Alternative models of special education: a case of Akwa Ibom state of Nigeria

Bassey D. Ndem

ATLANTA UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT
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ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION:
A CASE OF AKWA IBOM STATE OF NIGERIA

Advisor: Komanduri Murty, Ph.D.

Dissertation dated May 2005

This study examined the available literature on alternative models of special education services in five selected developed countries (France, Japan, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America), five developing countries (China, Cyprus, Ghana, South Africa, and Tanzania), and assessed the status of current special education programs in Nigeria as a whole and in Akwa Ibom State, in particular. The study is descriptive and qualitative in nature. Secondary sources of information were used to describe the kinds of special education services provided in these countries.

The study showed that each country has its own approaches to providing special education services to its special needs population in elementary through secondary education. Some countries designed their special education services based on home-grown education laws as well as international conventions and declarations, such as the United Nations’ proposals. The researcher also found that factors such as cultural beliefs, insensitivity, and funding are the main obstacles impeding the development of special education services. The study reports the findings that mitigate the establishment of
workable special education services in the state; thus, the conclusions and recommendations are offered regarding the present status of stakeholders in education of children with special needs.

Based on the international practices and recommendations of the United Nations Conventions, it is recommended that Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria re-examine its current practices of providing special education services to its special needs children in both elementary and secondary schools. Access to quality education, availability of educational resources, trained personnel, and financing are some critical areas the state government of Akwa Ibom must urgently address in order to provide free and appropriate special education services to its elementary and secondary education students.
ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION:
A CASE OF AKWA IBOM STATE OF NIGERIA

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
BASSEY DAVID NDEM

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
MAY 2005
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I want to thank God for His blessings throughout the course of my life and for sustaining me through this endeavor. I am indebted to my committee members, Dr. Komanduri S. Murty, Committee Chair and Professor of Criminal Justice, Dr. Kwaku Danso, Chairman of the International Affairs Department, and Dr. Ogbu Agburu, Educational Leadership Department for reading the manuscript over and over and making critical suggestions and being instrumental in bringing this dissertation to its final shape. I owe my personal gratitude to my sisters, Afiong, Comfort, and Alice; sister in-law, Dr. Afiong Emmanuel Akpan; and my children, Anietie, Imo, Anieno, Ukeme, and Nsikakabasi for their contributions to make my life enjoyable. My sincere appreciation to my devoted wife, Nseabasi, for her unfailing and unconditional love and understanding, even though I could not be there every time when she needed me because of educational commitments.

Finally, I bow my head humbly to my mother, late madam Arit Asuquo Udoh, my father, late Teacher David Akpan Ndem, and brother, late Professor Emmanuel David Akpan, whose love and guidance fostered my discipline and education.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>ARS</td>
<td>American Research Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMS</td>
<td>Church Missionary Society</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>Equal Education for All</td>
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<td>GAPP</td>
<td>Groupsd’Aide Psychopedagogiques</td>
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<td>IDEA</td>
<td>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEP</td>
<td>Individualized Education Plan</td>
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<td>IOBK</td>
<td>Students with Developmental Difficulties</td>
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<td>IQ</td>
<td>Intelligent Quotient</td>
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<td>IYC</td>
<td>International Year of the Disabled</td>
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<td>ICEC</td>
<td>International Council for Exceptional Children</td>
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<td>LEA</td>
<td>Local Education Authority</td>
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<td>LD</td>
<td>Learning Disabilities</td>
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<td>LOM</td>
<td>Learning Disabled Schools</td>
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<td>MLK</td>
<td>Educable Mentally Retarded Schools</td>
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<td>NAEP</td>
<td>National Assessment of Education Progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>PARC</td>
<td>Pennsylvania Association of Retarded Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Public Law</td>
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<td>NCEO</td>
<td>National Center on Educational Outcomes</td>
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SED  Severely Emotionally Disturbed
SLD  Specific Learning Disabilities
TGAT  Task Group on Assessment and Testing
USCEC  United States Council for Exceptional Children
INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, the education for children with learning disabilities did not gain considerable attention until recently. Specifically, in Akwa Ibom it was not until 1982 that the first school for special education was established by the missionaries. Special education refers to the education of persons with learning difficulties that stem from different handicaps including, but not limited to, blindness or partial sightedness; deafness or hardness of hearing; mental retardation or social maladjustment; and physical handicap.¹

Though the Nigerian government contemplated designing policies for special education programs in 1974, it was not until 1999 that the Constitution provided educational opportunities to children with learning disabilities and handicaps up to the age of 21 years. When Federal policies were implemented, however, special education reached only selective categories of handicapped children, those who were deaf, blind and/or physically handicapped. These policies were implemented in a peripheral manner, and Akwa Ibom was not an exception in this practice.

Poor academic performance in Akwa Ibom can conceivably be attributed to the absence of any credible identification and classification methods for providing disability -

specific services and the lack of resources to provide at least the minimum educational services required for those with disabilities. The pattern of poor academic performance is evidenced by student performances on the national standardized tests and entrance examinations to universities and other colleges of higher learning.\(^2\) Table 1 shows the five highest-ranking states with students writing the Joint Matriculation Board examination (the pre-college admission test, similar to the Student Achievement Test (SAT) in the U.S.A.) from 1997 to 2001.

### Table 1. States and Number of Applicants

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Amongst these top ranking states, despite the wide fluctuation in the number of students taking the examination, college admissions range only between 4.00 and 12.64 percent of those taking the exam. Akwa Ibom ranked further down the ladder with only 3.36 percent admitted to the colleges during the 2000 - 2001 academic year.

A prominent school of thought exists among school officials that these percentages can be drastically improved by: (1) separating in the classroom environment the children with disabilities from those without disabilities and (2) providing much needed disability-

specific services to the former group, thereby assisting them to acquire skills necessary to perform adequately or effectively on the standardized as well as on non-standardized tests. Not subscribing to this view, public schools currently are not provided mandates on the operation of special education programs because there are no legislative measures that govern enforcement of these mandates.

High absenteeism and dropout rates from schools provide the opportunity for disabled youth to hangout on the streets and become involved in vending, begging and/or committing petty thefts and misdemeanor crimes. Unfortunately, the fact that these youth are handicapped is viewed by many as a sympathy-gaining mechanism for those that participate in undesirable activities. It is estimated that at least 12-15 percent of the nation’s youth are disabled and only two percent of these are attending schools. The statistics generate an alarming concern to save the handicapped youth from becoming human waste for generations.

The Akwa Ibom State

The name Akwa Ibom was derived from Qua River, one of the tributaries of River Niger. Akwa Ibom is one of the 36 states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Figure 1). It is situated at the Southeastern part of Nigeria, lying between latitudes 4°32’ and 5°33’ north, and longitudes 7°25’ and 8°25’ east. To the east, the state is bordered by Cross River State and on the west by Rivers and Abia States and to the south by the Atlantic Ocean. Its capital city is Uyo.
There are thirty-one local government areas in Akwa Ibom with a combined population of about 6 million people as of 2003. The major language is Ibibio, and it is widely spoken by 95% of the population. Other ethnic groups of Ibo, Hausa and Yoruba account for the remaining five percent. Christianity is the predominant religion adopted by 90% of the population. The state is largely made up of a homogenous group of people, who are believed to have originated from a single ancestry. Staple foods include cassava, yam, rice, corn, plantain, beans, pumpkin, fish, and meats.

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4Ibid.
Fig. 2: A Political Map of Akwa Ibom State

(Godswill Etuk Cartographers, Afaha Ikot Obio Nkan Ibesikpo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria)

Statement of the Problem

The World Bank awarded a new grant of $55 million (about N7.1 billion) to the federal government of Nigeria to implement its Universal Basic Education program, in addition to those already received from other international organizations, including United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).\(^5\) The national government of Nigeria claims that it was spending billions of Naira (Nigerian currency) on Universal Basic Education (UBE), which covers primary and secondary education. Regrettably, many schools where the UBE is said to be in effect are in

shambles and without the basic instructional resources such as desks for the students and teachers, chalk and chalkboards to write on, books and other instructional resources. In addition to the unavailability of the essential elements for teaching and learning, a basic infrastructure problem, such as leaky roofs, exists that impedes the learning process. In some villages, students congregate under trees to form make-shift classrooms, or they sit on bare floors.

These conditions are certainly not conducive to an effective learning environment, and it is unrealistic to expect anyone to learn under what can be termed as deplorable conditions. The combination of these pathetic social and physical conditions causes many education analysts and experts to describe the UBE program as an opportunity for the government officials to embezzle public funds for education.⁶

Special (sometimes called Exceptional) Education programs and services were highly publicized during the decade of 1970s in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the funding and impact of programs and services still remain to be seen by the public. The whole system of education in Nigeria is so disorganized that during the last week of December 2002, Association of Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities embarked on a strike. The university professors were protesting against the federal government’s inability to implement the 2001/2002 agreements reached between the government and the union. Ozor claimed that education in Nigeria in recent years has been in a sorry state of affairs. He went to indicate that infrastructure, if any, has collapsed and policy, according to him, was badly envisioned and implemented. Academic years are not completed and encountered disruptions. Enrollment of students dropped to significant proportions.

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Performance of students has appreciably declined with little or no learning outcomes. Government inefficiency is visible everywhere. In the article, Ozor accused the Nigerian government for investing least resources in education compared to any other nation in the world.

The United Nations recommends that a minimum of 26% of the total budget of a nation be allocated to education. Nigerian government, while ignoring the calls for increase in the budgetary allocation to the minimum of 26 per cent, it has in fact reduced it to 1.83 percent in 2003 from its already low allocation of 5.9 percent in 2002. The highest ever the nation was able to give was 11% in the years 1999-2000. In 2001 it dropped to 7%, and then to 5.6% in 2002 and to 1.83% in 2003. From the primary to tertiary institutions the situation is the same. High cost of textbooks, equipment and poorly equipped laboratories and workshops in ‘pot primary schools’ (mud buildings) are the reasons for the poor performance of students in mathematics, sciences and vocational subjects. Others include lack of proper motivation and encouragement of students to take interest in these subjects.

Akwa Ibom State has more than 200 nursery schools, 1,550 primary schools, and 253 secondary schools. There are only six specific- purpose institutes that provide special education services. Five of these six are private organizations providing services to the blind, deaf, and orthopedics, and sometimes they are partially supported by government grants. These government grants may exist in the form in-kind service staff or funding for certain line- item budgets, e.g., books, and supplies, financial-aid scholarships. These institutes are barely quipped with required special education resources for their students. The Ukana Iba Rehabilitation Center, run by the Sisters of
Charity, a Roman Catholic Social Service agency, is the only exception. This center caters to the education of physically handicapped people with emphasis on self-help skills, personal hygiene, and handicraft. The only government center for special education program and services is located in the vicinity of the capital city Uyo. The center serves approximately 90 handicapped students between the ages 12 and 18 years, teaching them daily living, self-help, and academic skills.

