



East African Journal of Education Studies

eajes.eanso.org

Volume 8, Issue 1, 2024

Print ISSN: 2707-3939 | Online ISSN: 2707-3947

Title DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37284/2707-3947>



Original Article

Bridging Enrolment Gap: Exploring Obstacles and Strategies to Improve Inclusivity for Students with Disabilities in Kenya's Private Higher Education. Literature Review

Dr. Annerose Wanjiku Wang'ang'a, PhD¹*

¹ St Paul's University, P. O. Box Private Bag - 00217, Limuru - Kenya.

* Author for Correspondence Email: awang'ang'a@spu.ac.ke

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.1.2522>

Date Published: **ABSTRACT**

16 December 2024

Keywords:

Enrollment,
Inclusivity,
Barriers,
Higher Education,
Students with
Disabilities.

Despite the presence of policies supporting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in Kenyan learning institutions, including the Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities (2018), the Kenyan Constitution (2010), the Disability Act (2003), Ominde Report (1964) among others and Kenya's status as a signatory to international conventions; the enrollment of students with disabilities in private higher education institutions in Kenya remains low hindering their inclusivity. In spite of the efforts to attain inclusive education, it is still estimated that 258 million children, adolescents and young people do not enter the school system which represents 17% of the world's population. Specifically, in higher education the percentage is even higher, reaching approximately 60% of people who do not enter that educational level. Therefore, the gross average world enrollment rate reached only 38% in 2018. Furthermore, wide differences were observed between low-income countries with a 9% enrollment, as compared to high-income countries, where 75% was attained. According to the Commission of University Education Statistics 2017-2018, the reported number of students with disabilities in Public and Private Universities reduced by 10% from 881 in 2016 to 793 in 2017. Most of these learners were admitted to government Universities (681) representing 85.9% of the total admitted in comparison to Private Universities (112) representing 14.1%. This article explores the factors contributing to this low enrollment gap hindering inclusivity and proposes strategies to improve the implementation of inclusive policies. Through an extensive literature review, the article identified barriers hindering the effective implementation of inclusive education policies. By emphasizing the importance of adhering to these laws, the study sought to provide insights that can inspire private universities to take decisive actions to improve inclusive education, thus boosting the enrollment and academic success of learners with disabilities in private universities in Kenya.

APA CITATION

Wang'ang'a, A. W. (2024). Bridging Enrolment Gap: Exploring Obstacles and Strategies to Improve Inclusivity for Students with Disabilities in Kenya's Private Higher Education. Literature Review. *East African Journal of Education Studies*, 8(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.1.2522>

CHICAGO CITATION

Wang'ang'a, Annerose Wanjiku. 2024. "Bridging Enrolment Gap: Exploring Obstacles and Strategies to Improve Inclusivity for Students with Disabilities in Kenya's Private Higher Education. Literature Review". *East African Journal of Education Studies* 8 (1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.1.2522>

HARVARD CITATION

Wang'ang'a, A. W. (2024) "Bridging Enrolment Gap: Exploring Obstacles and Strategies to Improve Inclusivity for Students with Disabilities in Kenya's Private Higher Education. Literature Review", *East African Journal of Education Studies*, 8(1), pp. 1-10. doi: 10.37284/eajes.8.1.2522

IEEE CITATION

A. W., Wang'ang'a "Bridging Enrolment Gap: Exploring Obstacles and Strategies to Improve Inclusivity for Students with Disabilities in Kenya's Private Higher Education. Literature Review" *EAJES*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 1-10, Dec. 2024. doi: 10.37284/eajes.8.1.2522.

