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Barriers to Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities in Hagadera Refugee Camp's Primary Schools

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Executive Summary

This research investigates barriers to the implementation and provision of inclusive education for learners with disabilities in Hagadera Primary Schools. Inclusive education is an educational philosophy based on human rights and democratic principles that aim to address educational exclusion faced by learners with disabilities. Its implementation facilitates an education system that fits and responds to the need of all learners particularly, to those living with disabilities. As the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) implementing primary education in Hagadera camp are trying to provide inclusive education for all, overcoming barriers for learners with disabilities remains the most difficult challenge. This research seeks to better understand the barriers that not only hinder the implementation and provision of inclusive education, but specifically those that lead to the exclusion of learners with disabilities, particularly to those with hearing, vision, and physical impairments. The paper employs a qualitative research design conducting semi-structured interviews for three learners with disabilities and an administrative teacher. The semi-structured questions are guided by the intensive understanding of barriers to the implementation and provision of inclusive education while also addressing some tangible solutions. Findings explore that insufficient teaching and learning resources, exacerbated by the disability-unfriendly environment, ignited the negative attitudes of learners with disabilities and contributed to their discrimination in the classroom and elsewhere. The findings also acknowledged the need to enhance public awareness and sensitization of educational rights of persons with disabilities.

Introduction

Hagadera is one of the most populated camps in the Dadaab refugee complex in Garissa County, Northeastern Kenya. It was established in 1991 after the civil war in Somalia, a devastating conflict which resulted in a massive loss of life and property, leading people to flee to Kenya in search of refuge. Although Somalis make up the majority of refugees in the camp, other nationalities such as Burundians, Ethiopians, Congolese and Southern Sudanese also have significant populations. The camp is located south of Dadaab town and consists of blocks that form each section. Each section has a minimum of ten blocks that accommodate about a hundred households, with each household hosting an average of seven to nine people. In terms of leadership, each block is headed by female and male block leaders, who are succeeded by section leaders, and then a chairman and a chairlady, who represent refugees in important forums while linking refugee communities with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Within the camps, there are four groups responsible for providing education to refugee children. Primary education in the camp is facilitated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and secondary education is implemented by Windle International Kenya (WIK), while Humanity and Inclusion (HI) provides educational services to children living with disabilities. Kenya Equity in Education Project (KEEP) delivers some services and remedial classes to vulnerable girls who might have poor performance, are of older age, or are special needs learners, but they are currently facing a financial crisis. The camp has a total of seven primary schools managed by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and supported by UNHCR, as well as other partner non-profit organizations. Each school accommodates children from four to five sections (40-50 blocks); in other words, each school has an average of 1000-1500 learners. Although primary education is the priority for the donor agencies, there are still challenges, such as overcrowded classrooms and

insufficient teaching and learning resources, which are exacerbated by the lack of supportive environments. The lack of resources in the schools makes the implementation and provision of inclusive education to all learners and in particular for those living with disabilities difficult.

1.1. Problem Statement

Inclusive education is an educational philosophy where all students receive their educational needs regardless of their ability, gender, and race. It is a strategy based on democratic principles and human rights that aims to address all sorts of discrimination. As every child has the right to quality education, I believe inclusive education is necessary to achieve an education system that fits the needs of all students, particularly learners with disabilities. For instance, in inclusive education, students with learning disabilities receive services and support that are appropriate to their individual needs in their learning process. While NGOs are trying to ensure inclusive education to all students in Hagadera primary schools, barriers that hinder the provision of inclusive education to learners with disabilities remain.

There is undoubtedly an important correlation between the ableist barriers to education and the difficulties that students with disabilities face. This drives my research interest to seek a better understanding of existing barriers to inclusive education for learners living with hearing, visual, and physical disabilities. Therefore, the main purpose of this research is to investigate how these barriers hinder the provision and implementation of inclusive education within Hagadera primary schools. I became interested in researching the barriers to the provision of inclusive education for learners living with disabilities after I worked within an education program in Hagadera refugee camp implemented by Windle International Kenya (WIK). Within this program, I worked as a remedial teacher for girls who were considered to have low performance as well as those with learning impairments.

Throughout my teaching experience, I recognized key barriers to the students' learning such as poor attitudes from parents, teachers, and other learners towards students with learning disabilities, insufficient teaching and learning resources, and most importantly, lack of recognition for learners with mild disabilities. This indicates that even though inclusive education is required to eradicate barriers to learning and remove exclusion in the education system, its implementation is insufficient. However, personal experiences alone are not enough to fully understand these barriers, and conducting intensive research helped to identify barriers affecting student learning and possible solutions to these challenges.

To achieve inclusive education across the globe, several humanitarian and international organizations have created goals and timelines in achieving inclusive education for all children. Among them are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for 2030, which calls for inclusive education for all. The Convention on the Rights of Children (1989) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) acknowledge that education is not only a fundamental right for every child but also an opportunity to maintain and accomplish life with dignity. Moreover, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UN General Assembly 2006) addresses the requirement to meet and ensure students with disabilities have access to inclusive education. In my understanding, inclusive education is not only meant to eradicate exclusion but also to acknowledge diversities in human abilities, cultures, and ethnicities. Peters, Johnstone, and Ferguson (2005: 142) highlight this perspective by emphasizing that inclusive education is rooted in the fundamental right of every individual to access quality education. This approach not only ensures equal opportunities for all but also focuses on nurturing each person's potential while upholding their human dignity.

Inclusive education is viewed by scholars as a dynamic approach to effectively respond to learners' diverse circumstances as well as seeing individual differences as an opportunity to enhance learning as opposed to being an obstacle. The main aim of inclusion is to respect diversity and respond to individual needs regardless of students' race, ethnicity, and ability. Most importantly, inclusive education is meant to solve challenges that learners living with disabilities encounter in mainstream schools while accepting and allowing them to show their talents. Provision and proper implementation of inclusive education that caters to the needs of all learners is the key to implementing education for all (Pinnock and Hodgkin 2010). In regard to disability and refugee status, children living with disabilities encounter many barriers to accessing quality education. Attitudinal barriers impede the provision of full inclusion to students with disabilities (Bešić, Paleczek and Gasteiger-Klicpera 2020). Johnston and Ferguson (2005) acknowledge that despite the efforts of several international, national, and local authorities to implement inclusive education, there continue to be significant barriers that hinder its provision to children living with disabilities.

1.2. Statement of Key Questions

The primary research question of this study was: *What are the main barriers to inclusive education for learners living with disabilities in Hagadera primary schools, and how can we overcome these barriers?* The main goal of inclusive education is to enable all students to access an educational system that values and validates their individuality while meeting their unique needs. This is why inclusive education advocates for the educational rights of all children, especially learners with disabilities. Despite the fact that inclusive education intends to eradicate educational exclusion, there are still barriers that hinder its provision and implementation. Therefore, my research provides a deeper understanding of barriers to inclusive education for learners with vision, hearing,

and physical impairments. In particular, I examined the impacts of poor attitudes from parents, teachers, and learners towards students with learning impairments, insufficient teaching and learning resources, and most importantly, lack of recognition for learners with mild disabilities. Additionally, I provided recommendations on how to overcome these barriers within Hagadera Primary schools.