The organizational structure of education in Akwa Ibom is also an area of concern. The Ministry of Education of the Akwa Ibom State government is responsible for the policy design and operational budget for all of the publicly funded schools. The organizational structure shows the level of importance and lines of reporting authority of each position. The Director General for Education heads the administrative body of the Ministry with the Executive Secretary under this position. The Deputy Secretary Executive reports to the Executive Secretary, while the Principal of the Special Education Center Mbiabong Etoi is under the Deputy Executive Secretary.

There are other positions between the four listed administrative positions such as divisional directors, divisional heads, departmental supervisors and teachers, secretaries, counselors and laborers, yet, in spite of the serious attention that the special education programs deserve, Akwa Ibom's educational organizational structure does not take special education programs into consideration. Thus, the special education services provided to handicapped children in Akwa Ibom are grossly inadequate, not only in terms of the number of available centers to provide such services, but in their infrastructure capacity to diagnose and provide any meaningful services in learning process. The present band-aid approach to this long-standing neglected problem does not offer any
practical solutions.

**Purpose of this Study**

The purpose of this study is three-fold. First, this study examines available literature on alternative models of special education services in five selected developed countries (France, Japan, The Netherlands, United Kingdom and USA) and five developing countries (China, Cyprus, Ghana, South Africa, and Tanzania). Second, this study assesses the status of current special education programs in Nigeria with particular focus placed on Akwa Ibom state. Third, this study makes appropriate suggestions and recommendations to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the programs in Akwa Ibom based on applicable highlights in the program models examined.

**Rationale of the Study**

The education of children with disabilities across Nigeria lags significantly behind any comparable developing nation in the region. Within Nigeria, Akwa Ibom is far behind several states in this aspect. Many factors contribute to Akwa Ibom’s inability to adequately address the needs of students with disabilities. Among these factors contributing to Akwa Ibom’s shortfall in the delivery of special education are: a lack of provision for special education programs and services for the students of special needs and the level of apathy and the impact of limited educational funding. It is imperative that the level of attention be raised and immediate attention given to the needs of special education in public schools.

The study examined the current issues facing special education in Akwa Ibom, with particular reference to educational programs and resource allocation (if any), and suggests alternative methods for improvement in order to increase their effectiveness and
efficiency as practiced in other developing and developed nations.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used and defined in the following manner throughout this study:

**Anecdotal Records.** A report that contains observed behavior of a particular individual or event.

**Annual Goals.** This is a desired performance level of the student’s academic and/or behavioral achievements measured each school year.

**Annual Review.** This is a yearly review of the student’s individualized Educational Program to determine the extent of progress or otherwise of the stated annual goals and objectives.

**Assessment/Evaluation.** Assessment encompasses all those functions in the testing and diagnostic process leading up to the development of an appropriate, individualized educational program and the placement for a student with disabilities.

**Assistive Technology.** Equipment or devices that increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a student with a disability.

**Attention Span.** The length of time a person can concentrate on a single activity before losing interest.

**Auditory Perception.** The ability to receive sounds accurately and to understand what they mean.

**Autism.** This refers to a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction generally evident before age 3 that adversely affects a child’s educational performance.
**Behavior Management.** A plan of activities and strategies designed to reinforce positive behaviors and decrease negative behaviors.

**Behavior Objectives:** Objectives which are written to describe what a child will be able to do as a result of some planned instructions. Behavioral objectives are usually interpreted as objectives that are measured in some definitive or quantitative way; e.g., “Given a list of 10 three-letter words, the student will orally read eight of the 10 words correctly without errors within a given number of seconds”.

**Classification.** An arrangement according to some systematic division into groups. The term “special education classification” refers to (a) the primary area of disability of a student, e.g., “his classification is visual impairment” and/or (b) students with disabilities being divided into groups according to their primary area of disability for data collection purposes.

**Deaf-blindness.** This refers to a concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that the students cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.

**Developed Nation.** This refers to a modern industrial society with a well-organized economy. It is a country with many industries.

**Developing Nation.** This refers to a country with a relatively low industrial production and little modern technology.

**Hearing impairment.** Students with hearing impairments exhibit a hearing loss that interferes with the acquisition or maintenance of auditory skills necessary for the development of speech, language, and academic achievement.
Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This is a written document required by the United States Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 1997, P.L. 94-142) for every child with a disability, includes statements of present level of performance, annual goals, short-term instructional objectives, specific educational services needed, relevant be signed by parents as well as educational personnel.

Mainstreaming. This is the process of integrating students with disabilities with non-disabled students into regular education classes.

Mental Retardation (Often referred to as Intellectual Disability). A student with intellectual disabilities exhibits significantly sub-average intellectual functioning concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior that adversely affect educational performance and is manifested during the developmental period.

Multiple Disabilities. This refers to concomitant impairments (such as mental retardation-blindness, intellectual disability-orthopedic impairment), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely by addressing one of the impairments.

Orthopedic Impairment. Orthopedic Impairment refers to students whose severe orthopedic impairments affect their educational performance. This term may include:

- impairment caused by congenital anomalies, e.g., deformity or absence of some member;
- impairment caused by disease, e.g., poliomyelitis or bone tuberculosis; and
- impairment from other causes, such as cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures.
Secondary disabilities may be present, including, but not limited to, visual impairment, hearing impairment, communication impairment and/or intellectual disability (no lower than criteria outlined for mild intellectual disabilities program).

**Personnel Allocation.** Funds earmarked for secondary schools’ faculty and staff salaries.

**Emotionally Behavioral Disturbed: (EBD).** This term is used to describe students who display one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time: inability to learn which cannot be explained by ability, health, vision, or hearing deficits; problems relating to other children and adults; inappropriate behaviors or feelings (e.g., extreme anger reactions); severe depression or unhappiness, and a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears about personal school problems.

**Special Education.** This refers to a set of educational programs and/or services specially designed to meet the unique needs of individuals with disabilities that cannot be met in the regular classroom even with modification.

**Speech or Language Impairment.** Students with speech-language impairments exhibit oral communication skills that differ in manner or content from that of their peers that the speech calls attention to itself, disrupts communication, or affects emotional, social, intellectual or educational growth.

**Specific Learning Disability: (SLD).** Students with Learning Disabilities demonstrate a disorder in one of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language (spoken or written), which may manifest itself in an impaired ability to listen, think, speak, write, spell or do mathematical calculations.

**Traumatic Brain Injury.** This refers to an acquired injury to the brain which is
caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth.

Other Health Impairments. Other Health Impaired students have chronic or acute health problems resulting in limited strength, vitality or alertness that adversely affect their educational performance.

Limitations of the Study

This study largely relies on secondary sources of information including government documents, journal articles, other scholarly publications, and research reports. While these documents for developed countries are believed to be fairly accurate, similar assumption may not be applicable to developing countries. For example, in Nigeria as well as in Akwa Ibom State, the government documents often do not reflect up-to-date information. The national statistics are frequently under-counted and under-reported. Generally, there is a time-lag between the time of enumeration and time of reporting. Besides, as far as this study is concerned, there may be definition and criterion differences between the nations in terms of the concepts of child, handicap and special education, among others. This study does not attempt to either determine or adjust for such differences. It primarily focuses on the modalities and logistics of special
education programs in selected developing and developed nations.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 focused on the description of Akwa Ibom state, the statement of the problem, purpose of this study, rationale of the study, definition of terms, limitations of the study, and this section on the organization of the dissertation. Chapter II examines special education programs in selected developed nations. Chapter III reviews special education programs in selected developing nations. Chapter IV discusses the existing special education programs in Akwa Ibom state and identifies gaps in services. Chapter V provides the study's summary, conclusions, implications, and recommendations.
CHAPTER II

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN DEVELOPED NATIONS

This chapter reviews pertinent literature on special education services and practices in five selected developed countries: France, Japan, Netherlands, United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

France

Although the principle of compulsory education for all students in France, including those with disabilities, was established by the 1882 Compulsory Education Act, it was not until 1970s that the principle of integration was accredited. Specifically, on July 31, 1975, the French National Assembly ratified. The United Nations’ Declaration of compulsory education program for all students with disabilities.¹ The Orientation Law of 1975 provided for the mandatory education of students with disabilities in a minimum restrictive setting without cost to students. The Departmental Center for Special Education assumes responsibility for determining the least restrictive environment for students whose needs cannot be met in general education settings.² This includes not only physical and material adaptations made in the educational environment but also


teacher training, without regard to the nature and degree of disabilities. Circulars of
1982 and 1983 expanded the population covered to include students with emotional as
well as behavioral difficulties.

In France, underachieving students are provided with a chance of being integrated
in the mainstream through the classes de transition. Transition classes are usually
attached to secondary schools to provide assistance for students who have been excluded
from secondary education because their level of progress was assessed at a level that was
unsatisfactory and restricted their ability to leave the primary school. If skills are not
sufficient, students repeat years instead of automatically progressing to the next year.
Children from the age of 12 to 16 who have an IQ between 65 and 80 are served in
remedial education sections (Sections d'éducation spécialisée, SES), which are attached
to colleges. Decisions are made by a committee of people, called the Commission de
circonscription du second degré, including teachers and parents. Students under the age
of 14 primarily receive general education; however, students over the age of 14 are given
alternatives and usually receive pre-vocational or vocational education as well as general
education. Although these students are allowed to be re-integrated into an LEP (Lycée
'enseignement professionnel) or study for a CEP (Certificat d'éducation professionnelle)),
they may not be advised to go on to a lycée. 

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3Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, “The Integration of
Disabled Children into Mainstream Education: Ambitions, Theories and Practices,”

4Judy Elliot, and Hyeonsook Shin, eds., A Perspective on Education, Assessment in
Other Nation: Where are Students with Disabilities? Synthesis Report 1995 from

France does not have a universally standardized classification system of special education categories. French special education is an intervention on a student's environment and is not dictated by any specific disability. Special education program options are provided in preschools, primary schools and secondary schools as follows:

1. **Pre-school.** Improvement Classes are offered to 2-1/2 to 6-year-old children who are mentally, physically, emotionally, or behaviorally impaired;

2. **Primary school.** Improvement classes, adaptation classes, and multi-disciplinary team services are provided for students with mental impairment, learning disabilities, or behavioral impairment; and

3. **Secondary School.** Program options include adaptation classes, multi-disciplinary team support, and Special Education Sections (SES). SES classes are not located in regular school buildings. These classes offer vocational training as well as general education. Those who cannot learn in normal academic settings attend National Improvement Schools, which are physically separated from regular secondary schools. Adaptation classes are offered on a temporary basis.6

The current educational evaluation in France is public-oriented, so the accountability of educational institutions is being considered important in the educational evaluation procedure. For this purpose, school populations are assessed and focus is placed not on individual students but on schools. To assess student performance, teachers mark their students' work and make mock exams according to a well-worn pattern. To test general ability, the Ministry occasionally carries out national-level

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sample surveys. There are, however, two national surveys administered regularly. One evaluates reading ability at the end of primary education, and the other evaluates 14-year-olds' knowledge in economics just before they begin their study at school. Currently under consideration is the assessment of student's performance in basic skills at ages 10, 12, and 14, the evaluation of the national educational system, and regularly conducted national sample surveys. The same standardized tests are used to assess performance of students in Zones d'éducation prioritaire, in technical colleges (13-year-olds in classe de 3e), and students in GAPP (Groupes d'Aide Psychopédagogiques). Assessment of student performance on the standardized tests is combined with other techniques (e.g., questionnaires, interviews).

