

## Special Education Teacher Preparation in Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe

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### Abstract

Researchers have repeatedly identified special education teacher shortage as one of the factors that have stymied the development of special education in many African countries. Highly qualified special education teachers are an integral part of successful national educational systems. In order to ensure an optimum supply of qualified special education teachers in any country, one can start by examining special education teacher preparation programs in the country. In this paper, the authors sought to explore special education teacher preparation in Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe to identify the characteristics, key features, gaps, and therefore come up with specific recommendations. In doing this the authors hope that this information would be helpful to researchers, practitioners, policy-makers, and organizations that are interested in contributing to the development of special education in these countries through personnel preparation.

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Despite the many conferences, international policy declarations, and statements, such as the World Conference on Education for All held in Thailand in 1990 and the Salamanca Statement produced in Salamanca (Spain) in 1994, aimed at promoting the education of all children, a majority of children with disabilities continue to be marginalized (Sagahutu & Struthers, 2014). UNESCO (2004) estimated that only about 2% of children with

disabilities in developing countries attended school and that only about 1% of girls with disabilities were literate. Even though these figures are rough estimates, they highlight the need for a robust national and international response that goes beyond policy statements and declarations. There is need to identify specific target areas that have to be addressed to make the goal of education for all a reality.

Billingsley (2003) identified developing a qualified workforce as one of the most important challenges in the field of special education. Since lack of qualified special education professionals is one of the factors that have repeatedly been identified as impeding the development of special education in Africa (Abosi, 2000; Chitiyo, 2006; Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture, Namibia, 2004), these authors decided to examine special education teacher preparation practices in four African countries namely, Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. We decided to focus on these countries because each of the authors comes from one of the selected countries and is actively engaged in special education research in the country. In looking at how special education teachers are prepared in the selected countries, these authors wanted to highlight key features, identify gaps, and come up with specific recommendations for improvement. This paper could be useful for the many professionals and researchers who are interested and involved in special education teacher preparation in Africa.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER PREPARATION IN KENYA**

### **Brief History and Legal Framework**

Although education for individuals with disabilities in Kenya started as early as 1940 by the missionaries, only in recent years has attention been given to students with special needs (Mutua & Dimitrov, 2001). There are currently three different placement opportunities for children with disabilities in Kenyan public schools. From most to least restrictive, they are: (a) special schools with and without residential/boarding facilities where only children with disabilities are being educated and there are no opportunities to contact and interact with typically developing peers; (b) special classrooms in regular school (integrated units) where children with disabilities are being educated separately but have opportunities to interact with nondisabled children during arrival in the morning, recess, and departure times as well as during teacher-planned activities that aim to promote interaction among children with and without disabilities; and (c) inclusive classrooms where children with and without disabilities are being educated in the same classrooms.

In the early days, training of special education teachers was conducted on the job within respective institutions in two areas, namely for children with visual impairment or hearing impairment. The first specialized training was for teachers of children with hearing impairment at Kamwenja Teachers College in the early 1970's. Later, teachers for children with visual or hearing impairment were trained at Highridge Teachers College in the 1980's. In 1986, all special education teachers' training was consolidated at the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE). In addition to the main three specialized areas of visual impairment,

hearing impairment, and intellectual disabilities, the education for children with physical disabilities was introduced.

In Kenya, special education is a subsection of the general education and is defined as "Education which provides appropriate modification in curriculum, teaching methods, educational resource, and medium of communication or the learning environment in order to cater for individual differences in learning" (Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 6). The mission statement for special education in Kenya is to facilitate and coordinate the provision of quality education and training to learners with special needs at pre-primary, secondary, technical/vocational, and teacher training levels by enhancing access, retention, completion, transition, and creation of awareness. The vision is to provide conducive learning environments for all learners with special needs (Abilla, 1988; Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Education, 2008; Ntarangwi, 2003). The Special Needs Education policy addresses how the government will work with stakeholders to transition to an inclusive education approach in line with Education for All by 2015. The Kenyan government's vision is to have "A society in which all persons regardless of their disabilities and special needs access education to realize their full potential" (Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 25).

