

A comparative assessment of special education situations between Lesotho and Malawi

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Abstract

Despite the fact that many countries have made commitment to promoting special education through both local and international policies, conventions and treaties, people with special needs still do not benefit much from public education in the sub-Saharan region. This study used secondary data to compare and contrast the scenarios of special education (SE) between Lesotho and Malawi with focus on successes, challenges and implications of the current status of special education in the countries. Using the postcolonial theoretical framework and Gearge Beredy's analysis approach, the SE was framed, analysed and compared. The general result is that Malawi and Lesotho share so many similarities in terms of successes and challenges in their special education statuses, of course notwithstanding some disparities here and there. This paper, therefore, recommends that both countries should do more in SE in order to achieve EFA goals by implementing the policies that already exist to support all learners with disabilities.

Key Terms: Special Education (SE), Inclusive Education, Disability, Least Restrictive Learning environment

1.0 INTRODUCTION

While the meaning of Special Education (SE) seems to differ depending on the context, there is still a general agreement about what it is all about. The difference is observed through scholarly debates on correct terms to use like special education (SE), Special Educational Needs (SEN), Education and Disability, and now Inclusive Education (IE), {Haager & Klingner, 2005}. However, as Mark and others frame it, "One of many goals of special education is to give students with disabilities the opportunity to participate in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) so that they receive as much education as possible with non-disabled students" (Mark, et al, 2012, p.1). In Malawi and Lesotho, Special Education can be seen as greatly based on Bandura's principles of Social Learning Theory. The thinking here is that learners with disability should be included in the general education setup unless their levels of disability are so severe that they could be a distracter to other learners (Santrock, 2006, p226). These countries espoused this approach probably in line with the global view that when included in the general education setup, learners with disability have an opportunity to see their peers' working habits, and so they can model those habits and behaviours to reflect their own. After all, all learners come from society and so secluding learners with disability would make their discrimination worse when they finish school and want to work in the society they live. However, special education issues are not well developed and practiced in both Lesotho and

Malawi. For instance, literature shows that special education in Malawi has been practiced from a narrow perspective; with visual, hearing and physical disability taking a largest visibility (EMIS, 2014, NSO, 2008 & Kamchedzera, 2006). This paper, therefore, uses secondary data to comparatively map out the general picture of special education in Malawi and Lesotho.

1.1 Purpose of this paper

The general aim of this paper is to make a comparative assessment about the general scenarios of special education in Malawi and Lesotho with focus on successes, challenges and actions that need to be done to improve the situation.

1.2 Specific Objectives

Specifically, this paper seeks to:

- a. Analyse the historical backgrounds of SNE in Lesotho and Malawi
- b. Demonstrate the current status and trends of SNE in Lesotho and Malawi
- c. Compare the situations of SNE in the two countries with focus on the strengths and limitations
- d. Suggest strategies that would promote special education in these countries

1.3 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework can be defined as “frame of reference that is a basis for observations, definitions of concepts, research designs, interpretations, and generalizations, much as the frame that rests on a foundation defines the overall design of a house” (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 1998, p. 141). This paper is informed by the Postcolonial Education Framework in the Anglophone Africa. The assumption in this framework is that the colonial education system of the colonising country leaves a lot of enduring tendencies that comprise similarities in the education systems of the former colonies despite that differences also exist due to cultural, political and socio-economic changes made after independence (Ngugi wa Thiongo, 1986). Mirrored by George Bereday’s four-step approach, a critical comparison of special needs education between Lesotho and Malawi will be assessed to appreciate better the current status of special needs education in the two countries. The rationale for choice of this framework is that both Lesotho and Malawi are British former colonies, they are both in the sub-Saharan region and they got independence within the same decade. This theoretical underpinning, therefore, helps in critically knitting together the similarities and challenges facing special education in these countries so that informed suggestions and theories could be developed in attempts to promote inclusive education in the countries.

