Chapter 3
Towards an Ideal Framework of Education Support Services for Learners With Special Education Needs at Basic Education Level in Lesotho

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ABSTRACT
This chapter explores a suitable model within which an efficient education support can be developed to promote inclusive education in Lesotho. It highlights the gaps and challenges in the policy framework of the Ministry of Education and Training which have bearing on education support. In 2009 the Ministry developed the Curriculum and Assessment Policy. In order to realize the ideals of the curriculum which include the need for learners to work efficiently, independently, use technology, and communicate efficiently, the Ministry develops work plans that operationalize the ideals. In this regard, the current policy and practice contexts must be evaluated for the extent to which they enhance or impede education support of learners facing barriers to learning and development.

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BACKGROUND

Curry Sanchez in his dissertation entitled “How Beliefs are like colors” makes us aware that while people may relate with each other on the basis of experiential knowledge, our beliefs usually guide how we form knowledge and engage with the world around us. Our beliefs are like colours which shape our attitudes and worldview (Sanchez 2018). The beliefs that society has about people with disabilities influences whether it can include or exclude them. Proponents of the social model argue that people may have impairments but society disables them by failing to create inclusive physical, educational and attitudinal environments among others. Disability results from the social organization of our world which pretends as though we are all similar while we may be different in height, skin colour, weight etc. So, once we provide a resource such as a printed book but leave out brailed text or erect a building but leave out a ramp, we have coloured our world within an ableist perspective and have disempowered someone who can no longer read independently or access a building without assistance. So, the concept of education support which has evolved over the years has changed perceptions of how Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN) must be supported. The evolution has been influenced by various factors among which are the changing attitudes towards disability support and the influence of international policies and standards such as the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994) and the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 2008), which advocate learner support. The concept of education support is highly contestable by various interest groups in education because of differing opinions of what makes effective education opportunities. Additionally, learners’ needs are unique from one context to another and may result from biological, emotional or psychosocial causes or interaction between these factors. This chapter gives a conceptual understanding of education support, and explains it within the theoretical contexts that affect it. Then, it gives an overview of challenges of education support in Lesotho, and finally, suggests a framework likely to benefit the country’s education system.
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