Students with disabilities are provided time extensions on their tests. However, no reference is made to criteria for inclusion or exclusion of students with disabilities in large-scale assessments such as the national sample surveys.

Japan

Shortly after Japanese special education programs and services were nationally mandated in 1979, they were implemented in the 1980s. Japanese children, before starting their school years, undergo a medical examination to identify those who have

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8 Ibid.

physical, medical and mental disabilities. Special schools for children who are blind or deaf have been compulsory since 1948, and schools for students with mental, physical, multiple disabilities, or health impairments have been compulsory since 1979. About 1 percent of the 14 million children who receive compulsory education have physical and mental disabilities. Of these children, 42 percent are enrolled in special schools, and 58 percent are enrolled in special education classes in regular schools. Thus, almost all Japanese children, including the severely disabled, attend some type of school.

Apart from these special education schools, there are special education classes within regular elementary and junior high schools for children with less severe physical and mental handicaps (e.g., medical infirmity, language disorder, and emotional disorder). Students with more severe disabilities receive special education services at public and private daycare centers operated through the Ministry of Health and Welfare.

The parents of a handicapped child ultimately decide the school or class the child would be enrolled. No laws mandate that certain types of handicapped students will enroll in a special school, special class, or regular class. Neither the teachers nor the city's Education Center hold authority to send handicapped children to a special education school or class. The primary function of the Center is to help parents and teachers of handicapped students decide which school is most appropriate for them. The decision, however, is rarely made solely on the basis of parental judgment. Although it is difficult to derive a general pattern of how a child is referred to a special education school

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or class, the special education teachers in elementary schools map out the typical road many handicapped children travel before being enrolled in a special education school or class:

Most disabled children are identified before entering preschool. Parents receive the notice from the city government to bring their child for a check up at ages 6 months, 18 months, and 3 years. In case of rather severely handicapped children, disabilities can be traced easily by the 6-month check-up because their heads do not sit stably on the neck. If a child's neck is not stable at 6th month, a potentially severe disability is suspected, so the child with this condition is referred to a doctor immediately. In the 18-month check-up, most children are expected to walk, so if a child is unable to walk at this time, he or she is referred to a doctor.

Most autistic children pass both the 6-month and 18-month check ups. Autism is usually identified at the 3-year check-up when children are asked, for example, "What is this?" when shown a book. If a child does not respond at all, or tries to avoid the examiner all together, autism is suspected and the child is referred to a pediatrician.

Other characteristics often associated with autism are unusual responses to sensory experiences, engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, and resistance to environmental change in daily routines. Students with autism vary widely in their abilities and behavior. The term does not apply if a student's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the student has an emotional or behavioral disorder. Autism may exist concurrently with other areas of disability.

After being referred to and having been seen by a doctor, parents who still think that their child may be slower than others must make a decision if they have to put their
child into a regular preschool or a special school for disabled children.

Children who enter such special schools usually advance to either a regular school with a special class for disabled children or a special school intended to provide education for disabled children (yogo gakkou). When parents cannot decide by themselves, they seek advice from the Education Center staff.

Special education teachers seem to interact with special education students more casually and intimately than most teachers do with healthier children. Attending a special education class is a particularly "homey" experience. Normally, a special education class consists of five to seven students at most. Contrary to the medical and biological models, Japanese do not consider individual differences in abilities to be primarily given at birth, but rather acquired through individual effort and family background. From the beginning of their formal education, Japanese children are taught to see themselves as equals, as part of a group. From preschool and throughout much of elementary schooling, children receive what Japanese educators call "whole person education." The idea behind "whole person education" is that children should be educated in every dimension of their personhood, including their social, emotional, moral, physical, and intellectual capacities. Japanese elementary schools place so much emphasis on the group, and the individual as part of the group, that teaching and learning at this level cannot be taken out of an interpersonal context.

Grade promotion in compulsory education is normally automatic, unless the students:

(a) Miss more than 50 percent of school attendance;

(b) Demonstrate less than satisfactory achievement to the grade level; or
(c) Encounter disciplinary or behavioral problems. Promotion from elementary to lower-secondary public schools is also automatic.\(^\text{12}\)

Decisions regarding graduation from the upper-secondary schools are made subject to the total number of credits acquired and the approval of satisfactory achievement by the teacher. An entrance examination for public upper-secondary schools is organized by the boards of education.\(^\text{13}\)

It is unclear what the criteria are for inclusion or exclusion of students with disabilities in large-scale assessments.\(^\text{14}\) No data on accommodations for testing students with disabilities are available to the public. Given that the responsibility of research on special education lies primarily with a separate institute, it is doubtful that students with disabilities are dealt with in the assessment and accompanying procedures, and that special needs of students with disabilities are addressed in the assessment procedures.

**Netherlands**

In the Netherlands, special education refers to a separate system of education. Separate primary and secondary special education is provided for students in special schools. Special schools serve children from the age of 3 to 20 years, who have disabilities or do not make progress in ordinary schools.

Special education students are classified into three categories:

(1) Learning disabled (LOM) schools,

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\(^{14}\) Ibid., 3078.
(2) Educable mentally retarded (MLK) schools, and

(3) Students with developmental difficulties (IOBK).

MLKs provide special education for the hearing impaired, children with severe speech disorders, blind, partially sighted, physically handicapped, chronically ill, "hospital bound" children, severely maladjusted, multiple handicapped, and children in schools associated with universities. IOBKs serve children with severe mental retardation. The country has a two-track system of education, which was established in 1985 under the two separate laws for general and special education. The Primary Education Act applies to children aged between 4 and 12, and the Special Education Interim Act applies to children with disabilities. The Dutch educational system is characterized by selective practices of early assessment and streaming. Each child is assessed at the end of each school phase. Two key transition points for students are the end of primary schooling and the end of secondary schooling.

Promotion from one grade to the next in primary school is decided by norm-referenced tests. Students who are in the lower 25% of the range are not eligible for promotion.15 Students at the end of primary school (at the age of 12) take the primary school-leaving examination and are enrolled in the first year of secondary school, which is an orientation year. Based on the combination of academic record, examination scores (particularly in the subject area of science), and psychological tests, students are assigned by a board to one of three educational streams: university preparatory, general secondary,

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and vocational.  

According to 1995 statistics provided by Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (Van der Leij, 1995), special education is provided not only for these students but also those admitted to hospitals and suffering from long illnesses. Among these student populations, the number of students with learning or behavioral difficulties has increased. LOM and MLK schools serve the largest numbers of special education students. The competent authority of a special school decides who gets special education services based on the advice and selection of a board of experts. Students receiving special education services are re-examined every two years. Although children with physical handicaps have been integrated into general education settings to an increasing extent, there still remain different types of special primary and secondary schools. Most emotionally disturbed students are placed in special schools. For the purpose of evaluating the quality of educational institutions, student achievement is assessed once every eight years in each subject of primary education. The results have been used both by the government to intervene with problems and by schools to compare their own results with the national level of achievement.

The United Kingdom

The United Kingdom’s Education Act of 1944 expanded the limits of special education treatment in order to provide appropriate special education services for

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17Ibid.
children with physical or mental handicaps. Further, in 1980, the British Government replaced 10 categories of disabilities with a comprehensive assessment of needs.

According to Woll, the United Kingdom has had special schools for over 200 years and legislation for special education since 1893. Special education in the United Kingdom followed the medical model; hence diagnosis and classification of disabilities were the main duty of special education professionals. This model allows for the assessment, evaluation, diagnosis and intervention and treatment of the child with disabilities.

Normally the history of the child is gathered to ascertain the cause of the handicapping condition in case of abnormal birth (e.g., birth injuries, fetal alcoholic syndrome, traumatic brain injuries, and birth defects). Anecdotal recordings are reviewed by the professionals to determine observable behaviors exhibited by student to help determine baseline behavior. Information of this nature would be used to develop individualized education plan for the child. At this point, it is important to note that there are two opposing schools of thoughts that the United Kingdom went through as to how special education curriculum should be implemented.

The old school of thought, which maintained that special educational curriculum, must remain separate from the mainstream curriculum in order to protect the mainstream curriculum from a possible danger of weakening its original strength and integrity; and second, the current school of thought, which argues that the handicapped children should start special education curriculum separately but with an ultimate goal of integrating them

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with mainstream curriculum and regular classroom education.

The education of all pupils including those with Designated Special Provision is oriented by a national curriculum. Both the mainstream classes and the special education classes have a coordinator who is responsible for each subject. Both of them work as a team. Their work is further differentiated according to the needs of the pupils. For example, special education classes might do only one unit of a module.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (the government agency responsible for the National Curriculum in England) approved the planning of the curriculum to accommodate different needs within a single curriculum “map.” For example, there can be common objectives with different activities; those activities for pupils with severe learning difficulties are at a lower level than those for other pupils. Day-to-day work is planned on a weekly basis and opportunities for integration of individuals with groups are identified. In a gradual integration process pupils start moving between classrooms and become familiar with the work-taking place. These cooperative teaching, cooperative learning, and collaborative problem-solving, heterogeneous grouping and effective teaching approaches seem to be contributing to the realization of inclusive classrooms.

The Warnock Report consistent with Section 10 of the Education Act 1976 publicized increased efforts to integrate children with disabilities into "normal" schooling, and to view educational practice and related problems from the standpoint of educational needs of all students.\(^\text{19}\) Moreover, the 1981 Education Act has allowed a large number of students with hearing impairments and deaf students to be integrated into

\(^{19}\text{Ibid., 1609.}\)
mainstream schools. This act, while objecting to the use of classification of students according to disabling conditions, provides for assessing special education needs of the disabled child. Either the school or local education authority is responsible for educational provision, depending on the severity and complexity of the student's special education needs. Although the local education authority is expected to be minimally involved in special educational provision, it (the local authority) is responsible for identifying children with special education needs. It is the responsibility of the local authority to conduct a formal assessment and obtain educational, medical, and psychological advice from teachers and professionals.\(^{20}\)

Woll contends that there are three different levels of special educational agencies. Up to the age of three, primary schools provide educational services for children with severe problems. Legally, education begins at birth if parents or medical professionals request it. Local education authorities are responsible for discovering special education needs from the age of two years. In the school years, classroom teachers as well as children with disabilities receive governmental support. In the post school years, emphasis is placed on transition to adult society.