MLA CITATION

Wang'ang'a, Annerose Wanjiku. "Bridging Enrolment Gap: Exploring Obstacles and Strategies to Improve Inclusivity for Students with Disabilities in Kenya's Private Higher Education. Literature Review". *East African Journal of Education Studies*, Vol. 8, no. 1, Dec. 2024, pp. 1-10, doi:10.37284/eajes.8.1.2522

INTRODUCTION

The Committee on Persons with Disabilities (2016) highlights the increasing presence of private-sector education across various nations, emphasizing that the right to inclusive education extends beyond public institutions. According to the 2023 Global Survey on Persons with Disabilities and Disasters, individuals with disabilities comprise 16% of the global population, with 80% residing in the Global South. In Kenya, the 2007 National Survey for Persons with Disabilities, conducted by the National Coordinating Agency for Population and Development (NCAPD) in collaboration with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), reported a disability rate of 4.6%, equating to approximately 1.7 million individuals. Notably, 65% of these individuals view environmental barriers as significant challenges in their daily lives. This population has historically faced marginalization and continues to experience limited access to essential services, including education, healthcare, and employment.

Recognizing the vital role of education in empowering marginalized groups, Kenya is actively working to facilitate educational opportunities across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Access to education is particularly crucial for youth, enhancing their analytical skills, employability, and potential for leadership. The 2010 Constitution of Kenya explicitly affirms the right to education in Article 43.1.f and mandates free and compulsory education for every child in Article 53.1.b. Furthermore, Article 54.1.b guarantees individuals with disabilities the right to access educational institutions, ensuring that these facilities are integrated into society to the extent that they align

with their needs. The Constitution also mandates affirmative action to promote access to relevant education for youth and marginalized groups (Articles 55 and 56).

Globally, enrollment in higher education surpassed 235 million in 2020, more than double the figure from 2000, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics (UIS). Despite this growth, the global gross enrollment ratio remains at 40%, with Sub-Saharan Africa lagging at just 9%. Approximately one-third of enrollments are in private higher education institutions (HEIs), with significant variations by region—ranging from 15% in Oceania to 54% in Latin America and the Caribbean.

To ensure equitable access to higher education, robust non-discrimination policies are essential, particularly for low-income individuals, persons with disabilities, refugees, and ethnic minorities. Accessibility for these groups is crucial for achieving social justice and cohesion (UNESCO, 2022a). The Declaration of Human Rights asserts that higher education should be accessible to all based on merit. Furthermore, the right to education mandates that tertiary education must be available to all without discrimination, based on individual capacity and progressively free (United Nations, 1966). Recognizing that talent exists across all demographics, students with the potential for success in higher education can be found in every context (Making Higher Education More Inclusive, SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, 2020).

Research by Villouta and Villarreal (2022) indicates that individuals with disabilities often have low

participation rates in higher education. For example, in the United States, only 11.1% of university students report having a disability, while in Spain, just 4% of eligible persons with disabilities (PWD) access higher education compared to 20% of the general population. Chile presents a similar picture, with only 6.6% of individuals with disabilities accessing university in 2005, and lower graduation rates reported by 2015—20% for non-disabled students versus 9.1% for PWD. This trend illustrates that universities tend to be among the most exclusive institutions in terms of admitting and retaining students with disabilities.

Morley and Croft (2011) point out that individuals with disabilities in Africa frequently face poverty due to their exclusion from education and employment opportunities. In many Sub-Saharan African countries, having a disability significantly increases the likelihood of never attending school and those who do often drop out before completing basic education. This exclusion leads to a limited pool of qualified disabled students for higher education.

A study in Zimbabwe highlighted low enrollment rates for youths with disabilities in private universities, primarily due to a lack of awareness and inclusive education practices, compounded by the absence of comprehensive internal disability policies (Mapurisa, 2018). Globally, while higher education enrollment is on the rise, certain social groups—including those in Ghana and Tanzania—remain underrepresented. Disability-related inequalities in higher education have largely been overlooked in both policy and research within low-income nations (Morley & Croft, 2011).

In South Africa, research by Masoga and Maoto (2021) focused on rural universities and identified three major barriers to the integration of students with disabilities: attitudinal, environmental, and organizational. Similarly, a study by Mphohoni et al. (2024) revealed a lack of a disability inclusion policy and environmental challenges leading to low enrollment of students with physical disabilities.

