
POLICY REFORMS AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR EARLY LEARNERS IN KILIFI COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The disability assessment reforms in Kenya sought to streamline the identification, classification, placement and enrolment of children with disability. But the extent of implementation of the assessment reforms is unclear, inconsistent and under-resourced, which has an effect on inclusivity in education for early learners. Inclusive education is also hindered by retrogressive cultural practices, stigma and high poverty rates in Kilifi County, hence the need for the reforms. Thus, the focus was on policy reforms as a means of improving inclusivity in education. The study's theoretical underpinning was the zone of proximal development and ecological systems theory of human development. A mixed research approach was adopted and the targeted populace consisted 6 special needs education director/assistant directors, 38 managers and officers in the educational assessment and resource centers: 19 county officials in-charge of early childhood education, 3 PwDs council members and 7 principals of the schools providing inclusive education in Kilifi County. 87.5% of the questionnaires were filled and returned and 66.7% of the interviewees were conducted. Analysis showed that policy reforms had a great predictor effect to inclusive education, and the relationship between the variables was both positive and significant. The paper concludes that policy reforms including inclusion of non-discriminatory and education for all policies enhanced conduction of disability assessment for children. This led to improved placement and enrolment of children with disabilities in inclusive school system. The study recommended the harmonization of disability and education policies to meet the agenda of education for all.

Keywords: *Non-discriminatory policies, Education for all policies, Full inclusion of all learners, Partial inclusion, Mainstreaming*

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INTRODUCTION

Inclusion is an essential component of equity in education. Demand for inclusive education drives major education reforms throughout the world and hence the development and implementation of inclusive education policy (Byrne, 2022). The policy reforms aim at integrating all learners in a school setting through awareness creation, access for all learners and improving the chances for enrolment. Inclusive education, as shared by Schuelka (2018) means that students with disabilities or any other disadvantages are taught in a mainstream classroom with other students for most of the school day. As long as the children can adjust and take part in learning activities, then focus is placed on integrating them in the mainstream classroom setting, as opposed to having special units/special classrooms for them. Karangwa (2022) noted that inclusive learning focuses on integration (placement of children with and without disabilities in the same learning set-up) as opposed to segregation (specific learning areas for learners with disability).

Successful inclusive education is only attained when the education stakeholders assume that all children have a right to the same educational spaces (UNESCO-IBE, 2016). Implementing inclusive education is a continuous educational transformational process whose goal is on equity and access to education for all. The focus is on quality, outcomes and experiences as opposed to counting student numbers. Therefore, as per Ohba and Malenya (2022), implementing inclusive education first starts at assessment, policy reforms, and access. There is need to consider the class setting, school plans, trainings and support for teaching staffs, supporting the school leadership and a national policy and framework. On policy reforms, it sets the framework with clear target, informed decision making on management, curriculum and coordination between the family/society and the school for successful learning process (Chiu, 2021). The policy reforms ensure inclusive education is successfully implement, and yet this cannot happen until each child is properly assessed, to inform placement.

According to UNICEF and International Classification of Functioning Disability and Health (ICF), there is a framework to assess and classify disabilities and functioning at individual and population levels. Disability assessments are specific activities and tests done to determine the nature and extent of physical and mental limitations if they exist in an individual. Ncube and Sedibe (2022) shared that assessment informs on placement, strategy formation and linking the strategy with programs for planning, execution and monitoring. Without proper assessment for children, the access, placement and progressive monitoring become a challenge (Matolo & Rambuda, 2022).

In UK, child assessment is protected under the ‘Children’s Act’ and conducted by social services department so as to meet the needs of the child in terms of education, health, development and religious and cultural background. Furthermore, Malet (2023) noted that implementing inclusive education policy relies on conceptions, beliefs and practices for schooling and learning systems that encourage inclusion of all children in mainstream schooling. Byrne (2022) avers that the assessment helps in identifying, categorizing and placement of the child in the correct group to cater for their needs. But the challenges in disability assessment in terms of screening costs, stigma and taboos from cultural and community perspective, lack of enough centers and professionals, negatively affect growth and development for children with disability. Some children are kept at home or institutionalized and miss out on opportunities in developing and growing their abilities and potential (Chiu & Lim, 2020).

