

# UVM ScholarWorks

## The Challenges Of Inclusive Education Policy Implementation In Ghana: Stakeholders' Perspectives

Item Type	dissertation;article
Authors	Komabu-Pomeyie, Sefakor Grateful-Miranda Ama
Download date	2026-06-09 21:52:00
Link to Item	<a href="https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14849/3124">https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14849/3124</a>

THE CHALLENGES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY IMPLEMENTATION  
IN GHANA: STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVES

A Dissertation Presented

by

Sefakor G.M.A. Komabu-Pomeyie

to

The Faculty of the Graduate College

of

The University of Vermont

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Specializing in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

May, 2020

Defense Date: March 11, 2020  
Dissertation Examination Committee:

Katharine Shepherd, Ed.D., Advisor  
Mercedes Avila, Ph.D., Chairperson  
Kelly Clark/Keefe Ed.D.  
Colby Kervick, Ed.D.  
Cynthia J. Forehand, Ph.D., Dean of the Graduate College

## ABSTRACT

People with disabilities (PWDs) from countries around the world, including Ghana, deserve the right to education, but are often deprived of it. Statistics from the World Report on Disability in 2011 estimate that literacy rates for PWDs may be as low as 1%. The World Bank Report also reports that more than one billion people may experience some form of disability. Individuals with disabilities typically have worse socioeconomic outcomes than those without disabilities. They often have poorer health, lower levels of employment and earnings, and higher poverty rates. In developing countries, the prevalence of disabilities and its impacts on a wide range of developmental outcomes are usually more significant than they are in countries with well-established educational and social systems (WHO, 2012, p. 201). People with disabilities are especially disadvantaged within school enrollment, educational attainment, and learning. For each of these reasons, implementation of the inclusive education (IE) Policy of Ghana, which calls for full participation of all children with a disability in schools, is critical. This dissertation is organized around two journal articles that together address the theme of IE policies within a Ghanaian context. The first paper, which utilized a case study approach and is published, incorporated the lenses of phenomenological inquiry (Creswell, 2012 pp. 76-77) and feminist disability theory to compare the experiences and perceptions of ten women with disabilities regarding their educational experiences in Ghana. The second paper used a case study approach (Yin, 2017) to investigate and reflect on the interactions of context with actors and processes of implementing the inclusive education policy of Ghana. For the purpose of the second paper, the “actors” consulted were persons involved in implementation of Ghana’s IE Policy. A key goal of the study was to understand the narratives that participants shared regarding implementation of the IE Policy, and in particular, the challenges to implementation.

*Keywords: inclusive education, policy implementation, social injustices, stakeholders’ perspectives, sense of belonging*

## CITATIONS

Material from this dissertation has been published in the following form:

Paper 1: KOMABU-POMEYIE, S. G.. (2019). FORMAL EDUCATION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES IN GHANA: A POWERFUL WEAPON TO CHANGE THE WORLD. *Emerging Voices in Education*, 1(1), 1-12.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES .....	vii
CHAPTER 1: Introduction and Researcher Identity .....	1
Neglect and Exclusion .....	1
Mum’s Resilience and her Belief in Me .....	2
My Pains/Weaknesses Which are My Strength Now .....	3
My Root as an Ewe .....	4
A Brighter Future .....	5
Introduction to the Research .....	7
Purpose .....	8
Significance of the Study .....	8
Research Questions .....	9
Comprehensive Overview of the Two Papers: Purpose and Design Details ...	10
Paper One .....	10
Case Study Design .....	10
Paper Two .....	12
Purpose of the Paper .....	12
Case Study Research Design .....	12
CHAPTER 2: Paper 1: Formal Education for Women and Girls with	
Disabilities in Ghana: A Powerful Weapon to Change the World .....	14
Abstract .....	14
Purpose of the Research .....	15
Research Questions .....	17
Significance of the Work .....	17
Literature Review .....	18
Status of Women with Disabilities in Ghana .....	19
General Definition of Inclusion .....	20
Ghana’s Concept of Inclusive Education .....	23
The Role of the Ghana’s Disability Law on Inclusion .....	24
International Education Policies that Help Direct Ghana’s Policy .....	25
The Basic Educational System of Ghana .....	26
Cultural and Educational Experiences of Women with Disabilities	
in Ghana .....	27
Societal Perceptions of Adults with Disabilities, Especially Women .....	28
Summary .....	31
Research Method .....	32
Case Study Design .....	33
Setting .....	34
Description of Participants .....	34
Data Collection .....	37

Data Analysis .....	38
Researcher Subjectivity .....	41
Findings.....	43
The Need for Advocacy and the Implementation of the IE Policy.....	43
The Need to Introduce Disability Studies in all School Levels .....	45
The Need to Counteract Negative Cultural Beliefs about People with Disabilities in Ghana.....	47
The Need to Educate for Change in Attitude, Especially Teachers, Students, and the Public .....	50
Confirmation of the Four Themes and Their Importance .....	53
Discussion.....	54
Addressing Research Questions.....	54
Implications for Policy.....	56
Implications for Practice.....	57
Limitations of this Research .....	58
References.....	60
Appendices.....	65

### CHAPTER 3: Article 3: The Challenges of Inclusive Education Policy

Implementation in Ghana: Policy Stakeholders’ Perspectives .....	68
Abstract.....	68
Statement of the Problem.....	69
Purpose of the Research.....	69
Literature Review.....	70
Background of the Problem .....	70
Conceptual Framework of the IE Policy.....	71
Characteristics of the IE Policy.....	71
Ghana’s Strategic Goals related to the IE Policy .....	72
Implementation of IE Policy: Background .....	73
The Historical Overview of the Problem of Implementation of the IE Policy.....	74
Research Design: Case Study .....	76
Research Question .....	78
Research Site and Participants .....	79
Data Collection and Recording Procedures .....	81
Interviews.....	83
Data Analysis .....	85
Personal Bias/ Subjective Bias.....	87
Trustworthiness.....	87
Credibility .....	88
Reliability.....	88
Findings.....	89
Current Factors Supporting /Facilitating Implementation .....	90
Understanding the Problem: The Need for Accurate Data for PWD.....	94
Resourcing the Solution: The Need for Financial, Human, and	

Material Resources .....	96
Making Education Meaningful: The Need to Reduce Large Class Sizes in Every Level (Kindergarten- University level).....	100
Recognizing the Challenge: The Need to Create and Raise Awareness for the “Ordinary Stakeholders” in the Community .....	102
Discussion .....	106
Implications.....	108
Conceptual and Theoretical Implications .....	109
Implication for Policy .....	109
Implications for Practice .....	110
Implications for Research .....	110
Limitations .....	112
References.....	113
Appendix A.....	117
 CHAPTER 4: Conclusion: Implications and Significance .....	 127
 COMPREHENSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	 129

## LIST OF TABLES

### Chapter 1

Table 1: Key Characteristics of the Two Papers.....	8
---	---

### Chapter 2

Table 1: Participants .....	37
-----------------------------	----

### Chapter 3

Table 1: National and International Commitments.....	72
Table 2: Research Participants for Study #2.....	80

## LIST OF FIGURES

### CHAPTER 2

Figure 1: Using Bronfenbrenner’s Framework to Explain the Inclusive Education .....	67
--	----

## **CHAPTER 1: Researcher Identity**

### **Neglect and Exclusion**

Telling one's story can be therapeutic and healing (Lewis, 2010, p. 438). As a woman of color with a disability, my lens as a student and a researcher comes from this identity. I have a very long name, but I am simply called Sefakor because I want to live up to my name despite all odds, to disprove some of the negative conceptions of disability and to change attitudes towards people with disabilities (PWDs). Culturally, every citizen of Ghana has a meaning to his/her name and Sefakor means a comforter or consoler. I was born a happy, able child, but polio affected just my left leg at age eight. From this age, I ceased to run, jump and do other things that I used to do. I became paralyzed and could only lie down aimlessly 24/7. Thank God, I went through many treatments, which led me through sitting down again like a baby, to crawling and walking with crutches and one pair of braces. I was born in a culture that frowns at disability and has every negative meaning to any type of disability one has. This is the culture that says, those of us with disabilities should be thrown in the evil forest because we are "cursed objects" or a "devilish soul." In our culture, it does not matter if you are born with a disability or acquired it after birth. Your miserable life starts the day you are no more like how the society wants you to be. In view of this, my struggle started from the very day I had a polio injection that had expired because the government then hoarded them. During the regime of the late President Acheampong of Ghana, medicines were hoarded for political reasons and most of them expired before they were used for children. That is why most of us who were children during his regime in the late 70s to early 80s who had the polio injection are physically disabled in Ghana. To some people in my family and in

the community, I have brought a curse to my family and the entire community. My own dad ran away from my Mum leaving a letter on the table because of the stigma and how useless he claimed I became in the family. He actually indicated in his letter that he could no longer stay with that “disgraceful thing.” That “THING” is me. “Indeed, when illness strikes, one’s standpoint is radically changed. You become the situation others look upon with fear and disdain” (Johnson & Harris, 2010, p. 23). I thank God I had a caring mother.

**Mum’s resilience and her belief in me.** In contrast to others, my Mum (now late) never got tired of me but rather made every effort to carry me on her back and sent me to hide under her library table where she kept some of the books for me to read while she worked. She would read them aloud at times and encouraged me to learn, because to her, I needed to go back to school despite the taunting words from people. Mum was so bold to show me off instead of hiding me as the culture demanded. She rather saw me to be her blessing and never made me fearful of God. She made me know that I am created in God’s own image and I am another replica of God; hence, my strong faith in God. Indeed, as human beings, many of us believe in some super-natural power which keeps us moving and I see myself as another image of God and that keeps me going. I can still picture how tall I was, yet she used to carry me on her back to school with a small Milo tin in my bag to pee inside. Having the Milo tin in my bag was one awful and disgraceful thing in my life in terms of hygiene but I had no control over it. The memory of it left an indelible mark in my mind and challenged me to find the power to change things. There were no accessible bathrooms on our campus; hence, I was squatting in the classroom to pee in the Milo tin. I had so many traumatic scenes from this act because each of my

classmates had his/her own reaction and interpretation to my inability to access the bathroom. This is not a pleasant story, but I share it with you, my readers, to know my roots (where I came from), my stem (where I am now) and my branches (where I am going). That is the analogy of the tree we normally use in my culture to depict the roadmap of a change agent. In other words, if you know where you came from, you can easily determine where you want to go as a change agent. Meaning, if you know my beginning, you will understand why I am passionate about my topic. I was once a victim but now a survivor and I need to give back to my community who did not see anything good in me.

**My pains/weaknesses which are my strength now.** From my childhood I knew pain and I could see the injustice done to people with disabilities (PWDs in the world on the TV. The negative cultural influence and hardship from my childhood also have molded my thoughts and actions; hence, my fight for the rights of PWDs in Ghana and elsewhere. Let me tell you why I deem it very necessary to fight for the right to education in all spheres of life. One day, in my final year of my bachelor degree, my disability became more complex when I was climbing stairs to the classroom on the third floor. Suddenly, one of my crutches broke and I fell from the third floor and somersaulted to the ground. My strong right leg (that I used to stand on, to cook, to bathe, etc.) became my baby leg because my knee cap shifted and pains me still today. With this everlasting psychological, emotional, and physical pain, I can no longer stand more than 15 minutes, and I will spend the rest of my life in the wheelchair. Do not forget, my reader, that I went to school with two crutches and two braces, but I added a wheelchair and an

everlasting pain to it at the end of my first degree in 2006. These are some of the societal neglects most people with disabilities endure in Ghana.

Indeed, despite all these societal neglects, stigma and its bitter pills, I am privileged to be educated and that makes me so proud and so enthusiastic to make a change by fighting for the right to education in Ghana through mobilization of other PWDs. I am privileged to be the first generation student, first born of three (for that matter, the leader of my siblings), the first female child of my grandparents, the first person to study abroad, the first Disability Excellence Award winner of Ghana and above all, the first person from Ghana to win the International Service Award from Ghana, awarded by the Association of University Centers on Disabilities in the US. As you can see, I have had the privilege of winning numerous local and international awards, and I believe strongly that, though I experienced a lot of pain during my formal education, it was the same education that got me here today. I would have also been on the street begging like other PWDs born in my time and culture, but I am educated, and I see another side of disability. If I should use the biblical analogy, I will say, even though I was the stone the builders rejected, today I become the cornerstone as indicated in Acts 4:11 in the *Bible*. I am the hope of my community to make significant changes in the Inclusive Educational (IE) policy of Ghana. Therefore, I desire and aspire to advocate for any vulnerable group or any policy change with its implementation, which can make life better for any less privileged group in Ghana and elsewhere.

**My root as an Ewe.** I came from the Ewe (“Ewe” as it is written in English) tribe of Ghana. The Ewes consist of four groups based on their dialect and geographic concentration: the Aɔɔ Ewe, the Mina, Anecho, Uedome(Danyi), Tongu or Tɔɔ. The

Anlo Ewes are very peaceful, religious, empathetic and resilient. We have an intricate collection of proverbs, wise sayings and adages which vary between geographical regions and other factors, and more importantly, guide our paths in all spheres of life. Our language is full of proverbs and a typical Ewe does not talk without using a proverb to depict his/her roots. Ewe proverbs, therefore, reveal enduring individual and cultural themes that provide solace and guidance to people in their ordinary lives. The proverbs also reflect widely-held “beliefs about the Ewe’s human behavior and thought orders, and exhibit concrete manifestations of metaphorical schemes of thought” (Agbemabiese, 2011, p. 3). One of these proverbs in the Ewe language says that nobody can eat his/her pepper in another person’s mouth. This simply means nobody can feel the pain you are experiencing so you need to work on your pain yourself. Due to this, I realized in this journey of being a person with disability, nobody can make the change I want for me (especially in our Ghanaian Educational System) except the people who actually experience disability. Indeed, a few people (friends and family members) become allies to the disability community but most of them get weary on the way since they have no idea how it feels to be a person with disability (Fleischer, Zames, & Zames, 2012).

**A brighter future.** In view of my experiences, I decided years ago to dedicate my career to lead and fight for a worthy cause through teaching, fighting for social change and especially advocating for the rights to inclusive education. As a policy analyst, educator, and an advocate, I deem it very necessary to work assiduously on pressing issues affecting PWDs. Through this dedication to disability rights, I have received a number of national and international awards to further my education in order to advocate professionally for the rights of people with disabilities. One of these awards was from the

Ford Foundation International Fellowship Award through which I became an international change agent. From this level and by the help of the Advancing Leaders Fellowship Award, I was able to found my non-profit organization called “Enlightening and Empowering People with Disabilities in Africa.” Culturally, this might mean I am giving you all these details to show off, but my purpose is to inform you that when determination exists, failure cannot dismantle the reign of success and we are very capable despite our disability. As you can imagine, apart from being affected by polio, I am a victim and a survivor of inaccessible school buildings. I have suffered since the time of my childhood, but that does not deter me from my vision for posterity. Despite all odds, I vow to make education accessible and inclusive for any child of any disability because no child should go through what I went through.

Following completion of my dissertation, I see myself using my research to shape a media campaign for inclusive educational policies and practices in Ghana. The media provides a channel of communication for me to use to educate the public and policy makers on different frameworks and concepts from different cultures of disability. In the future, I see myself blending the practical philosophical, ethical, historical, and legal foundations of disability rights and special education that exist in the American disability culture with Ghanaian values, in order to create room for diversity and global inclusion back home. With my other PWDs and other like-minded people on board, we can make the change we want. I must live up to my name, to make the child with a disability happy and to console him/her that, education is the key to success, because once they go to school, they will overcome every barrier society puts in their way. If this

vision is achieved, I believe posterity will have no question for me and my late Mum; rather, future generations will be fully satisfied with me.

### **Introduction to the Research**

Given my past and my goals for the future, this study is designed to further explore Ghana's educational policies and, in particular, the Inclusive Education policy that was enacted to promote access to education for students with disabilities.

Discussions regarding Inclusive Education (IE) have dominated research in recent years.

Generally, "The role of education as a process for fighting discrimination, promoting social justice and overcoming poverty has been indisputable" (Giffard-Lindsay, 2009, p.

16). IE is a global phenomenon expressed differently in various countries, within different contextual realities that may support or constrain the process of making education more inclusive. This study is designed to explore the worldview or perceptions of major stakeholders who have been involved with the IE policy process in Ghana, including women with disabilities who experienced the educational system and individuals whose current work is connected with developing and implementing education policy. The concept of IE has become a worldwide trend, and countries internationally are grappling with how to make education more inclusive for all children, especially those who have disabilities. Many theorists contend that IE and how one defines "inclusion" will be conceived and implemented differently in different contexts (Walton, 2015). "The term inclusion has many uses in the literature and researchers have begun to use the term without an explicit definition, leaving the reader to determine the meaning of the word" (McLeskey, Waldron, Spooner, & Algozzine, 2014, p.

4). McLeskey et al. (2014) define inclusive schools as places where students with

disabilities are valued, are active participants, and where they are provided the support needed to succeed in their academic, social, and extra-curricular activities. This definition resonates with me because of how it is conceptualized in Ghana. Although my study surfaces challenges to implementation, Ghana's Inclusive Education policy is intended to focus on students' active participation, their sense of belonging and their productive contribution towards the development of their community.

**Purpose.** The study includes two papers: one that focused on the lived experiences of adult women with disabilities, and one focused on the perceptions of professionals engaged in policy making and implementation. Beyond the dissertation, my long-term goal is to use the findings regarding the personal experiences and stories of the major stakeholders of the IE policy to inform development of a nationwide advocacy campaign through the media for education towards its implementation and its enforcement. This will make the policy move from rhetoric to reality in the lives of people with disabilities, the majority of whom who are being denied their rights to inclusive education.

**Significance of the study.** In identifying and analyzing the perceptions of women with disabilities and education policy professionals, this study has the potential to inform policy and a research agenda aimed at organizing a nationwide advocacy campaign to effect positive change. The stories that I gathered contribute to the task of identifying the degree to which a lack of access for PWDs continues, in spite of over 12 years of implementation of the IE policy. These are stories that need to be heard in order to outline strategies that could help the government.

## Research Questions

To better understand the successes, challenges and shortcomings of several policies in Ghana intended to improve the opportunities for children with disabilities to have access to a full and inclusive education, this study explored the perspectives and experiences of 10 women with disabilities and eight major stakeholders involved with/or impacted by inclusive education policy in Ghana. Given the challenges identified above, two overarching questions guided the studies described in the two papers:

- What are stakeholders' perceptions regarding the factors or forces that inhibit implementation of the IE Policy?
- What are stakeholders' perceptions of the social, political, environmental, cultural and educational cultures that influence the IE policy implementation?

In addition to these overarching questions, more specific questions were identified for each of the two papers that constitute the dissertation (see Table 1).

Table 1

### *Key Characteristics of the Two Papers*

	Paper One	Paper Two
<b>Research Questions</b>	1) What benefits and challenges are identified by women with disabilities in Ghana who have accessed the formal education? 2) How has formal education changed the lives of women with disabilities in Ghana? 3) What do women with disabilities identify as areas in need of improvement in the	1) What are policy stakeholders' perceptions regarding the factors or forces that are impacting successful implementation of the IE Policy? 2) In what ways does the social, political, environmental, cultural and educational cultures impact its implementation? Fit within margins

	education of girls and women in Ghana?	
<b>Research Design</b>	Case study, with a phenomenological lens	Case Study

**Comprehensive Overview of the Two Papers: Purpose and Design Details**

**Paper One: Cross Case Analysis of the Educational Experiences of Women with Disabilities in Ghana**

The purpose of this is to explore the worldwide problem of lack of access to education for women with disabilities by understanding and examining how women with disabilities experience or access the formal education in Ghana through the country’s Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) Policy. My purpose in this study is to relate the personal experiences and stories of women with disabilities in their journey to access education in Ghana in order to effect change. This is because culturally, most Ghanaians would like to talk about their personal experiences by relating to a background story.

In addition, this study has the potential to provide a preliminary data set that may, over time, inform policy and a research agenda aimed at supporting women with disabilities in their quest to attain higher education and be independent. Through their stories I would outline the strategies that could help them build self-esteem and move from stuttrer to storyteller (Walsh, 2013).

**Case study design.** As noted above in the abstract, this paper draws on a qualitative interview study design that utilized a case study approach influenced by the lenses of phenomenological inquiry (Creswell, 2012 p. 76-77) and feminist disability

theory to compare the experiences and perceptions of 10 women with disabilities regarding their educational experiences in Ghana. In this paper, I employed a case study approach to summarize the women's experiences and capture their thoughts about how education in Ghana might be improved for girls and women with disabilities. As indicated by (Yin, 2017), the choice to employ a case study approach relates to the content of research questions. That is, the more that my questions seek to explain some contemporary circumstances (e.g., how or why some social phenomenon works), the more that case study research will be relevant. For instance, to investigate the research questions, I used the case study approach to explore the factors affecting life chances of women with disability in the educational system in Ghana through data gathered by semi-structured interviews with 10 women. Horner et al. (2005) also suggest that case study is effective in the field of special needs, as it focuses on the individual and can provide detailed data related to their life experiences (Philip, 2015). In view of the lived experiences of the women I interviewed, I blended some elements of phenomenological inquiry (Creswell, 2012) that "describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of concept or phenomenon" (pp. 76-77) with a case study and cross case analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1993) approach to capture the women's thoughts about how the Ghanaian education system could be improved in order to welcome and better address the needs of girls and women with disabilities. As described in the section on data analysis, this paper was developed through a view of each of the 10 women as a separate "case," followed by a cross-case analysis in which I identified themes emerging across the cases that focus on benefits and challenges of the education system, as well as recommendations for improvement.

## **Paper Two: Perspectives of Policy Makers and Key Stakeholders in Ghana**

**Purpose of the paper.** In my second paper, I explored the perspectives of other stakeholders who have been part of the IE Policy formulation from 2006 until the present time. Specifically, this paper focuses on the perspectives of education professionals and leaders involved in implementation of Ghana's IE policy.

