

**Barriers to and facilitators of the inclusion of learners with special  
education needs: An appraisal of the education systems of the  
islands of the Eastern Caribbean.**

**Carel Eulena Hodge**

BA, University of the West Indies, Mona Jamaica

MA, Communication for Social and Behaviour Change, CARIMAC, University of  
the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica.

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of New  
England

**University New England**

**School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences**

**Australia**

**April 2017**




## Declaration

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

Name: Carel Eulena Hodge

Signature: 

Date: 12 April, 2017

## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter One</b>	Introduction .....	1
1.1	Education and inclusion in the OECS .....	1
1.1.1	Funding education in the OECS .....	4
1.1.2	Education harmonisation in the OECS .....	6
1.1.3	Education of LSEN in the OECS .....	8
1.2	Research Question and Objectives .....	12
1.3	Significance .....	13
1.4	Chapter Outline .....	14
<b>Chapter Two</b>	Literature Review .....	18
2.1	Inclusive Education Policy .....	18
2.1.1	Integration origins .....	21
2.1.2	Human rights, equity and social justice .....	22
2.2	Inclusive education in small developing states .....	25
2.2.1	Challenges to inclusive education .....	27
2.2.2	Policy action for inclusive education in small states .....	30
2.3	Importance of culture on inclusive education in small states .....	34
2.3.1	Colonial influence on inclusive education .....	35
2.4	Summary .....	37
<b>Chapter Three</b>	Methodology .....	38
3.1	The Journey to Research .....	38
3.2	Research Approach and Design .....	40
3.3	Research Methods .....	44
3.3.1	In-depth interviews .....	45
3.3.2	Focus group interviews .....	46
3.4	Research Sample and Site Access .....	48
3.4.1	Parents .....	51
3.4.2	Teachers .....	53
3.4.3	Students .....	54
3.4.4	Ministry of Education (MOE) Policy actors .....	56
3.4.5	Disabled People Organisations (DPOs) .....	57
3.4.6	Pseudonyms .....	58
3.5	Data Analysis Methods .....	58

3.5.1	Memo writing and sorting.....	59
3.5.2	Coding Data .....	60
3.5.3	Theoretical sampling and saturation .....	62
3.6	Ethics .....	62
3.7	Challenges of the CGT methodology .....	64
3.8	Summary .....	65
<b>Chapter Four</b>	.....	<b>68</b>
Accessing Education: The Role of Policy, Teacher Training and Professional Development .....		68
4.1	Policy Development .....	69
4.1.1	Absent special and inclusive policies.....	70
4.1.2	The importance of culturally specific policies .....	74
4.2	Policy Implementation .....	75
4.2.1	Overwhelming pressure .....	75
4.2.2	Policy provision for financing inclusive education in schools.....	78
4.3	Teacher training and professional development.....	82
4.3.1	The need for training and professional development.....	82
4.3.2	Funding and training teachers in education .....	86
4.3.3	Special and inclusive education training.....	88
4.4	Summary .....	91
<b>Chapter Five</b>	.....	<b>93</b>
Accessing Education: The Need for Adequate Adaptations, Resources and Support		93
5.1	Adaptations.....	93
5.1.1	Accessing the curriculum.....	94
5.1.2	Assessment without adaptations .....	98
5.1.3	The need for classroom assistance .....	100
5.1.4	Skills education .....	103
5.2	Resources and Support .....	106
5.2.1	Infrastructural resources and support.....	106
5.2.2	Negatively affecting LSEN outcomes.....	109
5.2.3	Technology.....	111
5.2.4	Prioritising education funding.....	113
5.2.5	Physical and emotional support and services.....	119

5.3	Summary .....	123
<b>Chapter Six</b>	.....	125
Accessing Education: Changing Negative Attitudes Through Education and Awareness .....		
6.1	Attitudes and Perceptions.....	126
6.1.1	Effects of negative attitudes and perceptions on student wellbeing ..	126
6.1.2	The effect of negative attitudes and perceptions on parents .....	131
6.1.3	Exclusionary effect of the negative attitudes of principals .....	132
6.1.4	Positive attitudes promote inclusion .....	135
6.1.5	Contradictory beliefs about inclusive practice.....	139
6.2	Education, Awareness and Advocacy .....	141
6.2.1	Building knowledge and awareness.....	142
6.2.2	The need for advocates .....	145
6.3	Summary .....	147
<b>Chapter Seven</b>	.....	149
Accessing Education: Promoting Positive Collaborative Networks and Parental Involvement .....		
7.1	Parental Involvement.....	150
7.1.1	The importance of parental involvement in the home .....	151
7.1.2	Parent school interactions .....	152
7.1.3	Parental denial and a lack of knowledge.....	154
7.1.4	Parental advocacy and involvement.....	160
7.2	Collaborating and Networking.....	167
7.2.1	Establishing networks aimed at student success .....	168
7.2.2	Making a difference through positive teamwork .....	170
7.2.3	Bridging the Gap.....	176
7.3	Chapter Summary.....	178
<b>Chapter Eight</b>	Discussion.....	180
8.1	Barriers to and Facilitators of Inclusion in the OECS.....	181
8.1.1	Legislation and policy.....	181
8.1.2	Teacher training and professional development .....	186
8.1.3	Adaptations .....	192
8.1.4	Resources and support .....	195
8.1.5	Attitudes and perceptions.....	199

8.1.6	Bullying.....	203
8.1.7	Education, awareness and advocacy .....	204
8.1.8	Parental involvement.....	207
8.1.9	Collaborating and networking.....	209
8.2	Summary .....	212
<b>Chapter Nine</b>	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>214</b>
9.1	The Barriers to and Facilitators of Inclusive Education in the OECS.....	215
9.1.1	Policy development and governance.....	215
9.1.2	Adaptations .....	217
9.1.3	Teacher preparation and professional development.....	218
9.1.4	Knowledge and awareness .....	219
9.1.5	Resources, support and services.....	220
9.1.6	Attitudes, perceptions and behaviours .....	222
9.1.7	Parental involvement.....	223
9.1.8	Collaboration and networking.....	224
9.2	Recommendations for the OECS .....	224
9.2.1	Emergent Model.....	225
9.2.2	Develop and implement special and inclusive education policy .....	226
9.2.3	Prioritise and plan for inclusive education.....	227
9.2.4	Strengthen collaborative networks.....	228
9.3	Limitations.....	228
9.4	Further Research.....	229
9.5	Concluding remarks .....	230
<b>References</b>	.....	<b>233</b>
Appendix 1.	Example of an assent form for student participants .....	271
Appendix 2:	Example of a consent for adult participants .....	272
Appendix 3.	Example of information sheet for student participants .....	273
Appendix 4.	Example of teacher information sheets .....	276
Appendix 5.	Example of information sheet for parent participants .....	279
Appendix 6.	Example of information sheet for policy actor participants .....	282
Appendix 7.	Example of information sheet for stakeholder participants.....	285
Appendix 8.	In-depth focus group interview guide for student participants.....	288
Appendix 9.	In-depth focus group interview guide for teacher participants.....	290

Appendix 10. In-depth focus group interview guide for parent participants.....	292
Appendix 11. Example of one-on-one in-depth interview guide for student participants.....	294
Appendix 12. Example of one-on-one in-depth interview guide for teacher participants.....	296
Appendix 13. Example of one-on-one in-depth interview guide for parent participants.....	298
Appendix 14. Example of one-on-one in-depth interview guide for policy actor participants.....	300
Appendix 15. Example of one-on-one in-depth interview guide for stakeholders/NGO/DPO.....	302



## List of Tables

Table 1. OECS development indicators .....	2
Table 2. OECS government spending on education 2011 and 2013.....	5
Table 3. Signature and Ratification of the <i>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i> .....	8
Table 4. Signature and Ratification of the <i>Convention of the Rights of the Child</i> .....	9
Table 5. Percentage of untrained teachers in the OECS .....	10
Table 6. Enrolment in special schools in the OECS .....	11
Table 7. Number of participants per island.....	49
Table 8. Number of focus groups per island.....	50
Table 9. Parent participants in one-on-one interviews.....	51
Table 10. Teacher participants in one-on-one interviews .....	53
Table 11. Student participants in one-on-one interviews.....	55
Table 12. Example of theoretical sampling table.....	61

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Stages of the CGT methodology .....	43
Figure 2. Emergent Model.....	227

## Key Terms

**Accommodations:** Adaptations that allow students to access the national curriculum and demonstrate learning. Through accommodations students are able to work at the same instructional level as their peers, but how they learn and demonstrate what they have learned may be different. Accommodations may include adaptations/changes in instructional strategies, environment, equipment, presentation and response procedures (Maanum 2009).

**Adaptations:** The adjustments and changes made to the environment, curriculum, instruction, or assessment practices in order for children with disabilities to be successful learners. Accommodations and modifications are types of adaptations (Warner et al. 2008, 22).

**Assessment:** Process of gathering information to monitor progress and make educational decisions (Friend and Bursuck 2012, 409).

**Collaboration:** A style of interaction professionals use in order to accomplish a goal they share, often stressed in inclusive schools (Friend and Bursuck 2012, 411).

**Courtesy stigma:** The stigma experienced by individuals who are related through the “social structure to a stigmatised individual”. A person experiencing ‘courtesy stigma’ shared some of the discrimination of the stigmatised person to whom they are related and were stigmatised based solely on that affiliation (Goffman 1969; Gray 1993, 30).

**Cultural capital:** Possessing a “familiarity with the dominant culture in a society, and especially the ability to understand and use 'educated' language” (Sullivan 2002, 145).

**Differentiated instruction:** A form of instruction that meets students’ diverse needs by providing materials and tasks of varied levels of difficulty, with varying degrees of support, through multiple instructional groups and time variations (Friend and Bursuck 2012, 411).

**Disability:** A condition characterised by a physical, cognitive, psychological, or social difficulty so severe that it negatively affects student learning (Friend and Bursuck 2012, 412).

**Equality in education:** The sameness in treatment by asserting the fundamental or natural rights of all persons (Espinoza 2007)

**Equity in education:** Providing comparable experiences to, and generating the highest possible level of educational outcomes for all learners. Equity in education is associated with fairness or justice in the provision of education or other benefits and takes individual circumstances into consideration (Dyson 2001; Espinoza 2007).

**Inclusion:** A term used to describe and promote policies, strategies, and practices that aim to enable all learners to participate fully in education and is closely connected with social justice, equality, and rights for all (Wallace 2009, 134).

**Inclusive practices:** A term describing a range of strategies promoting how students with disabilities could be integrated or fully included as participants into mainstream education classrooms (Friend and Bursuck 2012, 413).

**Learners with special education needs (LSEN):** The term LSEN refers to learners who have a learning difficulty or disability which requires special education provision. Students with learning difficulties include a range of challenges such as: “sensory impairment (weaknesses in vision or hearing); severe behavioural, psychological or emotional issues; English as a second language or dialect (ESL or ESD); high absenteeism; ineffective instruction; or, inadequate curricula”. Conversely, “students with learning disabilities have difficulties in specific areas of academic achievement as a result of impairment in one or more of the cognitive processes related to learning,” (ACT Government Education and Training 2014, 1).

**Mainstreaming:** A term used to describe the placement of students with disabilities into general education settings, where they can experience traditional academic expectations with minimal assistance (Friend and Bursuck 2012, 414).

**Modifications:** Teacher-directed changes/adaptations to what students are expected to learn and the knowledge they are expected to demonstrate. Modifications may include changes to the instruction, amount, content, and type of work performance expected of students (Maanum 2009).

**Social capital:** The circumstances in which individuals can use membership in groups and networks to secure benefits (Sobel 2002, 139).

**Social justice:** A term which refers to the ‘good’ of the whole community i.e. both the ‘good’ of each and the ‘good’ of all, in an acknowledgement that one is dependent on the other (Wallace 2009, 277).

**Special education:** Specially designed instruction provided by the school district or other local education agency that meets the unique needs of students identified as disabled (Friend and Bursuck 2012, 417).

**Special education needs (SEN):** SEN is generally applied where medical and/or cognitive disorders exist that create barriers to learning, and that require support for the learner on a long or ongoing basis (Wallace 2009, 279).

## List of Abbreviations

CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CEO	Chief Education Officer
CGT	Constructivist/Constructionist Grounded Theory
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations)
CRIN	Child Rights Information Network
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations)
CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate
CXC	Caribbean Examinations Council
DFID	Department for International Development
DFIDC	Department for International Development Caribbean
DPOs	Disabled People Organisations
ECCB	Eastern Caribbean Central Bank
ECERP	Eastern Caribbean Education Reform Project
EDMU	Education Development Management Unit
EFA	Education for All
EO	Education Officer
EU	European Union
FFF	Foundations for the Future
GCE	General Certificate Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IE	Inclusive Education
IEP	Individualised Education Plan
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IT	Information Technology
LD	Learning disabled
LSEN	Learners with Special Education Needs
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education

MST	Minimal Standards Test
NCPD	National Council of and for Persons with Disabilities
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OAS	Organisation of American States
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
OESS	OECS Education Sector Strategy
OERU	OECS Education Reform Unit
PI	Parental Involvement
PPP	Pillars of Partnership and Progress
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEN	Special Education Needs
SN	Special Needs
SWD	Students with Disabilities
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USE	Universal Secondary Education
UWI	University of the West Indies
WB	World Bank
XCD	Eastern Caribbean Dollar

## Acknowledgements

To God be the glory, great things He has done. This achievement would not have been imaginable without the selfless and unconditional love of my mother, Camella U. Philip Hodge. Her unwavering support was demonstrated by a surprising enthusiasm in embracing the use of technology to facilitate hour long Skype and Whatsapp calls, and many nights spent in prayer. This work is also the result of the support of my father, Eurel Hodge, and my brothers for their continuous encouragement. I also acknowledge my friends, old and new, near and far, for their words of constant support and cheer.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my former principal supervisor Associate Professor Habib Zafarullah for his kind words, motivation and constructive suggestions during the course of my study. I could not have wished for a better supervisor.

My deepest appreciation is also conveyed to Dr. Cary Bennett. Your desire to see me succeed served as impetus for me to continually stretch my abilities to meet the goals that had been set. Dr. Bennett you have indeed been an inspiration, and I hope to continue to aspire to a standard of “beyond perfect”.

Dr. Ingrid Harrington, who came in at the eleventh hour and saved the day, to you I say heartfelt thanks. There is no doubt that you have positively impacted the successful and timely completion of this thesis.

This thesis would not have been possible without the participants who candidly shared their experiences and perspectives. To them, I want to again express my sincere thanks.

Without the generosity of the Australian and Antiguan governments, my time in Australia would not have been possible. I am grateful for the opportunity extended to me, and hope that I will be able to fulfil the purpose for the investment made in my development.

Finally, a special thank you to my partner, whose confidence in, and support of me, has remained unquestioned in its abundance.

## **Abstract**

This study investigates the barriers to and facilitators of the inclusion of learners with special education needs (LSEN) in the schools of three member countries of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). Students who require special education provision continue to face challenges in accessing quality equitable education in schools in the OECS. As a result, members of this marginalised group could face negative educational and employment outcomes (Armstrong et al. 2005; Miller 2000; Peters 2003). Inclusion has been embraced by educators as a means of creating equitable, informed and democratic societies. The successful practice of inclusion that meet the needs of diverse learners could see LSEN and communities reap the full benefits of a quality education system (Acedo 2008; Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle 2000; Kelly 2012; Peters 2003; UNESCO 2005).

The study is significant because it specifically explores the practice and strategies of inclusion within the education systems of the often overlooked small island developing states of the Eastern Caribbean, thereby contributing to the literature available on the sub-region. Underpinned by a qualitative approach to research design, and using a constructivist grounded theory (CGT) to collect and analyse data, the research engaged five groups of participants with in-depth interviews: special education teachers, special education students, parents of special education students, Ministries of Education policy actors and staff members of disabled people organisations. The CGT qualitative approach lends itself to reporting the lived experiences of the members of the five participant groups and provides insight into the barriers that have negatively impacted the access to quality equitable education for LSEN.

Inclusion has been a global education goal as early as the Salamanca Statement in June 1994 and the Education for All mandate (Ainscow and Sandhill 2010; Miles et al. 2014; Peters 2003; UNESCO 2005). In the OECS, broad strategies intended to facilitate inclusion into education systems include the implementation of universal secondary education and the placement of special education teachers in some schools (Browne 2007; Hinds 2007). However, the findings of this research indicate that deficient policies and supportive structures, a



lack of availability of suitable adaptations for LSEN, a failure of parents to advocate on behalf of their child, among other hindrances, continue to frustrate the successful inclusion of LSEN and the successful practice of inclusion in schools. These research findings highlighted eight major themes in which both positive and negative outcomes manifest: legislation and policy; teacher training and professional development; adaptations; resources and support; attitudes and perceptions; education and advocacy; parental involvement; and collaboration and networking.

In addition, the evidence adduced indicates that a level of purpose must guide OECS education stakeholders in order to strengthen supportive structures and engage in the transformation of barriers to inclusion into facilitators of inclusion. The study is important because it explores the current provision of special and inclusive education in the OECS from the perspective of not only those charged with the development and implementation of policy, but also from those most affected by the policy. Indeed, a particular research focus is on the challenges participants face and the solutions they suggest. It is hoped that the conclusions drawn from this research can be used to inform the future development and implementation of effective policies and strategies for inclusion in the OECS.



# Chapter One Introduction

Learners with special education needs (LSEN)<sup>1</sup> have faced marginalisation and exclusion from education systems globally (Peters 2003; Polat 2011; UNESCO 2005). This research explores this phenomenon specifically within the education systems of the member countries of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), an intergovernmental Eastern Caribbean sub-grouping. The chapter begins by providing background on the education landscape of the OECS, and offers insights into the current strategies for special and inclusive education. The chapter also outlines the research question and objectives in addition to the significance of the study. It concludes with an outline of the chapters of the thesis and a brief summary.

## 1.1 Education and inclusion in the OECS

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) has been described by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as having made significant advancement in human development, particularly in healthcare and education. Members of this sub-regional group are stable democratic countries that record high levels of political participation and uneventful electoral cycles (UNDP 2012). However, the economic and social status of the three OECS countries<sup>2</sup> included in this research, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Lucia, varies. These countries are described by the World Bank as “high income” and “upper middle income”<sup>3</sup>. These three island-nations were chosen for this research because they most closely represented a cross-section of the countries of the sub-region in terms

---

<sup>1</sup> This thesis uses the term “learners with special education needs (LSEN)” as a result of a desire to change the narrative surrounding students who require special education provision. It is hoped that by using the term LSEN the reader is directed to focus on a child’s ability to acquire knowledge rather than any difficulty or disability they may be experiencing.

<sup>2</sup> The three countries comprise of five islands as Antigua and St. Kitts are a part of twin island nation-states as reflected in the official name of the country. Therefore throughout the thesis a distinction is made in referring to the islands on which the fieldwork took place and the country.

<sup>3</sup> Upper middle-income economies are those with a gross national income (GNI) per capita between \$4,036 and \$12,475, while high-income economies are those with a GNI per capita of \$12,476 or more (World Bank 2017).

of population, geographical size, gross national income (GNI) and primary school enrolment (see Table 1).

Table 1. OECS development indicators

Country	Population	Size km <sup>2</sup>	Gross national income (GNI)	Income level	Primary School Enrolment
Antigua	91,818	442	US\$ 13,270	High-income	97.1%
St. Kitts	55,572	261	US\$ 15,060	High-income	83.7%
St. Lucia	184,999	616	US\$7,350	Upper middle-income	100%

Source: World Bank 2017

Income level of a country does not always correspond with the level of primary school enrolment, or as Weedmark (2013) noted, development cannot only be measured in capital. From Table 1 it can be seen that St. Lucia, described as an upper middle-income country, has a higher primary school enrolment than the other two high-income countries. While no definitive reason can be given for this, it could be an indication of the priority that St. Lucia places on developing and educating its population.

Historically in the former British colonies (17<sup>th</sup> to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century), general and special education was primarily provided by private entities and non-profit organisations such as churches and benevolent societies (Conrad et. al 2010; Pedro and Conrad 2006). Jules (2008) noted that as Caribbean countries gained independence (1960s onwards), access and the right to education became a political goal which was actively pursued by governments. However, the tourism-based economies of the small islands have been easily and heavily impacted by global economic shifts and the ever-present threat and occurrence of natural disasters. In the early 1990s economic survival seemed to hinge on whether the countries could move successfully towards the development of human resources, knowledge and training in areas that would support and strengthen their economies (Miller, Jules and Thomas 1991; Kathuria et al. 2005). More than two decades later, education continues to be seen as a prime political, social and economic driver (OECS, 2013). Miller (2000, 33) suggested that, to improve participation and performance in education, additional resources, “new paradigms of school organisation, better prepared teachers deployed in more creative ways, [and] new technologies applied to instruction and management” were still needed. He added that critical adjustments to

the structure of education that took into consideration the need for inclusion in schools were essential. The discussions by research participants suggest that despite Miller's (2000) recommendations over 15 years ago, no significant changes have been made to the structure of education systems in the region, and thus it continues to be one of the challenges to effective education practices.

The influence of colonialism, regionalism and globalism in Caribbean development is evident within the Education Acts and policies that exist in the OECS. In addition, the impact of international organisations can be seen in recent areas of emphasis and focus. According to Miller, Jules and Thomas (1991) and Armstrong et al. (2005), several international and regional initiatives in education in the Caribbean region have included: (i) the UNESCO Major Project in Latin America and the Caribbean; (ii) the Caribbean Consultation and World Conference on Education for All; (iii) the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Colloquium on the Future of Education leading to the creation of the CARICOM Advisory Task Force on Education; and (iv) the Study of Education in the Commonwealth Caribbean spearheaded by the West Indian Commission. As a result of these initiatives, several agencies have renewed their interest in the education sector and have initiated education programs. However, in her discussions of the Caribbean Dependency Theory, Weedmark (2013, 3) posited that the source of the problems in Caribbean development included a reliance on "concepts and theories of limited relevance to actual conditions in the region". Applied to education, this concept closely reflects the belief expressed by principal and teacher participants that some of the education strategies and policies being implemented in the region's schools, as a result of international initiatives, were not always locally relevant and continued to pose a challenge to the success of education practices.

Nevertheless, many Caribbean countries have levels of provision and participation in basic education higher than other countries of the South (Miller 2000; World Bank 2017). In the region, compulsory education starts at the age of five when children enter primary school. This phase is expected to last seven years until children sit either a common entrance or national assessment exam in grade six. This assessment determines placement for the next five years within the secondary school system. Students customarily complete their secondary education by sitting

the Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate (CSEC) examinations, results of which determine job placement and entry into post-secondary or tertiary institutions (OECS 2013, 10).

The Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), which administers the CSEC examinations, was created in 1972, and the introduction of the Secondary Education Certificate replaced the UK based General Certificate of Education (GCE) in 1979 (Jennings 2001). However, up until the early twenty-first century students in years 11 and 12 continued to sit the Advanced Level examinations offered by the University of Cambridge (Schrouder 2008). Today the education systems in the region are generally centralised with a Ministry of Education (MOE) overseeing day-to-day management of public and private schools. Literacy rates above 90 percent are reported for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNESCO September 2016). However, there are still concerns about the quality of literacy and numeracy that students achieve, with Jennings (2001) suggesting that mediocre literacy and numeracy at the primary level and continuing on to the secondary level has continuously plagued the small developing nations. Jennings (2001, 108) attributed a part of this challenge to the reliance on “teachers whose quality and level of training are less than desirable”. The case of a particular group of students failing to achieve basic literacy upon completing school or failing to complete their education was identified in this research. Further, participants posited that the majority of these students were LSEN, who were being neglected within an education system that failed to meet their needs. Research participants posited several reasons for the exclusion of LSEN including negative attitudes, a lack of training for educators and inadequate funding.

### 1.1.1 Funding education in the OECS

Education as a means of social and economic advancement permeates the policy rhetoric on education in the Eastern Caribbean. The islands share the common goal that education will equip its citizens for “productivity, wealth creation, and social and personal development” (Jules, Miller and Armstrong 2000, ix). Thus, the islands individually and as a sub-regional group have been participants in several regional and international initiatives to that end. Notwithstanding, some governments face major challenges in providing adequate levels of training and

education that would allow regional learners to compete equally at a global level, with funding education being one such challenge. A high proportion of government spending in small states is devoted to education (Crossley, Bray and Packer 2009; Leacock 2009). Schrouder (2008) reported that the five regional nations examined in her study (Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, St Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago) indicated that over 85 percent of the total investment in education came from government coffers, with expenditure ranging from 4 percent to 6.3 percent of the GDP in 2000/2001. The three countries being studied showed similar allocations more than ten years later (see Table 2).

Table 2. OECS government spending on education 2011 and 2013

Years	Antigua		St. Kitts		St. Lucia	
	2011	2013	2011	2013	2011	2013
% of National Budget	10.1	11.9	15.9	12.3	14.5	15.1
% of Education as part of GDP	2.4	3	3.8	3.6	5.9	5.6

Source: OECS Statistical Digest 2012, 2014

Table 2 demonstrates a failure by governments to increase spending on education to correspond with the growing needs and expectations of the sector. According to Crossley, Bray and Packer (2009, 735) the global average for percentage of GDP spent on education is 4.9 percent, with a higher average of 7.1 percent spent in small states. In 2013, both Antigua and Barbuda and St. Kitts and Nevis (high income countries) spent less than four percent of their GDP on education. In contrast, St. Lucia, an upper middle-income country (see Table 1) spent close to 6 percent of its GDP on education. Perhaps this could be a contributing factor to that country's higher primary school enrolment. It should also be noted that the education statistics show that in 2013 only St. Kitts and Nevis specified the percentage (1.6 percent) of the education budget that had been allocated to special education (OECS 2014). It is without a doubt that inadequate funding presents significant challenges to the implementation of education strategies and the ability of countries of the OECS to meet education goals. This study's investigations suggest that a lack of adequate financing has not only negatively affected the successful inclusion of LSEN into schools, but the overall provision of education in the OECS sub-region.

### 1.1.2 Education harmonisation in the OECS

According to Jules, Miller and Armstrong (2000, 32) attaining higher standards of excellence and social development in addition to strengthening regional collaborative frameworks that “address common deficiencies” are important actions that the region needs to take in education. Therefore, integration as a goal and a means to social and economic development recognises the role of education. Miller (2000) put forward several arguments in favour of the harmonisation of basic education across the Caribbean. Among Miller’s (2000, 35) arguments was the idea that the pooling of scarce human resources could “create economies of scale that would make indigenous production of books and learning material more feasible”. A scarcity of educational tools and having to create their own teaching aids was a complaint of participant teachers. Miller’s (2000) suggestion could help to address this issue through collaborative networks that saw teachers creating and sharing learning material. Additionally, one of the mandates of the OECS Education Reform Unit (OERU), the predecessor of the Education Development Management Unit (EDMU), was working towards harmonisation of the education systems of member states (Louisy 2001). However, the vision of complete harmonisation has not yet been realised, although it continues to be one of the areas that can be strengthened to improve the provision of regional education and the education of LSEN. The EDMU currently spearheads and oversees the development of education within the sub-region and has since established the OECS Education Sector Strategy (OESS). The purpose of the OESS is to guide the educational directions and priorities of member states and to provide the framework to align their national policies and plans in a strategic and results-oriented manner (OECS 2013). The EDMU provides information and solutions on education reform as well as ensuring full participation of all member states.

The Caribbean education sector strategies have included initiatives for closing the knowledge gap, making schools the focus of the learning community, the eradication of inequalities in the school system, strengthening regional cooperation for global competitiveness and improving education financing and management (Jules 2008). Having moved into the implementation phase of the current 2012 to 2021 strategy, the EDMU continues to “coordinate collaboration in education among



the OECS member states” (Albertin 2014; personal communication). This collaboration is intended to help to build the capacity for ministries to implement the plan and thus meet national and regional education goals (Albertin 2014; OECS 2013). However, Jules (2008, 204) noted that “education reform efforts within Caribbean states have not lived up to expectations” and “that in the current conjuncture, educational reform can no longer be incremental”. It has been further suggested by UNICEF (2013) that the OECS, through the EDMU, should further support the states in aligning their national documents more fully with the Sector Strategy to ensure that any future plans retain consistency and provide the data that is needed to monitor progress on a regional basis. The significance of the education reform process for the effective inclusion of LSEN within the schools of the OECS is reflected in the findings of this research as participants have pointed to strategies in other OECS countries that they deemed plausible for local implementation.

