



## Barriers to Effective Implementation of Inclusive Education Curriculum in Selected Public Primary Schools in Temeke Municipality

Jamila H. Nuru<sup>1\*</sup>, Michaela Mhagama<sup>2</sup>, Frank Mwamakula<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Temeke Municipality

<sup>2,3</sup> Department of Education Foundations, St. Augustine University of Tanzania

Correspondence e-mail : mwamakulafm@gmail.com

**Abstract:** Despite national and global policy frameworks, including Tanzania's Education and Training Policy (2014), the implementation of inclusive education remains constrained in resource-limited contexts. This study explored the challenges of implementing inclusive education in public primary schools in Temeke Municipality, Tanzania. Using a mixed-methods descriptive design, data were collected from 111 participants, including teachers, students, head teachers, and parents, through questionnaires, interviews, and document review. Findings reveal a significant gap between policy and practice, driven largely by limited teacher capacity, with over 55 per cent lacking formal training in inclusive education and half reporting inadequate preparedness for inclusive teaching. These challenges are compounded by shortages of teaching and learning resources, inconsistent application of inclusive strategies, and the absence of structured support systems. The study concludes that systemic barriers including insufficient professional development, inadequate resources, and weak support structures hinder effective implementation of inclusive education. It recommends mandatory and continuous teacher training, increased investment in adapted materials and infrastructure, establishment of collaborative support mechanisms, and strengthened monitoring and evaluation frameworks to promote equitable and quality education for all learners.

**Keyword :** Inclusive Education, Teacher Capacity and Resource Adequacy, Tanzania

**Article info:** Submitted :2025-09-18 | Accepted : 2025-12-27 | Published : 2025-12-28

Copyright © 2025, Author.

This is an open-access article under the [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)



How to Cite :

### Introduction

Since the launch of the Education for All initiative in 1990, substantial strides have been made toward expanding access to mainstream schooling across many regions of the world (Kauffman et al., 2018). This commitment is evident in legislative and policy frameworks such as the United States' Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which guarantees free and appropriate public education for learners with disabilities, and Australia's Disability Standards for Education (Dragoo, 2019; UNESCO, 2020). Comparable efforts are observed in China through the Special Education Promotion Plan, as well as across African countries that have aligned their education policies with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4, which emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education for all (Xie et al., 2019; Naami

and Mort, 2023). Collectively, these frameworks underscore a shared commitment to promoting equity, access, quality, and social inclusion within education systems.

Despite this strong policy commitment, the effective implementation of inclusive education faces pervasive challenges across various contexts. A consistent and major barrier is the inadequate training of teachers, who often lack the skills to handle diverse learning needs (Brown et al., 2021; Asante, 2020). This is compounded by a severe insufficiency of resources, including inadequate infrastructure, a lack of teaching materials, and financial constraints (Arkorful et al., 2020; Peters, 2021). These systemic issues of poor policy enforcement, large class sizes, and inadequate funding significantly hinder the creation of truly inclusive classrooms (Engelbrecht et al., 2022; Mwale and Mtemang'ombe, 2020).

These implementation challenges are clearly evident in the Tanzanian context, particularly in areas like Temeke Municipality. National strategies, such as the Education and Training Policy, are undermined by a lack of funds, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of qualified teachers (Mtitu, 2021; Mgwangilo et al., 2021; Nkwame, 2023). Furthermore, low community awareness and ingrained social attitudes and stigmas against children with disabilities create a significant barrier to their inclusion and educational advancement (Mwarari, 2022; Mboya and Mwansasu, 2023). The combination of these factors – overcrowded classrooms, insufficient teacher preparedness, and lack of parental involvement – negatively impacts the academic performance of students with special needs (Chirwa and Kalima, 2023; Mtey and Sulle, 2019).

Conclusively, while the global and national policy foundations for inclusive education are strong, evidence indicates that success is heavily dependent on overcoming persistent implementation gaps. Research underscores that the academic and social benefits of inclusive education are only realized with appropriate support systems (Sithole and Makoza, 2021; Smith & Johnson, 2019). Therefore, translating policy into effective practice requires targeted investments in teacher training, infrastructure, and resources, coupled with community sensitization programs to shift social attitudes (Morris, 2022; Halder, 2023). Addressing these core issues is paramount to ensuring meaningful inclusion and improved educational outcomes for all learners, particularly those with disabilities.

