Challenges of Development and Implementation of Individualized Education Programme by Teachers of Learners with Intellectual Disabilities in Kisumu and Nairobi Counties, Kenya

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Abstract: This was a descriptive study which sought to explore the challenges encountered by teachers of learners with intellectual disabilities in schools and units in Kisumu and Nairobi counties, Kenya. The sampling techniques in this study were purposive sampling and stratified random sampling. The sample size constituted of 9 special schools, 41 units, 9 head teachers and 105 teachers. Mixed methods were used to collect data. The questionnaire and observation schedule. The research instrument used were questionnaires with Likert scale of 1 – 5 (1 – Strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3 undecided, 4 agree, 5 strongly agree) was used to collect the data after which statistical package for social science (SPSS) software version 22 was used to analyze the data. Quantitative data from the questionnaire with Likert scale was analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis. The major findings of this study were the challenges encountered by teachers in developing and implementing IEP for learners with intellectual disabilities. They included the following:

Lack of adequate teaching aids, absenteeism of learners, lack of cooperation from parents, limited time for meeting of multidisciplinary team, lack of teaches confidence in developing and implementing IEP, lack of administrative support, lack of financial resources for communication and lack of adequate time to implement the IEP. This study recommended that teachers should have adequate teaching aids. They need to be confident in developing and implementing IEP. The cooperation from parents is required and is necessary for proper development and implementation of IEP. More time is needed by teachers in developing and implementing IEP with learners with intellectual disabilities.

Key words: Intellectual disability, Individual Education Programme, development, Implementation, challenges.

I. INTRODUCTION

A child with intellectual disability requires individualized Education Programme IEP. Individualized Education Programme (IEP) is a written plan of action that specifies an individual progress towards specific educational goals developed and implemented by a team of experts as in [1].

The IEP is developed to meet a child’s needs as in [2]. All IEPs contain the following information regarding the child with disability: present levels of educational performance, measurable annual goals, special education and related services, participation levels with other non-disabled children, plan for delivering services and modifications, measuring and reporting progress as well as a degree of access to general curriculum including the amount of time spent participating in general education as in [3].

Intellectual disability is a term used when referring to a person who has, certain limitation in intellectual functioning and in skills such as communicating, taking care of oneself and social skills. These limitations cause a child to learn and develop more slowly than a typical child. In such a case, the schools staff may work with the child’s parents and other professionals to develop an IEP which describes the child’s unique needs and services that have been designed to meet those needs. A child with intellectual disability can do well in school but it is likely to need the individual help.

Developing and implementing IEP has been quite challenging in the developing counties. Precious studies on challenges facing IEP development and implementation express concern. Studies that have been conducted show that parents are not keen in IEP meetings and often viewed themselves as being exploited because they saw that the responsibility of IEP rests with the teacher as in [4].

This study aimed at establishing the challenges of developing and implementing IEP in Kisumu and Nairobi counties, Kenya. It was against this background that the study established the challenges of developing and implementing IEP that parents are not actively involved in the IEP process and parents perceived IEP meeting, as traumatic, confusion and complicated as in [5].

The staff development must take place first as in [6]. He warns that teachers may end up with paperwork compliance rather than real exemplary implementation. Developing, writing and monitoring IEPs is quite time consuming and some teachers report that the burden of the paperwork outweighs the usefulness of the document as in [7] and [8].

IEP participation plays a significant effective positive dialogue and outcome as in [9]. Parents are typically not actively involved in IEP process as in [9].
IEP is perceived as necessary tool for planning, preparing and implementing educational goals and curriculum as in [10].

A study showed that parents of children with special needs input is frequently not respected during IEP meeting as in [11]. Collaboration in IEP process described the difficulties faced by teachers and parents in establishing and maintaining relationships with team members while developing IEPs as in [11]. Some of the highlighted challenges are involved around issues of power and equity, culture, roles of team members and their ability to overcome barriers to forge partnerships.

Lack of communication among team members can create a major challenge to development and implementation of IEP as in [12]. Communication is important because the team communicates their content to everyone who should have the information about the child.