Other than the United Kingdom, researchers Kaščák and Strouhal (2023) noted that the Slovakian education policy faced resistance to inclusion practices. While in Myanmar, Maber and Aung (2019) noted that effective assessment demanded highly skilled assessors, accessible and available resource centers and financial support. This is because disability can be one of the most marginalizing factors in a child’s life. The lack of financial resources can be challenging to meet the learning the needs of students with disabilities (Hayes & Bulat, 2017). Additionally, the Finnish government advocates for community consensus on educability of each child, this diverting from neo-liberal approach (Chong, 2018); while in the Czech Republic there is push for

reduction of isolation and segregation of children with disabilities and disadvantages. In the Scandinavian countries and case of Denmark, the issue of inclusion has taken the viewpoint of state welfare but suffers from structural and social barriers in equity, equality and democracy (Larsen, Holloway & Hamre, 2019).

Across the African continent, inclusive educational practices faced barriers since teachers were not empowered, trained and supported to teach children with disabilities in regular class setting. In Ghana researchers Opoku, Rayner, Pedersen and Cuskelly (2021) and Mantey, Vanderpuye and Asamani (2023) noted that the physical environment was not conducive; and hence the need to upgrade facilities to meet the needs of all learners. In South Africa, Matolo and Rambuda (2022) argument that assessment was modestly implemented since professional assessors and educators lacked screening and assessment resources and support. In Tanzania, macro and micro-exclusion practices still persist due to able-ism perspective. Cosmas (2021) further reported inclusive education in Tanzania is barred by lack of identification and assessment, discriminatory practices, shortage of trained teachers, inefficient support to all stakeholders. The Ugandan outlook, according to Musenyente, Han and Knigge (2022), is such that the concept of inclusive education is a-kin to a mock, as there were practices of non-admission of some students, inaccessible environment, little funding and separation of students as per their abilities.

Locally, Kiru (2019) found that assessment and determination of disability in children in an expensive exercise and many poor Kenyan households are unable to afford the time and costs needed for assessments. The problem is worsened where there are few assessors and medical doctors willing to handle that task. Ireri, King'endo, Wangila and Thurania (2020) noted that Kenya's quest to provide education for all can only be achieved if learners with disabilities are enrolled in schools. But enrolment is possible if the children are assessed and provisions are made to cater for their needs in and outside the school set-up. Obat (2020) found that cultural practices of rural communities, scarcity of resources, and discrimination, segregation and stigmatization of children with disability has made enrolment rates to be very low. Nyika and Madaraka (2021) also noted that inclusive education suffers the challenges of low financial and human resources, retrogressive cultural beliefs, inaccessibility to information and infrastructure and poor quality of education.

To alleviate these challenges in inclusive education, Nyika and Madaraka (2021), Cosmas (2021) and Schuelka (2018) all advocate for reforms in policy and practices to reverse the trends. In addition, successful inclusive education needs the support of governments, the community, the parents, and society. Ireri, *et al.* (2020) shared that inclusive educational practices largely rely on educational policies that promote inclusivity. The Educational Assessments and Resource Centers (EARC) centers can improve on quality, timely, reliable and accessible resources for inclusive education. Thus, this paper assesses policy reforms as a means of improving inclusive education in Kenya.

In Kenya, 2.48 million children have disabilities and only 6 percent are enrolled in school. The low enrolment rate is linked to high cost of schooling, no learning materials, inadequate infrastructure, low staffing levels and lack assessment for identification and placement (Ohba & Malenya, 2022). Inclusive education is also hampered by the assessment process that is expensive, considering Kilifi County is among the poorest counties in the nation. The county equally lacks sufficient number of EARC centers and professional assessors. In addition, retrogressive cultures, stigmatization and poverty, according to Amor, *et al.* (2019) hinder successes expected from inclusive education agenda. The problems in Kilifi County are compounded by high poverty rates, limited access to health and educational infrastructure, limited awareness and information (Kirby (2017). Such that Kilifi County forms a perfect back-drop in examining how policy reforms influence inclusive education.