The ongoing reform of education in the OECS seeks to establish circumstances for inspiring visions of the Caribbean society and of the “Ideal Caribbean Person” as described by the Human Resources Protocol from the 18th meeting of the CARICOM Heads at Montego Bay in 1997 (Miller et al. 2000, 13). The definition of the “Ideal” person included a person who “sees ethnic, religious and other diversity as a source of potential strength and richness” and “is aware of the importance of living in harmony with the environment” (CARICOM 1997, 9). Louisy (2004) noted that it is quite easy to recognise the “Ideal World Citizen” in the Caribbean’s profile of the ideal citizen worker. In the first OECS education strategy document, *Foundations for the Future*, Miller, Jules and Thomas (1991) warned that while the OECS counts on par with other English speaking Caribbean nations in terms of primary and secondary education, issues of inadequate resources and learning environments as well as the quality of teachers in some areas could be producing students who simply regurgitate information. The strategy document noted that policies such as universal primary education (UPE) and universal secondary education (USE), while opening access to education, did not remove the challenges of effectiveness that continued to plague the system.

### 1.1.3 Education of LSEN in the OECS

Inclusion seeks to ensure the access, participation and achievement in school of all students, including those with special education needs (Opertti et al. 2009). Inclusion is both a contested term (Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle 2000; Peters 2003; Polat 2011) and a philosophy that has been embraced as a means of creating equitable and democratic societies that comprise the development of quality education systems to meet the needs of diverse learners (Acedo 2008; Kelly 2012; Peters 2003; UNESCO 2005). Inclusive education has gained priority internationally with documents such as the *Education for All* (EFA) mandate and the *Salamanca Statement's* call for an inclusive approach to schooling (Peters 2003; UNESCO 2005). Inclusion in education has continued to gain traction over the years and is included in the top five of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The successful and efficient practice of inclusion, structured to meet the needs of diverse learners, could see LSEN and communities reap the full benefits of a quality education system (Acedo 2008; Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle 2000; Kelly 2012; Peters 2003; UNESCO 2005).

Countries of the OECS have committed to increasing the access to education for LSEN with many signing on to two of the major United Nations Conventions which seek to include all children and those with disabilities equitably in society. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations 2006) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations 1989) have been either signed or accepted in principle by countries of the Caribbean (see Table 3 and Table 4).

Table 3. Signature and Ratification of the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*

Country	Signature date	Formal Confirmation (c), Accession (a), Ratification
Antigua and Barbuda	30 March 2007	7 January 2016
Dominica	30 March 2007	1 October 2012
Grenada	12 July 2010	27 August 2014
St. Kitts and Nevis	-	-
St. Lucia	22 September 2011	-
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	-	29 October 2010 (a)

Source: United Nations 2015

Table 4. Signature and Ratification of the *Convention of the Rights of the Child*

Country	Signature date	Formal Confirmation (c), Accession (a), Ratification
Antigua and Barbuda	12 March 1991	5 October 1993
Dominica	26 January 1990	13 March 1991
Grenada	21 February 1990	5 November 1990
St. Kitts and Nevis	26 January 1990	24 July 1990
St. Lucia	30 September 1990	16 June 1993
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	20 September 1993	26 October 1993

Source: United Nations 2015

A point to note is that St. Kitts and Nevis has neither signed nor ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), a failure that members of disabled people organisations (DPOs) on the island consider as negatively impacting the rights of persons with disabilities, including LSEN. DPO participants indicated that while the government has promised to sign and ratify the documents, the process is not yet completed. The implementation of the tenants of these Conventions have human rights and social justice implications as well as consequences for the practice of inclusive education in the islands of the OECS. Although it has been acknowledged that member countries have made positive moves towards compliance in seeking to ensure that the rights of the child are upheld in the OECS region, reviews of practices show that there are still areas in which progress is needed (Child Rights International Network 2012, 2016a, 2016b). Signing, ratifying and enacting relevant international Conventions could be one way that governments of the OECS signal their commitment to ensuring that all children access equitable quality education, not just LSEN.

One of the policies aimed at ensuring that all children gain an education in the OECS is universal secondary education (USE). This strategy allows for all children to gain secondary education by guaranteeing a space within a secondary school. Inclusive in its intents, USE has been offered in St. Kitts and Nevis since 1968, while it has been recently implemented in St. Lucia and more so Antigua and Barbuda, the latter having only fully implemented the EDMU supported policy in 2013. Consequently, completion rates for primary schools are higher in the region, due in part to this universal secondary automatic promotion policy. However, for USE to be successful, the policies, curriculum, pedagogy and award of merit must take into consideration the varied skills and abilities of students (Hinds 2007;

Leacock 2009). According to Jules, Miller and Armstrong (2000, xii), there were a number of students in remedial classes in the secondary schools without the basic cognitive skills to “benefit from education at that level”. It is noted that the underachievement can be ascribed to undiagnosed learning difficulties and inadequacies in the teaching and learning processes (Jules, Miller and Armstrong 2000). Participant teachers questioned the merits of USE without schools being adequately resourced and teachers sufficiently trained. OECS statistics report that in both primary and secondary schools, there are a number of untrained teachers in the classrooms (see Table 5). It has been suggested in this and other research in the Caribbean (Conrad and Brown 2011; Jennings 2001; Leacock 2009; Pedro and Conrad 2006) that a lack of training for teachers has contributed to the ongoing challenges being faced in the education systems of the region. Inadequate teacher training therefore has implications for the provision of inclusive education in the OECS.

Table 5. Percentage of untrained teachers in the OECS

Country	% of untrained Primary Teachers	% of untrained Secondary Teachers
Antigua	34	53
St. Kitts	35	49
St. Lucia	11	31
OECS Average	26	50

Source: OECS 2014, Education Statistics

Despite being one of the major strategies towards inclusion, USE without the accompanying supportive structures, including trained teachers, is in danger of failing to meet the needs of the very students it is intended to fully include in the education system. According to Hinds (2007, 5), to be considered a successful policy, the provision of USE should be considered from a policy standpoint of “access, pedagogy and management”. Observably, universal does not always mean inclusive (cf. Browne 2007).

Among the key objectives within the most recent OECS education strategy document, *Every Learner Succeeds* (OECS 2013), is the need to reduce inequities in the education system. Among the education reform strategies was a commitment to address issues such as education funding, the availability of data, teacher training and preparation, education and school management, infrastructure and resources as

well as curricula development (OECS 2013). There have been plans for the expansion of programmes that cater to the disabled to enable them to benefit from educational opportunities at all levels, and would involve improving the early identification of individuals, groups at risk and those with special needs. This program expansion would also necessitate rethinking the notion of access to focus more on the “equity in provision, improved responsiveness to address special needs” (Jules, Miller and Armstrong 2000, 4) and strategies to compensate for gaps in the quality of education services. Currently each island provides for the educational needs of some of their LSEN within a special education setting. Table 6 gives a breakdown of the number of schools on each island providing special education to LSEN and the number of students accessing these services.

Table 6. Enrolment in special schools in the OECS

Country	Number of Special Education School	Number of students
Antigua	3	101
St. Kitts and Nevis	2	95
St. Lucia	5	313

Source: OECS 2014, Education Statistics

Based on the populations of the islands and the number of special education schools, one can deduce that not all LSEN in these islands are being educated in a special setting. Hence it raises the question: “How are governments meeting the needs of those LSEN who are within the general education setting?” Inclusive education practice, as suggested by this research, could enable all learners, whether in general or special education schools, to successfully access education. As far back as Miller, Jules and Thomas (1991), and the first OECS education strategy *Foundations for the Future*, the OECS has recognised the need to adequately provide for children who faced handicaps as a result of various disabilities, however, at the time of this research, challenges such as inadequate resources, curricula accommodations and modifications along with insufficient teacher preparation continue to challenge and exclude LSEN from the education systems of the countries of the OECS. These findings are supported by UNICEF (2013) as that document noted among its critiques of the education plans of the region the lack of analysis in terms of the poor and the disadvantaged, which includes LSEN.

In a system where the “reality is that the goals of equity and equality of opportunity remain distant for the majority of Caribbean people” (Armstrong, Armstrong and Barton 2000, 74), working for equity and equality for the LSEN, who are often among those members of the population labelled as “disadvantaged”, must be enhanced and continuously monitored. Conversely, Jules (2008) questioned whether the education system was increasing the social inequity within regional schools, as students from the marginalised social and economic groups did not always complete their education. Hence, the challenges to the full participation and access to education for LSEN within the education systems of the OECS is evident. The quality of education LSEN receive impacts on whether or not they are able to shed and move beyond the label as adults. Being able to move beyond the “disadvantage”, by being allowed fair and equal opportunities in schools and in the community, could impact the social and economic outcome of LSEN. Disadvantaged students do not have to grow up to be disadvantaged adults (Leicester, Modgil and Modgil 2000). This study therefore explores these challenges to the inclusion of LSEN with the aim of suggesting credible strategies and actions that may be able to mitigate and remove the ongoing challenges.

## 1.2 Research Question and Objectives

The primary question guiding this research is: What are the barriers to and facilitators of the inclusion of learners with special education needs within the education systems of the islands of the Eastern Caribbean?

In addressing this question, this research investigates:

- How LSEN, parents of LSEN, special education teachers, MOE policy actors and members of DPOs regard the current provision of special and inclusive education in the schools of the OECS, and
- The suggestions LSEN, parents of LSEN, special education teachers, MOE policy actors and members of DPOs make for the transformation of the identified barriers into facilitators of education for learners with special education needs in the OECS.

Therefore, the primary objective of this research is to explore phenomenon of the current barriers to the practice of special and inclusive education in the schools of the OECS. The aim is to consider these barriers as they are identified by each of the five participant groups. Based on participant responses, the study hopes also to identify ways in which the identified barriers can be mitigated and transformed into facilitators for successful practice.

### 1.3 Significance

Minimal research focusing on inclusive education provision has been undertaken in the OECS. This research is significant as it draws on local empirical data to explore the barriers to and facilitators of inclusion in the OECS. A study of this nature is important as it highlights an aspect of education--inclusive education, which has been included in some of the official education rhetoric in the sub-region but not been fully incorporated into regional education strategies and plans. The successful practice of special and inclusion education has made news headlines and has gained increasing traction with some MOEs actively seeking ways to improve and standardise the practice. However, as this study demonstrates, the strategies for the inclusion of LSEN continue to face several challenges. Using a methodology that emphasises the views and lived experiences of the researched, the study seeks not only to identify the major challenges, but also offer solutions for the successful removal and transformation of these barriers.

The level of global interest in the role education has in creating avenues for sustainable development and improved overall quality of life continues to grow. Global goals have identified education as a major contributor in achieving the desired positive social and economic outcomes (United Nations 2015). Inclusive education as a means of widening the access to education of historically marginalised groups such as LSEN has been met with acceptance among researchers and education officials. Yet, few studies have examined the barriers to and facilitators of the successful inclusion of LSEN specific to the education systems of the OECS from the local perspective. This study is unique as it is one of a growing number of studies undertaken by a national of the sub-region, rather than by an

international agency or researchers from outside of the OECS. The findings of this study will contribute to lessening the gap in local empirical knowledge on inclusive education in the OECS and the research in education generally in the sub-region.

The conclusion and recommendations drawn from this research are important as they emphasise the experiences and unique perspective of the participants. Through the voices of each participant group, perspectives emerge that hold critical knowledge for the OECS Education Development Management Unit, national governments and policy actors who aim to see the successful practice of inclusion in the sub-region's schools. Exploring the current special and inclusive education strategies through the eyes of the special education teachers who are charged with the daily implementation of inclusive practices, the LSEN who live with the consequences of exclusive practices and will benefit from the implementation of inclusive strategies, the MOE policy actors responsible for the development of these strategies, and parents and members of DPOs who are needed to partner and support these practices if they are to be successful, offers a unique and multifaceted view of the problem. The study hopes to inform the future development and implementation of locally specific policies and strategies for the successful practice of inclusion in the OECS. It should be noted however, that because the islands of the OECS despite their similarities are not totally homogeneous, attempts to replicate this research on other islands of the OECS may yield different or additional findings.

## 1.4 Chapter Outline

Chapter Two discusses the barriers to and facilitators of the inclusion of LSEN within the context of existing literature. The chapter explores the origins and integration of inclusion as a social and education policy area. The challenges to successful inclusive education practice are discussed and include policies, funding, teacher training, resources and support, along with other factors such as curricula and assessment adaptations, negative attitudes and stigma, parental involvement, education and awareness and collaborative systems. The role and influence of international ideology imparted through financial assistance, and the colonial legacies of small developing states is also discussed in this chapter, along with the implications for practice in the absence of culturally appropriate inclusive policies.



Chapter Three, the methodology chapter, articulates the epistemological and methodological approaches as well as the theoretical perspectives underlying this research. Designed based on qualitative methods of inquiry, this study uses in-depth, face-to-face, one-on-one and focus group interviews as the primary means of data collection. Special education teachers, LSEN, parents of LSEN, MOE policy actors as well as members of disabled people organisations (DPOs) were all interviewed as a part of the effort to gain a multidimensional perspective on the education of LSEN in the OECS region and the practice of inclusion in schools. The study used a small number of participants to gain a better understanding of each individual's lived experiences within their contexts. With social justice and human rights perspectives underpinning the research, the study used a constructivist grounded theory (CGT) approach to collect, analyse and report the data in an exploratory fashion. Emanating from a belief that knowledge and reality are social constructs, the research sought to understand and shed light on the challenges experienced by the participating groups. The CGT methodology is well suited for social justice and related research.

Chapter Four is the first in a four-chapter discussion on the findings of the current investigations. The role of policy texts, teacher training and professional development is discussed as one of the significant barriers identified in the study. The chapter first indicates that policies to guide the practice of special and inclusive education are absent from the education systems of the countries under study. It then explores the ways in which this lack of policies and supportive structures act as barriers to the inclusion of LSEN. The chapter also discusses the suggestions made by participants that the policies developed need to be culturally appropriate if they are to be effective. The challenges associated with current strategies intended to facilitate inclusion are also highlighted. In addition, this chapter looks at the relationship between the absence of policy and the second emergent category, teacher training and professional development. The ways in which participants identified the role of adequate teacher preparation in effective teaching practices, along with aspects of funding for teacher education, bring this chapter to a close.

Within Chapter Five are the discussions surrounding the ways in which the structure of the current national curriculum in the three countries becomes inaccessible to some LSEN. According to participants, there is the need for

appropriate technical and other aids that facilitate successful learning and the inclusion of LSEN. The link between emergent themes is highlighted, as teacher participants posited that the absence of comprehensive special and inclusive policies negatively impacted the education of LSEN who remained undiagnosed. Suggestions for technical vocational education and training (TVET) to be more widely available to LSEN are also discussed. The second part of the chapter explores the many ways research participants indicated that LSEN could be effectively and successfully included into the education systems, if provided with the necessary resources and support. Participants discussed how a lack of infrastructural support impacted the inclusion of LSEN, but they also noted the importance of emotional support for the successful practice of inclusion. Here too the importance of adequate funding for the success of inclusion is highlighted.

Chapter Six examines the ways in which negative attitudes and perceptions affect the successful practice of inclusion. Social and community aspects such as bullying, negative stigma, discrimination, the negative associations ascribed to those with a disability, and special and inclusive education, are reviewed. Negative stigma attached to special needs provision and those that access it was a significant challenge to LSEN, their teachers and families. The chapter also introduced parental involvement and their role as supporters and advocates for their disabled child, thereby linking this chapter to the one preceding and following it. In the second part of the chapter, the role of education and awareness building as well as advocacy, as suggested by participants, in playing a critical role in reducing some of the negative impact and consequences experienced by LSEN and others associated with them is explored.

Chapter Seven concludes the discussion of the research findings with an examination of the impact and consequences of parental involvement, collaboration and networking as critical to the success of inclusive practice in schools. The lack of parental involvement, their denial of their child's disability diagnosis and other issues associated with the absence of support for LSEN at home are discussed in this chapter. The absence of teamwork by education stakeholders is explored and highlighted in the latter section of the chapter. How positive collaborative networks have been used, and continue to be used, to increase the access LSEN had to quality

equitable education is also explored. The chapter builds on the need for a multifaceted approach to inclusion that was established in the previous chapters.

Chapter Eight presents the discussion of the research findings in relation to the research question and the implications for the successful inclusion of LSEN within the education systems of the OECS. In this chapter the interconnected relationship between all of the identified barriers is highlighted. The chapter also discusses the discovery that each emergent theme had the potential to both be a barrier to and a facilitator of the successful inclusion of LSEN in schools. The importance of locally relevant policy texts and adequate funding, the adequate supply of resources and services, as well as teacher preparation and training is emphasised. In addition, the role of education and awareness interventions in targeting the negative attitudes, perceptions and behaviours towards LSEN in order to influence positive behaviour change is discussed. The chapter also reflects on the need for a multilevel approach to what is a multifaceted problem facing the education of LSEN in the OECS.

Chapter Nine comprehensively outlines the recommendations for the successful practice of inclusive education based on the available literature. Within this chapter, the themes identified in this study have been explored, highlighting the facilitative mechanisms for the successful practice of inclusion. Each emergent theme is discussed based on the dichotomy of the barriers and facilitators for the successful inclusion of LSEN in education systems and schools, making reference to the literature's suggestions for more inclusive policies and processes. The interdependent nature of barriers and facilitators to successful inclusive practices in schools is also acknowledged.

Chapter Ten draws conclusions about the impact barriers and facilitators have to the successful inclusion of LSEN in the OECS. The research is summarised, highlighting significant findings, and suggests ways forward for further research and future recommendations for regional OECS education policy actors to consider. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the research.

## Chapter Two Literature Review

This chapter discusses the foundations and premise of inclusive education policy within the context of existing literature. In order to gain a better understanding of the research area and insight into the themes as they emerged, a review and evaluation of the accumulated knowledge relevant to the current research was undertaken. Manual and electronic searches were carried out based on key words and phrases connected to the research question and used within the discourse of special and inclusive education. The search included, but was not limited to, scholarly books and journals, official government documents and newspaper articles. As a result of this search, a number of key factors affecting the practice of inclusive education in small developing states are incorporated into the discussion in this chapter.

The chapter begins with a brief examination of ‘inclusion’ as a social policy and education policy area. A part of the wider social inclusive policy approach, inclusive education policy’s emergence from a strategy of integration of LSEN to one based on social justice and human rights is explored. Although a contested concept, inclusive education as a means of ensuring equity and quality in education for LSEN forms the basis for the discussions of some of the important barriers and facilitators in small developing states that follow. The chapter also explores education within these states and the role of culture in effective policies for the successful implementation of inclusion in schools. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the key factors and ideas that emerged from the literature review.

### 2.1 Inclusive Education Policy

Inclusion is a contested concept generating various meanings, and has often been used differently by researchers, governments and the community (Acedo 2008; Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle 2000; Ainscow and Sandill 2010; Halinen and Järvinen 2008; Hodkinson 2010; Miles and Singal 2010; Operti, Brady and Duncombe 2009; Peters 2003; Polat 2011). Having its origins in special education, UNESCO (2005) defined inclusion as a process that addresses and responds to the multiplicity of needs of all learners through their increased participation in learning, culture and community by reducing their exclusion within and from education.

Inclusion is about adapting systems to embrace the diversity of individual learners, and is an ongoing, fluid process of activities that are flexible to change in policies, strategies and/or approaches (Acedo 2008).

Inclusive education is a part of the wider social inclusion policy area that embraces concepts of full participation in society as a means of addressing poverty and marginalization (Conrad and Brown 2011; Conrad et al. 2010; Kelly 2012). Originally meant to include the poor, vulnerable, disadvantaged and those who lacked skills and capabilities to get and keep jobs (Cheung 2013; Kelly 2012; McClelland and Smyth 2006), policies for social inclusion aimed to reduce the risk of exclusion and increase opportunities in employment, income, and within social networks. Concerned with ensuring adequate quality of life, social inclusion emphasises human rights and seeks to reduce inequality and produce social cohesion. As such, access to education is seen as a major component in achieving overall social inclusion (Kelly 2012). Smyth (2010) suggested that countries continue to approach social inclusion from the counterproductive perspective of deficit and victim blaming. He contended:

A more sensible starting point might be to view social inclusion through some richly descriptive narratives and biographies of the lives of those most directly and profoundly affected, rather than continue with evidence-based attacks on what is ‘perceived’ to be the problem. This might just lead to a more inclusive view of ‘social inclusion’. (Smyth 2010, 125-126)

Smyth (2010) posited that the problems facing the excluded can only be ‘perceived’ as their voices continue to be left out of the identification of problems and solutions to social exclusion. He therefore questions the evidence on which the solutions are developed. Social inclusion policies vary in implementation across countries and sectors (Cheung 2013). Thus, inclusion as an area of social policy lends itself well to sociological study. From a sociological perspective, researchers can discuss areas of social interaction and practices, as well as social equality and inequality, in a manner that considers other factors in addition to economics or natural ability (Allman 2013).

The *Education for All* (EFA) document has been among one of the major International Conventions, Declarations, and Standard Rules that actively supports and promotes inclusive education. It originated from the Salamanca Statement which

emerged from the June 1994 meeting in Salamanca Spain at the World Conference on Special Needs Education, where representatives of 92 governments and 25 international organisations were present (Ainscow and Sandill 2010; Miles et al., 2014; Peters 2003; UNESCO 2005). Subsequently, the EFA has been a key strategy in addressing issues of marginalisation and exclusion within the global education systems and the wider society. Peters (2003) wrote that EFA promotes the gradual integration of students ordinarily left out of the education system with the aim to have all students eventually educated in mainstream schools at the same general education standards. The Salamanca Statement called for education systems to embrace the diversity of students as a way of fighting discrimination. The ultimate aim was to create just, equitable and democratic communities and societies that are effective and efficient, starting with quality education systems that meet the diversity of all learners (Acedo 2008; Peters 2003; UNESCO 2005). Years after the Statement international bodies continued to promote its tenets:

Education for All means ensuring that all children have access to basic education of good quality. This implies creating an environment in schools and in basic education programmes in which children are both able and enabled to learn. Such an environment must be inclusive of children, effective with children, friendly and welcoming to children, healthy and protective for children and gender sensitive. (UNESCO 2005, 10)

In the two decades that have passed since the Salamanca Statement and the EFA, inclusive education finds prominence in global development goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to achieve targets such as “equitable and quality primary and secondary education”, and substantially increasing “the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states” (United Nations 2015, 17). However, while many countries of both the global North and South have readily embraced inclusion as a concept, there are still vast differences in the understanding, approach and practice (Ainscow and Sandill 2010). Miles and Singal (2010) questioned the limitations of the EFA and the responsibility of health and welfare divisions, which has spilled over into the classifications of students and the general discourse of the EFA. They noted:

Inclusive education provides an opportunity for society to examine critically its social institutions and structures. It necessarily challenges didactic, teacher-centred teaching practices, such as rote learning, and so opens up opportunities for developing better pedagogy and greater competence. EFA often fails to explore such broad issues. Inclusive education offers an opportunity for EFA to begin to make distinctions between ‘moral’ and ‘mechanical’ reforms. (Miles and Singal 2010, 12)

In addition, Miles, Lene and Merumeru (2014) suggested that international organisations and internationally funded NGOs misapply discourses that originate in developed countries and assume they will have the same application in developing countries, some of the implications of which will be discussed within the context of policy implementation later in this chapter.

### 2.1.1 Integration origins

Inclusive education is still seen in many domains as primarily a means of integrating and providing access to the education system to LSEN (Peters 2003; UNESCO 2005). Since the Salamanca Statement, both the terms ‘integration’ and ‘inclusion’ have been used to describe the movement of LSEN from special schools into mainstream schools (Ainscow and Sandill 2010; UNESCO 2005). Although often supported by legislation, simply integrating and providing access to the mainstream school for LSEN does not guarantee that pupils’ learning needs will be met (Acedo 2008; Hodkinson 2010; Lloyd 2000; Opertti, Brady and Duncombe 2009). In fact, many continue to face exclusion within the mainstream environment (Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle 2000). Opertti, Brady and Duncombe (2009) warned that integration ran the risk of being mere rhetoric rather than being about the changes needed to classrooms, curricula, pedagogy, school culture and teacher practice. Therefore, access to education alone does not automatically imply or achieve social inclusion. It requires equal opportunities and participation for all as well as accompanying resources and support that ensures the successful schooling of students (Acedo 2008).

Moreover, the promotion of inclusive education grew as concerns with the focus of integrating one group of students, labelled as having “special educational needs”, was shown to be ineffective and led to a shift in emphasis to inclusion (Hodkinson 2010), which was considered a more holistic, all-encompassing approach to meet the needs of all students, including LSEN (Ainscow, Farrell and

Tweddle 2000). While integration was about the movement of students from special education into mainstream schools, inclusion focused on the degree of participation and experiences of students, and on expanding the provision of quality education within diverse environments to diverse populations (Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle 2000; Opertti, Brady and Duncombe 2009). Thus, UNESCO (2005) posited that inclusion is concerned with the creation and production of inclusive cultures, policies and practices.

### 2.1.2 Human rights, equity and social justice

How the concept of inclusion is approached may indicate the way in which it will unfold in actual policy development and practice. For some advocates, at the core of inclusive education is the notion of human rights and social justice, not only for disadvantaged students but for all citizens. The education agenda by international organisations embrace a rights-based approach to education and inclusion (Ainscow and Sandill 2010; Armstrong, Armstrong and Barton 2000; Farrell 2000; Miles and Singal 2010; Opertti, Brady and Duncombe 2009; Peters 2003; Slee 2001; UNESCO 2005). According to UNESCO (2005, 12): “A rights-based approach to education is founded upon three principles: access to free and compulsory education, equality, inclusion and non-discrimination and the right to quality education, content and processes”. The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (United Nations 1989) also set out as a right that children should not be discriminated against, and further that children with disabilities should be provided with the requisite services and support that enabled them to be fully integrated into society. Countries, including those of the South, that have embraced inclusive education on a humanitarian and social justice premise have shown some success in its practice (Ainscow and Sandill 2010).

Access to education under a human rights perspective is often interpreted as the integration of traditionally marginalised students within mainstream schools, or allocating places for them. However, inclusive education as a human right requires commitment from governments, schools and communities to reevaluate the education process, structures and policies in order to remove systemic exclusionary practices (Downing and Peckham-Hardin 2007; Farrell 2000; Miles and Singal 2010). Farrell (2000) warned of ‘tokenism’ in that while students are provided access and



'integrated' into schools, they are still subject to social exclusion, isolation and a lower quality of education as a result of the lack of supportive structures. Therefore, while access has increased under the guise of inclusion there are still issues of equity and the quality of education LSEN receive. One reason for this could be the persistent "access-oriented" interpretation of the EFA goals and the practice of equating equity with equality (Curcic et al. 2011; Operti, Brady and Duncombe 2009). Dyson (2001, 99) defined equity as having to do with "comparable experiences to and generating the highest possible level of educational outcomes for all learners", while Espinoza (2007, 345) differentiates between 'equity' and 'equality' by noting that although often used interchangeably, the concept of equity "is associated with fairness or justice in the provision of education or other benefits and it takes individual circumstances into consideration, while 'equality' usually connotes sameness in treatment by asserting the fundamental or natural equality of all persons".

Consequently, equity and equality are interdependent and are needed for the success of inclusive schools and societies (Operti, Brady and Duncombe 2009; Lloyd 2000). Equity is about fairness and is heavily dependent on attitudes. Therefore, tackling social exclusion means facing the attitudes on which they are based (Ainscow and Sandill 2010). Negative attitudes found in teachers, fellow students and society can hinder the practice of inclusion. Schools and communities committed to equity must then embrace and celebrate diversity and difference (Ainscow et al. 2012; Polat 2011). Accordingly, in many cases, schools' cultures need to adapt and change to facilitate inclusive education to achieve equitable outcomes (Operti, Brady and Duncombe 2009). A holistic approach to achieving equity and quality in education necessitates action at all levels: governments, schools, communities and personal. There must be a focus on a comprehensive approach to quality in education such as implementing the necessary resources and processes that will translate into sustained achievement of inclusive goals (Operti, Brady and Duncombe 2009). Vlachou (2004) proposed an "educational reconceptualization" if the human rights of students are to be ensured and protected.