The 1988 Act proposed that the national government specifies a national curriculum, and a national attainment assessment be introduced for all children at ages 7, 11, 14, and 16.\(^{21}\) For the purpose of addressing public concerns about accountability as well as improving student learning and teaching quality, the Task Group on Assessment

\(^{20}\)Ibid.

and Testing (TGAT) has been involved in developing strategies for national assessment and the reporting of assessment results.

According to the Task Group on Assessment and Testing, the national assessment should:

1. Be based on a combination of teacher assessment and external tests (called standard assessment tasks);
2. Be criterion-referenced;
3. Be formative;
4. Represent a small number of domains in each subject rather than reporting a single score of each subject;
5. Be based on a national scale for the comparisons of schools and individual students; and
6. Pinpoint progress through curriculum across the four prescribed ages as staged targets rather than designating each age as a terminal target.

Information about student performance in each of the subjects of the National Curriculum is used to provide consumers with data about learning progress and to require greater accountability of educational institutions. Achievements in eleven subjects in the curriculum are reported at the ages of 7, 11, 14, and 16. The results of public examinations have been made public school-by-school and the 1988 Education Reform Act has facilitated this process. In the data-reporting phase, the performance of individual children is aggregated and reported for each classroom and each school. According to the Task Group on Assessment and Testing recommendations: (1) assessment results in each subject should be reported in aggregated form as profile
components, which represent achievement in several domains of the subject rather than a single score; (2) assessment results should not be published at the age of 7; (3) assessment results should be available only to the student older than 7 and the parents; and, (4) overall school performance should be published along with the Local Education Authority's (LEA) interpretation of the results.

The 1978 Warnock Report agreed to segregate data about special education students at the national level. Attempts have been made not to count the number of special education students, but data about students with disabilities are included in at least the record-keeping attempts at the local level.\(^\text{22}\) However, no literature is available on how students with disabilities are dealt with in the data-reporting process. It is not clear how England currently reports the data collected from special education students.\(^\text{23}\)

**The United States of America**

Alexander Graham Bell deserves credit for his landmark contribution to special education of disabled students in the United States of America. He provided voice for those in need of special education and proposed implementation of most of the programs in the areas of instruction, care and the development of exceptional student's education.

In his address to the National Association of Educators in 1898, Alexander Bell pleads:

> Now, that all I have said in relation to the deaf would be equally advantageous to the blind and the feeble-minded. We have in the public school system a large body of ordinary children in the same community. We have there children who cannot hear sufficiently well to profit by instruction in the public schools, and we have children who cannot see sufficiently well to profit by instruction in the public schools, and we have children who are undoubtedly backward in their mental development. Why shouldn't these children form an annex to the public school system, receiving special instruction from special teachers, who shall be

\(^{22}\text{OECD, 1994, 17.}\)

\(^{23}\text{Ibid.}\)
able to give instruction to little children who either deaf, blind, or mentally
deficient, without sending them away from their homes or from ordinary
companions with whom they are associated.\textsuperscript{24}

A significant case that affected the education of students with disabilities was the
(1972 class action case of Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) v.
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Association challenged a state law that denied
public school education to certain children considered “unable to profit from public
school attendance.” The court decided that children were entitled to receive a free, public
education. In addition the court maintained that parents had the right to be notified
before any changes are made in their children’s educational program.

In 1975 the United States Congress passed Public Law 94-142, landmark
legislation that has changed the face of special education in the country. The Public Law
94-142 was originally called Education for All Handicapped Children Act. Since 1975
the U.S. Congress has reauthorized and amended PL 94-142 four times. Most recently in
1990 and 1997 the amendments were renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education
Act (IDEA).

The purpose of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is to assure
that all children with disabilities have available to them “a free, appropriate public
education which emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their
unique needs, to assure that the rights of children with disabilities and their parents or
guardians are protected, to assist states and localities to provide for the education of all
children with disabilities, and to assess and assure the effectiveness of efforts to educate

\textsuperscript{24}Benjamin Gearheart, Administration of Special Education (Chicago, Illinois:
There are six major principles of the IDEA:

1. Zero Reject. Schools must educate all children with disabilities. This principle applies regardless of the nature or severity of the disability. No child with disability may be excluded from public education.

2. Nondiscriminatory Identification and evaluation. School must use nonbiased, multi-factored methods of evaluation to determine whether a child has a disability and, if so, whether special education is needed. Testing and evaluation procedures must not discriminate on the basis of race, culture, or native language.

3. Free, Appropriate Public Education. All children with disabilities, regardless of the type or severity of their disability, shall receive free, appropriate public education.

4. Least Restrictive Environment. Individuals with Disabilities Act mandates that all students with disabilities be educated with children without disabilities.

5. Least Restrictive Environment. Individuals with Disabilities Act mandates that all students with disabilities be educated with children without disabilities.

6. Parents and Student Participation in Shared Decision Making. Schools must collaborate with parents and students with disabilities in the design and implementation of special education services. Schools must provide due process safeguards to protect the rights of children with disabilities and their parents.

Categories recognized under Part B of IDEA: autism; deaf-blindness; deafness; hearing impairment; serious emotional disturbance; mental retardation; multiple disabilities; orthopedic impairment; other health impairment; specific learning disability; speech or language impairment; traumatic brain injury; and visual impairment. Since the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, the federal

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government has been involved in providing educational services for students with disabilities. According to stipulations of this law, PL 94-142, all states are supposed to identify children with disabilities and provide them with special education services. Once a student with disabilities is identified, an individualized Education Plan (IEP) is written. This plan, based on the student's present levels of educational performance, delineates areas of needed skill instruction and remediation. It provides a vehicle to review a student's performance on a yearly basis. The IEP is reviewed yearly at an Annual Review. Goals of the IEP and short-term instructional objectives are examined. During this process it is determined whether the student has achieved the goals and objectives of the IEP. Decisions about the need for the continuation of special education services, and about any changes in the frequency and duration of services are made. If special education services are continued, revised goals and objectives are written for the upcoming school year. \(^{26}\) Many states have adopted the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) guidelines when developing their policies about including students with disabilities in assessment. \(^{27}\) The NAEP guidelines specify that students on Individual Education Plans (IEPs) may be excluded if the student is mainstreamed less than 50% of the time in academic subjects and is judged to be incapable of taking part in the assessment or the IEP team has determined that the student is incapable of taking part

\(^{26}\)Ibid.

\(^{27}\)J. Ysseldyke et al., Making Decisions About the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Large-Scale Assessments (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes, 1994).
meaningfully in the assessment.\(^{28}\) Although state-level guidelines on exclusion and testing accommodation for students with disabilities do exist, many states are not consistent with the application of policies or procedures and have varying implementation criteria. For example, most often state-level outcomes information is generated from large-scale general education achievement assessment in which students with mild disabilities participate. However, the extent to which they participate is unclear. Where students with disabilities do participate in these assessments, most states do not report the data on these students.

Based on the fact that students with disabilities can be excluded from statewide data, the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) explored the policies and practices that revolve around students with disabilities and large-scale assessments. NCEO demonstrated that states vary considerably in the guidelines they have for both (a) making decisions about the participation of students with disabilities in assessments and (b) determining the kinds of accommodations and adaptations that are used during assessments. Perhaps the most serious concern revolves around the exclusion of students with disabilities from data collection programs. Thurlow and others revealed that most national and state data collection programs exclude a large portion of students with disabilities. The type of exclusion ranges from the development of assessment instruments to the reporting of results. Thurlow and others determined that a sizable portion of excluded students could readily participate, some with testing modifications. This practice of exclusion severely hampers the ability to extract useful policy-relevant

information on this population. The National Education Longitudinal Study revealed similar evidence. This national data collection program followed students starting in grade 8 in 1988, two years later (in 1990 or grade 10) and then again in grade 12 or in 1992. It was discovered that students appeared to be excluded categorically, even though the guidelines had indicated this should not be done. In 1990 at the first follow-up, investigators went back to look at the eligibility of those students who had been excluded during the first year. It was found that 53% of previously excluded students did not meet the criteria for exclusion, 40% still were eligible and 7% could not be located.\(^\text{29}\)

While many of the newly eligible students in 1990 were students with language exclusion originally, 39% of physical barrier exclusions and 42% of mental barrier exclusions were classified as eligible in 1990. These data led researchers to "support the contention that a large number of students with disabilities who could successfully have participated were excluded by their school." Clearly, policies regarding assessment are in transition. This is reflected in terms of the format of assessments and the content of assessments, as well as in the consideration of the participation of students with disabilities. State-level efforts have continued to look at existing guidelines related to both participation of student with disabilities in assessments and testing accommodations.

During 1993 and 1994, more than two-thirds of the states indicated that they have guidelines on the participation of students with disabilities in statewide assessment programs. Since 1993, approximately 35 states (not necessarily the same states as those having some guidelines on the participation) have produced new guidelines on testing recommendations.

\(^{29}\)Ibid.
CHAPTER III
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN DEVELOPING NATIONS

This chapter reviews pertinent literature on special education services and practices in five selected developing countries include: China, Cyprus, Ghana, South Africa, and Tanzania.

China

In China the right of students with special needs to an appropriate education was explicitly recognized in its constitution of 1947. Regulations concerning the expansion and improvement of special education were formulated in 1970 for seven categories of disability: mental retardation, visual impairments, hearing impairments, speech disorders, orthopedic handicaps, chronic diseases and physical deficiency, and emotional and behavioral disorders. In the 1977 amendment, another category of learning disabilities was added to the initial seven disability categories. The educational rights of students with disabilities are protected under the 1986 Law of Compulsory Education and the 1990 Law of Protection of Disabled Persons.\(^1\) The 1986 law, the first compulsory education law in China, made it possible to provide nine years of free education for all children, including children with disabilities. The 1990 law furthered the development of special education in China and guaranteed equal rights in receiving education. There are four kinds of programs available to special education students:

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1. Regular classes plus special services;
2. Part-time or full-time special classes;
3. Special schools;
4. Instructional services in hospitals, custodial institutions, or at home.

A diagnostic team of doctors, school psychologists, special educators, and school determines placement of disabled children.\(^2\) In making decisions of student placement, family situations and parental opinions are also considered. After students with disabilities are placed in certain educational programs, they are reevaluated periodically. Efforts are underway to place students with disabilities in integrated educational environments.

In the past, external assessment was extensively used to make decisions on student placement. However, there is no national credential to mark the end of secondary schooling, and there is no regular national testing of student performance. Currently, promotion in primary and secondary schools is made by age. Students’ progress from one grade to the next each year and from primary to secondary school is automatic and has no bearing on their degree of academic competence. Children with disabilities are educated in special schools, special classes, or general education classrooms depending on the severity of their disabilities. Continuous progress is emphasized in the elementary school levels; however, at the secondary school level, promotion is made by subject rather than by grade.\(^3\) Currently, classroom teachers and principals play an important

\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Ibid.
role in making decisions about students' graduation from secondary schools. A final decision is based on overall school performance and local school test results.