In Kenya, the laws and policies on which special needs education is provided fall under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Currently, the National Special Needs Education Policy Framework, developed in 2009, addresses some of the critical issues determining the delivery of quality and relevant education to learners with special needs. The document details guidelines on personnel preparation for children with special needs. Successful implementation of this policy is expected to improve the quality and access to education for children with special needs.

### **Levels of Teacher Preparation and Mode of Delivery**

Currently, special education teacher training is done at three levels. These are: (a) special needs education teacher preparation provided to professionally qualified practicing teachers through a two-year diploma program at the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE), (b) undergraduate teacher preparation for interested individuals through a four-year Bachelor of Education in Special Education Program in both public and private universities, and (c) postgraduate teacher education provided in special education at the public universities in Kenya. The Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) develops curricula and relevant curricula support materials at all levels of education and training except at the university level. A special needs division was established at KIE in 1978 to develop curricula and support materials for training special education teachers in areas of physical disabilities, hearing

impairment, communication disorders, intellectual disabilities, and multiple disabilities. In addition, the division develops curricula for training special education teachers (Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2004).

### **Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE)**

For the last two and a half decades, the training of special education teachers in Kenya has been done at KISE, which is a middle level college that offers a diploma in special education (roughly equivalent of an Associate Degree) and a certificate in special needs education. It was not until 1995 that the first teacher-education program was established to train teachers at the undergraduate level at Kenyatta University. KISE has however, remained the main special education teacher preparation college in the country for teachers of children with special needs (Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Education, 2005). KISE, a semi-autonomous college under the Ministry of Education, was inaugurated in 1986 with the assistance of the Danish Development Aid (DANIDA), to spearhead the development of special education in Kenya.

KISE offers both certificate and diploma courses in special education through three modes of delivery namely; full-time, part-time (evening and during school holidays), and Open/Distance and Electronic Learning (ODEL). A limited number of students are admitted into the two-year full-time program and trainees have a wider choice of special education areas of specialization. It is only within the full-time program that specialization in low-incidence disability areas such as visual and hearing impairment are offered. During the two years, trainees get hands-on experience in special schools in the form of practicum, attachment, and final teaching practice.

The part-time program is offered during evenings and school holidays and consists of short courses which are tailored towards equipping in-service teachers with additional skills in special education. The training is very intensive and focuses on specific areas like orientation and mobility, sign language, Braille, communication with individuals with visual/hearing impairments, functional assessment, and the production of materials and devices for special education students. The program is designed for targeted groups such as teachers who work in institutions for children with special needs, teachers who work in inclusive settings, people who work in assessment centers, and community-based rehabilitation officers.

The ODEL program is designed for teachers and other personnel working or living with people with special needs who can be trained through distance learning. The program offers three main course options: (a) education of learners with special needs (inclusive education), (b) education of learners with learning disabilities, and (c) education of learners with emotional and behavioral

disorders. ODEL program is organized in such a way that every administrative region of Kenya has one satellite campus where in-service teachers go for training during the school holidays. Face-to-face training is done at these satellite campuses during the months of April, August, and December when regular schools are on holiday. The program is currently conducted on eleven satellite campuses in Kenya. After each session, KISE Regional Coordinators and officers based at the Education Assessment and Resource Centers continue to professionally support the students. ODEL has succeeded in creating awareness about special needs education in every part of the country.

### **Curriculum Focus**

Teacher training at KISE focuses on introducing special education skills to the teacher trainees. All the courses are skill oriented with an emphasis on hands-on and practical experience. The training includes three months of teaching practice. Each candidate is supervised by trainers from KISE and assessed by external evaluators from the Ministry of Education. The curriculum for the diploma program is geared towards preparing teachers to teach learners with diverse needs. Hence, all trainees must meet the requirements of a multidisciplinary course component of the program in the first half of the training period. The multidisciplinary course component consists of theory and project work.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER PREPARATION IN MALAWI**