**Case study research design.** This paper used a case study approach to investigate and reflect on the interactions of context with actors and processes involved in implementing the inclusive education policy of Ghana. The narratives of the participants enabled me to answer my research questions using an applied research approach to “understand the nature and sources of human and societal problems” (Patton, 2002b, p. 224) which were hindering the implementation of the IE policy. Additionally, the participants highlighted factors that constitute challenges to the IE policy. As indicated by Agyepong and Adjei (2008), case study approaches help to surface narratives and evidence that may not be taken into consideration in the design and implementation of major public social policy and program content. In this regard, case study approaches contribute to the body of evidence available to policy makers, counteracting the tendency of policy to be developed based on factors other than the availability or non-availability of evidence. In view of this, my case study approach attempts to highlight the experiences of various stakeholders, for the purpose of helping me to address my research questions and to contribute to the body of evidence that needs to be considered in relation to implementation of the IE policy. It is also worth noting that storytelling is a vital form of communicating serious issues in need of change in our Ghanaian culture. Through this, wisdom is formed and shared among members of the community – be it local, distant or

ancestral; hence, one needs to use the tool of narrative collection. Finally, it is important to note that indigenous perspectives play a key role in my practices as a non-western, Ghanaian woman working across boundaries in western academic spaces.

## **CHAPTER 2: Paper 1**

### **Formal Education for Women and Girls**

#### **with Disabilities in Ghana: A Powerful Weapon to Change the World**

##### **Abstract**

Women with disabilities (WWD) from countries around the world, including Ghana, deserve the right to education, but are often deprived of it. Statistics from the World Report on Disability in 2011 estimate that literacy rates for WWD are reported as low as 1%. The World Bank Report also reports that more than one billion people may experience some form of disability. Of those, up to one in five may experience significant disabilities. Individuals with disabilities typically have worse socioeconomic outcomes than those without disabilities. They often have poorer health, lower levels of employment and earnings, and higher poverty rates. In developing countries, the prevalence of disability and its impacts on a wide range of developmental outcomes are usually more significant than they are in countries with well-established educational and social systems. Children and women with disabilities are especially disadvantaged within school enrollment, educational attainment, and learning. Many girls with disabilities drop out of school prematurely, or never even enroll. Ensuring that these children have the same opportunities as other children is a challenge but also an opportunity, in that inclusive education may bring benefits to all children, not only those with disabilities. The current study used a critical, feminist phenomenological lens (Alcoff, 2000) to explore the access and experiences with education for 10 Ghanaian women with disabilities. Using methods associated with narrative inquiry, this paper reports findings

related to the women's positive and negative experiences, and recommendations for improvements to practice and policy to help remove barriers to access to education.

### **Formal Education for Women and Girls with Disabilities in Ghana:**

#### **A Powerful Weapon to Change the World**

When we think about worldwide education, people with disabilities are often left out of the traditional education picture. In fact, out of the 57 million children with disabilities worldwide, many are not at school. In Ghana there are no statistics as to how many children are not in school, let alone girls and women with disabilities. Some estimates suggest that on average across seven developing countries, a child with a disability is half as likely to be in primary school as a child without a disability (Factsheet\_A5\_\_Web\_NEW.pdf, 2013). For women and girls with disabilities, the exclusion rate is higher. Statistics from the World Report on Disability 2014 reveal that 50.6% of males with disabilities have completed primary school, compared with 61.3% of males without disabilities. Among females with disabilities, 41.7% completed primary school compared to 52.9% of females without disabilities. Education – be it traditional or vocational – is considered one of the key routes out of poverty (“Benefits of Inclusive Education,” n.d.). So this critical lack of access to education and rehabilitation services for women and girls with disabilities is denying them the opportunity to create a sustainable future.

#### **Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the worldwide problem of lack of access to education for women with disabilities by understanding and examining how women with disabilities experience or access the formal education in

Ghana through the country's Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) Policy. My purpose in this study is to relate the personal experiences and stories of women with disabilities in their journey to access education in Ghana in order to effect change. This is because culturally, most Ghanaians like to talk about their personal experiences by relating to a background story.

A great deal has been written on the power of personal stories; for instance in *Little Bee* written by Christ Cleave (2008) who states that narratives are part of African life. In Ghana, storytelling is a vital form of communicating serious issues in need of change. During this time of information saturation, telling a good story based on one's own experience is also essential to being heard; getting one's message out connects us to humanity. Additionally, stories such as those of the participants in this study have the potential to evoke or intellectually stimulate politicians and policy makers. In the Ghanaian culture, storytelling is also a collective process, even though we recount stories individually. As the participants tell their personal stories from their experiences, collectively, the stories tell us what is important to them and to their society. There is a sense of belonging, family interest, and unity in storytelling, especially when the lessons learned are shared with the community's interest in mind.

In addition, this study has the potential to provide a preliminary data set that may, over time, inform policy and a research agenda aimed at supporting women with disabilities in their quest to attain higher education and be independent. Through their stories I will be outlining the strategies that could help them build self-esteem and move from stuttrer to storyteller (Walsh, 2013). This study will recommend a conceptual

framework for equality and equity in the educational system in Ghana. Please, find below in Appendix B, the Conceptual framework.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were used to frame this exploratory study of the experiences of 10 Ghanaian women with disabilities in their process of accessing formal education, and their recommendations:

- What benefits and challenges are identified by women with disabilities in Ghana who have accessed the formal education system?
- To what extent has formal education changed the lives of women with disabilities in Ghana?
- What do women with disabilities identify as areas in need of improvement in the education of girls and women in Ghana?

By conducting this research and exploring answers to these research questions, I will gain insight regarding whether a small number of women with disabilities in Ghana benefit from the rights to education in Ghana as projected by the education policies of their government.

### **Significance of the Work**

A potential empirical contribution of this study is the use of personal narratives and case study as a way to identify strengths and weaknesses of the Ghanaian educational system (Brown, Chui, & Manyika, J., 2011). What is needed is a well-defined source of information that policy makers, faculty, and administrators can utilize to better understand the needs of women with disabilities in our Ghanaian school system. At

times, faculty and other members of higher education institutions are generally well-intentioned toward students with disabilities and are willing to provide accommodations, but may not be informed about what that entails (Debrand & Salzberg, 2005). This problem can be overcome if laws are enforced or implemented through which people can be held accountable.

In addition to informing education policies, this research may inform local practice by providing information that could increase enrollment for women with disabilities in Ghanaian schools. Furthermore, this research may provide some advocacy strategies that the Ministry of Education of Ghana could use to better serve this population.

Conceptually, this study has the potential to contribute to current literature on the educational experiences of women with disabilities in developing countries. As will be demonstrated in the review of the literature, little research exists on this topic, and even less is known about the issue as it pertains specifically to women with disabilities in Ghana.

### **Literature Review**

Researchers have shown that across the globe, persons with disabilities are underrepresented in higher education. In Sub-Saharan Africa, where opportunities for higher education are especially limited, women are unlikely to continue their education (Tuomi, Lehtomäki, & Matonya, 2015). In view of this, one could say that the literature on girls and women with disabilities and education is sparse. This holds true for countries at all levels of development, including the US (Rousso, 2001b). Research is limited and consists largely of small qualitative studies. Such research, while valuable in identifying barriers, rarely includes comparisons with both boys with disabilities and girls without

disabilities, making it difficult to identify the joint impact of gender and disability bias. Generally, available information demonstrates the dearth of policies and programs that specifically address the educational needs of girls with disabilities, and the failure of programs of gender and disability equity to serve them.

The literature review that follows sets the stage for the study by exploring the context of education for women with disabilities in Ghana. It begins with a focus on Ghanaian women and girls with disabilities and how they experience or access the formal education system in Ghana. In addition, it explores definitions of inclusive education and the ways in which Ghanaian schools demonstrate inclusion and adhere to Ghana's policies on inclusion. It concludes with a discussion of disability as a social construct, especially as it relates to women with disabilities.

### **Status of Women with Disabilities in Ghana**

In the literature, the lack of formal education for women with disabilities (WWD) is seen as a challenge to the ability of women to counteract negative social forces. WWD in Ghana face various forms of abuse that appear to be socially accepted because of the cultural beliefs. Consequently, they must use coping strategies to manage the abuse and to sustain their female identity (Kassah, Kassah, & Agbota, 2014). Indeed, there are many cultural beliefs which hinder the education of women with disabilities. As noted by Agbenyega (2007), "The most critical of all the barriers to free universal education for students, particularly those with disabilities is negative attitude and prejudice. Some Ghanaians still attribute the causes of disabilities to curses from the gods" (p. 4).

Generally, the available data that are focused on literacy indicate that women and girls with disabilities fare more poorly in the educational arena than either their disabled

male or nondisabled female counterparts. For example, UNESCO, the World Blind Union, and other organizations estimate the literacy rate for disabled women as one percent, compared to an estimate of about three percent for all people with disabilities (Groce, 1997). Statistics from individual countries and regions, while often higher, nonetheless confirm gender inequities (Saito & Nagata, 2003). In terms of school enrollment, UNESCO suggests that only two percent of disabled children are in school, with disabled girls even more underserved ([www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/usa/rapport\\_2\\_h.html](http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/usa/rapport_2_h.html)). These findings are part of a larger picture of double discrimination based on gender and disability that pervades the lives of women and girls with disabilities in all areas: employment, income level, health care, marriage, and parenting. The discrimination against women is compounded by discrimination against those with disabilities that often cuts across cultures and level of development. Disabled women and girls are commonly stereotyped as sick, helpless, childlike, dependent, incompetent, and asexual, greatly limiting their options and opportunities (Rousso & Schwartz, 2005).

### **General Definition of Inclusion**

Inclusive education is a global agenda (Hegarty, Meijer, & Pijl, 2002); however, it is context specific in terms of meaning and practice. In the US, authors writing about inclusion note various interpretations of the concept: “The term inclusion has many uses in the literature ...researchers have begun to use the term without an explicit definition, leaving the reader to determine the meaning of the word” (McLeskey, Waldron, Spooner, & Algozzine, 2014, p. 4). McLeskey et al. (2014) go on to define inclusive schools as places where students with disabilities are valued active participants, and where they are

provided the support needed to succeed in their academic, social, and extra-curricular activities. Globally, definitions of inclusion in education tend to cast it as a broad concept that affects all aspects of life. Loreman, Deppeler, and Harvey (2005) define it as “full inclusion of children with diverse abilities in all aspects of schooling that other children are able to access and enjoy” (p. 3). According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), persons with disabilities “should be guaranteed the right to inclusive education at all levels, regardless of age, without discrimination, and on the basis of equal opportunity, and children with disabilities shall not be excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education on the basis of disability” (p. 16). Despite global calls for action and legal frameworks for inclusion, “There is still more that needs to be accomplished to protect and uphold all children and young people’s right to an inclusive quality education” (Inclusive Education, 2016, p. 7). All children can learn when teaching is effective and meets individual strengths and learning needs. Many studies have found that for people with disabilities, participation in daily life is limited not only by their individual impairments, but by external barriers, including environmental, social, and attitudinal barriers (Barnes & Mercer, 1997; Craddock & McCormack, 2002). One of these external barriers is the non-inclusive school environment that for many years has been a great problem for children with disabilities in Ghana.

According to Parnell, inclusive education generally refers to the capacity of an education system to provide the academic and behavioral support needed for all students, regardless of disability or difference (i.e., gender, ethnicity, location, or language), to participate and succeed in the academic, social, and extra-curricular activities of the

school alongside their peers (UNESCO, 1994; UNDESA, 2016). With specific reference to disability-inclusive education, inclusion demands a shift from segregated learning environments to inclusive classrooms within general education schools, in which children with disabilities learn alongside their peers without disabilities. More importantly in this paper, inclusive education has more focus on making sure that children with disabilities are brought out from their homes (where most of them are hidden due to cultural stigma) to join their friends in the classroom and participate equally.

Even though there is no specific accepted international definition of inclusion, there are nonetheless some guiding concepts that are important to consider in design, implementing, and evaluating the degree to which schools are inclusive. There is also a working definition, which is taken from many sources that have identified key concepts of inclusion in education. The components of this working definition include the following (McLeskey et al., 2014): First, schools provide comprehensive and ongoing support to better meet the needs of a diverse range of students. Secondly, professionals work collaboratively to provide support and effective instruction, as students are educated in natural settings that are highly effective in meeting their needs. Thirdly, students are educated together, and they are valued members of the classroom. Finally, students are provided supports to meet individual needs and achieve valued learner outcomes (pp. 4-5).

These four components of a working definition of inclusion are intended as a useful framework to provide direction for the development of inclusive schools that serve all students with disabilities (McLeskey et al., 2014).

## **Ghana's Concept of Inclusive Education**

Ghana's concept of inclusive education is aligned with its FCUBE policy, which includes a broad focus on increasing access, retention, and participation of all school age students in education (Agbenyega, 2007). The emphasis is on changing the culture and organization to provide resources for and build capacity in schools to offer new opportunities to pupils who may be experiencing learning difficulties. Indeed, since its independence in 1957, Ghana has regarded education as a fundamental human right for all its citizens, and it has enshrined this right in the legal framework of education that was established in the 1961 Education Act. In 1961 the government enacted the Education Act, which is the principal legislation concerning the right to education for all children in Ghana. This law states that: "Every child who has attained the school going age as determined by the Minister shall attend a course of instruction as laid down by the Minister in a school recognised for the purpose by the Minister" (Agbenyega, 2007, p. 42).

In 2016, the 1961 Education Act was amended and became the IE Policy which requires schools to recognize that all children can learn, that all children have a right to learn, and that different children learn differently. And because children have different ways of the learning, then the schools and the education system must make sure that they have the physical environment to learn (big print books, sign language for example) as well as the social, emotional, and psychological environment to learn (so that they welcomed into the school, have friends, are treated with respect, are believed in and valued by their fellow students, teachers, head teachers

and the community. (UNICEF Ghana - Media Centre - Ghana's Inclusive education policy, n.d.)

Ghana's policy has attempted to adapt the same inclusion standard of developed countries. However, despite its clear directive for inclusion, the policy is not being implemented in a consistent or widespread fashion, leaving many children with disabilities without access to education in Ghana. As indicated by Otaah, "Despite numerous conferences and expert consultations on disability and human rights issues, and the passing of the Disability Law (Act 715) in 2006, which prohibits stigmatization, discrimination, and exclusion of persons with disabilities, relatively little is done in the area of disability" (p. 3).

**The role of the Ghana's disability law on inclusion.** The language of Ghana's disability law (Sections 17 and 18) is clear:

Every parent, guardian or custodian, or anybody taking care of a child with disability who is old enough to go to school, should take the child to school. The school can be a usual or common school where all children go to or a special school if the disability of the child demands that he or she attends such a school. If a parent does not take a child to school, he or she will be acting against the law and can go to prison for that.

Sections 17 and 18 of Act 715 have placed emphasis on the fact that the government wants PWDs to go to school. The title of Section 17 is "Facilities and Equipment in Educational Institutions" and states: "Schools in each region shall be given facilities which will make it possible for persons with disability to benefit from the school."

Similarly, Section 18, titled “Free Education and Special Schools,” states:

Children with disability shall have the right to go to school for free. Special schools shall be provided for person with disability who cannot attend normal schools solely because of the severity of the disability.

This information is to emphasize how Ghana as a nation has been able to write good policies with attractive sections but lacks the enforcement or the implementation practically.

**International education policies that help direct Ghana’s policy.** The policy of including all children into the mainstream started differently in different countries, but now policies across the globe have reinforced this basic human right of education for all and of equal opportunities for persons with disabilities (Wall, 2006). Some of these policies are:

1. UN Convention of the rights of the child (1989).
2. UNESCO’s Education for All -EFA of 1990
3. UNESCO Salamanca statement (1994).
4. UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (2009).

As one can notice, the international community has created education platforms and Ghana has joined each time to ratify, sign, and promise implementation of the intent of each statement. The basic aims of the above agreements are for governing bodies to protect educational opportunities for all children irrespective of race, sex, disability, or community. Based on this, in June 1994, representatives of 92 governments and 25 international organizations formed the World Conference on Special Needs Education, held in Salamanca, Spain (“The UNESCO Salamanca Statement,” 2008). They created a

dynamic new statement on the education of all children with disabilities, which called for inclusion, to be the norm. A major influence on Ghana's educational policy, the Salamanca statement declared that all governments must ensure the following (1994):

“Education for all” meaning every child has the right to school; the child with disability must have access to education from childhood to adulthood, and should attend the local school.

1. Legislation should provide measures for health, social life, vocational training, and employment for people with disabilities in the community.
2. The principle of mainstreaming is an integral part in educating people with disabilities, and special schools, if needed, should not be segregated from regular schools.
3. That the government must financially support regional and local schools for the above requirements. (pp. 17-18)

These policies helped Ghana to enact its current inclusive education policy.

**The basic educational system of Ghana.** To understand how education for school-age children with disabilities relates to the education of all children, it is important to describe the key components of the Ghanaian education system. The Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE), which is now 11 years old, is comprised of two years of kindergarten, six years of primary school, three years of junior high school, and three years of senior high school. After junior high school, students may choose to go into different streams at senior high school, including General Education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), or enter an apprenticeship with some support from the government.

In theory, students with disabilities should receive their education through this general education system. This is supported by the inclusive education policy which ensures that students with disabilities have access to the “same curriculum, materials, and instruction as their non-disabled peers, with the accommodations they need to learn.” There is debate, however, as to whether this provision of the law has been implemented. It is argued that although much has been achieved over recent years, there is still a long way to go if the language of inclusion is to become more than empty rhetoric (Barnes, 2007).

### **Cultural and educational experiences of women with disabilities in Ghana.**

Ghana’s history of educating its people with disabilities are like other African countries. This is because Africa was colonized by imperial empires. Despite the importance of education for women, attaining gender equity in higher education in Africa has remained a challenge (Sifuna, 2006). High education gender inequities in Africa date back to the colonial period when universities were established to produce colonial subjects to inherit patriarchal and ableist structures put in place by the colonialists (Mama, 2003; Opini, 2009). These structures persist to date and as a result, few women with disabilities in Africa have a high school or college diploma, much less, vocational training.

The systems established during the colonial period were rooted in ableist belief, patriarchal system of rule, and perfectionist theories; hence, the clear bias toward people with disabilities in the school structure, curriculum, training of teachers, teaching and learning materials, method of teaching, and above all, the method of assessing the students. These have been the massive challenges for women with disability, and only a few have managed to penetrate through the system or breakdown these barriers to

educate themselves. Those few women with disabilities in Ghana who made it to the top against all odds had to be very disciplined. To overcome cultural stigmas and marginalization, they had to bend the rules within the colonial structures, and above all, ignore some of the patriarchal systems to forge ahead. Some of these women with disabilities were hidden and were considered useless – even cursed objects – not given the chance to live a “normal” life, let alone go to school.

Research studies in Sub-Saharan Africa show that women continue to experience constraints in participating in postsecondary education. These constraints to educational achievement have subsequent implications on the individual development of women and the continent’s overall development (Amutabi, 2003). Investment in women’s education is more profitable than that for men; returns in the private sector of the economy (where most women operate) are higher than among those working in the public sector. Educating women is considered key to human development (World Bank, 2004). Education not only improves women’s earning capacity but also society’s general health and well-being (Psacharopoulos, 1994).

### **Societal Perceptions of Adults with Disabilities, Especially Women**

Legislation affecting people with disabilities of all ages – whether it be education policy or broader policies – tends to make certain assumptions about the meaning of disability. Over time, the concept of disability has come to be understood as a social construction (“Wendell\_Social\_construction.pdf,” 1996, p. 57). Disability is a complex phenomenon that is linked to a range of variables, such as impairment, gender, poverty, and social-cultural context. To some extent, educational outcomes for people with disabilities have traditionally been measured in economic terms, such as the link between

years of education, earnings and capabilities (Orazem, Glewwe, & Patrinos, 2007).

Through this economic lens, people with disabilities who exhibit a strong link between education and earnings are perceived as “resilient” individuals, able to navigate life’s events on their own (Hutcheon & Lashewicz, 2014, p. 1387) based on their academic and economic achievements. This sole focus on economic outcomes is problematic because some people with disabilities, particularly women, are constrained in terms of their access to education, their earnings, and the ability to sustain economic independence (Hammad & Singal, 2015). A similar idea has been expressed by (Chaudhury, Khare, Gupta, & Garg, 2016), who describe programs aimed at providing education and training to persons with disabilities who are also socially, economically, physically, or geographically disadvantaged. The programs are described as encouraging; however, the dropout rate of women is high and the success rate comparatively low due to the challenges women experience in the learning environment and the curriculum (Chaudhury et al., 2016). Therefore, their employment outcomes are not commensurate with their non-disabled peers.

Other researchers have also discussed the need to define inclusivity broadly and across multiple dimensions of people’s lives. Tisdell (1993) suggests that a learning environment needs to attend to inclusivity at three levels. A truly inclusive learning environment should “(a) reflect the diversity of those present in the learning activity itself in the curriculum and pedagogical style; (b) attend to the wider and immediate institutional contexts in which the participants work and live; and (c) in some way reflect the changing needs of an increasingly diverse society” (p. 4). Connecting Tisdell’s description of inclusivity to the overall focus on women with disabilities is very

important. It is also critical, when discussing inclusivity, to consider the social construction of disability, wherein some people are blocked from functioning productively.

Because adult women with disabilities do not live in a vacuum, addressing institutional and societal levels of inclusivity is important. Students do not only need the appropriate materials, but they also need skill training. The most significant level is the selection of appropriate materials and methods that address the characteristics of learning group members. Addressing the diversity of learners by selecting appropriate curriculum and course content in appropriate environment is a critical aspect of inclusiveness. The understanding that all groups – including those that are dominant – have culture or ethnicity must form the basis for the curriculum (“Shore,” n.d.). The knowledge base of all groups needs to be represented in the curriculum. Therefore, the curriculum must not be in a vacuum but it needs to reflect the cultural background of its learners.

Based on research, a different conception of pedagogy is emerging, one that is appropriate for an inclusive learning environment. Termed “new pedagogy” by Taylor and Marienau (1995), this way of teaching is more inclusive, and it incorporates (a) the validity of the student’s experiences, as well as support for the emerging self as a focus of education; (b) the contextual nature of knowledge, including the relationship between the learner and his or her knowledge base; and (c) the notion that learning can be a transformative process. This new pedagogy employs diverse practices such as reflective journal writing, storytelling, role playing, small group discussion, and metaphor analysis (“Ethical Practice in Adult Education, ERIC Digest,” n.d.), and it addresses the learning

styles and preferences of those represented in the learning environment. In view of this, inclusive education based on an understanding of differences must do the following:

- acknowledge that all individuals bring multiple perspectives to a learning situation because of their gender, ethnicity, class, age, sexuality, and/or physical abilities;
- recognize that since identification with social groups is complex, claimed identity is dependent on many contextual factors that position the individual politically; and
- reflect the experiences of learners, both as individuals and as members of specific social groups, and value these experiences by using them as the basis of learning and assessment in an inclusive environment.