**Cyprus**

Cyprus maintains a one-track approach to special education following the legal framework of The Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Law 113(1), 99 of 1999, which placed the emphasis on the education of almost all children with special needs within mainstream schools.¹ Main provisions of the 1999 law are:

1. Widening the age range from 3-18 years (children within special schools can, in exceptional circumstances, remain within the educational system until 21 years of age);

2. The setting up of a Central Committee, Regional Committees and an Advisory Council for special needs education; a regional committee composed of a multidisciplinary team to examine individual cases and prescribe suitable placement and educational intervention;

3. Special needs coordinators to monitor implementation of the recommendations of the Regional Committees, reassess cases on a regular basis, support teachers, work together with parents and develop the child's Individual Educational Program (IEP) with teachers and parents; and,

4. Appeals procedure when parental expectations differ from the recommendations of the regional committees.

¹Helen Phtiaka, Special Education in Cyprus, ISEC 2000, Held at University of Manchester.
Integration of students with special needs had been implemented on an ad hoc basis before the passage of the 1999 law. Over 3,500 children have some form of special educational requirements which are serviced through mainstream schools, whilst only a little over 400 of the most demanding needs are met through special schools. It should be noted that the spread of problems is very wide ranging from minor transitory problems to cases of severe multiple handicaps. Factors that have assisted integration are: increased number of qualified special educators, public awareness and acceptance campaigns, staff seminars and training programs, units (special classes) within mainstream schools, employment of specialists within special education services (speech therapists, psychologists, physiotherapists, etc.).

Special educational needs are defined as any cognitive, sensory, physical or emotional condition that creates a situation where the usual educational programs and curriculum of a school cannot meet the educational requirements of a child to ensure his or her full development. A multidisciplinary team assesses these needs—that is medical, psychological, educational, social welfare and any other needs deemed necessary to provide a full picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the child. Children can be referred by any agency (educational, medical, social, or the family themselves) for assessment.

In Cyprus, special education is defined as any cognitive, sensory, physical or emotional condition that creates a situation where the usual educational programs of
a school cannot meet the educational requirements of a child to ensure his or her full development. Once the Regional Committee has decided upon the most suitable placement and educational intervention and assistance required, the family and school are informed. The special needs coordinators assist with the development of the Individualized Education Program which ensure that the recommendations are implemented, and that any special resources are available.

The Cyprus education system is divided into administrative divisions based on education level (primary, secondary and technical). Special education is under the administrative control of primary education, which provides all services for pre-primary, primary and special schools. The regional authorities provide special education services for secondary and technical schools. The special schools for visual and hearing disabilities play a major role in supporting children within the mainstream of education. The special schools for the learning disabled provide services for the most difficult cases and attempt to develop networks of contacts with local schools to foster exchanges, joint activities, and sharing of facilities.

As most mainstream schools have their in-house special educator and a special needs coordinator, these contacts are used for additional support. However they are encouraged to contact special schools for specialized assistance or materials.

The school for children with emotional disturbances has developed a wide network of contacts and partial integration programs to assist the highly specialized needs of their client group. The 1999 special education law requires that new special schools to

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5Education for All - The Cyprus Case: Cyprus National Report on Education for All, 2000 Assessment, 5.
be built within the boundaries of a mainstream school in order to facilitate contact, networking and (where possible) inclusion.

Parents have been one of the driving forces behind the move towards inclusive education. As such their preference is for their child to attend eventually a mainstream school with special educational support. As services have developed so have demands, which are posing a number of logistical and financial challenges. The culture of Cyprus, which has always placed a high value on children and social support, has made the acceptance of children with special needs into mainstream education relatively easy. This has also been facilitated by the yearly increase in the quantity and quality of services provided in addition to public awareness campaigns.

The constraints to inclusion are primarily lack of adequate numbers of specialist educators to cope with the ever-increasing demands not only in numbers of cases but in the desired quality of services. Frequently parents or schools request that children with minor learning difficulties (that can not be classified as special educational needs) be included in special programs to receive extra assistance.

To meet this problem the Ministry of Education has embarked on an enlightenment project to encourage the concept of classes of mixed ability. Difficulties are also evident in the increased administrative load at coordinator level and at a technical level with a shortage of suitable facilities at many of the older schools. Special education as well as all education services is fully financed by central government. Teachers' salaries are centrally paid and the number of children with special needs and the types of special needs define the number of specialist teachers supplied to mainstream schools. The school inspectorate is responsible for projections of the number and specialty of
teachers required for the following academic year and the estimated new appointments and placements are made accordingly.

Ghana

The early missionaries laid the foundation for Special Education in Ghana in 1945 with the establishment of Akropong School for the Blind. Later special schools for other categories of disabilities were established.\(^6\) The statistics released by the ministry of education during the post-independence era revealed that a total number of 669 handicapped children (blind, deaf, orthopedically handicapped and mentally retarded) received educational services in eight schools for the deaf, two schools for the blind, two hospital schools for children with health and orthopedic problems and one school for mentally retarded.\(^7\)

In 1961, the First Republican Government of Ghana passed an Education Act making education free and compulsory for all children of school-age, including disabled children. The government built structures and resourced them with requisite educational materials and equipment required for teaching and learning of disabled children. Initially the residential system of schooling was operated, but subsequently to meet the ever-increasing demand; it was shifted to Community Based Education for the Handicapped.

One of the important attempts made so far, has been the 1998 First Conference on Special Education which, according to the keynote speaker, was of the 'view of ...giving...


the government a 'pre-plan' that will serve as a working guide and a decision making data bank in the next century. To this end, the Minister for Education added that, "there is the need to come up with a national policy on persons with disabilities in Ghana".

The general education policy mentioned above refers to the 1961 Education Act, which entitles all children to have a right to education. To enhance this, in 1962, the Education Amendment Act was introduced to enable the special education division to provide for people with special needs (this did not denote educational provision). Later, the Dzobo Committee Report (1972), which was limiting in scope, mentioned only slow learners and the gifted.

In 1995, the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare set up a national advisory committee on employment to look at policies on disability in relation to rehabilitation and vocational training. From this committee's report came out general principles and guidelines for training in areas such as craftsmanship. This left out formal education, as that was the responsibility of the Education Department. According to Koray (1998) the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare held workshops 'on drafting of a national disability policy which is now in its final stage'. Whether this document will embrace educational policies or simply vocational will be uncovered when the said policy is released. In addition to these efforts, more proposals are being made from many fronts. This, however, does not represent a Special Education policy in itself.

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8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
but a trend towards the framework of a policy, with the view of having legislation in the future.

South Africa

The Ministry of Education in South Africa published an Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: *Building an Inclusive Education and Training System*\(^{11}\), which outlines a long-term plan to avoid labeling, separate education, and denial of education on the grounds of belief that the system works and any failure of the child to learn is caused by the child’s own deficits. This plan calls for moving away from a medical view of disability and come to an understanding of disability as shaped by environment-ecology; and, to identify and correct the system’s endemic barriers to learning. Based on these conditions, teaching responses rely on an understanding of diverse learning characteristics and knowledge of varied instructional methods. The Ministry of Education is required to implement the white paper after a comprehensive audit of all special education services is undertaken to raise issues and identify barriers from the standpoint of an inclusive education framework.

While the separatist model excludes the child as innate and irremediable in the school mainstream, the white paper suggests a model on the premise that all children and youth can learn and need support, respect differences among earners that are subject to age, ethnicity, language, class, disability, HIV or other health hazard. The policy is supposed to design education structures, systems, methods, environment, curricula, and attitudes to meet the needs of all learners and acknowledge that learning also occurs in

the environment of home and community, both in formal and informal settings and structures. The policy attempts to uncover and minimize barriers to learning, while expanding the participation of all learners in one school culture and curriculum. Instead of special schools, special classes, and remedial classes, the White paper emphasizes: District-based professional support teams are established to provide coordinated support services and draw on the expertise of higher education and local communities.

Currently, the South African government is converting special schools into resource centers that will be part of the district's support services. These centers will focus on policy development and research to train the ideal district support team members and other personnel, resource centers and full service schools.

A new curriculum introduced after the democratic government took office has become the core curriculum for all children. Other changes in the practice include:

(a) Overhauling of the process of identifying, assessing, and enrolling learners in special schools and separate classes, and its replacement by a process that acknowledges the central role played by educators, school directors, and parents in the academic progress of children;

(b) Instructional responsiveness to multiple intelligences and various learning and cultural styles as the basis for understanding differences among students; and

(c) Cooperative learning and other practices that accommodate students of differing ability levels and adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of all students, whether they have disability or not.

In this situation South Africa has undertaken a twenty-year plan. Under this plan, from 2001 to 2003, a national program of advocacy has been carried out. The targeted
outreach was initiated in the government’s rural and urban development sites. Thirty special schools in thirty districts are converted to resource centers, while thirty primary schools in the same districts have become full service schools with support teams. Also procedures for the early identification of learning problems and for reducing barriers are developed from preschool through Third grade levels.

During 2004 to 2008, postsecondary schools and colleges are required to develop programs for educating diverse range of learners, especially those with disabilities. In this situation, the targeted community outreach program is expected to expand beyond the original rural and urban sites, and the number of resource centers, full-service schools, and district support services are expected to increase. In the long term (2009 - 2021) the focus is on expanding services to reach the target of 380 special resource centers, 500 full – service schools, full-service colleges, a quality education for all children, and denial of education to none.

**Tanzania**

In the East African country of Tanzania, private missionary organizations established majority of the handicapped schools. Such schools include the Uhuru Co-Educational School located in Dares-Salaam, Tabora Annex (Iringga) Longido, Rural Annex (Nwanza) and Nwisenge, while the Rural Annex (Maria) opened in 1960 by the Anglican Mission. This was to serve as a Rehabilitation Center. In 1930s, various missionary denominations began to show more interest in the opening of formal education for handicapped children.12

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As a result, education was systematically planned and well executed, producing a lasting effect in education of the handicapped children across many African countries. In Tanzania, the education of the handicapped children, especially the deaf and blind, was purely an effort of missionaries. The Anglican Church managed institutions such as the Wilson Carlie School for the Blind Boys located in Buigiri-Dudoma, which was opened in 1962. The Swedish free mission managed the mission Blind School at Tabora opened in 1962. The Lutheran Church opened the Trente School for Blind Girls in Lesotho, Tanga in 1963 while the Roman Catholic mission opened the Tabora Deaf-Mute Institute in 1963. In addition to early missionaries, the 1960s witnessed further expansion of handicapped schools in these regions as most African countries began to regain their independence. Most educational development programs put special education as one of their higher priorities.

Tanzania in the last 10 years was under structural adjustment program, thus causing economic hardship to its citizens. There are only few schools to provide special education to the visually impaired children. In fact, most schools suffer from lack of instructional supplies and materials that are essential to provide any meaningful service to students.