Research Question:

- How do policy reforms affect the inclusive education for early learners within Kilifi County Kenya?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical Literature Review

In the United Kingdom, Knight and Crick (2022) research paper was on inclusive education in Wales. The focus was on the values and practices adopted in interpreting the discourse through analysis informed on critical assessment of policies. The policy paper sought to incorporate the resolutions made in the UN General Assembly convention in 2006 on Rights of Disabled Person. It found that the new curriculum in the education system under the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) regulations and reforms in the overall educational system. Further findings noted that the reforms, policies and initiatives focused on curriculum changes, qualifications and teacher education and training and investments made in the sector; seeking for improvements in inclusive education. The policy is at the backbone of inclusive education for Welsh people in Wales.

In Japan, Kikkawa, Wakui, Iketani and Bryer (2022) research was on inclusive education system and practices across the nation and further needs across the Pacific Asia. The aim was to blend the academic and special needs; such that the inclusive educational system in practice is under the dual educational system. The findings reveal that dual system created new opportunities to enhance inclusive practices in mainstream school system. Under the new national policy, there was a revision of the curriculum from special-needs education to a blend of experts handling both academic and specialized needs of any learners.

Lambrev, Kirova and Prochner (2020) researched on education reforms for inclusivity by focusing on policy - practice in Bulgaria. The focus was on the need for implementation of non-discriminatory education policies for Roma and non-Roma educators in Bulgaria. The school segregation and perceptions caused racism, division based on minority and capability needs for the learners. Educational reforms focused on improving learning outcomes but removing non-inclusive public education system. There is also need to reduce the gaps in access, equity, treatment and quality for children with disability and those without disability; Roma and non-Roma students. Educational reforms must also consider restructuring the school facility for accessibility and change the school system to accommodate all learners. The facilities must be easily accessible and safe for learners with physical disability. There must be school policies to ensure resource rooms, spacing and allocation is accessible to all learners.

Ackah-Jnr (2016) research paper is on the implementation process for inclusive early childhood education (IECE) policy and the policy changes in Ghana. The researcher used qualitative interpretive case study approach in investigating IECE implementation in Ghana. 16 teachers, 5 headteachers, 4 ECD center managers and 6 senior education officials were interviewed to collect data. Since the data was qualitative in nature, it was assessed through thematic methods with results showing differing understanding of the policy and practices of IECE in Ghana. Findings also showed that implementing inclusive early childhood education in Ghana, there is need for policy change for modification of the curricula, re-training of teachers to handle inclusive classroom and school administrators to take part in formation of educational practices and its reforms. The policy should clearly dictate the role of teachers in handling an inclusive class with diverse learner needs.

In South Africa, Engelbrecht (2020) conducted research on inclusive education by focusing on its developments and the challenges experienced. The research used secondary data using a three-step linear process of reviewing peer-reviewed studies, reports and journals. Reviewing of past literature was done to show a trend of the developments, successes and challenges. It was found that inclusive education is based on socio-cultural and political development. There have been progressive transformations in the education sector that have justified inclusivity in education system. The policy guidelines have led to teacher training, support for successful inclusive education approaches and allocation of resources for infrastructure modification, human and technical resource allocation to schools.

Researching on policy and practice for inclusive education in Ethiopia; Tonegawa (2019) shared that inclusive education is part of the SDGs mid-term plans as a means for socio-economic growth and development. The research focused on the perspective of parents and guardians who had children living with different disabilities and teachers. This was a case study approach, targeting 3 public primary schools in Addis Ababa. The teachers and parents were interviewed and filled the semi-structured questions, while learners with disability were observed in their classrooms. The qualitative data collected was assessed and it is reported that in Ethiopia, the inclusive education policy started as special needs education program in 2006, with revisions in 2012 and led to the 2017 strategy focusing on inclusive education. The one-track policy adopted in the country places the parent/guardian and teacher at the center in inclusive education for children with disability. The policy sought engagement and contribution of various stakeholders such as teachers, parents/guardians, local communities and government to champion inclusive education in the primary schools.