### **Brief History and Legal Framework**

In Malawi, special education teacher preparation began with Montfort Special Needs Education (SNE) College located in the southern region of the country. The college was one of the first institutions to offer special education teacher preparation in the South Eastern African region, as it opened its doors in 1968 with support of the Roman Catholic Church (Itimu & Kopetz, 2008; Thomu & Mkhaya, 2014). The teacher education at Montfort SNE College produced educators who specialized in educational support for students with hearing impairments and visual impairments. In 1996, the college included a third specialization program in learning difficulties (Itimu & Kopetz, 2008; Montfort SNE College, 2005). Consistent with the global trends, Malawi became signatory to a number of international conventions that commit the country to education for all like the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 2004). National policies were developed to provide a framework for practices that directly affected the educational support for students with special educational needs. Malawi's national policies promote access to education and vocational training for all Malawians,

regardless of ability. Special education in Malawi is influenced by the following policies: the National Disability Policy established in 2001; the National Policy of Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disability established in 2006; and the National Special Needs Education Policy established in 2007 (Chavuta et al., 2008; Itimu & Kopetz, 2008; Kamchedzera, 2008). In addition to promoting inclusive practices, the policies emphasize the importance of special education teacher training. In examining these policies, Kamchedzera (2008) identified the need for legislative policies that mandate inclusion of special education courses/modules within the general education teacher preparation curricula/programs. This entailed that all pre-service teachers at primary and secondary education levels would be trained to be aware and to take cognizance of the needs of students with disabilities in their instructional planning, delivery and assessment. Today, almost all teacher education programs consulted prior to writing this paper indicated that at least one special education course/module constituted as a component of their general education teacher education curriculum. Kamchedzera (2008) stated that the ideal teacher education program prepared special education teachers to support educational needs of all learners, thus, ensuring that the curriculum exposes them to all types of disabilities prior to specialization.

### **Levels of Teacher Preparation and Mode of Delivery**

Eight institutions of higher learning that focus on teacher education were consulted to understand how teacher education in Malawi ensures that pre-service teachers exit their programs with knowledge to adequately support learners with special educational needs. Of the eight institutions, three are considered private institutions and do not receive financial support from the government of Malawi. Only two institutions (Montfort SNE College and Catholic University) indicated that they offered special education teacher programs. At Montfort SNE College, students specialize in visual impairment, hearing impairment, or learning difficulties. The courses are offered through face-to-face (traditional instruction) and open and distance learning (ODL) modes. The distance learning mode utilizes print as medium of instruction (Thomu & Mkhaya, 2014). Qualification for enrolment into Montfort SNE College includes a teaching experience. Students who attend Montfort SNE College receive a diploma after two years of training.

The Catholic University, on the other hand, is a privately funded institution, and the only institution offering a special education bachelor's degree program in Malawi. Students are offered a face-to-face four-year degree program with a major or minor in special education. Students at Catholic University also receive preparation in a teaching subject area along with their special education

training, allowing them to graduate with subject area content knowledge and expertise in supporting learners with special educational needs.

The rest of the universities/colleges consulted for this paper offered a course or module in special needs education as part of their general education teacher training programs. Mzuzu University indicated plans to offer a master's degree in inclusive education beginning August 2015. Although the primary education teacher training colleges were not consulted for this paper, the mandate to include a special education course/module within the general education curriculum also applies to such institutions.

### **Curriculum Focus**

There is no prescribed curriculum for special needs education in Malawi. The government of Malawi requires that all teacher training institutions include a special education course in their pre-service teacher training program since 2009. The two colleges that offer special education training (Montfort SNE College and Catholic University) provide a cross-categorical curriculum during the first years of their training, Montfort SNE College students specialize in visual impairment, hearing impairment, or learning difficulties during the final years. Montfort SNE College recently introduced a fourth specialization for teachers of students with deaf-blindness. Catholic University, the only institution offering special education specialization up to a bachelor's degree provides a cross-categorical curriculum before students specialize in visual impairment, hearing impairment, or learning difficulties. Mzuzu University plans to offer an inclusive education degree in order to address the broader needs of learners within the Malawi and southern African context. The proposed curriculum will have a cross-categorical focus.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER PREPARATION IN ZAMBIA**

### **Brief History and Legal Framework**

In Zambia, the first efforts to educate students with disabilities were made by missionaries in 1903. Despite the missionaries' early involvement with special education in Zambia, no national policies existed to guide the provision of special education services (Kalabula, 2000). Zambia did not have an articulated national policy on special education until 1977 when the Ministry of Education assumed responsibility for educating students with disabilities. Notably, three policies have provided the foundation for the provision of special education services in Zambia: the Education Reform Document (1977), Focus on Learning (1992), and Educating Our Future (1996).