In my research, I uncovered how students with mild disabilities are not recognized in some educational institutions and hope that the research will support how educational organizations rethink their approaches to inclusive education. This does not only aim to help guide educational organizations around the proper provision of inclusive education in schools, but will also show the exclusion of learners living with disabilities within and outside the schools.

2. Discussion of Literature

2.1. Negative Attitudes Towards Learners with Disabilities

In the situation of displacement and emergencies, children with disabilities are at a greater risk of being separated from their families, making them especially vulnerable in the process of escaping immediate danger (Pinnock and Hodgkin 2010: 34). As Couldrey and Herson (2010: 6) state, "obstacles that impede persons with disabilities' access to education and livelihood opportunities in stable contexts is heightened in displacement context". For those who find themselves in camps, children with disabilities who experience learning difficulties have traditionally been marginalized and excluded from schools (Ainscow and Haile-Giorgis 1998). This trend is present in the Dadaab refugee camps, where children living with disabilities are often neglected and believed to be unfit for learning.

This neglect is not confined to education only, in fact, it can negatively affect children in terms of their health, diet, clothing, and physical hygiene. UNICEF (2008) acknowledges that even though

there is a steady progress for the provision and achievement for inclusive education, attitudinal barriers remain. Children who face exclusion can be psychologically traumatized and socially rejected from their community. Moreover, some parents of children with disabilities experience feelings of shame, leading them to confine their children to locked rooms at home, depriving them of access to education. The intensity of this negligence deprives children of any hope of inclusive and dignified lives, which is further exacerbated by overlapping challenges including abuse, physical attacks, and oppression from their families and the community at large. These incidents hinder their capacity to interact with the community and result in feelings of social exclusion on an even greater scale (Westcott and Jones 1999).

Children living with disabilities also face negative attitudes from their non-impaired peers due to the stigmatization of the disabled community. The belief that disability is a curse persists in some cultural groups, often resulting in the marginalization and mistreatment of children with disabilities in mainstream schools, where they may face abuse, harsh name-calling, and physical attacks from their peers. Supporting this notion, Stone-MacDonald and Butera (2012: 7) highlighted that in 1949, individuals in Zimbabwe commonly viewed disability as divine punishment, leading to the societal rejection of those affected. This historical perspective underscores the deep-rooted stigma surrounding disability in some cultures, which continues to impact the inclusion and treatment of children with disabilities in education today.

Some teachers believe that learners with disabilities are inherently "low achievers" in comparison to non-disabled children. As a result, in settings where resources are limited, they prioritize students who they expect to demonstrate higher academic performance. This practice effectively denies learners with disabilities their fundamental right to inclusive and equitable education. Some teachers even claim that they do not like to teach students with severe

disabilities as they fear they might not perform well in the exams (Campbell, Gilmore, and Cuskelly 2003: 370). Some untrained teachers also believe that disabled children cannot take part in extracurricular and other school club activities. Combs, Elliott, and Whipple (2010) clearly expressed how some teachers are reluctant to include children with disabilities in co-curricular activities such as sports. A participant from their research stated that

> I've really tried with a couple of the kids that I get but they just cannot follow directions. They run around when I am talking and do not follow directions. Sometimes they even run out of the gym and I have to stop my lesson to deal with that problem. When the weather is nice, I like to teach outside but I cannot take these kids outside because I am scared they will run off. (Combs, Elliott, and Whipple, 2010: 118)

This exclusive, backward attitude can cause depression amongst children with disabilities, leading to an early departure from school. The predicament of learners with disabilities is not only academic exclusion but many also receive corporal punishments from some untrained teachers for minor mistakes while un-impaired learners who commit the same offenses are forgiven. Some teachers, primarily those who lack formal training, believe that corporal punishment might rectify the mistakes and bad behaviors of the students.

Since attitudinal barriers result in the exclusion of children with disabilities, it is important to eradicate myths and misconceptions about disability. More specifically, advocating for children with learning impairments in and outside the school can help them realize their rights as learners. Teachers' attitudes contribute to the academic development of their pupils thus they must show a positive attitude toward all children. In UNESCO's *Education for All,* the significance of equity and access to basic education opportunities for children with disabilities is emphasized, and eradicating negative attitudes towards children with learning disabilities is an integral step in this process.

2.2. Insufficient Teaching and Learning Resources

Due to the free provision of primary education in the camps, a high number of refugee learners are enrolled in Dadaab Refugee camps' primary schools. However, inadequate learning materials have resulted in poor student retention. This is also argued by Meda, Sookraish, and Maharaj (2012: 152) who, in writing about the camp context in South Africa, specified how inadequate access to learning resources has resulted in challenges in student retention and performance while also mentioning that at times students have to share textbooks in a ratio of 1:10. As I have noted during my experiences as a teacher, at times, non-disabled learners refuse to share these textbooks with the learners living with disabilities in and outside the school. Even worse, the few learners with disabilities who had access to these textbooks were not able to benefit from it because of the font size of these texts. Calabro, Contini, and Leporini (2009) stated that students with vision disabilities encounter difficulties in reading books printed in small fonts and encouraged educational systems to provide accessible reading material for all children. While working with an NGO providing education in the camps, I also bore witness to disabled students' challenges with books with small prints.

Also, in relation to students with visual disabilities, some teachers' handwriting on the chalkboards are unreadable to students with visual disabilities. The importance of providing clear and readable handwriting is emphasized as it affects the learning progress of the students, particularly to those with visual impairments (Coussens, McLaughlin, Derby and McKenzie 2012). Likewise, children with mild hearing disabilities need to be provided a seat at the front part of the class so that the teacher's voice is audible to them. As Mpofu and Chimhenga (2013: 73) state when proposing remedies for students with hearing impairments, "there is a need to seat hearing-impaired students

where there is an unobstructed view of the teacher. This classroom reorganization will ensure that these pupils can lip read if they are trained to do so."

Since children with disabilities often feel isolated, they usually sit at the back of the classroom while their peers dominate in front of the classes, leading to barriers within the classroom. The learning process involved in teaching pupils with disabilities does not differ tremendously from other students; however, children with disabilities encounter challenges that their peers are not facing. For instance, these pupils might require specialized equipment to help them learn effectively alongside other students without constraints. Children with learning disabilities have particular educational needs that potentially differ from other students and therefore, teachers need to consider their needs and provide the necessary equipment for them to succeed (Neeraja and Anuradha 2014). Oftentimes, untrained teachers may have limited knowledge of different classroom management strategies, and thus may not understand the specific needs of the learners living with disabilities. Mamba and Mafumbate (2019: 34) demonstrated in their findings that learners with disabilities were not provided with modified strategies, questioning techniques, and teaching aids. Children were exposed only to the curricular strategies that suited the learners who had no learning disabilities, making it difficult for them to perform at the same levels of success as their peers.