The researchers Ileri, King'endo, Wangila and Thurair (2020) focus was on policy strategies and influencing factors during the inclusive education implementation in Kenya. It was noted that the government domesticated some of the international agreements on inclusive education in the constitution and laws. The policies advocate for adoption, designing and implementation of programs for inclusive education. The inclusive education policy sets guidelines for school administrators to follow to overcome physical barriers that children with disability face. The policy also sets out measures for restructuring the school facilities to improve on mobility and accessibility of learning institution.

Adoyo and Odeny (2015) article was on inclusive education practice in Kenya by concentrating on the challenges, suggestions and possible solutions. The paper highlights the journey to inclusive education that started with establishment of special needs schools (segregation) integration and currently inclusive education. Through policy reforms domesticated in the 2010 constitution, the country is pushing legal frameworks and policy reforms as a means of realizing inclusive education. The findings showed that the country has made strides towards the realization of inclusive education and includes establishing of educational assessment and resource centers (EARC), training EARC officers, provision of financial incentives, grants and assisted devices. Awareness creation and information sharing also worked towards inclusive education.

Theoretical Framework

The Zone of Proximal Development Theory

Vygotsky's developmental theory of dyontogenesis formed the grounding theoretical perspective, and informed by Vygotsky's (1930) concept on zone of proximal development (ZPD). ZPD focuses on length of time taken by each child to independently solve a problem. Ability to solve problems is a sign of development, highlighted through engagement with adults in solving problems (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). The main construct of this theory on zone of proximal development under learning and development is that there is a space between what a learner can do without any assistance and what the learner can do under supervision and guidance from adults. The theory sets a method for collaboration between peers in the same study level or between an adult and the child.

The concepts in ZPD theory operates on the basis of having someone more skilled and knowledgeable (teacher) than the learner. Xi and Lantolf (2021) shared that it is also adopted in learning scenarios where there is scaffolding with the professional teacher guiding the learning process. Scaffolding operations in a manner that the more the learner masters the skills, the less support does the teacher give to the student. Rezaee and Azizi (2012) shared that the theory also explains how reciprocal teaching can be executed to improve learning outcomes. The learning process is based on collaborative effort of teachers and students and involves questioning, clarification, summarizing and predication. The social setting allows for social interactions that enable the learners to practice their skills and abilities through repetitive learning activities either in or out of a classroom setting. The authors Vygotsky and Cole (1978) advocate for inclusivity in

education system, which functions to encourage learning even for children suffering from different disabilities.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory of human development

This theory is associated with Bronfenbrenner (1977), and projects that human development is shaped by the interactions that a person has with the environmental systems and influence from cultural context. The is sometimes referred to as the bioecological model, because of its consideration on role of biology in human development. The immediate surrounding environmental system is labelled microsystem, the interconnections between the systems, labelled mesosystem and the broader societal influences, labelled as exo-system and cultural influence labelled as macrosystem. Santrock and Lansford (2002) describes the ecological system as a scientific approach in understanding developmental processes throughout one's lifespan and interlinkages within the system. The developmental processes cover biological, social and cognitive development. The developmental processes are universal but show variability in context for likelihood of occurrence, influenced by different settings and affect individuals differently (Darling, 2007).

The ecological systems is a framework operating under microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. For the microsystem, the child's development is informed by influences from family members -siblings and parents, peers in school and the neighborhood. The mesosystem focuses on interlink between individuals in the microsystem, such as how children interact with parents, or parents with teachers. This interrelationship is reflected in the development of the child's social interaction, since learning is through observation (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The exosystem seeks to include the social set-up in development of the child, such that a parent who travels a lot for work, causes absenteeism at home and affect the development of the children. For macrosystem, the development phases are incorporated with cultural practices, values, beliefs, identity and heritage. These aspects are infused in the development of child and shows variation based on geography, social lifestyles, economic status, ethnicity, and religious practices. The last stage is chronosystem, where changes in environmental events, social and historical transitions impact on development of a child.