### **Summary**

In conclusion, this review of the literature underscores the critical need to provide inclusive education to all children in Ghana, and especially girls and women with disabilities. Without educating the women of the country, there is little hope of becoming a developed nation. Women play a vital role in the all-round progress of a country. If we want to make democracy successful, women with a disability must be educated. So, what happens to women who never had a formal education? Drawing from the literature on education and especially inclusive education, it appears that although numerous policies have been put into place in Ghana, women with disabilities in Ghana still lack access to formal education, and thus, positive life outcomes in education, literacy, employment, and inclusion in everyday life. Given this, it follows that exclusion is a costly expense in

Ghana and other African countries since most of all people with disabilities are being left behind. Welsby and Horsfall (2011) expressed in their article that “these women experienced practices of social and emotional exclusion and inclusion in their everyday life” (pp. 795-807). We are denying access to education for the greater part of our people who are women, even though it is said that educating a woman is educating the family, the community, and the nation. Arguments have been put forward regarding the benefits of providing support for women and girls. One could also deduce from the research that women with disabilities who were not in school would face numerous challenges because their effort would not be measured in “economic terms;” hence, they are not part of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

### **Research Method**

This paper draws on a qualitative interview study design and employs a case study approach drawn from the narratives of 10 women with disabilities, for the purpose of understanding how these women have experienced and accessed education of Ghana through the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy. This paper focuses on one aspect of a larger phenomenological research approach articulated by Creswell (2012) that “describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of concept or phenomenon” (pp. 76-77). Similarly, Glesne (2015) describes the purpose of the phenomenological approach as an effort to “explore the subjective meaning and essences of another’s experience of a phenomenon” (p. 20). In this case, the common experience being explored is that of disability as well as womanhood. Regardless of their various disabilities, they are all women. In this paper, I present findings derived from a cross-case analysis of 10 women’s experiences in the

educational system. Future papers related to this study will explore the phenomenological approach in more detail. For the purposes of this paper, I draw upon narrative traditions and a case study approach to describe the interviewees' collective thoughts on their educational experiences and their recommendations for improving education for women with disabilities. I interviewed 10 women with disabilities who, despite all odds, have lived through the marginalization and rejection in accessing education to tell their stories. I used the structural description of their experiences in education, by getting to know how being disabled affected them as they pursued education.

### **Case Study Design**

As noted above, this paper draws on a qualitative interview study design that used narrative inquiry and a phenomenological approach to capture the experiences of women with disabilities as they accessed their education in Ghana through the FCUBE policy. In this paper, I employed a case study approach to summarize the women's experiences and capture their thoughts about how education in Ghana might be improved for girls and women with disabilities. As indicated by (Yin, 2017), the choice to employ a case study approach relates to the content of research questions. That is, the more that my questions seek to explain some contemporary circumstances (e.g., how or why some social phenomenon works), the more that case study research will be relevant. For instance, to investigate the research questions, I will use the case study approach to explore the factors affecting life chances of women with a disability in the educational system in Ghana through data gathered by semi-structured interviews with 10 women. (Horner et al., 2005) also suggest that case study is effective in the field of special needs, as it focuses on the individual and can provide detailed data related to their life experiences

(Philip, 2015). In view of the lived experiences of the women I interviewed, I blended some elements of phenomenological research approach (Creswell, 2012) that “describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of concept or phenomenon” (pp. 76-77) with a case study and cross case analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1993) approach to capture the women’s thoughts about how the Ghanaian education system could be improved in order to welcome and better address the needs of girls and women with disabilities. As described in the section on data analysis, this paper was developed through a view of each of the 10 women as a separate “case,” followed by a cross-case analysis in which I identify themes emerging across the cases that focus on benefits and challenges of the education system, as well as recommendations for improvement.

### **Setting**

My unit of study is women with disabilities in Nsawam, Ghana. I chose this setting because many women with disabilities live here, and many experience rejections across multiple areas of their lives. The major reason that there are many people with physical disabilities in Nsawam is the Orthopedic Training Center (OTC). The OTC is a nonprofit organization that enables people with physical disabilities to gain independent and productive lives. Most people with physical disabilities who come for services at OTC do not return home after treatment. For fear of stigma in their communities, most people, especially those who have had amputations, are ashamed to return home.

### **Description of Participants**

Ravitch and Carl (2016) indicated several primary questions to consider when looking at participant selection:

Whom does one need to include, and for what reasons and purposes does one include them? Again, which individuals, types of individuals, and groups are particularly knowledgeable about what one seeks to learn in the study? Finally, are there specific experiences, roles, perspective, occupations, and/or sets of relationships that one seeks to explore, and who can help to explore those? (p. 128)

I have identified 10 Ghanaian women with disabilities who are knowledgeable about the education of girls and women with disabilities and who have passed through the basic educational system known as the FCUBE. Since I am utilizing a qualitative method for this study, I have identified the participants through purposeful sampling.

Each included in the study have finished the basic education system of 11 years in Ghana, which put them all on common ground. Each woman is from a different region of Ghana, and each represents the values, ethics, and cultural epitome of her region.

Ravitch and Carl (2016) state that in using purposeful sampling, qualitative research provides context-rich and detailed accounts of specific populations and locations. Moreover, they explain that purposeful sampling means that individuals are chosen to participate in the research for specific reasons, and qualitative researchers deliberately select individuals because of their unique ability to answer the study's research questions. For this research, it was pertinent to select women with disabilities that have similar school experiences to gather an understanding of the barriers they face in obtaining formal education.

To secure participants for this study, I contacted the Ghana Federation of Disability Organizations in Ghana to assist me in identifying women from different

disability groups. Most of these women have similar but different experiences based on their disabilities as well as their status as women.

Through support from the Ghana Federation of Disabled (GFD), I conducted interviews with 10 women of different disability groups, from different regions of Ghana, who now reside in Nsawam. Prior to coming to Nsawam, they experienced their disabilities in the context of different cultural backgrounds in these 10 regions of Ghana. Language as part of the culture is not similar for them; hence, my medium of discussion was in English. These 10 participants were grouped into five different disability categories: 1) physical disability or permanent mobility issues, 2) cognitive disability, 3) blind, 4) deaf, and 5) other disabilities that cause them to be similarly marginalized. Among these 10 women, two were deaf, three had physical disabilities, two were blind, one had a brain injury resulting in a stroke and paralysis, and two were people with albinism. Although Albinism is not regarded as a disability in all cultures, these two participants have faced so many prejudices and injustices in our land that they have become part of the disability group called the Ghana Federation of Disabled Organization.

Of the 10 women, eight were graduates of higher education programs working to earn a living on their own, and two had just finished their tertiary (higher education) level programs. Among them were four teachers, a nurse, a social worker, a law student, a non-governmental organization founder, a University and a High National Diploma holder. Among these four teachers, one is deaf, and three have physical disabilities, and they were teaching at senior high and junior high school levels. One of the women with albinism was a nurse serving her community, and one of the women with a physical

disability was in law school. The woman with a brain injury, which resulted in her paralysis, founded an NGO to help girls navigate the formal educational system. The second person with albinism had finished with her High National Diploma. Finally, the last person who is deaf is a university graduate. The age range for all the participants is 22 to 35. See Table 1 for a summary of participants and their characteristics.

Table 1

*Participants*

<b>Pseudonyms</b>	<b>Disability Type</b>	<b>Basic Certificate</b>	<b>Educational Level Attained</b>
1. Nana	Deaf	Basic Education Certificate Examination (B.E.C.E.)	Tertiary level: Student at the University of Winneba
2. Maami	Deaf	B.E.C.E.	Tertiary level: Administrative Assistant
3. Akua	Albino	B.E.C.E.	Tertiary-HND student
4. Joyce	Albino	B.E.C.E.	Tertiary: Nurse
5. Abena	Brain injury, stroke and paralysis	B.E.C.E.	Master's Degree
6. Elikem	Blind	B.E.C.E.	Tertiary: Ist Degree Social Worker
7. Naya	Blind	B.E.C. E	Tertiary: Teacher
8. Mabel	Physically disabled/Mobility	B.E.C.E.	Tertiary: Teacher
9. Ama	Physically disabled / Mobility	B.E.C.E.	Tertiary: Bachelor of Law student
10. Mansah	Physically disabled/Mobility	B.E.C.E.	Tertiary: Teacher

### **Data Collection**

Data collection focused on interviewing these 10 individuals about their experiences through their own stories. Individual interviews were conducted on the phone and lasted about one and a half hours each. I recorded them using my smart phone

telephone recording device. The interview questions were designed to be very accessible to the participants. I had 10 open-ended questions on my interview protocol which were refined through pilot testing. See Appendix A for a copy of the questions. I left ample space between the questions to write responses to the interviewees' comments.

The opportunity to learn about what you cannot see and to explore alternative explanations of what you do see is the special strength of in-depth interviewing. To this opportunity add the serendipitous learning that emerges from the unexpected turns in discourse that your questions evoke. (Glesne, 2011, p. 97)

I had explored every aspect of interviewing to discover those opportunities from my participants within the timeframe of this study. My participants' confidentiality was protected with pseudonyms. Following completion of the interviews, I transcribed recordings on my computer.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis is the intentional and systematic scrutiny of data at various stages throughout the research (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Glesne (2011) states that data analysis involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read to figure out what you have learned and to make sense of what you have experienced. For this study, I utilized inductive data analysis. Patton (2001) explains that inductive data analysis allows the researcher to discover patterns, themes, and categories in their data. Within this research, my goal was to discover common and unique experiences of women with disabilities amidst their process of obtaining formal education. As stated by Thomas (2006), the primary purpose of the inductive analysis is to allow findings to emerge from the data

that has been provided during the research. Thomas went on to state that the purpose of utilizing an inductive analysis approach is to distill the raw data into a summary and to establish clear links between the research objectives and summary findings. Although deductive analysis is utilized in many studies, I do not believe enough research has been conducted on the specific phenomenon of this research to indicate the need to incorporate this. For this study, an inductive analysis of the data was used to identify emerging themes and patterns from the interviews.

For the data analysis, I incorporated coding within my research. Coding is a process for assigning meaning to data and it is typically a part of qualitative data analysis (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). As part of the analysis, I used a color-coding scheme in which specific phrases were categorized once the data were revealed. For example, most of my participants discussed the high need for disability studies in our schools. I considered this an appropriate category, and then looked within the individual interview transcripts and across all transcripts for participants' thoughts on the importance of this approach to education. Generally, coding data involves the researcher searching for regularly occurring phrases and concepts (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). As stated by Marshall and Rossman (2010), "The tough intellectual work of analysis is in generating categories and themes" (p. 212). Therefore, it is imperative that coding is done as soon as the interviews take place to ensure that these categories and themes are discovered. By incorporating open coding, I was able to highlight sections of text or label them in some manner (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). The next step I took was to do axial coding or grouping the codes according to conceptual categories that reflect commonalities among the codes (Marshall & Rossman, 2010).

I believe it is important to write thematic and theoretical memos to ensure that my thoughts about how the data are coming together in clusters, patterns, or themes as the data accumulates (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). Writing these memos as I was conducting the research helped me manage the data and my own thoughts about it. Writing these memos also helped me to form better insight on how these categories were formulated by the data sources. In addition, I referred to the public documents I reviewed as part of my literature review (e.g., Benefits of Inclusion, Graphic) and reflected on the data they provided as part of my memos. Together, these sources provided more insight on the experiences of the women with disabilities as they pursued formal education.

During my coding, I implemented different devices to ensure that the participants' confidentiality would be protected. Each participant was identified by a pseudonym known only to me. In addition, I kept all recordings and written material from the participants locked in a file cabinet which only I could access. The research materials were backed-up on several different sources including password protected drives and computers. Ultimately, all materials were securely protected, and the participants' names and information were kept confidential. To ensure that continues, I plan to destroy all research material with identifying information six years after this study is completed.

Following coding and thematic analysis of each participant's interview, I conducted a cross-case analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1993) to identify common themes emerging across the interviews as well as differences in the ways in which individuals expressed the themes. I considered each of the women's study as a single case, and then

looked for common themes emerging across those cases. This process of analysis resulted in a thematic summary of the women's experiences in accessing education, as well as their recommendations for improving Ghana's educational system for girls and women with disabilities. Although I discuss some of the experiences the participants described to me during their interviews in this paper, I focused primarily on what women with disabilities identify as areas for improvement in the education of girls and women in Ghana.

### **Researcher Subjectivity**

As a researcher who shares some of the same characteristics as the participants (e.g., I am a Ghanaian woman with a disability), I have been very aware of my positionality and the potential for my biases and experiences to influence this work; hence, I have maintained a quest for objectivity throughout the research process. At the same time, my personal experience helped me to better understand my participants' experiences and this also helped me to go beyond my worldview. At the outset of my research, I immersed myself in the writings of scholars who have explicated and then spent time thinking about the contrast between normative conceptual analytic and empirical research methodology (Stone, 1979). I wanted to deeply understand the core principles of a phenomenological research design so that I could see how previous scholars have explored "personhood" in their articles and how they have used their participants' central philosophical concepts which is their (the participants') "truth" or subjectivity in their study. I have tried to explore the essential similarities and differences between hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology from historical and methodological perspectives (Laverty, 2003) so that I could engage in methods that

would allow me to accurately describe the lived experiences of the women with disabilities.

During the data collection process, I wrote research memos, especially thematic and theoretical memos, to myself to ensure that my own thoughts were distant from the data and that the data reflected the participants' view (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). I followed up by talking to some "critical friends" (e.g., friends from class, friends who are women with a disability, and my dissertation advisor). To confirm that the transcripts accurately reflect what they said, I also did a lot of back and forth checking with my participants. For instance, in the case of a participant who did not have access to the internet to receive the transcript through email, I called her on the phone to confirm that the transcript reflected her own words. I also utilized a validity/trustworthiness research design memo which was very helpful in continuing to ensure the validity of my study. Ravitch and Carl (2015) state that the goal of this type of a memo is to encourage a researcher to systematically consider issues of validity at various points throughout the study.

Finally, during the analysis phase, as a tradition that encourages researchers to "bracket" themselves away from the "lived experiences" of the research participants, and as set forth by Moustakas in Creswell (2012), I set aside my experiences as much as possible to take a fresh perspective towards the phenomenon under research. I also reflected and searched for negative cases along with patterns and themes as I constantly checked myself during analysis to ensure that my own biases were not entering the analysis (known as epoche or bracketing).

## **Findings**

As mentioned above, my analysis resulted in a broad range of themes focused on the participants' educational experiences and their recommendations for changing the system. For this paper, I report on the themes coalescing around four major issues that may help bring change to people with disabilities in Ghana. These major points – which all 10 participants touched on in their feedback – provide me with a direction of advocacy to embark on after the study is completed. These issues are comprised of the need to:

- advocate and to implement the Inclusive Education (IE) Policy in Ghana;
- introduce disability studies in all school levels;
- counteract negative cultural beliefs about people with disabilities in Ghana; and
- educate the public for attitudinal change especially teachers, students, and the community

These major themes surfaced through triangulation of participants' statements during the interview. I report separately on each, noting the ways in which each of the four themes connects to my interest in advocating for the education of women with disabilities in Ghana. When participants were asked to give two strategies that they think Ghana can implement to make its educational system more supportive for women and girls with disabilities, their responses were profound to me. Eight of the participants emphasized the need to advocate for and implement the IE Policy in Ghana. They stated this need based on their own experiences of their time in the formal educational system.

### **The Need for Advocacy and the Implementation of the IE Policy**

The research participants seemed to have some idea about the IE Policy, especially because most of them are teachers. They had no idea about the IE Policy,

during their schooling process until they got to the university level; that is when they heard of the IE Policy. They felt this policy should be well known to every Ghanaian – young and old – and a subject that people should be able to speak about freely. In particular, they felt that *teachers* should be conversant in this policy. The only person who knew and understood this policy well during her schooling experience was Abena. In fact, she did not complete her formal education in Ghana, but in the US, thus, she had opportunities to ask for accommodations for her needs, which only happens at the university level in Ghana. Mabel believed the public is unaware of the IE Policy and therefore needs to advocate for its implementation.

I believe it is only we teachers who know about the IE Policy so, the public needs some education on it. Hmmmm, even me, I didn't know it until I was pursuing my degree and had to answer a question on it. The leadership needs to put the Inclusive Education into practice, we can also have equal access to education as the able people.

Maami echoed this sentiment, noting the need within the deaf community for implementation of the IE Policy and this community's power of the vote.

Government needs to provide all deaf students all they need to progress in school. Book, qualified teachers, interpreters, teaching and learning materials like TV to show videos about the lectures because deaf people want to see the thing. We also want to be proud of ourselves by passing our exams once and for all. Inclusive education for equal opportunity is good for us all. We need the inclusive education fully. They should support us because we are also women and also citizens of the country and we vote when it is election time.

Naya, who is blind and was a rape victim when she was in school, suggested that if implemented correctly, the IE Policy could provide security measures that would help protect girls and women with disabilities.

Hmmm, the government should implement the IE Policy so that all schools can admit women with disabilities and all people with disabilities in public schools.

Maybe with the IE Policy, the content will be protective enough to protect girls who are raped like me in their early ages. We the blind also need security.

Abena also advocated for full implementation of the IE Policy. She echoed others' ideas by saying: "More teachers should be trained on how to accommodate and teach different learners. If the Ghana government can take education seriously and implement the IE Policy, women with disabilities can also acquire education on equal basis." Clearly, most of the women in this study believed that the implementation of the IE Policy is necessary so that people with disabilities can participate in the positive results that an education provides.

### **The Need to Introduce Disability Studies in all School Levels**

Each of the interviewees described how they were marginalized or neglected by students, educators, and the community as a whole because of the lack of understanding of people with disabilities. After having felt left out during their formal education, many were drawn to the idea of introducing disability studies in all levels of the school system so that children and teachers can better understand disability issues. The interviewees who advocated for this approach felt that if disability studies were to become part of the curriculum – made more visible and explicit in teaching and learning materials – the topic would be less taboo. Seven out of the 10 participants talked about the need for an

introduction of disability studies as a course in the formal education system. For instance, Abena indicated that:

Bringing disability studies to the basic education curriculum is very necessary. We need to educate our people in the community about disability and how they have to work collaboratively to achieve the same goal because all these stakeholders are working differently towards different goals.

Alice talked at length about the need for inclusive education in the school system, noting that, “All children need to know about disability in schools.” And Elikem strongly advocated for teaching concepts related to disability early in school, rather than waiting until higher education.

We are people with great potential but there are so many blockages on our ways to excel through the formal education. Some of us don't even know our own value because of the suppression in the community so, we can start learning about disability from our school as a course. I learned KNUST [a national education institution] has just introduced it in their master's program, that level is too late. How can people know about our importance if they don't start from their childhood?

Nana thought teaching disability as a subject would be very important for people to become more aware of disability issues.

We need the educational policy to protect us and work for us all. Government needs to provide deaf student all they need to progress in school. Books, qualified teachers, interpreters, teaching and learning materials like TV to show videos

about the lectures because deaf people want to see the thing. *Teaching disability as a subject would also have been something very important.* We need to learn about disability from schools at all levels.

Based on the information provided by my participants about the need for advocacy and the implementation of the IE policy, I will say this idea means a lot to the Ghanaian child with a disability. If there is an advocacy to create the awareness of the existence of the IE Policy and its implementation also is accomplished, the Ghanaian child will have access to equality and equity in our school system.

### **The Need to Counteract Negative Cultural Beliefs about People with Disabilities in Ghana**

Six of the participants talked extensively about some of the cultural practices in Ghana that have had negative effects on them personally. They wished to see total eradication of such practices which are common yet hidden in Ghana, and cause women with disabilities great pain. For instance, there is a cultural belief that albino children can bring a curse upon the family, sometimes resulting in the killing of albino children. Some tribes also believe that raping people who are blind will make the perpetrator rich. It is believed that the blind are deities; hence, sleeping with them will yield wealth. This is a cultural myth that some people still hold firmly, perpetuating the abuse and violation of rights of these women.

Akua felt that the advocates of the country are not working hard enough to hold the government accountable to ban some of the cultural practices. To her, the government's lack of policy implementation makes it very difficult for albinos to survive or live a normal life.

As an albino lady, I would strongly suggest the advocates of the disability groups hold the government accountable for the implementation of all policies and law. Even our own disability law is just on the shelf without any implementation plan, let alone the IE Policy. The advocates need to remind the government of its promise for over two decades now. Education for albinos, especially women is so difficult because, if your family is not educated and firm, you can even be killed for the gods on your way to school. Just think about Akwamufie, the town where no albino will dare travel to, otherwise he/she will be killed openly. What are we doing as citizens if the government is not helping us? Our albino children's lives are in danger.

Elikem's voice showed her ability to thrive despite all odds; at the same time, it was clear that the cultural environment suppresses her. She explained in her answer to an interview question.

I faced a lot of hardships, but none will pull me down. Sometimes as a woman with a disability, if you want to do something, you will feel intimidated by the culture of our land and the environment. I could remember one day in class as we were treating the topic "working with groups," where our lecturer wanted some volunteers in front of the class to do a bit of acting. Nobody was standing up whether they were afraid, or they were feeling reluctant, so I gathered confidence and stood up. The whole class went shouting yoooyooooo Elikem! Making me feel how incapable or incapacitated I was even though I didn't feel that for myself. The lecturer was also surprised of my confidence and questioned me if I was sure of standing to do the role play. You can imagine the humiliation and the

teasing that day. I ended up quarrelling with my best friend because she said in our proverb “In the midst of the blind, the one eye man is the leader.” I knew she was supporting me but the proverb she used also seemed as an insult to me which caused our relationship till date. It was a very bitter experience and I never forgot it even today, I feel that pain of recounting it. So, some of our cultural beliefs too count.

These examples show how deeply the Ghanaian society and culture looks down on people with disabilities. Elikem’s story illustrated how people with no disabilities, who are supposed to know better, degraded people with disabilities and made them feel a great deal of stress.