Educating Our Future (1996) resulted from a consultation process involving the Ministry of Education,

other ministries, international donors, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the University of Zambia. *Educating Our Future* focused on formal education. Recurring themes in the document included educational flexibility, responsiveness to educational needs, and enhancement of quality of education for all children. In relation to students with disabilities, the following policy statements were outlined: (a) the Ministry of Education will ensure equality of educational opportunity for children with disabilities, (b) the Ministry of Education is committed to providing education of particular good quality to students with disabilities, and (c) the Ministry of Education will improve and strengthen the supervision and management of special education across the country (*Educating Our Future*, 1996, p. 8). With regard to teacher preparation, the policy outlined the following:

The quality and effectiveness of an education system depends heavily on the quality of its teachers. They are the key persons in determining success in meeting the system's goals. The educational and personal well-being of children in schools hinges crucially on their [teachers] competence, commitment and resourcefulness. In view of this, the caliber of teachers and the teaching profession is of paramount importance. The Ministry of Education has the important task of sustaining the quality of individual teachers and of the profession as a whole. It will accomplish this by attracting suitable persons to take up teaching as a career, equipping them with initial professional education, and providing for their subsequent in-career development. Running parallel with this, it also has responsibility for rewarding their services and sustaining their morale through satisfactory terms and conditions of service (*Educating Our Future*, 1996, p. 104).

Increasing the number of teachers and providing in-service training for teachers were identified as priorities. Consequently, the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the University of Zambia established national standards for teacher preparation programs, including special education teacher preparation (Longe & Chiputa, 2003).

### **Levels of Teacher Preparation and Modes of Delivery**

In Zambia, the Ministry of Education oversees the running of two universities and 14 colleges of education throughout the country. Ten of the 14 colleges prepare primary school teachers, two prepare secondary school teachers, and two are exclusively for in-service training (Longe & Chiputa, 2003). Currently, there are three levels of teacher preparation programs in Zambia: (a) certificate level, a two-year program that prepares teachers to teach primary school grades 1 to 7, (b) diploma level, a two- or

three-year program that prepares teachers to teach basic school grades 8 and 9, and (c) degree level, a four-year program that prepares teachers to teach high school grades 10 to 12 (Hakasenke, 2005). Teachers holding teaching certificates can apply to pursue an in-service diploma program. Likewise, teachers holding teaching diplomas can apply to the university to pursue an in-service degree program. These teachers enroll as in-service full-time students upon being granted paid study leave by the Ministry of Education. High school graduates (pre-service) can pursue teacher preparation at any level (i.e., certificate, diploma, degree) based on their final high school grades.

Special education teachers are prepared at one university and one of the 14 teacher preparation colleges. The special education teacher preparation college, Lusaka College for Teachers of the Handicapped (LCTH), was established in 1971. At the time, the college offered a one-year certificate program. In 1995, the college was renamed the Zambia Institute of Special Education (ZAMISE) and introduced a two-year diploma program for special education teachers. In the same year, the college was affiliated with the University of Zambia (UNZA) for moderation of examinations and underwriting of diplomas. Currently, ZAMISE offers both pre-service and in-service certificate and diploma programs. From 1971 to 1995, LCTH awarded about 2,300 Special Education certificates. ZAMISE awarded 605 special education diplomas between 1995 and 2008.

UNZA introduced the special education degree program in 1996 with an enrollment of six first-year pre-service and 20 third-year in-service students. To obtain a degree in special education, pre-service teachers complete four years of full-time study. In-service students complete two years (i.e., 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year) of full-time study. Pre-service students major in special education and choose one teaching subject as a minor. To date, the special education program at UNZA has graduated about 180 students, with the majority being employed by the Ministry of Education in various levels and capacities (University of Zambia Special Education Departmental Handbook, 2008-2009).

### **Curriculum Focus**

At its establishment in 1971, the curriculum at ZAMISE focused on visual, hearing, and physical impairments. A decade later, the teacher preparation program was expanded to include intellectual disabilities. In 2005, the Institute undertook a major curriculum revision, moving from its previous practice of preparing single-disability specialists to preparing its graduates in holistic special education (Education in Zambia, 2014). All graduates are prepared to teach students with visual impairments, hearing impairments, intellectual disabilities, and learning difficulties. The change was intended to prepare teachers with in-depth knowledge and understanding of the

strengths and weaknesses of students with special needs (Education in Zambia, 2014).