### **Study Objective**

To examine teachers' capacity in implementing the inclusive education curriculum in public primary schools at Temeke Municipality

### **Statement**

The Tanzanian Education and Training Policy of 2014 identifies inclusive education as a strategic approach to ensuring all learners, regardless of physical,

intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other disabilities, have equal access to quality education. The policy identifies the Tanzanian government's initiative towards mainstreaming learners with special needs in regular schools for the purpose of promoting equity, social inclusion, and equal opportunities for all children. In practice, inclusive education in Tanzania has taken root in various ways, especially in public schools, where students with disabilities are increasingly enrolled in mainstream classrooms alongside their peers.

Despite Tanzania's progressive Education and Training Policy (2014), which mandates inclusive education, implementation faces systemic challenges that undermine its effectiveness. Research reveals critical barriers, including untrained teachers (only 28% with special needs training), inadequate adapted materials (available in <15% of classrooms), and persistent disability stigma (reported by 65% of educators). Infrastructure deficiencies, such as the absence of ramps (82% of schools), inaccessible toilets (91%), and overcrowded classrooms (averaging 60:1 student-to-teacher ratios), further exclude learners with disabilities. This study addresses that gap by investigating curriculum delivery in Temeke's inclusive classrooms, analyzing how teacher preparedness (34% report confidence), material availability ( $\leq 3$  adapted books per school), and physical accessibility (18% meet standards) collectively shape learning outcomes. The findings provided actionable strategies to align policy aspirations with classroom realities, ensuring equitable education for all students.

## Literature Review

### 1. Theoretical Review

This study applies Vygotsky's (1978) Socio-Cultural Theory, which emphasizes learning as a socially mediated process shaped by cultural and interpersonal interactions, particularly through the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where learners progress with guidance from more knowledgeable peers or adults. In the context of inclusive education in Temeke, the theory highlights the value of peer support, scaffolding, and culturally responsive teaching, while also underscoring how societal language, norms, and attitudes influence perceptions of disability and inclusion. Although the theory aligns well with the collaborative nature of inclusive education, it offers limited practical guidance on differentiated instruction and does not address structural challenges such as inadequate funding, teacher shortages, and poor infrastructure common in low-resource settings. In this study, the theory is used to explore how teacher-student relationships, social interactions, and cultural norms shape inclusive practices, informing recommendations on peer-assisted learning, teacher training, and community sensitization. However, the findings recognize that additional frameworks are needed to address the broader systemic barriers that Socio-Cultural Theory does not fully

## 2. Empirical Literature Review

Empirical evidence from both developed and developing contexts demonstrates that the implementation of inclusive education is strongly influenced by the availability of resources, teacher preparation, and systemic support. In the United States, Jackson et al. (2020) conducted an extensive equity audit of 1,200 school districts using quantitative analyses of funding patterns and resource allocation. Their findings revealed pronounced disparities between affluent and high-poverty districts, with wealthier districts spending more than three times as much per learner on assistive technologies and maintaining substantially lower student-to-special-educator ratios. These inequities were further illustrated by Yell et al. (2017), whose longitudinal study showed that students in under-resourced schools were more than twice as likely to be removed from mainstream classrooms and achieved significantly lower Individualized Education Program (IEP) outcomes. Although the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act provides a robust legislative framework for inclusive education, persistent structural barriers such as property tax-based funding systems, limited access to teacher training in rural areas, and widespread shortages of instructional materials continue to hinder equitable implementation (Lipkin et al., 2015).

Similar challenges are evident in Sub-Saharan Africa, where policy commitments to inclusive education frequently outpace classroom-level realities. In Uganda, Nakabugo et al. (2018) employed a mixed-methods national study involving surveys, infrastructure assessments, and teacher interviews to evaluate the implementation of inclusive education under the Education Sector Strategic Plan. The study revealed substantial gaps between policy and practice, with fewer than one-fifth of schools meeting minimum accessibility standards and only a small proportion possessing modified learning materials for learners with disabilities. Acute shortages of trained personnel resulted in an extremely high student-to-special-needs-teacher ratio, forcing untrained mainstream teachers to assume responsibility for inclusive classrooms. Consequently, inclusion was often superficial, as most learners with disabilities were placed in mainstream classrooms without individualized instructional support. These shortcomings were attributed to limited budgetary allocation for inclusion, weak enforcement of accessibility standards, and fragmented teacher training systems that produce an insufficient number of special needs education specialists annually.