Maami wanted the culture of the school system to be inclusive and to consider the needs of learners with differences, in her case, people who were deaf:

I have a lot of pains that I would not like to talk about because of this interview, I can mention how I failed the exams. One thing is, our culture of talking, shaking hands, shouting, and doing everything in speech is a big issue, because if somebody does not do it the way everybody does it, then that person is wrong. This has to change because we (deaf people) also have accepted ways of doing things. You know, we are different, and we can’t do the same thing especially in our educational journey, but nobody cares for the deaf because we are minority. I felt so much isolated. Everybody saw me as a failure and I feel so disconnected from my loved ones because I failed the Exam. Even the examiners didn’t know that I am deaf because I wrote the paper with the hearing students.

Joyce, through her nursing training, got to know deeply that albinism has nothing to do with the gods (as it is believed). She expressed a desire for the Ghana Association of Albinos (GAPA) to advocate for them so that people holding on to these cultural beliefs might begin to change their attitudes.

We say we are developing as a country, but we have a long way to go in terms of educating our communities, especially our traditionalists who hold on to tradition and keep killing people with albinism. This culture of killing people with albinism or marginalizing them should be a topic of discussion on national platforms because it is an issue. Nobody would like to have his child killed so they would not even come closer to you because they are scared of you. It is really hard to survive on this land.

Based on the comments from the interviewees, it is clear that some of the cultural practices and influences have a negative impact on our school system and our society as whole and we need to work to counteract these negative beliefs.

### **The Need to Educate for Change in Attitude, Especially Teachers, Students, and the Public**

This theme captures the ideas expressed by seven participants who talked about the need to educate the public so that they can change their attitudes towards people with disabilities. It was expressed that, due to our deep-rooted cultural backgrounds and negative stories about people with disabilities, generally and more personally, this group has become marginalized and regarded as a minority group.

Ama, for example, raised the need for people with disabilities to be around the discussion table with NGOs in the educational system to help make the changes they want to see regarding people with disabilities.

We should also change our method of doing things, our attitudes, especially our ways of teaching, because not all of us will raise up our hands to answer questions that we are used to here because I was a victim. I am the shy type and I don't like answering questions in public. Education service should do a consultative program so that NGOs working with people with disabilities, and the people themselves, should be around that discussion table so that we tackle the real issues affecting us. Change must come in our attitudes on the educational system. They should stop thinking for us and fixing things wrongly that never solve our problems.

Joyce thinks people have some strange beliefs about people with albinism, so the community has to be educated. This education, according to her, must start from the classroom.

You know, some of our people have this funny belief that we, the people with albinism don't eat garden eggs or we don't go to the washroom on Fridays and we don't die. We need to stop these negative talks or negative cultural habits in the society. This is so humiliating. Our people need to change their negative attitudes towards people with albinism. There should be a public education for everybody to know and change and this has to start from the classroom.

Naya said that because women with disabilities are seen as lacking in potential, some Ghanaians still have the mentality that it is acceptable to molest them. Her school experience included a situation in which she was molested.

You hardly find a Ghanaian to see any good in a woman with disability.

Ghanaians need to change their attitudes. This is because, in my time, I couldn't report to anybody in the school until my mum visited me after some weeks of the incidence. I was afraid and ashamed because of their attitude.

Elikem believes that the change can come from women with disabilities themselves.

Yes, a lot is needed to be done because the government is not pushing as it has to do for people with disabilities. We also need to do something about our culture which shies away from people with disabilities and prevents them from tapping into their potential. I believe in change, we should change out negative attitudes in Ghana.

She goes on to say:

The public also needs some education to change their attitudes towards people with disabilities especially how they look at people with disabilities without turning their heads is unbearable. I think this is the major problem and if it is solved publicly, we can be more comfortable.

The need to educate for a change in attitude, especially for the main stakeholders such as the teachers, students and the entire public, is highly discussed in the above quotes from my participants. As Winston Churchill said, "Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference." I believe as a country, if we change our

attitudes positively towards the issues of disability, we will make big differences in the lives of WWD.

### **Confirmation of the Four Themes and Their Importance**

As indicated by Agbenyega (2007), “The challenge facing the government of Ghana for ensuring social and educational inclusion includes public prejudiced of persons with special needs, architectural barriers, inadequate assessment facilities, inaccessible curriculum, inflexible and training in special education needs for regular teachers” (pp. 41-56). It was very interesting to note that the barriers mentioned here have been in place for more than a decade based on Agbenyega’s (2007) explanation. These are the reasons why women with disabilities must be serious to fight for the implementation of the IE Policy, fight for the introduction of disability studies in all levels of school, fight for the eradication of negative cultural practices, and fight for the attitudinal change for all members of the Ghanaian society. The experiences of Ghanaian women in my study reflect the messages about the importance of cultural responsiveness expressed by other writers, including Fadiman (2012), and Kalyanpur and Harry (2012).

Similarly, it is worth noting (“United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative - Ghana - Background,” n.d.) that the negative social and cultural perceptions about formal education, especially for girls, is typical in the northern part of Ghana where the poverty level is high and Islam is a dominant religion. The inability of parents or guardians to bear related costs of education, including uniforms, stationery, and food, as well as the opportunity costs of sending girls to school, is a huge responsibility. Long distances from home to school, too few facilities and a lack of child-friendly environments in the schools are huge issues to tackle as a nation.

In considering the benefits of inclusion, one realizes that there are many factors that accompany greater inclusion such as friendships, relationships, networks, greater access to general curriculum, peer role models for academic and social behavior, and increased inclusion in future environments (“Benefits of Inclusive Education,” n.d.). Here, making sense of public school culture and context is also highly recommended, as expressed by Valle and Connor (2010).

### **Discussion**

In conclusion, I learned a great deal during this study, and especially about how these women are endowed with unique gifts of self-realization. I am so glad almost all 10 are advocates for themselves, especially fighting for the right to education in diverse ways. Indeed, there were voices missing from this analysis, especially those who did not seem to be advocates, yet went through worse cases. It was very significant for me to listen to these women stress the same points with different words and different emotions. As we have value for collectivity as part of our culture, I deem it necessary to work with these voices. That alone tells me there is hope for our children with disabilities in the future. In this section, I begin by addressing my research questions and conclude with implications for policy, practice, and future research.

#### **Addressing Research Questions**

My first research question focused on the benefits and challenges that the women with disabilities identify in relation to their education. Indeed, my participants confirmed they had many challenges in accessing and benefitting from their education. Some of their challenges were physical, emotional, psychological, and even financial. For instance, I was surprised to hear how some of them were emotionally tortured and

physically dehumanized through rape and other abuse during their journey to get an education. These atrocities were committed by school authorities who were supposed to protect these children. Instead, they took advantage of them and destroyed their future. It is said by one of the victims that:

Akua....hmmm, I was raped on campus by somebody whom I didn't even know because he gave me a lift from a friend's birthday party on campus. My parents left me there in the hands of a teacher to take care of me, um yes, I have a school mum, being a blind child of 11 years, whom would I talk to then? I kept it to myself till now.

These abuses have left an indelible mark in their minds and have caused them psychological trauma. Below is an example of another woman with a disability that falls under the cultural stigma.

Um ...I'm almost 30 and have dated about 11 guys not because of anything... um but for seven of them as my school mated, it's because of their family disapproval of my identity as albino, the other four people were school professionals wanted to use me for their money rituals, but I escaped.

The second research question addressed the extent to which formal education changed the lives of women with disabilities in Ghana. In answering this question, most of the women were very clear that education has very positively changed their lives. They were very optimistic that education has added more value to them in the community. Most of them talked about the respect people in the community give them by assigning

leadership roles to them because they can read, write, and look after themselves. They feel they are not seen as “cursed objects” anymore due to their education.

The last question was about what women with disabilities identify as areas in need of improvement in the education of girls and women in Ghana. In responding to this question, the participants echoed the need of disability studies in the Ghanaian educational system. They saw this as the main way to deal with marginalization, segregation, and the negative attitudes towards the people with disabilities in the school system. To them, if the education system were to include the study of disability in the curriculum, then teachers and students will not see disability as different and therefore not as taboo.

Finally, it was very interesting to note that these women expressed how beneficial formal education has been to them despite all the traumas they experienced. They expressed how this process has led them to employment, given them status to be respected in the community, and how they are independent. The fact that they can read and write and understand other views around them has been of great value to them.

### **Implications for Policy**

The study’s findings confirm that systemic inequalities and wide disparities exist in the acquisition of inclusive formal education in developing countries, including Ghana. The participants’ stories underscore the need to enforce the law for public schools to be equitable, inclusive, and accessible for people of all abilities. Participants calling for the government, NGOs, teachers, and students to be awake and strive for the implementation of the IE Policy of Ghana. The fact that 8 out of the 10 people have echoed this point makes it a great topic for further discussion and advocacy for me as a researcher.

Beyond the local and regional benefits, it is my hope that this study would be beneficial to people with disabilities who are not Ghanaians, but also travel to the country based on its ratification of the UNCRPD. If the IE Policy is fully implemented it would also add value to the existing literature and contribute to the intellectual debate on inclusive education. Again, it is my hope that this study will also create awareness for teachers to know more about the IE Policy and pave the way for policy planning and implementation to reduce the injustices done to children with disabilities in Ghana. Indeed, it would be very beneficial to the nation at large.

### **Implications for Practice**

As described earlier, many of the women interviewed in this study stressed the need to develop and implement disability studies curriculum in the school systems. This practice is one that would seem to be of benefit to students in all levels of our schools. This point is reminiscent of the idea of alternative access described by Mirenda, Garrett, and Light (2012), which describes the importance of learning something new, but learning it differently when one is in a learning environment, including students with and without disabilities. Thinking globally about this theme, it seems to create an important opportunity for international organizations to understand different categories of people with disabilities in Ghana and how to include them fully in programs and scholarships. Additionally, the study's findings suggest that it is important to involve people associated with various disability groups, and especially people with albinism, with epilepsy, and people who form the largest minority group of people with disabilities in Ghana to fight those negative cultural beliefs and practices which are so detrimental to people with disabilities, and especially women with disabilities.

There should be other inclusive innovative tools for easy access to education for women with disabilities in the rural areas. For instance, some participants mentioned walking long distances before reaching school – a situation that calls for transportation to be provided for equal access to education. Once in school, participants mentioned how teaching and learning materials such as glasses, screening, the Jaw screen with speech for the blind, etc., would have been very helpful to them if the government provided them. As a transformative and social justice leader with other allies, I hope my next level of this research is the advocacy level. The findings from the data have given me the direction for fighting for the implementation of the inclusive education policy of Ghana.

### **Limitations of this Research**

This study is limited by its focus on women who were well-educated and literate. Their experiences and voices allowed me to learn a great deal about the educational experiences of women with disabilities in Ghana. The results, however, reflect their experiences and not the experiences of all women, particularly those who are not literate, or had fewer educational experiences. I would have liked to have conducted the same interview with women with disabilities who had lower levels of education; however, the language barriers would have created a cumbersome process, thereby making this option unrealistic at this time. It is important to note, nonetheless, that a group of participants with more diverse educational backgrounds may have added another perspective on the IE Policy.

I can also add that the examination of the literature was limited to articles and reports published in English, thus resulting in the exclusion of some relevant literature. Also, unpublished Ghanaian research on inclusive education was not reviewed. Further, it

is likely that additional inclusive education efforts and initiatives exist that are not well documented and/or disseminated, which may have resulted in an underestimation of the amount of research conducted.

And finally, the participants all had “visible” disabilities, as compared with “invisible” disabilities. This is a limitation and a major problem since the Ghanaian culture does not have names for some disabilities that are not immediately apparent to others such as learning disabilities, chronic pain, birth disorders, injury, chronic illness, Asperger syndrome, asthma, autism, etc. In view of this, the study was limited to the experiences of women with visible disabilities and cannot be generalized to the experiences of so many other women with disabilities that are not immediately obvious.

## References

- Agbenyega, J. (2007). Examining teachers' concerns and attitudes to inclusive education in Ghana. *International Journal of Whole Schooling*, 3(1), 41–56.
- Agyepong, I. A., & Adjei, S. (2008). Public social policy development and implementation: A case study of the Ghana National Health Insurance scheme. *Health policy and planning*, 23(2), 150-160.
- Alcoff, L. M. (2000). Phenomenology, post-structuralism, and feminist theory on the concept of experience. In *Feminist phenomenology* (pp. 39–56). Springer, Dordrecht. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-015-9488-2\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-015-9488-2_3)
- Amutabi, M. N. (2003). Political interference in the running of education in post-independence Kenya: A critical retrospection. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 23(2), 127–144. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0738-0593\(01\)00055-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0738-0593(01)00055-4)
- Barnes, C. (2007). Disability activism and the struggle for change: Disability, policy and politics in the UK. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 2(3), 203–221. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1746197907081259>
- Barnes, C., & Mercer, G. (Eds.). (1997). *Doing disability research*. Leeds: Disability Press.
- Benefits of Inclusive Education. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.kidstogether.org/inclusion/benefitsofinclusion.htm>
- Brown, B., Chui, M., & Manyika, J. (2011). Are you ready for the era of 'big data'. *McKinsey Quarterly*, 4(1), 24–35.
- Chaudhury, S. V. S., Khare, P., Gupta, S., & Garg, S. (2016). Towards inclusive education: A case study of IGNOU. *Journal of Learning for Development*, 3(3), 43–59.
- Cleave, C. (2008). *Little bee: A novel* (Reprint edition). New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Craddock, G., & McCormack, L. (2002). Delivering an AT service: A client-focused, social and participatory service delivery model in assistive technology in Ireland. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 24(1-3), 160–170.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

- Debrand, C. C., & Salzberg, C. L. (2005). A validated curriculum to provide training to faculty regarding students with disabilities in higher education. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 18(1), 49–61.
- Ethical Practice in Adult Education. ERIC Digest. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.ericdigests.org/1992-5/adult.htm>
- Factsheet\_A5\_\_Web\_NEW.pdf. (n.d.). Retrieved from [https://www.unicef.org/disabilities/files/Factsheet\\_A5\\_\\_Web\\_NEW.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/disabilities/files/Factsheet_A5__Web_NEW.pdf)
- Fadiman, A. (2012). *The spirit catches you and you fall down: A Hmong child, her American doctors, and the collision of two cultures*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux
- Glesne, C. (2011). Chapter 6: But is it ethical? Considering what is right. *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An introduction*, 4, 162–183.
- Groce, N. E. (1997). Women with disabilities in the developing world: Arenas for policy revision and programmatic change. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 8(1–2), 177–193.
- Hammad, T., & Singal, N. (2015). Education of women with disabilities in Pakistan: Enhanced agency, unfulfilled aspirations. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 19(12), 1244–1264.
- Hegarty, S., Meijer, C. & Pijl, S. J. (2002). *Inclusive education: A global agenda*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Horner, R. H., Carr, E. G., Halle, J., McGee, G., Odom, S., & Wolery, M. (2005). The use of single-subject research to identify evidence-based practice in special education. *Exceptional Children*, 71(2), 165–179.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/001440290507100203>
- Hutcheon, E., & Lashewicz, B. (2014). Theorizing resilience: Critiquing and unbounding a marginalizing concept. *Disability & Society*, 29(9), 1383–1397.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2014.934954>
- Inclusive Education. (2016, October 19). Retrieved from [https://adafellowship.org/ada\\_fellowship\\_in\\_us/inclusive-education/](https://adafellowship.org/ada_fellowship_in_us/inclusive-education/)
- Kassah, B. L. L., Kassah, A. K., & Agbota, T. K. (2014). Abuse of physically disabled women in Ghana: Its emotional consequences and coping strategies. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 36(8), 665–671.  
<https://doi.org/10.3109/09638288.2013.808272>

- Laverty, S. M. (2003). Hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology: A comparison of historical and methodological considerations. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 2(3), 21–35.
- Loreman, T., Deppeler, J., & Harvey, D. (2005). *Inclusive education: A practical guide to supporting diversity in the classroom*. East Brunswick, UK: Psychology Press.
- Mama, A. (2003). Restore, reform but do not transform: The gender politics of higher education in Africa. *Journal of Higher Education in Africa/Revue de l'enseignement supérieur en Afrique*, 101–125.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2010). *Designing qualitative research* (5th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- McLeskey, J., Waldron, N. L., Spooner, F., & Algozzine, B. (Eds.). (2014). *Handbook of effective inclusive schools: Research and practice*. New York, NY; London, UK: Routledge.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., Huberman, M. A., & Huberman, M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Opuni, K. A. (2006). The effectiveness of the consistency management & cooperative discipline (CMCD) model as a student empowerment and achievement enhancer: the experiences of two K-12 inner-city school systems. *Online Submission*.
- Orazem, P., Glewwe, P., & Patrinos, H. (2007). *The benefits and costs of alternative strategies to improve educational outcomes*. Retrieved from [http://www.copenhagenconsensus.com/sites/default/files/cp\\_educationcc08vol2.pdf](http://www.copenhagenconsensus.com/sites/default/files/cp_educationcc08vol2.pdf)
- Owusu-Amoako, J. (2015). *Support services and adaptations for pupils with visual impairment at Bechem St. Joseph's Practice Basic Inclusive School in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Patton, M. Q. (2001). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Philip, N. (2015). Culture and poverty: a case study of a girl with special educational needs from a poor community in South India. *Support for Learning*, 30(3), 205–222. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9604.12091>
- Psacharopoulos, G. (1994). Returns to investment in education: A global update. *World development*, 22(9), 1325–1343.

- Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. C. M. (2015). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Rousso, H. (2015). *Education for All: A gender and disability perspective*.
- Rousso, A., & Schwartz, S. (2005). *U.S. Patent Application No. 10/946,488*.
- Saito, K., & Nagata, M. (2003, July). Multi-language named-entity recognition system based on HMM. In *Proceedings of the ACL 2003 workshop on Multilingual and mixed-language named entity recognition-Volume 15* (pp. 41–48). Association for Computational Linguistics.
- Shore, S. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED371112.pdf>
- Sifuna, D. N. (2006). A review of major obstacles to women's participation in higher education in Kenya. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education, 11*(1), 85–105.
- Stone, L. (1979). The revival of narrative: reflections on a new old history. *Past & Present, 85*, 3–24.
- Taylor, K., & Marienau, C. (1995). Bridging practice and theory for women's adult development. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 1995*(65), 5–12. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.36719956503>
- The UNESCO Salamanca Statement. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.csie.org.uk/inclusion/unesco-salamanca.shtml>
- Thomas, D. (2006). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data.
- Tisdell, E. J. (1993). Interlocking systems of power, privilege, and oppression in adult higher education classes. *Adult Education Quarterly, 43*(4), 203–226.
- Tuomi, M. T., Lehtomäki, E., & Matonya, M. (2015). As capable as other students: Tanzanian women with disabilities in higher education. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education, 62*(2), 202–214.
- UNICEF Ghana - Media Centre - Ghana's Inclusive education policy. (n.d.). Retrieved from [https://www.unicef.org/ghana/media\\_8503.html](https://www.unicef.org/ghana/media_8503.html)
- United Nations. (2006). United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention>.

- UNDESA, U. (2016). Department of Economic and Social Affairs.(2016). *United Nations e-government survey 2016: E-government in support of sustainable development*.
- United Nations Girls' Education Initiative - Ghana - Background. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.ungei.org/infobycountry/ghana.html>
- Valle, J., & Connor, D. (2010). *Rethinking disability: A disability studies approach to inclusive practices* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Wall, K. (2006). *Special needs and early years: A practitioner's guide* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London, UK; Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Walsh, J. (2013). *The art of storytelling: Easy steps to presenting an unforgettable story* (Reprint). Moody Publishers.
- Welsby, J., & Horsfall, D. (2011). Everyday practices of exclusion/inclusion: Women who have an intellectual disability speaking for themselves. *Disability & Society*, 26(7), 795–807.
- Wendell\_Social\_construction.pdf. (n.d.). Retrieved from [http://moodle.fhs.cuni.cz/pluginfile.php/19118/mod\\_resource/content/0/Wendell\\_Social\\_construction.pdf](http://moodle.fhs.cuni.cz/pluginfile.php/19118/mod_resource/content/0/Wendell_Social_construction.pdf)
- World Bank Staff. (2004). *Education in Rwanda: Rebalancing resources to accelerate post-conflict development and poverty reduction*. World Bank Publications.
- Yin, R. K. (2017). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Interview Questions:**

- 1) Give us a short background about yourself as a woman with disability
- 2) Which level of formal education did you attain or reach?
- 3) Did you have any experience with the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education -FCUBE? If not, which educational reform product are you?
- 4) How was your journey to access education in Ghana like?
- 5) As a woman or a girl with disability how beneficial is formal education to you?
- 6) Has formal Education any change in your livelihood?
- 7) What hardships have you faced because of your identity as a woman and a person with disability in the process of accessing education.
- 8) What Educational program would help you overcome these hardships?
- 9) Drawing from your experience, do you think there is any room for improvement?
- 10) Give two ways that you think Ghana can use to boost its educational system to make it more supportive for women and girls with disabilities.