Solely basing inclusive education on human rights and social justice however, are not without its criticisms. Vlachou (2004) contended that rights should

be specific, must be linked to strategies that promote inclusion in society, and must be accompanied with appropriate sanctions for breaches. Vlachou (2004) proposed that:

Through their abstraction from real social contexts, statements of rights and opportunities (i) fail to take into consideration the implications of competing discourses for policy outcomes, (ii) are limited in their impact, and in particular they are constrained within the bounds of an ethical critique of exclusion which offers no strategies for bringing about change, and (iii) are presented as 'given' rather than as secured through particular measures and thus, they reduce social justice to technical and bureaucratic issues of basically functional arrangements. In this way, they are in danger of remaining at the level of rhetoric. (Vlachou 2004, 5-6)

Farrell (2000) posited that there are two arguments in support of inclusive education: the socio-political and the empirical. The socio-political argument is one in which inclusion is seen as a matter of human rights, while the empirical perspective seeks to locate the rationality for inclusion in evidence-based research. Farrell raises several questions that could present difficulties when building the argument for inclusion on human rights alone, including the question of 'whose rights'? First, for the government to state that all pupils have a right to be educated in a mainstream school oversimplifies the issue. Farrell (2000, 154) suggested that "the overriding 'right' is for all children to have a good education and to have their individual needs met", and proposed that some students may be best educated in a segregated setting rather than a mainstream school. Farrell (2000) also noted that parents have a right to choose the environment in which their child is to be educated. Conversely the merit of evidence-based research is questioned by Smyth (2010) in his discussion of social inclusion where he examines the authenticity of research based on evidence provided from the perspective of those who do not experience the phenomenon.

Another consideration raised by Hodkinson (2010) is that of 'locational' inclusion or the practice of providing access to a local school, which often took precedence over the more important aspects of inclusion such as access to the curriculum and protection from negative attitudes. Education systems are also criticised by Lloyd (2000) for the failure to recognise that it is within structures of negative attitudes and discrimination that exclusion emanates, and thus perpetuates social inequality, especially for LSEN. Inclusion then should include strategies towards changing the beliefs and values that exist within society and the education

system (Miles and Singal 2010). Hodkinson (2010) concluded that inclusive education as a practice has failed to keep abreast with inclusion as a philosophical thought and policy development.

Creating equality in the provision of education for students from various backgrounds and with varying abilities is a key feature of social policy and education policy (OECD 2003). Policies of inclusion seek to achieve equitable educational outcomes for all. In short, “At the heart of the idea of inclusive education lie serious issues concerning ‘human rights’, ‘equal opportunities’ and ‘social justice’” (Armstrong, Armstrong and Barton 2000, 1). The policies, and actions that demonstrate how societies construct and respond to disabilities, gender, ethnic and cultural differences in education systems is key in the discussion of inclusion in education.

## 2.2 Inclusive education in small developing states

Governments of small developing states across the globe face similar challenges to those encountered in developing countries in respect to education provision (Atchoaréna, Da Graca and Marquez 2008; Bacchus 2008; Crossley, Bray and Packer 2009). However, small states like those in the Pacific, Cape Verde and Caribbean regions face additional economic difficulties due to environmental and social vulnerabilities (Atchoaréna, Da Graca and Marquez 2008; Jules 2008). Despite this, the level of education in these states remains high (Bacchus 2008; Crossley, Bray and Packer 2009; Jennings 2001). Crossley, Bray and Packer (2009) reported that global areas of focus often overlook the achievements of small states, noting that in areas of primary school enrolment they compare positively with other countries. Further, in many of these countries, particularly members of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), universal secondary education (USE) has almost been achieved. In addition, many small states have already achieved gender parity in education or now have a disparity in favour of girls as is seen in the Caribbean (Crossley, Bray and Packer 2009; Jules, Miller and Armstrong 2000; OECS 2013). Small states have also utilised existing integrative regional organisations to maximise resources to collectively advance the provision of education. Within the OECS, the Education Development Management Unit

(EDMU) coordinates education reform in that region (Jules 2008; OECS 2013) while the Pacific region has the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) among others providing policy advice and guidance (Miles, Lene and Merumeru 2014).

A challenge in education identified as impacting individuals and nations is the inadequacy of education systems in small states to prepare persons for the world of work, as employers find it hard to fill positions in skilled areas, while a large number of low-skilled youth are faced with underemployment and unemployment (Crossley, Bray and Packer 2009; Miller 1999). Suggestions have been made for the implementation of technical vocational education and training (TVET) offered in some secondary schools to have greater relevance to the needs of the labour market within small developing states (Atchoaréna, Da Graca and Marquez 2008; Crossley, Bray and Packer 2009). However, Crossley, Bray and Packer (2009, 739) cautioned that: “In highly specialised areas, needs can be met by one or two individuals. Anything less than this small number is a severe deficit, and anything more is a problematic surplus”. Atchoaréna, Da Graca and Marquez (2008) noted that the structure of the education system needed to be diversified in accordance with the expectations of student and the needs of the labour market. However, they noted that for small states it was difficult to offer a wide range of TVET education and university studies. Small states like those in the Eastern Caribbean and Cape Verde now consider TVET an integral part of their education policy actions in achieving USE and have been using TVET as a facilitator for economic restructuring (Atchoaréna, Da Graca and Marquez 2008; Morris 2010, 2013; Subran 2013). On the positive side, small islands have benefited from the technological advances that come with globalisation, which has widened the access to education for some households and has unlocked new possibilities for learning (Atchoaréna, Da Graca and Marquez 2008; Bacchus 2008; Crossley, Bray and Packer 2009).

Data collection is another area in which limitations to the provision of education in small states can be found. Improved data collection and statistical analyses can be used to assess whether targets set by regional education policies, the EFA mandate, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are being met (Forlin et al. 2015; McDonald and Tufue-

Dolgoy 2013; OECS 2013, 2014). The importance of education plans and policies that are targeted and evidence based is highlighted, since without accurate educational data problems within the system cannot be adequately identified or addressed, nor can effective planning for the sector be done (Miller 2000; UNICEF 2013). There have been continuous calls for initiatives that strengthened management in data collection and analysis which would then help in policy formation, program development and the overall reform process. These are the skills necessary for effective project design, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation (Forlin et al. 2015; Jules, Miller and Armstrong 2000).

### 2.2.1 Challenges to inclusive education

Small island developing states of both the Pacific and Caribbean regions share many of the challenges associated with the implementation and practice of inclusive education in schools. According to Forlin et al. (2015) the education systems of small island developing states (SIDS) of the Pacific faced a complex set of barriers that included: (i) classroom practice that included large class sizes; (ii) lack of resources, teacher/parent unresponsiveness; (iii) poor policy implementation procedures; (iv) lack of skills and knowledge among teachers; (v) social problems relating to drugs, family issues; and (vi) poor standards in rural schools. The researchers also indicated that there was insufficient support for inclusive education practices as a result of lack of knowledge of inclusive education, intolerance towards LSEN, varied definitions of inclusive education, unrealistic expectations of teachers, and the presence of negative stigma and discrimination, among others.

Barriers to inclusive practice are similar to those found in other countries, and include a lack of resources and unprepared teachers (Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai 2016). Teacher training is an area identified for improvement within the Caribbean education system by the World Bank (2005). The need for teacher professional development is accepted in all education development plans produced by OECS countries (UNICEF 2013). OECS data indicated that while the majority of primary school teachers are trained, they are not trained graduates, while though many of the secondary school teachers are untrained, they are however graduates (OECS 2014). The general absence of adequate resources was also identified by teachers who pointed to scarce technical resources (McDonald and Tufue-Dolgoy

2013). Among the many suggestions made for governments and educators in small states, along with the necessary budgetary allocations and adjustments, was the need to increase student participation through the “provision of appropriate infrastructure, instructional materials, and teaching staff” (Jules, Miller and Armstrong 2000). Attention should be paid to strategy coordination so that there is no duplication and wastage of the scarce resources that were available (Miller 1999; Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai 2016).

In the past, education systems did not have a systematic way of including LSEN, and the disabled were initially educated by religious organisations, voluntary groups and other non-profit and non-government organisations (Conrad *et. al* 2010; Pedro and Conrad 2006; Forlin et al. 2015; Lashley 2008). McDonald and Tufue-Dolgoy (2013, 270) described the “usual pattern of development from voluntary provision to government-funded segregated placements, followed by mainstreaming, and finally inclusion in regular schools”. Remaining key partners in education some of these voluntary disabled people’s organisations (DPOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have criticised governments for not prioritising inclusive education (Forlin et al. 2015). As such, the impetus for the implementation of inclusive practices in schools emerged as a result of several factors. Writing on the OECS, Thomas (2001, 21) noted one of these was that the “problem of ‘special needs’ education had become an urgent one as discrimination was no longer legal”. International pressures associated with the EFA and global development goals have also contributed to an increased focus on inclusion in education systems in small states (Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai 2016).

In the Pacific islands the process of transforming their education systems to support all learners has started by focusing on applying more inclusive approaches and working to collaboratively create local and contextually applicable indicators for inclusive education (Forlin et al. 2015). The literature on the Pacific region indicated that policies and strategies specific to the provision of inclusive education have been produced, which have also sought to include local definitions of inclusion (Forlin et al. 2015). However, McDonald and Tufue-Dolgoy (2013) had similar findings to Forlin et al. (2015) in that there were still varying concepts of inclusive education ranging from a disability perspective to capability and rights based

perspectives, which in turn has influenced the notion of what could be considered effective teaching practices in inclusive education. Hegarty (1993, 18) issued a caution to governments and education policy-actors emphasising that inclusion should be seen in terms of full participation because “the pressure to make better provision for pupils with difficulties led – paradoxically – to greater segregation”. As noted by Forlin et al. (2015, 201): “Governments cannot effectively implement their policies on IE when the system is unprepared”.

It has been found that strategies for effective inclusion of LSEN can be categorised according to the micro, meso and macro levels (Forlin et al. 2015). On the school level (micro) it is suggested that strategies targeted at teacher and student preparation to include LSEN involve facilitating a safe environment through a “culture of acceptance, understanding and support”, the collection of in-school data and creating teams that supported schools’ capacity-building for effective inclusive education (Forlin et al. 2015, 206). On the meso or regional level, the authors suggested improved data on LSEN, increasing awareness of local cultural and contextual issues, increased testing, better identification procedures for students and access to para-professional staff. Approaches for the national (macro) level included the development of flexible policies that could be applied to isolated islands, making IE training compulsory for pre-service teachers as well as continuing professional development, and defining and assigning responsibilities within governments and MOE for IE. (Forlin et al. 2015, 206)

Further, there are recorded benefits of inclusive education on the developing child and the teacher in the development of positive attitudes and decreased discrimination towards LSEN (Nakken and Pijl, 2002; Salend and Garrick Duhaney, 1999). Within these positive ways of thinking, LSEN were not seen as hindrances but “a source of value for the development of social skills and positive attitudes in the other students,” (McDonald and Tufue-Dolgoy 2013, 276). McDonald and Tufue-Dolgoy (2013, 278) identified other factors that promoted successful inclusive education to include “adequate flexible funding, partnerships, adequate resources, curricula and instructional knowledge, teacher professional development and ongoing performance-based assessments linking to student programming reviews”.

These factors have also been identified by other research in small developing states (Armstrong et al. 2005; Conrad et al. 2010; Conrad and Brown 2011; Jules 2008).

### 2.2.2 Policy action for inclusive education in small states

Inclusive education is collaborative and thrives in an environment of positive partnerships that have significance in small states with close-knit communities (Chimombo 2005; McDonald and Tufue-Dolgoy 2013; Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai 2016). Shared responsibility as identified by many local communities in the Pacific relied on collaborative decision making with locally determined approaches (McDonald and Tufue-Dolgoy 2013; Miles, Lene and Merumeru 2015). Among the supportive mechanisms for inclusion as noted by McDonald and Tufue-Dolgoy (2013, 276) were community and family members and education stakeholders. The authors identified council of chiefs, orators, church ministers and local and national politicians as persons who could successfully promote inclusive education. Individuals in these smaller societies could be able to propel change in contrast to larger more bureaucratic systems, thus “the role and impact of individuals may be greater than in larger states,” (Crossley, Bray and Packer 2009, 732). Supportive and collaborative relationships for the effective practice of inclusive education also included positive partnerships between parents and teachers. In small states, positive school-home relationships helped to facilitate disability awareness education for parents (Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai 2016). Watts (2011) encourages collaboration between teachers, principals and countries.

Governments need to also find ways to better support parents to enable them to send their LSEN to school because during times of financial hardships, parents invest more in children who they deem most likely to succeed rather than those who may not show as much potential (McDonald and Tufue-Dolgoy 2013; Miller 2000). This has an impact on students with disabilities, as in the grand scheme of things they are most likely to be seen as having lower potential. Parents in small states can also face a lack of finance for the provision of food and transportation (McDonald and Tufue-Dolgoy 2013; Miller 2000). Miller (2000) suggested that strategies be put in place to encourage parents to send all their children to school with the necessary support; financial or moral. Child labour in the Pacific islands affected the education of some students. Governments should ensure that parents do not suffer



economically by sending their children to school (Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai 2016). Effective use of resources and a more holistic view of the child are needed to ensure that their access to education during economic hardships will decrease (Miller 2000). Other reasons were also supplied for parents withholding their disabled child from school, which also needed to be addressed. One example was the desire to shield disabled children from possible abuse at school (Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai 2016).

In small states, inclusive education has been driven in part by external factors which in turn can create contradictions and challenges for implementation, becoming problematic if the values and ways of operating of international organisations and other agencies are not shared by the recipients (McDonald and Tufue-Dolgoy 2013). Inclusive education policies need to reflect the unique historical and educational realities of small states and regions, and a lack of local ownership and support of the agenda for change could contribute to the unsuccessful implementation of inclusive strategies (Armstrong et al. 2005; Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai 2016). Policies considered by local educators as being borrowed and embedded in a western or external notion of inclusion could face resistance in practice (Forlin et al. 2015; McDonald and Tufue-Dolgoy 2013; Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai 2016). It is suggested that to be successful and not be considered as borrowed, inclusive education policies in small states needed to have local ownership (Forlin et al. 2015, 206), actively including local educators and considering cultural contextual issues (Forlin et al. 2015; McDonald and Tufue-Dolgoy 2013). Also noted was the fact that policies originating externally were not always “value free,” (McDonald and Tufue-Dolgoy 2013, 281).

Top down change can fail, especially when teachers challenged by limited resources and teacher training oppose change. The reality of schooling in the local context should to be considered when implementing inclusive education strategies (Forlin et al. 2015; Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai 2016). A culture of inclusion already exists in Samoa with McDonald and Tufue-Dolgoy (2013, 280) reporting that western education systems were viewed as the creators of disability and the promotion of competition. The idea that inclusive education was an imported concept that needed ‘local ownership’ to take place for its success was also noted. In

addition, changes to the curriculum to facilitate inclusive education require curriculum reform that reflects the specific context and practice of the state or region (Chimombo 2005; Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai 2016; Watts 2011). However, the absence of policy in some states has been identified as a limitation to the implementation of inclusive education (Armstrong et al. 2005; Nguyen, Terlouw and Pilot 2006; Peters 2003). McDonald and Tufue-Dolgoy (2013, 281) posited that problems in inclusive education have emerged and been exacerbated by the adoption of “western-oriented education system,” and as a result of a lack of local “consultation, adaptations, resources and professional development”.

A significant percentage of the national budgets of many small states is spent on education (Crossley, Bray and Packer 2009); included in that expenditure is the funding of the regional tertiary institutions such as the University of the West Indies and the University of the South Pacific. Funding obligations also extend to regional examination bodies including the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) and the Pacific Regional Initiative for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) (Crossley, Bray and Packer 2009). Therefore, it is suggested that the local research capacity of educational institutions be strengthened as it is important for small states to develop sustainable partnerships “and engage more effectively and critically in mediating, adapting or, where appropriate, challenging global agendas,” (Crossley, Bray and Packer 2009, 743). As suggested by Ali (2010, 80), governments “should ideally ensure that international politics and policies are only regarded as one component in the policy analysis equation but that adequate indigenous empirical data is gathered and used in the policy”. Adapting educational services to the specific needs of the local communities and the use of indigenous forms of education to enhance the delivery in the formal school setting is encouraged (Chimombo 2005).

Using the example of Miller’s 1991 research in the Caribbean region, Crossley (2008) posited that educational research needed to emanate from small states and should be specific to small states. In addition, Crossley, Bray and Packer (2009, 743) noted that “small states should not be seen simply as scaled-down versions of larger states: they have an ecology of their own, which requires local research to supplement and perhaps modify the insights that can be obtained from larger countries”. Local, context driven inclusive education policies that include the

perspectives of local stakeholders should inform the direction of research policy implementation and practice. Inclusive education should be defined and redefined in partnership with local stakeholders (Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai 2016).

Miller (1999, 4-5), in discussing education in the Commonwealth Caribbean, reported that despite not fitting into the prevalent characterisation of small developing states in terms of educational achievement, governments pressured by the lack of resources accepted financial assistance predicated on “stereotypical” diagnoses. These loans often came with preconditions and structural adjustment strategies that promoted the “‘borrowing’, ‘harmonization’, ‘integration’, ‘adoption’ and ‘negotiation’” of local policies with the model policies that came from the lending agencies (Ali 2010, 77). Weedmark (2013, 2) described the situation in the Caribbean as imperial control being wielded over nations through the assistance to “developing states in the form of loans, grants and aid”. Criticising the loan practice, Ali (2010) noted that consumption models limited the ability of local governments to contextual policies so that they became relevant to local conditions. Linking the phenomenon to colonial legacies, Lavia (2007, 189) reported: “The influence of global agencies as drivers of reform initiatives is not new to the Caribbean. Indeed, external consultations, funding and policy borrowing are features of colonial imagination; such imagination has not transcended the postcolonial experience”. The continued colonial or imperial presence in the region as well as market dependence by the Caribbean (Girvan 2012; Weedmark 2013), promotes individualism moving the focus away from how society is shaped by a collective, to an orientation of more personal responsibility (Sutton 2005; Girvan 2012). Furthermore, many small countries did not have the capacity to adequately prepare for or fund these loans and had to seek further funding to support them (Ali 2010). Ironically, in the Caribbean prioritising degree-level teacher certification, a pre-condition of lending, resulted in gaps in the capacity of small states to provide quality education as there were high levels of migration among teachers and other educated people, who were actively recruited to work in the UK and USA (Atchoaréna, Da Graca and Marquez 2008; Crossley, Bray and Packer 2009).

## 2.3 Importance of culture on inclusive education in small states

Traditional culture and the importance of community collaboration for successful inclusive education practice has been emphasised for small developing states (Forlin et al. 2015; Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai 2016). The countries of the Eastern Caribbean are reported by Leacock (2009) and Lavia (2007) as valuing strong academic education programs, with Leacock (2009, 30) specifying that students like LSEN who were not following these academic programs are “often considered to be somehow inferior to those who are”. This preference for predominantly academic education programs not only affects students, but also parents who all want their child to be placed at the schools that were traditionally grammar schools and considered to be ‘top’ schools (Knight 2014; Leacock 2009). According to Lavia (2007) colonial education was delivered in an *ad hoc* and segregated manner, with social groupings determining the quality and level of schooling. The legacy of normalising and stratifying has had negative effects on the education of LSEN in the Caribbean. Ali (2010) points to this history of colonialism in the Caribbean as the motivation for the culture of adoption of external policies, including those in the area of education. He said:

The concept of the colonial plantation economy has shaped our social consciousness. The allocation of values, ideals and norms and our understanding of our social identity have been influenced by the political structures within the plantation itself, the political and cultural traditions of the plantation heads and their superiors and by the plantation’s social demographics in which decision-making was organized by status, class, gender, race and religious epistemologies. (Ali 2010, 75)

Ali’s (2010) sentiments hark back to similar comments by Lavia (2007) who highlighted the stratified plantation class society that persists in the provision of special and inclusive education in the Caribbean region. Although the influence of the former British colonial leaders on Caribbean education has waned over the years, education reform and policies continue to reflect some of their ideals (Miller 1999). Inclusive education in the Caribbean continues to be perceived primarily as the equivalent of care for persons with disabilities who have a history of being separated and identified as different (Amadio 2009). Hence Lavia (2007, 189) concluded that to fully understand the nature of special education in the Caribbean would require the acknowledgement that the “issues of justice and liberty that are inextricably

linked with the experience of colonialism, endure deeply in the consciousness and the daily life of nation states, the region and its people”.

In contrast, although also having a colonial past, the countries in the Pacific region are noted for their traditional culture of inclusion (Forlin et al. 2015; McDonald and Tufue-Dolgoy 2013; Miles, Lene, and Merumeru 2014; Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai 2016). Writing on the Pacific island of Samoa, McDonald and Tufue-Dolgoy (2013, 271) noted the “homogeneous cultural umbrella identifying the individual and collective in a unity”. The researchers noted the tradition of “fa’aSamoa” as a way of life that was communal and underpinned by mutual respect, humility and love that saw the disabled being included and given responsibilities in the community. Miles, Lene, and Merumeru (2014) and Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai (2016) also wrote of the inclusive and communal culture of the people of the Pacific islands. Strategies for the inclusion of LSEN in the Pacific islands included families who took over the responsibility for caring for LSEN in another community to enable them to attend school (Miles, Lene and Merumeru 2014).

Culture can also act as a barrier to the practice of inclusive education as has been identified in some small states (Bacchus 2008; Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai 2016). Gender related criticisms suggest that in the Pacific region a culture of overprotection of girls resulted in inadequate facilities which limited their access to inclusive educational opportunities (Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai 2016). Lavia (2007) highlighted that in the OECS region, while on the surface gender parity has been achieved, a closer look at the reality for female LSEN revealed something very different. She reported that in the OECS female LSEN faced low levels of achievement in primary and secondary schools. Therefore, there is a need for individual learners to be taken into account in regional approaches to education, with education plans that adhered to the principles of child centeredness, inclusion and gender sensitivity (Leacock 2009; UNICEF 2013).

### 2.3.1 Colonial influence on inclusive education

The education systems of both the regions of the Pacific and Caribbean have been influenced by a combination of factors including colonial histories and post-

colonial realities and pressures (Miles, Lene, and Merumeru 2014; Miller 1999). Nevertheless, in relation to the provision of inclusive education, the literature presents areas of difference between the two regions. In the OECS the three education strategy documents which seek to engender education reform in the sub-region have highlighted the need to provide access to quality education for LSEN. However, the most recent instalment of the OECS education reform strategy, *Every Learner Succeeds* (OECS 2013), still uses the language of emphasis on reducing disadvantage and special education provision rather than inclusion (Jules, Miller and Armstrong 2000; OECS 2013). According to Jules, Miller and Armstrong (2000) and Watts (2011) the many strategies, local, regional and international have caused project fatigue in the region and there are calls for a stream-lining of activities. The pressures brought to bear on education systems by various organisations are also seen in the Pacific region, resulting in tensions. For example, the notion of child rights created cultural difficulties:

Children are not educated because they have rights, but because it is the correct thing to for a community to provide for them. In the Pacific, rights are retained by the family under the authority of the village or tribal chief. The notion of individual rights is not as prominent as the rights of the collective family and village unit. Pacific islanders tend not to talk of child rights, but rather of family and community in which the rights of the individual are embedded. (Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai 2016, 405-406)

Thus, the need to pay attention to the local culture and polity content when implementing inclusive education is again highlighted (Forlin et al. 2015). Barriers and limitations to the provision of quality education in small states also include historical and cultural factors. Research on education in the Caribbean has highlighted the role of colonialism, and cultural, religious and social diversity (Ali 2010; Lavia 2007).

The literature suggests that for inclusive education policies to be successful in small states, there is a need for drastic, immediate, and effective reform to education systems and schools (Bacchus 2008; Chimombo 2005; Jules 2008; Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai 2016). Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai (2016) noted that although not unique to the Pacific islands, the barriers to inclusive education on the school level included challenges with resourcing, negative attitudes and unresponsive curricula. However, educational reforms should also consider the

effects of globalisation on these small states. Reform policies and strategies should be flexible and able to adapt to the changing realities of the state. Bacchus (2008) recommended new approaches to education and teaching that foster creativity and questioned established norms. Reform on all levels requires time and careful planning if it is to be successful,” (Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai 2016, 407). Provision of quality education calls for the change in the way schools function, necessitating the collection of school-based data to help with decision making and monitoring. It also required that governments elevate the international dialogue on inclusive education in national and regional action (Chimombo 2005), as the gaps between stated principles of inclusion and practice are still evident in many small states (Amadio 2009).

## 2.4 Summary

This review of the literature has identified the origins of inclusive education within the context of the wider social policy framework of integration, human rights and social justice. The negative and positive impact of international Conventions, Declarations and Standards Rules in promoting the practice of inclusion globally and within small developing states was discussed. The dangers of the top down approach to inclusive policy implementation and the importance of local contribution for the successful practice of inclusion was highlighted. In addition, the role of historical legacies of colonialism and the impact of local culture on the practice of inclusion points to the need for greater involvement of communities in the provision of education for LSEN. All of these issues will be revisited throughout the study. The next chapter outlines the research methodology based on these revelations. Undertaking a research study that investigates the challenges facing the successful inclusion of LSEN, as well as the strategies that work, necessitates a research methodology that allows the voices of LSEN and those directly responsible for the implementation of inclusive strategies and practices to emerge. This literature review acts as sensitising knowledge and offers insights into ways in which the research data collected can be interpreted and analysed.

## Chapter Three Methodology

This chapter provides an outline of the ‘natural story’ of the research (Silverman 2000). In it, I discuss the design, methodology and methods used in the investigation into the barriers to and facilitators of the inclusion of learners with special education needs (LSEN) in the education systems of the countries of the Eastern Caribbean. Qualitative in nature, this study was guided by a constructivist grounded theory (CGT) methodology in the collection and analysis of data. The specific data collection methods used were one-on-one and focus group in-depth interviews. The process by which I, the researcher, moved from personal questions on how LSEN were being educated in my homeland of Antigua and Barbuda, to the research question that ultimately directed the study is explained. The rationale behind the choices and decisions made during the research process are outlined. In addition to the assumptions about the role and nature of society and social interaction in the creation of knowledge, the chapter provides a description of the data gathering procedures and outlines the epistemological foundation and theoretical perspective on which the research is based. The chapter also considers various issues associated with the selected methods and provides a summary of the ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

### 3.1 The Journey to Research

Several factors contributed to the decision to engage in an investigation into how students described as having ‘special’ education needs were being educated in the classrooms of the member countries of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). Questions as to how LSEN were being educated arose after observing my mother, a career teacher of over 40 years, who with the permission of parents, at the official close of the school day dedicated an extra hour to those students who needed extra tutoring to facilitate full access to the national curriculum. I therefore wondered:

- How were other teachers meeting the needs of LSEN in their classrooms?



- Was there a policy that governed the practice of special and inclusive education practice?
- If there wasn't a policy, what guided the practice of special and inclusive education?
- What role did the education unit of the OECS play in guiding the practice of special and inclusive education in the region?
- What resources and support did parents of LSEN have in seeking equitable education for their child?
- How were children with special education needs coping in schools in the OECS?
- What steps could be taken to ensure that LSEN were accessing quality education?

During the initial stages of the research, the research question guiding the process was: “Who are the disadvantaged? A case for social inclusion in the education system of small Caribbean islands”<sup>4</sup>, which focused primarily on the need for a policy for inclusion and the consequences of its absence. However, as the list of questions grew, initial investigations discovered that there were no active special or inclusive education policies in place in Antigua and Barbuda, or any other OECS member state. What was more, the provision of education to LSEN varied among countries and within countries. Hence, it soon became apparent that a policy alone would not ensure that LSEN were provided with quality and equitable education, but that a multifaceted approach was needed. Thus, the main research question in this study emerged: “What are the barriers to and facilitators of the inclusion of learners with special education needs within the education systems of the islands of the Eastern Caribbean?”