The child's development and in this case; children living with disability development; are affected at microsystem level by the parents, the peers, siblings and school in Kilifi County; the mesosystem is informed by interaction between members in the microsystem, such as parents having children with disability, the EARC assessment centers and teachers in inclusive or special schools. Under the exosystem, development of early learners is influenced by social settings and macrosystem discusses child development from the influence of cultural practices in the Coast region and Kilifi County, consisting of religious practices -largely Islamic doctrine, Swahili cultural practices, beliefs and value systems. Chronosystem impacts on child development by ease of handling transitions and changes in the environment for children with disability in Kilifi County. The ignorance, discriminatory practices, derogative words and stigma directed of children with disabilities, will impact their social, cognitive and biological development. Therefore, the theory informs on development processes for children having various disabilities as influenced by the ecological system anchored on the five sub-systems.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed mixed method research design where both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected and used. The quantitative data was collected from stakeholders using questionnaires and qualitative data from the interviews. This research was done in Kilifi County and focus was on stakeholders in the health and education sector with interest in inclusive education. The targeted respondents included 6 director/assistant directors of SNE in the county of Kilifi, 4 managers and 34 officers at the educational assessment and resource centers (EARC), heads of the 7 schools, 19 county officials' in-charge of ECDE and 3 national council of PwDs in Kilifi. Stratified sampling technique was employed where the targeted individuals were placed into groups as per their functions.

Interviewees were done on three (3) National council of PwD members in Kilifi County and six (6) Director/Assistant director of Special Needs Education (SNE) Coordinator in Kilifi. While the managers and officers working in the EARC centers, the principal of schools having inclusive education and County officials' in-charge of ECDE filled the structured questionnaire.

The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive method and obtain means, standard deviation, frequency and percentages; inferential statistics inclusive of regression and correlation analysis, which tested the relationship between the variables and determine strength and direction. The qualitative data was assessed through thematic analytical approaches by generating codes, searching for reoccurring themes and defining the themes. These themes were linked to the study objectives. The findings were presented in charts, tables and write-ups for the discussions.

FINDINGS

Descriptive Analysis Results

Table 1: Policy Reforms

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev
	%	%	%	%	%		
There are resolutions that champion 'education for all children' as a right	3.6	1.8	16.1	42.3	35.7	4.05	0.961
The country pushes for regulatory framework on the basis of access to learning for all children	3.6	8.9	12.5	50	25	3.84	1.023
The nation has policies for provision of education for diverse learners	-	5.4	17.9	48.2	28.6	4.00	0.831
The country has made reforms including curriculum changes, training of teachers and equipping schools for inclusive learning	-	1.8	12.5	53.8	32.1	4.16	0.707
The education reforms operate on a dual system to integrate both learners with and without disability in one learning environment	1.8	5.4	8.9	53.8	30.4	4.05	0.883
The policy sets guidelines for use in overcoming barriers for children with disabilities	5.4	8.9	17.9	48.2	19.6	3.68	1.064

The results show that 35.7% of respondents strongly agreed and another 42.3% of the respondents agreed on an existing resolution to champion for education for all children as a human right. At the same time, some of the 16.1% did not agree or disagree with the statement, while 1.8% had contrary views and 3.6% of the respondents strongly disagreed. At a mean score of 4.05 and standard deviation of 0.961, it highlights that respondents confirmed on presence of a resolution to champion for educating all children.

Further findings show that some of the 25% and 50% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively on the nation pushing for regulatory framework for access to learning for all children. But some of the 8.9% of the respondents disagreed, 3.6% strongly contradicted with the statement and 12.5% had neutral views neither agreeing nor disagreeing. There were means of 3.84 and deviations about the mean at 1.023 for this statement.