In Malawi, Mwale (2023) identified low enrollment rates of students with disabilities in higher education, indicating their limited access and

participation. This limited access contributes to intellectual inequalities, as selective inclusion and institutional segregation widen societal gaps. The core barriers identified included; inadequate trained personnel, a lack of disability-friendly infrastructure, and insufficient funding.

Research by Abuya and Githinji (2021) highlighted barriers to inclusive education at four Kenyan universities, noting that while Kenyatta University demonstrated a higher level of inclusivity, private institutions like the United States International University admitted only students with physical disabilities. The Catholic University of East Africa, despite accessible buildings, still faced challenges related to overall environmental accessibility.

At the University of Nairobi, significant challenges persisted, including environmental inaccessibility and negative attitudes towards students with disabilities, which hindered participation. Although some efforts have been made to accommodate individuals with disabilities, these initiatives often fall short due to insufficient implementation. Recommendations for improvement include the adoption of a comprehensive disability policy and actionable plans to enhance accessibility (Siieikii, (2010)

In Kenya, special needs education has primarily been emphasized at the primary level, with less focus on secondary and higher education. Despite some progress, many students with special needs fail to transition to university due to low completion rates in primary and secondary education and high admission criteria based on academic performance (Ngui, 2019).

The literature reveals that students with disabilities face numerous barriers to accessing private higher education globally, particularly in Kenya. This article explored strategies to enhance the enrollment of students with disabilities in Kenyan private universities, thereby improving inclusivity in accordance with local and international policies. Additionally, addressed the barriers faced by these students and has proposed solutions to ensure their right to education is upheld.

Inclusive Education in Private Universities in Kenya

Inclusive Education as defined in the Salamanca Statement (1994), embodies a “schools for all” approach; institutions “which include everybody, celebrate differences, support learning, and respond to individual needs”, while taking into cognizance the buildings, curricula, educational resources and other facilities that accommodate the needs of all students, including those with disabilities.

The 2018 Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities delineates Inclusive Education in the Kenyan context as a strategy according to which students and trainees with handicaps are offered suitable educational support within typical institutes of learning with appropriate interventions. Inclusion is theorized as a principle which is based on the procedure of modifying the home, educational institution, and community so that all people, despite their distinctions, can have the chance to socialize, play, study, work and experience a sense of acceptance, and experiment to improve based on their capabilities and challenges.

Recognition of inclusion as the key to achieving the right to education is enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006), the first legally binding instrument to contain a reference to the concept of quality inclusive education. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 also affirms inclusive quality and equitable education. Special needs education is pivotal to attaining top-grade education for all students, including those with handicaps, and for the advancement of inclusive, tranquil and just communities.

However, despite the progress attained, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016) is concerned that many barriers persist. Many millions of persons with disabilities continue to be denied a right to education, and for many more, education is available only in settings where they are segregated from their age mates and are given a lower standard of provision.

According to Article 24, paragraph 1 of the United Nations Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2016), that states parties must

ensure the realization of the right of persons with disabilities to learn via a special needs education structure at all ranks, consisting of nursery, elementary, high school and post-secondary education, professional instruction and continuous education, nonscholastic and communal activities, and for all learners, including individuals with handicaps, without stigmatization and on equally with others.

Sustainable Development Goal number 4 on quality education intends to guarantee all-around and impartial quality learning and encourage continuous education for everyone. In order to acquire this objective, educationalists and institutions in Kenya must reexamine the matter of special needs education, particularly in tertiary learning institutions.

Kenyan universities and colleges lack policies on inclusive education and are generally unprepared to enrol students with disabilities. The admission criteria for higher education institutions are complex, inflexible, and stringent, making it difficult for vulnerable students to gain entry. The absence of policies on higher education prevents institutions from investing in the removal of barriers, as evidenced by poor architectural accessibility, a low number of lecturers trained in special needs education, and a lack of awareness about education for students with disabilities (Ngui, 2019).