The provision of teaching and learning resources that cater to the needs of all learners can lead to full inclusion. As such, organizations must ensure that sufficient learning resources are offered for all learners. Teachers must use learner-centred approaches and employ effective teaching methodologies that serve and meet the needs of learners with different impairments. Most importantly, teachers should be provided with educational training so that they will have enough

knowledge to understand the unique needs of learners with disabilities as well as learn about diverse students' approaches to education.

2.3. Communication and Participation Barriers

Although schools are meant to cater to the needs of all students, children with disabilities may face some communication challenges, including misunderstandings with teachers, as well as their peers. Students with mild hearing disabilities face some difficulties in certain sound frequencies and might not hear well when there are background noises (Mpofu and Chimbenga 2013: 69). This may prevent them from participating in classes due to the fact that they might not hear specific instructions or see physical demonstrations because of other classroom distractions. The noise made by their peers during classroom discussions might limit the understanding of students with hearing disabilities, particularly when several students are speaking at the same time (Stinson and Antia 1999: 169).

There is thus little evidence of organizations in Hagadera implementing inclusive education strategies, and this apathy is negatively impacting the learners with mild disabilities since they continue to be in the mainstream education system and lack the assistive learning devices that they need to succeed. Therefore, children with disabilities feel excluded at school, heightening incidents of dropping out and low self-esteem. Educational organizations such as Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Windle International, and Save the Children International (SCI) must provide the necessary learning support that children with impairments in the mainstream require so that the vision for inclusion for all can be achieved.

3. Methodology and Research Design

In this study, in-depth semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. My qualitative research methodology relied on the participation of four informants: three learners living with disabilities

and an administrative teacher. I chose these participants because the three students have lived experience of the barriers to inclusion and are directly affected by one or more of these barriers. The administrative teacher has longstanding experience in primary education and most importantly, was able to provide insight into certain attitudes and experiences of the teachers who work with students living with disabilities. This research method helped me to understand and uncover barriers that hinder the provision of inclusive education for learners with disabilities within Hagadera Primary schools.

After the initial contact with participants, they had a minimum of two weeks to ask questions, communicate feedback, and provide suggestions to the research study before the interview took place. The interviews were conducted in the three separate primary schools that the participants attended. With the use of pseudonyms, I transcribed the four interviews using audiotaping. I coded the interviews and read the transcripts several times while identifying key themes. I performed a content analysis of the interviews to interpret meaningful ideas. This reading helped me to get more in-depth content and provided a better understanding of the barriers to inclusive education for learners with disabilities.

While the study captures insights from four sampled participants from one camp, it is worth acknowledging that the timeframe of this study was limited. In order to fully understand and analyze the perceptions surrounding children with disabilities, I recommend future research on the cultural beliefs about children living with disabilities and finding ways to address these opinions.

4. Participant Profiles

4.1. Batula[1]

Batula's family was forced to flee from her home country, Somalia, because of civil war and drought. The journey to the refugee camps was extremely difficult and challenging. She travelled with her extended family, who had never been out of the country before,. Despite the rough journey, they managed to reach Dadaab camps. Currently, they are registered refugees in Hagadera camp and had the opportunity for resettlement overseas. However, the resettlement process is taking a long time and they are waiting to be resettled to one of the refugee-receiving countries abroad.

When I asked whether she was born with a visual disability, she said she was not born with this condition but rather lost her sight completely after she was injected with the wrong medication. She recalled some painful moments when the hospitals in the camps could not help her and she was transferred through a referral to Nairobi Hospital for further treatment. She was learning in the mainstream classes before her visual disability but now she is in the special needs education (SNE) unit. Currently, she is in grade eight but if she had not lost her sight, she could have been among those students graduating from secondary schools, referred to as "form four".

After asking about her life in the camp and how she feels about the tangible delay in her academic studies, she replied that life is quite challenging. Although her parents are fully supporting her to their best effort, she claims she has lost a lot of time, and she is too old to be in grade eight. She faces significant challenges when going to school, including people calling her "balaa", which means 'the blind'. Sometimes, her parents are unable to take her to school and she decides to go alone, but kids throw stones and taunt her with name-calling.

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[1]Note that these names are pseudonyms.

Despite facing adversity, Batula has high self-esteem and she is determined to succeed in her academics and build a future for herself. She told me that what happened has happened, but what is important is to be positive and go forward. She is determined to take the lessons from of the past and use them to work hard in the present so that she can build a better future.

4.2. Faisal

Faisal is one of the young men who were born in Somalia and recently fled to Dadaab Refugee Camps. His family passed the border when there was tension between the Kenyan government and the Somali transitional government. Consequently, there were numerous armed forces around the border, making it very hard to enter Kenya and reach the refugee camps. However, after spending some days in the bordering areas, Faisal's family successfully reached the refugee camps. The journey took one month to reach the camps due to the rough terrain and Faisal's mobility restrictions. He says:

> When we fled from our country we had some problems on the way, particularly I who had a disability. I fled with my family and on travelling I had difficulties in walking and I was to wait every time, this led the family to take a long time in the journey where it took month instead of some days.

Fortunately, his family was able to register with UNHCR easily and settled in Hagadera camp. However, everything was strange to them; the communities, the environment, and the entire life in the camp were new. Later on, they interacted with the communities, adapted to the environment, and Faisal was taken to the schools. The family is headed by his mother, who is responsible for providing for the family, as well as securing learning materials for him.

For now, Faisal is in the seventh grade of his primary studies and is doing well in his academic achievements, but he faces exclusion from his peers due to their name-calling, which annoys him. Nevertheless, Faisal strives to be happy and is confident that he will achieve his dream

of successfully completing his education to the university level. He confidently believes that he is the one who will help his mother and be the source of support for the family.

4.3. Hassan

Hassan's family fled from Somalia but he was born in the refugee camps. He is 19 years old studying grade eight in one of the primary schools in the camp. He and his parents live with an extended family. Hassan shares similar challenges that all refugee youth are facing in the camps, including lack of exposure outside the camps and poor living standards, but his plight is exacerbated by the lack of proper support to learners living with disabilities.

Hassan's family purely rely on the food they get from the distribution centre. His father is unemployed and his mother remains at home cooking food for the family while having no external support. The only tangible things they have in the camps are free education and health support. Hassan is among students living with disabilities, particularly those with hearing difficulties. He is partially deaf and needs voice amplification to hear others speaking. At the school level, he faces some challenges with his peers calling him "deaf", which he sees as discriminatory.

Despite having hearing difficulties, Hassan is happy to continue his studies at least up to the secondary level. Still, he faces challenges such as a lack of a disability-friendly environment and insufficiency of learning materials, which represent tangible barriers to his studies. Since he is learning in mainstream classes and has difficulties in hearing, the provision of a hearing aid could help him achieve his academic dreams.