With the initial personal questions still in mind, the study began to focus on the discovery of the barriers to and facilitators of effective inclusive practice from

---

<sup>4</sup> This initial project title can still be seen on the documents in the appendices as the research question was finalized after ethics review and fieldwork.

the perspective of (i) LSEN, (ii) special education teachers, (iii) parents of LSEN, (iv) policy actors within the ministries of education (MOEs) and (v) members of disabled people organisations (DPOs). The decision was taken to include these five groups as I considered them the key stakeholders who were impacted by, or who could make an impact on the provision of special and inclusive education in the OECS sub-region. Widening the research to a regional focus rather than just Antigua and Barbuda was the result of a belief in the merits of the sub-region's mandate of the OECS Education Development Management Unit (EDMU) and the efforts towards harmonisation of education policies and other structures (OECS, *Every Learner Succeeds*, 2014). Having an understanding of the barriers to and facilitators of effective and efficient inclusion of LSEN within the education system could be the first step in the implementation of more successful inclusive practices in schools. Furthermore, the knowledge gained could help in creating sustainable practices and the development of enabling systems within schools and society that would see the equitable provision of quality education to all learners, especially LSEN.

### 3.2 Research Approach and Design

At the beginning of the research process I spent considerable time exploring theories by Bourdieu and Vygotsky. However, while Bourdieu's policy fields, social capital and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1990; Sullivan 2002; Tzanakis 2011) and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Anh and Marginson 2013; Gindis 1999, 2003; Panofsky and Vadeboncoeur 2012; Vygotsky 1978) did shed some light on aspects of the problem as I had identified it, to my mind, they did not capture the full scope of the problem facing LSEN in the Eastern Caribbean region. While I later acknowledged the role of social and cultural capital of parents in the successful practice of inclusion, at that time I felt the research necessitated an approach that allowed the theory to emerge from the perspective of those closest to the phenomenon. Hence, further reading and discussions with supervisors led me to the methodological approach and design outlined in this section.

The methodological assumption that guided this study is a constructionist/constructivist epistemology with an interpretivist theoretical

perspective. This position directed the overall methodology and method choice, as well as the analysis process. The study is guided by the understanding that knowledge and reality are socially constructed, and therefore must be interpreted based on the social interactions, cultures and experiences of the participants (Crotty 1998; Berger, Luckman and Zifonun 2002; William and Vogt 2011). Because social realities are meaningful, as a constructivist I endeavoured to emphasise the meanings given by participants to their experiences, while at the same time recognising the role of my beliefs, social reality and social and cultural capital, and how that too could influence the research process. According to Marvasti (2004), social realities are subjective and are brought into existence in research through a process of interpretation by the participant and reinterpretation by the researcher. As such, the knowledge gained in this study is primarily a result of how each participant made sense of their social interactions and how I made sense of the experiences they shared. Interested in the ways in which human interaction helped to create the social reality of the participants, and the ways in which the mind created knowledge (cf. Crotty 1998; Marvasti 2004; William and Vogt 2011), I examined the phenomena of the barriers to and facilitators of the practice of inclusion from the perspective of the five key groups identified.

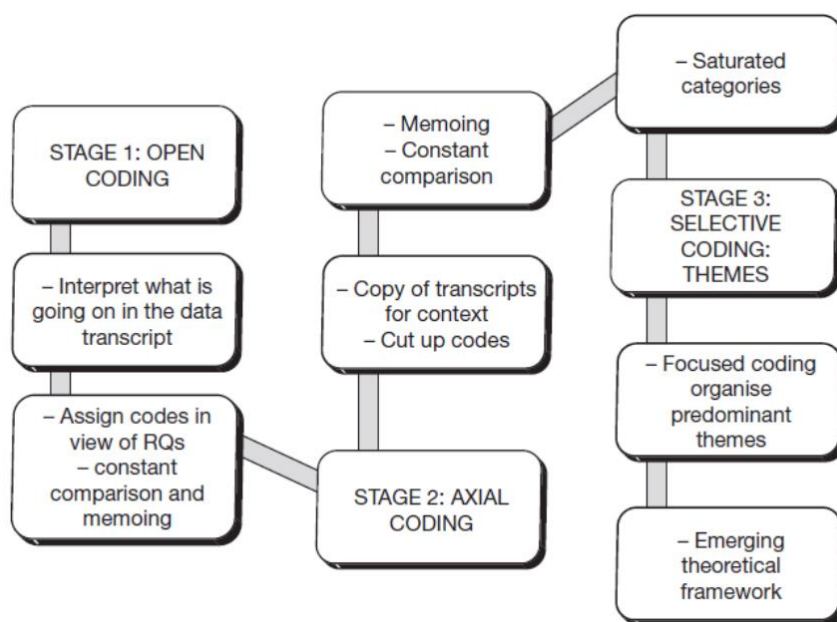
Within this context, the theoretical interpretivist perspective was chosen as the approach as a means by which to understand the behaviour and words of the participants. Hence, using interpretivism contributed to the discovery and deeper understanding of the social attitudes and behaviours held by participants (cf. Babbie 2016). Interpretative research aims to show how the social groups being studied interpret their world, and then place those interpretations into a social science framework. Thus, in responding to questions, research participants first interpreted their experiences that were then interpreted by me during the analysis process, through the lens of concepts, theories and the scholarly literature (Bryman 2012; Crotty 1998; Denzin and Lincoln 2003). Seeking a methodology that allowed me to incorporate an interpretivist theoretical approach, including that flexibility to actively engage with the participants, led to the application of constructivist grounded theory.

The constructivist grounded theory (CGT) methodology was selected, first, because as a qualitative approach it provides cohesion during the research process, from design to data analysis and presentation. In the field, using the CGT permitted

me to freely share ideas expressed by other researchers and previous interactions about special education and inclusion, and gain the perspectives of participants on them. In one case I shared some of the strategies being used by the MOE in one island with participant teachers during a later interview session, allowing them to share their ideas and feelings about such strategies. In doing this, participants were able to share their opinions on these ideas and whether they corresponded with their own experiences. As such, respondents and I were able to “co-construct” areas of importance and relevance (cf. Keane 2015; Mills, Bonner and Francis 2006). CGT retains grounded theory methods but without relying on traditional positivist underpinnings or assumptions (Charmaz 2005; Keane 2015; Ramalho et al. 2015). Therefore, rather than merely counting the number of the participants who experienced a phenomenon, I was able to tease out how they experienced it, paying attention to the local social realities of those being studied while also trying to locate myself within these realities (cf. Charmaz 2005). As a constructivist researcher, I recognised that I brought to the study an established interpretive frame of reference, asking questions based on my view of the world (Charmaz 2005; Mills, Bonner and Francis 2006). Thus, conscious of the fact that the data and its analysis are products of the social interaction that take place during interviews, I was careful during the times that I did share my opinions, not to allow them to overshadow those of the participants (cf. Marvasti 2004).

The CGT approach was used because it offered a means of understanding the context in which LSEN were being excluded from accessing equitable quality education in the schools of the OECS. In addition, the interpretive theoretical orientation in which the methodology falls gives a researcher the leeway for ‘contextual rendering’ which means including the experiences of participants within the environment in which they occur (Charmaz 2005). The methodology also provided an approach that developed purpose, theory building and interpretation (Keane 2015). The analysis framework of the CGT model involves several stages which are displayed in the Figure 1.

Figure 1. Stages of CGT methodology



Alderson, Hall and Latreille 2014, 77.

Unlike traditional grounded theory where a review of literature is not ordinarily done, within the CGT approach a literature review is encouraged. The literature as ‘sensitising knowledge’ has played an important role in this study, as the existing literature was used to fill gaps in knowledge in the area of education policy, special education and inclusive education. As a researcher coming from a civil service communications background, the literature was engaged prior to and as the themes emerged as a means of expanding my knowledge in the research area. In addition, the literature also helped in the development of topic areas to be included in interview guides (Charmaz 2005; Keane 2015; Ramalho et al. 2015). The review of the literature also provided a greater level of understanding of the less obvious challenges associated with the practice of inclusion, such as the ways in which the absence of a policy affected the resources available and the provision of adaptations for LSEN (Peters 2003; UNESCO 2009; Vlachou 2004).

Finally, the use of the CGT encouraged me to engage in a level of reflexivity, by providing avenues for the declaration of the choices that went into the selection and use of a methodology and research design. By answering Jones' et al. (2006, 125) four questions -

- Why engage in the study?
- What are the experiences that have led to the study?
- What are the personal biases and assumptions that are brought to the study?  
and
- What is the relationship with those in the study?

- I was able to quickly surmise and identify how this study developed, as detailed at the beginning of this chapter. I was also able to acknowledge and declare my views on knowledge creation and social interaction at an early stage of the research, and the potential impact this could have on the research process. This sort of self-reflection is one way of addressing Jones' et al. (2006) questions, along with reflection in conjunction with participants and other researchers. During the course of a research the influence the research participants and the researcher have on each other is unavoidable; I recognised this and tried to engage in reflexive thought by building a rapport with participants and actively participating in the study (cf. Keane 2015; Maxwell 2009). I believe that having little firsthand experience with the topic before embarking on fieldwork made it easier for me to be open to the empirical knowledge of the participants.

### 3.3 Research Methods

As a qualitative research, the study was interested in the experiences of participants, hence, the use of in-depth semi-structured one-on-one and focus group interviews. The in-depth interview is a method that provided a depth of meaning through the verbal accounts and face-to-face interactions. It was also a method that yielded detailed descriptions while still allowing observation and interaction with participants, which was essential for this study (see Babbie 2016; Bryman 2012; Marvasti 2004; Silverman 2000). The flexibility of semi-structured interviews

allowed me to pursue areas not previously included in interview guides. This was another advantage of using the in-depth interview method which was also noted by Babbie (2016) and Bryman (2012). Further, these less structured interviews were suitably placed within the constructivist/interpretivist research paradigm and CGT methodology (cf. Charmaz 2005).

### 3.3.1 In-depth interviews

The use of the in-depth interview as the primary data collection method in this study resulted from the understanding that participants were the vessels of knowledge needed to answer the main research question. Consistent with the CGT methodology, this interviewing technique provided a multi-perspective understanding of barriers to and facilitators of the inclusion of LSEN (cf. Marvasti 2004). The semi-structured in-depth interviews utilised in this study were made up of a mixture of open and close-ended questions. The close-ended questions, intended to glean demographic information, such as their age, also served to put the respondents at ease with questions they could readily answer. These questions were followed by the open-ended questions which allowed participants to freely reconstruct events through their responses. This approach of mixed typed questions is suggested by Bryman (2012) and worked well in this study. Hence, during these semi-structured interviews participants were asked in addition to their age, to state their address and other demographic data. Parents and teachers were specifically asked to provide information on their employment and education status. When provided, the socio-economic information gave the researcher a better understanding of the social, cultural and economic capital the participant brought to the research, and how this may have influenced their social interactions as well as their responses, attitudes and experiences (cf. Sullivan 2002).

Further, interview guides for this study used a mixture of questions in support of the 'what' research question. Hence, questions included those that asked 'how', 'why', 'have you', 'do you', and sought to explore and understand the experiences being shared and garnered their impact on the lives of the participants. In addition, these questions allowed participants to detail their feelings about an encounter and share about the experience (cf. Blaikie 2000). As such, interview guides covered topics such as knowledge and perspectives of inclusion, current education strategies,

negative stigma and discrimination and the strategies for the practice of special and inclusive education in schools.

### 3.3.2 Focus group interviews

The focus group interviews were used to bring together, for an interactive discussion, groups of people who are of relevance to the research questions and theoretical position (Babbie 2016; Marvasti 2004; Rabiee 2004; Silverman 2000). The initial goal of the research was to have focus group sessions with teachers, students and parents on each island. These three groups were identified to participate in the focus group discussions to ascertain how interpretations and perceptions differ within and among the groups (Bryman 2012). However, I was unable to complete any parent focus group sessions. Parents on all islands cited busy schedules as reasons for not being able to participate. This challenge and the possible implications are discussed further in chapters seven and eight. Ultimately, a total of six focus group sessions were conducted during this study's data collection process, varying in number of participants from four to nine. These numbers were based on participants who were willing and available for interview, but also fall within the typical and ideal number of persons involved in a focus group session (cf. Babbie 2016; Bryman 2012; Rabiee 2004). Focus group interview guides were also developed along the same 'what', 'why' and 'how' questions and focused on gaining the perspective of members. The similar themes covered in one-on-one interviews were also covered during focus group discussions. Focus group interactions provided greater insight into why certain beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours or positions were held among that particular group and offered insights as to how these manifested in society (cf. Blaikie 2000).

During this study, focus groups were organised according to key groups to ascertain how each thought about the same topic, as I recognised that interpretations and perceptions could differ among teachers for example, and between teachers and students (cf. Bryman 2012). As discovered, in each group there was agreement and disagreement, and it was my role to probe the beliefs behind some of the opinions held and why they may have varied or were similar to their peers and those of the wider public. An example of this was when one teacher commented that "...inclusion does not work for them [LSEN]". Upon further questioning, it emerged



that this belief was based on the unavailability of resources and support to facilitate the successful practice of inclusion.

Acting as a moderator to this interactive process with the aim of keeping the discussion balanced and on topic, I had the responsibility of ensuring the conversation remained focused without being too intrusive or hindering the natural development of an area of discussion that was important to the participants and the study. Ensuring that participants were equally involved in the discussion was a challenge with the larger focus groups of teachers and students. While some participants spoke at once, others remained silent and said very little. One of the strategies used to encourage the participants to engage in the conversation was to directly ask them questions. Throughout the process, I listened keenly to responses in order to probe specific areas critical to the research, while still allowing the conversation to flow freely (cf. Babbie 2016; Bryman 2012).

For both the in-depth one-on-one interviews and the focus group interviews, topic guides were informed by the research questions and themes derived from the process of the sensitising knowledge gained from the initial literature review (cf. Charmaz 2008). Questions were designed to probe and understand the experiences of each group, and this necessitated the creation of guides for teachers, parents and students, examples of which can be found in the appendices. Questions also varied based on the format of the interview; therefore, the focus group guides were different from the one-on-one interview guides. Interview guides for focus groups also had fewer questions that focused on the key themes. This helped to facilitate a more robust discussion that saw topics being comprehensively explored. All sessions were conducted face-to-face, with the exception of the parents on the island of St. Kitts, who responded to the questions through written answers, which were then emailed, as they were unable to meet with me while I was on the island. Interview guides were adjusted as the data collection process progressed, and later included questions that covered topic areas that were raised by respondents. This action is consistent with the use of CGT as well as qualitative research methods (Babbie 2016; Charmaz 2008).

### 3.4 Research Sample and Site Access

Fieldwork for this study was carried out on the islands of Antigua, St. Kitts and St. Lucia. These three islands were chosen because they closely represented a cross-section of the sub-region in terms of population, geographical size, gross national income (GNI) and primary school enrolment. Travel from Australia, where I am currently based, to the Caribbean region for fieldwork took place during the period of September 2014 to February 2015. My homeland of Antigua was the base from where I travelled to the other islands. The visit to St. Kitts lasted five days and included several visits to the special education school on that island. St. Lucia was visited twice, with each visit lasting five days. Two visits were necessary for St. Lucia. The first was used as a preliminary visit to establish connections with possible participants. It is on the second visit to St. Lucia that the majority of data gathering took place.

The sampling procedure used in this research was a purposive one. Participants were selected using a nonprobability sampling method based on the researcher's knowledge of the population of who will be most useful to the study (cf. Babbie 2016) and their willingness to participate. Participants on each island consisted of members of five groups: (i) learners with special education needs (LSEN); (ii) parents of LSEN; (iii) special education teachers; (iv) policy actors, which included principals of special education schools and officers from the ministry of education (MOE); and (v) members of disabled people's organisations (DPOs). Table 7 is a breakdown of the number of in-depth one-on-one interview respondents per island.

Table 7. Number of participants per island

Country	Participants	Number of persons
Antigua	Students	2
	Parents	2
	Teachers	4
	Policy Actors	1
	DPOs	2
St. Kitts	Students	2
	Parents	2
	Teachers	2
	Policy Actors	4
	DPOs	1
St. Lucia	Students	4
	Parents	2
	Teachers	2
	Policy Actors	2
	DPOs	2
Total		33

In all, 33 in-depth interviews were conducted as part of the data collection process of this research. Because the research used a CGT methodology and entailed thick descriptions of the lived experiences and histories of participants, it was felt that this number was sufficient to shed light on the phenomenon being investigated. Researchers produce ‘thick descriptions’ of social settings, events and individuals which result in studies being full of information about the social worlds under examination. This thick description and understanding from the participants’ point of view is one way of ensuring that the analysis and interpretations maintain the integrity of the research and also meets the ethical obligations of respecting research participants (cf. Bryman 2012; Blaikie 2000; Charmaz 2008; Jones et al. 2006). I also kept in mind that the number of interviews had to be manageable so that there was adequate time for the extensive coding process involved in theory building (cf. Mills, Bonner and Francis 2006). Focus group interviews ran for an average of 35 minutes, while one-on-one interviews ran for an average of 16 minutes. However interviews specifically with LSEN ran for an average of 7 minutes.

As noted, focus group discussions comprised of groups of varying numbers with the smallest number of participants being four and the largest groups having nine participants, as detailed in table 8.

Table 8. Number of focus groups per island

Island	Participants	Number of participants
Antigua	Teachers	9
	Students	6
	Parents <sup>5</sup>	3
St. Kitts	Teachers	6
	Students	6
St. Lucia	Teachers	4
	Students	9
Total		43

Interview participant numbers were dependent largely on the willingness and availability of persons within the target groups. While it was generally easy to get participant agreement for focus groups from teachers and students, finding parent participants proved difficult. In each island, I failed to gain willing parent respondents to participate in focus group sessions. This could be attributed in part to the inability to settle on a time that was convenient to all parents, who all cited time constraints. However, it could also be as a result of an apparent underlying unwillingness of parents to share their experiences in front of others. In Antigua, only two parents arrived at the appointed time for the session. There was a discussion with these parents, along with the principal of the school where the discussion was held, but the decision was made not to use the data collected from that engagement as a focus group session, since there were only two parents. Rather, the data was used for theoretical sampling during the course of the analytical process.

Contact with members of each participant group was made through several means, including email, telephone calls and site visits. Before engaging with any

<sup>5</sup> This group is the group used as the theoretical sampling

group however, I wrote to the ministry of education (MOE) in each island, primarily through email after locating contact information online. Having started the preparations for fieldwork while outside of the region, this form of contact was necessary. It should be noted that in each case permission was freely and even enthusiastically given. In the case of Antigua, once I was on the island, telephone calls were made to the Director of Education, who provided me with letters to present to the principals of the schools I was interested in visiting. St. Lucia has an online permission to conduct research form, which I filled and submitted. From there, a written letter of permission was issued to me which I presented to the schools visited. However, no school was visited without first making contact with the principal. In St. Kitts, an email exchange with the Chief Education Officer (CEO) indicated that the researcher was able to visit the special education school if the Principal was willing. Upon arrival in the region, emails were followed up with telephone calls and official letters which included information sheets. The following sections give a synopsis of how the researcher accessed the research sites as well as participants of the study.

### 3.4.1 Parents

Parents of LSEN were included as a participant group because they are usually among the first to notice the effects of the barriers to inclusion in the education system. In addition, they are often the ones visibly advocating on behalf of their child (Bunch 2008; Peters 2003; Yeung 2012). Table 9 gives a synopsis of the demographic information shared by parents who participated in the research.

Table 9. Parent participants in one-on-one interviews

Parent	Sex	Age	Level of Education	Occupation	Child's disability
PANU1	Male	46	Tertiary	IT consultant	Down Syndrome
PANU2	Male	-	Tertiary	Pest Control	Hearing-impaired
PSKB1	Female	30	Secondary	Teacher	Hearing-impaired
PSKB2	Female	39	Tertiary	Nurse	Learning Difficulties
PSLU1	Female	33	Secondary	Self-employed	Autistic
PSLU2	Female	33	Secondary	Unemployed	Multiple

In Antigua, parents were suggested to the researcher by teachers of the special education schools after they had been briefed on the purpose and scope of the study. However this was not the only means by which participants were identified. In one case a visit to a special education school during a parent-teachers' meeting was made. I addressed the group, giving a summary of the research, and left contact information and information sheets with the parents and the principal. It should be noted that it is from this visit that the two parents who were willing to participate in a focus group discussion originated, as well as one of the parent respondents for the one-on-one interview. The other parent participant was one of several referred by a principal of a general education school that had recently commenced accepting students placed as a result of the universal secondary education (USE) policy. Both parent participants in Antigua were fathers. I found this to be an advantage, as the literature (Lai and Vadeboncoeur 2012) and later experience in the other islands, pointed to the tendency of mothers to be the more active parent.

In St. Kitts, parent participants indicated their willingness to be included in the research through a teacher who shared information sheets and contact details on behalf of the researcher. However, due to time constraints associated with job and family demands the willing parents were unable to meet with the researcher during the week on the island. They however agreed to participate in the research, and were asked to treat the interview guides as questionnaires by answering all questions fully to be the best of their ability. They then forwarded the responses to the researcher via email. This was not the ideal method of data collection, because of the loss of opportunities to immediately probe responses and observe body language, but Babbie (2016) does note that use of technology in this way is not unheard of in social research.

In St. Lucia, parent participants were mothers who were often in contact with the special education school their children attended. This school is located in the countryside on the south of the island. Once approached by the principal on behalf of the researcher, they willingly agreed to be at the school at the appointed time for the interviews.

It should be noted that there are potential risks involved in including participants in the study that were referred to by principals and teachers as it could

be suggested that those identified were the ones who were in agreement with school policies. However, from the candid conversations held with parents this did not seem to be the case.

### 3.4.2 Teachers

All the teacher participants of this study are special education teachers, but were not all trained in special education. Teachers were selected as a key group for this study because they have been identified as important for the effective implementation of inclusive practices in schools (cf. Avramidis and Norwich 2002). Teacher participants noted that they were teacher trained and had some level of special education exposure. However, some noted that the training they had was a general overview of special needs, rather than more comprehensive training. As will be discussed in chapter four, all teachers indicated that they would like to have further training in areas of inclusion and special education provision. Table 10 gives a synopsis of the demographic information shared by teacher participants.

Table 10. Teacher participants in one-on-one interviews

Teacher	Age	Sex	Years teaching	Years teaching SEN	Teacher Trained	SEN Training	Area of SEN training
TSLU1	29	Female	12	11	Yes	Yes	Learning difficulties
TSLU2	29	Female	8	6	Yes	Yes	General
TSKB1	35	Female	17	15	Yes	Yes	Dyslexia
TSKB2	39	Male	13	13	Yes	Yes	Deaf Education
TANU1	38	Female	11	-	Yes	Yes	General
TANU2	32	Female	8	8	Yes	Yes	General
TANU3	41	Female	27	-	Yes	Yes	Dyslexia and Literacy
TANU4	26	Male	3	3	Yes	Yes	General

In Antigua, the focus group participants were a part of a group of teachers that taught at different schools, both secondary and primary, but worked as a team to carry out special needs assessments across the island. The researcher was able to conduct the session prior to one of their weekly preparatory meetings. The teachers who participated in the in-depth one-on-one interviews were either teachers at a

special education school, or were special education teachers stationed at one of the general education schools. A total of four teachers were interviewed in Antigua because as the 'home base' I did not face as many issues with time constraints as the other islands visited. If teachers could not meet this week, I could schedule a meeting for the following week or in some cases the following month.

In St. Kitts, all teachers interviewed, both in the focus group session as well as the one-on-one in-depth interviews, taught at the lone special education school on the island. As focus group sessions were conducted first, one teacher from this discussion along with a male teacher were chosen for one-on-one interviews. The female teacher was chosen based on her willingness to be interviewed further and her background in both the general education and special education schools. The male teacher was not a part of the focus group discussion, and was chosen for the one-on-one interviews to gain his perspective as a male teacher, as the majority of teachers in the OECS were predominantly female (OECS 2012, 2014).

Teachers who participated in focus group discussions from St. Lucia agreed to participate after being contacted by the head of the Special Education Unit of the MOE. They are all special education teachers who are placed within general education schools, where they not only provided classroom support to teachers, but in all but one case, the teacher also had their own specialist class. From this group one teacher was chosen to be interviewed further because of her experience in special education on that island as well as within the education system of Guyana where she was from. The other teacher was the primary school teacher at the special education school in the city that was selected for the student focus group.

### 3.4.3 Students

Inclusion of LSEN is the main focus of this study, thus it was important to allow the students to share their perspective on what they considered to be the barriers to and facilitators of effective inclusive practices in schools. Student participants were primarily drawn from those being educated in a special education setting. However, one blind student was mainstreamed as it was a policy in that country to educate blind students within a general education school as far as is



possible. Table 11 gives a synopsis of the demographic information gathered on the student participants.

Table 11. Student participants in one-on-one interviews

Student	Age	Sex	Disability	Type of School	Grade level
SANU1	16	male	Learning Difficulties	Special Education	Transitional class <sup>6</sup>
SANU2	15	female	Emotional and Learning Difficulties	Special Education	Transitional class
SSKB1	15	male	Deaf and Learning Difficulties	Special Education	Mixed level <sup>7</sup>
SSKB2	18	female	Undiagnosed (Teachers suspect autism in addition to learning difficulties)	Special Education	Mixed level
SSLU1	17	female	Blind	General Education	Form five <sup>8</sup>
SSLU2	11	female	Learning Difficulties	Special Education	Grade four
SSLU3	11	male	Learning Difficulties	Special Education	Grade four
SSLU4	17	female	Multiple Difficulties	Special Education	Mixed level

In Antigua, the participants of the focus group and one-on-one interviews were selected from the islands oldest special education school. The school is a public school that catered to the needs of learners with varying special needs, including hearing-impaired, dyslexia and learning and emotional difficulties. Students for the one-on-one interviews were chosen by sex (one male and one female) as well as to gain the perspective of LSEN with different disabilities, so that a wide as possible scope of disabilities could be covered in the research. This was done for each island.

In St. Kitts, the student participants attended the only special education school on the island. They experienced difficulties which included hearing-impaired, learning difficulties and suspected autism. Students were selected from this cohort for the one-on-one interview. One was partially hearing-impaired, while the other had learning difficulties and other challenges associated with autism. Here too students were chosen to include both a male and female with different disabilities.

---

<sup>6</sup> Students in the Transitional class were being prepared to enter general education secondary schools as a part of the USE policy.

<sup>7</sup> As explained by a teacher mixed level classes may see students grouped according to abilities.

<sup>8</sup> Equivalent to grade 11

In St. Lucia, the composition of the student participants in the focus group discussion was also varied. They were all members of the same class, but often sat some subjects with other classes. These students were the only primary school aged focus group participants of the study. They were chosen to ensure that the voices of younger LSEN were included in the research. Three of the students at this special education school were interviewed further. Two were taken from the focus group based on similar criteria of balance of representation, and the third was an older student aged 16. The fourth student interviewed in St. Lucia was a blind student who has always attended a general education school according to that country's policy on mainstreaming blind students.

#### 3.4.4 Ministry of Education (MOE) Policy actors

Policy actors are tasked with the coordination and implementation of policies in support of inclusion (Bines and Lei 2011; Mitchell 2015). In Antigua, the policy actor who participated in the research study was the special education coordinator at the MOE. She was also the person who facilitated the teacher focus group session, as she was in charge of the assessment activities that the teachers were engaged in. Only one MOE policy actor was interviewed in Antigua as others asked to participate all referred the researcher to the special education coordinator, indicating that she would best be able to answer the questions.

St. Kitts sought to provide special needs assistance to students who may need it through a program in the secondary schools called "learning support". Learning support is a year-long program focused on students entering secondary schools but who needed help to get them to a level where they could successfully access the secondary school curriculum. One of the policy actors interviewed was the coordinator for this program. The other two policy actors were the Chief Education Officer (CEO) in the MOE, as well as the ministry official responsible for general student support services. These two were interviewed in one sitting, as the CEO invited the other MOE official to join her because she would be able to shed more light on the practical aspects of some strategies. The principal of the special education school was also interviewed.