For example, in order for a blind child to go into the classroom, he/she needs a writing machine, brailing paper, a tape recorder, and a typewriter. A Perkins brailing machine costs about six hundred dollars and the cost to transport it from the city to the countryside is 200 dollars. This creates a tremendous financial burden on disabled children and their families. Parents are required to pay for the educational services of their children. Many parents are in low socioeconomic status and cannot afford to pay
for children’s education. Nonetheless, they are forced to pay for their transportation and other peripheral services.

As this chapter reveals, in developing countries, people with disabilities often live in areas where medical and other related services are scarce or not present and where disabilities cannot be detected in reasonable time. Approximately 80 percent of all disabled persons live in isolated areas under the conditions of poverty. In most cases, by the time medical attention is given (if at all), the effects of disability may have become irreversible.

In many countries resources are not sufficient to detect and adequately treat/prevent disabilities or to meet the need for rehabilitative and supportive services of the disabled population. Research into newer and effective strategies must be afforded to delineate suitable approaches to rehabilitation. Manufacturing and provision of aids and equipment for the disabled persons are grossly inadequate in most developing countries. In some of these countries, the proportion of the disabled population is estimated as high as 20% and is likely to increase. When families and relatives are included, 50% of the population could be adversely affected by disability.
CHAPTER IV
SPECIAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA AND IN THE
STATE OF AKWA IBOM

This chapter examines the existing special education programs in Nigeria with special reference to the state of Akwa Ibom in an attempt to identify gaps in services to the needs of disabled students. Limited literature was available on special education in Nigeria as well as Akwa Ibom State.

Special Education in Nigeria

Historical Perspectives

Development of special education in Nigeria could be traced back to the work of early missionaries. Fafunwa observed that the vast exploration of Africa in the early 19th century and the evangelistic trading activities that followed led to the scramble for Africa in the 1880s and the eventual establishment of colonial rule in the continent.1 Because the missionaries and colonial administration worked hand in hand, education of the Africans was the greatest weapon for full indoctrination to the Christian faith. Education combined with religion prepared Africans to provide cheap labor for colonial administration. Although there was no recorded history of education for the handicapped within the early colonization years, the traditional roles of the various missionaries were to provide shelter for handicapped persons. It is noteworthy that the development of

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exceptional education, otherwise known as special education in Nigeria, like regular education was the outgrowth of the work of missionaries. Special education began informally with the care of physically handicapped children by Christian missionaries to read the bible and learn the skills, which would make them self-reliant.2

The initial curriculum of instruction was geared towards the 3R's (reading, writing, and arithmetic) for only non-handicapped persons. Abosi indicates that Christian missionary activities did not start until 1840s in the Niger Delta region of what is now Nigeria.3 The first Christian mission was established in 1842 by the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in Badagry.

Starting from the coastal areas, the missionaries moved inland along River Niger. In the northern part of Nigeria, for example, the Sudan United Mission, America Branch, opened a school for the blind in Faliyu, Bauchi State in 1935 while in 1953, the Sudan United Mission (S.U.M.), British Branch, opened the Gindiri School for the Blind in Plateau State. Other handicapped School for handicapped started by missionaries in Nigeria is the Oji River Center. C.M.S. Church missionary established Special School for the Deaf, Oji River in 1961. This school came into being in 1960, through the efforts of the Church Missionary Society (CMS). Inspiration for the founding of this institution came when the Queen of England visited Nigeria in 1956. On a short visit to Oji River,

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the Queen observed that many ex-leprosy patients who were blinded were illiterates.\(^4\) She therefore promised financial support for an educational program for the blind from the Colonial Development Fund. With an enrollment of over 120 pupils, the school prepares hearing-impaired children for the First School Leaving Certificate Examination, following the regular school curriculum with minor adaptations, with focus on vocational education programs. These vocational education programs include: cabinet-making, tailoring, artwork, domestic science and shoe making. Graduates of the institution continued their education to secondary and higher institutions in and outside Nigeria. Other graduates took to vocational pursuits such as farming, weaving and crafts. The school is fully supported (financially) by Anambra State Government.

The Ministry of Education, Bendel State in September 1977, established Bendel State School for the Deaf, Benin City. In addition to hearing impaired students, the school also provides training for the blind and the mentally retarded. It is a day school, and uses the total communication method for instruction. Actually, the school is a school for the deaf (special education unit) within the Ivbiore Primary School.

The Ondo State for the Deaf, Akure came into being in April 1977. The school is residential institution, which is fully supported by the State Government. Total communication is used and pupils are prepared for the First School Leaving Certificate Examination. Some prevocational education is given and students are taught poultry and carpentry. The initial intake, made up of ten boys and six girls began in a rented temporary story building as hostel and classroom. Later, the school moved to its permanent site along Jebba Road. The Blind Unit of the school was added in 1976, and

\(^4\)Ibid., 5.
in 1980 a secondary unit was also initiated. The school has many facilities including a
large library and audio-visual aids.

Eruwa School for the Deaf, Eruwa, Oyo State was also started in 1974 as a
nursery school. Special Education Center, Ogbete, Enugu was established in January
1964 by the then Enugu Municipal Council as boarding/day institution catering for
hearing-impaired children. In 1978, a unit for mentally retarded children was added. The
school has a well-equipped audiology department.

Pacelli School for Blind Children, Surulere, Lagos was conceived by Archbishop
Leo Taylor, (the then Catholic Bishop of Lagos) in the late 50s. He invited Irish Sisters
of Charity and other experts in the education of the blind. The Federal Ministry of
Education gave annual grants to the school until 1967 when the Lagos State Government
took over the management of the institution. Pacelli operates three educational programs:
1. **Preschool Education**: Blind children aged 2-5 years are provided for in the
kindergarten program. They are taught early manual mobility skills through play
activities.

2. **Primary School Education**: In addition to the regular primary school subjects,
the primary section of the Pacelli School teaches instrumental music, Braille, physical
education and mobility. Children are initially prepared for the First School Leaving
Certificate Examination.

3. **Vocational Assessment and Guidance Center**: This center provides continuous
assessment of the blind pupils, and also offers prevocational training. Pacelli Schools

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5Peter O. Mba, *Handbook of Special Education in Nigeria* Ibadan, Nigeria:
(University of Ibadan, 1987), 28.
have a number of modern facilities, including a home economics center, an outdoor swimming pool, science laboratory and a well-equipped library.

Another special education school is the Nigeria Training Center for the Blind, Ogbomosho established under the auspices of the Divisional Branch of the Nigeria Red Cross Society in Western Nigeria. In 1963, the Center attracted some supports from the Economic Planning Committee, and up until today the center is still attracting some government and subventions from the Federal Ministry of Social Development. In addition to training in Braille and functional education, the Center offers courses in farm operations and poultry keeping, handicraft, cane work and rope-work.

School for the Physically Handicapped and the Mentally Retarded Atunda-Olu Day Primary School, Lagos was established in 1965 by the Anglican Diocese of Lagos, in conjunction with the Federal Ministry of Education. This school is a day primary institution for physically handicapped children who have normal intelligence. The institute of Child Health of the University of Lagos provides medical care for the children, some of whom are referred to the Orthopedic Hospital, Igobi and Lagos University Teaching Hospital. The school also has physiotherapy rooms. Annual enrollments in this school, exceeds one hundred students. Another center worth mentioning is the Child Care Social Services and Women’s Voluntary Organizations. In 1979, a year which was observed as the international Year of the Child (IYC), the government became interested in the management of the school. This organization is still in operation today. The institution is a boarding primary school and caters for physically handicapped children. Some of the students have normal intelligence while others are...

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6Ibid., 30.
neurologically impaired or severely mentally retarded. These children are referred by hospitals, schools, individuals and parents. The institution provides a temporary or semi-permanent home for disabled children without homes, and those who come from crisis-torn homes. The activities of the institution include intensive medical care and physiotherapy for both boarders and non-boarders. Primary education and placement of post-primary children and gainful employment are also undertaken.

Another special center that is worth mentioning is the Child Guidance Clinic, Yaba. This clinic was founded in 1964, and is operated by the Ministry of Education, Lagos State. The institution provides psycho-educational services, including guidance and counseling. Other services are remedial education, play and speech therapy. Hospitals, clinics and schools in Lagos State make referrals. The school for handicapped children in Ibadan, presently under the name: Good Samaritan School for Handicapped Children, is a boarding/day primary school for mentally retarded/physically handicapped children, some of whom pay fees. Schools for the Def were opened in Lagos in 1962 through the activities of the Roman Catholic and Protestant church missionaries respectively. By the turn of the century the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) was controlling more schools, teachers and pupils than any other missionary body.

From the earliest point, the nineteenth century missionaries who came to West Africa aimed at the establishment of schools, which they regarded as an integral part of their work. There is a saying that goes “children that learn together, learn to live together.” This is quite true as this will maximize individual growth and build a sense of community. It will afford special needs children a sense of belonging. In 1993 through most of 2000 academic years, 8 colleges of education and 10 universities in the country
offered specialized sequence of courses for preparation of teachers in one or more areas of exceptionality.

In order of frequency, the largest number of colleges of education and universities offered courses in speech and hearing, mentally retarded, deaf and crippled. Only three universities had departments of special education that prepared teachers in six or more areas of exceptionality. One of the greatest obstacles in local, county, or state education programs for exceptional children is the difficulty of obtaining teachers, even with the various crash programs in teacher training colleges. Development in education came to a standstill in most of the nineties due to the human rights abuses as Nigeria was declared a pariah state, thus was sanctioned by the World bodies. This situation affected exchange of ideas amongst educators. It also affected education, including special education.

In terms of government engagement in the provision of special education services, the earliest recorded mention of special education was in the then Lagos Education Act of 1957, Article 61(g). Other laws were the Northern Nigeria Education Law of 1964 (Section 3 paragraph 3) and the Western Region Law (Section 88, paragraph 1). Both laws required the Ministry of Education to issues regulations and guidelines defining the various categories of pupils of primary school age who require Special Education.