**Purpose of the study**

This study sought to explore the challenges encountered by teachers of learners with intellectual disabilities in developing and implementing IEP in Kisumu and Nairobi counties, Kenya.

**Objective of the study**

To investigate the extent to which teachers of learners with intellectual disabilities are faced with challenges when developing and implementing IEP in Kisumu and Nairobi counties.

**Significance**

The study aimed at generating information on the challenges to successful development and implementation of the IEP for learners with intellectual disabilities. These findings might be beneficial to policy makers so as to make better the quality of education in special units and special schools for learners who are intellectually disabled. The headteachers and teachers might benefit more since they could be equipped with more knowledge in IEP development and implementation. Parent of learners with intellectual disabilities might benefit and will understand their role in IEP development and implementations. These learners might earn the necessary skills for independent living when more attention is given to them individually.

**II. PROCEDURES AND METHODS**

The study adopted a descriptive survey design to explore that challenges teachers of learners with intellectual disability face in developing and implementing IEP in units and special schools in Kisumu and Nairobi counties, Kenya. The sampling techniques used were purposive and stratified random sampling. The sample comprised of 9 special schools, 41 units, 9 headteachers, and 105 teachers. Mixed method was used to collect data both primary and secondary data was questionnaire and observation schedule were used. The research instrument was questionnaire with Likert scale.

The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statics. The main technique used to analyze the data was statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 22.

**III. RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

The study sought to explore the challenges encountered by teachers of learners with intellectual disabilities in developing and implementing IEP in special schools and units in Kisumu and Nairobi counties, Kenya.

Challenges encountered by Teachers of Learners with Intellectual Disabilities in relation to IEP implementation.

Teachers views were established using a Likert’s scale of 1-5 (5-very strongly agree, 4 – Agree, 3- Undecided, 2 – Disagree, 1 – Strongly disagree. As revealed from the data teachers displayed diversified views. The results were displayed in Table 1.1

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On the argument that IEP lacked adequate aids, 42.9% (45) teachers strongly agree while 33.35% (35) agreed on the same. About 95% (10) did disagree and strongly disagree with the declaration while 4.75% (5) remained undecided on the same. According to Berne Smith et al., (206) IEP needs necessary resources and materials for its development and implantation. The data demonstrates a situation that is quite discouraging because programme effectiveness requires resources. This situation as affirmed by the researcher’s observation schedule. Thus, it requires a quick response form governments.

The other statement was that learner absenteeism interrupted IEP implementation. About 47.6% (50) of teachers agreed while 33.35% (35) strongly agreed with statement. 9.5% (10) did disagree on the same while 47.5 (5) remained undecided and strongly disagreed with statement respectively.

Moreover, on the question of whether parent were not co-operative to implementation IEP. 42.9% (45) of teacher agreed with the statement while 19.1 (20) strongly agreed and disagreed with the statement respectively. About 9.5% (10) did remain undecided and strongly disagreed with statements respectively. The data demonstrates a situation where parent were uncooperative which indicates that there was failure to initiate them well to IEP process.

The statement that there was time limitation to call for a meeting with the multidisciplinary team was responded to differently by teachers. About 38.1 (40) agreed with this statement while 28.7% (30) strongly agreed on the same. 14.2% (15) of the teachers strongly disagree while 9.5% (10) of the teachers remained undecided and disagreed with statement respectively. Heward, (2003) concurs that a multidisciplinary team is vital for IEP to be implemented. He is further supported by Dart Didimalang and Pipeline (2002). Generally, all stakeholders involved in IEP have to create time for the programme if it has to bear fruits in schools.

The statement that teachers do not feel competent in developing and implementing IEP had diversified views. 28.7 (30) teachers agreed and strongly disagree with the statements respectively. About 19.1 (20) did strongly agree and disagreed on the same respectively. Only 4.75 (5) remained undecided. The data indicates that half respondent did feel that they were not competent and the other half felt they were.