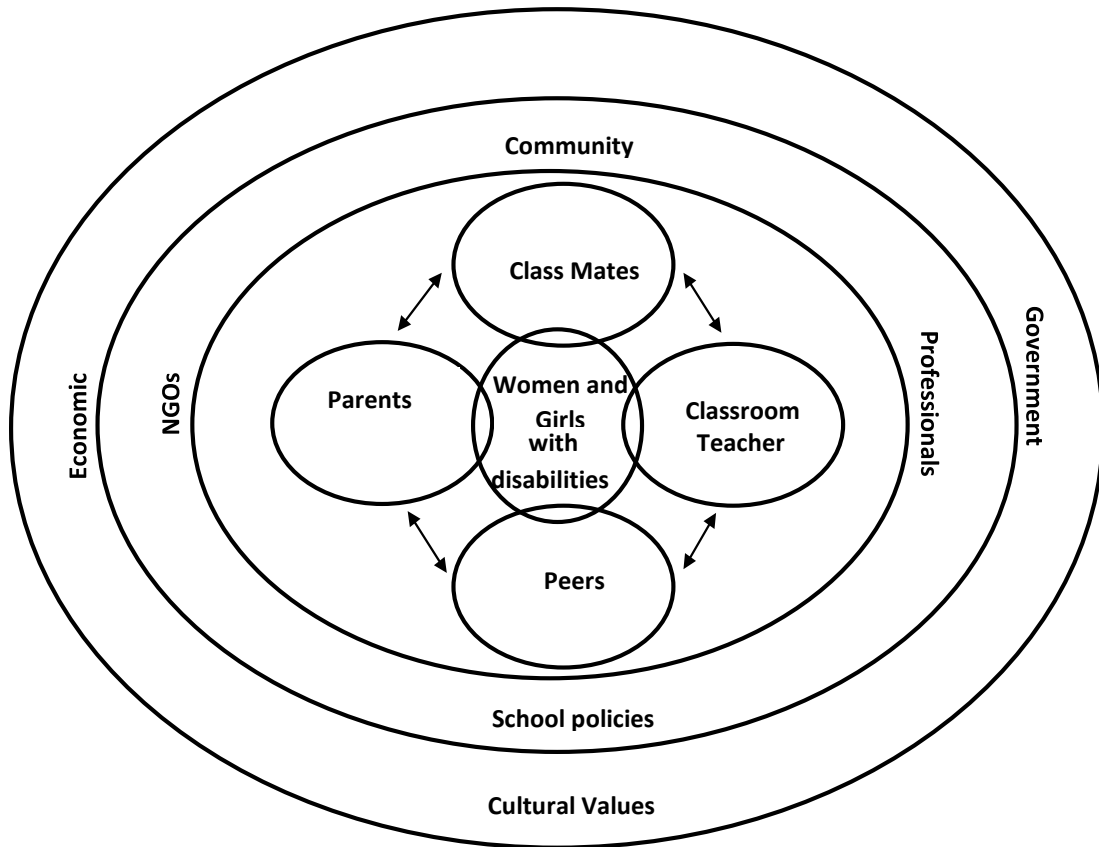
## **APPENDIX B**

Bronfenbrenner ecological system of inclusive education:

### **Conceptual framework**

The support of theory to this study can be found in the work of Uriel Bronfenbrenner's ecology of human growth. Using Bronfenbrenner's (1989) model to explain the education of women and girls with disabilities with regards to equality and equity in the context of an ideal inclusive education, figure 1 below represents the interactions likely to occur within a child's ecosystem. That is to address the contextual

and critical understanding of inclusive education, Bronfenbrenner's (1989, 1992) ecosystem framework has been adopted. It explains the systemic influences on child development. Women and girls with disabilities, at the center of inclusive education, can be seen within the ecological model, described below. Elements within the various systems potentially influence the self-efficacy and educational outcomes of women and girls with disabilities. Bronfenbrenner argues that various immediate and distance forces affect an individual's development. These can be distinguished as five systems which he terms, microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, macrosystems, and chronosystems in which the first four interact with or are linked together in a system of nested, interdependent, dynamic structures ranging from the proximal, consisting of immediate face-to-face settings, to the most distal, comprising broader social contexts such as classes and culture (Bronfenbrenner 1993). He believes that development involves a reciprocal and dynamic relationship between all these five systems, in which each developing person is significantly affected by interactions between a number of overlapping systems.



*Figure 1: Using Bronfenbrenner's framework to explain the Inclusive Education*

## **CHAPTER 3:**

### **Article 2: The Challenges of Inclusive Education Policy Implementation in Ghana: Policy Stakeholders' Perspectives**

#### **Abstract**

People with disabilities (PWD) from countries around the world, including Ghana, deserve the right to education, but are often deprived of it. Statistics from the World Report on Disability in 2011 estimate that literacy rates for PWD may be as low as 1%. The World Bank Report also reports that more than one billion people may experience some form of disability. Individuals with disabilities typically have worse socioeconomic outcomes than those without disabilities. They often have poorer health, lower levels of employment and earnings, and higher poverty rates. In developing countries, the prevalence of disability and its impacts on a wide range of developmental outcomes are usually more significant than they are in countries with well-established educational and social systems (WHO, 2012, p. 201). People with disabilities are especially disadvantaged within school enrollment, educational attainment, and learning. For each of these reasons, implementation of the inclusive education (IE) Policy of Ghana, which calls for full participation of all children with disability in schools, is very critical. This study utilizes case study design to investigate the perceptions of stakeholders who have been part of the IE policy processes, including women with disabilities and policymakers from Ghana, in order to identify the challenges of implementation.

*Keywords: inclusive education, policy implementation, social injustices, stakeholders' perspectives*

### **Statement of the Problem**

Although the IE policy of Ghana was legislated in 2006, it has never been fully implemented. The policy is in place; however, most children with disabilities are still not included in our schools in Ghana. The policy does not contain sufficient sanctions or other accountability measures that would ensure full implementation. Thus, there are no checks and balances and no accountability requirements with consequences (Darling-Hammond, 2007). This creates a number of barriers for families who are trying to send their children to school. To a large extent, most of the citizens have no idea about the existence of this policy and most do not even realize that there is something to be accountable to or some regulations to be followed adequately. This study is designed to further investigate the factors that impede the successful implementation of the IE Policy in Ghana.

### **Purpose of the Research**

The study is designed to investigate the perceptions of stakeholders who have been part of the IE Policy processes (from policy formulation to implementation stages) in order to identify the challenges of implementation of the IE policy. Specifically, this paper focuses on the perspectives of education professionals and leaders involved in implementation of Ghana's IE policy. My purpose is to develop a better understanding of why this policy fails to result in the intended outcomes, based on the perceptions of these major stakeholders.

## **Literature Review**

### **Background of the Problem**

Research on this topic is limited and consists largely of small qualitative studies. This literature review sets the stage exploring the challenges of implementing the IE Policy of Ghana. It begins with an overview of the conceptual framework of the IE Policy of Ghana, the characteristics of the IE Policy, Ghana's strategic goals of the IE Policy, and the background of the implementation of the IE Policy. It concludes with the historical overview of the problem of implementation of the IE Policy of Ghana.

To me, this literature review is a process like an image which I would refer to as "looking into a kaleidoscope at a lovely design which keeps shifting" (Kamler, Thomson, & Thomson, 2014, p. 64). The review presents a critical analysis of the development and implementation of the IE Policy in Ghana. While Ghanaian culture is traditionally founded on inclusive social practices, rather than individualistic ideologies, inclusive education has been a difficult challenge for the leadership of the Ghanaian government. Implementation of inclusive approaches to education have been negatively impacted by a number of issues, such as the prevailing belief system in Ghana, the cultural stigma around disability, and the marginalization of people with disabilities (Mantey, 2014). The purpose of this literature review is to highlight the complexity of formulating inclusive education policies for small developing countries like Ghana and to explore questions about why policy developers borrow from other developed countries, often without necessarily thinking about the cultural context in which the implementation of policies takes place (Duke, Pillay, Tones, Nickerson, Carrington, & Ioelu, 2016). The national process of development is a powerful influence in educational policy; hence, our political

leaders must be very sensitive to the inconsistencies that can exist when they sign and endorse international conventions and treaties but fail to “walk the talk” of implementation.

### **Conceptual Framework of the IE Policy**

The IE Policy in the Ghanaian context was developed to provide a platform for addressing the varied educational needs of all Ghanaians of school age using the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework and ensuring that the teaching and learning environment met the needs of all students (Agymang, 2008). The UDL framework is friendly to all pupils and students. It is a pedagogical approach that makes information accessible for students with diverse learning needs. It has three main principles, namely: Multiple means of representation, multiple ways of actions and expressions, and multiple means of engagement. The UDL framework ensures that students have multiple pathways to learn information. Thus, the conceptual framework of this policy is based on the premise of UDL and child friendly schools’ concept (Agymang, 2008).

### **Characteristics of the IE Policy**

The IE Policy acknowledges that:

- All children can learn irrespective of differences in age, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, etc.
- All children have the right to access basic education
- The education system should be dynamic to adapt to the needs of children

- IE facilitates and enables education structures, systems and methodologies to meet the needs of all children; and
- It is part of a wider strategy to promote an inclusive society (Opoku-Agyemang 2008)

### **Ghana’s Strategic Goals Related to the IE Policy**

According to Nana Opoku Agyemang, there is a strategic direction for delivering an all-inclusive education service that is conducive to the Ghanaian education system. This section presents the strategic framework – the overarching objective of the policy, objectives and key strategic deliverables. Table 1 summarizes the IE Policy of Ghana. (Opoku-Agyemang 2008)

Table 1:

#### *The IE Policy of Ghana*

<b>Goals of the IE Policy</b>	The overarching goal of this policy is to redefine the delivery and management of education services to respond to the diverse needs of all pupils/students within the framework of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
<b>Objectives of the IE Policy</b>	Policy Objective: Promote a child friendly environment for enhancing the quality of education for persons with disabilities through UDL approaches.
<b>Strategies</b>	Transform existing special education institutions into resources to assist the mainstream system. (The expertise of special educators and special schools can support regular teachers and mainstream schools at district, school and classroom levels). 2) Mainstream inclusive education into pre-service and in-service training to teachers so that they can identify and respond to the needs of each child and promote diversity in the classroom.

- 
- 3) Promote the deployment of special educational needs coordinators to all schools to coordinate special educational needs activities within school reforms context.
  - 4) Ensure that schools, curricula, assessment procedures and teaching and learning materials are accessible and fair for all.
  - 5) Promote the availability and training of relevant professionals as well as facilities for medical assessment; educational assessment, training in social skills, psychological assessment, occupational therapy, and speech/language assessment. Also, ensure early identification and stimulation of children with disabilities as well as coordinated support services for families of children with disabilities.
  - 6) Promote a system of flexible examination structure that permits pupils/students to sit for exams in diverse forms (e.g. verbal listening/verbal exams, use of picture exchange communication, written, etc. to meet the diverse educational needs).

- 
- Adopted from the IE Policy of Ghana. (Opoku-Agyemang 2008)

### **Implementation of IE Policy: Background**

Although there is little research on implementation of the IE Policy in Ghana, a review of implementation more broadly reveals themes that may also apply in Ghana. As indicated by Vlachou (2004), “Despite the magnitude of the debate towards efforts to create more inclusive schooling, communities are fraught with multiple difficulties, dilemmas and contradictions that often result into piecemeal or sequential reforms” (p 57). Avramidis and Norwich’s (2002) research on inclusive education reveals similar trends, noting that the successful implementation of any inclusive policy is largely dependent on the degree to which educators embrace a positive attitude towards inclusion. Thus, a great deal of research has sought to examine “teachers' attitudes

towards the integration and, more recently, the inclusion of children with special educational needs in the mainstream school” (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002, p. 17). Research has also demonstrated the importance of ensuring that educational institutions, teaching staff, administration, families, community and other participants in the educational process are fully aware of and accept the need for an IE for all. However, several shortcomings toward attainment of this goal for IE have been revealed (Spasenovic & Maksic, 2013). There are a number of factors that contribute to this situation. In the context of Ghana, it was indicated by Avoke (2002) that the successes achieved to date mask long-term challenges in access, retention and quality education for all, particularly for students with disabilities due to lack of professional development activities for teachers, ineffective monitoring system and limited resources provided to the schools (Akyeampong, 2004). Further, architectural barriers, inaccessible curriculum and limited pre-/post-training in special education courses for regular classroom teachers limit access to education for students with disabilities (Ghana Education Service, 2004, as cited by Agbenyega, 2007).

### **The Historical Overview of the Problem of Implementation of the IE Policy**

According to Kilinc (2016):

History dynamically evolves over time developing the roots of current ideologies and practices within specific contexts. Thus, without examining the history of special education, our understanding of inclusive education falls short, mainly, because sociocultural and historical contexts set agendas on how actors within an education system experience education in current time and space. (p. 2)

For instance, in the literature, it appears that despite the rising interest in IE across the world, there are tensions, struggles, and difficulties in achieving education parity in each country. A typical example is what is discussed in the book *Improving Schools, Developing Inclusion* (Ainscow et al., 2006). For instance, international pressures often lead countries to (intentionally and unintentionally) neglect their complex historical and sociocultural contexts, causing a direct and negative impact on their interpretations and understandings of the development of the IE agenda. Western Europe and the United States pursue comprehensive, IE agendas, and mandate top-down IE policies. These approaches used in Western Europe and the US are not always appropriate in other countries, which has increased the gap between positive intention to develop inclusive education agenda and actual practices in those countries (Artiles & Kozleski, 2016).

For example, developing countries such as Latin America and most of the Asian and Sub-Saharan countries tend to deal with financial, professional, physical resources and ideological challenges that constrain the progress of inclusive education (Fletcher & Artiles, 2005; Peters, 2007). Indeed, Ghana is part of the Sub-Saharan countries; hence, she is also entangled with these historical issues in terms of implementing and enforcing the IE policy. Fletcher and Artiles (2005) discuss the challenge of implementing inclusive policies in Mexico due to barriers such as larger class sizes, lack of economic opportunities, and lack of well-prepared teachers. On the other hand, some Middle Eastern countries (e.g., Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait) experience obstacles to develop an IE system due to traditional beliefs, practices, and values (i.e., fatalism, denial, shame, and family honor). Similar challenges exist in Ghana. In view of this, I agree with Sultan and Yin (2012) that the “inclusive education agenda should be examined in the light of

cultural-historical contexts, which reveal differential opportunities for particular groups in a nation” (p. 42).

In conclusion, even though there has been significant observable plans and documentation of the conceptual framework of the IE Policy of Ghana, the characteristics of the IE Policy, Ghana’s strategic goals of the IE Policy, the background of the implementation of the IE Policy, and the historical overview of the problem of implementation of the IE Policy of Ghana, there are significant achievement gaps among children with disabilities and non-disabled students in the school. This is the reason my research seeks to address the challenges of implementation in order to achieve educational equity in access, participation, and learning outcomes for all groups of students. My research design attempts to capture my personal interest in the topic of IE in Ghana with my growing interest in research design and especially, techniques that promote conversations amongst different groups of people involved in the implementation effort. This leads me to the design that is best suited to the needs to answer my research questions while valuing the Council of Heads of Education of Secondary Schools (CHESS) participants.

### **Research Design: Case Study**

This paper used a case study approach to investigate and reflect on the interactions of context with actors and engaged in the implementation of the IE Policy of Ghana. For the purpose of this paper, the “actors” consulted were persons involved in implementation of Ghana’s IE Policy. A key goal of the study was to understand the narratives that participants shared regarding implementation of the IE Policy, and in particular, the challenges to implementation. As indicated by Agyepong and Adjei

(2008), case study approaches have been used successfully to support the idea that major changes to public social policies and programming content are often heavily influenced by factors other than the availability or non-availability of evidence that would otherwise inform systemic changes. Use of the case study design allowed me to engage research participants in a form of storytelling, as storytelling is a vital form of communicating serious issues in need of change in our Ghanaian culture. Through the exchange of stories, wisdom is formed and shared among members of the community – be they local, distant or ancestral; hence, one needs to use the tool of narrative data collection. I also needed to indicate that indigenous perspectives play a key role in my practices as a non-western Ghanaian woman working across boundaries in western academic spaces. This is because the case study approach relates to the indigenous perspectives of my participants within my own culture.

Again, as echoed by Ghanaian scholars Agyepong and Adjei (2008), in the context of low-income and developing countries, there can be imbalances of policy decision-making power related to strong and dominant political actors combined with weak civil society engagement, accountability systems and technical analyst power and position. Similarly, Ghesquière, Maes, and Vandenberghe (2004) note that in engaging in research, one must follow the criteria set down by the scholars so that one's intellectual piece can find a place in the generally "accepted" domain. My intent was thus to use an accepted research method (i.e., a qualitative case study approach) while focusing on the narrative aspects within the case study approach.

As indicated by Yin (2017), the choice to employ a case study approach relates to the content of research questions. That is, the more that my questions seek to explain

some contemporary circumstances (e.g., how or why some social phenomenon works), the more that case study research will be relevant. Horner et al. (2005) also suggest that case study is effective in the field of special needs, as it focuses on the individual and can provide detailed data related to their life experiences (Philip, 2015).

According to Yazan (2015), in a case study, it is incumbent upon the case study researchers to draw their data from multiple sources to capture the case under study in its complexity and entirety; hence, my interest in using the narrative as an indigenous tool through which I could easily gather data while attending to issues of reliability and validity. This study was intended to bring out the reality on the ground as indicated by Merriam (1998):

The researcher brings a construction of reality to the research situation, which interacts with other people's constructions or interpretations of the phenomenon being studied. The final product of this type of study is yet another interpretation by the researcher of others' views filtered through his or her own. (p. 22)

Finally, this study was designed to explore, investigate and validate the worldview or the perceptions of stakeholders of the IE Policy process (from policy formulation stage to implementation), to inquire into the nature and challenges of implementation, and in particular, the challenges of holding the government accountable in Ghana. My purpose was to develop a better understanding of why this policy appears to have failed to result in the intended outcomes, based on the perceptions of major stakeholders included in the study.

### **Research Question**

The study was guided by the following question:

- What are stakeholders' perceptions regarding the factors or forces that facilitate or impede implementation of the IE policy?

### **Research Site and Participants**

The study was primarily situated in Accra, Ghana because most of the policy stakeholders live there. Implementation requires coordination among representatives; as such, I selected the participants due to the key roles they played in implementing the IE Policy of Ghana since 2006. The reason for my purposeful sampling is that these stakeholders were key players from relevant organizations established by the government, and they are part of a group that can make changes in the lives of children with disabilities in Ghana. These participants included representatives from the Ghana Education Department, the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection, the Human Rights Department, The University of Legon, and two Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). In addition to the relevance of their roles, I chose the eight participants (four women and four men) because of “do-ability” considerations in qualitative research, which suggests that a qualitative study should be focused enough to bear in mind the issues of gaining access and identifying willing participants in the setting (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). Importantly, these stakeholders do not have a common social status or the same educational background because they belong to different institutions. They formed a different community as they represented some group of people around the table of discussion to make the changes the people want to see in the community. In other words, they represent a hierarchy of decision-makers, as they include participants from the national, local and school district levels.

Before I recruited the participants for this study, I sent a letter of introduction regarding my intent and study design. Some of these people knew me due to my advocacy campaigns through the media; still, I needed to initiate some rapport. Also, I needed to be very careful about how to present the purpose of my research because my target was to get a variety of perspectives. I was also aware that I had to be careful about how I worded what I intended to do with the results.

I followed all the human subject protection regulations of the University of Vermont. Ethically, this process also played a vital role as I worked towards trustworthiness, credibility, validity and reliability. In addition to using pseudonyms for participants, I have changed the names of the settings in which they work. I have also altered or scrambled non -essential biographical details to further protect anonymity. Table 2 lists a pseudonym for each participant, their departments, their respective roles, age and gender.

Table 2:

*Research Participants for Study #2*

Pseudonym	Position/Title	Sex and Age	Departments
1.Kojo	A Special Education National Coordinators,	Male, 47 years	The Ghana Education Department
2.Maman	A Representation of Ghana Federation of Disability Organizations-GFD	Female, 50 years	NGO
3. Kofi	A Lecturer at the department of educational studies in one of the Universities in Ghana	Male, 52 years	The University of Legon
4. Yawa	A Social Policy Analyst, Researcher and Consultant in development management issues	Female, 47 years	The Education Department

5. Korku	A Human Rights Lawyer and a Lecturer	Male, 60 years	The Human Rights Department
6. Tina	A social worker and former executive director	Female, 55 years	The Ministry of Gender and Social Protection
7. Korbla	A representative from a national foundation for gender equality and social inclusion.	Male, 57 years	NGO
8. Dora	A representative from the National Council on Persons with Disabilities (NCPD)	Female, 45 years	The Ministry of Gender and Social Protection

My main aim in selecting these people was to explore their perceptions of implementation of the IE Policy, including their thoughts as to why it may be difficult to implement. Their responses were key to understanding how to move forward from the current status of implementation.

### **Data Collection and Recording Procedures**

According to Patton (2014), “The purpose of a research interview is first and foremost to gather data, not to change people” (p. 14). Also, as Dollinger indicated, “Narrative is perhaps the only way of getting closer. Getting closer in in this case getting closer to the context- the personalities, the relationships, the organizational culture” (2013, p. 108). I needed to network culturally and ethically with these stakeholders since they all share different cultural values and organizational cultures. In order to gather data, I first explored the terrain by engaging in a pilot test with my interview guide. I used Patton’s (2014) interview guide approach to ensure that the same basic lines of inquiry were pursued with each participant’s interview. Each interview began with a conversational interview with the participants in order to get demographic information

and their description of the IE Policy. I employed analytical memoing in this process to keep myself engaged with the data and aware of how the study was proceeding.

Individual interviews were conducted face to face. Each lasted about one and a half hours and was audio recorded. The interview questions were designed to be flexible and accessible to the participants. My interview protocol included 10 open-ended questions, which were refined through pilot testing. See Appendix A for a copy of the questions. I left ample space between the questions to write responses to the interviewees' comments. As indicated by Glesne (2011):

The opportunity to learn about what you cannot see and to explore alternative explanations of what you do see is the special strength of in-depth interviewing.

To this opportunity add the serendipitous learning that emerges from the unexpected turns in discourse that your questions evoke. (p. 97)

I explored every aspect of interviewing to discover those opportunities from my participants within the timeframe of this study. Following completion of the interviews, I transcribed recordings on my computer.

To ensure credibility, I asked each of the participants the same interview questions, using a neutral tone of voice. As noted above, I began each interview with an informal conversational interview. According to Burgess-Limerick and Burgess-Limerick (1998), conversational interviews are:

...described as a method to address research questions in psychology. The consequence is that multiple, dynamic, and potentially contradictory realities are assumed to exist. These realities are best understood through a collaboration between researcher and participants in which the social worlds of the participants

are brought together through the researcher. The aim is to generate theory that is convincing and useful. (p. 1)

## **Interviews**

I conducted the interviews over a two-month period during which I was based in Ghana. The average length of interviews was 65 minutes. The shortest interview was 50 minutes and the longest 90 minutes. Some of the participants were constantly chatty and happy about the research questions and tended to tell detailed stories of their successes in implementation of the IE Policy. All the participants were well educated; hence, the interviews were in the English language. Some of them chose to be interviewed at their offices and some at different spots where they had to perform other equally important duties so I had to meet them at those places like funeral grounds, a durbar ground and at a school program launch. I identified with their difficulties and successes in this interview process and that helped me to be a good and empathic listener. The 10 open ended questions were sufficiently flexible to allow for the incorporation of follow up questions to open any development and alteration depending on the experience of the participant (Hollway & Jefferson, 2002). Some of them also requested to have the questions ahead of time before our meeting.