The regional governments made occasional grants-in-aid to the voluntary organizations that requested help in connection with their various educational programs for the handicapped. However, direct government engagement came only after the historic broadcast on October 1, 1974, by the then Military Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, who announced the establishment of a post-secondary teacher training college to train teachers for the primary school special needs students in the country.
The activities of international agencies, such as the United Nations Organization and the Commonwealth of Nations, provided additional impetus to the re-awakening of interest in Special Education in Nigeria and across other African countries. Since 1952 the United Nations has encouraged member countries to provide educational services to the handicapped populace. These services could be direct involvement of the United Nations in terms of financing and manpower supply or through indirect approaches such as in the declaration of rights of disabled persons in addition to sponsoring conferences to educate public on the needs and problems of handicapped. At the international levels, Nigeria has participated in activities that included:

A. First Publication of the United Nations on Rehabilitation (1952)
B. Declaration of the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons (1973)
C. Declaration of the Rights of Disabled Persons (1975)
D. Proclamation of the 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons (IYOP) (1976)
E. Jomiten Conference Declaration (1990)
F. Equal Education for All (EFA) (1999-2000)

The 1970s may be regarded as the "Golden Age" of opportunity for handicapped children in Nigeria, because, during that decade, several schools for many categories of handicapped children were established. In addition, there was a massive expansion of existing institutions and increased services to the special needs students. The magnitude of government involvement and the drive to provide adequate educational facilities for handicapped children may be gauged from the fact that at the close of the decade most states in Nigeria had established, at least one school for the handicapped.
Contemporary Perspective

The International Council for Exceptional Children (ICEC) and the United States Council for Exceptional Children (USCEC) recognize following disability categories: mental retardation, learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral disorders, communication disorders hearing loss, blindness and low vision, physical disabilities, health impairments, traumatic brain injury, autism and severe disabilities, whereas Nigeria (and Akwa Ibom State) recognizes only visually handicapped children.

Special Education Services in Akwa Ibom State

Akwa Ibom has over 200 nursery schools, 1,550 primary schools, and 253 secondary schools. There are only six specific purpose institutes that provide special education services (see Table 2). Five of these six are private organizations providing services to the blind, deaf and orthopedics and sometimes partially supported by government grants (in the form in-kind service staff or funding for certain line-item budget categories such as books, supplies, financial-aid, and scholarship awards). These institutes are barely quipped with required special education resources for their students. Ukana Iba Rehabilitation Center, run by the Sisters of Charity, a Roman Catholic Social Service agency, is the only exception. This center caters to the education of physically handicapped people in the areas of self-help skills, personal hygiene, and handicraft. The only government center for special education is located in the vicinity of the capital city Uyo. It serves approximately 90 handicapped students in the ages between 12 and 18 years by teaching them daily living, self-help and academic skills.7

Table 2: Schools and Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>SERVICES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Joseph Rehabilitation Center</td>
<td>Ukana Iba in Essien Udim</td>
<td>Typing, shorthand, carpentry, shoemaking, welding and crafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lutheran Children's Home</td>
<td>Ikot Otong in Nsit Ibom</td>
<td>Self-help skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Children's Home</td>
<td>Babangida Avenue, Uyo</td>
<td>Self-help skills, grooming and hygiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Daughters of Charity Destitute Center</td>
<td>Eniong Offot, Uyo</td>
<td>Self-help skills, grooming and hygiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise Center</td>
<td>Ikot Ekpene</td>
<td>Primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akwa Ibom State, Special Education Center</td>
<td>Mbiabong, Uyo</td>
<td>Secondary School, daily living, self-help and academic skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Rehab Center</td>
<td>Uyo</td>
<td>Self-help skills, survival skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The actions carried out by the government and the private sector are seldom coordinated or focused towards common goals. As a result, there is little information on any initiative in special education services and programs being carried out in Akwa Ibom.

In Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria the government and its agencies give little or no attention to children with certain kinds of disabilities. When special education programs and services are fully operational in the State, the practice would include identification and assessment of students needing such services. Assessment may include screening of students to identify students with disabilities. Identification would include observation, testing, and diagnosis of students to specifically determine those students with disabilities, and the extent or severity of that condition.

Students who have learning disabilities, emotional behavioral disorders, totally blind, visually handicapped, deaf, hearing loss, and physically handicapped attend special
schools if they can afford to pay for the services. There is no integration or inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education settings, except in one of the rehabilitation centers, which offers secondary education.

Learning Disabilities (sometimes called specific learning disabilities) is a term that includes such conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia. The term does not include children who have learning problems, which are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor handicaps, mental retardation, emotional disturbance or environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.

The learning disabled student will typically score average or above average on tests of intelligence and, therefore, is predicted to be able to master the requirements of the regular curriculum. The learning disabled student has one or more serious academic deficiencies that are sharply discrepant with measured potential and ability. The nature of the deficit(s) is such that classroom performance is not correctable without clinical/specialized techniques that are fundamentally different from those available in the regular classroom or in basic remedial/tutorial approaches. The student's need for academic support is not alone sufficient for eligibility and does not override the other established requirements for determining eligibility. The impairment must be in one of the following seven areas:

- Oral Expression
- Listening Comprehension
- Written Expression
- Basic Reading
• Reading Comprehension
• Math Calculation
• Math Reasoning

Hearing loss is determined by an audiological evaluation and an otological assessment. A hard-of-hearing (HI) student exhibits a pure tone average range of 30-65 decibels. A deaf (DF) student exhibits a pure tone average of 65-90 decibels. A student with a unilateral hearing loss may be considered for eligibility provided sufficient evidence exists that indicates academic or communicative deficits are the result of that loss.

Speech or language impairment is another critical area of disabilities that needs attention. It is the disorders of articulation (sound production), language (use of symbols to comprehend and express ideas), fluency (rate and rhythm of speech) and voice (volume, pitch and quality) interfere with the acquisition and utilization of effective oral communication skills.

While there are disorders of oral communication, not all oral communication problems are disorders. Such communication problems as dialectal differences, limited English proficiency and maturational articulation and language delays are frequently brought to the attention of the Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP), but are unlikely to require remediation by the SLP. To determine when students who have oral communication problems should be referred to SLP, the classroom teacher, and speech-language pathologist work as a team to make this decision.

There are a few homes for the mentally retarded students in Akwa Ibom. The mentally retarded are those students have significantly sub-average general intellectual
functioning is defined as approximately 70 Intelligence Quotient (IQ), or below as measured by a qualified psychological examiner on individually administered, standardized measures of intelligence. Deficits in adaptive behavior are defined as significant limitations in an individual's effectiveness in meeting the standards of maturation, learning, personal independence or social responsibility and especially school performance that is expected of the individual's age level and cultural group as determined by clinical judgment. A student may be classified as having an intellectual disability at one of the following levels:

- **Mild Intellectual Disability** - intellectual functioning ranging between an upper limit of approximately 70 to a lower limit of approximately 55 IQ Scale.

- **Moderate Intellectual Disability** - intellectual functioning ranging from an upper limit of approximately 55 to a lower limit of approximately 40 IQ Scale.

- **Severe Intellectual Disability** - intellectual functioning ranging from an upper limit of approximately 40 to a lower limit of approximately 25 IQ Scale.

- **Profound Intellectual Disability** - intellectual functioning is below 25 IQ Scale.

Many Akwa Ibom students with mental retardation do not attend special schools. Along with the lack of special education facilities in the general education settings, the low attendance rate of students with disabilities reflects the difficulties that the special education system is currently facing in the State.

There are other health impairments such as traumatic brain injury or other health related conditions that affect a student's educational performance. For instance, there are students who exhibit a medically diagnosed physical condition of a permanent,
temporary, or intermittent nature that causes reduced efficiency in school participation and performance. Limitations on the students due to the health impairment may take the form of extended absences, inability to attend a full academic schedule and/or inability to attend to tasks for the same length of time as peers. These students are unable to function physically and/or academically with peers of the same age and grade expectancy level and require the provision of specialized instructional services and modification in order to participate in the school.

It is important to mention that there is no system of classification of students according their various disabling conditions such as mental retardation, specific learning disabilities, autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, emotional and behavioral disorder, hearing impairment, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, speech or language impairment, visual impairment, traumatic brain injury and other health impairment categories.

Classification of students based on different disabling categories plays an important function in the service delivery system. Probably, the absence of classification and prevailing stigmatization may explain the reasons why there are no services for the different kinds of disabilities in the Akwa Ibom public schools. Thus, the special education services provided to disabled students in Akwa Ibom State are grossly inadequate, not only in terms of the number of available centers to provide such services, but also in their infrastructural capacity to diagnose and provide any meaningful services in the learning process. The present band-aid approach to this long-standing, neglected problem does not offer any practical solutions. A long-standing and validated approach must be put in place to alleviate the current treatment of Special Education programs in the state.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined available literature on alternative models of special education services in five selected developed countries (France, Japan, The Netherlands, United Kingdom and USA) and five developing countries (China, Cyprus, Ghana, South Africa, and Tanzania), and examined the historical development of special education programs in Nigeria as a whole and in Akwa Ibom State, in particular. Special education is viewed in this study as education of children with learning difficulties. This definition is commonly adopted by all nations reviewed here, but in some nations the classification of disabilities is more elaborate than in others.

The study observed some major differences as well as similarities in the operation of special education between the developed and developing nations as outlined in Tables 3 and 4, respectively. One major difference is the approach to special education itself. While the United States of America and the United Kingdom adopt a micro-level approach that gives importance at individual level emphasizing free education for all, France adopts a macro-level approach highlighting services and facilities for special education children as a group. Japan adopts an inclusive approach that allows disabled children to integrate with the mainstream education to the extent their degree of disability permits, otherwise known as placement in a least restrictive environment. The Netherlands embraces an exclusive approach, wherein special education is provided
through special schools as a separate system of education at both primary and secondary levels.

The curriculum differentials among these nations reflect their different approaches to special education. For example, nations with a micro approach have individualized curriculums and those with a macro approach do not have a separate curriculum for special education; they instead follow the mainstream education curriculum. While the U.S. and the U.K. had passed legislation related to special education provisions and disabled children, Japan has legislation to partially address these concerns, and France and the Netherlands have no special legislation in this regard. These nations cover special education and disability issues under the scope of their national policies. Some nations take into consideration special accommodations for disabled children, such as extended time to take examinations, and recognizing separate criteria to meet the IEP (individualized education plan) goals.

Of the five developed nations reviewed in this study, three nations - the Netherlands, U.K. and U.S.A. have such special accommodations for disabled children, while France and Japan do not. As for the similarities, in almost all developed countries, education is mandatory up to certain age, usually encompassing primary and secondary education. All developed nations provide access to special education and facilities designed to help disabled children in one form or other.

Table 4 presents comparison of five selected developing along the same criteria used for developed nations. As table points out, some marginal differences as well as similarities in the operation of special education exist among the developing countries. First, every developing nation, except Tanzania, has a basic definition of special
education. Also all nations adopt an inclusive and, for most part, a macro-level approach, perhaps because of limited financial resources. Cyprus and China seemingly have a refined workable definition of the special needs population. Special education in the countries of Ghana and South Africa are still in the developmental stages. In Ghana, special education operates on an extension of the legislation of the general education system, implying that special education still operates under the general education curriculum.

In South Africa, district-based professional support teams are established to provide coordinated support services and draw on the expertise of higher education and local communities. Tanzania in the last 10 years was under structural adjustment program, thus causing economic hardship to its citizens. There are only few schools to provide special education to the visually impaired children. In fact, most schools suffer from lack instructional supplies and materials that are essential to provide any meaningful service to students. For example, in order for a blind child to go into the classroom, he/she needs a writing machine, brailing paper, a tape recorder, and a typewriter.