In Ethiopia, Tirussew (2021) evaluated the implementation of the Education Sector Development Program V and similarly identified substantial gaps between inclusive education policy and practice. The study found that rural schools were particularly marginalized, with virtually no access to functional resource centers or adapted learning materials such as Braille and tactile resources. While some urban pilot schools recorded modest improvements in the enrollment of learners with

disabilities, these gains were undermined by systemic challenges, including inadequate practical preparation of teachers and heavy reliance on short-term donor funding. The study emphasized the need for coordinated cross-sectoral implementation, localized production of affordable adapted materials, and strengthened teacher education programs that integrate extensive practical training in inclusive instruction.

Evidence from Tanzania further underscores the systemic nature of these challenges. In the Kagera Region, Mwakisambwe (2019) examined the implementation of the National Strategy on Inclusive Education and documented severe shortages of instructional resources, overcrowded classrooms, and limited specialist support. Most classrooms lacked tactile learning tools, teacher–student ratios far exceeded recommended levels for inclusive settings, and logistical barriers hindered service delivery in remote areas. The study proposed context-specific strategies such as mobile resource units, decentralized production of adapted materials, and enrollment management policies to address these constraints. Similarly, in the Tanga Region, Ally and Lameck (2021) found that while partnerships with non-governmental organizations contributed positively by providing assistive devices and basic training, significant gaps persisted in teacher competence and availability of adapted learning materials. These shortcomings were linked to weak alignment between district policies and school-level resourcing, limited local production capacity, and overdependence on external support.

Further evidence from Tanzanian regions such as Mbeya highlights the limited scalability of inclusive education interventions in the absence of sustained systemic support. Despite promising community-based initiatives and localized solutions, most schools lacked adequate supervision mechanisms, trained personnel, and instructional materials, constraining the long-term effectiveness of inclusive education programs. Collectively, these regional studies reveal a persistent contradiction: while grassroots innovations and partnerships demonstrate the potential to advance inclusion, they often remain fragmented and isolated. The literature therefore suggests that meaningful and sustainable inclusive education requires coordinated systemic investment in teacher training, resource provision, monitoring frameworks, and institutional support structures rather than reliance on piecemeal or short-term interventions.

## Methodology

The study employed a mixed-methods approach and a descriptive design to conduct a comprehensive analysis of inclusive education practices in Temeke Municipality, Dar es Salaam. The selection of Temeke Municipality representative challenges of resource scarcity and high enrollment typical of an urban setting. A total sample of 111 participants including students, teachers, head teachers, parents, and a

Ward Education Officer (WEO) were selected using a combination of purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and documentary review, and were subsequently analyzed using SPSS for quantitative data and content analysis for qualitative data, thus ensuring the validity and reliability of the findings.

## Result and Discussion

### Findings

The focus of this study was on teachers' capacity in implementing the inclusive education curriculum. The study needs to understand the training of teachers and their competence in implementing inclusive education. First, the visiting teachers asked if they received any training on inclusive education, and their responses are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.**  
**Training on Inclusive Education**

<b>Have you received any training on inclusive education?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
YES	8	44.4
NO	10	55.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Data (2025)

The findings indicate that only 44.4 per cent of teachers reported having received training in inclusive education, while a larger proportion, 55.6 per cent, had not undergone any formal preparation in this area. This imbalance suggests a substantial capacity gap that poses a serious challenge to the effective implementation of an inclusive curriculum. When fewer than half of teachers are trained, the likelihood of consistent and meaningful inclusive practice is significantly reduced. Teachers without adequate professional preparation may encounter difficulties in adapting instructional methods, utilizing specialized resources, and addressing the diverse learning needs present in inclusive classrooms. Competencies such as differentiated instruction, the use of assistive technologies, inclusive classroom management, and adaptive assessment require structured training and cannot be adequately developed in the absence of formal professional development.

The findings further suggest that existing teacher training efforts are limited in scope and coverage, indicating systemic weaknesses in teacher preparation and staff development frameworks. Effective implementation of inclusive education requires training to be compulsory, continuous, and integrated across both pre-service and in-service programs rather than offered selectively or on a voluntary basis. Targeted capacity-building initiatives are therefore essential to equip teachers with practical

skills for inclusive pedagogy, particularly in curriculum differentiation and learner support strategies. Without sustained professional development, even motivated teachers may struggle to meet the educational needs of learners with disabilities, thereby undermining the objectives of inclusive education policy. This underscores the responsibility of policymakers and education authorities to prioritize structured training programs, allocate adequate resources for professional development, and ensure that all teachers are sufficiently prepared to manage diverse learners in inclusive settings.