On the nation having policies to provide education for all diverse learners, the findings show that only 5.4% of the respondents disagreed. But 48.2% of the respondents agreed, 28.6% strongly agreed with the statement and 17.9% had neutral views. The findings were summarized and recorded scores of 4.00 for the mean and 0.831 for the standard deviation. On the statement about the country making reforms for inclusive learning, the reforms included curriculum changes, trainings and equipping schools; where the aggregate mean scores were high at 4.16 and 0.707 for variances. Majority of them at 53.8% agreed with the statement, with 32.1%

strongly agreeing to the same. There were 12.5% of the respondents who had neutral views, but a minority of the 1.8% disagreed with the statement on reforms.

The results show that a majority of the 53.8% of the respondent agreed and 30.4% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement on education reforms operating on a dual system. Some of the 8.9% of respondents had neutral views, but 5.4% disagreed and 1.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed on dual system where the learning environment integrated learnings with and without disability. The recorded mean score was 4.05 and standard deviation 0.883. The statement on policy setting guidelines on how best to overcome barriers faced by children with disability in accessing education, having means of 3.68 and deviations of 1.064. There were 19.6% of participants who agreed at a strong index, another 48.2% simply agreed and 17.9% had neutral views on the statement. On the other hand, there were 8.9% of respondents who did not agree with the statement and another 5.4% completely rejected the notion that the policies helped in overcoming barriers in accessing education for children with disability.

The viewpoint from the conducted interview is such that Kenya has a strong legal framework under the constitution, the Basic Education Act and National SNE policy which advocate for inclusive education. The Kilifi County has a 15% education budget allocated to special needs education programs, but the interviewee noted a challenge in execution. Another interviewee stated that *“the Kilifi County has started operationalization of the Persons with Disability Act, where 5% of the county bursary went to PWDs”*. The interviewee noted *“the need for more compliance officers to check in each ward that the bursaries were enjoyed by the parents and the guardians of children who live with different disabilities.”* Additionally, there are few qualified personnel in the assessment centers and education system to teach and invigilate examinations done by children with disabilities. This makes a case for need for policy reforms to ensure full implement of policies geared towards inclusive education and reforming assessment process in Kilifi County.

Table 2: Inclusive Education in Kilifi County

	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean	Std. Dev
There is full inclusion of all learners in schools in Kilifi County	7.1	3.6	21.4	48.2	19.6	3.69	1.060
Schools offer partial inclusion where some learning activities are based on ability of the children	3.6	5.4	16.1	46.4	28.6	3.91	0.995
There is integration of learners with and without disabilities in one classroom	1.8	5.4	14.3	46.4	32.1	4.02	0.924
The schools are mainstreamed to enroll/accommodate all learners	5.4	7.1	17.9	48.2	21.4	3.73	1.052

On whether there is full inclusion of all learners in a school setting in Kilifi County, the study found that 19.6% of the respondents strongly agreed, while 48.2% agreed with the statement. There were some 7.1% of respondents who completely opposed the idea of presence of full inclusion, and 3.6% disagreed. Further findings show that 21.4% of the respondents had neutral views on full inclusivity in the schools. These views from all the respondents led to aggregate scores of 3.69 for the means and 1.060 for standard deviation.

On the statement about the schools offering partial inclusion, results show that 28.6% and 46.4% strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the fact that some learning activities were done by all students and others were informed by the child’s ability. There were 16.1% of the respondents who had neutral views, 5.4% disagreed and 3.6% completely rejected the statement. The findings also recorded values of 3.91 for the means and 0.995 as deviated values.

At a high mean score of 4.02 and standard deviation of 0.924, the respondents shared on having integration where learners with and without disability share one classroom. The results indicate that 32.1% of respondents completely affirmed the situation and 46.4% also agreed on the facts about integration. In addition, a few of

the 1.8% and 5.4% of respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively on the statement. At the same time, some 14.3% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed on integration of learning in schools in Kilifi County.

