

Inclusive Education rolled out throughout Ghana

Ghana/Ministry of Education: Inclusive Education Policy

Ghana's Inclusive Education Policy, together with its comprehensive implementation plan (2015–2019), has introduced Inclusive Education in schools countrywide. The programme has expanded from 29 districts in seven regions in 2011 to 48 districts in all ten regions by 2013.

IN BRIEF

Ghana's Inclusive Education Policy provides a more harmonized and strategic approach to planning and financial prioritization in order to roll-out Inclusive Education activities on a wider scale and reach all learners with special educational needs. The policy is complemented by a comprehensive five-year implementation plan (2015–2019) that includes indicators, a timeframe, a budget, and responsible stakeholders for each action to be undertaken.

FACTS & FIGURES

- The Inclusive Education programme expanded from 29 districts in seven regions in 2011 to 48 districts in all 10 regions by 2013.
- Key personnel from the Ghana Education Service as well as head teachers and teachers in 1,322 basic schools have been trained in Inclusive Education.
- Over 80,000 children have been screened.
- Education materials and assistive devices have been distributed to schools.
- A school monitoring and evaluation tool was developed and is now part of the policy scale-up process.

INNOVATIVE ASPECTS

Social justice & cost-effectiveness

Inclusive schools are the most effective means to combat discriminatory attitudes and to improve cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.

Sensitization & training

Ghana's policy works well in a low-income context because it sensitizes parents, communities, and staff; trains teachers in early detection techniques; and sets up support services.

Tracking of success

Monitoring and evaluation is undertaken at all levels: All annually reviewed planning documents of educational institutions have to include Inclusive Education issues, including an Education Management Information System.

CONTEXT

Despite an overall increase in school enrolment in Ghana, some children continued to be left behind, particularly children with disabilities, who went either to segregated boarding schools or were not enrolled at all. In 2009, Inclusive Education was piloted in the Central, Greater Accra, and Eastern Region, and by 2011 it was implemented in 529 schools. To roll-out these activities, UNICEF, the Ghana Blind Union, and Inclusion Ghana commenced discussions with the Ghana Education Service, the Ministry of Education, and other stakeholders to develop a policy framework. The involvement of non-state actors was key to the policy's adoption, along with an accompanying implementation plan.

QUOTE

Inclusive Education is not a tragedy. Ignorance is. —Hon. John Majisi, Member of Parliament, Krachi Nchumuru Constituency, Ghana

KEY FEATURES

Ghana's Inclusive Education Policy of 2013 is a national legally-binding policy. To adapt the existing education system, special schools are transformed to serve as resource centres, school infrastructure is improved, and funding is provided. To promote a learner-friendly school environment, curricula and teacher training are reviewed and resources are provided. Staff, community, and media are also sensitized. Both private and public schools in Ghana must implement Inclusive Education and cannot deny admission. The responsibilities of ministries are clearly defined and the government is the principal funder. The implementation plan provides for the expected deliverables, including indicators, budget, timeframe, actors, and collaborating ministries or agencies. All institutions have to include Inclusive Education issues in their planning documents, which are reviewed annually. The policy will be reviewed every five years.

OUTCOME, IMPACT, AND EFFECTIVENESS

- Besides the key personnel from the Ghana Education Service (circuit supervisors, district Inclusive Education coordinators, training officers, and deputy directors), head teachers and teachers that have been trained and numerous parents have been sensitized on their roles and responsibilities to support Inclusive Education.
- Addressing the lack of data, UNICEF recently conducted an impact assessment, soon to be published.
- A 2014 doctoral thesis noted that there is evidence of acceptance of children with disabilities into mainstream schools in Ghana, but that a number of challenges remain.

TRANSFERABILITY, SCALABILITY, AND COST-EFFICIENCY

Inclusive Education has been or is being adopted by most members of the United Nations. Before implementing Inclusive Education on a national scale, Ghana first piloted the policy and learned what works and what does not work. Other countries of the Global South can easily decide to follow Ghana's approach.

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POLICY

Inclusive Education Policy of 2013 by the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service, Ghana

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