These findings reflect a broader pattern documented in empirical literature from comparable contexts. For instance, Tirussew's (2021) evaluation of Ethiopia's Education Sector Development Program revealed that teacher training initiatives addressed less than 15 per cent of the required practical competencies for inclusive education. Such limited practical preparation helps explain the persistence of untrained teachers and the gap between policy aspirations and classroom practice observed in the present study. The convergence of evidence across contexts highlights teacher training as a critical and unresolved challenge in the implementation of inclusive education.

Teachers were also asked to indicate their level of understanding of the concept and principles of inclusive education, and their responses are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.**

**Teachers' Understanding of Concept and Principles of Inclusive Education (N=18)**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>%</b>
i I understand the concept and principles of inclusive education.	5	27.8	5	27.8	6	33.3	1	5.6	1	5.6
ii I feel confident teaching learners with diverse abilities in the same classroom.	8	44.4	4	22.2	4	22.2	2	11.1	0	0
iii I have received adequate training on inclusive teaching methods.	3	16.7	4	22.2	2	11.1	6	33.3	3	16.7
iv I regularly use differentiated teaching strategies to accommodate all learners.	4	22.2	6	33.3	6	33.3	2	11.1	0	0

---

v	I collaborate with special needs experts when needed.	4	22.2	10	55.6	2	11.1	2	11.1	0	0
---	---	---	------	----	------	---	------	---	------	---	---

---

Source: Field data (2025)

The results presented in Table 2 indicate varying levels of teachers' understanding of the concept and principles of inclusive education. While 27.8 per cent of teachers strongly agreed and an equal proportion agreed that they understood inclusive education, resulting in an overall 55.6 per cent expressing confidence in their understanding, a substantial proportion either remained neutral (33.3 per cent) or disagreed (11.2 per cent). This distribution suggests that although more than half of the teachers perceive themselves as knowledgeable, a considerable number experience uncertainty or lack sufficient conceptual clarity. The high proportion of neutral responses is particularly significant, as it likely reflects ambiguity or limited confidence rather than complete absence of knowledge. Such uncertainty may hinder teachers' ability to translate inclusive education principles into practice, even when they possess some theoretical exposure. The presence of teachers who disagreed further underscores gaps in foundational understanding, which remain a critical barrier to effective implementation of inclusive education.

These findings point to a clear misalignment between inclusive education policy aspirations and teacher readiness at the school level. Effective inclusive education requires more than general awareness; it demands a thorough understanding of key concepts such as equity, diversity, reasonable accommodation, and differentiated instruction. Teachers who are unsure of these principles may struggle to adapt instructional strategies, manage diverse classrooms, or identify and respond to learners' individual needs. The results therefore highlight the necessity for targeted, school-based professional development initiatives that strengthen teachers' conceptual knowledge and link theory to classroom practice. Structured in-service training, supported by professional learning communities, can play a vital role in reducing uncertainty and enhancing teachers' confidence in applying inclusive practices. Without such interventions, inclusive education is likely to remain fragmented and fall short of its goal of providing equitable learning opportunities for all learners.

In relation to teachers' confidence in teaching learners of varying abilities within the same classroom, the findings show that 66.6 per cent of teachers expressed confidence, while 22.2 per cent were neutral and 11.1 per cent disagreed. Although the majority reported confidence, the presence of uncertainty and lack of confidence among a notable proportion of teachers is significant. Confidence in managing learner diversity is a critical determinant of successful inclusive education, as it influences teachers' willingness and ability to adapt lesson plans, differentiate instruction, and

provide targeted support. Teachers who lack confidence are less likely to implement inclusive strategies consistently, which may compromise learning outcomes for students with diverse needs. These results suggest that confidence in inclusive teaching is uneven and closely linked to levels of training, experience, and access to professional support.

The findings further reveal that only 38.9 per cent of teachers perceived themselves as having received adequate training in inclusive teaching practices, while half of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. This highlights a substantial deficit in professional development, suggesting that many teachers are expected to implement inclusive education without sufficient preparation. Inadequate training limits teachers' ability to apply essential inclusive strategies such as differentiated instruction, individualized learner support, and the effective use of assistive devices. Consequently, inclusive principles may be applied inconsistently, even where teachers express theoretical understanding. These results emphasize that teacher training must be not only available but also comprehensive, practice-oriented, and continuous. Carefully designed in-service programs that integrate theoretical knowledge with classroom application are essential for building both competence and confidence in inclusive pedagogy.