The policy actors who took part in the research from St. Lucia were the head of the special education unit in the MOE and the principal of the special education school in the rural south of the island. The head of the SE Unit's duties included overseeing and coordinating the special education teachers as well as the members of the multidisciplinary team (MDT) which carried out assessment and diagnosis of students.

Principals were included as policy actors because it was felt that their duties as managers and leaders placed them in a position similar and closer to that of the other MOE policy actors rather than teachers. The principal interviewed in Antigua was a little different however and was counted as a teacher. She was the principal of a small private special education school who also taught.

#### 3.4.5 Disabled People Organisations (DPOs)

Disabled People Organisations (DPOs) have been involved and continue to engage in advocacy and supportive activities on behalf of LSEN. As Peters (2003) notes, they are important partners in the move towards the development and implementation of effective inclusive policies and strategies. I made initial contact with umbrella organisations and non-profit groups via email prior to arriving in the Eastern Caribbean. A contact person within these identified organisations was fully briefed on the nature of the research. Those who consented were asked to assist the researcher in identifying potential participants and pass on the researcher's contact details to persons willing to participate. Not all of the organisations contacted participated in the research. A list of organisations contacted is below:

- St. Lucia National Council of and for Persons with Disabilities.
- St. Kitts Association of Persons with Disabilities
- Antigua and Barbuda Association of Persons with Disabilities
- Autism Speaks: St. Lucia and Antigua
- Antigua and Barbuda Dyslexia Association

The Antigua and Barbuda Dyslexia Association is a parent-founded organisation. It is currently supported by the government through the payment of the salaries of the two full-time staff. The tutors as well as the board of the organisation are all volunteers. The organisation is further supported through donations from

private companies. The other DPO participant was also from a parent-led organisation. At the time of the interview it was involved in the process of being formalised as an association.

In St. Kitts, the head of the disability association, which is an umbrella body for all other disability organisations on the island, participated in the research. The location of the association's headquarters was in close proximity to the special education school; this was convenient as the organisation provided additional classes to those students and others in the disabled community.

In St. Lucia, two interviews were conducted with members of DPOs. The executive director of the National Council of and for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD), and the executive director of the Blind Welfare Association were interviewed. In addition, the executive director of the NCPD was instrumental in making initial contact with the principal of the special education school in the south of the island, while the executive director of the Blind Welfare Association was instrumental in gaining the participation of the secondary school student in St. Lucia.

#### 3.4.6 Pseudonyms

At each interview a digital recorder was used as well as notes taken using pencil and notebook. At the end of each session, a summary of each interview was written. As this was done, pseudonyms or codes were developed for each participant consisting of a shortened form of the country, group, and the number of the interview, examples of which can be seen in tables 9, 10 and 11.

### 3.5 Data Analysis Methods

The data in this study was analysed based on the four main strategies of the constructivist grounded theory method: coding, memo writing, theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation (Charmaz 2008). During the in-depth interviews and focus group sessions, participants gave accounts of their life experiences, thoughts and feelings. The aim of the research study is to construct, co-construct and reconstruct these experiences. Each interview was fully transcribed once the fieldwork was completed, and the data collected was coded and analysed. This was done based on the interpretive tradition's focus of gaining knowledge from the 'inside'; from the

point of view of the participants, the goal of which is describing and understanding the experiences of those studied (Charmaz 1996).

### 3.5.1 Memo writing and sorting

Memo writing as a part of this research process began on the evening of the first information gathering interview and continued throughout fieldwork. In combination with the notes taken during the interviews, separate summaries were written for each session. At the end of the fieldwork, all digital recordings were transcribed verbatim. Once transcription was completed, transcripts were read and the broad ideas, words and phrases that appeared frequently in the notes and memos were placed onto post-its. Post-its were then grouped according to the similar ideas, words and phrases, and how they related to each other. Thus, “teased”, “bullied” “preference for general education school” (because of the stigma associated with special schools), were grouped together under stigma and would eventually fall within the category of “negative attitudes and perceptions”. This activity helped in the initial development of theoretical categories as well as identifying the frequency at which themes were occurring. The data was then re-analysed according to these categories for a further theoretical sampling exercise. It is from this exercise that the final eight themes emerged.

When analysing data researchers look for patterns (Charmaz 1996). Memo writing helped me to look beyond the individual cases to the patterns that were within the data. The process allowed me to explore the categories, taking them apart to understand how they developed and changed (cf. Charmaz 1996). Memo writing also helped to identify which categories were important and facilitated ongoing comparisons between the beliefs and actions of respondents. Through a review of the analytic memo notes, questions that arose were included in subsequent guides and were answered with further data collection. Importantly, memo writing is a reflexive process that was used to record theoretical thoughts about the interview, participants and emerging categories, as well as a data collection tool (cf. Charmaz 2008; Mills, Bonner and Francis 2006). Thus, notes that identified the comments of several teachers on different islands on the need for parents to become more involved in the education of their child contributed to the development of focused codes such as

“denying child’s diagnosis” and “needing parents to be advocates” within the eventual theoretical category of “parental involvement”.

### 3.5.2 Coding Data

Codes help to construct an analysis of the data not just describe it (Eaves 2001). Open coding was one of the first analytic activities that took place after transcription. In CGT coding is the link between the collection of data and the development of emergent themes. Based on Charmaz’s (1996, 2008) suggestions in the use of CGT, open coding was undertaken in this initial phase using ‘gerunds’. Gerunds are the noun form of verbs that enabled me to observe the processes taking place while coding, and to make connections between codes while keeping the analyses ‘active and emergent’. Each line was coded using the words of the participants as part of the development of categories. Coding line by line increased my knowledge of and familiarity with the data and, as suggested by Charmaz (1996), kept me in constant contact and interaction with the data. Using these ‘in vivo’ codes, which are the direct statements of participants, gave me some direction in constructing and interpreting participants’ meanings and actions (cf. Charmaz 2008). Examples of line by line coding can be found in Table 12.

The initial coding was followed by a more focused coding exercise. Focused coding was a more direct form of coding than the initial line by line stage. It involved the creation of categories which helped develop the overall analytic framework (Charmaz 1996). By keeping focused codes active and by studying how they are related, the development of theory was easier. In the focused coding process, two or more open codes would often be merged to become one focused code, for example ‘feeling discriminated against’ and ‘reporting being bullied’ were then narrowed to the focused code of ‘being discriminated against’. To simplify the coding process, a table was created with raw data from the transcripts. The table had columns for initial codes, focused codes and then the theoretical category. The creation of this table worked to my advantage as I was able to keep track of raw data, as well as the codes during the category development process. Tables 12 and 13 show examples of these tables.

Table 12. Example of theoretical sampling table

Question	Answer/ Raw data	Open/Initial Code	Focused code	Theoretical category
3. Were you specifically trained as a Special Needs Educator? If not, in what area were you trained?	[Yes.] General, but I plan to pursue some more training in learning disabilities.	Trained in general special education Planning on pursuing further training in learning disabilities	Planning to pursue further training	Teacher training and professional development
4. Have you had any training in facilitating inclusive classrooms? a. If so, do you think this type of training was useful?	Sure. Very useful. You were able to learn strategies that would help the special needs child feel a lot more comfortable. Not only that , you learned how to differentiate the instruction so that whatever it is that is being taught is at their level while the other students who may not need that type of specialised teaching, they will get work at their level. So you learn how to tailor your lessons to meet the needs of the special needs child.	Giving positive review of training  Believes training is helpful especially in specialized areas	Expressing positive view of training	Teacher training and professional development

Table 13. Second example of theoretical sampling table

Question	Answer/Raw data	Open/Initial Code	Theoretical category
What would be your ideal school to attend? Why?	Leon Hess. Because basically they knew my mom and they knew what to expect so it was an easy transition from primary to secondary.	Indicating that school personnel knowing her mom helped her transition	Parental interaction impacting child success
What was your experience like at primary school?	Horrible. I used to get picked on a lot. Children used to call me names and things, but when I got older and they got used to me, it's like normal school.	Being bullied and called names because of disability	Experiencing bullying initially
Do you feel welcomed and accepted at your school?	Yea, now. Cause I repeated a first. Well it wasn't that I wasn't welcome but I was shy and now I feel wanted.	Feeling wanted at school. Indicating shyness is to blame for initial challenges	Expressing changed feelings about self and school

### 3.5.3 Theoretical sampling and saturation

Theoretical sampling was a way of completing categories and finding gaps and variations within and between them. Theoretical sampling required that I take back to the field initial categories in order to refine them (Charmaz 2008). In this case, the emergent categories were taken back to the transcript of the parent focus group that was not used in the general study. Eight theoretical categories or themes emerged from the data as being the major barriers to and facilitators of the practice of effective inclusion in schools. They are: (i) legislation and policy; (ii) teacher training and professional development; (iii) adaptations; (iv) resources and support; (v) attitudes and perceptions; (vi) education and advocacy; (vii) parental involvement and (viii) collaborating and networking. By applying these categories to this parent focus group I was able to determine that no new categories were likely to develop. The volume of data collected along with the fact that no other theoretical categories continued to emerge as the fieldwork progressed also contributed to the decision that saturation had been reached. The decision was aided by the knowledge that data was collected in three different island locations, and the interview guides were adjusted consistently as the fieldwork progressed to reflect any new areas to be discussed.

## 3.6 Ethics

Interested in ensuring that the wishes of respondents no matter age, class or ethnicity were always respected (cf. Babbie 2016; Marvasti 2004), several steps were taken prior to, during, and after the fieldwork and data process commenced. I was concerned with the ethics in social research and my responsibilities as a researcher; the things I should and should not do in the relationship established while investigating the experiences of those being studied. Engaging in fieldwork required establishing formal protocols which outlined the ethics to be observed in voluntary participation. Information sheets and consent forms were created according to my University guidelines, and an ethics application was filed with approval granted by the university prior to the start of fieldwork.



In accordance with the ethics guidelines of the University, detailed information sheets were created for both adult and juvenile respondents. They included information about the study, the researcher, as well as contact information for queries or complaints. Information sheets gave participants a general description of the project, how the interview would be conducted and how the information gathered would be used. Examples of information sheets can be found in appendices three to seven. In addition, assent forms were created for juvenile participants and consent forms for adult participants. Examples of these can be found in appendices one and two. Participants reviewed and signed these documents before data collection interviews began (cf. Jones et al. 2006). Upon signing, participants acknowledged they were aware of the possible risks, though slim, involved in participating in the research. Within these forms were assurances of a level of confidentiality and anonymity. The use of the pseudonyms was discussed in section 3.4.6. While guaranteeing a level of confidentiality and anonymity on the premise of protecting the participants' identities and wellbeing, I agree with Marvasti (2004) that this could pose a challenge especially in the area of in-depth interviews where, once the interviews started, I asked additional questions in order to further explore what a participant had said. Also in dealing with small communities such as those found in the countries of the OECS, persons may be able to identify participants by a process of elimination.

Because the research included children, Babbie's (2016) caution on the power status relationships between researcher and the researched, which is especially visible when dealing with children, was heeded. All participants taking part in a research were respected, with additional caution and care paid to minors. Care was taken to involve them as research participants rather than subjects, so that their voices and viewpoints could be taken into consideration (cf. Clough and Nutbrown 2007). Children were interviewed within familiar surroundings such as their schools and all gave their informed assent to participate. Their information sheets used simple clear language and even included illustrative accompaniments. Further, with minor and adult participants it was emphasised that participation in the research was voluntary. Participants were also informed prior to commencing data collection that they may withdraw at any time without giving any explanation. It must also be noted

that no financial or other compensation was offered to participants for their involvement.

### 3.7 Challenges of the CGT methodology

As a researcher using the CGT methodology for the first time, some challenges arose that posed some difficulty. One challenge was the use of gerunds as suggested by Charmaz (1996, 2005). In CGT, gerunds are to be used to keep codes active, using direct statements of the participants. However, I found that this was not always an easy task. I had to spend some time to ensure that the gerund was indeed an accurate presentation of what the participant was doing. If I found that I was using a particular gerund too often such as “expressing”, or “planning”, I revisited the code, making changes as necessary to keep them both active and accurate.

Another limitation of using the CGT methodology was the initial line by line coding. Not only was this stage time consuming, but participants did not always finish their thought in one line, and thus it was difficult to actually code each line. Conversely, from some lines there emerged more than one initial and focused code, which resulted in two or more focused codes, however this aspect helped me to see the relationship between codes.

The constant comparison stage of CGT calls for continuous comparisons to be done, which involves the simultaneous collection and analysis of data. While the use of memos did help in this regard, once I'd left the field and returned to Australia, the scope for constant comparisons became limited. Making use of available technology such as email correspondence did help in this regard.

Because of the relatively small number of participants, it was suggested that I manually conduct the coding and analysis of the data rather than use a computer software program. This was a long and arduous process, because although small in number, the research produced significant information as a result of the thick descriptions given. As such I must acknowledge the possibility of human error, although I endeavoured to reduce this by revisiting recordings, transcripts and code tables several times to ensure accuracy and consistency.

### 3.8 Summary

This is a qualitative study that used in-depth, one-on-one and focus group interviews as its primary means of data collection to investigate the barriers to and facilitators of the inclusion of LSEN in the education systems of the islands of the OECS. A CGT methodology was chosen based on the stated personal social constructionist views on knowledge creation and social interaction. As a social justice study using an interpretivist paradigm, the voices of participants were a central aspect of the research. Thus, in-depth one-on-one and focus group interviews were used, as it was felt that the method would produce ‘authentic’ data, while encouraging shared self-disclosure and free expression. Social justice studies like this one have often employed constructivist grounded theory methods because, as Charmaz (2005, 510) pointed out, it offers an alternative though systematic approach that “fosters integrating subjective experience with social conditions in our analyses”. Using a CGT method, data coding was a continual process that started while data was being gathered and ended when theoretical saturation had been reached. Over 12 hours of data was collected during fieldwork, with eight themes emerging from its analysis. The importance of these themes as barriers to and facilitators of the effective practice of inclusion will be discussed in the following findings chapters.

## INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section introduces the following four chapters that present the findings of the current investigation into the barriers to and facilitators of the inclusion of learners with special education needs (LSEN) in the education systems of member countries of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). These four chapters will introduce and analyse the eight major themes that emerged following the data collection. The themes that emerged were: i) legislation and policy; ii) teacher training and professional development (Chapter 4); iii) adaptations; iv) resources and support (Chapter 5); v) attitudes and perceptions; vi) education, awareness and advocacy (Chapter 6); vii) parental involvement, and viii) collaborating and networking (Chapter 7). Two themes will be highlighted in each chapter, exploring the ways in which they have acted as barriers to and facilitators of the inclusion of LSEN within the schools of the three islands under study: Antigua, St. Kitts and St. Lucia. Each chapter title proceeds with the phrase “Accessing Education” as the social justice and rights based approach to social policy and inclusive education policy emphasises identifying and implementing strategies that grant LSEN full membership into the education system and society (cf. Kelly 2012; Peters 2003; Smith and Leonard 2005; UNESCO 2005).

According to UNESCO (2005), in order to be included in educational contexts, all learners must have access to both the content and processes of education. Access to education covers whether LSEN have the opportunity to fully engage in classroom activities or a curriculum suited to their educational requirements, and considers whether these learners are receiving quality and equitable education through the provision of suitable adaptations. Access to education extends to whether they are benefiting from the social aspects of the interactions that take place within schools, how LSEN and their families are being treated and the adverse consequences of negative attitudes or a lack of adequate support (cf. Operti, Brady and Duncombe 2009). The availability and provision of the necessary resources contribute to the quality of education on offer and ultimately determines if learners are truly accessing education.

Chapter four begins by exploring how policy texts, teacher training and professional development have impacted the practice of special and inclusive education. The following chapters delve into the other emergent themes often discussing how they are connected. Hence, chapter five's discussion covers adaptations, accommodations, resources and support, while chapter six features the findings relating to building of knowledge through education, awareness and advocacy and the potential to change negative behaviours and attitudes towards LSEN. The final findings chapter, chapter seven, focuses on parental involvement in LSEN education and collaboration between education stakeholders. Chapter seven also ends with a brief summary of all of the findings discussed prior.

## Chapter Four

### Accessing Education: The Role of Policy, Teacher Training and Professional Development

The theme ‘policy development’, along with ‘teacher training and professional development’, emerged from an amalgamation of issues and concerns voiced primarily by the policy actors within the Ministries of Education (MOE) and special education teachers participating in this research. This chapter discusses the impact of the absence of inclusive education policies and the inadequate preparation of teachers and principals for the implementation of inclusive strategies on the practice of inclusion and the access to quality education for learners with special education needs (LSEN) within the schools of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). Successful inclusive policies are those that provide guidance, outline avenues for funding, resources and support, and establish partnerships with a wide cross-section of stakeholders in development and implementation (Gül and Vuran 2015; Mitchell 2015; Peters 2003). Adequate teacher preparation to function efficiently in an inclusive classroom, and the leadership skills of principals to foster inclusive school environments, arose as an essential determinant of the success of inclusion. In addition, this study found that effective inclusive education policies were also contingent on efficient leadership and stewardship from policy actors within the MOE who are predominantly responsible for ensuring the success of inclusive strategies in schools (cf. Abosi and Koay 2008; Peters 2003; UNESCO 2009).

The two themes this chapter will cover call into question matters of the administrative processes and practices of central government, along with the planning and implementation of strategies for education. This is important because, as Mitchel (2015) and Peters (2003) point out, the ability of policy actors within MOEs to be effective administrators of the processes of education affects the overall education framework. The policy theme is closely related to how the skills of teachers are developed, the availability of training opportunities, and the ways in

which the education strategies of regional governments affect both students and teachers in the classrooms. Teacher training and professional development was of major concern to policy actors, but more so teachers. Therefore, within the context of these themes the chapter explores matters of importance in the conversation on *special* and *inclusive* policies that were necessary to facilitate equitable education practices in the OECS.

## 4.1 Policy Development

A significant finding of this research was the need for governments and policy actors within the three MOEs to pay keen attention to the ways the lack of a standardised approach to the education of LSEN affected their access to equitable and quality education. Teachers and principals not only called for the development of inclusive policies, but for the development of locally relevant policies for inclusion. In addition to the inadequacies of current education policies and strategies in the OECS, participant teachers and principals expressed feelings of alienation at the apparent breakdown in communication between themselves and the MOE. These issues resulted in a strained relationship between schools and the MOE, which ultimately affected the MOE's ability to effectively manage schools and the various processes relating to inclusive education within the education system.

The discussions in this chapter explore MOE policy actors and the special education teachers' experiences working within the education environment in the three member countries of the OECS. Teachers discuss how the lack of support by MOE officials - whether physical or by providing better avenues for personal development and training - affected their morale. Teachers' views on the allocation of funding for special education schools demonstrated the deep personal connection they had to the wellbeing of their students. In addition, MOE policy actors described situations in regards to funding that provided a governance perspective to education financing. Early in the preparation to undertake this research, the absence of specific and comprehensive special and/or inclusive education policies in any of the islands under study was discovered. Therefore, it was no surprise when teacher and policy actor participants outlined the ways in which the lack of a policy for inclusive and

special education negatively impacted their practices and the overall provision of education.

Policies direct the way in which teachers and principals function on a daily basis. Mitchell (2015) noted that without a stated policy on inclusion, the way in which education stakeholders, including teachers, principals and MOE policy actors, carry out their duties affects the successful practice of inclusion in the classroom. Hence, approached from a social justice and human rights perspective, pursuing equity and equality in creating legislation that outlined the treatment of learners within the education system is essential to providing LSEN access to quality education.

#### 4.1.1 Absent special and inclusive policies

The absence of an inclusive or special education policy to guide the practice and strategies of inclusion emerged as the leading aspect of the policy theme. For teachers, policy actors and members of disabled people organisations (DPOs), the absence of a document with specific guidelines for the education of LSEN presented daily challenges. This was despite member states of the OECS countries signing or accepting in principle<sup>9</sup> the content of the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child (CRC) (United Nations 1989), the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (United Nations 2006), and the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations 2015). Antigua was ahead of the other two islands with a draft Special Education Policy, but this was never implemented as a more comprehensive policy was commissioned by the MOE. However, at the time of writing, this was yet to be completed. The policy actor, PAANU1 explained that the mandate of the special education needs (SEN) council spearheading the drafting of the policy expired and was not “reconstituted” in order to make way for the newly commissioned policy. She however noted, despite not having a policy, the MOE was implementing strategies for the inclusion of LSEN in schools. Other MOE policy actors noted similar situations of working without a policy:

---

<sup>9</sup> See Tables 3 and 4 in Chapter 1.



*I should begin by saying that there are not many finalised policies that we have where special education is concerned. There is provision for special education in the Education Act, so there is legislation that speaks to the provision of special educational services. (PASLU1)*

In the absence of a specific policy, MOE policy actors explained the source of their guidance for special and inclusive practice:

*We looked in the Education Act, there is a section on special education and then we have the Ministry's White Paper which was developed in 2009. There is a section on special education as well. (PASKB1)*

At the same time teachers expressed their disappointment at the relatively small scope of the sections in White Papers and other government documents dedicated to special needs:

*I think recently there was the White Paper on education [that] came out. I know there is a section in there that deals with special education [but] as to its coverage, I'm not sure. I think it's just a very small section of that whole paper that deals with special education and I don't think it nearly covers as much as it needs to with regards to policies pertaining to special education. (TSKB2)*

How teachers felt about the scope of coverage of special and inclusive education within these government documents became apparent by the way in which they chose to address the situation. From the above response, it could be interpreted that the teacher felt that the coverage was inadequate and superficial at best. Another conclusion that could be drawn from the response is the unwillingness to speak definitively about these documents. This could be an indication that she as well as other teachers who hinged their answers with "I'm not sure" and other such phrases, were reluctant and uncertain because they were unfamiliar with all that these documents contained.

MOE policy actors did recognise the importance of having a policy solely dedicated to special and inclusive education and were actively seeking ways to create the appropriate legislation. However, they described being restricted in their ability

to do so due to fiscal restraints and having limited scope to influence policy development and processes. PASLU1 underscored this point when he said:

*Well, we are proposing draft policies to the higher powers. Unfortunately, we are not able to create and finalise policies at our level.*

According to PASLU1, the “level” at which policies were created and finalised was that of the Chief Education Officer (CEO) within that ministry, along with the Education Minister.

Policy actors were not the only ones expressing a desire to see policies enacted that extended the access to education for LSEN. A member of a disabled people organisation (DPO) held the view that one step towards successfully including LSEN into schools would be for governments to act on the international conventions that they have signed:

*But then we still have quite a way to go, for example the UN International Convention, [country] has signed on it but has not ratified... we also are looking for them to enact a national policy or Act on disabilities.*  
(DPOSLU1)

In response to the researcher’s question on how could a country better serve its LSEN population, DPOANU1 replied:

*I think we need to start focusing a lot more on policy. Policy with teeth and policy that is inclusive, meaning you don’t sit in your office and write a policy and then put it on a website and say ‘hey that’s our policy’.*

This study found that an absence of policies eroded the powers policy actors had in enforcing strategies for the inclusion of LSEN. One of the ways this was demonstrated was in the reported disregard that some principals displayed for recommendations emanating from the MOE. One policy actor noted that many principals and teachers took the proposals made by the Special Education Unit as ‘advice or suggestions’, rather than directives which they were obligated to follow. The negative impact on the education of LSEN caused by the inability of the MOE to enforce its strategies could be as a result of a lack of knowledge and a shared vision between the MOE and those charged with implementing inclusive strategies.

Responding to the question as to whether the basis for the provision of special education in the OECS islands can be found in the mandate to uphold the human rights of each child, participants responded in the negative. The data shows that the majority of respondents questioned the genuine will of the governments to actually implement policies that sought to ensure social justice and the human rights of LSEN. Here, teachers and principals pointed out the gap between policy and practice:

*No. I don't think so and even if it is in policy, it's not in practice. There's a lot of policy that has been in play, hoping that you put the policy in place and over the years it trickles down and then there is something actually happening. They have just recently put the special needs officer in office, but that hasn't trickled down, we've seen nothing from that, so I wouldn't say the making of it is in practice at the moment. (TANU2)*

Another teacher responded to the same human rights question this way:

*I think it is promoted as a human rights issue on paper, but I think more needs to be done in terms of— don't just sign the stuff, ratify it! Because it's good on paper but if you don't actually put it—implement what you have signed on to, then you're practically wasting everybody's time. (TANU1)*

Similar sentiments were shared by this teacher:

*I don't think so. I just think the government is doing because they know it's expected to. But I don't think they have looked at it as any human rights issue or every child should be given the right. They are just doing because they know I [the government] have to do it, other than that I don't think they care. (PASKB3)*

Throughout the research process, the gap between policy and practice became more evident as parents, policy actors and especially teachers express their frustrations with those who have the power to enact the necessary changes, but failed to do so. A genuine approach to inclusion should start with the necessary policy texts that sought to expand the boundaries of education provision to include not only students with disabilities, but all learners. Ensuring that all learners were included in the education system as a human right is one of the approaches taken in promoting the

development and implementation of inclusive policies globally, as policies are important to guide the provision of inclusive education in a way that meets the needs of the diverse learners in schools.

#### 4.1.2 The importance of culturally specific policies

According to the feelings expressed among teachers in the OECS, the policies that guide the practice of inclusion in the region's schools should be culturally specific. The need for inclusive education policies to be developed by education professionals in the region based on the complexities of its people, was highlighted. The often-wholesale adoption, rather than local adaptation of international policies, annoyed and even angered some teachers and principals. Teachers also expressed resentment at being overlooked as key resource persons in favour of overseas experts and not being consulted on issues that directly affected them (cf. Bines and Lei 2011; Crossley, Bray and Packer 2009; Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai 2016). This can be seen in the following exchange between teachers:

TFGSLU1: *... I think we for the special needs as it relates to inclusion, we are adopting the wrong sets of approaches and the wrong sets of principles, and that is because we look more to Americanised things.... And we cannot Americanise things in a Caribbean society—*

TFGSLU2: *We need to go back to what works for us, for our Caribbean children.*

One principal also expressed the opinion that inclusive education policies originating outside of the country were inappropriate:

*The same ministry that doesn't have a clue as to what goes on here. They will invite people from outside, of course UNESCO, UNICEF to help them set up their policies based on what is happening out in the US and Europe and wherever, when we don't have half of what is happening out there.*  
(PASKB3)

Policies and strategies that address the local complexities of the region's education system have merit. The call for policies that address the challenges being faced

locally by teachers in regional schools should be one that regional education ministries pay keen attention to, since the risks of implementation failures for policies that originate outside of local education systems could increase without local adaptation and ownership.

## 4.2 Policy Implementation

The data reflects that consultations and quality interactions between MOE policy actors and teachers were lacking in the countries of the OECS. Teachers reported feelings of neglect and were openly critical of the MOE in this regard. They raised issues related to assessments and diagnosis as well as personnel shortages within the MOE as hindrances to the implementation and effectiveness of strategies. A government institution such as the MOE has the mandate to plan, develop and oversee the implementation of strategies aimed at improving the quality and delivery of education. They are also in charge of putting into effect international policy mandates related to education that national governments sign onto. For these policy targets to become practice however, implementation must be done in conjunction with the various stakeholders including principals and teachers who are on the frontline of education delivery. According to Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle (2000) the proactive or prescriptive approach to inclusive education and its implementation is evident from the behaviours of policy actors within the MOE. The type and number of interactions MOE officials have with principals and teachers opens avenues for valuable feedback and ultimately the improvement of the education product. Nevertheless, it is evident that some MOE policy actors were ill-equipped, uninterested and inexperienced in their roles, which resulted in tensions between themselves and other education partners.