4.4. Taareey

Taareey arrived in the camps with his sister's family when he was young, and life was unbearable and challenging in those early days. His mother died when he was born and his father died before they fled to Kenya. The living standard of the family was very low, but Taareey's elder sister knew

the only way to success was to educate the kids. She put all her efforts into ensuring that he and her kids go to school while giving guidance and counselling. Thus, Taareey successfully completed both his primary and secondary level of education in Hagadera camp.

He was employed as a classroom teacher in the year 2010, but getting tertiary education was too difficult as the chances were very minimal and competitive. Thus, he did not pursue a university degree for several months. Fortunately, at last, he got some scholarship opportunities ranging from certificate to diploma level; he earned several Diplomas in the field of education, such as a Diploma in primary education, a Diploma in early childhood development, and a Diploma in office administration and management from Mount Kenya University, Emara College, and Cambridge College, respectively.

Since 2010, he has worked in primary education as a classroom teacher and currently works as an administrative teacher in one of the primary schools. Despite his position as an administrative teacher, he is paid an incentive wage (incentive payments to the refugee staff), which helped him to self-sponsor and pursue his Bachelor's level in the field of education. Taareey has moved from classroom teacher to administrative teacher and has worked at three different schools. In each school, he made a tangible contribution to the well-being and performance of the students. Thus, he is known as the teacher for change and achievement, and he is one of the most experienced teachers in the camp. He always advocates for the inclusion of children living with disabilities, as he believes education is a path to social transformation.

5. Inclusive Education in the Hagagera Camp

Hagadera is one of the Dadaab refugee camps established in 1991 after the civil war in Somalia and it is so densely populated, having around 106,900 people. People living in the camp rely on monthly food distributed by WFP, and the primary tangible benefit they receive in the camps is

free education. The camp has seven primary schools funded and managed by the Lutheran World Federation. Five of these schools have Special Needs Education (SNE) unit centres. The organizations implementing primary education provide some support to the learners with severe disabilities who are learning in the special unit classes, while those with mild disabilities in the mainstream classes are not given much consideration. Taareey acknowledged that students previously had difficulties accessing school at all, as few schools enrolled children living with disabilities, but that has since improved.

Primary education in Hagadera camps functions as an integration rather than an inclusive education. Learners with severe disabilities such as the blind, deaf, or have cognitive disabilities are taught separately in special unit classes, while those with mild disabilities such as low vision, hard of hearing, or physical disabilities learn in the mainstream classes with non-disabled learners. This separation suggests a focus on accommodation rather than fully inclusive educational practices. Taareey mentioned that "Learners with severe disabilities like those deaf, blind or having cognitive disabilities learn separately in special classes and are taught by trained teachers," while "those with partially impaired are taught in the mainstream classes." Tareey's comments show that some of the learners with disabilities are not given the chance to learn with other non-disabled learners and are instead separated from each other. When I asked Taareey why learners with severe disabilities are not given the chance to learn with their non-disabled peers, he emphasized the lack of resources such as trained teachers and sufficient learning materials. Smaller classes as well as a disability-friendly environment are the key challenges for the inclusion of learners with disabilities.

5.1. Conceptualizations of Inclusive Education in the Camps

The concept of inclusive education is one of the key themes that came out of the four interviews and it is foundational to all other themes in my research. According to UNICEF (2017) inclusive education means an educational system or approach that provides inclusion to all children and supports them to learn regardless of their ability and requirements. This clearly indicates that inclusive education is meant to meet the unique needs of all children, particularly those with special needs. Nevertheless, learners who have physical, vision and hearing disabilities need to be provided with inclusive education in their schools. Remarkably, each of the interview participants had a clear understanding of inclusive education. They all cited inclusive education as an educational system that does not exclude or oppress anyone or have no other barriers which prevents the child from participating, accessing and, most importantly, engaging in education and its benefits. They also acknowledged that inclusive education serves the needs of the child while removing structural barriers to inclusion.

Reflecting on inclusive education, Batula explained, "Inclusive education means to me an education system that everyone (boys, girls, disabled, non-disabled, the blind and the deaf) are participating and learning together in one place." Faisal offered more insights and emphasized the importance of children learning together in one school and one class regardless of their ability or even gender and race. He stated that,

> Inclusive education means like an education that persons with disabilities, girls, boys and the people from the minority communities have access to it. It also means an education system that all children are learning in the same school and the same classes without discrimination. In short, it means education for all.

Hassan also echoed that inclusive education means an education for all. He stated that,

> Inclusive education means an education that gives chance to all students regardless of their disabilities (such as deaf, blind and so on), gender, cultural background, minority and so

on so that they get an equal educational opportunity. Where they are not separated, they will learn in one class without discriminating by taking those with severe disabilities on one side and the others on the other side but rather getting equal chances or opportunities.

In this context, Hassan also divided or categorized children with special needs into two different categories; those with mild disabilities such as those who have partial hearing, vision, and cognitive disabilities in the mainstream classes and those with severe disabilities such deaf and blind in the special unit classes. He asserts that,

> Students with special needs are of two different categories, those who are like me (having moderate disabilities) can hear but needs the voice to be raised, can see but their sight is limited, can think but have little mental issues in the mainstream classes and those who have severe disabilities such as deaf and blind, in the special needs unit classes.

Hassan advocated for the inclusion of students with mild disabilities in the same classrooms as their non-disabled peers, emphasizing the need for adapted teaching methods and appropriate learning aids to support their education. He also felt that it was important that there be interaction between children living with disabilities and those living without disabilities: "Compared to the early days, today there are interactions between students with disabilities and those without disabilities."

However, Hassan expressed the concern that children with mild disabilities, who are learning alongside their non-disabled peers, face significant challenges due to a lack of recognition and support for their needs. Unlike their peers with severe disabilities who receive specialized access and assistance, he noted how those living with mild disabilities who are in the mainstream classes do not get such opportunities. At this junction, Hassan is not advocating against special need unit classes, but rather he is addressing the inadequacy and inequalities of resources to learners living with a range of disabilities, in particular to those with mild disabilities who are placed in the mainstream classes.

In addition to the interview participants above, Taareey also declared inclusive education is a pedagogical approach where learners congregate purposely for learning regardless of their ability, family background and so on.

> To my level of understanding, inclusive education is an educational approach where learners are brought together for the purpose of learning together regardless of their ability or disability, gender or race or maybe their background or their geographical location. So, regardless of all those differences, they are brought together so that they can learn in the same setup and in the same environment.

He also acknowledged that inclusive education is designed to meet the unique needs of children with special needs and also make them feel important in the community.

Based on the response of the interview participants, it is clear that participants value and have a substantial understanding of inclusive education. However, the system in the Dadaab camps for providing special education, where there are separate classes (special need unit classes and mainstream classes), presents a challenge for those with mild disabilities. Participants understand inclusive education and they advocate for education for all. However, their perception is shaped and influenced by the practices of insufficient resources and lack of recognition . Therefore, participants are trying to address the inequalities and insufficiency of resources for all learners living with disabilities, particularly those in the mainstream classes. Participants shared a clear understanding of inclusive education and its tenets, such as the importance of one shared space, differentiated resources and strategies available to all, learning together with great importance placed on interactions, and approaches that benefit everyone as the key to inclusive education for all.