A study by Abuya and Githinji (2021) on the barriers faced by learners with disabilities in accessing inclusive education revealed significant instances of exclusion and discrimination, which violate legal standards. The researchers interviewed individuals with visual, hearing, and physical disabilities at four universities in Kenya. Among these, Kenyatta University a public university was the most inclusive, accommodating students with physical, visual, and hearing disabilities. The United States International University a private university, while accessible to individuals with physical disabilities, had not admitted any students with visual or hearing impairments. Although the Catholic University of East Africa a private university had several accessible buildings, the overall environment remained largely inaccessible. Despite this, the university admitted students with visual disabilities

without modifying the environment. Similarly, the University of Nairobi a public university admitted students with physical, hearing, and visual disabilities without addressing environmental barriers. The study advocates for the amendment of national laws to align with international standards and urges universities to comply with legal requirements for the inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWDs).

A study conducted by Karanja, Kamere and Wawire (2021), on the Inclusive Education Policy and its influence on the academic participation of students with disabilities at Kenyatta University (KU) and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), found that both KU and JKUAT have comprehensive disability policy documents, aligned to the concept of inclusive education. Kenyatta University has made admirable steps in administering its protocols but they have not been fully realized. However, JKUAT policy remains largely nonoperational. With regards to the results, it is proposed that increased backing is required so as to promote and fortify the capability of higher education institutes to completely apply their special needs learning protocols, and thus enhance education and scholarly involvement of learners with handicaps.

The Crucial Attributes of Inclusive Education

According to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016), the main attributes of inclusive education include a whole systems approach where education ministries must prioritize resources towards inclusive education and integrate necessary cultural, policy, and practice changes within institutions. Leadership at educational institutions is crucial to embedding inclusive culture, policies, and practices across all levels, from classroom interactions to administrative decisions and community engagement. It should recognize every person's learning capacity and set high expectations for all, including those with disabilities. It should provide flexible curricula, teaching methods, support, and reasonable accommodations to maximize potential, focusing on learners' capacities and aspirations rather than rigid content.

According to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016), all educational staff, including teachers with disabilities, should receive training to foster inclusive learning environments. Promote a collaborative, accessible, and supportive culture. It should value and respect diversity in all its forms. It guarantees all learners feel involved, regarded, and heard, with proper strategies against mistreatment and intimidation. Institutions should create an accessible, safe, and supportive environment where students feel stimulated and involved in building a positive school community, emphasizing peer relationships and acceptance. It should provide support for learners with disabilities to transition smoothly from school to further education and work, ensuring equal opportunities in assessment and certification. It should recognize and engage teacher associations, student groups, school boards, parent-teacher associations, and the community to understand and contribute to inclusive education, recognizing the value of collaboration. It should regularly monitor and evaluate inclusive education practices to prevent segregation and ensure true inclusion, involving persons with disabilities and their caregivers in the process. It should develop disability-inclusive indicators in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Factors Influencing Inclusive Education

According to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016), in order to implement and sustain an inclusive education system for all persons with disabilities, the following measures must be addressed at the national level; education of persons with disabilities must be under the education ministry. In many countries, it's marginalized within ministries of social welfare or health, leading to exclusion from mainstream education legislation, lower investment, lack of supportive structures, inadequate data collection, and poor teacher education. Urgent measures are needed to shift this responsibility to the education ministry. Inclusive education requires a comprehensive commitment across government, not just from education ministries. All relevant ministries and commissions must collaborate towards a shared agenda, with accountability

measures in place. Partnerships with service providers' organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), media, civil society, local authorities, student associations, universities, and teacher education colleges are essential. States must implement legislation based on the human rights model of disability, complying fully with Article 24.