### 4.2.1 Overwhelming pressure

During discussions, teachers who participated in the study took the opportunity to outline the ways they felt pressured to meet the various goals as outlined by the MOE. The myriad number of issues raised included those of having to fulfil student and teacher assessment criteria without improving the conditions

under which teachers worked, yet expecting them to be successful in meeting the targets set. Preparing students for the Minimum Standards Test (MST)<sup>10</sup> is one such area of concern. In addition, the absence or presence of only one special education teacher having to serve an entire school population, severely reduced the effectiveness of the inclusive strategies that the MOE tried to implement. One teacher explained her predicament:

*MST [is] coming up very soon. [The] MST ... comes at grade two and it comes at grade four. And then we have common entrance at grade six. So there is no break in which you can say 'you know what let me just focus on this child here', because if you do that you'll be killing yourself as a teacher because your grade average will go down, you will receive a letter from the Ministry of Education, you will be penalised because you're not performing the way you should as a teacher. (TSLU1)*

On the issue of only one special education teacher per school, these opinions were shared:

*Some of the teachers at the secondary school I think they are overwhelmed. They cannot do it alone. And especially one special ed. teacher and there are so many [special education] children in certain schools. (TFGSLU3)*

*I know they are trying to put special needs teachers in all the schools.... I don't necessarily think that's a way to go either because what you're going to have there is one person in their office doing assessments all the time, or you're going to end up with just a special needs class and that defeats the purpose of inclusion. (TANU2)*

Teachers also had to deal with delays in receiving diagnosis reports of suspected LSEN which hampered their ability to effectively plan lessons and interventions that were necessary to successfully engage these students in the learning process. Some

---

<sup>10</sup> The Minimum Standards Test (MST) is administered at Grades two and four at the Primary School level. The MST's main purpose is to test for the minimum competencies all students should possess in the basic education cycle. The results of these exams serve as the basis for the provision of "remediation to those who need or to allow teachers to assess their own teaching, thus improving the quality of education on the island," (Chitolie-Joseph 2014, 95).

teachers identified undiagnosed students as one of the barriers to the effective practice of inclusion:

Researcher: *What are some of the barriers and challenges you face daily?*

TFGSKB1: *I have two students that I don't know if they are diagnosed—they are undiagnosed and the problem there—those two are my problems.*

Researcher: *So it's an issue of diagnosis that you don't know what is the problem, so you don't know how to deal with them?*

TFGSKB1: *Exactly.*

TFGSKB 2: *We don't know what they have, what is wrong.*

TFGSKB1: *[They're] undiagnosed.*

In some cases, getting the MOE to embark on conducting diagnosis of students suggested by teachers was often a lengthy process involving several stages. Without diagnoses teachers felt that they were unable to properly cater to the needs of all of their students. They wanted to help, but because they did not have a diagnosis, they were uncertain as to the best approach. They were also reluctant to comment on what they suspected were the specific challenges LSEN were facing as they did not want to unfairly label children and face a backlash from parents and the MOE. Their lack of qualification to do preliminary unofficial diagnosis was closely linked to another issue that will be explored later in this chapter: the training and professional development of teachers. Two teachers expressed their inability to accurately diagnose the needs of LSEN:

*He's not diagnosed, can't say it [that he has a disability] until he's tested.*  
(TSKB1)

*Some of them have motor skill difficulties, some of them, I can't judge to say well they are autistic or anything like that, but there are signs, but you can't really give a diagnosis.* (TANU3)

After describing a child's behaviour in class, a teacher refused to comment on her suspicions of a special education need:

*I cannot make a diagnosis like that to you since I am not a special ed. [teacher], like miss [points to another teacher] has the experience. For me I just did a little special ed. when I was in teacher's college, got a little bit from my co-workers, my colleagues. But for myself, personal special education training I have not done so, so for me to make a diagnosis...(TFGSLU2)*

Teachers like TFSGLU2, who were not trained, were especially reluctant to confer labels on undiagnosed students, and rightly so. Conversely, despite not being able to make diagnoses and the reported tardiness of the MOE in providing diagnoses for students that have been referred, teachers said they were still being expected to cater to the individual needs of LSEN students. However, the dependency on the MOE for diagnoses is partly rooted in the fact that teachers are not trained to identify specific learning difficulties that students may present in the classroom, or to teach in a way that includes all students. This lack of training not only impacted the ability to tailor lessons suited for children who needed lesson modifications, but also delayed teacher and student progress.

#### 4.2.2 Policy provision for financing inclusive education in schools

The cost associated with the provision of education for LSEN and how the MOE meets the financial needs of these institutions emerged as a re-occurring issue for parents, principals and teachers. The principals of special education schools believed that the provision of special education was too costly, as that was the reason predominantly given to them by the MOE when they requested essential supplies. The data reports that the MOE itself is underfunded, resulting in insufficient staff numbers and the inability to adequately provide the services and resources needed for the effective implementation of inclusive strategies. It is evident from discussions with the MOE policy actors that they have felt constrained in their abilities to provide schools with the necessary resources, due to limited funds provided by the central government. One policy actor indicated that one of the barriers to adequately budgeting for inclusion was the lack of a policy: "You sort of have to have a policy for inclusion before you can have budgeting" (PSSLU1). Other participants shared their opinions as to why special education was underfunded, with policy actors saying:



*Cost plays a lot because special ed. demands a lot and I guess that's one of the reasons why the government is shirking away. (PASKB3)*

*Well it is expensive to cater to their needs especially their individual needs. (PASLU2)*

On the staffing of the MOE, this teacher stated:

*To me they [sic] are not enough people. You look in the ministry, they do not have enough adequate staff to accommodate...because I feel sorry for the few little people that working there. Some of them can't even function. (TFGSLU2)*

A number of teachers also expressed the opinion that special education teachers and schools were not given the same attention as their general education counterparts. Teachers suggested that the MOE would allocate a lesser amount of essential resources such as textbooks and other supplies to the special education schools than they would to the general education ones. The apparent lack of “balance” as stated by TFGSKB4 in funding was a critical issue:

*It's like we're at the back burner of it all. Even say you have special ed. and you have other schools, the other school going get, let's say 45percent in whatever they are doing, but special ed. will get 5 percent, that's how bad it is. (TFGSKB2)*

Sourcing funding for special education emerged as a concern for both teachers and MOE policy actors, but teachers appeared to be more passionate in their discussions, whilst the MOE policy actors seemed to be resigned to their role of constantly looking for ways to meet their targets.

In order to adequately fund special education, education officials should be able to plan, and for plans to be effective there is a need for data. This study uncovered that there was a lack of data in the area of special needs in the OECS, and that countries were unable to offer an estimate on how many LSEN they had within their education systems. The lack of statistical data in general and data on LSEN learners has been explored as a barrier to the full realisation of the need for inclusive special education policies. MOE policy actors noted that they were unable to gauge

the gravity of how many LSEN were effectively being excluded from education systems because they did not have supporting facts and figures. Hence, being without the data to support the need for effective inclusive policies and strategies, MOE policy actors were at a further disadvantage in their goal of implementing successful inclusive practices in schools. The OECS department responsible for regional education, the Education Development Management Unit (EDMU), in recent years has embarked on the task of compiling regional educational statistical digests. Launched in 2012, three digests have been published; the first for the years 2010 to 2011, the second for the years 2012 and 2013, published in 2014 and a third for the years 2013 and 2014 published in March 2017. The statistical digest will provide critical data on all areas of education including special education. MOE policy actors have contributed to the collection of data, with the aim of using it as a basis for sourcing increased funding:

*... We're now gathering data ... when we get the policy and the public education we should be able to bargain some more. (PASKB1)*

Members of DPOs also saw the importance of data in increasing the visibility and advancing the importance of inclusive education policies:

*...I think we need to start collecting data.... There's no data, how can you make decisions if you have no data? What is driving your decision making? You're shooting from the hip like a cowboy. (DPOANU1)*

This research found the lack of data limited how much educators could plan for education, and also recognised the necessity of MOE policy actors to collect data for use as a basis for gaining additional funding.

Teachers, parents and members of DPOs would occasionally question some of the decisions coming out of the MOE. These included the implementation of universal secondary education (USE) without the necessary supportive structures, and encouraging teachers to engage in differentiated teaching without providing corresponding assessment adaptations. Another decision being queried by some teachers was the non-placement of trained special education teachers at the special education schools where they were needed, or placing a Special Education teacher at a general education school where the majority of that teacher's time would be spent

on predominantly administrative tasks, rather than being available to provide the support the LSEN students may require in the classroom. One teacher highlighted the issue:

TFGSKB1: *It have teachers out there trained in special ed. you know, but for some reason the Ministry is not sending them here. I don't know why.*

Researcher: *Are they effective in the main schools?*

TFGSKB1: *I doubt it. Let me not say I doubt it. I don't know. But I know people who are out there who are trained in special ed., who are interested in special ed. and when they go to the ministry to ask to work here [at the special education school] they tell them that we don't have any vacancy. When we are here dying under strain.*

On the subject of USE and the challenges presented by the practice, teachers and other participants explained that they understood the inclusive principles behind the USE policy, but pointed to the issues of implementation that the governments were yet to adequately address:

*I'm not opposed to universal secondary education, I'm not sure what it does for quality [of education]. (DPOANU1)*

The reservations surrounding the quality and effectiveness of education with the introduction of USE is a concern that is echoed throughout the region:

Researcher: *In [country] there is universal secondary education so what happens?*

TFGSKB1: *They move up.*

Researcher: *So are they just moving them for moving them sake?*

Group: *Yes!*

TFGSKB1: *Based on age.*

TFGSKB2: *They just moving them because it's time to move, you can't be in kindergarten 'til you're 12.*

What the data suggests is that with students being automatically assigned a space in secondary schools, teachers are more likely to encounter LSEN for whom they are untrained, unprepared and at times unwilling to teach. Therefore, some participants wanted the MOE to consider more effective ways in mitigating the negative consequences of the automatic placement of all students in secondary schools. It was felt that if schools were to successfully include LSEN, then policies such as USE should be adequately resourced and supported. The quality of education is in danger of failing if the corresponding training and resources were not made available to teachers in conjunction with the implementation of policies and other essential strategies.

### 4.3 Teacher training and professional development

The need for increased teacher training and professional development emerged as one of the major themes emerging throughout the data analysis process. The theme included areas such as a lack of special education knowledge and training, teachers seeking and facilitating development/knowledge, as well as the identification of a trial and error style of teaching. In addition to teacher participants, MOE policy actors expressed concern about the low levels of teacher training and professional development opportunities within the education system. Without the adequate preparation to include LSEN in their classrooms, policies and strategies for successful inclusive practice faced the increased likelihood of failure. As such, teacher training and professional development depends on policy as well as the personal goals of teachers. Teacher training was identified by all participants of this study as an essential component if teachers are to be effective at their jobs. Other issues that arose during the research was the need for principals to also be trained for effective inclusion, and the lack of funds available to facilitate the identified training needs.

#### 4.3.1 The need for training and professional development

All teacher participants had some level of general, special or inclusive education training. However, they all responded in the affirmative that they would like to further develop their teaching skills and practices. Some were already actively seeking further training in the area of special education, and were pursuing studies at

the time of interview. Teachers viewed Special Education training as an important part of their professional development, and felt that training in this area needed to be ongoing. Very few teachers were trained in broad spectrum special education, and many identified gaps in their special education training:

*I really want to go in-depth in reading, teaching children literacy. (TANU3)*

*Only when we did the Associate Degree in teaching we touched on special ed., there was a special ed. course. I'm now doing my degree in general special ed. (TSLU2)*

Some teachers reported only being exposed to special education training through summer workshops and courses rather than during their pre-service teacher training. Hence, many were now taking their professional development into their own hands by dedicating their spare time to gain a better understanding of how best to meet the diverse needs of LSEN in their classrooms. They admitted some of their current practices of addressing the challenges that presented themselves on a daily basis were dealt with through less than ideal methods:

Researcher: *So how are you mitigating some of these challenges?*

TFGANU3: *Research.*

TFGANU4: *Trial and error.*

TFGANU1: *I have to go back and study when I find out about a diagnosis of some child, and say ok well thank you for letting me know, now I have to go and find out everything I can and find out what other people are doing that works and come back. Trial and error.*

The lack of MOE training resources and the importance of ongoing training and research into the complex field of inclusive education and disability has given teachers little choice but to try and fill their knowledge gap, through non-traditional means:

*I think that when you're teaching special needs a lot of people shy away from it ... 'I've never done special needs', 'I don't know what to do', 'I'm stressed I'm worried', and I think teaching in general is trial and error. (TANU2)*

In the absence of training, teachers described how they coped with teaching LSEN:

Researcher: *So how many of you have been trained in an area of special-ed?*

TFGSKB1: *None*

TFGSKB2: *One, [points to TFGSKB5] 'she'*

Researcher: *What area where you trained in?*

TFGSKB1: *General [education]*

Researcher: *So how do you cope then in dealing with your class?*

TFGSKB1: *I'm a natural*

TFGSKB2: *From experience*

TFGSKB3: *From trial and error and you observe certain things, then you know, 'ok, I shouldn't do it this way', after you've tried it*

TFGSKB4: *Working here*

The theme of 'trial and error' reoccurred among the special education teachers on all the islands. They acknowledged that their methods were not always ideal, but based on their circumstances of inadequate training, it was the best option.

Principals and teachers appeared to facilitate their own professional development in the area of Special Education through information sharing and scheduled in-house professional training workshops. MOE policy actors recognise the challenges their special education teachers face along with the inability of the MOE to facilitate training and have encouraged these self-directed professional development sessions. However, one MOE policy actor described the burden these sessions can be for some teachers, who had to pay out of pocket to attend these important meetings. He said:

*It used to be that we had monthly sessions with the SEN teachers where there was little bits of professional development type activity. That has changed under the last education officer.... We're thinking of trying to regularise that again, [but hard] economic times are making it a little bit of a challenge, because its national meeting where the SEN teachers from all over the island would come to one central location, and in most cases there is no financial assistance for transportation. Teachers pay out of pocket to get to the various locations. So we have had to reduce the number of these [national meetings], and we're trying to see what we can do. (PASLU1)*

The MOE policy actor continued by explaining how innovative teachers had been in an effort to reduce the cost of travelling by meeting at the district level, and selecting a district coordinator from the group. Principals in other islands reported doing something similar but specifically with the staff at their special education schools. A principal responded to what efforts had been made to train the untrained teachers by stating:

*It's just our staff development sessions, we'd use our staff development sessions to do little courses in a different special ed. areas. (PASKB3)*

Having teachers fully prepared for the challenges which may present during the course of the school day will affect how they respond in a positive or negative manner. Their response will be a deciding factor between positive and negative experiences for them and their students. One teacher outlined a possible disadvantage to inclusion based on a lack of training:

*Not having teachers trained in these [behavioural] issues, because if the teacher is trained to deal with such issues she ain't just going to be trained in the curriculum aspect but she's going to be trained in the behaviours. This person got to be over here, how to group them, so that she got proper management of the classroom. (TFGSKBT4)*

This research found that while already possessing some training, teachers were interested in further and ongoing training in the area of Special Education, however this goal was not always within reach. In terms of professional development in the area of special and inclusive education practices, the research found that most

teachers were concerned about their own ability to effectively teach LSEN. How confident and qualified teachers were to respond to the various special needs their students presented with affected the quality of education they were able to deliver.

#### 4.3.2 Funding and training teachers in education

Whether the government should bear the full cost or at least assist teachers in gaining the necessary special education training to be effective in inclusive classrooms was a question posed during interviews. This received a mixed response with the majority (six out of eight) of teacher participants believing that the government should pay for their training while the other two were willing to share the cost:

*I'm thinking the government should pay, if not all of it part of it because we're coming back here. (TSLU2)*

The teachers' rationale was that they would return to the classrooms to continue as members of this crucial profession, so the money would be a direct investment into the education system. In the absence of government funding, some teachers reported financing their own studies, while others were still awaiting scholarships. One research participant indicated that while scholarships for special education were given a priority by the country's education scholarship board, teachers who applied for these scholarships were not always successful in gaining the appropriate leave to pursue their studies by the MOE. She said:

*You know they have a list and special education should be one of the priority areas, so you get [approved], and then you go to the ministry and the ministry tells you they have no resources. (DPOANU2)*

The need for scholarships and funding avenues for teacher training and professional development in special and inclusive education could be reduced if teachers during the course of their pre-service teacher training, were exposed to units of special education as part of the core curriculum. However, at the time of this research special education units were optional at the main teacher training institutions in the OECS. In response to this, some participants suggested that courses in special



education should be made compulsory to better facilitate LSEN within classrooms in the sub-region.

The question was posed to policy actors, including one Chief Education Officer (CEO), to explain what the MOE was doing to influence the inclusion of special and inclusive education as a mandatory unit for all pre-service teachers in training. The response highlighted that there was a willingness for this to happen, but the way for it to be possible was riddled with barriers. One of the hindrances identified was convincing the training institutions to make the necessary change for special and inclusive education to become a part of core curriculum:

Researcher: *As the ministry of education, do you have a say in the curriculum at the teacher training college?*

PASKB1: *That was brought up in the same CEO's meeting I went to. We had somebody there from the joint board of teacher education at UWI [University of the West Indies] and she was saying 'you are CEOs, you are the people who make teacher ed. happen, you have a say'. We're supposed to come to the joint board of teacher education meeting and make our input. I didn't go last year but I went the year before and I thought that they said that they were going to review the programme.*

PASKB2: *It needs some serious reviewing.*

Another MOE policy actor described what efforts had been made to have inclusive education included in the teacher training curriculum:

*No, they are not trained in inclusive education. In teacher training, special ed. is an option and I've spoken, and I've been beating the pavement, but coming from the University of the West Indies and out of college [the island's primary tertiary institution], everything can't be core curriculum. (PAANU1)*

Efforts to influence the teacher education institutions to make units in special education compulsory for all students have thus far proved fruitless. When the question was posed to the head of the OECS Education Development and Management Unit (EDMU) as to what the department was doing to influence these

institutions to make the change, he placed the onus on the region's CEOs, its teachers and parents. He noted that an interested party needed to bring pressure to bear on the regional training institutions if they wanted to see special education as core curriculum:

*That's a function of two things: one it's the function of how much influence the government has in determining what goes on at the teachers' college, and also it is a function of those who manage the programme, that is the university in most cases, the University of the West Indies, who has oversight of the teacher training programme to be aware that there is such a need and then to make the adjustment. Now there is sort of a mechanism to allow this to happen in the OECS. There is the Eastern Caribbean Joint Board of Teacher Education which should be represented by government, ministry of education, by the teachers colleges and the university, and if at that table, at that discussion level there is that kind of awareness or a push is made for the inclusion of that [mandatory special education units] then the teacher training programme should be so modified to allow for that inclusion. If it is not there, somebody has not raised it or somebody has not pushed for it, or the university isn't sufficiently sensitised to make changes to the existing teacher training programmes. So, the push has to come from ministry, teachers, parents, somebody has to push for it. (PAOECS)*

Without a policy for inclusive training for teachers, LSEN within the education system will continue to face issues of inequality and inequity in the education they receive. In the meantime, as reported by one MOE policy actor, some MOE on the islands had established partnerships with other non-traditional tertiary education institutions to make available diplomas, associate and full degrees in special education.

#### 4.3.3 Special and inclusive education training

The quality, frequency and training specific to special and inclusive education remain an area of concern for participants of the research. The special education teachers were concerned that their general education counterparts lacked the very basic training to teach LSEN, identifying the ways in which a lack of

training affected the overall ability to teach. A level of self-efficacy is involved in every job and untrained teachers were more likely to doubt their ability to teach LSEN than trained teachers. A lack of understanding and awareness as a result of a lack of training was found in the research:

*I think, one of them [the barriers to education for LSEN] is a huge lack of understanding just from everybody. So, if teachers are not trained or teachers don't understand what's happening they don't necessarily know how to teach them [LSEN] properly.... I do feel that there are some students that are able to be put back into the mainstream but again I think it takes a lot of work and a lot of training for the teachers... a lot of people, especially that lack the training, are so concerned 'can they [LSEN] add, can they read and write?'. (TANU2)*

*There are some teachers who are not even fully aware of what special needs is about, even though it's happening at their own school. (TSLU1)*

Teachers considering LSEN a “burden” and beyond help as a result of not having the training to offer adaptations to LSEN was also noted:

*And the teachers them feel like they can't do nothing for them. They don't know how to deal with them. (TSKB1)*

*Teachers are going to find you a burden because they are not trained to specifically deal with students who may have a special need within their classroom. (TANU4)*

MOE policy actors also recognised the negative attitudes displayed by untrained teachers and the impact their negative attitudes had on their mode of teaching and classroom management skills. Policy actors in one island outlined an experiment to teach boys and girls according to their respective strengths. However, the project was unsuccessful as teachers for several reasons failed to carry it out:

*Unfortunately the teachers did not have much training, so when I went to the school they said 'Ms PASKBI we just teach the way we does [are accustomed to] teach whether we teaching only boys or teaching only girls'....[So] we're*

*going to need teachers, we're going to need people trained as specialists.*  
(PASKB1)

The reasons given to the MOE policy actor, in addition to the lack of time, included the teachers' inability to effectively adapt their teaching practices. As such, in many cases it was not an unwillingness to enact changes that caused teachers' inaction in providing adaptations to LSEN:

*... In the school setting however, there are many teachers who feel that they are not trained to cater to the needs of students with special needs.*  
(PASLU1)

MOE policy actor PASKB1 added that teachers were only formally trained to provide accommodations at the national examinations, one year before this research was conducted. The ability to provide suitable accommodations and modifications in the classroom and during assessments often hinged on the level of knowledge and training teachers possessed. One principal, PASKB3, explained that while ideal, the teachers at her special education school did not develop the individualised education plans (IEPs) for students because for teachers who were not trained, it would be a "tedious" task.

This research also found that parents were concerned with how a lack of training translated into the unfair treatment or neglect of their child. One parent expressed frustration that teachers did not seem to have the time to "teach him properly" (PSKB2), because he was deemed to be keeping back the rest of the class. Another parent compared the current placement of her children in a special education school, as opposed to when they were first diagnosed:

*Well of course here, the teachers are trained to take care of the children with the special needs. So, I would say that they do get a lot of the one-on-one that they need and the patience of course.... When they were diagnosed a lot of the teachers didn't even know what autism was.* (PSLU1)

There were also calls by members of DPOs for teachers to be exposed to some special education training as pre-service teachers, as they recognised that it was needed to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse school population:

*Even with teacher training, not that I'm saying that every teacher should get a four year degree in special education, but you have a robust course so when these teachers are coming out of teacher training they can teach a diverse class. (DPOANU1)*

In one of the countries under study, a policy actor described efforts by the MOE to provide teachers with training over the summer months through collaborative workshops and stakeholder organisations. DPOs have also indicated their willingness, and, in some cases, have taken on the responsibility of seeking partnerships with the MOE to facilitate training in inclusive practices for teachers. They reported that it was a critical part of their mandate to ensure that LSEN were educated equitably:

*We do training for teachers and that basically comes in with the seminars as well... Yes more training definitely has to be done; training for the teachers in the schools. (DPOANU2)*

The member of this DPO accepted that by no means are the workshops and training sessions organised deemed as adequate to meet the growing demand for trained teachers in the classrooms of OECS schools. However, the general consensus of participants of the study was that more opportunities for inclusive training needed to be made available to teachers and principals, and this was one avenue.

#### 4.4 Summary

The theme of policy development in conjunction with teacher training and professional development emerged through discussions that covered issues surrounding the need for the creation and effective implementation of inclusive and special education policies. This chapter highlighted the ways in which the absence of policy texts that could be used to help to structure and guide the provision of special and inclusive education within the schools of the OECS education systems resulted in several challenges in the practice of inclusion. Teacher participants reported having to resort to 'trial and error' teaching practices because of a lack of training, and of having to function within the contexts of policies that neglected to take into consideration the local cultural contexts of the islands and how these factors merged

to contribute to a continued exclusion of LSEN from truly accessing education. Other policy development and governance issues such as feelings of alienation by teachers and an overall lack of funding for special education, all converged to demonstrate the challenges to the provision of quality education of LSEN. Teachers and MOE policy actors sought to reiterate the need for adequate teacher preparation in order to facilitate the practice of special and inclusive education, therefore suggesting that training institutions made units in special education compulsory.

The research also found that because of the absence of policy documents, and the failure to outline the qualifications that teachers should have before stepping into a classroom, the education of LSEN suffered, as many teachers remained untrained in inclusive practices. In addition, it was discovered that the opportunities for training and on-going professional training and development in special and inclusive education were few and far between in the region. The chapter also pointed to the significance of policy texts for the provision of adaptations for LSEN. The challenges arising out of the absence of the provision of adequate accommodations and modifications, as well as resources and support will be discussed in the following chapter. However, as suggested by research participants, the development and implementation of a locally designed policy text had the potential to facilitate the successful inclusion of LSEN into the education systems of the OECS by providing the foundation on which effective inclusive practices can be built.

## Chapter Five

### Accessing Education: The Need for Adequate Adaptations, Resources and Support

This chapter explores how the structure of the national curricula in the three islands remains inaccessible to LSEN as a result of the absence of appropriate accommodations and modifications. It considers the need for adaptations to enhance what LSENs are expected to learn, and how they are expected to demonstrate that knowledge. The role of schools in preparing LSEN with the life skills necessary to become independent adults is explored. Teachers indicated that without emotional and para-professional staff support, they were often unable to effectively include students with disabilities in their mainstream classroom. As such, the failure of governments and MOEs to provide schools with adequate resources, services and support, such as suitable infrastructure and teacher aides, continues to hinder the effective practice of inclusion. The chapter explores ways research participants indicated that LSEN could be effectively and successfully included into the education systems if provided with the necessary resources and support.

#### 5.1 Adaptations

For inclusive practices to be successful it is necessary for LSEN to have access to suitable curricula and assessment adaptations. Research participants used the terms ‘adaptations’ and ‘accommodations’ interchangeably, despite not being completely synonymous. ‘Adaptations’ are the adjustments and changes made to the environment, curriculum, instruction, or assessment practices in order for LSEN to be successful learners (Warner et al. 2008, 22). Thus, accommodations and modifications are types of adaptations. Accommodations are adaptations that allow students to access the national curriculum and demonstrate learning. Through accommodations LSEN are able to work at the same instructional level as their peers, but how they learn and demonstrate what they have learned may be different. Accommodations can include changes in instructional strategies, environment,

equipment and presentation, and response procedures (Maanum 2009). According to Ferguson (2008), accommodations can include assistive technology as well as lighting and other infrastructural supports. Modifications require substantial changes to what LSEN are expected to learn and the knowledge they are expected to demonstrate. Modifications require changes to the amount and type of work expected of students, and included changes at the instructional level, content and performance measures (Maanum 2009). Teachers often spoke of the accommodations LSEN needed, but in actuality LSEN needed adaptations made in order for them to equitably access the education.

### 5.1.1 Accessing the curriculum

This research found that the ability of LSEN to access the curriculum was of particular concern to special education teachers and students. Teachers across the islands reported that the national general education curriculum was beyond the reach of some learners due to a lack of sight, understanding or some other factor, and thereby limited students' opportunity to learn. Coupled with the inadequacy or total absence of accommodations and modifications for LSEN, difficulty accessing the curriculum emerged as a challenge for parents, members of disabled people organisations (DPOs), and the LSEN. Teachers criticized the lack of a specialised curriculum and examinations for the LSEN who needed them. As such, teacher TSLU1 posited that some students needed to be accommodated with an adapted national examination from which LSEN could be assessed. Another teacher added:

*First and foremost, the curriculum doesn't meet their needs at all. They don't have any special curriculum for them so you pick what you think they need at the time. (TSLU2)*

According to these teachers, providing students with the help of a reader or extra time in an exam may positively impact their educational outcomes. They also acknowledged that some students needed to have the mode and content of the curriculum and assessment adapted to meet their needs. One teacher shared the example of a grade four student who was continually failing English and Comprehension assessments. The child was a recent migrant from China, and while she did well in Mathematics, she struggled in English Language. The teacher hired



by the child's parents realised that if she read the questions aloud and explained them, the child could correctly answer the questions. While not a traditional 'special needs child', this student was a LSEN who needed assistance in accessing aspects of the national curriculum successfully. However, in all the islands investigated, participants reported that diagnosed and undiagnosed LSEN found it difficult to access support due to a lack of recognition of the challenges and available resources.

