


Chapter 15

Inclusive Education in Ghana: Enablers, Barriers, and Challenges of Inclusion

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents the evolution and current state of inclusive education in Ghana. Despite the existence of the 2015 policy and the Education Strategic Plan (2018-2030), exclusions persist. The chapter highlights the critical role of community engagement, government commitment, and digital technology in fostering inclusive education. Community and family involvement, government initiatives, and funding sustain inclusive practices, as does the integration of digital technology. It emphasises a comprehensive approach, including enhanced funding, teacher training, societal attitude shifts, and effective monitoring systems. The role of stigma, infrastructure, and policy implementation are deliberated. The chapter advocates for a multi-dimensional approach, combining policy support, community involvement, and technological integration to advance the sector. Recommendations include increasing funding, improving teacher training, and promoting inclusion for Ghana to advance towards a more inclusive and equitable education system among its contemporaries.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education in Ghana has undergone significant reforms to improve access and quality, guided by national policies and international frameworks (Saaka, 2024; Takyi et al., 2019). Central to these reforms is the push for inclusive education, which seeks to provide equitable learning opportunities for all children regardless of background, disability, or ethnicity. Despite these commendable policy directions, challenges persist, particularly for students from minority and disadvantaged groups, hindering their full participation in education. This chapter explores the support, barriers, and challenges in implementing inclusive education in Ghana, offering insights that could inform national and international educational practices.

Inclusive education in Ghana is anchored in key policies such as the Inclusive Education Policy (2015) and the Education Strategic Plan (2018–2030), which reflect the government’s commitment to inclusive learning environments (Ministry of Education, 2015, 2018). However, despite these policy frameworks,

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implementation remains constrained by limited funding, inadequate infrastructure, negative societal attitudes, and insufficient teacher training (Okorley, 2020; Anlimachie et al., 2025). These systemic issues raise concerns about how inclusive education policies are effectively translated into practice, especially in underresourced schools.

A comprehensive understanding of inclusive education also requires exploring the enabling factors. Community engagement, technological integration, and government support play vital roles in fostering inclusive environments. The active participation of families and local stakeholders enhances awareness and acceptance, whereas technology has been instrumental in creating accessible learning experiences for students with disabilities (Boafo et al., 2024). These support systems are complemented by increasing government investment in inclusive initiatives, although sustained efforts are required to ensure long-term impact.

2. OVERVIEW OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GHANA

The introduction of inclusive education policies in Ghana marked a shift toward equity in the educational system. The Inclusive Education Policy (2015) and the Education Strategic Plan (2018–2030) aim to eliminate barriers to quality education, particularly for children with disabilities and those from marginalised backgrounds (Ministry of Education, 2015, 2018). However, realising these objectives depends on resource allocation, community involvement, and continuous teacher development (Abreh, 2017a). Technology integration has further enhanced the learning environment, catering to diverse student needs (Agyei, 2013; Abreh, 2010).

Nonetheless, practical implementation challenges persist. Limited financial resources, inadequate teaching materials, and a shortage of trained personnel undermine inclusive efforts (Danquah, 2019; Manu et al., 2024). Social stigma and negative perceptions about disability continue to affect educational inclusion, whereas infrastructure deficits prevent the physical accessibility needed to accommodate all learners (UNICEF Ghana, 2019). These persistent barriers highlight the need for collective efforts across sectors, including strong monitoring systems to track progress and guide reforms (Akanbang & Abdallah, 2021).

Understanding the factors influencing inclusive education helps bridge the gap between policy intent and classroom realities. While the frameworks provide a foundation, a thorough analysis of what supports or impedes inclusion, such as teacher readiness, community attitudes, and the availability of adaptive resources, can shape better implementation strategies. This analysis not only advances national reform but also enriches global discussions on inclusive education, offering valuable models for other countries facing similar constraints in the Global North and South, especially Sub-Saharan countries (Danquah, 2019; UNICEF Ghana, 2019).

3. BACKGROUND OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GHANA

The push toward inclusive education in Ghana is part of a broader policy evolution to provide equitable education. Key milestones include the Inclusive Education Policy of 2015 and the Education Strategic Plan (2018–2030), designed to address systemic barriers preventing full participation by students with disabilities and those from disadvantaged communities (Ministry of Education, 2015, 2018). Despite their

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