1.4 Demographics

1.4.1 Lesotho

Lesotho is a small mountainous country that covers an area of 30,355 square kilometres and is interlocked by the Republic of South Africa in the southern part of Africa. It was the British protectorate and obtained independence in 1966. It has a population of 2 million most of who live in the rural areas. The official languages are Sesotho and English. The climate of Lesotho consists of four distinct seasons with severe winters especially in the highlands part of the country, making the villages there inaccessible due to heavy snowfalls. Economically, Lesotho is dependent on South Africa, a factor making it vulnerable to the economical and political changes in that country. It also relies heavily on agricultural production, however due to prolonged drought the sector has seen a decline. Lesotho is among the countries that have been hardest hit by HIV/AIDS pandemic. According to World Bank (2012), 23, 7% of the population between 15 and 49 was HIV positive.

1.4.2 Malawi

On the other hand, Malawi is a landlocked country sharing its borders with the People's Republic of Tanzania in the north and northeast, in the northwest by Zambia and in the south and southwest by the Republic of Mozambique. It is situated in the southern part of Africa. It was a British protectorate and obtained independence in 1964. Malawi is approximately 118,484 square kilometres of which 94,275 square kilometres constitutes of land and the rest covered by water. According to the 2008 National Statistics report, Malawi has about a population of 17 million people most of who live in the rural areas (NSO, 2008).

2.0 History of Special Needs Education

Lesotho and Malawi were both under the British protectorate although they obtained independence in different years as such the education system in both countries is to a larger extent influenced by the British education system. In both countries, the medium of instruction in schools has been English. In terms of special education, initially, the governments of Lesotho and Malawi did not assume responsibilities in educating children with special needs. Instead, non-governmental organisation, individuals and churches out of charitable and spiritual work took the responsibility for the special provision of education for the learners with impairments.

From the colonial to independence in 1964, the government of Malawi has not been active about the education of people with disabilities instead it has mainly been the Catholic Church under Montford College of Special Needs Education in Chiradzulu that almost singly took the responsibility (Chavuta, A. 2008). Because of this neglect, research-based statistics about special needs education in Malawi is also very limited and not comprehensive. But it is common knowledge that without credible statistics, it would be impossible to help learners with disability in good time. As Peters observes "Failure to provide early detection, identification and intervention to infants and young children with disabilities and support to their parents and caretakers results in secondary disabling conditions which further limit their capacity to benefit from educational opportunities." (Peters, 2003 p.78) In addition, since the church may have been using a spiritual and sympathetic approach and also because the church did not have enough resources, development of this area of education has lagged behind. In other words, focus seems to have been placed on long term care for learners with disabilities rather than helping them to develop their full potentials of life. In her paper, Kamchedzera also observed about Malawi "that training of specialist teachers is restricted to visual impairment, hearing impairment and learning difficulties and yet there is also a need for multi-disability teachers and regular teachers with special needs education skills" (Kamchedzera, 2006). In other words, special needs education in Malawi has been narrow thereby making other forms of disability not benefitting much. Due to this situation, many efforts have been focused on changing the approach from sympathetic to human-right based perspective through development, ratification and implementation of disability-friendly policies. As the Global Partnership for Education summaries, the lack of data seriously undermines countries' ability to build and implement sound education sector plans. Therefore, data availability remains a critical issue in many GPE developing country partners¹.

¹ <http://www.globalpartnership.org/docs/reports/results-2014-15/Chapter%20%20-%20Overall%20Education%20Progress%20in%20GPE%20Developing%20Country%20Partners.pdf>

Similarly, in Lesotho, prior to the 1980's, the NGO's, churches and individuals with the help of international donors and private agencies provided education and care for children with special needs. St. Bernadette Centre for the Blind was the first school to be established in 1971 by the Roman Catholic Church in Maseru, the capital city and the other three schools which were founded years later which provided education for children with different special needs were located in three other districts. Aligning herself to the 1975 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Disabled persons, the government of Lesotho in the 1980s took an initiative to provide education for children with special education needs and in 1987, the Ministry of Education conducted a study through the help of Northern American consultant named Dr. Csapo to find the number of children with special education needs. Four hundred children and youth were found and only 70 of those were provided with education while others were only receiving long term care. Many of these children were found in special schools that were residential, (Mariga and Phachaka, 1993).

