

BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE OECS

Carel E. Hodge
University of New England, Armidale, Australia
Email: chodge4@myune.edu.au

Abstract

This study sets out to investigate the barriers and facilitators to the inclusion of learners with special education needs (LSEN) in the education systems of three member states of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

The provision of equitable and quality education to LSEN has been unequal between, and within the islands of the OECS, which directly impacts the future quality of life of this vulnerable group. Conducted using constructivist ground theory for collection and analysis of data, the research engaged five groups of participants with in-depth interviews; teachers, students, parents, Ministries of Education (MoE) policy actors and staff members of disabled people organisations (DPOs).

Research findings highlighted eight major themes in which both positive and negative outcomes can manifest, based on the levels of absence and presence. These themes were identified as legislation and policy; teacher training and professional development; adaptations and accommodations; resources and support; attitudes and perceptions; building awareness and advocacy; parental involvement, and collaborating and networking. Hence, a level of purpose must guide OECS education stakeholders in to order strengthen supportive structures and engage in the transformation of barriers to inclusion into facilitators. Successful inclusion demands that governments make the commitment to support the creation of inclusive environments focused on problem solving that took into consideration local conditions, families, community initiatives, and individual needs.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Special Education Needs, Education Policy.