6. Insufficient Teaching and Learning Resources

Teaching and learning resources are one of the most essential elements that promote inclusive education and help learners to acquire knowledge and skills effectively while meeting individual

learning needs. Teaching and learning materials can be categorized as human and material resources. Human resources are the teacher's knowledge, skills, and attitudes to effectively deliver lessons and manage different students' needs, while some of the material resources are the resources that facilitate students' learning process such as books, pens, and devices that students need to fulfill their potentials. Most of the participants acknowledged that children with disabilities required special support services that facilitate their participation in schools because it is difficult for them to cope with the 'normal' classroom teachings without specialized resources. Providing them with this kind of resource will facilitate their participation and empower their talents. Taareey acknowledged that teaching and learning resources are one of the key components that promote inclusive education and help students learn effectively regardless of their ability.

The other three participants (Batula, Faisal, and Hassan) agreed that learners living with disabilities have unique needs and require special support services that facilitate or encourage their participation in the general schools since they may not succeed in classes with insufficient learning resources. Batula said: "I can only read at home when I have braille-printed papers." Faisal highlighted that "there are those children who have broken wheelchairs and cannot get someone to push them, this results in coming to the school late," while Hassan shared that "Other students like me with mild disabilities need learning aids, such as eyeglasses, hearing aids or white canes." Nevertheless, the role of teaching and learning resources in the inclusion of learners with special needs cannot be denied, and thus, these resources can facilitate their participation and support and reinforce their potential.

Teaching and learning resources are insufficient in Hagadera primary schools and this constitutes a barrier to the implementation of inclusive education particularly in the inclusion of learners living with special needs. When I asked Taareey about the challenges of inclusion, he

confirmed the lack of resources, sharing that "Another barrier is inadequate teaching and learning materials. Teaching and learning materials which always facilitate effective teaching and learning are inadequate in some schools." Due to the lack of adequate teaching and learning resources, some schools are unable to establish a Special Needs Education (SNE) unit. This forces learners from nearby areas to enroll in schools that do have an SNE unit, often located far from their residential blocks. Notably, even schools with an SNE unit face resource shortages, making it difficult to ensure full inclusion for students with special needs.

6.1. Insufficient Textbooks and Teaching Aids

One of the specific teaching and learning materials that the participants unanimously discussed is the lack of textbooks. Students struggle with sharing textbooks both inside and outside of the schools and this leads to the exclusion of students living with disabilities. Since schools are already facing deficits in teaching and learning materials, teachers instruct students to share one textbook in groups consisting of five to six students. Each group is given one textbook depending on the subject of study and the teacher expects them to share the material in and outside of the class while giving directions to rotate daily or weekly. In this context, learners living with disabilities face challenges in sharing textbooks with other learners without disabilities in a myriad of different ways.

In the class, some students with physical disabilities have difficulties sitting in a limited space. For instance, they might either have difficulties sitting in a congested place where five to six learners are sitting on one desk or might have difficulties freely moving from their seats and joining the group. Students with vision impairments cannot read from far away and need to be closer to the book, but this is not possible for them when sharing a book with a group of five to six. Outside the classroom, students with vision and physical disabilities have difficulties travelling

long distances to retrieve the textbook from group partners. Faisal shared his difficulties of textbook-sharing, stating that "The teacher will bring few copies and he will say share together and again the books are not enough, if you borrow just one night, you have to return it."

Unfortunately, some of the few learners who are able to secure textbooks may not benefit from its use because of the small font size. This inaccessibility creates challenges for students with vision disabilities as they cannot read the material. When students with special needs are denied access to proper reading materials, they tend to disturb other students with questions, which in turn makes the teacher believe them to be a disturbance and disciplines them. Faisal shared an incident about his visually disabled classmate and he said, "A friend of mine who cannot see well could not write notes and perform class work just because he could not read the small font size of the book thus he needs large printed books."

Taareey also shared a story highlighting the insufficiency of textbooks and the challenges faced by learners with special needs when interacting with their non-disabled peers. He explained that when textbooks are limited and must be shared among groups, instances of misplaced or lost books often occur. In such situations, students with disabilities are disproportionately blamed for the losses, reflecting broader societal biases. Additionally, Taareey observed that non-disabled students sometimes refuse to share textbooks with their peers with disabilities. This scarcity of resources not only exacerbates stereotypes but also reinforces negative attitudes within the community toward learners with disabilities, further marginalizing them in educational settings.

Nevertheless, the challenges with the learning resources are not only limited to the textbooks and the small font size, there is also a lack of teaching aids. These are tools that facilitate the process of teaching and learning which in turn enhances students' learning. Materials such as Manila paper and colored pens help teachers with visual aids. For example, these materials can be

used to draw diagrams to facilitate effective teaching. Taareey discussed the insufficiency of teaching aids and acknowledged the need for various kinds of teaching materials that enhance learners' understanding of the lesson. He said,

> The other things are the manila papers and colored pens which are a teaching aid for teachers to draw diagrams to facilitate effective teaching. Children living with disabilities need to be engaged with various kinds of teaching and learning materials which are very colorful. Because children learn best what they see rather than what they hear. So, if all these things are provided then those children can go far, enjoy their learning process and that will help them acquire knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes and also experience.

6.2. Lack of Professional Development for Teachers

Teachers' role as a human resource is vital when it comes to the provision of inclusive education in Hagadera primary schools. Knowledge, skills, and attitudes that teachers possess to effectively deliver lessons and understand the unique needs of students are regarded as a uniquely valuable resource. Trained teachers have the knowledge skills and attitudes to offer inclusive education to learners with disabilities and understand the unique needs of these learners as they go to college and university trainings. Interview participants addressed the significance of having some resource teachers (trained teachers) to understand the unique needs of the students living with disabilities. Nevertheless, as the Kenyan government vowed to close the camps, most non-profit education organizations faced a lack of funding. As such, teaching positions have been massively reduced every year despite the population of learners increasing each year. These staffing shortages resulted in one teacher teaching a class of more than seventy students, which contradicts to the Kenyan curriculum of stating a ratio of one teacher to teach forty students (Waita, Kaloki Joseph, et al. 2016: 56). The administrative teacher also stressed a massive reduction of teachers and acknowledged difficulties that teachers are facing to accommodate a large number of students in

the classrooms. This indicates that there is a scarcity of teachers and most importantly, of specialized trained teachers.

Furthermore, the few teachers available are often not trained to teach children with disabilities; they often lack the formal instruction and pedagogical knowledge to safely, effectively, and compassionately teach learners living with disabilities. Faisal and Taareey noted that without the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to accommodate learners living with disabilities, both untrained teachers and the students struggled. Taareey recommended:

> In the mainstream classroom arrangements, teachers have to bring learners having hard of hearing, low vision, and physical disabilities at the front part of the class so that they can be close to the teacher and the blackboard; in coming closer, it helps them to see and hear teachers notes and the explanations.