In 1989, a brief policy statement on special education which set out goals for the provision of special needs education was published by the Ministry of Education. The establishment of special education unit whose main purpose was to oversee the integration of children with special education needs into mainstream schools by the Ministry of Education in 1991 soon followed and in 1993, a feasibility study was conducted by the Ministry of Education to provide baseline information which would enable the Ministry to implement its stated policy in promoting the integration of children with special needs into mainstream schools at all levels of schooling. The study was followed by a pilot programme of inclusive schooling in 1995 in 10 primary schools which lasted for three years. The objective of the programme was to change the attitudes of teachers, students, parents and special education staff. Urwick and Elliot, (2010) indicate that evaluators of the pilot programme recommended that it should be extended to all schools in Lesotho

2.1 Instruments that support Special Needs Education in Malawi and Lesotho

Upon the realisation that children with disabilities have been historically marginalised and excluded from the education systems in both countries, the governments of Lesotho and Malawi mandated themselves to accord children with disabilities an education that will ensure their growth and development. Both the governments have favourably signed the international instruments that bind them to the provision of education to the persons with disabilities. For instance, Lesotho ratified the United Nation's convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in December 2008 while Malawi ratified the same convention in August 2009. By ratifying the convention both governments with regard to education were committing themselves to ensuring that:

'persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system at all levels on the basis of disabilities and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary on the basis of disability'' (United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 24).

It is however interesting to learn that both countries have not yet ratified the Optional Protocol attached to the UNCRPD which requires countries to recognise the authority of the United Nation's Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to receive individual complaints on any perceived violation of the provision. Lesotho and Malawi are also signatories to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, World Declaration on Education for All and Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs. Both countries have also ratified a number of other United Nations and African Union instruments and associated initiatives that have important implications for children with disabilities and their right to education (The Secretariat of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2012).

At national level, it is worth noting that to show its commitment to the education of persons with

disabilities, the government of Malawi has enacted policies such as the 1998 the vision 2020, the Policy and Investment Framework (PIF)-2001, the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy (MPRS) 2002, the Education for All (EFA) Action Plan (2005) and the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS 1&2), 2006; and the current National Education Sector Plan (NESP). But above all, the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi stipulates that the government will provide education to all its citizens without any discrimination. In this case, education is enshrined in the constitution as a human right.

Like Malawi, Lesotho recognises education as a right of every child as such in 2000, in line with the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the associated Education for All (EFA) initiative, the government introduced free primary education which was build on the provisions of the Education Act of 1995 (The Secretariat of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2012). The right to free primary education has been put into law through the Education Act of 2010. The Ministry of Education has also developed the Strategic Plan for 2005-2015 whose objective is to take the EFA and MDGs forward by providing education to all children in Lesotho. The constitution of Lesotho supports education of all children including those that are disabled under chapter 3 and other laws such as The Child Protection and Welfare act of 2011 affirm the right of children with disabilities to education. Section 4(2) (b) of the Education Act further states that duty bearers should ensure the inclusion of children with disabilities in the education system. In addition, The National Disability and Rehabilitation Policy; the first policy of people with disabilities published by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in 2011 stresses the need for inclusion in education and training of the people with disability. In the midst of plenty support structure in terms of principles; perhaps the biggest problem facing special needs education in both Lesotho and Malawi has been lack of implementation.