The common practice within the schools of the three islands was to work with LSEN to bring them to a level where they could access the national curriculum and take part in assessment exams and tests. While for some students this was acceptable, teachers noted that for other students this was not always viable, as students were unable to manage or 'cope', and were not prepared to deal with the general education curriculum. Commenting on this issue, one teacher said:

*...he has to be in a school, and academically he does not—he cannot cope academically, he's way below the other students' level. (TFGSLU2)*

Another teacher suggested that pushing students to meet national assessment targets without offering them suitable curricular modifications and/or accommodations resulted in students not only failing, but dropping out of school completely. Teacher TSLU1 observed that once LSEN began to progress through secondary school and as the academic work became more difficult, there was a higher rate of dropouts, and by the fourth form,<sup>11</sup> many had left school. She attributed this to the fact that "they are at that age that they know they can't cope" (TSLU1).

An exception to the lack of a specialised curriculum for the students within the special education schools was found at one school. The principal of the special education school noted that the curriculum used at the school was designed by former teachers at the school. She described it as "flexible" and one that "teachers can use". While this was welcomed, teachers at the school still had to modify the specially designed curriculum according to their students' individual needs, as seen from this discussion:

---

<sup>11</sup> Form four is the equivalent of Grade 10

- TFGSKB1: *They have a curriculum.*
- Researcher: *Is it geared towards individual students or individual disabilities?*
- TFGSKB1: *Disabilities, it was set up to the disability.*
- TFGSKB4: *I would say students.*
- TFGSKB2: *Its specific, it's got the stages.*
- TFGSKB1: *Set up for the different levels [of ability].*
- TFGSKB3: *As a teacher in the classroom, you will have to break it down.*
- TFGSKB4: *You have to know the child, because if you have six children and six different levels...*

The importance of having a curriculum that catered to the needs of the students greatly impacted positively towards their access to education. If students were being taught at a level that they could not grasp, then they were being excluded from accessing equitable education. Some students could access the curriculum and tests with the assistance of various aides and accommodations, whilst others needed to be exposed to an entirely different approach to their education.

The special education teacher participants were vocal in their opinions that the general education teachers were neither equipped nor willing to welcome LSEN in their classrooms. They criticised the lack of progress of LSEN in the general education setting and attributed the lack of achievement in learning as a consequence of teachers 'teaching to the test', focussing on finishing their syllabus in order to obtain high passes when their students are assessed. Teachers were also motivated by receiving positive assessments for themselves and pushing students through the system without having met the requisite benchmarks. This environment of testing and assessment for both teachers and students has been linked to unfavourable outcomes for the inclusion of LSEN students. Several teachers and policy actors highlighted the occurrence of students entering secondary school without being able to read. While these students may have space in the classroom, without the necessary assistance they were not being given an equal and equitable opportunity to learn.

According to Gül and Vuran (2015), an instructional adaptation is an area in which teachers need more information and training. A teacher stated that students who did not demonstrate that they had achieved the grade level proficiency were nevertheless systematically promoted. A policy actor confirmed this occurrence:

*Talking to the Learning Support teachers and what they are saying is a lot of students leave school unable to read, unable to do anything and, not all of them, but some of them are just not doing anything. (PASKB4)*

Without the appropriate in-class assistance and training, general education teachers lacked important classroom management skills that often negatively impacted inclusive education strategies and the education of the LSEN in their care. Special education teachers in the general education settings noted that the capacity to effectively teach was stretched with overcrowded classrooms and other pressures that left them with little time to adapt the syllabus. They added they lacked the time to bring those LSEN up to speed and thus those learners fell through the “cracks” in the system. Policy actors and parents also noted with concern the focus of teachers on completing the syllabus rather than on promoting quality student learning. Comments from a principal and teacher critically highlight this practice:

*[LSEN] cannot be integrated without support because most of the time they would either drown or they will swim, because we know teachers in the primary school they teach to the syllabus (PASLU2).*

*All they teach is curriculum they don't teach for children to learn. (TFGSKB4)*

Policy actors and teachers noted that teachers were overwhelmed by class sizes and the number of LSEN in the class:

*If you have a class with 27 [up to] 37 children and you have three or four of those children [LSEN] in your class, it becomes very hard. The children seem to be left by the wayside. They [are] just going to be left there alone because at the end of the day the teacher does not have that energy. (TFGSLU2)*

Other perspectives included the chalk and blackboard traditional method of teaching, and teaching based on the set curriculum only:

*The teacher goes up and writes the work on the board and one or two they are not getting it, but nobody calls them aside and say let me do so and so with you. (PASKB1)*

The varying perspectives explaining why some teachers were unable to adequately meet the needs of the LSEN in their classroom did not negate the fact that these challenges had the potential to negatively impact strategies of inclusion and the education these vulnerable students received.

### 5.1.2 Assessment without adaptations

Referring specifically to the national assessments and tests, teacher participants claimed that the curricula needed to not only be adapted for LSEN, but be accompanied with appropriate plans, modifications and accommodations for the assessment process. Parents, DPO personnel and NGOs also gave reviews of their experience of LSEN in a general education setting based on the inability of schools to provide the adaptations needed to meet their needs. A parent of an autistic boy described her experience with his placement in a private school as “horrible”. Another parent whose child exhibited slow learning and a speech impairment, expressed her frustration at the teacher’s seeming neglect of her child. Comments included:

*The experience was a bit frustrating because the teachers didn’t have the time to teach him properly. (PSKB1)*

Parent PSKB1 and a member of a DPO shared the belief that the general education schools were not yet equipped to handle LSEN, which resulted in these students being pushed through the school system without acquiring the necessary skills.

*The schools are not equipped to handle these kids. They’re just pushed in there and either sink or swim. And you go from class to class until you age out of the system. (DPOANU1)*

She noted that the education system needed to be restructured in order to cater to the special needs and abilities of these students, rather than pushing them to achieve the same as their ‘normal’ counterparts who pursue anything between 8 and 20 Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC)<sup>12</sup> subjects. DPOANU1 was not alone in her beliefs:

*Because some of these children cannot handle 11 subjects. Five, English and the Mathematics, and it’s still pitched at a level where they can understand. So you need the restructuring in some of these secondary schools.*  
(DPOANU2)

A teacher explained her observation of the issue:

*As much as accommodation is now on the ball, with them [MOE] providing them [LSEN] with a reader, a scribe and all these things for national exam, I still think that the children still face challenges. Because you’re going to say ‘repackage the curriculum to suit this student’, ‘do differentiation teaching’, you’re going to say ‘ok this child cannot manage 10 problems on the board, give him or her five’. And so we practice that child to work according to his or her ability, but yet national exam doesn’t cater for that child’s ability. So it’s like three quarter of the academic year you’re trying to strive [work] with this child to bring him up to a level, but on that last term you’re now trying to force the curriculum down his or her throat because again, we have to fulfil certain things for national exams.* (TSLU1)

The perspective of TSLU1 brings to the fore issues of the failure of policy actors in the MOE to implement corresponding examination accommodation and modification strategies for those students for whom they encourage teachers to engage in adaptive and differentiated teaching. The study found that this failure by education officials to ensure that national assessments catered to the needs of LSEN, and that teachers were adequately equipped, was an additional point of contention for teachers. For teachers it seemed unreasonable for the MOE to require LSEN to sit these tests when

---

<sup>12</sup> The CSEC were formerly known as CXC which stand for Caribbean Examinations Council. Exams administered by the body were commonly referred to as ‘CXC’s’.

they were not adequately prepared for them. The disconnection between policy and practical applications was apparent and teachers were often left having to figure out how to best navigate ways to meet the needs of their students, often with limited resources and support from the MOE.

### 5.1.3 The need for classroom assistance

Several teachers contended that the provision of support staff was a key element to providing quality education to all students. They linked the provision of teaching assistants and teacher aides with the very concept of inclusion in education. Teachers described the practice of having only one teacher in an inclusive class as an “error” and a barrier to the successful practice of inclusion:

*Other barriers would be, they do have some accommodations for them at common entrance, and minimum standards and these things, somebody reads for them or somebody writes for them, so that is just started. But we also need teacher aides here in the classroom and that is not being taken seriously. We have a few teachers who have aides but the school is paying the aides. (TSLU2)*

When teachers were asked to comment on what they believed was necessary for the effective practice of inclusion comments included:

TFGSKB4: *There should be teacher assistants in classrooms in those schools.*

TFGSKB1: *You [need to] have an assistant, and the teacher must be willing to do it, to work along with those who are slower.*

TFGSKB2: *[You need to have] a teaching assistant.*

Accessing assistance in the classroom was not always an easy task. In most cases, as reported by teachers, in order for students to have access to assistants or aides they must be officially evaluated. This caveat served as a barrier to LSEN, their teachers and parents, as obtaining diagnoses and evaluations was not easy. The three islands varied in their ability to provide these evaluations or assessments, with St. Lucia having the most developed system with the MOE’s Special Education Unit

deploying a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) who was in charge of conducting the clinical supervision and assessments of students across the entire island. In Antigua, a team of special education teachers coordinated by the MOE's special education officer, would occasionally conduct assessments in addition to their regular teaching assignments. What about the third island? Obtaining diagnoses, assessments and development plans for LSEN outside of these government options was expensive, and often beyond the financial capacity of many parents. The point of pursuing extensive diagnoses was questioned when it was considered that the education system and schools were ill-equipped to equitably include LSEN whether they have been diagnosed or remain undiagnosed. One teacher summed the problem by relaying a conversation she had with a principal:

*What do you do when you come back and say these three kids have disabilities, these three kids have this, what can you provide? And the principal said we have nothing at our school to provide. They don't have a resource teacher, they don't have extra TAs [teaching assistants] they don't have help. They may be on the right track thinking 'ok we need to figure out what's wrong', but there isn't the training for the staff to deal with it. That's the same problem when people go off island to get assessed. They spend all this money and go to the States [United States of America] and go to wherever to have these big assessments and at the end of the day there is only so many services that we can provide. And if we're already providing everything that we can, you going off island spending \$3000 getting your child assessed, coming back with hundred page note about the things, you know, I think that's one of the big problems. (TANU3)*

Policy actors acknowledged that while the MOE did offer some accommodations and modifications to students, more needed to be done. PASLU1 conceded that "accommodation has now become ... an established issue with the ministry and I have a feeling that's the one that will not go away". For their part, teachers welcomed the initiative but felt that more needed to be added to the list of provisions. Parents were clear in identifying a lack of accommodations and their desire for more to be offered to their children in way of accommodations:

*....they do not have the facilities to assist (PSKB2)*

*I wish I had a sign language teacher to be by him. (PANU2)*

The provision of adaptations was met with barriers as some schools were not equipped to implement the strategies suggested for the teaching of LSEN because of a lack of resources and other challenges:

*Clinical assessments will be done, formal assessments will be done, and they will then come up with the appropriate recommendation. Not always best, because sometimes the best recommendation can't always work. (TSLU1)*

Providing schools with adequate resources and support would help to facilitate the most effective and appropriate use of adaptations to include LSEN. A policy document outlining accommodation and modification strategies and adaptation procedures for teaching LSEN, and providing teachers with the necessary resources could add some clarity and consistency to the provision of education for LSEN. However, as was discussed in chapter four, these policies and guidelines were absent in all jurisdictions.

In discussing the barriers in which LSEN access education, the lack of continuity between primary and secondary school was recounted by research participants. It was found that students offered assistance in primary school often had few avenues to access similar assistance once they began at secondary institutions. These transitional issues included the lack of student files accompanying students, and meant that their new teachers were unaware of their need for special education provision and were unprepared to effectively include them in their classes:

*There is a huge gap, so as much as they are calling it a special programme. There is no way you can link it to that child leaving primary to secondary, to actually see the transition to go with the flow, to say ok, this is where he was at, this is where we're moving. (TSLU1)*

With the introduction of Universal Secondary Education (USE) where all primary school students are offered a place in a secondary school, the number of LSEN accessing secondary school education has increased, and the range of transition issues become more apparent. While teachers saw the benefits of USE, they also highlighted its disadvantages:



*From next year, I'll have students being integrated to secondary schools so it's actually opening doors now for some students who are able at functioning at a higher level of education, so that transition is good for them. And in a way, that's a positive, but it also has some negatives because you're going into a secondary school and teachers are going to find you a burden because they are not trained to specifically deal with students who may have a special need within their classroom. (TANU4)*

Teachers remained apprehensive and sceptical of whether LSEN would be equitably included upon arrival to secondary schools. Only St. Kitts had a system in place at secondary schools aimed at providing a smooth transition for LSEN. The Learning Support classes replaced first form, and were specifically geared towards bringing LSEN to a level where they were able to easily transition from primary to secondary school. However, the Learning Support classes faced negative stigma by the association to LSEN. The Learning Support classes being accessible only in the first year of secondary school neglected the needs of those students who needed fulltime assistance.

#### 5.1.4 Skills education

The literature (Lloyd, 2000; Morris, 2010; Peters, 2000) reports that the promotion of skilled-based and technical subjects within the developing world is considered a pathway to promote individual and national economic development, a finding that this study's participants support. In the Caribbean region, technical vocational education and training (TVET) has traditionally been the education focus for LSEN and those not considered to be academically inclined (Lewis 2007). The discourse continued in this study with teachers and policy actors suggesting that TVET be promoted as an avenue for more LSEN. Several participants suggested that more classes and even schools should be developed solely focused on providing skills training. A teacher stated:

*In my opinion St. Lucia should have like other schools, I know Montserrat has a tech voc [technical vocational]<sup>13</sup> school (TFGSLU2).*

Teachers discussed the possibilities with a sense of hope that these students could engage in fulfilling careers if given the right training. TFGSLU3 reported the positive feedback from LSEN who attended schools with a wider curriculum:

*The emphasis is not [only] on academic academic [subjects]<sup>14</sup>. They do a bit of it, but they also branch off into different skills, cooking, mechanic, electrician and some of these children tell you they are happy to be at that school.*

TVET was identified as an integral aspect of the successful practice of inclusive education:

*Because in inclusion you don't just push academics, you push vocational, you push for whatever that child or student may have full potential. (TANU4)*

*This child needs more of vocational things going on. You realise you know what? This book and pencil is not for this child, common entrance is not for this child. (TSLU1)*

Teachers fully endorsed TVET for those students for whom “book and pencil...common entrance” (TSLU1) was not appropriate. Agreeing with teachers, MOE policy actors also discussed the merits of allowing some LSEN to be put on a “TVET track” and not be bothered “too much with academics” (PASKB1). As one policy actor claimed: “All those who go to [the special education school], once they reach the secondary level they go straight into a vocational program where they have everything hands on, practical skills” (PASKB2). Other policy actors were of a similar view, but recognised that such a move would need clear guidelines to govern it in a way that meets the needs of the students and the concerns of their parents. One policy actor said:

---

<sup>13</sup> “Tech voc” is a commonly used way of referring to technical vocational subjects and schools.

<sup>14</sup> In many Caribbean countries words are often repeated to show emphasis. Thus “academic, academic” would mean not focused solely on academic subjects.

*We still have to work on [the concern of the parents]... one of our priority areas in the ministry now is TVET, and I think we have to really fine tune that and know what we want from it. (PASKB1)*

Recognising the need for practical skills training, principals have used strategies to maximise the practical work experience available to their students by finding afterschool work placements. They saw this as an option for promoting an easy transition into the working world for students who ordinarily would be left out of the workforce:

*Right now we have a programme where we take the older ones to a supermarket to give them some job training at least once a week for an hour, so that maybe later on they may be fully integrated to the workplace. (PASLU2)*

Research participants shared their beliefs that LSEN being regularly exposed to several units of a skilled based activity relevant to their needs would assist them in completing their education successfully and be better prepared for employment.

Parents expressed concern for their children's futures expressing a desire to see skills training become a part of their education. This study found that parents were concerned about the basic life skills and their children's ability to survive on their own as adults, and whether schools were preparing them for independent living. One parent explained:

*It's more about life skills education than say academic education. It's about learning to eventually hopefully have a menial job in your capacity, how to manage your money, how to take care of yourself, how to dress. Obviously it depends on the level of the condition, but I think ultimately that along with the education, reading, writing, math, those basic fundamental foundational things, the life skills, how to be wary of things, safety, paying a bill those sorts of things are more important I think. (PANU1)*

It was evident that some parents were of the belief that curricula content for LSEN should include subjects that prepared them to live independently and not just gain employment. The preparation with practical skills emerged as a concern for teachers and MOE policy actors as well. For LSEN to develop into independent contributing

members of society, enabled by equitable quality education, was evidently a concern of all groups. Empowering LSEN to function independently by expanding the curriculum in practical ways and providing them the appropriate adaptations is one possible positive step towards inclusion.

## 5.2 Resources and Support

Research has reported the link between the quality of student learning to access to resources and services (Drame and Kamphoff 2014; Pivik, McComas, and Laflamme 2002). Discussions with teachers, students, parents and all stakeholders revealed that having resources, services and support was necessary to effectively facilitate inclusive and special education. This study found that all participant groups were of the opinion that LSEN did not have access to adequate resources and support, such as basic infrastructure, books, technology and funding. Support services such as counselling, therapy, programs and support staff, including para-professionals, were also lacking. Most parents reported that their child was not accessing government support services because they were not available, and some had to seek these services abroad elsewhere. Levels of access to resources, services and supports impact upon the practice of equity, equality and quality in education, and how effectively LSEN access education.

### 5.2.1 Infrastructural resources and support

Infrastructure including furniture, signs and buildings fitted with access ramps and rails, classrooms of adequate size with proper partitions, and doors wide enough to allow wheel chair mobility, could all impact how a LSEN accesses education. According to teachers, infrastructural resources primarily affected those students with physical disabilities:

*Even just as simple as putting in a couple of ramps around the schools so kids with physical disabilities with a wheelchair, maybe have crutches, I need to walk up, they can't walk up those stairs, they can't get to those classrooms. (TFGANU1)*

The UN *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (United Nations 2006) outlines suggestions on how governments should ensure that public buildings,

including schools should be structurally designed to allow access to persons with disabilities. Based on the comments made by teachers and principals, many schools lacked adequate ramps and other access points for physically disabled students. Visually impaired students also faced challenges navigating around their school's environments. The absence of adequate infrastructure limited students' access to education by literally limiting their physical access.

Other infrastructural issues included the size of classrooms. Teachers reported classrooms being too small to accommodate the high number of students that occupied them, resulting in cramped conditions unsuited for optimal learning. They were critical about the thin partitions separating classrooms that allowed the sounds from other classes to filter in:

*Some classrooms are parted with blackboard, so you hearing that teacher, that teacher next to me there I have to listen to. (TSLU1)*

Inadequate partitions between classrooms created distractions for both the teachers and students.

Teachers reported feeling limited in their classroom management options. A teacher explained what happened when she tried to pull out a child to work with them individually at the back of the class: "But we can't do that because our classrooms are so congested, and they are so small when you do that that creates distraction" (TFGSLU3). Small classrooms were found not to be conducive to the presence of teacher's aides and support staff who are often necessary for the inclusion of LSEN (Mitchell 2015). Students' attention was easily distracted and teachers reported that the competing voices of the aide, students and teacher did not add to an ideal learning environment. Another concern surrounded the unintentional student distraction that arose having both an aide and teacher in a small classroom:

TFGSLU1: *Let me tell you what is so confusing now, is that when the person [the aide] is there, the other children in the class paying more attention to what is happening there.*

TFGSLU3: *The [aide is a] distraction.*

TFGSLU1: *Yes, and now the little boy is becoming resentful because he is feeling different.*

TFGSLU3: *He's being stigmatised.*

Goffman (1963) and Link and Phelan (2001) noted the ways in which differences helped to create negative stigma, and while teacher participants felt that in some cases aides were necessary, they identified the inadequacy of the current classroom environment to make the initiative a successful one.

Teachers noted the need for other infrastructural facilities for the successful inclusion of LSEN into the education systems:

*Structurally you should see a ramp so you know they have accommodations for chair bound students; they should have railings on the side on the stairs and in the classrooms. (TSLU2)*

*...many of the schools they are not geared with ramps and so on for students who might be in wheelchairs and those kind of things. (TANU3)*

Sporting facilities that could provide an avenue for sports therapy were missing from schools and communities, but was high on the wish list of this principal:

Researcher: *What are some of the things you'd like to see happen at the school?*

PASLU2: *Because we don't have gym for our children although one of our theme is developing ability for sports, but make do with what we have, they play the football, they play the cricket, they do the athletics and whatever, but to say we have a gym where they could practise or we have one of those sporting facilities like netballing and volley balling, we don't have that.*

Principals especially expressed their desire to see their schools outfitted with the types of facilities that would help to prepare their students to be well-adjusted adults. One principal described the facilities she envisioned for her school:

*We need to have workshops, like a woodwork shop, carpentry shop, electrical department shop. A shop with some arts and craft stuff, for*

*example, pottery, and those stuff. We need a big area where we can do farming, farm land. So we— workshops, where the girls can do their hairdressing and those stuff. (PASKB3)*

The infrastructure that enabled the adequate provision of the TVET subjects being suggested as necessary to provide LSEN equitable access to education, was reported as absent by principals and teachers.

MOE policy actors were among those who called for the introduction of more skilled-based classes. They supported the initiative on the basis that the infrastructure was provided so that these classes could occur. However, both principals and MOE policy actors reported a lack of funds as the reason behind their inability to provide these necessary facilities. For students to truly access education, they need to access resources such as books, charts, pencils, appropriate furniture, and other educational tools and supplies, yet these were recorded as also being amongst the items in short supply:

*I think at least in our classroom just different supplies you can have. You have kids that have a lot of issues with their motor skills and so having the big fat pencils and the smaller pencils and the pencil grips and things like that. (TANU2)*

Adequate furniture was the concern of this teacher:

*For one, you don't have the furniture. That is a big concern. You have to source your own material and sometimes you don't have that access, even as simple as the internet within your class setting to be able to use the information on the internet. You don't have that access. So it's kind of [a] strain on you to create your own material. (TANU3)*

Teachers reported that they had to be innovative in finding ways to acquire the tools they needed or having to “make the best” with what they had.

### 5.2.2 Negatively affecting LSEN outcomes

Student participants spoke of the challenges they faced at school in the absence of adequate services and support. One visually impaired student recalled

having teachers forget to print her papers in large font that would enable her to read her assignments. She noted that the personnel at a supporting DPO had to “remind them that we need this done for our vision” (SSLU1). The student also spoke of one teacher’s reluctance to offer her the accommodations needed to complete a home economics practical.

*The teacher was a little bit hesitant because of all the added work she had to do, probably extra time, some things they would not allow for some students they had to be a little lenient because of my eyes and everything. (SSLU1)*

Being provided with adequate resources and support at all levels would allow LSEN to equitably participate in their education. However, while each country showed some level of provision, teachers across the islands called for vast improvements.

LSEN were generally positive in their response to the educational opportunities given at school, with many embracing these opportunities as a means of ensuring future employment. School was also a place for socialisation and friendship, an aspect of school students enjoyed. Nevertheless, students by their own admission expressed experiencing academic difficulty in some areas of school, specifically subjects they deemed to be “too hard”.

*English, the words are too hard. I like mathematics because when I grow up I want to work in a supermarket. As a cashier, you have to know how to check the money good. (SSLU2)*

Another student identified another subject as a problem:

*Only thing that slow me down is the reading. Slow down everything. (SANU1)*

Participating at school contributed to the development of many LSENs. Teachers having access to the appropriate resources to support student learning played a critical role in whether or not a student was being offered and embracing all the opportunities made available in their classroom. Student participants reported receiving assistance from their teachers most of the time they asked for it. This finding is important as researchers have noted that the more equipped teachers are to



cater to the needs of LSEN, the more likely LSEN are to be successful in school (Pivik, McComas, and Laflamme 2002; Hodkinson 2010).

Students were asked to share their views on how ‘inclusive’ they felt in their current special education classroom. The LSENs based their opinions of the ‘inclusiveness’ of their school by the support they had received from teachers, and their observation of how other students with varying abilities and disabilities within the school were included. Some of these students were transferred from mainstream schools to their special education school, and from their descriptions of their experiences, many preferred the special placement:

*Some of them call me slow because when I was in [names former school] I was a little bit slow; that’s why they had to move me here. (SFGSLU5)*

Based on student responses, general education schools were not fully equipped to cater to their needs hence the need to be moved to a special education setting. A student who is legally blind who had always been mainstreamed shared her perspective on what an inclusive school should look like:

*I think it [inclusion] should mean that the school should be able to adapt with any student that comes with any disability. Meaning like if the person cannot walk, they should have ramps. Or if they cannot see, they should have a guide or something or braille or something to help them. Or if they cannot hear, somebody to do sign language with them so they can cope with anybody that enters the school and not just normal children. (SSLU1)*

She described her school as not being inclusive as they were often ill-equipped and unprepared to cater to her needs and the needs of other LSEN. If the realisation of inclusion is for all students to be mainstreamed regardless of their disability, then the issues identified by these research participants would have to be critically assessed and addressed.

### 5.2.3 Technology

The use of technology in the classroom has gained momentum in the last few years, and inclusive classrooms catering for all students, especially the LSEN could benefit from this trend (Loreman 2007). All teacher and student participants voiced their opinion for the increase in technology in classrooms, as “that was [is] the way

things are going”. Teachers and members of DPOs described technology as one of the “biggest needs” in education and the success of inclusive education, with teachers indicating the pedagogical opportunities technology opened up when provided in the classroom:

*We’d love to have a lot more resources when it comes to technology ... because technology opens a whole new world for learning and with our students and their impairments and their restrictions, technology could help teach them in a different way. (TSLU2)*

The same teacher shared the story of the change she saw in a student when he was allowed to use the computer:

*Just turning on the computer gets their interest, I normally have a desktop here ... the minute I put that [the computer] there, [names autistic student] is a different person and I can get him to do anything by just having that there. (TSLU2)*

Teachers also reported on their own lack of access to technology:

*...the way how technology is moving, we don’t have enough technology, we don’t have enough resources because we’re still limited to maybe a chalk and a blackboard, and it’s sad. (TANU4)*

Students expressed their love for the use of technology in the classroom and the ways in which it was making learning more interactive for them:

*I like the IT lab... I like playing games, playing educational games. Mathematics [games] (SSLU4)*

Commenting on the use of technology in the classroom, students agreed with teachers that it should be increased. Their vision of an inclusive classroom that met their needs was filled with technology, computers, and tablets:

*I would have like a computer room and agriculture room. (SFGANU3)*

*No books, we’d work on tablets not books. (SANU2)*

*They [DPO] partner with Kids in Sight from Alabama [and] they provide me with equipment like things for me to see books properly like magnifiers, a pebble - it's kind of like a new device, it's kind of big, it has different lightings. (SSLU1)*

Technology can be used to help teachers to better implement differentiated learning techniques and can offer many advantages for better classroom management. Students who are exposed to technology in class are also better able to function in the workplace, which has become increasingly automated. As TVET is becoming increasingly advanced in the use of technology, if LSEs are to be included into those areas, they need to be exposed and be familiar with the technology and equipment.

Members of DPOs reported seeing the benefits of equipping LSEN with technological skills, supporting their access and training for the required equipment and skills. Whether providing screen reading software for visually impaired students, or training in Microsoft Office, DPOs provided the necessary resources in support of education to areas beyond the capacity of some schools. A DPO member commented:

*Those who are blind would be helped to acquire braille skills and also the use of computers. So that the info technology, so that they can access—we provide them with screen reading software so they can access the computers and so on. (DPOSLU1)*

The need for information technology training for LSEN has been noted and DPOs in some islands were providing training in areas such as “Microsoft Office” and graphics design. As the world becomes more technologically advanced, all students, need to be taught the essential skills with which to function in this increasingly technological world, otherwise they may be further excluded and marginalised from important opportunities.

#### 5.2.4 Prioritising education funding

The costs associated with education in general, and Special Education in particular, has been rising and continues to rise (Banks, Frawley and McCoy 2015). According

to research participants, such costs have been used by governments as an explanation for the deficits that are seen in the provision of resources and services throughout the system. A participant said: “Especially when you seek resources, they complain about the fact the cost of things” (TANU3). Research participants agreed that education could be a costly endeavour, however, suggested that it was the lack of priority placed on Special Education provisions that resulted in a lack of essential resources, not the cost of them. Participants called for more money to be channelled towards the provision of special and inclusive education.