Until recently, the University of Zambia employed the categorical approach to preparing special education teachers. Areas of focus included hearing impairment, visual impairment, learning disabilities, behavior disorders, and autism. However, worldwide developments in the field of special education prompted faculty in the department of special education at UNZA to undertake a critical review of the teacher preparation program in order to respond meaningfully to the challenges of educating students with disabilities (University of Zambia Special Education Departmental Handbook, 2008-2009). Students' programs of study now include educational psychology courses that were added to strengthen student teachers' knowledge and counseling skills so that they are able to address the psycho-social challenges faced by students with disabilities and students affected by HIV/AIDS. Additionally, students are prepared to work with all students regardless of the disability.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER PREPARATION IN ZIMBABWE**

### **Brief History and Legal Framework**

In Zimbabwe, the development of special education can be traced to the work of Christian missionaries and other philanthropists dating back to the 1920s (Zindi, 1997). Since then, the development of special education in the country has been slow in comparison to the rest of the education system. The first official special education teacher training program was established at the United College of Education in Bulawayo in 1983 and this was followed by the introduction of undergraduate and graduate degrees in special education at the University of Zimbabwe and Great Zimbabwe university at least a decade later.

Even though Zimbabwe has been dubbed one of the most disability-accessible countries in Africa (Devlieger, 1998, p.26), the country does not have specific special education legislation. Special education is thus guided by the Education Act of 1987, which requires all children to have access to basic/primary education, and few government policies that have been designed to support the education of children with disabilities. Even though this law and policies do not directly address special education teacher preparation, they certainly have indirect implications on the process of teacher preparation. For example, since the policies seem to support the concept of inclusion, the government established the Zimbabwe School Psychological Services and Special Education whose responsibilities include providing in-service training and support to schoolteachers on how to teach students with disabilities (Mutepfa, Mpofu, & Chataika, 2007). As such, even though there is no specific law regulating special education

teacher preparation in the country, the existing policies seem to indirectly influence both teacher preparation and professional development.

### **Levels of Teacher Preparation and Mode of Delivery**

In Zimbabwe special education teacher preparation is done at either a teacher training college or university. A teacher training college offers a diploma or certificate in special education after completion of usually three years of study. The United College of Education is an example of a teacher training college, which offers special education training to in-service teachers who have prior training and experience as general education teachers. At university level, programs offer bachelor's degree or master's degree in special education after up to four years of study. The Zimbabwe Open University and Great Zimbabwe University both offer bachelor's and master's degrees in special education.

The training can either be full-time or part-time. In-service teachers who already hold a certificate or diploma in education can study for a bachelor's degree through distance learning with the Zimbabwe Open University; alternatively, they can also study for a bachelor's degree in special education using the block release approach. Block release is a part-time approach where in-service teachers enroll for classes and study during their school holidays. Both distance learning and block release options provide in-service teachers an opportunity for professional development in the area of special education while they retain their current jobs.

### **Curriculum focus**

Special education teacher training at the United College of Education is categorical, focusing in four specialized areas namely, hearing impairment, visual impairment, mental retardation, and learning disabilities (Musindo, 2013). This leaves out other disability categories such as communication disorders, emotional behavioral disorders or physical disabilities. However, training at Great Zimbabwe University is cross categorical covering different types of disabilities including intellectual disabilities, sensory disabilities, emotional and behavioral disorders, physical disabilities, health-related disabilities, learning disabilities, multiple disabilities, and giftedness. The training offered at Great Zimbabwe University therefore, targets preparing special education teachers who are able to provide educational services to children with different types of disabilities.

## **DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The absence of enabling legislation and clear policy on special education remains a major obstacle impeding the development of special education in African countries

(Abosi, 2000; Kalabula, 1993). There is urgent need for clear policy guidelines to harmonize efforts directed towards providing quality education to children with special needs. The absence of clear policy guidelines has resulted in uncoordinated and disintegrated special education services. Poor coordination has in turn led to duplication, substandard and unregulated provision of services to learners with special needs (Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Education, 2009). There is therefore, urgent need for legislation that supports the implementation of programs and services for individuals with disabilities. Personnel preparation would greatly benefit from such legislation (Eleweke, 1999) as the legislation can regulate how special education teachers are prepared, which can enhance the quality and quantity of special educators across the different countries.