3.0 THE CONTEXT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LESOTHO AND MALAWI

3.1 LESOTHO

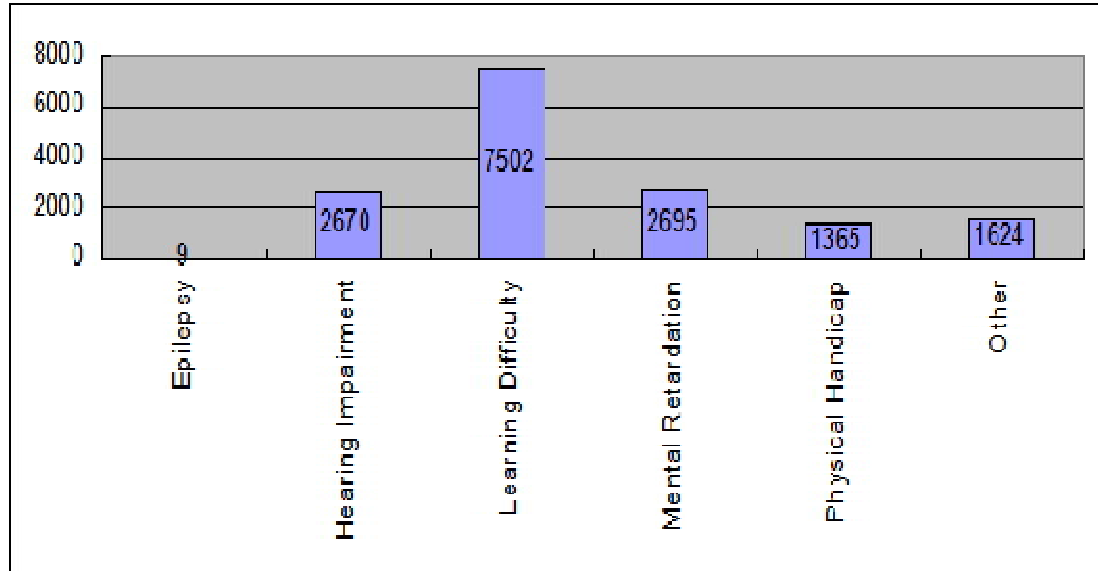
The statistics used for this paper is from the Lesotho Demographic Surveys conducted in 2001, 2011, 2006 Lesotho Population and Housing Census and Education Statistics 2012. Out of 2 157 537 population, Lesotho Demographic Survey (2001) indicates that 4.2% , which is 79 794 people had some form of disability. Four major disabilities found were sensory, physical, mental and multiple impairments. Physical disabilities were the more prevalent than others. The Ministry of Education and Training database indicates that there were 22 233 pupils which is 5.2% who had disability of one form or another out of 424 855 pupils and that boys had disabilities than girls. The survey also indicated that 4 346 was the number of disabled children at primary level and 2 764 pupils at secondary level and of the total number of disabled children at primary level, 2 568 were blind and 1 857 were deaf.

The population decreased as compared to 2001 as there were about 1 894 194 in 2011. Nationally, Lesotho Demographic Survey (2011) showed that about 2.6 percent of the population had one form of disability or another. Among males 2.9 percent was disabled compared with 2.3 percent of the females. The results indicate lower level of disability in Lesotho compared to 3.7 percent for both sexes, 4.2 percent for males and 3.2 percent for females that was estimated in 2006 Lesotho Population and Housing Census. The most prevalent disability was partial blindness in females than males in 2011.

The latest study which was conducted in 2012 indicates that there were 19 682 students with different types of disabilities at primary level while in secondary level there were 7 601 students (Bureau of Statistics, 2012). The study further showed that learning disabilities was the most

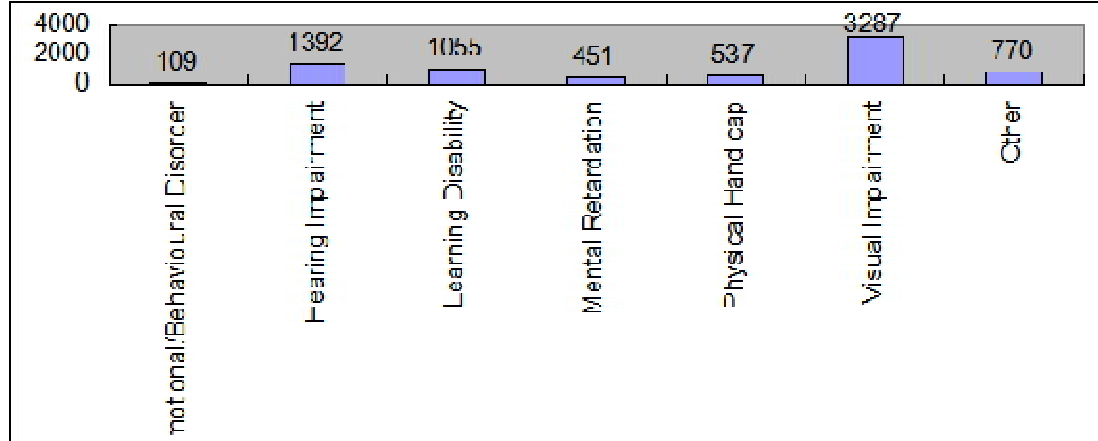
prevalent disabilities among primary students while partial blindness was prevalent among secondary students. The graphs below, figure 1 and 2 respectively show forms of disabilities at both primary and secondary schools.