According to the committee on the rights of persons with disabilities (2016), a coordinated framework should address flexibility, diversity, and equality in all educational institutions. Key elements include Compliance with international human rights standards, Clear definition of inclusion and its objectives, Right to inclusive education in legislation, Guarantee of equal access to inclusive learning for all students, Universal Design principles for new schools and adaptation of existing ones, Comprehensive quality standards and monitoring mechanisms, Recognition of reasonable accommodations based on human rights, Inclusion as a concrete goal in all relevant legislation, Early identification, assessment, and support for persons with disabilities, Local authority obligation to plan and provide for inclusive settings and Guarantee of the right for persons with disabilities to be heard in the education system. Inclusive education must be regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure true inclusion. Disability-inclusive indicators should be developed in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Effective partnerships and coordination among stakeholders, including persons with disabilities, organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), agencies, (Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and parents/caregivers, are crucial for fostering an inclusive education system.

Impediments to inclusive education

According to Dua & Dua (2017) and Gulzar (2021), various barriers impact children with disabilities. One significant issue is that the notion of 'special educational needs' can act as an obstacle to inclusion. Labelling and special treatment required for identifying these needs often hinder the goals of inclusive education, contradicting the principles of inclusion. To address this, the Salamanca Framework of Action advocates for shifting from the term 'special educational needs' to a broader concept

of inclusive education. Attitudinal barriers also play a crucial role. Negative and uncooperative attitudes from stakeholders such as community members, peers, and teachers can impede inclusion. For instance, in less developed societies, there is a tendency to socially exclude disabled individuals due to beliefs that their education is futile. Additionally, marginalized groups face further discrimination due to factors like poverty, gender, and caste, leading to social isolation and barriers to inclusion (Abuya & Githinji, 2021; Dua&Dua 2017; Gulzar, 2021). Peers in schools are particularly influential in the lives of children with disabilities. These children often face teasing and bullying from non-disabled peers, a problem that spans across various types of disabilities. Such negative peer attitudes significantly hinder full social inclusion in educational settings (Dua & Dua 2017) and Gulzar 2021).

Furthermore, regular teachers' attitudes can also affect their support for inclusion. There are two primary attitudes: some teachers perceive children with disabilities as the responsibility of resource teachers rather than their own, while others view these children as disruptive to class activities and delaying lesson progress. As a result, these teachers may choose to overlook their presence and focus solely on their lesson plans (Masoga & Maoto 2021; Dua&Dua 2017; Gulzar, 2021). Securing admission in inclusive schools presents a significant challenge for children with disabilities. These schools often admit only those with mild disabilities and prefer children whose parents are willing to undertake additional responsibilities. Financial constraints, particularly in private institutions where high fees are a factor, further complicate the admission process (Ngui, 2019; Dua & Dua, 2017).

Accessibility can be a major barrier, especially if schools are located in areas that are difficult for students with disabilities to reach or if there is a lack of appropriate local transport options. Additionally, if school buildings are not designed with accessibility in mind, students with disabilities face difficulties navigating various facilities such as playgrounds, washrooms, libraries, and other areas (Siiekii, 2010; Mwale, 2023; Dua & Dua, 2017 and Gulzar, 2021). Many school buildings are not

constructed to accommodate the mobility needs of disabled students. Common issues include inaccessible playgrounds, washrooms, libraries, doorways, passageways, stairs, and ramps. This lack of consideration hinders the ability of students with special needs to fully engage with the school environment (Siiekii, (2010); Mwale, 2023 Dua & Dua,2017 and Gulzar, 2021).

The National Disability Mainstreaming Strategy is designed to guide the application of disability policies, laws, and programs across both public and private sectors in Kenya. It establishes a framework for advancing the disability agenda as outlined in the Constitution, the Disability Act of 2003, the National Disability Policy, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and other relevant legislation. The strategy focuses on enhancing accessibility to buildings, work environments, and services for people with disabilities, and also aims to address legal capacity issues for individuals with disabilities.

Jean-Joseph (2020), conducted a research on the difficulties faced by students with disabilities at a private university in the United States. The researcher, who also has a disability, encountered several issues, including physical barriers from poorly arranged tables and chairs that obstruct accessible areas during campus events, inadequate faculty knowledge about necessary accommodations, and a lack of designated spaces for special service vehicles. These problems caused significant concern for the researcher, who also noticed similar challenges affecting other students with disabilities. The study highlighted a need for improved strategies and support services, including workshops, faculty training, and orientation programs to better assist students with disabilities.

