular, the existing programmes do not adequately support the range of children with disabilities and their families.

While donor support and services has improved services for children with disabilities, support has often not been well co-ordinated, and there are concerns about sustainability of donor-supported programmes. Jamaica, a lower-middle-income country, functions within a stringent economic climate that

can affect the sustainability of services and the development of expanded and comprehensive services, which require additional investment in human and physical resources.

Recommendations

Based on the existing strengths and the identified challenges, the following recommendations are being made:

1. **Operationalize the Disabilities Act and Regulations**

    The Disabilities Act and Regulations should be operationalized to provide the framework for policy and programme development.

2. **Review the Implementation of Existing Policies, Laws, Programmes, and Standards**

    We should conduct comprehensive systems research to review the passage of laws and implementation of existing policies, laws, programmes, and plans relevant to children with disabilities, and identify gaps for attention and action throughout the Jamaican ministries, departments, and agencies.

3. **Accurately Determine the Prevalence and Epidemiology of Childhood Disability**

    There should be accurate determination of the prevalence and distribution of the different childhood disability and existing support services being received by children with disabilities, to aid planning for services.

4. **Develop a Comprehensive and Co-ordinated System of Service Delivery**

    There is need to develop a widely accessible, co-ordinated, and comprehensive national strategy for children with disabilities, with clear pathways for the

early identification, diagnosis, and provision of services across health, education, and social sectors.

5. **Develop a Public Education Campaign**

    We should develop a public education campaign to sensitize parents and the public on childhood disability and the rights of children with disabilities to allow for early identification and early intervention, and reduction of stigma.

6. **Improve Access to Intervention and Therapeutic Services**

    Investment in training of professionals to support children with disabilities is necessary. It will require training of professionals at tertiary levels and at schools, health centres, and at the community-based levels to ensure access to early intervention services for all children. There will also need to be investment in physical resources for professionals to support children with disabilities.

7. **Improve Access to Educational Services**

    All government of Jamaica-owned-and-operated infant schools and Brain Builder Centres islandwide should be designated as inclusive schools and provided with the human and physical resources to allow access to educational services for all children with disabilities.

8. **Increase Access to and Co-ordination of Social Support Systems**

    We associate the presence of a child with a disability with higher levels of poverty. A co-ordinated approach that provides adequate social support for children with disabilities is required.

9. Ensure Adequate Parent Support Services

General parent education and support services should include support for parents of children with disabilities. Additional specific parent support services should be made widely available through existing parent support networks.

10. Establish an Oversight Body to Ensure the Rights of Young Children with Disabilities are Upheld

An oversight body will be necessary to ensure that the recommendations made to ensure the rights of children with disabilities are implemented. A cross-sectoral body, under the ECC's mandate is recommended.

Conclusions

For a country to advance, we must address the needs of all people; hence, the SDGs address the needs of children and the needs of persons with disabilities. Educational advancement requires that all citizens have access to education. To ensure that we educate all children, there must be accurate knowledge of the challenges faced by those who are excluded from education, not only for documentation, but for the purpose of addressing the challenges and ensuring inclusive education.

This chapter has completed the first step towards inclusive education for young children with disabilities in Jamaica; it has identified the strengths and the challenges that exist. The next step is a co-ordinated approach to building on the strengths and addressing the challenges. For others reading this chapter, it has also provided a methodological roadmap for countries to model and adapt to their local situations, in their attempts to ensure inclusive education for young children with disabilities.

Chapter 10

Conclusion and Recommendations

Floyd Morris

This work grew out of several presentations made at the 4th Regional Disability Studies Conference by the UWI Centre for Disability Studies. The focus of the conference was on inclusive education. Inclusive education is a priority issue for the population of persons with disabilities globally (United Nations 2006; 2018). We have seen in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) a fundamental right for members of this marginalized community. If we are to transform the lives of persons with disabilities, we must give inclusive education priority (Rieser 2008).

State Parties under the CRPD must ensure that measures are put in place to include persons with disabilities in regular classrooms. Not that special education has no place in a modern educational context. Indeed, special education has its place when the nature and severity of a disability require that an individual be kept from the regular classroom. However, as far as possible, persons with disabilities should receive their education in the same classroom as those without a disability.

Including persons with disabilities in the regular classroom carries several advantages and will contribute immensely to transforming Jamaica and broader Caribbean society. First, it will show those without a disability that a person with a disability can function productively in society once he or she gets the

opportunity. Second, it will show that a person with a disability is a normal human being with physical differences and that this person does have a brain that can withstand to the rigours of academia. Third, inclusive education will help to erase some negative stigma and myths about these marginalized individuals in the broader society. Last, inclusive education will facilitate social justice by ensuring that persons with disabilities get the same quality education as those without a disability.

Contributors to this monograph have eloquently made the case for an inclusive education system in the Caribbean. Sharon Anderson Morgan points to the importance of having a strong legislative and policy framework in the education system to accommodate persons with disabilities. One will recall from the social model of disability as theorized by Mike Oliver that disability occurs when an individual with impairment interacts with various barriers in society and these restrict the effective participation of the person with impairment equally with others (Oliver 1990). We cite access to education as one of the preeminent social barriers to persons with disabilities (Oliver 2013). For these barriers to be eradicated from society, the government must establish a strong legislative and policy framework, which Anderson Morgan believes will transform the education system and society for persons with disabilities in the Caribbean.