Faisal agreed that untrained teachers are not capable of handling learners living with special needs in mainstream classes and have negative attitudes towards learners living with disabilities:

> One of my colleagues who has hard of hearing could not hear the teacher's dictation and the lesson explanation because he was seated at the back of the class. He remained sitting while not writing the lesson but the teacher thought he was joking and punished him.

Faisal also admitted that some teachers, mostly untrained teachers, have the perception and attitudes that learners living with disabilities disturb other students and cannot successfully transition to other levels of education. Thus, this is a clear indication that learners in mainstream classes face some challenges ranging from punishments to exclusion. This left some learners living with disabilities feeling excluded, uncomfortable in their classes, and emotionally distraught at schools, while some dropped out (or, more appropriately, were pushed out) of their education.

Not only did students feel uncomfortable, but also parents of learners with disabilities felt that their children were not recognized in the schools. Thus, it is clear that schools are not adequately prepared for the inclusion of learners living with disabilities. Batula and Hassan shared

a story where some of their classmates dropped out of school because their needs were not met, and their parents felt the schools were not equitably accommodating their children's needs. Taarey said, "Parents with special needs learners always complain that their students are not properly accommodated in the schools." This lack of confidence encourages parents of learners with disabilities to have negative beliefs about education, thus deciding not to send their kids to school at all.

6.3. Lack of Assistive Devices

Assistive devices are materials that help learners living with disabilities learn effectively and facilitate their acquisition of knowledge and skills. These devices help learners with disabilities learn equally and have the same opportunities as learners without disabilities. Most of the assistive devices required in Hagadera primary schools include but are not limited to hearing devices, braille, wheelchairs, magnified eyeglasses, and walking sticks. Unfortunately, the supply of these devices is insufficient in the special unit classes and use is not available to students in the mainstream classes. Taareey mentioned the inadequacy and the need for the devices, claiming that:

> Teaching and learning materials which always facilitate effective teaching and learning is inadequate in some schools. As such, children living with disabilities in various schools are not equipped with efficient teaching and learning materials and assistive devices; those devices that could help them facilitate their acquisition of knowledge and facilitate their learning.

Although most of the needs for learners living with disabilities are common, some of their needs are unique depending on the type of disability. The need for these types of devices varies from special unit classes to mainstream classes. Learners in the special unit classes are thus slightly advantaged compared to those in the mainstream because those in the special unit classes are more likely to be provided with some of these devices while those in the mainstream classes are not being recognized.

Based on the interviews, all of the participants declared the insufficiency of the devices and acknowledged the need for the provision of these devices. NGOs implementing primary education provide more attention to the SNE unit classes while overlooking the needs of students with disabilities who are placed in the mainstream classes. However, Batula (a student who attends special unit classes) makes the case that even though these SNE centres have some resources, they are not near to meeting their learning needs. She said:

> There are four (4) blind students in the class, and only one of them has braille while the lesson is going on. So, will they wait for each other? They cannot wait for each other; everyone needs to have a braille at this moment. They just sit doing nothing and wait for that student to finish the braille; when the first student finishes, he/she will give the second, and the second will give the third and so on, and it will go around like that.

Batula also shared her insights into how students feel scared and frustrated when the resources are scarce:

> You feel stranded. Because when the lesson is going on and a student is writing while I sit with my hands closed, it makes me frustrated. It could have been better that each student has a brail so that everyone is writing when the lessons are going on."

This is not limited to the classroom, Batula also faces challenges at home, "I don't read at home because in the school there is only one braille and that is meant for the school." In the mainstream classes, there are students who have mild disabilities such as hard of hearing, low vision and physical disabilities. These students are learning in the same manner as other non-disabled learners, and they need to be provided with some supportive devices. Faissal, Hassan, and Taareey emphasized the insufficiency of devices and the need that students living with disabilities have for them. Faisal said:

> There are several pieces of equipment that are not available in the schools but are needed by the learners living with disabilities. For example, those learners who have hard of hearing need hearing aids so that they can catch up with other regular learners. Those who

have low vision also need an eyeglass because they cannot see or read clearly unless it is magnified; it helps them to read and write well.

He also shared that no one has concern about their needs for these devices: "Like me, I am physically impaired, I need a walking stick when I am walking and I did not find anyone who inquires me whether I need support." Hassan mentioned:

> Those students who are like me (having mild disabilities), depending on their disabilities, need learning aids such as the person with low vision needs eyeglasses, those hard of hearing need hearing aids and those with physical disabilities need a white cane. These learning aids help students to learn and perform equally to the other students.

Most interestingly, Taareey also had the same insights. He said:

> Regarding inadequate learning and teaching resources, there are those children who are partially deaf while others have low vision; children can also be assisted. For example, those who are partially deaf can be given hearing aids which can help them hear like any other normal person. Therefore, those devices, we call them assistive devices, will help them hear just the same as any person can hear, and they can go with other children.

Nevertheless, when students living with disabilities are not provided with this kind of supportive device, some of them drop out of school because the barriers to learning feel insurmountable. Faisal and Hassan shared stories where a significant number of their peers dropped out of school because learning without assistive devices was too difficult. Moreover, Taareey acknowledged that parents of learners with disabilities shared their concerns about the provision of assistive devices to their children, and the decision to keep children out of school if they were not supported. He said, "Some parents decided to keep their children at home if their needs cannot be provided by the school."

6.4. Inadequate and Inaccessible Physical Facilities

A disability-friendly environment is key when it comes to the inclusion of children with diverse disabilities. Thus, establishing physical accessibility in schools is essential for inclusive education.

In this context, schools should implement a range of accessible features to accommodate learners with different disabilities. In Hagadera primary schools, the current infrastructure lacks the facilities to accommodate learners with disabilities, and students encounter challenges from leaving home to arriving at school. For example, Faisal had this concern, "If the house is locked and the child might be using a wheelchair, he/she needs support from someone else to open the door." This indicates that students with physical disabilities cannot go out of their houses unless someone helps them. This is mostly caused by the type of fences and gates that people use in the compound, which in turn remains a tough barrier to students with physical disabilities. Moreover, schools without SNE centres refuse to enroll children with disabilities, forcing children with disabilities to travel long distances to go to school. Faisal shares his insights on this barrier, stating that:

> At the side of the school, there are some schools that don't enroll special needs children, such as the deaf and the blind children. Maybe the schools are too far, and they may be crossing 3-4 sections covering long distances. So there are many challenges they can also meet on their way to the school, and it will take a long time to reach that school since the neighboring schools could not admit them.

Most importantly, when students with disabilities face tough challenges within the school, they feel excluded. These challenges start right from the school entrance, in which the gate is heavy and students with physical disabilities cannot open by themselves unless they are helped. Hassan points out this issue, stating that "The school gates are quite heavy and children with physical disabilities cannot access themselves unless someone else or the person accompanying helps them to open the gate." After the entrance, within the school compound, they also face challenges when accessing the general compound, classrooms, playground, office, toilets and places for co-curriculum activities. For students who use wheelchairs, the sand is an especially difficult barrier to movement as the terrain is not suitable for wheels. Students' wheelchairs sink in the sand and

thus, movement becomes difficult unless they are helped. Hassan has mentioned instances where learners using wheelchairs have experienced challenges in accessing the school environment:

> Also, classes in some schools don't have ramps at their class doors, and this makes it difficult for students with physical disabilities such as learners using wheelchairs and the blind to get proper access to the classes. At the same time, these children might need to go to the toilet but someone has to take them there and he/she might face some challenges on the way.