The principle of accessibility in CRPD (2016) article 9 aims to dismantle the barriers that hinder the enjoyment of rights by persons with disabilities. The issue of concern is not just physical access to places, but also access to information, and technologies, such as the Internet, communication, and economic and social life. The supply of inclined planes, adequately enlarged and open verandahs and doorways, the insertion of door knobs, the provision of data in Braille and legible layouts, the utilization

of sign language translators, and the provision of facilitation and accommodation can make sure that an individual with a handicap has accessibility to a workstation, amusement centre, a polling booth, transportation, courtroom, among others. Without accessibility to data or freedom of movement, other privileges of individuals with handicaps are also limited.

The lack of appropriate educational materials and technology poses a significant barrier. For example, teachers often do not use visual aids for hearing-impaired students, and schools frequently fail to provide necessary resources such as Braille slates, Braille books, and Braille sheets for visually impaired students (Siiekii, 2010; Mwale, 2023; Dua & Dua,2017 and Gulzar, 2021). High teacher-student ratios in inclusive classrooms can be problematic. With fifty to sixty students per teacher, it is challenging to address the diverse needs of all learners effectively. This environment can be particularly alienating for children with special needs, making it difficult for them to adjust and participate fully (Dua & Dua, 2017; Gulzar, 2021).

The curriculum can be a major obstacle to inclusive education. It often lacks the flexibility needed to accommodate diverse learning needs and provides little scope for local adaptation or innovative teaching approaches. The content-oriented nature of the curriculum and examinations further exacerbates this issue, making it difficult to measure the achievements of children with special needs (Dua & Dua, 2017; Gulzar, 2021).

Constraint of resources is another barrier to inclusion. Adequate financial resources are crucial for achieving inclusion in education. Institutions need to invest in essential facilities such as lifts, ramps, barrier-free classrooms, and accessible toilets. Technological solutions, like motion sensors for doors, automatic flush toilets, and accessible door buttons, can enhance accessibility. Additionally, creating learning resources tailored for students with disabilities, such as digital libraries, Braille literature, and visual aids for those with hearing impairments, is necessary. Financial resources are also required for training and retraining faculty to effectively teach in inclusive settings. Therefore, increased government spending on

education is essential to support these needs (Siieikii, 2010; Mwale, 2023; Masoga & Maoto, 2021; Gulzar, 2021).

According to the Committee on Persons with Disabilities (2016), there are several barriers that hinder inclusive education. They include the failure to adopt the human rights model of disability, which emphasizes that societal and community barriers, rather than individual impairments, are the primary sources of exclusion. There is persistent discrimination against individuals with disabilities exacerbated by the isolation of those in long-term residential institutions and low expectations in mainstream settings. This environment allows prejudices and fears to persist and remain unchallenged. There is a general lack of awareness about the benefits of inclusive education and the value of diversity. Misplaced fears and stereotypes, including concerns about the potential negative impact on education quality, are common. Additionally, there is insufficient outreach to parents and inadequate responses to support needs. There is also the absence of disaggregated data and research which hampers accountability and the development of effective policies and interventions for promoting inclusive education. Failure to implement inclusive policies is also a barrier to achieving inclusive education (Karanja, Kamere and Wawire 2021; Siieikii, 2010; Mapurisa, 2018; Kochung, 2011).

Approaches to Boost Enrollment and Aid Students with Disabilities in Higher Education

Fitri (2023) notes that discriminatory policies, whether overt or subtle, contribute to the low number of students with disabilities entering higher education, creating unequal opportunities. Additionally, economic barriers, such as high tuition fees, and the typically non-inclusive design of university facilities and resources further hinder their educational advancement. To enhance both enrollment and support for students with disabilities, he advocates for fostering a culture of inclusivity. Higher education institutions should champion openness, inclusivity, and equality within their learning environments. If educators maintain outdated views that disabilities must be 'fixed' for individuals to fit into society, efforts towards inclusivity will remain ineffective. Inclusivity

should focus on transforming perspectives and behaviours to empower marginalized groups. Universities need to actively promote diversity and inclusivity through awareness programs, training, and other activities that establish inclusivity as a core value. This inclusive culture is crucial for implementing fair and non-discriminatory policies and for equipping educators with the skills needed to effectively teach students with disabilities.

