

# **WHOLE SCHOOL INCLUSION: A CASE STUDY OF TWO SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CAMEROON**

**By**

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Thesis submitted to the Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree

**Doctor of Education (EdD) in Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

In April, defended in June and approved by the Vice Chancellor's Executive Group in October 2012.

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## ABSTRACT

The study investigates a systematic organisation and management of whole school inclusive processes in two mainstream secondary schools in Cameroon. These schools are implementing the official action plan of Education for all (EFA) and inclusion of 1998 alongside other inclusive legal and policy frameworks in response to the needs of student diversity with focus on those with Special Educational Needs/Disabilities, Difficulties in learning, Disadvantages in background (SEN/DDD) and special abilities. Using a diverse range of participants namely a pedagogic inspector, head teachers, teachers, students and parents (N=23) with a multi-method approach to data collection through semi-structured interviews, document review, observation and analysis, the qualitative research enquiry has a number of findings.

On the one hand, it discovered that whole school inclusion is complex and incorporates a wide range of curricular (academic/linguistic) and extracurricular (social/intercultural) support services and benefits through grouped/individualised, in-/out-class and on/ off school ground activities (technology of inclusion) designed to equalise educational opportunities and to enhance the participation of all in learning. The results further indicated that whole school inclusion widens learning horizons and maximises possibilities for developing diverse potentials of student diversity. It also revealed that, in a subtractive bilingual education system with official/foreign language as media of instruction, the inclusion of students with SEN/DDD is more effective through bilingual special education services. This incorporates intercultural participation, curriculum/foreign language learning support and/or mother tongue-based mediated education to facilitate leaning, development and attainment.

On the other hand, its results indicated that the bulk of barriers to whole school inclusion arise from the gap between the officially centralised policy / planning and practical inclusive schooling. The barriers include: centralised and prescriptive nature of educational services; partial or non-implementation of legal and policy frameworks; insufficient provision and management of human resources including staff pre-/ in-service training programmes, didactic materials and financial resources; lack of effective coordination, professionalism and accountability in service delivery that underlie the inadequate organisation and management of whole school inclusion development. Thus, support services are more charity driven (integration) than human rights-oriented (inclusion).

The work suggested that in order to adequately accommodate students with SEN/DDD, the schools' organisational and management strategies need to be systematically reconceptualised, through a review of key issues: the macro system level support services; decentralisation of services; more autonomy with active cooperation between the schools and their stakeholders; restructuring of contextual factors like staff training programmes, curriculum and environment accessibility among others to improve all forms of support activities.

The study also contributes to the understanding of inclusion in a global context through its combination of special educational needs, disability, bilingual and intercultural dimensions. In this way, conceptualisation of inclusion in countries of the North which is frequently limited to the provision for children with disabilities/special educational needs and the issue of location are insufficient in their application to certain countries of the South, especially in postcolonial societies where the linguistic and cultural dimensions are emphasised.

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