Interestingly, despite the important documents such as the IRB, the information sheet, the letter of introduction, one person requested for “just an email” confirmation from my advisor or the head of faculty to prove my authenticity. At the point, I remembered what Hollway and Jefferson (2002) noted about the research process: qualitative researchers need to take seriously the intersubjective dynamics of the interview relationship and their own role in both the production and analysis of data. Her

request for “just an email” was a great surprise for me because this shows me how we attach value and meaning to certain aspects of the research process which may not be understood by somebody from another culture. I immediately got back to my supervisor back in the US to send her such a letter. She received the letter the following day and called me back to her office to congratulate me. She finally gave me 90 minutes of her time for the interview.

Throughout the data collection, I practiced analytical memoing; that is, I conducted preliminary syntheses of the data in the form of notes to self in order to inform the next data collection steps, and to document emerging ideas, concepts and their relationships with extant theory (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Ravitch and Carl (2016) also echoed that the goal of this type of a memo is to encourage a researcher to systematically consider issues of validity at various points throughout the study (p. 206). I wrote these brief notes about each participant immediately after I completed their interviews. The field notes were key to my ability to convey an overall impression of the interview and the attitudes of the participants which I could refer to later. That was how I was able to categorize the groups accordingly. I later downloaded the audio onto my computer and listened to the interviews. While listening, I wrote down as much of the details I could type without stopping the recording. This process helped me to refresh my memory and linked my field notes to what I heard. From here, I transcribed word for word, phrase by phrase and sentence by sentence until I was done with each of the interviews. Being present at the interview, and familiar with the accent and cadences of the interviewees, greatly aided my comprehension of recording.

For accuracy, the anonymized transcript was sent to each participant to check. Each one of them was told that he/she could request the removal of any material he/she did not wish to be included as part of the research data. No request for the excision of any interview material was presented. From this stage, I started my coding.

### **Data Analysis**

Glesne (2011) states that data analysis involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read to figure out what you have learned and to make sense of what you have experienced. Data analysis is the intentional and systematic scrutiny of data at various stages throughout the research (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). For this study, I used inductive data analysis. Formal analysis constituted actual coding of the data (transcripts) associated with each the individual participants and generating a list of inductive emergent codes. This was where I used my memos and field notes effectively because the memos helped me develop my codes and themes in the early stage of my data analysis. Patton (2001) explains that inductive data analysis allows the researcher to discover patterns, themes, and categories in their data; similarly, Thomas, (2006), notes that, the purpose of utilizing an inductive analysis approach is to distill the raw data into a summary and to establish clear links between the research objectives and summary findings.

In addition to field notes, I believe it is important to write thematic and theoretical memos to ensure that my thoughts about how the data are coming together in clusters, patterns, or themes as the data accumulates (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Writing these memos as I conducted the research helped me manage the data and my

own thoughts about it. The memoing process also helped me to form better insight on how these categories were formulated by the data sources. In addition, I referred to public documents reviewed as part of my literature review (e.g., Benefits of Inclusion, Graphic Daily Paper) and reflected on the data they provided as part of my memos. Together, these sources provided more insight on the experiences of the stakeholders.

For the data analysis, I incorporated a specific approach to coding. Coding is a process for assigning meaning to data and is typically a part of qualitative data analysis (Carl & Ravitch, 2016). As part of the analysis, I used a color-coding scheme in which specific phrases were categorized once the data was revealed. The initial coded themes were grouped into separate charts. Generally, coding data involves the researcher searching for regularly occurring phrases and concepts (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). As stated by Marshall and Rossman, 2010, “The tough intellectual work of analysis is in generating categories and themes” (p. 212). Therefore, it is imperative that coding is done as soon as the interviews take place to ensure that these categories and themes are discovered. By incorporating open coding, I highlighted sections of text or labelled them in groups identified by the type of institution that the participant represented (e.g., government, NGO, local school district) while remaining grounded in participants’ descriptions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The next step I took was to do axial coding or grouping the codes according to conceptual categories that reflected commonalities among the codes (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Following coding and thematic analysis of each participant’s interview, I conducted a cross-case analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994) to identify common themes emerging across the interviews as well as differences in the ways in which individuals

expressed the themes. As a researcher, it is my goal to connect the stakeholders' stories to literature and larger themes. That said, the nature of the narratives makes it unique to the individual stakeholders yet connected to one another. While the narratives collected were all truly authentic to each of them, I attempted to analyze and to determine the four themes by their responses of the eight questions. I considered each of the stakeholders as a single case, and then looked for common themes emerging across those cases. This process of analysis resulted in a thematic summary of the stakeholder's experiences in implementing the IE Policy, as well as their recommendations.

### **Personal Bias/ Subjective Bias**

In the vein of educational and social services research and qualitative inquiry process, it is necessary to acknowledge my role as an instrument in this research. It is critical for me to understand my bias and assumptions before starting the research and it was important for me to constantly engage in "reflexive activities" (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2015, p. 219). As a reflective researcher, I felt obliged to make explicit my social background and identity with which I came to this dissertation research. I am concerned with the effect my own subjectivity might have on the data and findings that would be generated from the study. To mitigate my subjectivity and biases in the study, I took several measures such as those outlined in the following sections.

**Trustworthiness.** It is very important to identify whose voices are heard in this research. My passion for the topic is clear, so I needed to ensure that I focused on the participants' voices above my own. This is what Graneheim, Lindgren, and Lundman (2017) described as the "red thread running through the entire work from the

introduction and background, via the soundness of the method to the integrity of the findings” (Graneheim et al., 2017, p. 29). In view of this, I focused on establishing credibility and reliability as a means to ensure that my work could reflect trustworthiness.

**Credibility.** The credibility of my study must follow what has been the trend of scholarly works. First, I adopted appropriate and well-recognized research methods. I also needed to adopt some tactics to promote honesty among my participants, as well as to make sure that I employ the use of clarifying questions during the interviews. There was also the process of debriefing sessions between the participants and myself. Here, descriptions of background, qualifications and experiences of my participants were very essential. Finally, I engaged in a reflective commentary, or memoing (on my phone) on my research to remind me of the process and the product.

**Reliability.** With regards to external reliability, Ghesquière et al. (2004) note that “the epistemological premises of the research design must be made explicit, the selection of the case study language must be described accurately, and as many details as possible must be given with regard to the collection of the data as well as to the analysis procedure used” (p. 173). Based on this, I did some “member checking” and sent anonymized transcripts to each participant to check for accuracy and reliability and to have them confirm that the transcript represented their own words.

I also engaged in continuous evaluation to ensure both internal reliability and external reliability were considered. I set aside my experiences as much as possible to take a fresh perspective towards the phenomenon being explored. I also reflected and searched for negative cases along with patterns and themes as I constantly checked

myself during analysis to ensure that my own biases were not entering the analysis (known as epoche or bracketing) (Waldron, Spooner, & Algozzine, 2014). The purpose of these measures was to help to mitigate potential bias. In principle, this can replicate itself directly or indirectly in the findings.

### **Findings**

The data analysis procedures described above generated five categorical themes that I present below in an attempt to address the central research question. While I identified some positive trends with respect to implementation, the interviewees spoke more about challenges than successes. The eight participants all talked about these themes in diverse ways. They expressed the same idea with different choices of words and attached different levels of emotions or sentiments to their points. As seen in the table below, I cited five examples under each of them out of the eight interviews but captured perspectives expressed by all eight individuals. Interestingly, all eight of them touched on the major issue, which they named a “weak system.” Analysis of these rich discussions resulted in identification of five themes and related factors supporting or impeding implementation:

- Current factors supporting /facilitating implementation
- Understanding the problem: the need for accurate data for PWDs
- Resourcing the solution: the need for financial, human, and material resources
- Making education meaningful: the need to reduce large class sizes in every level (kindergarten- university level)

- Recognizing the challenge: the need to create and raise awareness for the “ordinary stakeholders” in the community

### **Current Factors Supporting /Facilitating Implementation**

According to my participants, there are some plans and activities that were supporting or facilitating the implementation of the IE Policy. According to them, some individuals, entities and non-governmental organizations have been collaborating with the government and moving the policy forward. The quotes that follow provide evidence of participants’ beliefs and descriptions of support for implementation of the IE Policy. Secondly, the stakeholders talked about experiences that were also very authentic to them which any an average Ghanaian can easily relate to. Thirdly, these stakeholders have been part of all these processes from the planning stage to the level of implementation and therefore these were some of their achievements in their processes. For instance, Yawa, who is the Social Policy Analyst, Researcher and Consultant in development management issues, talked about positive developments in this way:

Considerable amounts of work in country by different parties to create awareness of inclusivity issues – there good larger environment and context for education and advocacy. There is also willingness of stakeholders to work on inclusive education including Colleges of Education, Ministry of Education Monitoring Agencies (including National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE), National Accreditation Board (NAB), etc.). We can also talk about availability of some guidelines to guide institutions in achieving IE including teaching-learning materials, attention to inclusivity standards etc. There is again availability of

schools practicing IE that can be learnt from for good practices. Presently, there is ongoing collaboration between some schools and PTAs to promote IE. Finally, there is a current availability of Development Partner Support.

In her explanation, Yawa was very clear to note the things that are happening on the ground to push the IE Policy implementation forward. All of the entities she mentioned are government institutions that are established and have the mandate to effect a positive change.

Similarly, Kojo who is also the Special Education National Coordinator, expressed the idea of the existence of established government institutions to effect changes. He said:

Yes, training has been going on to identify children with disability from September, 2009 and it has become a policy that every school should have a training process. We are doing this in conjunction with Ghana health service and again it is a cross nation activity and other ministries have brought on board local government for that matter, the district assembly concept. We have the Ministry of Finance; the Ministry of Health and we have about five ministries coming together because of the implementation of inclusive education. It is a coordinative approach and we are embarking on this and we tell the district assemblies that they should own the policy and make sure the inclusive education is fully implemented.

Kojo expressed how the Health Service, the Ministry of Finance and five other institutions such as the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, the Ministry of Education, the National Council of People with Disabilities, the Ministry of Local Government and

two national Non-Profit Organizations connected with the Ghana education service to work toward the implementation of the IE Policy.

Kofi, a professor at the department of educational studies in the University of Ghana, commented pointed out the important role of universities in implementation of the IE Policy. As he noted:

One of the factors that is promoting the IE policy is the bills has passed in our universities. There are incorporated programs that have exposed students to the bills, that exposes student to errrm positive documents that exposes students to intervention that is used to support students with special needs and students with disability. For example, even though there are no lifts in the university of Ghana, at the business school there was enough see as evidence. The fact that it is embedded in, it and these days some of the universities also have it as part of their mission statement and vision statement and then on their strategic plans they have the plan that they encourages diversity alright so, once there is diversity it means that we are bringing everyone on board irrespective of your race, irrespective of your gender, your ability, disability and special needs.

Kofi's statement indicated how universities have been involved by incorporating IE into their mission statements, vision statements, and strategic plans as well as their diversity plans.

In the same vein, Korbla, who is the representative from a national foundation for gender equality and social inclusion, also explained how the NGOs are involved in making sure that the IE Policy is implemented:

Well I think that in the first instance having the policy is even a factor that enabling its implementation because then it states clearly the scope and the strategy and all of that and I think this is an area of interest for a lot of people ermm there are media organizations that invest their time and resources in ensuring that persons with disability learners with disability are not discriminated against there are also civil society organizations actors for example the Star Ghana foundation is in partnership with a lot of civil society organizations who are working at different levels on the implementation of the policy.

According to Korbla, Non-Governmental Organizations and other civil societies are quite involved pushing the IE Policy forward. He mentioned “Star Ghana,” the biggest donor organization in Ghana, and its partnership with other organizations. Star Ghana is a foundation that belongs to the people of Ghana. They create platforms for ordinary people, particularly the most marginalized in society, to become active citizens who demand positive change in their lives and communities. Citizens and leaders within Star Ghana have been working closely with other stakeholders to make realize their vision.

Finally, Dora who is a representative from the National Council on Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) had this to say, “A determined National Implementation Steering Committee on IE is established and the civil society coalition on education keeping an eye on the implementation of the policy.” According to Dora, these entities have been established to monitor how work on the IE Policy is progressing and report to the government.

Along with talking about the factors that facilitated implementation, my participants also talked about some of the major challenges impeding the progress of the

implementation. These challenges can be summarized through five themes. All eight participants spoke to these themes, although they used different words and examples to illustrate their points. To me, these themes are at the heart of this research.

### **Understanding the Problem: The Need for Accurate Data for PWD**

Interviews with the participants suggested that there should be disaggregated data for people with disabilities in Ghana. Below are some of the quotes from the interviews which solidify the theme of working towards disaggregated data for PWD.

For instance, Yawa who is a social policy analyst, researcher and Consultant in development management issues indicated Ghana does not have a strong database for PWD. As she noted:

Weak databases to support information provision for planning and monitoring is our huge challenge as nation. The compelling setback emanates absence of adequate data. Eerrm and then, even though we are putting a lot of things in place we don't have any specific data to work with either, on the district level or at the national lever. We want commitment of our duty bearers to show their strong commitment in data collection for the effective implementation of our inclusive education policy.

In this quote, Yawa expressed the frustration about how Ghana as a country does not have any specific data around people with disabilities. To her, the need for this data is very critical because without the data they cannot connect the dots; hence, they end up working vaguely towards the challenges. She advocated for the commitment of the duty bearers or implementors to work assiduously toward a very strong data base for Ghana and especially for people with disabilities.

Tina also echoed the same theme of disaggregated data for people with disabilities in the country. She said it differently but also spoke to the need for accurate data:

But how can we do an effective job if we do not know the quantum of the problem? In our office we do not know the number of PWDs we have in Ghana and that makes our work very complex because we end up releasing funds for the same disability groups in different part of the country. We need to work on data to know how to disburse the funds.

Here, Tina confirmed the lack of data on people with disabilities in the system leads to inconsistent solutions and funding. According to Tina, without specific data about the people with disability in Ghana, the government is not able to connect the challenges to the available resources. The disbursement of funds towards disability issues do not meet the needs of the people because there is lack of disaggregated data that could inform how resources are directed and utilized.

Kofi, who is a lecturer at the department of educational studies in one of the universities in Ghana, noted the challenges that the lack of data presented to him in trying to describe Ghana's challenges to his students:

Secondly, as a researcher and a lecturer, I think Ghana needs data on its PWDs to work with. It's a shame that, I am not able to point at any data for my students, locally or regionally and I am sure this is a huge issue for as a country. We need data on PWDs, women, girls etc. We need to stop using international data to express or explain our own local issues.

For Kofi, the fact that Ghana relies on international data pertaining to individuals with disabilities impedes the country's efforts to identify and address local issues in ways that reflect Ghana's culture and context.

Finally, the need for accurate data on PWD was expressed by Korku, a human rights lawyer and a lecturer who described how a lack of data negatively impacted implementation. Korku said:

Yea our major challenge is errrr how do you call it, data, yes data on the CWDs. We don't know the number of children in the classroom when you go to the public schools. We are not able to quote any data to use in our fight for their educational rights. Some places we even have large class sizes so, it makes it difficult for the teachers to identify and handle the CWD well for the children to be comfortable in the classroom. Somebody in the wheelchair will need more space so, data should tell us how many CWD we have in our schools and have a better infrastructure for them.

Korku's point highlighted the need for data that would help policy makers and others to fully comprehend the scope of the issues for children with disabilities and to address their needs accordingly.

### **Resourcing the Solution: The Need for Financial, Human, and Material Resources**

Each of the eight participants indicated there are insufficient numbers of people with capacities as well as other resources to implement the IE Policy in schools, as well as at the country's district and regional resource centers. In speaking about resources, the interviewees described the need for financial, human, and material resources. As the

Special Education National Coordinator, Kojo paused for a minute and then characterized his thoughts this way:

...resources are the challenge, in terms of financial resources, material resources, human resource are some of our challenges in Ghana. You know education has its own budget, and we are saying that the total budget for education generally for inclusive education is not enough so, we want to have 2% of that District Assembly Common Fund (DACF).

Human resource is very low. You know, if we want to roll out inclusive education, we know it's a huge program so the training of teachers should be taken into consideration. It is an issue because if you are rolling out in every school in each district, then in every school the teacher must be trained, and it takes money to do all of these.

According to Kojo, human resources are limited due to Ghana's lack of trained teachers who can properly implement the IE Policy. Even though individuals representing the national Special Education office are fighting for incremental increases to the District Assembly Common Fund (a fund for people with disabilities in the district level), Kofi believed that human resources are insufficient to meet the needs of the children with disabilities.

Similar observations were made by Maman, the representative of the Ghana Federation of Disability Organizations- GFD. She talked about the lack of financial resources in this way:

Inadequate resources especially funds allocated to support implementation is so small. It is basically scanty. There should be some clarity about how Ghana is

going to fund IE policy implementation beyond donor resources. Insufficient numbers of people with capacities to implement the IE policy in schools (as teachers and resource support) as well as at district and regional resource centres.

Maman expressed how Ghana as a nation relies heavily on donor agencies or resources for the implementation of the IE Policy, as opposed to receiving adequate funding from the government. Maman noted that in spite of the fact that This is because even Ghana budgets annually for this policy, the larger share of actual funds come from donor agencies; therefore, she called for clarity about how Ghana will fund the IE Policy implementation beyond donor resources. She also talked about insufficient human resources and how most do not have the capacity to implement the policy.

As the representative from the National Council on Persons with Disabilities (NCPD), Dora also confirmed the state of inadequate resources that she confronted in her work. She explained that:

We have inadequate budgetary allocation. Lack of technical personnel on the field and financial constraints, or what we always call inadequate budgeting. Most often people think that CWDs' needs must equally match the funds we receive in our district levels but what do we see? Inadequate funding is another major challenge. when you take education budget alone education budget, the component that is going into infrastructure is very negligible because it is the local government.

Here, Dora was frustrated by the fact that budget allocations for education were inadequate and therefore a hindrance for an effective implementation of the IE Policy. She noted that even though there is a budget and some funds allocated purposely for

education and by the government through the districts and municipal assemblies for disbursement, these budget allocations are very scant and cannot solve the problems on the ground.

Finally, Korbla, the representative from a national foundation for gender equality and social inclusion, also spoke about the inadequacy of resources. His comments centered on the lack of political will regarding funding and negative implications for implementation of the IE Policy:

Related to the political will is lack of funding because, if the political will is there, the government will certainly channel some fund to that. Look at how the common fund is disbursed in our district levels, without any real commitment. Ermm I also think we need adequate resources especially funding for the implementation of this policy and I don't want to be like to say- that the policy is effective as the implementation. What makes the implementation possible is, the fund that are committed to it.

To Korbla, the absence of political makes the works toward the implementation slow or even non-existent. To him, there is money available but not the will to commit funds to implementation of the IE Policy. He noted the contrast between the IE Policy, which has been in existence since 2006 and has yet to be fully implemented, and more recent educational policies that have passed through the policy formation stage to the implementation stage within a two-year process. A typical example is the new Free Senior High School (SHS) policy in Ghana. The Free SHS is a policy of the government of Ghana that started in September 2017. The Free SHS policy states that every child in Ghana who qualifies for second-cycle education should be placed freely in a public

Senior High School for his secondary education fees to be catered and absorbed by the government. Korbla expressed frustration about the fact that the SHS Policy received adequate funding, whereas the IE policy did not.

### **Making Education Meaningful: The Need to Reduce Large Class Sizes in Every Level (Kindergarten- University level)**

According to the Tanzania writer, Tambwe (2019), large class size is a general African cultural issue that relates back to our communal life history. The descriptive statistics show that 69% of classes in Africa are very large and very difficult to handle with the new technological world. This is because in our part of the world, teaching of information, communication and technology are mostly taught abstractly with improvised teaching learning materials; therefore, the teacher needs to attend to each child one after the other. In view of this, “Students were not cooperative when given class activities requiring them to solve problems and think critically, as they are used to a spoon-feeding approach which is based on memorization and cramming” (Tambwe 2019). These experiences are similar to that of Ghana, where large class sizes were mentioned by all participants as a hindrance to implementation of the IE Policy in Ghana. For example, Yawa noted the challenges of the

...persistence of inaccessible school facilities and large classes. Slow progress in constructing and equipping/operationalizing proposed resource centers, classroom which increase our large class sizes in Ghana. Well, as you know our traditional classes are so huge that the teacher does not have time to serve every child equally and equitably. How can one teacher be assigned to sixty to seventy students in a class? That’s too much and unbearable so, if we want to really implement this IE

policy effectively, we should work on the large class size problem.

Here, Yawa was very direct about how our traditional classrooms make it difficult for teachers to serve all children, including those with disabilities.

Korbla also emphasized that, since this particular issue is an African issue, the leaders should discuss it during their African Union meetings. He said:

I also think we should have a second look at our class sizes because at times, we end up killing the teachers indirectly. I guess this large class issue is an African issue and not a Ghanaian issue and it's a big challenge that we need to think about deeply in AU, African Union. Unfortunately, these are not the issues they think about at AU meeting, or?

To Korbla, this class size issue was emblematic of a larger challenge within our land of Africa; therefore, he cautioned this should be discussed at the AU level. His perspective was that the challenge was too great for Ghana to handle single handedly and would be better addressed as a continental issue.

Kofi also expressed his dissatisfaction about how construction work in the schools and resource centers are delayed for years which exacerbates the problem of large class sizes. In this case, foundations of new school structures have been started in the communities but most of them are uncompleted for many years; hence, the old school buildings are still being used despite the fact that some of them are unsafe and unhealthy. The majority of schools are using their old school buildings, which are mostly archaic and not accessible.

From this we can talk about large classes which is another challenge. Some places we have large class sizes so it makes it difficult for the teachers to identify and

handle the CWD well for the children to be comfortable in the classroom somebody in the wheel chair will need more space. Then we don't have enough infrastructure for schooling most of the school are not accessible even those that they have constructed the ramp are few.

Finally, Maman, who is a representative of the GFD, stressed that, along with large class sizes, the built environment is not conducive for children with disabilities.