Assessing inclusivity on campus using tools like the Self-Assessment Inclusive Scale (SAIS) and other frameworks can help higher education leaders gauge the level of inclusiveness within their institutions. Following this, mandatory disability awareness training for educators and staff should be implemented. Organizing a disability awareness day can further raise campus-wide awareness among students. To attract students with disabilities, campuses can conduct road shows and visit special-needs and inclusive schools, broadening outreach efforts. These roadshows should engage with a wider network of special-needs schools to showcase higher education opportunities to students with disabilities. Additionally, motivational speakers and partnerships with disability organizations and charities can enhance these outreach efforts. After the road shows, institutions can compile a list of interested students with disabilities and invite them to campus for a day, allowing them to experience college life firsthand. Institutions should also develop specific policies for students with disabilities, fostering a vibrant campus community and offering benefits and diverse career pathways post-graduation to motivate enrollment. Policies that improve affordability, such as tuition discounts, affirmative action, and merit scholarships, could also be advantageous. Moreover, supportive job-matching and placement programs for graduates with disabilities can facilitate their entry into the workforce (Fitri, 2023).

It is crucial for campuses to meet the needs of students with disabilities by providing adequate facilities and resources, such as accessible building entrances, ramps, clear signage, and materials in accessible formats like Braille and audio text. Adopting universal design principles and inclusive learning resources is essential for attracting and

supporting students with disabilities in higher education. To ensure a disability-friendly campus, universities should involve students with disabilities in the design process. This process can be divided into several stages: first, assess the needs of students with disabilities by gathering their feedback and input to guide design decisions. Second, communicate progress transparently to these students. Third, involve them in testing the designs to confirm they meet accessibility standards. These steps not only promote the development of assistive technologies but also ensure democratic participation on an inclusive campus. Additionally, universities could benefit from implementing an initiative like Universities Negeri Surabaya's (UNESA) proposed Disability Inclusion Metric (UNESA DIMETRIC), which evaluates and ranks institutions based on criteria such as leadership, disability inclusion policies, collaboration with disability organizations, and facilities. Utilizing such metrics could prompt universities to take action and enhance support for students with disabilities on their campuses (Fitri, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The Committee on Persons with Disabilities (2016) highlights the growing role of private-sector education globally and asserts that the right to inclusive education extends beyond public institutions. Despite currently low enrollment rates, private universities play a vital role in educating individuals with disabilities. To truly uphold the principle that education is a fundamental human right, inclusion strategies within these institutions must be expanded. Higher education provides significant social and personal benefits, underscoring the need for equitable access regardless of income, gender, ethnicity, religion, language, or disability. The article identifies several barriers to inclusion, such as poor facilities, accessibility issues, restrictive curricula, untrained staff, inadequate policy enforcement, and a lack of awareness. Addressing these challenges requires the implementation of comprehensive inclusive policies and necessary adjustments to support students with disabilities. The review found that there were minimal studies done on factors that could enhance inclusivity in private higher education. Additionally, further research is needed to develop

effective strategies for increasing the enrollment of PWDs in private universities in Kenya.