The findings also indicate that 55.5 per cent of teachers reported regular use of differentiated teaching strategies, while a significant proportion were either neutral or disagreed. Although this suggests that differentiation is practiced by more than half of the teachers, the level of inconsistency remains concerning. Differentiated instruction is a central component of inclusive education, enabling teachers to respond to learners' diverse abilities, interests, and learning styles. Teachers who are uncertain or inconsistent in applying differentiation may struggle to meet the needs of learners with disabilities or those with varied learning preferences. This gap between conceptual understanding and classroom practice underscores the importance of professional development that emphasizes practical, classroom-based strategies for differentiation, supported by mentoring and access to appropriate resources.

Regarding collaboration with special needs experts, the majority of teachers expressed positive engagement, with most acknowledging the value of working with specialists to support learners with disabilities. This reflects an appreciation of collaborative approaches to inclusive education, as specialist support can enhance instructional adaptation, material modification, and individualized learner assistance. However, the presence of neutral and dissenting responses suggests that access to specialists or clarity on collaborative procedures may be uneven. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening institutional support systems that facilitate regular collaboration, mentorship, and consultation with special needs professionals. Such structures are essential for sustaining effective inclusive practices beyond individual teacher initiative.

The findings of this study are consistent with empirical evidence from other Tanzanian contexts. For example, Ally and Lameck (2021) demonstrated that although partnerships with NGOs such as Sight Savers contributed valuable resources and basic training, the absence of embedded collaborative systems limited the overall impact on teachers' capacity to adapt curricula. Their observation that a large proportion of teachers lacked curriculum adaptation skills reinforces the present study's conclusion that sustained collaboration and localized support structures are necessary for effective inclusive education. The emphasis on developing teacher communities of practice and structured mentorship aligns closely with the need identified in this study for systematic collaboration to enhance teachers' preparedness and effectiveness in inclusive classrooms.

The study further incorporated students' perspectives to gain deeper insight into teachers' capacity, preparedness, and support in implementing inclusive education, with the responses presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.**  
**Teachers' Capacity, Preparedness, and Support**

Question	Response	Frequency	Percent
i Do your teachers treat all students equally and with respect?	Always	49	61.3
	Sometimes	21	26.3
	Never	10	12.5
	Total	80	100.0
ii Does your teacher help students who have difficulties in learning?	Yes	63	78.8
	Sometimes	17	21.3
	Total	80	100.0
iii Have you seen your teachers using different ways to help students learn?	Yes	66	82.5
	No	9	11.3
	Sometimes	5	6.3
	Total	80	100.0
iv Do teachers encourage students to work/play together, regardless of ability?	Yes	66	82.5
	No	7	8.8
	Sometimes	7	8.8
	Total	80	100.0

Source: Field Data (2025)

The findings indicate that 61.3 per cent of students reported that teachers consistently treat all students equally and with respect, while 26.3 per cent indicated that this occurs only sometimes, and 12.5 per cent felt it never happens. These results suggest that although the majority perceive fair and respectful treatment—a key

principle of inclusive education—a significant minority experiences inconsistency or lack of equitable treatment. The positive responses reflect teachers' general commitment to inclusivity, yet the fact that nearly 39 per cent of students experience unequal treatment highlights a serious concern. Inclusive classrooms require universal respect and equitable treatment, as any deviation can foster exclusion and negatively affect students' engagement and learning. These findings underscore the need for continuous professional development focused on cultivating inclusive mindsets, reinforcing classroom equity, and fostering respect for diversity. Training programs should emphasize the importance of universal and equitable treatment, while school administrators must monitor and support teacher behaviors through mentorship, peer observation, and structured feedback systems to maintain a nurturing and inclusive learning environment.

In terms of support for students with learning difficulties, 78.8 per cent of students reported that their teachers provide assistance, whereas 21.3 per cent indicated that support is only provided sometimes. No students reported complete absence of support. This reflects a generally positive perception of teacher responsiveness, yet the inconsistency noted among a fifth of the students raises concerns about equitable access to assistance. Systematic and ongoing support is essential, as intermittent help may be influenced by factors such as class size, inadequate training, or limited resources for differentiated instruction. The results highlight the need for structured mechanisms to ensure all students receive timely and sufficient support, including professional development in early identification of learning difficulties, training in remedial strategies, and fostering peer tutoring or specialized support classes. Collaboration with experts should be institutionalized to prevent low-achieving students from being marginalized.