Yes, inappropriate built environment for the students which makes our classrooms overcrowded. Errm right now we have been advocating at the Ghana federation of disability organizations plus other NGO in education. We have been advocating for reduction or students in our classrooms for easy implement of the inclusive education, up to at most 40 students is good for a teacher but they are not there yet.

Our classroom sizes are too much and unbearable especially the basic levels.

Maman sees the fight from the NGOs as an important part of the call for accessible school environment and the reduction of class size at least to 40 students per class.

### **Recognizing the Challenge: The Need to Create and Raise Awareness for the “Ordinary Stakeholders” in the Community**

Finally, the last theme that emerged from the interviews related to the needs to create and raise awareness for the Ghanaian citizens, who were often referred to by my interviewees as “ordinary stakeholders” in the community. These local stakeholders are the majority of the population in our communities who do not have any idea of the IE Policy or its challenges and therefore have no ideas about how to support its implementation. These citizens include people such as the farmer, market woman, carpenter, shoemaker, community linguist, gongon beater, etc. who are at times also

parents of children with disabilities. Due to the fact that the policy is disconnected from the people in the community, the call was made for everybody to be aware of it in the community and to be involved and participate in diverse ways for the implementation of the IE. The following are the words from Kojo, the Special Education National Coordinator.

There is a lack of wide awareness of ordinary stakeholders, of what national level implementation has achieved (including work of the Inclusive Education Unit of GES and the National Multi-Sectoral Inclusive Education Steering Committee). The need for wider inclusion of stakeholders in policy review processes especially sub-national stakeholders. It is not clear that their insights and experiences are taken into account enough. Awareness creation and revision of the IE Policy to categorically specify the roles of Special Education trained teachers, the regular trained teachers and the Health directorate is highly needed.

Kojo's point explained how the layman needs to be educated about the IE Policy because most people are very much naïve about it. He indicated the importance of these people being aware of the policy because they form the majority of the community.

Korku, a Human Rights Lawyer and a Lecturer, also expressed his thoughts on the importance of developing awareness in the community:

I think, the first thing is, there should be awareness raised about the errm policy, and then it has to move beyond policy into becoming law so that we can really ensure that it is operationalize. In that respect, I don't even know how far it is now. I meant how inclusive it is in developing the policy. Who were the advocates and then the stakeholders who were involved to draw up the policy? Is

it something the government sat down somewhere and just put together or it involve actually persons with disabilities who have the experiences and expertise in contributing to the drawing of the policy? Finally, I want to stress that, the fact that there are not enough awareness or education, not enough funds, or human resources about disability issues publicly, we have threatening issues in the future. The fact that there has not been enough awareness risen the fact that people are not educated about what disability is, what disable people can do and what they cannot do, the whole issue is driven by religion and tradition. That is why for example you have persons with mental disability being taken to spiritual camps and so on and so forth being tied in chain and as a means of exercising their disability to get treatment so, to me these three factors impedes the space for promoting inclusive education, hence the need to educate the public.

Korku's points highlighted the extent of the problem and the potential long-term consequences of the lack of awareness. He first talked about lack of awareness of the IE Policy which in turn makes the policy unpopular to community members or the people we refer to in the Ghanaian term, "the ordinary man." To him, the fact that people are not educated about the IE policy, results in a situation in which historical, cultural, and religious traditions remain the prominent discourse about disability. Unfortunately, this discourse casts people with disabilities in a negative light, thereby contributing to the challenges of implementing a more positive and inclusive approach to the education and rights of people with disabilities. Another issue Korku raised was the lack of funds allocated to disability issues, and the lack of human resources dedicated to publicly

addressing disability issues and challenges. For these reasons, Koroku saw great threats to the future of Ghana as a country.

Dora, who is the representative from the Nation Council on Persons with Disabilities (NCPD), made a similar point about the need for people to understand the nature of disability:

Nationally I will say that the policy is at the infantile stage because most people don't know about it so, we need to educate people more. When you engage with the policy document, it looks so great but when you go into our schools, into our public schools especially, the basic levels, these days most people don't know about it. Errrm I would like to say inclusive education should be championed by everybody because errrm when it comes to inclusive education what the society thinks is about just a student with physical disability or individual's disability that are actually evidence but among us there are a lot of disabilities that are unknown. They are invisible so, we need education on those. For instance, if somebody is suffering from dyslexia or dyscalculia, we might not actually term, it or see it as a disability until the person exhibits it or say his challenges.

To Dora, the IE Policy itself is not well-known and needs a lot of coverage or exposure to the people in the community. She challenged the public to be involved because inclusive education should be championed by everybody in the community.

Finally, Kofi spoke to the theme of awareness raising among the indigenous people in the communities by saying,

For instance, the 3% of the DACF that is for children with special needs and persons with special needs to be talked about openly. The child is entitled to it but

you have to register the child so if you have not registered the child how do you go for it? Most parent don't know and some places you go and asked for it and they will tell you the people have not been coming for it so, they used it to do other things in the community so what we need is education at the community level. remote Inclusive Local Government.

Kofi's point underscores the need for parents to understand the concept of disability and how funds are accessed. Given that many parents do not have access to the right information about the IE Policy, they have challenges accessing the Disability Assemblies Common Fund. This fund was created through the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992, which provides for the establishment the District Assemblies Common Fund [DACF] and mandates Parliament to "annually make provision of not less than five per cent of the total revenues of Ghana to the District Assemblies for development; and the amount shall be paid into District assemblies Common Fund in quarterly installments" (The Constitution, Article 252:2). This fund was not just for education, but rather for the overall welfare of the person with disability. The unfortunate thing is that parents have to send their children for registration before they can access the fund for whatever they want to use it for. Kofi's point provided further evidence of the challenges of a system in which funds may be available, but require families of children with disabilities to be aware of them and to gain access through a registration process that many are not aware of.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study shed light on factors that both support and impede implementation of the IE Policy in Ghana and point to a number of implications for

future policy and practice. Factors facilitating implementation include the efforts of some individuals, entities and non-governmental organizations to collaborate with the government in moving the policy forward. They also pointed to the positive impact of recent training to identify children with disabilities in the basic school levels, the establishment of a National Implementation Steering Committee on IE, and the civil society coalition on education that is monitoring implementation of the policy.

These supporting factors, however, seem to be outweighed by challenges to implementation. For instance, participants talked about the critical need for accurate data on people with disabilities and the ways in which the absence of such data makes it difficult to understand the scope of the challenges associated with implementation of the IE Policy. With respect to resourcing solutions, they indicated the need for financial, human, and material resources. In order to making education meaningful, the stakeholders suggested the need to reduce large class sizes in every level (i.e., kindergarten-university level). Finally, in recognizing challenges associated with implementation, they emphasized the need to create and raise awareness for the stakeholders in the community, including parents of children with disabilities.

Ghana's experience with implementation of the IE Policy is somewhat surprising. Even though policy makers and leaders claim to understand the need for implementation of the IE Policy, they appear to have overlooked challenges that might have been addressed during the policy formation stage. The findings of this research confirm Scheneider and Ingram's (1990) claim that:

If people are not taking actions needed to ameliorate social, economic or political problem, there are five reasons that can be addressed by policy: they may believe

the law does not direct them or authorize them to take action; they may lack incentives or capacity to take the actions needed; they may disagree with the values implicit in the means or end; or the situation may involve such high levels of uncertainty that the nature of the problem is not known, and it is unclear what people should do or how they might be motivated. (p. 64)

All five of these reasons appear to apply to the situation in Ghana, which is why the country needs to rethink and revitalize its processes towards implementation in a timely fashion.

From the literature, it is true that, at times, government and other duty bearers of our institutions are generally well-intentioned toward students with disabilities and are willing to provide accommodations; however, they may not be informed about what is required to achieve full implementation of the IE policy (Debrand & Salzberg, 2005). Drawing from Debrand and Salzberg (2005), as well as the findings of this research, I could easily deduce that the government and duty bearers might do this most often to satisfy the international requirements imposed on them as a country for funding for projects even though they might not have the insight to promote full implementation of the project. This problem can be overcome if laws are enforced or implemented by the government and people can be held accountable and educated.

### **Implications**

To present the implications of this paper, it is important to first review the original purpose of the research. This research took a conceptually and theoretically synthetic approach to investigate the worldview or perceptions of stakeholders who have been part of the IE Policy processes (from policy formulation to implementation stages), in order to

identify facilitating factors as well as the challenges of implementation. This study engaged a sample of eight major stakeholders (four female and four male) representing various backgrounds whose perspectives contributed to a better understanding of why the IE Policy fails to result in the intended outcomes. It follows that this study's significance may be relevant across several areas, including conceptual and theoretical implications, as well as implications for policy, practice, and future research.

**Conceptual and theoretical implications.** Conceptually and theoretically, this paper contributes to extant literature by looking at how educational leaders and policy makers in Ghana expressed their perceptions of implementation. Participants discussed their commitment to the importance of the IE policy and related practices, but also expressed significant concerns regarding implementation. Their comments reflect the broad scope of the problem and suggests a need for Ghana as a country to take a more holistic and sustainable approach to development issues, especially IE Policy implementation issues. The viewpoints of individuals in these types of leadership positions have not been written about in the literature; thus, the study's conceptual contribution is to broaden the scope of what is known about IE Policy implementation.

**Implication for policy.** From this research, the conclusion that can be drawn concerning policy and practice is that the current IE Policy and related practices are not fully aligned. While on paper the policy draws on the framework of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and seeks to respond to the diverse needs of all learners within the framework of Universal Design for Learning, implementation has been impeded by a lack of attention to key structures, resources, data and procedures for accountability. While the involvement of some individuals, entities

and non-governmental organizations who have been collaborating with the government to move the policy forward is important, the current study demonstrates the critical role that the government must play for implementation to be successful. In particular, the study points to the need to move beyond the belief in the need for this policy to a stage that holds implementors accountable for implementation.

**Implications for practice.** A key finding of the study is the lack of broad dissemination of the policy amongst other stakeholders, and especially families, teachers, and students. The fact that so many families are still not aware of the IE Policy or how it can be accessed by families of children with suspected disabilities poses serious threats to implementation. My belief is that effective implementation would have been much more successful had these stakeholders been involved in the discussion of the policy from the beginning of the planning and not just during the implementation stage. The fact that families, teachers, and students do not know enough about the IE Policy is also connected to the lack of data on students with disabilities. Lacking data on their outcomes as compared to outcomes for children without disabilities, families are not in a position to advocate for needed changes or full implementation of the policy. Future studies could focus on the degree to which the outcomes of students in some of Ghana's more progressive and inclusive schools could have informed broader implementation policy.

**Implications for research.** The study's findings raise a number of opportunities for future research, both in terms of theory or framework development and concept validation. More research will, in fact, be necessary to examine and define the issues from a quantitative standpoint in order to refine and validate the concepts and constructs that emerged from this inductive analysis.

While qualitative research is difficult to generalize, I believe this case study could and should be replicated with additional stakeholders for the purpose of informing a more complex and thorough understanding of the current gap between policy and practice. Too little work has been conducted in recent past on disability policies in Ghana; therefore, we must take a moment and recognize the immense changes that the IE Policy will make in the lives of children with disabilities if implemented fully. The question is, is the IE Policy relevant or useful to Ghanaian children with disabilities? Can it be fully implemented? These are all areas and opportunities for further research.

Finn, Julian, and Petrilli's comments (2013) about the fragmented nature of the educational system may be instructive; as they note in their article, "There are too many cooks in the education kitchen, and nobody is clearly in charge" (p. 21). This appears to be true in the Ghanaian context because the policy makers are so distant from where implementation occurs, on the ground and in the classrooms. Labaree (1997) reminds us that "big problems call for big changes." The policy terrain, the cultural context of Ghana, and the social construction of these problems and their solutions are intertwined and complex; hence, our focus on the targeted goal is critical when we are seeking solutions to these problems. Labaree (1997) also reminds us that simple problems can be addressed through linear and rational decision-making, whereas complex problems require multiple perspectives that reflect the larger ecosystem. In other words, there is no need of spending so much time and energy on simple challenges; just simple answers are needed. This particular policy requires complex solutions and therefore needs every major stakeholder to be engaged in the discussion of how to make it work. The complex problems need to be addressed through opportunities for diverse groups and communities

to engage in discussion and dialogue around the root causes of the challenges and potential solutions.

Finally, for the implications for future research, I would like to propose the extension of this research to include more stakeholders such as the families of children with disabilities, teachers of students with disabilities and some religious leaders to get their opinions on implementation.

### **Limitations**

This study is limited by its focus on a small number of stakeholders. Even though their experiences and voices allowed me to learn a great deal about their perspectives about the IE Policy, I believe basing the study in a larger sample size could have generated more accurate results and additional perspectives. In a future study, it might be important to gather viewpoints from people with varying political perspectives. This is because the Ghanaian politician rarely take into account the viewpoints and programs of their opponent. They like initiating new policies and ignoring the old ones; as such, a group of participants with more diverse educational and policy backgrounds may have added another perspective on the IE Policy.

It is important to note that the examination of the literature was limited to articles and reports published in English, thus resulting in the exclusion of some relevant literature. Also, unpublished Ghanaian research on IE was not reviewed. Further, it is possible that additional IE efforts and initiatives exist that are not well documented and/or disseminated, which may have resulted in an underestimation of the amount of research conducted.

Finally, I would have liked to include more people with disabilities in this discussion. This is because the disability community believes strongly in the saying, “Nothing about us without us.” In view of this, the study was limited to the perspectives of abled bodied people and it cannot be generalized to the experiences of policy stakeholders with disabilities that are not immediately obvious.

### References

- Agyepong, I. A., & Adjei, S. (2008). Public social policy development and implementation: A case study of the Ghana National Health Insurance scheme. *Health Policy and Planning, 23*(2), 150–160.
- Ainscow, M., Booth, T., & Dyson, A. (2006). *Improving schools, developing inclusion*. London, UK: Routledge. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203967157>
- Akyeampong, K. (2004). Whole school development: Ghana. Retrieved from [https://www.academia.edu/1074582/Whole\\_school\\_development](https://www.academia.edu/1074582/Whole_school_development)
- Artiles, A. J., & Kozleski, E. B. (2016). Inclusive education’s promises and trajectories: Critical notes about future research on a venerable idea. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 24*(43). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.24.1919>
- Avoke, M. (2002). Models of disability in the labelling and attitudinal discourse in Ghana. *Disability & Society, 17*(7), 769–777. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/0968759022000039064>
- Avramidis, E., & Norwich, B. (2002). Teachers’ attitudes towards integration / inclusion: A review of the literature. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 17*(2), 129–147. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856250210129056>
- Burgess-Limerick, T., & Burgess-Limerick, R. (1998). Conversational interviews and multiple-case research in psychology. *Australian Journal of Psychology, 50*(2), 63–70. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/00049539808257535>
- Debrand, C. C., & Salzberg, C. L. (2005). A validated curriculum to provide training to faculty regarding students with disabilities in Higher Education. *Journal of*

*Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 18(1), 49–61.

- Dollinger, D. (2013). Using narrative in research by C. Bold. *The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation, Toronto*, 28(1), 107.
- Duke, J., Pillay, H., Tones, M., Nickerson, J., Carrington, S., & Ioelu, A. (2016). A case for rethinking inclusive education policy creation in developing countries. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 46(6), 906–928. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2016.1204226>
- Finn Jr, C. E., Julian, L., & Petrilli, M. J. (2013). *The State of State Standards, 2006*. Thomas B. Fordham Foundation & Institute.
- Ghesquière, P., Maes, B., & Vandenberghe, R. (2004). The usefulness of qualitative case studies in research on special needs education. *International Journal of Disability, Development & Education*, 51(2), 171–184. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/10349120410001687382>
- Glesne, C. (2011). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. London, UK: Pearson.
- Graneheim, U. H., Lindgren, B. M., & Lundman, B. (2017). Methodological challenges in qualitative content analysis: A discussion paper. *Nurse Education Today*, 56, 29–34.
- Hollway, W., & Jefferson, T. (2000). *Doing qualitative research differently: Free association, narrative and the interview method*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Horner, R. H., Carr, E. G., Halle, J., McGee, G., Odom, S., & Wolery, M. (2005). The use of single-subject research to identify evidence-based practice in special education. *Exceptional Children*, 71(2), 165–179. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/001440290507100203>
- Kamler, B., Thomson, P., & Thomson, P. (2014). *Helping doctoral students write: Pedagogies for supervision*. London, UK: Routledge. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315813639>
- Kilinc, S. (2016). *A cultural historical activity theoretical (CHAT) framework for understanding the construction of inclusive education from Turkish teachers' and parents' perspectives* (Ph.D. dissertation). Arizona State University, AZ. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/eric/docview/1793940366/abstract/9286D70413124304PQ/1>

- Labaree, D. F. (1997). Public goods, private goods: The American struggle over educational goals. *American Educational Research Journal*, 34(1), 39–81.
- Mantey, E. E. (2014). Accessibility to inclusive education for children with disabilities: a case of two selected areas in Ghana.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2015). *Designing qualitative research* (6th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Opoku-Agyemang, N. (2008). *Make education inclusive and sustainable*. Retrieved from <https://www.seekapor.com/make-education-inclusive-and-sustainable-naana-opoku-agyemang/>
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Peters, S. J. (2007). “Education for all?” A historical analysis of international inclusive education policy and individuals with disabilities. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 18(2), 98-108.
- Philip, N. (2015). Culture and poverty: A case study of a girl with special educational needs from a poor community in South India. *Support for Learning*, 30(3), 205–222.
- Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. C. M. (2015). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological* (1st ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Schneider, A., & Ingram, H. (1993). Social construction of target populations: Implications for politics and policy. *American Political Science Review*, 87(2), 334–347.
- Sultan, P., & Yin Wong, H. (2012). Service quality in a higher education context: an integrated model. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 24(5), 755–784.
- Tambwe, M. A. (2019). Challenges Facing the Implementation of a Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET) system in Tanzanian Technical Institutions. *Education in Tanzania in the Era of Globalisation: Challenges and Opportunities*, 242.

- Thomas, D. (2006). *A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data*. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214005283748>
- Vlachou, A. (2004). Education and inclusive policy-making: Implications for research and practice. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 8(1), 3–21. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360311032000139449>
- McLeskey, J., Waldron, N. L., Spooner, F., & Algozzine, B. (2014). *Handbook of effective inclusive schools*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2012). Global Health Observatory (GHO) data. Deaths from NCDs [Internet]. Geneva: World Health Organization [cited 2015 May 19].
- Yazan, B. (2015). Three approaches to case study methods in education: Yin, Merriam, and Stake. *The qualitative report*, 20(2), 134–152.
- Yin, R. K. (2017). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

## Appendix A

<b>THE CHALLENGES FROM THE EIGHT PARTICIPANTS</b>		
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Ghana's Commitments</b>	<b>Participants' Perspectives (Direct Quotes)</b>
<p><b>1. Weak systems and capacities:</b></p> <p><b>Eg. Data System- Disaggregated data for PWDs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need to develop the Ghana National Households Registry (GNHR) which will compile data on vulnerable persons including persons with disabilities. The Proposal of using the Washington Group of Questions was mentioned.</li> <li>• The need for further research on PWDs in Ghana through population census, Ghana Statistical office, Universities Research Department (for data ) to inform practice and materials development for a better IE implementation.</li> </ul> <p>Further recognition and more culturally responsive disaggregation of differences in disability requirements 1<sup>st</sup> Participant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak data bases to support information provision for planning and monitoring is a huge challenge as a nation.</li> <li>• ...the compelling setback emanates absence of adequate data.</li> <li>• Eerrm then even though we are putting a lot of things in place we don't have any specific data to work with either on the district level or at the national lever. We want commitment our duty bearers to show their strong commitment in data collection for the effective implementation of inclusive education.</li> <li>• Inadequate data about people with disability to help us a s country from the fourth participant</li> <li>• ..inclusive education policy is fundamentally crucial for the progressive development of persons with disability. We must tackle this with some focus on data of PWDs of any form or any sort or shape of disability to enable us plan well.</li> <li>• ...But how can we do an effective job if we do not know the quantum of the problem? In our office, do not know the number of PWDs we have in Ghana and that makes our work very complex because we end up releasing funds for the same</li> </ul>

<p><b>2. Inadequate Resources/ Human &amp; Funding</b></p>	<p>To increase human and financial resources by engaging the Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, Ministry of Gender and Social Protection and the Ministry of Finance in accelerating implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy – prioritising</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Budget allocation 1.5%.</li> <li>2. Infrastructure development for persons with special needs.</li> <li>3. Teacher training</li> </ol> <p>Number two is about funding. Funding is also very important</p>	<p>disability group in different part of the country. We need to work on data to know how to disburse the funds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondly, as a research and a lecturer, I think Ghana needs data on its PWDs to work with. It's a shame that, I am not able to point at any data for my students, locally or regionally and I am sure this is a huge issue for as a country. We need data on PWDs, Womeen, Girls etc. We need to stop using international data to express or explain local our local issues seven participant</li> <li>• Yea our major challenge is errrr how do you call it, data, yes data on the CWDs. We don't know the number of children in the classroom when you go to the public schools We are not able to quote any data to use in our fight for their educational rights. Some places we have large class sizes so it makes it difficult for the teachers to identify and handle the CWD well for the children to be comfortable in the classroom somebody in the wheel chair will need more space so, data should tell us how many CWD we have in our schools and have a better infrastructure for them.</li> <li>• Inadequate resources especially funds allocated to support implementation is so small. It is basically scanty- Insufficient numbers of people with capacities to implement the IE</li> </ul>
--	---	---

	<p>and three is about making sure that there is a core group of people who can be trained to lead the implementation process people who have the knowledge the expertise and experience to lead that process sometimes when such new projects come up they give it to people who are already in the system or people who connected to the government one way or the other but I think the people with the experience and the expertise should be given the space to lead and that bring about positive change. 5<sup>th</sup> Participant</p>	<p>policy in schools (as teachers and resource support) as well as at district and regional resource centres) There should be some clarity about how Ghana is going to fund IE policy implementation beyond donor resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate Budgetary Allocation Lack of technical personnel on the field and financial constraints, or what we always call inadequate budgeting.</li> <li>• ...resources are the challenge, in terms of financial resources, material resources, human resource are some of our challenges in Ghana. You know education has its own budget, and we are saying that the total budget for education generally for inclusive education is not enough so, we want to have 2% of that District Assembly Common Fund (DACF). Human resource is very low. You know, if we want to roll out inclusive education, we know it's a huge program so the training of teachers should be taken into consideration. It is an issue because if you are rolling out in every school in each district, then in every school the teacher must be trained, and it takes money to do all of these.</li> <li>• Related to the political will is lack of funding because if the political will is there, the government will certainly</li> </ul>
--	---	---

