
Challenges to Classroom Participation of Learners With Disability in an Inclusive Classroom Setting

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Abstract

The United Nations Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (UN, 2006), which most countries have ratified, requires that disabled people have access to education that is equitable to their non-disabled peers (United Nations, 2006). Meaningful implementation of inclusive education must consider a range of elements that form educational experiences and outcomes and examines the role of elements of education systems that can support inclusion, including laws and policies, governance and finance, school curricula, personnel, infrastructure, and community norms, beliefs, and expectations. The concept of inclusive education is based on the right of every child to have enabling learning environment. Inclusive classrooms must therefore recognize and respond to the diverse needs of the learners, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all learners through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities. There should be a range of support and services to match the continuum of special needs encountered in every classroom.

As the global dialogue is focused on "leaving no one behind" innovative multi-sectoral approaches are explored to ensure inclusion and equity in education. However, available literature indicate that a lot of emphasis has been put on the inputs and outputs to educational system with little emphasis on the actual learning process within our classrooms, which in essence is the engine that transform the inputs of an educational process to its outcomes.

This study employs literature review to explore the state of learning environments in inclusive classrooms in European and global south countries, as experienced by learners with special educational needs, and to assess how such learning environments influences a learner's sense of autonomy and meaningful participation in the classroom setting. In this study, we bring our personal experiences, not only as persons living with disability but also as teachers in inclusive classrooms in Kenya and Hungary.

Key words: Inclusion, inclusive education, inclusive classroom, classroom participation, autonomy, meaningful participation, learners with special educational needs, challenges

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