Regarding differentiated instructional strategies, 82.5 per cent of students observed their teachers employing diverse methods to support learning, while 11.3 per cent reported that they did not, and 6.3 per cent said this occurred only sometimes. These findings indicate a growing adoption of inclusive pedagogical strategies, such as group work, simplified language, and lesson repetition, which are crucial for addressing diverse learning needs. Nevertheless, the minority reporting absence or inconsistency of differentiated instruction suggests variability in teacher practice, likely due to differences in training, experience, or workload. To ensure consistent implementation, professional development programs must provide practical, classroom-based guidance in differentiation, reinforced by supervisory support and monitoring across subjects and grade levels. Sustained use of varied instructional strategies promotes meaningful engagement for all learners and supports a more inclusive classroom environment.

The study also examined social inclusion practices, with 82.5 per cent of students indicating that teachers encourage collaboration and play among students of

different abilities. Smaller proportions (8.8 per cent each) reported that such encouragement is absent or only occasional. These results demonstrate that teachers actively foster interaction and cooperation, promoting social integration, reducing stigma, and ensuring students with disabilities are not segregated. However, the presence of inconsistent implementation underscores the need for professional development that emphasizes experiential, hands-on approaches to facilitate cooperative learning, peer support, and interaction among diverse students. Additionally, school policies should support inclusive extracurricular activities that reinforce classroom practices, thereby creating a holistic environment conducive to equity, respect, and shared learning opportunities.

## Discussion

The findings of this study reveal important insights into teachers' capacity to implement inclusive education in Temeke Municipality and demonstrate a clear gap between policy intentions and classroom realities. Although inclusive education is formally endorsed, its effective implementation remains constrained by limited teacher training, partial conceptual understanding, inconsistent instructional practices, and insufficient systemic support. These challenges mirror broader patterns observed in both regional and international studies on inclusive education in resource-constrained contexts.

The study established that more than half of the teachers had not received formal training in inclusive education, indicating a serious capacity deficit that undermines curriculum implementation. Inclusive education requires teachers to possess specialized competencies such as differentiated instruction, adaptive assessment, classroom management for diverse learners, and the effective use of assistive technologies. Without adequate training, teachers are likely to rely on traditional teaching methods that do not accommodate learners with disabilities or diverse learning needs. This finding is consistent with studies conducted in Ethiopia and Uganda, which reported that teacher preparation programs often fail to equip educators with practical inclusive teaching skills, resulting in superficial or tokenistic inclusion (Tirussew, 2021; Nakabugo et al., 2018). The persistence of untrained teachers in Temeke suggests that professional development in inclusive education remains fragmented, non-compulsory, and insufficiently prioritized.

Despite limited training, more than half of the teachers reported understanding the concept and principles of inclusive education. However, a substantial proportion expressed neutrality or disagreement, suggesting uncertainty rather than firm conceptual mastery. This partial understanding poses a challenge to effective implementation, as inclusive education requires more than awareness; it demands deep comprehension of equity, reasonable accommodation, learner diversity, and differentiated pedagogy. Teachers who lack clarity on these principles may struggle to

translate inclusive policies into meaningful classroom practices. This finding supports earlier research in Tanzania, which identified conceptual ambiguity among teachers as a key barrier to inclusive education, even in schools where inclusion was formally adopted (Ally and Lameck, 2021; Mwakisambwe, 2019). From the perspective of Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory, such uncertainty limits teachers' ability to facilitate meaningful social interaction and scaffold learning within learners' Zones of Proximal Development, thereby reducing the effectiveness of inclusive learning environments.

The study further revealed that while a majority of teachers expressed confidence in teaching learners with diverse abilities, a significant minority remained uncertain or lacked confidence. Teacher confidence is a critical determinant of inclusive practice, as it influences willingness to adapt instruction, manage diverse classrooms, and engage learners with varying needs. The coexistence of confidence and uncertainty suggests that teachers' self-efficacy is uneven and closely tied to training, experience, and availability of support. Similar findings have been reported in both developed and developing contexts, where inadequate resources and limited specialist support reduce teachers' confidence in implementing inclusive education effectively (Jackson et al., 2020; Yell et al., 2017). This underscores the interconnectedness of training, conceptual understanding, and confidence, indicating that positive attitudes alone are insufficient to sustain inclusive practices.

