

Rights of Youth with Disabilities in Zimbabwe

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Disability Context in Zimbabwe

- According to the 2017 Inter-Censual Demographic Survey (ICDS), Disability prevalence in Zimbabwe stands at 9.3%.
- However, in the National Disability Policy (2021), the government of Zimbabwe recognised lack of precise and reliable data on disability and the need for the country to use the WHO-World Bank (2011) disability prevalence of 15%.
- The ICDS survey reported a higher prevalence of disability among females (10.2%) than males (8.4%).
- The 2013 Zimbabwe Living Conditions Survey conducted by the MoHCC and UNICEF reported the most prevalent disabilities in Zimbabwe as Physical Impairments (31%), Visual (26%) Multiple (13%), Hearing (12%) and intellectual (8%).
- Major Causes of Impairments in Zimbabwe are diseases (41.8-Male-53% females), congenital (27%-Male- 18.5 Females) and accidents (15% males- 8.5% female).

Rights of YWDs-Education

Zimbabwe recognizes persons with disabilities including YWDs as rights holders as evidenced by efforts to date for disability inclusion through UNCPRD ratification and its progressive alignment of legal frameworks with UNCPRD provisions

Legal Frameworks

- Zimbabwe has rich Constitutional, legislative and policy frameworks which support the achievement of UNCPRD and SDG provisions on education.
- Section 83 of the Constitution Amendment Number 20 (2013) stipulates that the State must take appropriate measures, within the limits of the resources available, to ensure that persons with disabilities realise their full mental and physical potential, including measures to provide special facilities for their education; and to provide State-funded education and training where they need it.
- The National Disability Policy 2021, Secretary's Circular 7 of 2014, the Zimbabwe School Health Policy, the Zimbabwe National CSTL Model , Education Amendment Act (2020) and the Inclusive Education Policy Draft supports the constitution to promote inclusive education in the country

Rights of YWDs-Education

- Zimbabwe provides education to children and learners with disabilities using 4 main models, namely: Mainstream Education, Special Schools, Resource Units and Special Classes and Hospital Schools

Rights of YWDs-Education

Type	Number
Number of special schools	40
Number of resource units for Special Classes	1650
Number of resource units for learners with visual impairments	26
Number of mainstream primary schools	6 671
Number of mainstream secondary schools	2954
Number of Government Rehabilitation Centres	3
Number of teachers' colleges	16
Number of Teachers colleges providing training in special needs (<i>United College of Education</i>)	1
Number of Universities providing training in special needs (<i>ZOU, UZ, GZU, RCU, WUA</i>)	5
Number of Vocational Training Centres	17
Number of polytechnical colleges	8
Number of universities providing pre-service teacher training programs	2

Gaps in Inclusive Education/TVET Implementation

- A 2021 situational analysis conducted on PWDs established significant lack of capacity by most educational institutions of learning to offer quality inclusive education.
- The country still has many special schools, public vocational training colleges and some residential homes for students with disabilities, which is against provisions of the CRPD and SDGs on inclusive education.
- Institutions of higher learning do not have a blueprint or framework that guides the implementation of inclusive education. As such every institution has its own implementation standards as deemed necessary.
- Most university curricula are void of disability inclusion. Only 5/20 universities (ZOU, UZ, MSU, GZU and Arrupe) are offering disability courses and other related services, including reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Only a few teachers' colleges (Seke, UCE, Morgan Zintec, Morgenster, Mutare) have significant reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. On the other hand, most polytechnic colleges do not have the skills capacity to handle students with disabilities.

Gaps in Inclusive Education/TVET Implementation

- The ministry of MHTESTD does not have an inclusive education policy, neither are there structures for the implementation of inclusive education in institutions of higher education.
- Lack of coordination between the two ministries of education. MHTESTD is training a teacher who is not in harmony with the expectations of MoPSE in terms of disability skills and competencies. This militates against achieving Article 24 of the CRPD and SDG 4.
- There is no verifiable database and statistics on the number of disability skilled teachers who can manage inclusive classes. This makes inclusive educational planning and programming difficult.
- In the Zimbabwean Constitution, statements like **subject to availability of resources** in policies militates against the provision of inclusive education
- Mainstream teachers lack the requisite competencies and skills to identify, screen and refer children with special needs in schools and manage diversity of disability.
- Inappropriate curriculum for inclusion special needs
- Inadequate funding for inclusive educational needs

Gaps in Inclusive Education/TVET Implementation

- Majority of P/YWDs lack knowledge of their human rights as enshrined in UNCRPD
- Majority of duty bearers and caregivers lack knowledge of the existence of UNCRPD and its provisions
- Invisibility of CWDs/YWDs in communities
- Majority of CWDs are not in school because schools have no capacity to manage CWDs
- Most schools especially mainstream schools have no infrastructure and assistive technology for use with CWDs
- Most parents do not send CWDs to schools due to long distances travelled to school
- Most CWDs have no access to Assistive Technology to aide in learning and mobility
- Majority of vocational colleges lack disability inclusive structures which derail enrolment of CWDs and promote high rate of dropouts of CWDs

Recommendations for IE/TVET/Best Practices

- Support the adoption of the Persons with Disabilities Bill and the Inclusive Education Policy.
- Support learning and information sharing platforms for inclusive education, involving stakeholders at all levels to share lessons, challenges, and best practices.
- Support the creation of inclusive education structures in the MHTESITD, aligned with MoPSE needs.
- Support the development of inclusive education knowledge products for use in colleges and universities.
- Train additional teachers on inclusive education
- Train In-service teachers in disability skills and inclusive education
- Regard sign language as a compulsory subject in Schools and colleges

Recommendations for IE/TVET/Best Practices

- Invest in the creation of a database of teachers, lecturers, and individuals with competencies on inclusive education
- Support Partnerships between TVET/Educational Institutions and Industrial players to enable YWDs to learn under conducive workplace conditions
- Raise awareness on IE/TVET to encourage parents to send CWDs to school
- Support the uptake of assistive devices/technology by CWDs
- Scale up TVET and Youth Actions projects to other provinces and wards for visibility of YWDs and confidence strengthening
- Support Infrastructural adaptation of schools/colleges to accommodate various impairments

References

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