He continued to point out that when these students do not receive assistance, they hide their need to use the restroom, resulting in instances of defecation or urination during classes. He says, "Just because of this, they might hide their need to go to the toilet and some of them end-up urinating in the class or they might even defecate. This leads learners to shame them while the teacher might punish the students for doing that act." Taareey and Batula also discussed similar difficulties that learners living with disabilities face in regard to inadequate physical facilities. They acknowledged that challenges start from the school entrance, "the gate", and continue throughout the rest of the school environment. Taareey recognized that the schools are not accessible for learners living with disabilities and fully accessing the school compound is the most challenging one:

> Another barrier is the issue of physical access where those children living with disabilities cannot have physical access to some classrooms, the school gates and the latrines and even the school offices. In some schools, the soil is sandy, and physical access for children with disabilities from class to class, water taps, offices, latrines, the field, and the kitchen (where the school feeding program is) is quite challenging. The environment is not friendly for children living with disabilities.

Most of the participants emphasized that the lack of proper physical facilities leads to a lack of motivation and increased stress for learners living with disabilities, particularly for those with physical disabilities. This inaccessibility consistently results in school dropouts and poor performance. Moreover, interview participants specifically recommended the need to build ramps in all areas of the school environments to ensure accessibility to the class, offices, toilets, and the

field for co-curriculum activities. Provisions of the ramp help learners with physical disabilities to be independent and have full access to the school environment. For example, when a ramp is built in the school environment, everyone benefits from better access and most importantly, learners using wheelchairs can freely move from one point to another without support from another person. This builds their self-esteem and helps them feel motivated as they can access the school environment without overbearing challenges. Taareey (the administrative teacher) acknowledged that not only do learners with disabilities feel included when they are provided with easy access, but also parents have the belief that their children will be cared for in the school.

6.5. Negative Attitudes Towards Children with Disabilities

Upon their arrival in the refugee camps, a significant number of individuals had little experience in the formal education system and were unfamiliar with the disabled community. As a result, some groups believed in biased myths and misconceptions that children with disabilities should not take part in formal education. Taareey acknowledged that this kind of negative attitude led some parents to keep their children with disabilities at home. In extreme cases, some even locked their children in the house to prevent them from going outside. Outside of the family unit, teachers and peers can also harbor negative feelings towards their students with disabilities. Teachers' attitudes can differ significantly according to their educational specialization; teachers with minimal training tend to have more negative views of children with disabilities, often referring to them as disruptive or difficult, while trained teachers are more likely to be supportive of children with disabilities. Unfortunately, these attitudinal barriers, emerging from a lack of knowledge and understanding towards children living with disabilities, can fuel discriminatory practices that further exacerbate their exclusion (Ahmad 2012). This is an indication that attitudinal barriers are

common and contribute to the other barriers, and thus, negative attitudes can lead to educational inaccessibility for children living with disabilities.

Based on the four interview responses, one of the greatest barriers to the provision and implementation of inclusive education towards learners living with disabilities is the negative attitudes of parents, teachers, students, and entire communities. Nevertheless, the majority of the communities in the camp have a nomadic background and most of them are not aware of the importance of educating learners living with disabilities. As such, they may not recognize the value of sending children with disabilities to school. Additionally, the lack of resources in the schools has also acted as a catalyst to reinforce the negative attitudes towards learners living with disabilities. In this case, the inadequate supply of resources in the schools made parents feel less inclined to send their disabled children to school as they know the system cannot accommodate children living with disabilities.

Moreover, parents' negative perception of schooling may lead them to believe that their child will not succeed at school. Batula emphasized this in her interview response, arguing that parents greatly take part in the exclusion of children living with disabilities. She said, "Negative attitudes are on the side of the parents, they say he/she will not achieve academically." When Batula was asked whether some parents only support children without disabilities compared to those with disabilities, she cited that many parents support children without disabilities just because they believe that children living without disabilities are active, can learn, and progress academically but those living with disabilities cannot progress at the same rate, or at all. This is not limited to Batula; the rest of the participants shared the same statements. Faisal also discussed how parents will send children without disabilities to school while those with disabilities are kept at home based on the belief that these children cannot learn effectively. What aggravates the issue

is that Faisal mentioned that his parents also believe children living with disabilities cannot prosper in life and are vulnerable to accidents. He said:

> Yes, there are some challenges. This includes some parents who might not give an equal opportunity for education to non-disabled children same as other children just because they have the attitude that children with disabilities cannot learn effectively and thus cannot prosper in life. If the person is deaf they say; this is deaf, how can he/she learn something? Therefore, some parent keeps children with disabilities at home fearing that their children might have an accident on the way since they are blind, deaf or physically disabled. Thus some parents send children without disabilities while leaving those with disabilities at home and this is a challenge to children with disabilities.

Faisal also shared that quite number of children living with disabilities are kept at home without sending to the schools based on parents' attitude towards educating children living with disabilities:

> In a certain block, you will see 3-4 children living with disabilities who are not taken to school and you will realize that parents are the root cause as such when other ordinary children of the same age are taken to school, for them they are kept at home and isolate them saying this is a disable and so he/she cannot learn.

Nevertheless, it was unanimously agreed by all the participants that the negative attitudes of parents resulted in massive exclusion of children living with disabilities and resulted in some parents not sending children living with disabilities to school. These attitudes may be because some parents feel helpless and recognize the insufficiency of teaching and learning resources in the schools which in turn affects the inclusion of their children in school. These experiences lead to the formation of parental negative attitudes. Hassan said:

> Some parents have the attitude or belief that learners with disabilities can't get an equal opportunity to those who are not disabled. This attitude encourages parents of children with special needs to keep these children at home and not send them to school or even give them any educational opportunities.

In this context, Hassan shared that when the schools cannot properly accommodate learners with disabilities, parents will have negative beliefs about schooling towards their children living with

disabilities and this facilitates them to keep the children at home. Hassan also shared instances where the community sends children without disabilities to school and keeps those with disabilities at home while parents believe they are not fit for learning:

> Starting from the family level, children living with disabilities and those living without disabilities might be living together in one family but some parents decide to send those children without disabilities to the school and keep those with disabilities at home. This is quite common because some parents believe that children living with disabilities are incapable of learning or cannot get an equal chance of education to the other students.

Faisal shared an equally heartbreaking story when describing the challenges he faced with his own parents, particularly his mother, in which they discouraged him from attending school. He said:

> "My parents believe that because I am disabled, I can't make progress. Like now, it is me who really works hard in school but I am facing a lot of problems at home, they discourage me, they tell me, you are disabled, why don't you stay at home? Then I do say no, mum, I will learn something. Education is good; no problem let me learn, it is a short time. At home, they will ask me repeatedly many questions as they believe that a disabled person cannot learn something. They rather prefer me to stay at home. I also see other disabled children kept at home without going to school.