A Perkins brailing machine costs about six hundred dollars, and the cost to transport it from the city to the countryside is 200 dollars each time this service is required—a price that many parents cannot afford to pay. Age ranges for special education population varies; in it is China 14-29 years, and in Cyprus, it is 3-18 years. The other three nations of Ghana, South Africa and Tanzania do not clearly specify their age ranges. Curriculums and accommodations are inadequately addressed in three of the five countries.
In conclusion, drastic differences were observed between developed nations and developing nation for special education provisions in terms of definition, approach, education, legislation, access, age, curriculum and special accommodations for disabled children. While the U.S. and the U.K. rank highest among the developed countries, Tanzania ranks lowest among the developing countries. Thus all special education models reviewed in this study range between the most sophisticated and desirable model of the U.S. and the U.K. and the least sophisticated and least desirable model in Tanzania.
Table 3: Special Education Practices: Similarities and Differences in Selected Developed Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria &amp; Approach</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>The Netherlands</th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
<th>United States of America</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition &amp; Approach</td>
<td><em>Macro approach:</em> Special education services are defined in the <em>Education Act</em> as the facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program.</td>
<td><em>Inclusive approach:</em> Special education specifically refers to &quot;the education of children (and adults) with learning difficulties stemming from different handicaps including and not limited to blindness, partial sightedness, deafness, hardness of hearing, mental retardation, social maladjustment and physical handicap.</td>
<td><em>Exclusive approach:</em> Special education refers to a separate system of education. Separate primary and secondary special education is provided for students in special schools.</td>
<td><em>Micro approach:</em> A learning difficulty which calls for special education provision to be made for him...A child has a 'learning difficulty' if: (a) The child has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his age; or (b) The child has a disability which either prevents or hinders him or her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided in schools within the area of the local authority concerned.</td>
<td><em>Micro approach:</em> Special education to mean specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with disabilities, including---instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and other settings, and instruction in physical education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Mandatory for all with no specific regard to nature and degree of disabilities</td>
<td>Mandatory special schools for deaf &amp; blind; special education classes within regular elementary and junior high school. Severe cases receive special full public and private day care centers</td>
<td>Unknown whether education is mandatory. Separate education for the disabled.</td>
<td>Mandatory education. National curriculum—both mainstream classes/Integration of students</td>
<td>Mandatory education. Students with disabilities Receive free and need-specific educational services.</td>
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<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Legislation | No specific laws pertaining to special education or disabled children. | Have Acts on Disability, but none to mandate that handicapped students to enroll in special education schools. | No specific laws pertaining to special education or disabled children. | The United Kingdom's Education Act of 1944 expanded the limits of special education treatment in order to provide appropriate special education services for children with physical or mental handicaps | In 1975 the United States Congress passed Public Law 94-142, —“a free appropriate public education which emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs, to assure that the rights of children with disabilities and their parents or guardians are protected, to assist states and
localities to provide for the education of all children with disabilities, and to assess and assure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities” (IDEA, 20 U.S.C. §1400[c]).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>YES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>12-16 remedial education</td>
<td>Disabled children identified before they enter school</td>
<td>Age of 3 to 20 years.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>No separate curriculum for special education</td>
<td>Transition into mainstream classroom</td>
<td>Differentiated according to needs</td>
<td>Individualized education plan</td>
<td>Individualized education plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate Accommodations</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4: Special Education Practices: Similarities and Differences in Selected Developing Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Cyprus</th>
<th>Ghana</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
<th>Tanzania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approach</td>
<td>Seven categories of disability: mental retardation, visual impairments,</td>
<td>Special educational needs are defined as any cognitive,</td>
<td>Special education operates on an extension of the legislation of the general education system. There is no separate legislation governing the education of children with disabilities</td>
<td>District-based professional support teams are established to provide coordinated support services and draw on the expertise of higher education and local communities</td>
<td>Not Stated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hearing impairments, speech disorders, orthopedic handicaps, chronic</td>
<td>sensory, physical or emotional condition that creates a</td>
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<td></td>
<td>diseases and physical deficiency, and emotional and behavioral disorders.</td>
<td>situation where the usual educational programs and</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>curriculum of a school cannot meet the educational</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>requirements of a child to ensure his or her full</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>development.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Placement of disabled children is determined by a diagnostic team of doctors, school psychologists, special educators, and school administrators</td>
<td>A multidisciplinary team assesses these needs—that is medical, psychological, educational, social welfare and any other needs deemed necessary to provide a full picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the child.</td>
<td>The government put up structures and resourced them with requisite educational materials and equipment to suit the teaching and learning of disabled children</td>
<td>Ministry of Education in South Africa published an Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: <em>Building an Inclusive Education and Training System</em></td>
<td>Not stated</td>
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<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>14-29 years</td>
<td>3-18 years, exceptional circumstance remain to age 21</td>
<td>School age</td>
<td>School age</td>
<td>School age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Regular classes, Part time special classes, Special classes,</td>
<td>Integration into mainstream classroom</td>
<td>Public, private and mission schools</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional services in hospitals, custodial institutions, or home bound.</td>
<td>Separate Accomodation</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>Inclusion</td>
</tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

Implications and Recommendations

Beginning in 1982, Nigeria adopted a 6-3-3-4 educational system that requires all students to experience 6 years of primary, 3 years of junior secondary (middle), 3 years of senior secondary (high school) and 4 years of post secondary/tertiary (college) education. The common understanding of this model was the provision of basic primary education for the first six years after the child enters school, basic general post-primary education (equivalent of junior secondary/high school education), which exposes students to both academic and vocational/technical curricula through exploratory programs, and the three years of senior secondary education, which is purely for academic and post-secondary education purposes.

However, this system has been constantly criticized for two reasons: first, on the ground of inadequate preparation of students whose performance levels in national standard examinations (National Examination Council and West African School Certificate Examination) were worse than ever before; and, second, on the grounds that there are no credible special education provisions for disabled children. Therefore, there is an immediate need for a comprehensive redesign of the educational programs that strengthen and expands the educational needs of children with and without disabilities. The examination of alternative special educational models in this study facilitates the development of the following integrated model for adoption in Nigeria as well as in Akwa Ibom.

1. Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Education should develop a process of identifying student with special educational needs so that appropriate services can be provided to enhance their academic success. The following ten steps may serve as
a blue print to develop a special education individualized plan to address the individual student needs. This blue print can be modified periodically as needs change.

a. The Initial Referral to the Child Study Team
b. Diagnostic Assessment of the Student
c. Classroom Observation
d. Discussion/Analysis of Assessment and Observation by the Student Study Team (SST).
e. Parent Interviews
f. Psycho-educational, Language, Psychological and Social Evaluations
g. Diagnosis of the Student’s Difficulty/Disability/Impairment;
h. Recommendations Concerning the Student’s Placement;
i. Creation of an Individualized Education Program (IEP);
j. Implementation of the IEP process.

2. Akwa Ibom Ministry of Education should identify Curriculum Areas for Disabled Students: Fig.3 identifies three curriculum areas: daily living skills, occupational guidance and preparation, and personal social skills.
Figure 3: Curriculum Areas for Disabled Students


Education for those with disabilities at both the elementary and secondary levels should consist of these elements so that they could compete effectively, and they need continued support while in the employment.¹ This calls for a program of transition from school to work. Currently, there are no transition services for any kind of students, regular or special education, in Akwa Ibom schools. It is, perhaps the reason why many young adults who graduate from high school have difficulties finding and keeping jobs. The following diagram shows how the proposed curriculum areas can be developed to provide meaningful educational services for students with special educational needs:

As depicted in Figure 4, education of the disabled at the elementary level, in addition to the academics, should focus on health, psychological services, social and daily living skills, occupational guidance, and career preparation. At the secondary level, cognitive skills, manual skills, interpersonal and perceptual skills, work attitudes and ethics, job exploration and interests, and social skills should be emphasized. At both levels, the student is the focus of any assessment and instructional services based on individualized needs and interests.

3. Akwa Ibom State should identify the professionals in the areas of medical, physical therapy and other diagnostic services: The special education services should be delivered by specialized and well trained teachers and other professionals—including psychologists, social workers, speech and hearing clinicians as well as physical and
occupational therapists. Vocational educators, parents, the community-based centers and organizations should be involved.

Establish Partnerships, Networks and Collaborative Initiatives: Collaboration among the specialists is a key element in the education of disabled regular education students. Through collaboration, youths can receive planned, appropriate and comprehensive services. When properly designed and implemented, many individuals are likely to participate in the education process. School practices that respect the cultural and family backgrounds of their students can increase and enhance partnerships between home and school, Epstein and Connors (1994). Understanding and building on a family's cultural interpretations of disability is essential in creating partnerships with parents of children receiving special education services. Partnerships in the field of special education could be very useful to operate special education programs in a cost-effective manner without duplicating resources. A former Nigerian minister of Education called on the private sector to come to aid of government in through a joint partnership to solve problems plaguing the education sector in Nigeria.\(^2\)

4. Monitor Success: In Akwa Ibom, as with many other state, the success of the program can be monitored by keeping track of the successful placement of those completed the special education program. The end product of any level of schooling is the ability in the graduates to find jobs that are relevant to their education obtained and skills acquired over their career building periods. Another important measure is to see how well these graduates adjust in the community. Currently, many students who complete secondary education hardly can find jobs, let alone well paying jobs. The

current junior secondary education is intended to expose students to career opportunities so that they may identify their choices when they successfully complete three years beyond primary education. However, they have to go further to complete two or more years of technical education such as in polytechnics or other technical colleges to qualify for some technical positions.

Based on this study, the following recommendations are made in order to achieve educational strengths and equitable access to educational opportunities for all Nigerians:

Nigeria, to come out of the present predicaments, must return to its point of departure in 70s when education in Nigeria was given reasonable attention. Nigeria must consider revamping its education policies in line with the U.N. recommendation of appropriating a minimum twenty-six percent of national budget to education with a set aside portion for special education.

a. Nigeria must develop clear conceptual definitions of education and special education for the benefit of all school going children. Nigeria as a nation must enact proper educational legislation to fund school and special school and to prevent wastage of young brains. This should be viewed as an investment in children, who serve as a backbone for the future stability and growth of the nation. Clear plan of implementation of the education and special education programs in terms access, age, curriculum, and any special accommodations for the disabled must be designed, implemented and periodically evaluated.
b. Educational plan should be flexible to accommodate future needs of school-going population with and without disabilities in order to ensure their success in school and in securing employment in their chosen field.

Finally, no nation should leave children to their fate without proper guidance, nurturing and educating them. They must be viewed as an integral and essential part of the national development. This task cannot be completed without collective involvement all stakeholders—government, policy makers, teachers, parents, business corporations, private and charitable organizations, volunteers, and the students themselves.
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