On the statement about the school having been mainstreamed to accommodate all learners, there were 21.4% of the respondents who strongly agreed and 48.2% simply agreed with the statement. In addition, 17.9% of the respondents did not agree or reject the statement on mainstreaming. The results also showed that there were 7.1% of the respondents who had contradictory views and 5.4% completely contradicted the statement on mainstreaming schools to accommodate learners. Analyzing these findings from the respondents showed a mean score of 3.73 and standard deviation of 1.052.

Linear Regression Analysis Results

The tests conducted include model of summary, analysis of variance and beta regression coefficient, with findings shown as below:

Table 3: Model Summary for Policy Reforms Influence on Inclusive Education

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.721 ^a	.519	.471	.276752

Predictors: (Constant), Policy Reforms

Study results as shown in Table 3 indicate there is a direct, linear relationship between the variables. The R values at 0.721 and R square at 0.519, showing that policy reforms influenced changes on inclusive education in Kilifi County by 51.9%. These results also show that there are other reforms that need to be done to improve inclusive education, but were excluded in this study and accounted for 48.1%.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance for Policy Reforms

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.896	1	.896	2.947	.000 ^b
	Residual	16.394	54	.304		
	Total	18.29	55			

a. Dependent Variable: Inclusive Education

b. Predictors: (Constant), Policy Reforms

In assessing the existence of linear relationship and significant effects of independent variable to the dependent variable, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was done. Table 4 show that policy reforms have a significant and linear relationship to inclusive education. This is informed by the obtained values of ($F, (1, 54) = 2.947, p\text{-values} = 0.000 < 0.05$).

Table 5: Beta Regression Coefficient for Policy Reforms and Inclusive Education

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.275	.183		1.502	.000
Policy Reforms	.513	.259	.378	1.980	.003

Dependent Variable: Inclusive Education

The beta regression coefficient results are shown in Table 5 determining the predictor effects of policy reforms on inclusive education. The constant value of 0.275 and $\beta = 0.513$, show a positive association between the variables and p-values of 0.003 imply the relationship was significant. These results can also be presented as an equation as: $Y = 0.275 + 0.513X_1$, such that Y is inclusive education in Kilifi County and X_1 is policy reforms. These results mean that inclusive education in Kilifi County increases by 0.513 as influenced by policy reforms.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper sought to address the gaps between the national inclusion policies and implementation at the county level. It was revealed that the policy framework is strong but it is not practical at its implementation phase, as many teachers struggle to adapt the curriculum to cater for special needs. There was need for policy reforms alignment to resourcing in the EARC centers, teaching strategies, school infrastructure and agenda to meet inclusivity agenda in education.

The findings indicate that policy reforms had a large predictor effect in improving the implementation of inclusive education in Kilifi County. This study concludes that curriculum changes, changing how teachers are trained and equipping of schools as part of education reforms, helped improve inclusive learning. In addition, policies that led to having dual system where there is integration of learners such that those with and without disabilities learn together, improved the perspective and outlook on inclusivity in learning. The policies also resolve to champion for education for all children as part of human rights. The study further concluded that having policies that cover learners with diverse needs, regulations to enhance access of learners and measures to remove barriers for learners with disabilities; improve inclusive education implementation in Kilifi County.

Based on these findings and drawn conclusion, it was recommended that the policy reforms be harmonized between the national disability policy and that of educational policy in the country. The sustainable development goals have an agenda of ensuring quality education for all children as adopted from UNESCO's rights of all children; which should guide the nation's education policy and operating guidelines. Therefore, to meet educational rights of all children, disability assessment must have a decentralized framework operating in the counties. The framework will guide the assessment process in identifying, placement and enrolment of children with disability in the right education setting.

The paper further acknowledges that successes in inclusive education extends to cover several sectors. Therefore, it is important to collaborate with stakeholders from the health, social services, public service and education sectors to support learning for children with disabilities. The community should be encouraged to suggest and implement initiatives that allow involvement of parents, educators, health providers and caregivers in inclusive learning processes for children with disabilities. A collaborative approach is necessary where government agencies and departments, multi-sectoral teams, educators, parents and community members are involved in provision of quality inclusive education for all children.

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