Figure 1. Forms of Disability at Primary school level in 2012.



Source: Bureau of Statistics, Lesotho- 2012

Figure 2. Forms of disability at Secondary schools in Lesotho -2012



Source: Bureau of Statistics, Lesotho- 2012

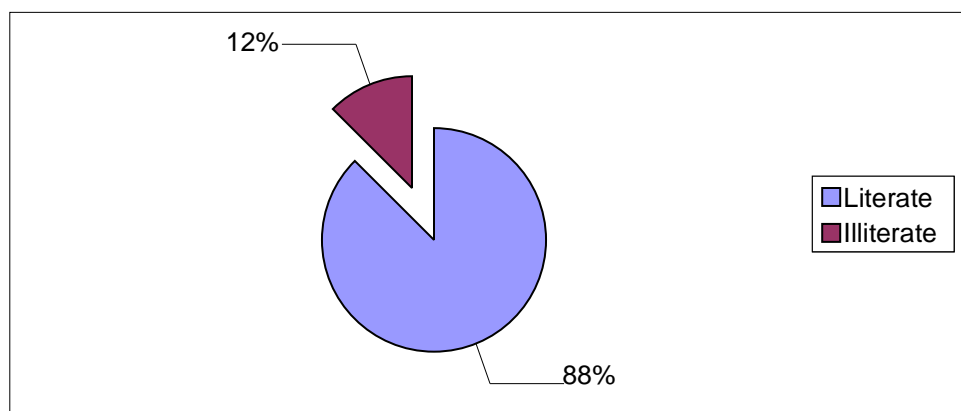
With regard to higher learning education, research has shown that enrolling students with disability is still a challenge as very few are enrolled. This is shown on a table in figure 3 below.

Figure 3 showing enrolment of learners with disability at higher level by gender

| Name of the Institution | | | MALE | FEMALE | TOTAL |
|-------------------------|--|--|------|--------|-------|
| NUL | | | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| LUCT | | | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| TOTAL | | | 8 | 2 | 10 |

Lesotho has a literacy rate of 87.5 percent (87.5%) which indicates growth as compared to 85.0 percent (85.0%) in 2006 Census. The studies made do not clearly show the literacy of people with special needs but the assumption is that they are included in the above mentioned literacy rate.

Figure 4 indicating literacy rate in Lesotho



The Government of Lesotho strives to provide all citizens with education to meet the country's development aspirations. However, education sector is faced with a challenge of insufficient resources, which makes implementation of policy of universal access to education difficult. Figure 5 reflects that, regardless of disability status, the majority of population has primary level of education and the proportion was higher among persons with disability compared with those without disability. Moreover, it seems that beyond primary level, disability reduces the chance of

acquiring higher levels of education. Thus, while 15.2 percent of disabled males had secondary education, the corresponding percent for non-disabled males was 25.2 percent. Regardless of the disability status, the proportions of the population that attained Secondary education and Diploma or Certificate after secondary were higher among females than males. The table further indicates that 3.4 percent of disabled males had no education, while 2.7 percent was for non-disabled males. Among females without disability, only 1.6 percent had no education compared with 3.1 percent for those with disability (Lesotho Demographic Survey, 2011).

Figure 5: Education attainment of people with and without disability

| Level of Education | Total | | With disability | | Without disability | |
|--------------------------|-------|--------|-----------------|--------|--------------------|---------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Pre-school | 3.4 | 2.6 | 2.1 | 1.9 | 3.5 | 2.7 |
| Primary | 64.6 | 61.3 | 74.0 | 74.4 | 64.3 | 60.9 |
| Secondary | 24.9 | 30.5 | 15.2 | 15.4 | 25.2 | 30.9 |
| Dip/cert after primary | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.4 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.1 |
| Dip/cert after secondary | 1.9 | 2.3 | 1.2 | 2.8 | 1.9 | 2.3 |
| Graduate | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.4 | 1.3 | 1.6 | 1.5 |
| Non-Formal | 0.6 | 0.1 | 2.1 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.1 |
| None | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Total(%) | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Total(N) | 811 | 840 | 26 621 | 21 822 | 784 443 | 818 303 |
| | 064 | 125 | | | | |