With regard to instructional practices, the findings showed that just over half of the teachers reported regular use of differentiated teaching strategies, while a substantial proportion were either inconsistent or uncertain in their application. Differentiated instruction is a cornerstone of inclusive education, as it enables teachers to respond to learners' diverse abilities, interests, and learning styles. The inconsistency observed in this study highlights the gap between theoretical endorsement of inclusion and its practical execution. Similar challenges have been documented in Tanzanian regional studies, where large class sizes, limited materials, and insufficient professional support constrained teachers' ability to differentiate instruction effectively (Mwakisambwe, 2019; Ally and Lameck, 2021). In socio-cultural terms, inconsistent differentiation restricts teachers' capacity to align instruction with individual learners' developmental levels, thereby limiting meaningful participation and learning.

The findings also revealed that most teachers recognized the importance of collaborating with special needs experts, reflecting a positive orientation toward teamwork and shared responsibility. Collaboration with specialists can enhance teachers' capacity by providing professional scaffolding, enabling more effective instructional adaptations and learner support. However, the presence of neutral and dissenting responses suggests that such collaboration is not universally accessible or systematically embedded in schools. This aligns with earlier findings from Tanzania, where reliance on external support, particularly NGOs, yielded limited impact in the

absence of sustained institutional structures for collaboration and follow-up (Ally and Lameck, 2021). Vygotsky's theory reinforces the importance of collaborative knowledge construction, suggesting that inclusive education is most effective when teachers are supported through ongoing professional interaction and shared expertise.

Students' perceptions further illuminate the realities of inclusive education practice in Temeke. The majority of students reported respectful treatment, instructional support, use of varied teaching strategies, and encouragement of interaction among learners of different abilities. These findings suggest that many teachers demonstrate inclusive attitudes and practices that foster social integration and peer learning. Such practices align strongly with socio-cultural principles that emphasize learning through social interaction and collaboration. However, the presence of students who experienced inconsistent or absent inclusive behaviors highlights uneven implementation across classrooms. This inconsistency suggests that inclusive practices are often dependent on individual teacher commitment rather than being institutionalized as standard practice. Similar patterns have been observed in other Tanzanian studies, where grassroots innovations and teacher-driven efforts showed promise but remained fragile due to lack of systemic support (Mwakisambwe, 2019; Kisanga, 2022).

The findings demonstrate that inclusive education in Temeke Municipality is characterized by a paradox of commitment amid constraint. Teachers generally exhibit positive attitudes, willingness to support learners, and partial adoption of inclusive practices, yet these efforts are undermined by inadequate training, limited conceptual clarity, inconsistent instructional application, and weak systemic support. These findings are consistent with regional and international literature, which emphasizes that successful inclusive education requires coordinated investment in teacher preparation, professional collaboration, and institutional resourcing. In line with Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory, the study affirms that inclusive education is a socially mediated process that cannot rely solely on individual teachers but must be supported through structured systems that enable collaboration, scaffolding, and sustained professional growth.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The implementation of inclusive education in Temeke Municipality is characterized by a clear gap between policy intentions and classroom practice. While most teachers demonstrate positive attitudes toward inclusion and show commitment to supporting learners with diverse abilities, their efforts are constrained by inadequate professional preparation and limited systemic support. A significant proportion of teachers have not received formal training in inclusive education, and many perceive their training as insufficient, which negatively affects their confidence, conceptual clarity, and consistency in applying inclusive teaching strategies. Although

some teachers report understanding the principles of inclusive education, uncertainty remains prevalent, suggesting that theoretical awareness has not been fully translated into practical competence. Differentiated instruction, collaboration with specialists, and learner-centered practices are present in some classrooms but are not consistently implemented across schools. Students' perceptions further confirm that inclusive practices such as respect, instructional support, and peer interaction are common but uneven, indicating reliance on individual teacher initiative rather than institutionalized systems. In line with Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory, the findings suggest that inclusive education in Temeke has not fully leveraged social interaction, scaffolding, and collaborative learning due to limited training structures, weak professional collaboration, and inadequate resources. As a result, inclusive education remains partially implemented, with the risk of excluding learners with special educational needs despite their physical presence in mainstream classrooms.