The argument that school administration was not supportive to teachers was also responded to. About 28.7 % (30) teachers agreed with the statement while 23.8% (25) strongly disagreed on the same. 19.1% (20) of the teachers strongly agreed and did not agree with statement respectively it was only 9.5 % (10) who remained undecided.

Lack of co-operation from other stakeholders was another challenge teacher cited. 38.1% (40) of teachers agreed with the statement while 23.8% (25) strongly agreed and disagreed on the same respectively. About 9.5% (10) strongly disagreed with the statement while 4.75% (5) remained undecided. Fish (2011), CASA92013 and Heward (2003) state the cooperation among stakeholder is a key for IEP to be done well in schools.

The statement that there was a lack of financial resources of communication was responded to. About 33.35% (35) of the teachers strongly agreed and agreed with the statement while 19.1% (20) disagreed on the same. About 9.5% (10) remained undecided while 4.75% (5) strongly disagreed. Generally the data reveals that government involvement is essential in supporting the IEP in schools for them to bear fruits.

The statement that teachers lacked time to implement the IEP was another challenge that the teachers faced. About 33.35% (35) of the teacher agreed on the statement while 28.7% (30) disagreed 19.1% (20) strongly disagreed while 14.2% (15) strongly agreed on the same. It is only 4.75% (5) who remained undecided. As revealed from the data, teachers displayed diversified views. However, researchers have shown that for IEP to be well implemented all stakeholders must create time for it and teachers being key in the team should be able self-sacrifice. Additionally headteachers also need to create a good environment for teacher and other stakeholders to implement the IEPs.

The findings are constituent with the findings of previous studies in the challenges of developing and implementing IEP by teachers of learners with intellectual disabilities.

Children and Chambers (2005) describe that context and school culture have significant effects on IEP practices and importantly influence the nature and level of collaboration between teachers, parents, students and other stakeholders when developing and implementing IEPs. Ronaldi (1976) cautions that: staff development must take place first. He warns that teachers may end up with paperwork compliance rather than real exemplary implementation. Smith (1990) argues that developing, writing and monitoring IEPs is quiet time consuming and some teachers report that the burden of the paperwork outweighs the usefulness of the document.

However, the study of Abosi (2003) shows that, the individuals with special needs are not well catered for by the government. He laments that teachers training and general development for those with special needs is lacking especially in Africa.

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Furthermore, he emphasizes that planning, organizing and management of special education have been characterized by poor vision and commitment, inadequate funding, selfish interest among experts and negative attitudes as a result of negative African values, traditional and culture.

IV. CONCLUSION

According to the findings based on objective four on challenges encountered by Teachers of Learners with Intellectual Disabilities in Kisumu and Nairobi counties. It was found that although IEP is carried out in schools and units, it encounters many challenges. These challenges include: lack of good-will from parents and sometimes form teacher as well as lack of support from head teachers and other stakeholders. IEP also lacks resources and materials, sufficient funds and time for its implementation. The government too has failed in terms of policy, monitoring and implementation through the Ministry of Education.

Teachers were key player for IEP to be developed and implemented in schools. Maximum encouragement, motivation, good environment and support should be given to them in order to have good will to develop and implement IEP well in schools and units government should remain faithful to her policies so as to avoid lip services to stakeholders for IEP.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

(i) This study focused only on two counties, Kisumu and Nairobi there is need to carry out a future research in other counties in Kenya.

(ii) There is need and concern for further research to find out the role of Ministry f Education in policy decision in IEP development and implementation by teachers of all learners with special needs.

(iii) Further research is needed to establish the role of Quality Assurance personnel in supervision of development and implementation of IEP in special schools and units for learners with special need.

(iv) The present study used locally prepared instruments which limited the generalization of data. The future research need to employ standardized instrument for the purpose of generalization of the study findings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Finally to my late husband professor Joshua Dixon Olewe-Nyunya, late brother, Moses Owino Odengo, Benjamin Othieno Odengo, my late Mama Norah Auma Odengo, my sister Dr. Wilfrida Olaly and my children Rosemary, Hillary, Ishmael and Nicholas for their understanding and support during this period of my study.

REFERENCES