Source: Lesotho Demographic Survey, 2011

3.2 MALAWI

As stated earlier, most of the statistics we get about special needs education (SNE) in Malawi is from the National Statistics Office under their 2008 *National Housing and Population Census*. The challenge with such data is that focus was not specifically on education, let alone on special education. Further, the data are too huge and sometimes not fully analysed for one to decipher specific issues of SE. Other data that this paper uses is from Government's *Education Management Information System* (EMIS). The data seem to have the same stated challenge in addition to having an error of trying to create a positive impression of government and the ministry's successes.

In general, analysis of available data indicates that special education has been viewed from a general perspective with few efforts to address all categories of disability in Malawi. The authors of this paper, therefore, deemed it fairer and better to take a holistic discussion of special needs education in this paper at this point in time rather than to look at isolated issues as we compare with Lesotho's case.

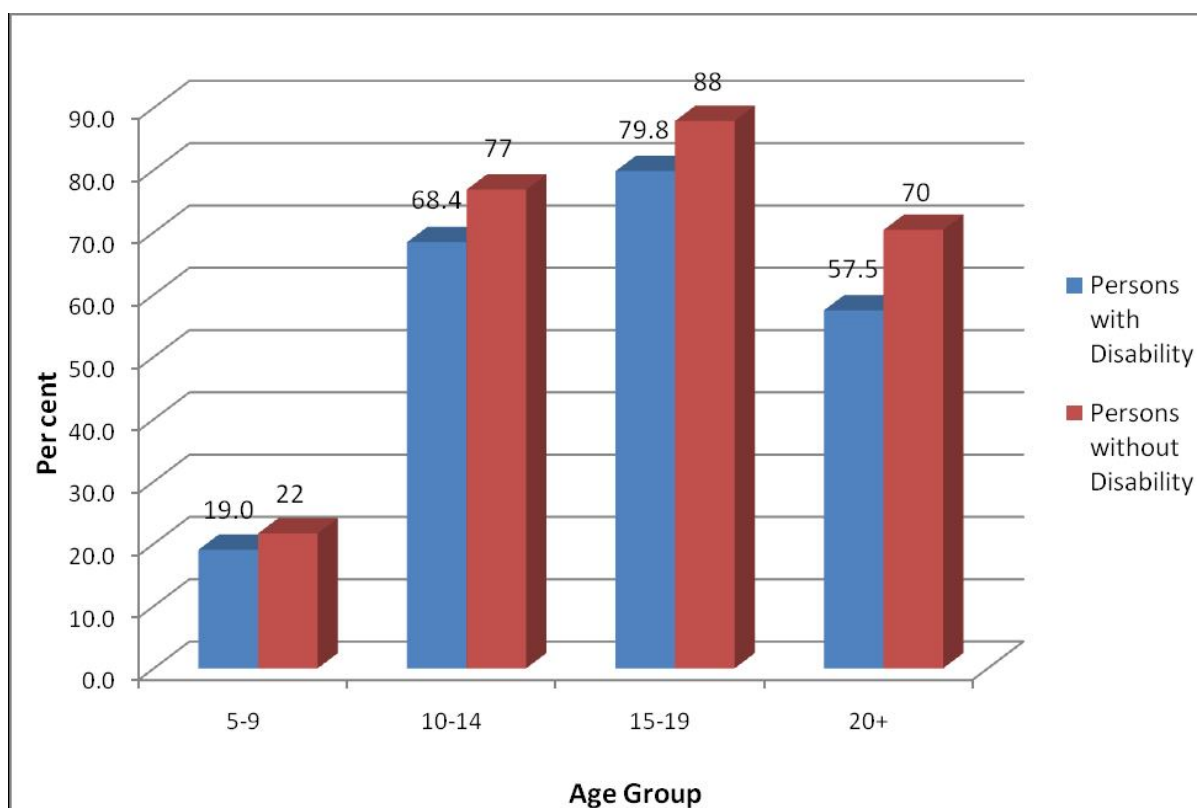
A 1993 *National Survey* estimated that there were 190,000 people with disabilities in the country and this figure was equivalent to 2.9% of the national population. The same study also estimated that 45% of disabled people were between 15 and 45 years old and that 24% were aged over 50 (DFID, 2008). These study estimates confirm that around this period, there were no reliable

statistics which government could use to effectively plan for education for people with disability in Malawi. However, according to the 2008 NSO survey, Malawi:

Malawi has 498,122 persons with disability representing a disability prevalence rate of 3.8 percent. Disability is more prevalent in rural areas as compared to urban areas. Rural areas have a disability prevalence rate of 4.1 percent as compared to 2.5 percent for urban areas.

In terms of education, the latest *Education Information Management System*, shows that in the 2013-2014 academic year, there were 90 089 learners in all primary schools in Malawi. These data show that the largest type of disability in Malawi's primary schools is 'Learning Difficulties' at 45%, seconded by visual impairment and hearing impairments at 21% respectively. Perhaps because of the purpose of the information, some forms of impairment are invisible in the analysis. This ironically implies that the Ministry of Education cannot effectively use these data to plan for education for all forms of disability. Below is a figure showing proportions of primary school learners according to their types of disability:

Figure 6: Showing literacy rates by types of disability in Malawi



Source: National Statistics Office of Malawi (2008)

In terms of literacy, Malawi has national literacy rate of 63.9 percent (63.9%). But the literacy levels of people with disability are much lower than their counterparts. A big percentage of 43.9% of people living with disabilities is illiterate and 34.5% never attended school, compared to 35.7 percent and 22.9 percent for the population without disabilities (NSO, 2008). Fig. 1 below shows literacy distribution between people with disabilities and those considered not:

4.0 Achievements

As outlined above, Malawi has a strong policy-base that supports special needs education through inclusive education. Currently, efforts are changing from making policy to implementing the policies. With this in mind, in 2014 the President of Malawi, Joyce Banda, launched an African campaign paper to expand thinking and action about education and disability so that African governments include intellectual disability². With this initiative, critical issues about inclusive education in general and disability have become more open for debate and analysis in Malawi and other countries in the forum. Malawi has the Ministry of Elderly and Disability which is meant to champion issues of disability.

The other level of achievement is that issues of inclusive education have been currently incorporated into the curriculum from primary to higher education. Nevertheless, these efforts can still be said to be much on paper than in practice. It is therefore contended herein that Malawi needs a lot of effort from all stakeholders to move from mere policy debate to practically changing the lives of learners with disabilities on the ground.

In Lesotho, based on the World Conference on Education for All, the Ministry of Education established the Unit of Special Education with the aim of providing education and care for children with special needs. The Policy Statement and National Disability and Rehabilitation Policy were formulated. They clearly indicate steps to be taken to promote education for all children at all levels of education. For example, Curriculum and Assessment Policy (2008) stipulates that sign language should be used as another medium of instruction in all school. Special education modules have been incorporated in teacher training programmes in institutions of higher learning.

4.1 Challenges of Special Needs Education in Lesotho and Malawi

What is critical to note is that from the above analysis of the postcolonial and neo-colonial education system in these countries, special education has been evidently influenced by the past education systems hence the similarities and challenges are similar. For example, many children with special education needs in Lesotho and Malawi still do not attend primary schools and for those that go to school, their needs are still not fully realized by the schools they attend. In addition, children with special needs education are still faced with many challenges that hinder their access to quality education necessary to help develop their full potential. In both countries, the challenges they face include:

4.2 Physical Barriers

Many school building structures in Lesotho are still inappropriate for easy movement of children with disabilities. Most buildings do not have ramps and the doors are not wide enough to allow easy movement of wheelchairs for children who are physically impaired.