Researchers have consistently lamented the paucity of qualified special education professionals in African countries (Abosi, 2000; Chitiyo, 2006; Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture, Namibia, 2004). Researchers have also noted that there is a strong discrepancy in the distribution of teachers between urban and rural areas, with most teachers choosing to teach in urban areas (Phiri, 2009). This results in the more remote areas experiencing a critical shortage of qualified teachers. World Bank (2006) observed that factors, such as lack of housing and poor sanitation, are major obstacles to teacher recruitment and retention in rural areas. We propose that studies be conducted to avail data on the extent to which rural and urban areas experience shortages of qualified personnel in special education.

The number of special education teacher preparation programs in each of the four countries appears inadequate to meet the needs of all children with special needs in the countries. For example, one university and one teachers' college for the preparation of special education teachers are not adequate for Zambia while one publicly funded college in Malawi cannot meet the country's special educational needs. The governments of the four countries should therefore, increase the number of special education teacher preparation programs and reconsider candidate admission to the various levels of study. Currently, few pre-service candidates are admitted to teacher preparation programs.

In training more special education teachers, governments should focus on both primary and secondary school special education. In Malawi, for example, special education teachers at Montfort SNE College, the only government funded special education teacher preparation program, are trained to work in primary school setting. However, there is need for such expertise at the secondary and tertiary levels. Thus, special education teacher preparation should be tailored to adequately meet the needs of students in both primary and secondary school settings (Kamchedzera, 2008).

It appears that some special education teacher preparation programs tend to focus on specific disabilities

to the exclusion of others. The United College of Education in Zimbabwe and Montfort SNE College in Malawi are examples of colleges that offer training in specific disability areas such as visual impairment, hearing impairment and learning difficulties. Whereas this approach may help in preparing teachers who are highly specialized in a particular disability, using a cross-categorical approach may ensure that all trained special education teachers are prepared to work with students with all types of disabilities. Such teachers would be able to provide support and guidance to general education teachers who may have students with different disabilities in their inclusive classrooms. We recommend that teacher education programs tailor their curriculum to match current trends of inclusive education. Programs can engage special education curriculum development experts to provide support in the development of appropriate curriculum.

KISE in Kenya, as well as the Zimbabwe Open University offer part-time training to in-service teachers interested in becoming special education teachers. Together with open or distance learning, we believe this is a good and sustainable approach to meeting the special education teacher needs in the African countries and therefore, encourage governments to continue to promote such programs. One of the advantages of doing so is that school teachers would not have to give up their current teaching positions in order to train as special education teachers. Instead, they can take evening classes or study during holidays. This can be an incentive for many teachers who could otherwise not afford to give up their current positions in order to go back to school.

Teacher preparation programs in the African countries seem to be missing out on an opportunity to prepare more teachers who are knowledgeable about their students' special educational needs. In some industrialized countries, for example the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, all pre-service general education teachers are required to take classes in special education that prepare them to work with students with diverse learning needs. This ensures that all teachers would have some basic knowledge about special education, like knowing how to make the necessary instructional and environmental accommodations for students with special needs. Among the four countries that are the focus of this paper, Malawi seems to have taken the lead in this area by introducing mandatory special education courses in general education teacher preparation programs. These authors commend such efforts and encourage other countries to consider adopting similar approaches. With the current global trend towards inclusive education, doing this may ensure that all teachers are well-prepared for the 21<sup>st</sup> century inclusive education classroom.

In summary, it appears that Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe are attempting to promote the development

of special education albeit with various levels of success. The authors provide a glimpse of special education teacher preparation in each of the four countries highlighting the deficit in terms of personnel preparation. The authors acknowledge that reasons for this deficit could be complex as cultural factors may also play a role. There is need for empirical examination of cultural factors that influence special education policies and practices related to special education teachers in this region. The authors hope that researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers who are interested in the development of special education in this region can use this information to develop sustainable solutions to the perennial problem of special education teacher shortage in the region—a problem which has repeatedly been highlighted by different researchers.

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