Based on these conclusions, the study recommends that inclusive education be strengthened through coordinated and sustained systemic interventions. Teacher training in inclusive education should be made compulsory and continuous at both pre-service and in-service levels, with emphasis on practical classroom strategies such as differentiated instruction, adaptive assessment, and classroom management for diverse learners. Teacher education curricula should be revised to include mandatory practicum experiences in inclusive settings to enhance teachers' confidence and competence. Schools should establish structured support mechanisms that promote regular collaboration between mainstream teachers and special needs education specialists through mentoring, consultation, and professional learning communities. Education authorities should prioritize the allocation of resources for inclusive education, including assistive devices, adapted learning materials, and manageable class sizes, to enable effective implementation of inclusive practices. Monitoring and supervision systems should be strengthened to ensure consistent application of inclusive education across schools, while school leaders should actively promote inclusive values and practices. Additionally, schools should encourage peer-assisted learning and cooperative activities that foster social integration among learners of varying abilities. Finally, community sensitization initiatives should be implemented to address negative attitudes toward disability and promote shared responsibility for inclusive education, thereby ensuring sustainability and meaningful inclusion beyond the classroom.

## References

Alkhudiry, R. (2022). *The contribution of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory in mediating L2 knowledge co-construction*. *Theory & Practice in Language Studies (TPLS)*, 12(10).

- Arkorful, V. E., Basiru, I., Anokye, R., Latif, A., Agyei, E. K., Hammond, A., ... & Abdul-Rahaman, S. (2020). *Equitable access and inclusiveness in basic education: Roadblocks to sustainable development goals*. *International Journal of Public Administration*.
- Bernard, D. M. (2024). *Understanding socioculturalism in early childhood education: Current perspectives and emerging trends*. *Interactions*, 73, 16-31.
- Dragoo, K. E. (2019). *The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part C: Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities*. Congressional Research Service.
- Halder, S. (2023). *Preparing teacher educators for inclusive classroom: Challenges, lacuna and future direction*. In *The Routledge Handbook of Inclusive Education for Teacher Educators*. Routledge India.
- Kauffman, J. M., Hallahan, D. P., Pullen, P. C., & Badar, J. (2018). *Special education: What it is and why we need it*. Routledge.
- Li, L., & Ruppard, A. (2021). *Conceptualizing teacher agency for inclusive education: A systematic and international review*. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 44(1), 42-59.
- Lipkin, P. H., Okamoto, J., Norwood Jr, K. W., Adams, R. C., Brei, T. J., Young, T., ... & Council on Children with Disabilities. (2015). *The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for children with special educational needs*. *Pediatrics*, 136(6), e1650-e1662.
- Mtey, T., & Sulle, E. (2019). *Resource allocation challenges in inclusive education*. *Tanzania Education Journal*.
- Mtitu, E. (2021). *Teachers' readiness for inclusive education in Tanzania*. *Inclusive Pedagogy Research*.
- Mwale, P., & Mtemang'ombe, T. (2020). *Malawi's National Inclusive Education Strategy: Successes and challenges*. *African Educational Review*.
- Mwarari, C. (2022). *Access to and participation of women with disabilities in higher education in Kenya*. In *Women's Contribution to Higher Education and Social Transformation* (pp. 37-50). Springer.
- Naami, A., & Mort, K. S. T. (2023). *Inclusive education in Ghana: How prepared are the teachers?* *Frontiers in Education*.
- Nkwame, J. (2023). *Challenges in inclusive policy implementation in Tanzania*. *Policy and Educational Studies*.
- Sugiarto, E., Syarif, M. I., Mulyono, K. B., bin Othman, A. N., & Krisnawati, M. (2025). *How is ethnopedagogy-based education implemented? (A case study on the heritage of batik in Indonesia)*. *Cogent Education*, 12(1), 2466245.
- UNESCO. (2020). *Disability standards for education in Australia: Progress review*.
- UNESCO. (2021). *Inclusive education and resource disparities*. *Global Education Report*.
- UNESCO. (2023). *Building inclusive education systems: The role of family-school partnerships*. UNESCO Publishing.

- 
- Xie, Y. (2019). *The impact of China's Special Education Promotion Plan (2014–2016)*. Asian Education Policy Journal.
- Yell, M. L., Katsiyannis, A., & Bradley, J. R. (2017). *The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: The evolution of special education law*. In Handbook of special education (pp. 55–70). Routledge.