Jasmin Walkin from the Turks and Caicos Islands passionately articulated the case for inclusive education from an experiential standpoint. Walkin who is a special education officer in Turks and Caicos also had the opportunity to venture into the education system as a student with disability. He is therefore using this experience to try to effect change in the education system in Turks and Caicos Islands so that it can be more inclusive for persons with disabilities. For inclusive education to be successfully implemented in the Caribbean, it will require passionate and committed advocates who have both practical and theoretical knowledge of the subject.

It has also been revealed in this monograph by research conducted by this editor that the education system in Jamaica is not accessible and inclusive of persons with disabilities. This collection of quantitative studies revealed that most of the educational institutions in Jamaica are inaccessible. Because Jamaica and most other Caribbean countries emanated from a similar colonial system, it can be suggested that most of the schools in the Caribbean are inaccessible to persons with disabilities. The Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean 2017 Report on Disability confirm this inaccessibility and suggest that a major contributing factor to the high levels of unemployment and poverty among persons with disabilities in the region is because of limited access of persons with disabilities to the education system (ECLAC 2017). An inclusive educational environment will result in a Caribbean that is more participatory and non-discriminatory for persons with disabilities. It will resocialize individuals in the region to have a more positive attitude towards persons with disabilities, thus contributing to their inclusion in mainstream society.

Gooden Monteith presented her arguments on teachers' knowledge, attitude, and practice towards children with disabilities in the Jamaican education system. Overall, teachers do have a positive attitude towards the inclusion of children with disabilities. However, they lack the requisite training on how to relate to children with disabilities in the Jamaican education system. If the Caribbean is to have a truly inclusive education system, teachers must be given the required training in how to impart knowledge to persons with disabilities.

Morris, Cardoza, and Mcpherson chronicled an approach for transforming the lives of marginalized individuals through tertiary education. The experience of The University of the West Indies (UWI) in educating persons with disabilities was highlighted as a model that can transform the lives of persons with disabilities. The chapter showed how an inclusive approach through policy

formulation, using modern technology, volunteering support, establishing special accessible building environment, and having supportive staff can result in persons with disabilities – learning in the same educational environment as those without a disability – to be successful in their educational pursuits. Gaining a tertiary education is significant in professionalizing persons with disabilities. Earning a tertiary education is one of the best means by which a person with a disability can gain the requisite qualifications to enter the labour market and earn significant income, which will remove the person with a disability from the inter-generational cycle of poverty.

In the final chapter, Professor Maureen Samms Vaughan presented the results from a comprehensive 2019 study that mapped available services for children affected by Congenital Zika Syndrome (CZS) and other congenital malformations at birth and developmental disorders or disabilities in the early years. The chapter presented foundational information on a compendium of services available to children with disabilities in Jamaica. This is extremely useful if the education system is to successfully include children with disabilities. It will require supportive services for the efficacious implementation of an inclusive education system for persons with disabilities throughout the Caribbean.

The arguments presented in the diverse chapters of this book also gave a pellucid indication as to what are the essential elements of an inclusive education. These elements are:

1. An educational institution that is fully accessible to persons with disabilities.
2. Professionally trained teachers in an educational institution with knowledge of how to relate with students with disabilities.
3. Students with disabilities and classrooms that are equipped with modern technologies that are accessible.

4. Educational institution with support staff for students with disabilities and

5. Educational institution that allows for students with disabilities to participate in extra-curricular activities on an equal basis with other students.

Recognizing these excellent scholarly views on varied aspects of inclusive education for persons with disabilities in the Caribbean, we must guide governments and bureaucrats with recommendations on how to provide an inclusive education system that will transform the lives of persons with disabilities in the wider Caribbean society. The following are the recommendations borne:

6. For governments to establish strong legislative and policy frameworks for including persons with disabilities in the education system as suggested by Anderson Morgan.

7. For governments within the region, as presented by Morris, to establish policies that will ensure they construct all new schools with the requisite access features for persons with disabilities.

8. For governments within the region, as presented by Morris, to move systematically to make the necessary modifications to existing schools to make the physical plant accessible to persons with disabilities and this should include ramps to enter and exit buildings; bathrooms with accessible toilet facilities; desks and chairs designed to accommodate children with disabilities.

9. For governments (as Morris articulates) to equip classrooms with modern technologies that will facilitate easy interaction between students with disabilities and the professionals in the classrooms.

10. Through the use of Universal Service Funds (USFs), governments should establish a mechanism that will make available a tablet or laptop for a student with

disability, once every five years. This recommendation comes against the fact that most persons with disabilities are poor and will not be able to purchase the requisite technology on their own.

11. As recommended by Walkin, for governments to ensure that all teachers venturing in teacher training institutions to receive training in how to teach all learners, including persons with disabilities.

12. As recommended by Walkin, for governments to hire competent and trained professionals in the education system who can impart knowledge and understanding to persons with disabilities.

13. Included in the hiring of trained professionals are Sign Language Interpreters to cater to children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Additionally, shadows should be hired to give support to children with disabilities in the education system, where necessary.

14. As articulated by Morris, for governments in the region to implement consistent training seminars to improve pedagogical skills of teachers in the education system.

15. As articulated by Parey, for governments within the region to establish national testing systems to capture, track and monitor children with disabilities in the education system.

If governments and technocrats accept and implement these recommendations throughout the Caribbean, the region will see a significant transformation in the education of persons with disabilities. An inclusive approach to the education of persons with disabilities will benefit all in society and contribute to an inclusive and prosperous Caribbean.

Acknowledgements

Contributors

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