All of the above participants show that many children living with disabilities are not given the opportunity to attend school, which in turn prevents their access to education. However, it is especially frustrating is that the few who got the chance to go to the schools then encounter attitudinal barriers from their teachers and peers. The attitudes of some teachers towards learners living with disabilities have been cited by most of the participants as they noted how some of the teachers are not comfortable educating or teaching learners living with disabilities in mainstream schools due to beliefs that such learners are only fit for specialized schools. Some teachers have the belief that learners living with disabilities cannot understand or be taught lessons, while others believe that students living with disabilities are more likely to fail and are therefore not worth the time. This shows that overall, they are less willing to support disabled students. As a result of this,

teachers fear that the students will not progress to the next classes, which puts their jobs at risk as failed students reflect poorly on their performance as an instructor. This additional pressure creates more tension between teachers and students with disabilities. The following participants' responses depict the negative attitude of teachers towards teaching children living with disabilities.

Faisal cited how some teachers are not comfortable engaging with children living with disabilities: "As well, some teacher believes that students with disabilities cannot be taught or are not the same as other students; in this regard, they cannot teach them." Hassan described that teachers assume students with disabilities cannot understand anything:

> At the side of the teachers, the views they belief is that a disabled person cannot learn something. You take a question to a teacher; the question will not be explained to you, the teacher might believe that you will not understand anything, so now at the side of trained teachers, they are very few."

Taareey highlighted that despite school guidelines for inclusion, there is still a gap in the negative beliefs towards learners with disabilities, "Despite the sensitization in which teachers are professionals, students are guided by the school rules and principles, but there is also a gap regarding the negative attitudes towards these children living with disabilities."

The attitudes of peers and the entire community towards children living with disabilities are significant. Although one participant emphasized that students without disabilities contribute some negative attitudes, all of the participants agreed the whole community contributes when it comes to negative attitudes toward children living with disabilities. Hassan argued:

> An equally important is the other students' belief that students living with disabilities cannot learn equally to them since they hear from the community that these students are born cursed or their parents are cursed or there is a problem in their families.

In addition to Hassan's sentiments, Taareey accentuated that their discomfort in interacting with children living with disabilities leads to their exclusion:

All the negative attitudes are viewed by some parents, teachers and learners in which they might not feel comfortable with interacting or associating with children living with disabilities. The element of having a negative attitude towards those living with disabilities by some parents, teachers and learners of the entire school also becomes a gap, which also contributes to the exclusionary act that you asked me.

7. Discussion of Findings

The provision of inclusive education is vital as the sustainable development goals indicate the need to ensure that all children will be provided with inclusive and quality education. In this context, understanding the unique needs of learners with disabilities is key to removing the barriers within Hagadera's primary schools. It is essential that stakeholders recognize that disability is not an inability and provide the necessary resources to support the unique needs of learners with disabilities and help them learn alongside their non-disabled peers. While NGOs are putting their effort into the provision of learning resources, it is evident that learners in the SNE unit classes are facing challenges of insufficient resources, while those in the mainstream classes encounter barriers at even greater scales. As NGOs tend to solely focus on the inclusion of learners with severe disabilities in the SNE unit classes, those with minor disabilities are being overlooked and their needs are left unmet.

Nevertheless, students with difficulties in hearing and those with low vision need some supportive assistive devices such as hearing aids and magnified eyeglasses that help them hear and see well. Providing assistive devices improves students' understanding so that they can learn effectively and improve their academic performance. Returning to Batula's discussion of sharing one braille in a class of four (4) blind students and everyone waiting while the teacher is speaking, it is unfair to assume learners with disabilities can follow at the same pace as their hearing peers. There is a great gap in the provision of supportive devices that could cater to the needs of students

with disabilities; thus, the implementing organization and other stakeholders should provide all learning materials that students with disabilities require to succeed in their studies.

An additional need is to continue training teachers to recognize, empathize, and support the unique needs of learners with diverse disabilities. This helps learners feel that their problems are seen and that their presence at school is valued. Most of the interview participants acknowledged the need for teaching and learning resources, with Hassan sharing:

> Provision of sufficiently trained teachers who can teach and understand the unique needs of children living with disabilities while as well providing teaching and learning resource that responds to the needs of all students and in particular to children living with disabilities is vital in the schools.

Most significantly, a disability-friendly and accessible environment is a tangible issue when it comes to the inclusion of children with disabilities. Thus, it is critical to build infrastructure within the schools that ensure proper physical accessibility, such as cement floors throughout the passages to the classes, staff rooms, and toilets. Hassan highlighted that:

> It is nice to help these students being provided to a proper physical access within the school by building a floor in between their classes to the toilets, staffrooms and other necessary places so that learners using wheelchairs can have access to these places.

Insufficiency of teaching and learning resources and inaccessible physical environment exacerbate the existing negative attitudes of the community towards learners living with disabilities and all of these themes lead to evident discrimination against learners with disabilities. Increasing awareness amongst the parents and the entire community by educating them about the rights of the children living with disabilities or sensitizing them that children with disabilities have the same rights to education as other students. This education would dispel the myth that children living with disabilities are not able to learn and succeed in their lives. In this sense, society should promote the educational rights of children living with disabilities and advocate for these children to access

their educational rights. Taareey acknowledged that the deaf, the blind, and other children living with disabilities have the same educational rights equal to the other children, and that everyone must dedicate their efforts towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities.

8. Conclusion

One of the main aims of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of education is to provide accessible inclusive education for all children regardless of the challenges they face (Rieckman 2017). As the NGOs responsible for implementing education in Hagadera camp try to achieve the goal of inclusive education for all, there are barriers that hinder the progress towards this goal. These barriers include but are not limited to insufficient teaching and learning resources such as books, trained teachers, and supportive assistive devices inadequate and inaccessible physical facilities, and negative beliefs towards learners with disabilities. These factors accumulate to form the ableist discrimination that exists in refugee camps' education systems, proving that there is a tangible need for change if we are to ensure that all children, irrespective of their disability, can succeed at school and work towards a better life.

Recommendations

- Ensuring sufficient teaching and learning materials, such as textbooks and learning aids, are available for all students.

- Providing learners with disabilities with necessary assistive devices, such as hearing aids, magnified glasses, and braille materials.

- Creating training programs for teachers to foster inclusive education in schools.

- Renovating school infrastructure to ensure physical accessibility, including ramps, cement floors, and accessible toilets.

- Educating parents and the community about disabilities and inclusive education to reduce negative beliefs.

- Recognizing learners with mild disabilities who are currently in mainstream classes and providing them with the support they need.

- Implementing mechanisms that can challenge discrimination against learners with disabilities

- Advocating for more inclusive policies that can support the inclusion of learners with disabilities in all educational settings.

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