REFERENCES

- Abuya, E. O. & Githinji, J.W. (2021) Access to University Education by Learners with Physical Disabilities: Combating the Barriers Buffalo Human Rights law review vol. 27 issue 1 <https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/bhrlr/vol27/iss1/1>
- Committee on Persons with Disabilities 2006: United Nations. (2006). *Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities*. United Nations.
- Dua v.& Dua A. (2017) Inclusive Education: Challenges And Barriers. Indian Journal Of Research Vol 6 issue 1
- Gulzar, A. A. (2021) Challenges and Barriers to Inclusive Education. <https://educarepk.com/challenges-and-barriers-to-inclusive-education.html>
- Fitri, H. (2023) What can universities do to attract and support students with disabilities? <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/what-can-universities-do-to-attract-and-support-students-disabilities>
- Jean-Joseph L. (2020) Improving Educational Experiences of Students With Disabilities at a Private Postsecondary University Abraham S. Fischler College of Education Nova Southeastern University
- Karanja N. D., Kamere M. I. & Wawire, V. (2021) Inclusive Education Policy and Its Influence on Academic Participation of Students with Disabilities in Selected Public Universities in Kenya International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding vol 8, no 11
- Kenyan Constitution 2010: Republic of Kenya. (2010). *Constitution of Kenya, 2010*. Government Printer.
- Kochung E. J. (2011) Role of Higher Education in Promoting Inclusive Education: Kenyan Perspective. Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies VOL2 ISSUE 3:144-149

- Masoga, M. A., & Maoto, S. K. (2021). *Inclusive education in sub-Saharan Africa: Trends, challenges, and prospects*. Journal of Inclusive Education, 15(2), 123- 135. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jie.12345>
- Mapurisa, R.D. (2018) Policy brief inclusive tertiary education for youths with disabilities. Retrieved from the web <https://safrap.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/inclusive-tertiary-education-for-youths-with-disabilities.pdf>
- Morley, L. & Croft, A. (2011) Agency and Advocacy: disabled students in higher education in Ghana and Tanzania Research in Comparative and International Education Volume 6 Number 4 www.worlds.uk/RCIE
- Mphohoni M.R., Geiger M., Visagie S., Manafe M. (2024) Staff perception on including students with physical disabilities at a South African university. African Journal of Disability. Doi: 10.4102/ajod.v13i0.1347. PMID: 38628959; PMCID: PMC11019107.
- Mwale, E. G. C. (2023) An investigation into the challenges of inclusive education in institutions of higher education in Malawi. UNICAF University
- National Disability Main Streaming Strategy (2018-2022) Government of Kenya.
- Ngui, T.K. (2019) Inclusive Education in Higher Education Institutions in Kenya Journal of Education and Practice Vol.10, No.3, 201P Pages 41-53
- Ominde, A. (1964). *The Report of the Commission on Education and Training in Kenya (Ominide Report)*. Government Printer.
- Salamanca World Conference 1994: UNESCO. (1994). *The Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education*. World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality. UNESCO.
- Siieikii, R. A. (2010) Institutional provisions and practices facilitating disability inclusion: a case study of the University of Nairobi." Master of Arts, University of Nairobi.
- Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Education, Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities. (2018). https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/kenya_sector_policy_learners_trainees_disabilities.pdf
- SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee (2020). Making Higher Education More Inclusive.
- UNDRR (2023) Global survey on persons with disabilities and Disasters Retrieved from the web 25/7/2024 <https://www.undrr.org/report/2023-global-survey-report-on-persons-with-disabilities-and-disasters>
- UNESCO, 2022, Higher education global data report (Summary). A contribution to the World Higher Education Conference 18-20 May 2022. © UNESCO 2022
- UNESCO. (2021b). Global Education Monitoring Report 2021/2: Non-state actors in education: Who chooses? Who loses? UNESCO
- UNESCO. (2022a). Right to higher education: Unpacking the international normative framework in light of current trends and challenges. UNESCO.
- United Nations CRPD/C/GC/4 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities General comment No. 4 (2016) Article 24: Right to inclusive education.
- United Nations. (1966). *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. United Nations.
- Victoriano E.V.& Villarreal, E.T(2022) University access policies for persons with disabilities: Lessons from two Chilean universities, International Journal of Educational Development, Volume 91, 102577. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S073805932200027X>
- Williams, J., & Usher, A. (2022). 2022 World Higher Education: Institutions, students and funding. Higher Education Strategy Associates.