The lighting in the classrooms is also not suitable as windows in some of the buildings are either too small to allow enough light or too big and allow too much light for children who are visually impaired. The inappropriate seating that is due to large classes, a problem most schools face in Lesotho as a result of the introduction of free primary education is also another problem. Many schools have the average class size of 80-100 students; this situation limits the interaction between the teacher and student. For example, a feasibility study carried out in 1993 by Mariga and Phachaka indicated that because of large class size children would stand in long queues to either be marked or read to the teacher and these conditions were even worse for children with learning disabilities. In Malawi schools which are considered good for inclusive education are too congested

² www.unicef.org/malawi/protection_14341.html

with the teacher-pupil ratio of about 1:78. In fact, historically, the teacher pupil ratio worsened with the introduction of Free Primary Education policy in 1994 which made the enrollment rate increase from 1.7 million to 3.2 million (NESP, 2010). Government records show that the completed available resource rooms for special needs education (SNE) in primary schools the whole Malawi is 100 and yet the required number is 2849 rooms. This means that room space for learners with special needs in Malawi is barely at 3.5%, which is far below the needs. This situation makes education extremely difficult for learners with disabilities. For example, Chavuta's study and Nyasatimes report showed that many learners drop out of school because of poor facilities and learners with disabilities are the worst affected. See below some cases for learning environments that are not conducive for learners particularly with disabilities:

Figure 7: Showing a typical example of schools for SNE in Malawi

Typical examples of schools for SNE



Source: Chavuta et al. (2008), p.1

4.3. Lack of quality teacher education and support

Research in Lesotho and Malawi has shown that many teachers lack adequate skills and training to handle the needs of all the children in the classroom especially those that are disabled. For example, according to Mateusi, Khoaeane and Naong (2014) study, 98.26% of teachers who were interviewed in Lesotho reported not having any training with regard to students with disabilities. In addition, the in-service training provided is not on-going to help teachers develop their skills and knowledge. There are also not many itinerant teachers to provide teachers with the much needed support. For example, in Lesotho the special unit provided a list of 156 primary schools whose teachers were said to have received training and who were therefore supposed to lead the way for other teachers, however these teachers were supported by only six itinerant teachers for special education. The lack of support and inadequate teacher training impose a major problem in realizing quality inclusive education.

Furthermore, Malawi has not been training special needs education teachers for so long. Therefore, this capacity gap leads into frustrations among learners with disabilities and so many end up dropping out of school. See the table below showing the survival rate of pupils over the years in Malawi's primary schools which implies serious dropout rate mainly by special learners.

4.4. Attitudinal Barriers

The society including teachers is still discriminatory towards the inclusion of children with special needs in educational settings. Teachers feel ill equipped with necessary skills required to teach learners with disabilities hence develop negative attitude. Teachers focus much of their attention to finishing the syllabus and they believe teaching children who have special educational needs will slow them down because they require attention as such children with special needs end up dropping out of school because they are excluded during teaching and learning. Many parents in these countries are still ignorant about the importance of educating their disabled children. They feel that the money spend on the education of their disabled children would rather be spend on something or someone they believe would economically contribute to the needs of the family. According to Stubbs (1995) in an interview with the mother of a boy with albinism in Lesotho the mother openly said that she has cattle and her son looks after them, he ploughs and collects grass instead of going to schools. These kinds of attitudes affect the inclusion of children with disabilities in the education system. In Malawi, children with disability are often believed to be dangerous to society such that when a person dies in society, some believe death has been caused by the person with disability.

4.5 Inadequate Resources

There is also lack of assistive materials which children with disabilities need hence effective learning and communication in most schools is compromised. Due to increased levels of poverty and poor service delivery especially in rural areas, many schools cannot afford materials such as hearing aids for children with hearing impairment and unavailability of teaching materials such as Braille and hearing aids result in increased risk of exclusion of children with disabilities. Text books that are given to students in these countries are not in large print and this creates difficulties for children who are visually impaired to access information necessary for their academic achievement. A research by Mariga and Phachaka (1993) has revealed that in some schools there is lack of clean water and toilet facilities, a situation that could impose serious health problems to children especially children with disabilities.

5.0 Conclusion

This paper has attempted to compare and contrast the case of special education between Malawi and Lesotho. Using Gerge Beredy's perspective, analysis of secondary data from both countries indicate that there are striking similarities between Malawi and Lesotho in terms of the challenges and successes in special education. For instance, both countries have very well developed policy benchmarks in support of special education however they are partially implemented. This paper, therefore, recommends that much should be done in implementation of the policies if learners with disability are to realise their potential and if the efforts to realise education for all (EFA) are to be achieved.

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