<p><b>3. Large Class sizes</b></p>	<p>Government of Ghana (GoG) has developed the Ghana Accessibility Standard for the built environment and needs to commit to work with relevant agencies to make the provisions in the Standard an integral part of the building regulations and being implemented by approval agencies by December 2020.</p> <p>To establish a committee to review the Ghana Disability Act 715 (2006) to ensure its in line with the UNCRPD and to accelerate the implementation of the LI.</p> <p>A strong will to reduce the number of students in a class to at least 40 students should be culturally discussed at these highest levels.</p>	<p>channel some fund to that. Look at how the common fund is disbursed in our district levels, without any real commitment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ermm I also think we need adequate resources especially funding for the implementation of this policy and I don't want to be like to say- that the policy is effective as the implementation. What makes the implementation possible is the fund that are committed to it.</li> <li>• I will say ermm funding is an issue because we need a lot of funding to go out there to campaign. The other issue is the infa.... To remodel our institute our public places to make our public places disability user friendly so we need a lot of funding and also to help meet Universal time for learning in our various</li> <li>• Most often people think that, CWDs needs must equally march the funds we receive in our district levels but what do we see? Inadequate funding is another major challenge. when you take education budget alone education budget, the component that is going into infrastructure is very negligible because it is the local government .</li> </ul>
------------------------------------	--	---

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persistence of inaccessible school facilities and large classes. Slow progress in constructing and equipping/operationalizing proposed resource centres, classroom which increase our large class sizes in Ghana.</li> <li>• We can also talk deeply about the large class size of Ghana. It's really too bad to have over 60 students in one class and you know we have AB and C for each class. If a PWD is in that class, who will attend to him? They will just ignore him in the class.</li> <li>• Yes, inappropriate built environment for the students which makes our classrooms overcrowded. Errm right now we have been advocating at the Ghana federation of disability organizations plus other N.G.O in education. We have been advocating for reduction or students in our classrooms for easy implement of the in inclusive education, up to at most 40 students is good for a teacher but they are not there yet. Our classroom sizes are too much and unbearable especially the basic levels.</li> <li>• Inappropriate built environment for the students which makes our classrooms over crowded.</li> <li>• Well, as you know our traditional classes are so huge</li> </ul>
--	--	--

<p><b>4. Lack of wide awareness for the ordinary stakeholders</b></p>	<p>Advocacy, Education, Owning the Policy And Enforcement. This can be done by sensitising communities and raising awareness on disability inclusion through a national communications strategy targeted at churches, schools, parliamentarians and the media.</p> <p>Massive, far-reaching, wide efforts at awareness-raising at all levels, national and sub-national. Awareness-raising widely stepped up amongst Municipal / District Assemblies, other potential players. Stronger advocacy towards more meaningful budget allocations towards implementation of IE policy and related efforts</p>	<p>that the teacher does not have time to serve every child equally and equitably. How can one teacher be assigned to sixty to seventy students in a class? That's too much and unbearable so, if we want to really implement this IE policy effectively, we should work on the large class size.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I also think we should have a second look at our class sizes because at times, we end up killing the teachers indirectly. I guess this large class issue is an African issue and not a Ghanaian issue and it's a big challenge that we need to think about deeply in AU, African Union. Unfortunately, these are not the issues they think about at AU meeting.</li> <li>• That also brought about how we overload our classrooms. This overloading in our classes affects our classes largely especially if there is a child with physical disability. Due to large class some schools won't accept them but if there is that campaign there is that sensitization, education out there that this child also has a potential to that needs to be developed therefore whether price.....will... they have to be admitted then that way that acceptance will be there the child will be embraced by his self- individual by fellow children and trough we will learn to even learn in harmony with student with special.</li> </ul>
---	---	---

	<p>Enforcement at legal requirements to improve infrastructure and provide “friendly”-classroom and learning environments 1<sup>ST</sup> Participant</p> <p>I think the most important to me is education. People needs to understand what disability is and what inclusive education is if they get to understand it if they get to understand the benefit of it, will be the game changer open up the space where that policy could be implemented. 5<sup>th</sup> Participant</p>	<p>. From this we can talk about large classes which is another challenge. Some places we have large class sizes so it makes it difficult for the teachers to identify and handle the CWD well for the children to be comfortable in the classroom somebody in the wheel chair will need more space .then we don’t have enough infrastructure for schooling most of the school are not accessible even those that they have constructed the rump are few</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is lack of wide awareness of ordinary stakeholders of what national level implementation has achieved (including work of the Inclusive Education Unit of GES and the National Multi-Sectoral Inclusive Education Steering Committee). The need for wider inclusion of stakeholders in policy review processes especially sub-national stakeholders. It is not clear that their insights and experiences are taken into account enough.</li> <li>• Awareness creation and revision of the IE Policy to categorically specify the roles of Special Education trained teachers, the regular trained teachers and the Health directorate is highly needed.</li> </ul>
--	--	---

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need to ask the commitment of the duty bearers to educate the public about the IE Police. The need to create the awareness to all grassroots levels. We need their commitment in awareness and education for effective implementation of inclusive education policy. I will also need the commitment of the public, the understanding of the inclusive education and owning it is what we need as Ghanaian. We need to own this policy.</li> <li>• The implementation is yet to cover the entire country. It needs some awareness creation. Inadequate public education.</li> <li>• I think, the first thing is, there should be awareness raised about the errm policy, and then it has to move beyond policy into becoming law so that we can really ensure that it is operationalize. In that respect, I don't even know how far it is now. I meant how inclusive it is in developing the policy. Who were the advocates and then the stakeholders who were involved to draw up the policy? Is it something the government sat down somewhere and just put together or it involve actually persons with disabilities who have the experiences and expertise in contributing to the ; drawing of the policy?. Finally, I want to stress that, the fact that there are not enough awareness or education, not</li> </ul>
--	--	--

		<p>enough funds, or human resources about disability issues publicly, we have threatening issues in the future. The fact that there has not been enough awareness risen the fact that people are not educated about what disability is, what disable people can do and what they cannot do, the whole issue is driven by religion and tradition. That is why for example you have persons with mental disability being taken to spiritual camps and so on and so forth being tied in chain and as a means of exercising their disability to get treatment so, to me these three factors impedes the space for promoting inclusive education, hence the need to educate the public.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think the first one is that we need to – educate the public so that everybody including the head teacher knows that this the best way to go about the inclusive education. Awareness is the best way to go so that the community including the teacher also knows this and can support a learner with disability to perform and to explore his or her potentials.</li> <li>• Nationally I will say that the policy is at the infantile stage because most people don't know about it so, we need to educate people more. When you engage with the policy document, it looks so great but when you go into our schools, into our public schools</li> </ul>
--	--	---

		<p>especially, the basic levels, these days most people don't know about it. Errrm I would like to say inclusive education should be champion by everybody because errrm when it comes to inclusive education what the society thinks is abot just a student with physical disability or individual's disability that are actually evidence but among us there are a lot of disabilities that are unknown. They are invisible so, we need education on those. For instance, if somebody is suffering from dyslexia or dyscalculia we might not actually termed it or see it as a disability until the person exhibits it or say his challenges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For instant the 3% of the DACF that is for children with special needs and persons with special needs to be talked about openly. The child is entitled to it but you have to register the child so if you have not registered the child how do you go for it? Most parent don't know and some places you go and asked for it and they will tell you the people have not been coming for it so, they used it to do other things in the community so what we need is education at the community level. remote Inclusive Local Government</li> </ul>
--	--	--

## **CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE**

To present the conclusion of this dissertation, it is important to first review the original purpose of the research. The research used a phenomenological lens and case study approaches to identify, investigate and analyze the perceptions of WWD and education policy professionals about the factors or forces that are impacting successful implementation of the IE Policy in Ghana. Interviewing both “actors” who had different personal and professional experiences, as well as different roles in relation to hierarchy and power, was very helpful. My perspectives were enhanced by interviewing both women with disabilities who are, in effect, consumers of Ghana’s education system, and those in policy-oriented positions, who are creators and implementers of the system.

It was interesting to observe how the findings were different based on the level of participants’ experiences or worldview. While the perspectives of the two groups were different, the findings in both papers identified some common themes: both groups found the IE Policy to have good intention but to be lacking in quality of implementation. Generally, the two groups identified some separate issues and possible solutions. As seen in the two papers, the WWD have expressed their personal experiences they had through the educational system. Their reflections on the impact of the IE Policy were very passionate and authentic and were influenced both positively and negatively by their personal histories. In comparison, the policy stakeholders’ experiences were basically from their working experiences. These two perspectives have expanded my horizons as they were both talking about the same policy and goals, but in relation to very different roles and experience levels. These experiences are reflected in their individual

recommendations. In my leadership roles as an educator, a policy analyst, and an advocate, this brings me to what I intend doing in the future after this research.

My hope is that together, the stories will help to shape a framework for equality and equity in the educational system in Ghana that has the potential to stop children with disabilities from begging on the street and lead them to school. I believe that my research may contribute to appropriate steps for revitalization and a resurgence of attention to the topic after this research. It is true that “policy implementation work, in short, continues to bear relevance for important themes of policy and management. But some of the discourse has shifted, the questions have broadened, and the agenda has become complicated” (O’Toole, 2000, p. 8). In using a case study approach that drew from phenomenological inquiry and feminist and indigenous theories, I hope to project the central role that narrative and storytelling has in transmitting knowledge about the world and about humans’ experiences in it. I also hope to surface the stories that need to be told in order to bring critical issues to life. It is my dream to engage the government through media to listen to these stories in ways that will challenge them to work together to enact the IE policy in our classrooms, both politically and symbolically.

## COMPREHENSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Agbenyega, J. (2007). Examining teachers' concerns and attitudes to inclusive education in Ghana. *International Journal of Whole Schooling*, 3(1), 41–56.
- Agyepong, I. A., & Adjei, S. (2008). Public social policy development and implementation: A case study of the Ghana National Health Insurance scheme. *Health policy and planning*, 23(2), 150-160.
- Ainscow, M., Booth, T., & Dyson, A. (2006). *Improving schools, developing inclusion*. London, UK: Routledge. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203967157>
- Akyeampong, K. (2004). Whole school development: Ghana. Retrieved from [https://www.academia.edu/1074582/Whole\\_school\\_development](https://www.academia.edu/1074582/Whole_school_development)
- Alcoff, L. M. (2000). Phenomenology, post-structuralism, and feminist theory on the concept of experience. In *Feminist phenomenology* (pp. 39–56). Springer, Dordrecht. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-015-9488-2\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-015-9488-2_3)
- Amutabi, M. N. (2003). Political interference in the running of education in post-independence Kenya: A critical retrospection. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 23(2), 127–144. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0738-0593\(01\)00055-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0738-0593(01)00055-4)
- Artiles, A. J., & Kozleski, E. B. (2016). Inclusive education's promises and trajectories: Critical notes about future research on a venerable idea. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 24(43). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.24.1919>
- Avoke, M. (2002). Models of disability in the labelling and attitudinal discourse in Ghana. *Disability & Society*, 17(7), 769–777. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/0968759022000039064>
- Avramidis, E., & Norwich, B. (2002). Teachers' attitudes towards integration / inclusion: A review of the literature. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 17(2), 129–147. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856250210129056>
- Barnes, C. (2007). Disability activism and the struggle for change: Disability, policy and politics in the UK. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 2(3), 203–221. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1746197907081259>

- Barnes, C., & Mercer, G. (Eds.). (1997). *Doing disability research*. Leeds: Disability Press.
- Benefits of Inclusive Education. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.kidstogether.org/inclusion/benefitsofinclusion.htm>
- Brown, B., Chui, M., & Manyika, J. (2011). Are you ready for the era of ‘big data’. *McKinsey Quarterly*, 4(1), 24–35.
- Burgess-Limerick, T., & Burgess-Limerick, R. (1998). Conversational interviews and multiple-case research in psychology. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 50(2), 63–70. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/00049539808257535>
- Chaudhury, S. V. S., Khare, P., Gupta, S., & Garg, S. (2016). Towards inclusive education: A case study of IGNOU. *Journal of Learning for Development*, 3(3), 43–59.
- Cleave, C. (2008). *Little bee: A novel* (Reprint edition). New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Craddock, G., & McCormack, L. (2002). Delivering an AT service: A client-focused, social and participatory service delivery model in assistive technology in Ireland. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 24(1-3), 160–170.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Debrand, C. C., & Salzberg, C. L. (2005). A validated curriculum to provide training to faculty regarding students with disabilities in higher education. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 18(1), 49–61.
- Dollinger, D. (2013). Using narrative in research by C. Bold. *The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation, Toronto*, 28(1), 107.
- Duke, J., Pillay, H., Tones, M., Nickerson, J., Carrington, S., & Ioelu, A. (2016). A case for rethinking inclusive education policy creation in developing countries. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 46(6), 906–928. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2016.1204226>
- Ethical Practice in Adult ducation. ERIC Digest. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.ericdigests.org/1992-5/adult.htm>
- Factsheet\_A5\_\_Web\_NEW.pdf. (n.d.). Retrieved from [https://www.unicef.org/disabilities/files/Factsheet\\_A5\\_\\_Web\\_NEW.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/disabilities/files/Factsheet_A5__Web_NEW.pdf)

- Fadiman, A. (2012). *The spirit catches you and you fall down: A Hmong child, her American doctors, and the collision of two cultures*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux
- Finn Jr, C. E., Julian, L., & Petrilli, M. J. (2013). *The State of State Standards, 2006*. Thomas B. Fordham Foundation & Institute.
- Ghesquière, P., Maes, B., & Vandenberghe, R. (2004). The usefulness of qualitative case studies in research on special needs education. *International Journal of Disability, Development & Education*, *51*(2), 171–184. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/10349120410001687382>
- Glesne, C. (2011). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. London, UK: Pearson.
- Graneheim, U. H., Lindgren, B. M., & Lundman, B. (2017). Methodological challenges in qualitative content analysis: A discussion paper. *Nurse Education Today*, *56*, 29–34.
- Groce, N. E. (1997). Women with disabilities in the developing world: Arenas for policy revision and programmatic change. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, *8*(1–2), 177–193.
- Hammad, T., & Singal, N. (2015). Education of women with disabilities in Pakistan: Enhanced agency, unfulfilled aspirations. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *19*(12), 1244–1264.
- Hegarty, S., Meijer, C. & Pijl, S. J. (2002). *Inclusive education: A global agenda*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hollway, W., & Jefferson, T. (2000). *Doing qualitative research differently: Free association, narrative and the interview method*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Horner, R. H., Carr, E. G., Halle, J., McGee, G., Odom, S., & Wolery, M. (2005). The use of single-subject research to identify evidence-based practice in special education. *Exceptional Children*, *71*(2), 165–179. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001440290507100203>
- Hutcheon, E., & Lashewicz, B. (2014). Theorizing resilience: Critiquing and unbounding a marginalizing concept. *Disability & Society*, *29*(9), 1383–1397. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2014.934954>

- Inclusive Education. (2016, October 19). Retrieved from [https://adafellowship.org/ada\\_fellowship\\_in\\_us/inclusive-education/](https://adafellowship.org/ada_fellowship_in_us/inclusive-education/)
- Kamler, B., Thomson, P., & Thomson, P. (2014). Helping doctoral students write: Pedagogies for supervision. London, UK: Routledge. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315813639>
- Kassah, B. L. L., Kassah, A. K., & Agbota, T. K. (2014). Abuse of physically disabled women in Ghana: Its emotional consequences and coping strategies. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 36(8), 665–671. <https://doi.org/10.3109/09638288.2013.808272>
- Kilinc, S. (2016). A cultural historical activity theoretical (CHAT) framework for understanding the construction of inclusive education from Turkish teachers' and parents' perspectives (Ph.D. dissertation). Arizona State University, AZ. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/eric/docview/1793940366/abstract/9286D70413124304PQ/1>
- Labaree, D. F. (1997). Public goods, private goods: The American struggle over educational goals. *American Educational Research Journal*, 34(1), 39–81.
- Laverty, S. M. (2003). Hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology: A comparison of historical and methodological considerations. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 2(3), 21–35.
- Loreman, T., Deppeler, J., & Harvey, D. (2005). *Inclusive education: A practical guide to supporting diversity in the classroom*. East Brunswick, UK: Psychology Press.
- Mama, A. (2003). Restore, reform but do not transform: The gender politics of higher education in Africa. *Journal of Higher Education in Africa/Revue de l'enseignement supérieur en Afrique*, 101–125.
- Mantey, E. E. (2014). Accessibility to inclusive education for children with disabilities: A case of two selected areas in Ghana.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2015). *Designing qualitative research* (6th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- McLeskey, J., Waldron, N. L., Spooner, F., & Algozzine, B. (Eds.). (2014). *Handbook of effective inclusive schools: Research and practice*. New York, NY; London, UK: Routledge.

- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., Huberman, M. A., & Huberman, M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Opoku-Agyemang, N. (2008). *Make education inclusive and sustainable*. Retrieved from <https://www.seekapor.com/make-education-inclusive-and-sustainable-naana-opoku-agyemang/>
- Opuni, K. A. (2006). The effectiveness of the consistency management & cooperative discipline (CMCD) model as a student empowerment and achievement enhancer: the experiences of two K-12 inner-city school systems. *Online Submission*.
- Orazem, P., Glewwe, P., & Patrinos, H. (2007). *The benefits and costs of alternative strategies to improve educational outcomes*. Retrieved from [http://www.copenhagenconsensus.com/sites/default/files/cp\\_educationcc08vol2.pdf](http://www.copenhagenconsensus.com/sites/default/files/cp_educationcc08vol2.pdf)
- Owusu-Amoako, J. (2015). *Support services and adaptations for pupils with visual impairment at Bechem St. Joseph's Practice Basic Inclusive School in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Peters, S. J. (2007). "Education for all?" A historical analysis of international inclusive education policy and individuals with disabilities. *Journal of disability policy studies*, 18(2), 98-108.
- Philip, N. (2015). Culture and poverty: a case study of a girl with special educational needs from a poor community in South India. *Support for Learning*, 30(3), 205–222. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9604.12091>
- Psacharopoulos, G. (1994). Returns to investment in education: A global update. *World development*, 22(9), 1325–1343.
- Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. C. M. (2015). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological* (1st ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

- Rousso, A., & Schwartz, S. (2005). *U.S. Patent Application No. 10/946,488*.
- Rousso, H. (2015). *Education for All: A gender and disability perspective*.
- Saito, K., & Nagata, M. (2003, July). Multi-language named-entity recognition system based on HMM. In *Proceedings of the ACL 2003 workshop on Multilingual and mixed-language named entity recognition-Volume 15* (pp. 41–48). Association for Computational Linguistics.
- Schneider, A., & Ingram, H. (1993). Social construction of target populations: Implications for politics and policy. *American Political Science Review*, 87(2), 334–347.
- Shore, S. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED371112.pdf>
- Sifuna, D. N. (2006). A review of major obstacles to women's participation in higher education in Kenya. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 11(1), 85–105.
- Stone, L. (1979). The revival of narrative: reflections on a new old history. *Past & Present*, (85), 3–24.
- Sultan, P., & Yin Wong, H. (2012). Service quality in a higher education context: an integrated model. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 24(5), 755–784.
- Tambwe, M. A. (2019). Challenges Facing the Implementation of a Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET) system in Tanzanian Technical Institutions. *Education in Tanzania in the Era of Globalisation: Challenges and Opportunities*, 242.
- Taylor, K., & Marienau, C. (1995). Bridging practice and theory for women's adult development. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 1995(65), 5–12. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.36719956503>
- The UNESCO Salamanca Statement. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.csie.org.uk/inclusion/unesco-salamanca.shtml>
- Thomas, D. (2006). *A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data*. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214005283748>

- Tisdell, E. J. (1993). Interlocking systems of power, privilege, and oppression in adult higher education classes. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 43(4), 203–226.
- Tuomi, M. T., Lehtomäki, E., & Matonya, M. (2015). As capable as other students: Tanzanian women with disabilities in higher education. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 62(2), 202–214.
- UNDESA, U. (2016). Department of Economic and Social Affairs.(2016). *United Nations e-government survey 2016: E-government in support of sustainable development*.
- UNICEF Ghana - Media Centre - Ghana's Inclusive education policy. (n.d.). Retrieved from [https://www.unicef.org/ghana/media\\_8503.html](https://www.unicef.org/ghana/media_8503.html)
- United Nations Girls' Education Initiative - Ghana - Background. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.ungei.org/infobycountry/ghana.html>
- United Nations. (2006). United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention>.
- Valle, J., & Connor, D. (2010). *Rethinking disability: A disability studies approach to inclusive practices* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Vlachou, A. (2004). Education and inclusive policy-making: Implications for research and practice. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 8(1), 3–21. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360311032000139449>
- Wall, K. (2006). *Special needs and early years: A practitioner's guide* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London, UK; Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Walsh, J. (2013). *The art of storytelling: Easy steps to presenting an unforgettable story* (Reprint). Moody Publishers.
- Welsby, J., & Horsfall, D. (2011). Everyday practices of exclusion/inclusion: Women who have an intellectual disability speaking for themselves. *Disability & Society*, 26(7), 795–807.
- Wendell\_Social\_construction.pdf. (n.d.). Retrieved from [http://moodle.fhs.cuni.cz/pluginfile.php/19118/mod\\_resource/content/0/Wendell\\_Social\\_construction.pdf](http://moodle.fhs.cuni.cz/pluginfile.php/19118/mod_resource/content/0/Wendell_Social_construction.pdf)

- World Health Organization (WHO). (2012). *Global Health Observatory (GHO) data. Deaths from NCDs* [Internet]. Geneva: World Health Organization. [cited 2015 May 19].
- World Bank Staff. (2004). *Education in Rwanda: Rebalancing resources to accelerate post-conflict development and poverty reduction*. World Bank Publications.
- Yazan, B. (2015). Three approaches to case study methods in education: Yin, Merriam, and Stake. *The qualitative report*, 20(2), 134–152.
- Yin, R. K. (2017). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.