*For me it would be more money put into resources, into training and into providing the services that are necessary for these students to progress.*  
(TSKB2)

A principal acknowledged that catering to the individual needs of LSEN was costly:

*It is expensive to cater to their needs, especially their individual needs because you find that in a class where you have maybe five children but each of them, they are at a different level intellectually, their capabilities. So you need to have things in your classroom [to] sustain them, to occupy them. But it's expensive, whereas in a normal school the children are homogeneous. So when the teacher teaches the classes they don't really have to go out and say well I'm doing this with Jack but Jill needs this and I have to try and keep up with Jill's needs. So you have to be going all out preparing your charts, your manipulatives, your this and that and all this costs money, its expensive.*  
(PASLU2)

Due to a lack of financing, schools have had to cut back on, or do without certain services:

*We lost our speech therapist. That was due to money. We've love to have our music therapist in a couple more days to deal with kids, and that has to do with funds.* (TANU2)

It was evident that financing the much needed resource material and personnel to support the provision of quality education was a constant endeavour for MOE policy

actors, teachers and parents. Teachers on all islands reported using a portion of their salaries<sup>15</sup> to supply their classes with materials:

*We are doing a good job in terms of meeting their needs academically, socially, sometimes even physically because at times we have to do 'babysitting'; we have to sometimes provide meals because students will come without breakfast or come hungry. Sometimes we even have to provide clothing, and so I see us as a family unit that some of the students don't have even at home. (TSKB2)*

*It's very, very costly, [and] our paycheques goes back into our classrooms basically. (TANU4)*

*My salary just be for my children on the programme, because the amount of breakfast they didn't eat before they come, I say 'alright go to the canteen'. The amount of people who forgetting lunch. (TSLU1)*

Concurrent to the monetary expenses of providing access to education, there was also the expense in terms of time and other personal resources that teachers invested to ensure that their students received a quality education.

Teachers who did not use their own funds sought donations or engaged in fundraising activities. Seeking donations and securing the support external to the education system was reported as being commonplace amongst all schools visited. This research found that "begging" and relying on volunteers was a means by which schools acquired necessary resources in order to provide quality education to their students:

*We have a lot of volunteers like the Peace Core, [who] would come and have people who specialise in these areas and they work with some of the children. (TSLU2)*

---

<sup>15</sup> According to the 2016 Budget Estimates for St. Kitts, a trained teacher made between \$39,720 and \$52,020 Eastern Caribbean dollars annually, the equivalent of approximately US \$1,226 to US\$ 1,606 per month.

*We've been pretty good with supplies recently a lot of tourist have helped us out with books and crayons. (TANU2)*

Teachers identified this input from “foreigners” and “people from the community” as a major source of educational supplies and other resources:

Researcher: *Okay, resources. Do you have enough resources in terms of whatever it is you might need, blackboards? —*

TFGSKB: *No!*

TFGSKB1: *We use what we have [two teachers respond this way at the same time].*

TFGSKB2: *And we get most of our resources from outside.*

TFGSKB3: *Yes [in response to outside help for resources].*

TFGSKB2: *Like foreigners, people overseas. Different people in the community.*

TFGSKB1: *Beg we have to beg!*

TFGSKB2: *And donations.*

TFGSKB1: *Donations [agreeing].*

Respondents shared their experiences in trying to gain support for special education activities from members of the community. They described it as a difficult process and not an adequate means of obtaining a consistent source of funding. MOE policy actors stated that it was easier to gain local corporate sponsorship for LSEN when they were participating in sporting competitions like the Special Olympics, than for when the same group of LSEN needed sponsorship for local school activities:

PASKB1: *We also have Special Olympics which is sports training and sports competition for persons with disabilities and we have gone to world games all over the world, as far away as Austria, the last one was in Greece and people would contribute. People would contribute to that.*

PASKB2: *And they wouldn't support local games, I don't understand.*

PASKB1: *It's supposed to be year round, and when we ask for a donation, they ask where you all going this year? And if you say nowhere—*

PASKB2: *They would not support local games but then when you're going outside 'our game'...*

The difficulty that teachers and policy actors faced in establishing sustained partnerships with the business community as seen from the above discussion sometimes resulted in LSEN not receiving the resources they needed. This is not a unique situation as Mitchell (2015) noted establishing partnerships in support of inclusive practices was not always an easy or smooth process.

Parents were not spared the expense associated with educating their child with special needs. Outside of the normally expected expenses of educating a child, parents of special needs children had additional costs associated with having to seek assessments and diagnosis outside of their home country. Some parents faced the difficult decision as to whether or not to send their child overseas when the education facilities on the island could not adequately meet their child's needs. Some parents indicated having contemplated moving their entire families, while another was preparing to do so in a few years. One father tried to explain the difficulties parents faced when deciding what was best for their child:

*...do we take her, leave [country], go to Canada, have some sort of emersion exercise, or [go] to the States and to see? Hopefully she would then be able to get [to] maximise her thing [abilities]. You don't know. These are things that you have to weigh as parents. (PANU1)*

Teachers themselves have had to recommend this move to parents, as it was in the best interest of the child:

*We have in the past ... have to recommend to some parents, some schools overseas that we think are better capable of dealing with the needs of the particular child. (TSKB2)*

LSEN often required scholarships to access overseas institutions as not all parents could afford the financial expense. The cost associated with educating hearing impaired students in the mainstream class was mentioned by two participants from two different islands. Whilst parents of hearing impaired children may have liked to have seen a teacher's aide alongside their child, the cost was prohibitive. Explaining the challenges, this policy actor said:

*But for the deaf it has been difficult because we do not have many deaf students that would be in the classroom, and then to pay a teacher just to interpret for one or two deaf children, I don't think the money is there for that. (PASLU2)*

Moreover, members of DPOs also faced the financial pressures in their quest to assist in the successful inclusion of LSEN in schools. A DPO member indicated his organisation's sources of income as a mixture of government funding and assistance from parent and international organisations:

*We receive support from the Caribbean Council for the Blind and their international partners, Sight Savers and other agencies. The government..., they provide the teachers for the education programme, and of course the people of goodwill. We depend a lot on donations and whatever we are able to generate through our efforts... (DPOSLU1)*

Other DPO members also shared how the goodwill of others enabled them to continue to provide the services they offered to LSEN. Sponsorship from private organisations with which they partnered, featured repeatedly in their conversations. Service organisations like the Rotary Club were also singled out by DPO members as important partners in education in the region. Education funding continues to be a globally discussed issue in relation to providing each child with quality education. How governments, MOEs, and schools prioritise their spending affects what resources are available to students, which in turn impacts the access each child has to a high quality and equitable education. The connection between policy, financing and resources and the impact on the inclusion of LSEN is well documented in the literature.



### 5.2.5 Physical and emotional support and services

The morale of the teachers was greatly affected by the perceived lack of emotional support by their MOE. During the research discussions, it emerged that along-side resources and services, teachers, parents and students yearned for emotional support. The feeling of being supported, of not being alone, and having someone with whom they could share their concerns, acted as a motivator for teachers. Conversely, a lack of this support resulted in feelings of demoralisation. This study found that for the majority of participating teachers, while having some moral support from principals, highlighted the lack of support from the MOE, parents and other teachers:

*As a school we need a lot more help and a lot of guidance, and we don't get it. (TFGSKB4)*

*My biggest thing is support. Both from ministry wise and parents ...[support] from the principal, yes. From the ministry no. Parents, little. (TFGSKB2)*

The above excerpts show the importance teachers placed on feeling that they had the support and guidance from the MOE. Teachers across all islands reacted with negative responses to whether or not they felt they had the “support, resources, training and time” to effectively implement inclusion in their classrooms:

TFGSLU3: *None of the above.*

TFGSLU1: *I only have the support.*

TFGSLU2: *Yes, you have support, the resources you do not have. The training—*

TFGSLU3: *The training has to be ongoing.*

TFGSLU2: *You see in the classroom resources are something that we lack a lot...*

Feelings of neglect and abandoned by the MOE pervaded the discussions with teachers and principals. The Special Education teachers in both the mainstream and special education settings reported with concern the lack of familiarity MOE policy actors seemed to have in relation to the special education experience of

students and teachers. There were calls for these officials to visit the institutions which they govern and acquire firsthand knowledge of classrooms and schools with LSEN:

*They don't know what we are going through in the schools, what we are experiencing. They don't even come in to say let them hear what [we have to say], they don't listen. So although we tell them, even if they ask us to write it, we write it, but maybe when they get to their office they just forget.* (TFGSLU3)

[Education officials need to] *see what it's like. Come in and see what these kids are going through. See where they are coming from and see for yourself.* (TFGSKB1)

Agreeing with teachers, a MOE policy actor instead chose to shift the focus and blame to the central government rather than solely on the MOE:

*To me government needs to become more aware of what is entailed in special education so that they can offer more to the children. That's the greatest barrier.* (PASKB3)

The feeling of abandonment by the MOE negatively affected the morale of the teachers and ultimately how they conducted themselves on the job and their interactions with students. Elaborating on the need for policy actors within MOE to show more support, these teachers shared their experiences of engaging in public awareness campaigns in an effort to engage the community, to which MOE officials were invited but did not attend:

TFGSKB3: *When we do them [public awareness campaigns] we does [sic] have people from the ministry really pushing it?*

Group: *No.*

TFGSKB2: *They don't really care. We just do them because we want to do them and we try to educate the public. That's why we do them.*

TFGSKB3: *The ministry don't even show up.*

Failure by MOE policy actors to attend school functions as a show of support for the Special Education school was interpreted by teachers as a lack of interest and priority. Teachers did not expect MOE officials to attend every function each school had, but felt that teachers and special education schools needed more physical and emotional support from MOE policy actors and the government. Mitchell (2015) reported that strong and interactive leadership by those tasked with ensuring the successful implementation of education strategies was critical to the success of inclusion. Teachers' comments on the absence of MOE policy actors could be seen as a criticism of the effectiveness of their leadership style. Bunch (2008) described a 'leader' in education as one who recognised that its success was dependent on teamwork and a common goal. The general lack of support from parents was also highly reported by teachers who indicated that this was as a result of parents denying their child's "special" status.

Support for services also had mixed reactions from participants. No teacher, principal or parents were completely satisfied with the services being accessed by LSEN. Participants were asked whether they believed that the resources made available to their school were adequate to support the successful practice of inclusion. To this, a principal and teachers replied:

*Not really because although we use what we have... But then we even need more to make our programs even better to cater to all their needs. (PASLU2)*

*I make what [resources] I have work, but much more is needed (TSKB1).*

*I won't say [our resources are] adequate because we always have need to reach out and so we will find that there are certain disabilities that require extensive remediation, therapy or whatever the case may be, that we actually do not have, and so it limits us somewhat in terms of providing all the services required for that particular child. So not adequate, but we do have some, you know what they say 'use what you have'. And so that's what we've been doing making the best of what we have. (TSKB2)*

In addition to a lack of physical resources, teachers indicated that the absence of support personnel in the classroom had the potential to negatively impact on student learning and how they were being included in the education systems. Support staff

such as counsellors, psychologists and therapists, all essential to promote equity and equality in schools, were often absent from the special education schools:

*Providing the necessary resources to meet the student's need, for example children who are having difficulties, I don't think we have an educational psychologist at the ministry. (TANU3)*

*TFGSKB5: My greatest challenge is that we do not have a guidance counsellor. So when the children start to react or something is going on at home, they act it out in class and they can't talk to nobody, or sometimes they come to the teachers and we're not counsellors so we don't know how to deal with it...*

*TFGSKB2: Don't know how to deal with it.*

*TFGSKB5: ...the situation in the appropriate way. So to me that is the biggest challenge. We can't reach them in that area. We need a counsellor.*

Teacher's aides and classroom assistants also featured as one of the support services and resource required for inclusive classrooms. This was articulated by at least one person in each participating group. The demands on a teacher with a large number of students some with LSEN, was found to be a continued source of frustration for teachers and parents. Compounding the issue was the perception held by teachers that the need for assistants was not "being taken seriously" (TSLU2) by the MOE. They directly connected this lack of assistance in the classroom as a barrier to the successful practice of inclusive education in schools:

*It's very stressful on a regular class teacher with a large class. (TFGSLU2)*

*They don't have any resource teacher. They don't have extra TAs [teaching assistants]. They don't have help. (TANU2).*

Many of the support programs and services available to LSEN are provided by DPOs and other community organisations. Teachers and students noted the ways in which DPOs and members of the community provide services not available at school.

According to the participants, willing members of the community played a part in the education of LSENs as schools did not always have the facilities or trained teachers to provide the required skills training. This type of collaboration between schools and the community was identified as facilitators of inclusive education.

### 5.3 Summary

The findings of this chapter support the need for the provision of appropriate curricula adaptations, resources, services and support for teachers and LSEN if the successful and effective practice of inclusion in the schools of the OECS is to occur. Teacher participants reported that LSEN needed to be provided with adapted curricula and the corresponding assessment mechanisms. The need for these processes to be standardised across the education system was another point raised by teachers, and an inclusive policy may ensure this. Research participants indicated that there was a lack of infrastructural resources such as ramps and sufficiently sized classrooms, which impeded LSEN's access to education. The absence of teacher's aides, counsellors, other para-professionals and the lack of support from the MOE negatively affected teacher morale and their ability to successfully engage LSEN for equitable learning. Another area of concern were the beliefs held by general teachers and students that many of the general education schools were not inclusive, as LSEN continued to face discrimination and exclusion. The need for an increased use of technology and the accompanying assistive devices in the classroom was also indicated as essential for inclusion. The study also found that a dependency on external yet unreliable donations as a major source of funding, contributed to a sense of unease among a number of participants.

LSEN in schools in the Eastern Caribbean are not unlike special education students across the world. They face barriers in accessing education that continue to plague education systems not only in countries of the South, but more industrially developed ones as well. The provision of curricula modifications and accommodations has been proven to increase the quality of education this group of students receive. Policies and guidelines that ensure the smooth transition from primary to secondary school, as well as an increase in the availability of subjects that prepare students for independent adulthood, all contribute to a LSEN having equity

in accessing education. Resource and support is inextricably linked to the provision of equitable and quality education. As such, improvements in infrastructural supports as well as emotional and physical support are greatly needed. Therefore, MOE policy actors and governments need to reassess their provision of education for this group ensure equitable access. Negative attitudes by MOE policy actors and others towards LSEN and the disabled could be a contributing factor in the inadequate provision of the resources in support of successful inclusive practices. Consequently, the following chapter explores the ways in which negative attitudes and a lack of awareness act as barriers to the inclusion of LSEN in schools, as well as how increased knowledge and awareness could positively transform negative beliefs and behaviours towards those associated with special education.

## Chapter Six

### Accessing Education: Changing Negative Attitudes Through Education and Awareness

Attitudes develop from the beliefs and perceptions a person holds (Roberts and Smith 1999). As such, people's beliefs and how they perceive the world are formed based on the knowledge they acquire. This chapter builds on the links made in chapters four and five between policies and resources and how they act as barriers to or facilitators of the successful inclusion of LSEN into the education systems of the islands of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). The negative teacher attitudes that developed in part due to challenges that arose in the absence of inclusive policies, training and a lack of resources in addition to a lack of knowledge, are included in this chapter. The exclusion LSEN face as a result of negative attitudes and perceptions cannot only be ascribed to teachers however, as it was reported that a lack of knowledge and understanding of special education, which influenced these perceptions, existed within the wider society. These negative attitudes, perceptions and behaviours act as barriers to the successful practice of inclusion, with students and teachers reporting incidents of bullying and name-calling and other discriminatory behaviours.

The first part of this chapter examines the effects of positive and negative attitudes and perceptions primarily from the viewpoint of teachers, students and parents. The second part of the chapter explores the role of education and advocacy, along with targeted intervention strategies in transforming negative attitudes and behaviours that act as barriers for the successful inclusion of LSEN in the education system. According to the participants, educating teachers, students, parents and others about disabilities and the inclusive process may positively influence the negative attitudes people had towards LSEN. Increased awareness brought about by activities such as lobbying and promoting positive interactions between the non-disabled and LSEN, through the use of the mass and other media, have all been

posited as ways in which the successful practice of inclusion in schools and society can be enabled.

## 6.1 Attitudes and Perceptions

Within schools and the wider society, negative attitudes and perceptions about special education needs provision and LSEN result in negative stigma, discriminatory behaviours and labels (Grue 2016; Shifrer 2013) that adversely affect inclusive practices in the education system. This study confirms these and other findings, such as the fact that negative stigma attached to special needs does not only affect LSEN, but also their parents and teachers (cf. Goffman 1963; Gray 1993). Additionally, it was noted by participants that some of those who held negative attitudes and perceptions towards LSEN and the practice of inclusion included teachers and principals. Conversely, the findings of this study argue that acceptance, tolerance and patience towards LSEN can act as a successful facilitator on inclusion.

### 6.1.1 Effects of negative attitudes and perceptions on student wellbeing

Students reported they were teased, bullied and faced negative stigma based on their disability and special education placement. Students reported having their capabilities questioned by teachers, parents and members of the community as well as being marginalised and treated as ‘incompetent’ because of their disabilities. They stated that they had to continually dispel these widely held preconceived notions in an effort to be treated fairly and equally in school and the community. A hearing-impaired student expressed her anger at how she had been treated at school:

[Communicates through teacher] *Sometimes I get angry. Sometimes I get serious with people. People think because I'm deaf I'm stupid and I'm actually smart.* (SFTSKB6)

A visually impaired student who wore glasses to help improve her vision, recalled some of the ridicule she experienced from peers for wearing glasses:

Researcher: *Do you think that people, because they see you with glasses, assume that you can see properly?*



SSLU1: *Yes! It's like, 'you wearing glasses and you still cannot see that'? Some of them they do it as a joke because most of them know really [she is unable to see], after a while they come and ask 'how your eyes get like that'?*

Students recalled being left out of activities they wanted to participate in based on the negative perceptions of others that they would be unable to participate due to their disability. The student who was legally blind<sup>16</sup> cited above says she was denied the opportunity to participate in athletics at one school. She did however, go on to actively participate in athletics after enrolling in an afterschool club, and meeting a coach with a different attitude towards her abilities:

*In primary school, they didn't want me to take part in the track and field because I couldn't see properly (SSLU1)*

The preconceived notions of the disabled by persons in society often manifests in their conversation and interaction with others and impacts these students on several levels, including how they viewed themselves. Students' perception of themselves and of their abilities changed, and in some cases led to low self-esteem. One student said:

*I wish I was smart, I wish I was like the other people. (SFGSKB2)*

These feelings of inadequacy, self-loathing and comparing themselves to others are not the only emotions or experiences caused by negative behaviours towards LSEN:

SFGSLU3: *Some of them does treat me bad, cuff me*

Researcher: *Do they have a reason for hitting you?*

SFGSLU3: *They doing it because I ugly.*

Researcher: *You're not ugly, who would say that you're ugly?*

---

<sup>16</sup> "Legal blindness is a level of vision loss that has been legally defined to determine eligibility for benefits. The clinical diagnosis refers to a central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the best possible correction, and/or a visual field of 20 degrees or less. Often, people who are diagnosed with legal blindness still have some useable vision," (American Foundation for the Blind 2017).

SFGSLU3: *Some of my friends*

Student SFGSLU3 seemed to accept that she was ugly, based on what she was being told by others. Research has reported the consequences of the unchecked effects of negative labels and stigma such as name calling and bullying which may result in physical and emotional harm to LSEN (Houchins, Peia, Oakes and Johnson, 2016; Rose and Monda-Amaya, 2012). When asked how students felt about being labelled as ‘slow’ or ‘disabled’, the main response was:

*A little sad ... I tell them don't call me that. (SFGSLU2)*

*I does [sic] feel angry... Sometimes I feel like I want to fight but I let it pass. (SFGSKB3)*

*I does [sic] feel mad. (SFGSKB2)*

*I feel angry. (SFGSKB5)*

Importantly, LSEN who attended special education schools reported being labelled based solely on the special education school they attended:

SFGSKB5: *Because you in special ed. school, they say that you dumb and you around the deaf people or you in class with slow people, they say you'll come dumb like them.*

SFGSKB2: *Same thing for me too.*

SFGSKB3: *The thing is sometimes when— one minute when they call you names, ... they trying to say like how stupid you be because you go this school, 'cause all they say you going special ed. school, because special ed. is for dumb people and them kind[s] of thing[s]. But I don't really tek [take] them on. I just walk off and do what I have to do.*

SFGSKB2: *They does call you “specie”.*

SFGSKB5: *They call you “special ed.”*

Another child in a different island noted similar associations:

Researcher: *What are some of the things you've been teased about?*

SFGSLU2: *They call me "lady gorgor"*[The school's name sounds similar to 'gorgor']

It is evident that the negative stigma associated with LSEN and special placement further stigmatised and excluded them from successfully accessing education

Approximately half of the students in each focus group discussion expressed the desire to attend a general education school, rather than their special education school in order to escape the negative stigma attached to the special education schools:

SFGANU4: *I preferred [names mainstream government school] because if you go that school people will stop calling you names.*

SFGANU5: *[names mainstream government school] because it's fun....*

SFGANU1: *[names private school] because you don't have to be afraid to tell anybody what school you go.*

As noted, not all students wished to transfer schools, as some students appreciated the additional assistance from teachers as well as academic advancements made as a result of their special education placement.

Students also reported bullying in the form of physical confrontations, which they said were usually initiated by the non-disabled students, and was a direct result of the negative stigma associated with special education provision. Students said physical altercations sometimes resulted from these negative interactions, a result of feeling so angered that they had no other choice but to confront the bully:

*I don't like bullies. I stand up for myself.... Sometimes I does [sic] get angry and the boys just come to wrestle me and I just do the same thing they do to me. (SFGSLU4)*

Bullying was a constant worry for parents, who feared the way others perceived their child would result in them being treated unfairly. One parent expressed his concern

at the vulnerabilities his child could face within a general education school with overcrowded classrooms and overworked teachers. He felt that this scenario could lead to undetected cases of bullying. This father spoke of the ‘windows’ of opportunity that opened in these circumstances that could lead to opportunities for his child to be bullied:

*My worry though is [that] the other children will abuse her. Because of that exclusion she will be isolated, essentially because the teacher will not have the ability to monitor her, and with that vulnerability, with that window, I think groups of children will—That’s where the worry is, there are opportunities for things like bullying (PANU1).*

It should be noted that bullying and name-calling also took place within the special school environment and primarily between the male LSEN students, something that was confirmed by a teacher present during a discussion with a group of LSEN. This is a finding which this study could not fully investigate, but one that would benefit from further research.

Principals and other educators noted the link between the impact of the negative stigma associated with special education and the discrimination students faced as a consequence. For LSEN whose disability was not as visibly obvious, the discrimination was less. The principals outlined how students often removed identifying school features from their school uniforms to hide the fact that they attended a special education school, or were in any way associated with special education classes. These acts of avoidance are a means by which LSEN attempt to escape the negative stigma associated with disabilities in the OECS.

*For example, they would hide their crest because the high schools wear white and wear khaki pants, so it’s easier for the boys. So they would take off their crest, they would walk down town and because there is no physical feature, you wouldn’t know that they are attending this school. But for the girls as soon as they see the white shirt and the plaid skirt you know that it is not one of the high schools so they do feel a way [self-conscious]. (PASKB3)*

PASKB3 further noted that the way in which LSEN were treated “as less than human sometimes”, depended on their disability. As such, negative stigma was also described as one of the major challenges that LSEN faced on a daily basis:

*The stigma. The fact that people don't see them as having rights. The fact that people don't see them as having a voice really. The fact that people laugh at them or those types of things. (PASKB4)*

This study found that the nicknames and stigmatising labels conferred on LSEN and special education schools based on the negative perceptions of people with disabilities often resulted in the exclusion of LSEN from activities and peers. The misconceptions about LSEN and disabilities, along with the subsequent discriminatory behaviours, are often fuelled by a ‘deficit’ model used to categorise and diagnose LSEN. The labelling and classifications of LSEN varies across countries and societies and manifest from the values and traditions held by its citizens. In OECS societies the view that something is ‘wrong’ with those who are different continues instead of an attempt to see past the disability and associated issues facing LSEN (cf. Lavia 2007).

### 6.1.2 The effect of negative attitudes and perceptions on parents

Parents were not spared the effects of the negative attitudes and stigma attached to those with disabilities, as they were often stigmatised and discriminated against based solely on their familial relationship with a LSEN. Gray (1993) referred to this stigma by association as ‘courtesy stigma’ (CS). One parent expressed the thought that while his child was doing well, he would have been ‘better’ without the disability:

*The fact that he cannot hear ... no matter how good he is, it is only to a certain level. I think he would have been much better if he was hearing. (PANU2)*

There were reports by teachers of parents resisting the enrolment of their child in the special education school because of the perceived and actual negative response of others:

*They don't want nobody to know that their children are coming to special ed. you know. And they know their friends going say 'oh your child go there, why you send your child there'? So instead of thinking about the child's wellbeing, they [are] thinking about what other people [are] going [to] say. (TFGSKB2)*

Parents of LSENs reported encountering negative attitudes from teachers and community members. One parent reported being able to see the reluctance of a teacher to “deal with” her children by the teacher’s facial expression. As such, the negative stigma experienced by parents could result in less social interactions and in some cases removing their child from the education system.

For LSEN with behavioural disorders and no physical disability, parents reported being approached in a negative manner by members of the community. Misconceptions about disabilities resulted in negative encounters for parents who often felt judged:

*Their approach would be like the child have no manners and you would try to tell them that the child has an issue and they would be like, 'the child looks fine'....So it's like they are not understanding. Of course it has a lot to do with ignorance. (PSLU1)*

*Over the years we've learned to deal with the stares. You learn to deal with any sort of behaviour that doesn't fit in the norm, 'you're a bad mom, you can't control your child', 'why [are] you not beating him'? 'I insist you spank him right now'. (DPOANU1)*

The lack of understanding of certain developmental disorders has caused parents to be unfairly targeted by outsiders whose negative perceptions of the disabled were clouded by a lack of knowledge and understanding. One disability advocate interviewed noted that in general the community was “still not expecting a whole lot from people with disabilities,” (DPOSKB1).

### 6.1.3 Exclusionary effect of the negative attitudes of principals

Students and parents were not alone in having to deal with negative attitudes and perceptions about special needs. Teachers also needed to deal with negative

attitudes from colleagues, MOE policy actors, parents, and the wider community. These negative attitudes were conveyed in both words and actions and ranged from displays of prejudice towards LSEN in schools to subtle acts of discrimination. In identifying some of the challenges and barriers to the effective implementation of inclusive policies, teachers said:

*Other teachers' attitude towards [SEN] teachers, principals—principal give you a hard time. Other teachers think it's, 'I don't need to do this' (TFGANU5).*

*After I finish teaching and entering them back into the [mainstream] system sometimes it does be a problem because teachers will be like 'oh they don't want them there', they coming from special ed. and they going to keep back the class....One teacher told me if they ever send her up here [special education school] to teach she will retire. (TFGSKB1)*

As a result, the concern that LSEN in general education schools would be neglected was shared by participating special education teachers. They suggested that a combination of inadequate training, a lack of resources along with the negative attitudes of teachers and the negative stigma attached to LSEN were the main reasons for this.

This study found that MOE teachers reported they did not always have the support from some principals which was demonstrated in their resistance to attempts to implement strategies meant to include LSEN. Some principals were reluctant to welcome LSEN with challenging conditions into their schools and this demonstrated their negative perceptions of LSEN and the inclusive process. As such, principals unlawfully refusing to accept LSEN into their schools based on their disability was a situation faced by MOE policy actors:

*There are many school principals who, at the first sign of any challenging behaviours or conditions that these children present, refuse to accept these children into their school. Now that is actually illegal. The law speaks against that, the Education Act speaks specifically against that, so it's not allowed but there are many principals who undercover would recommend that children go elsewhere. (PASLU1)*

Some of the negative responses to LSEN have been a result of the persistent ranking system of students and schools that exists in the islands of the OECS (cf. Curcic *et al.* 2011; Hodkinson 2010; Vlachou). The MOEs continue to publicise student names and schools of those that do well on national assessment examinations. Schools often try to maintain a high ranking based on examination results, and many Principals believed that LSEN would negatively influence the school's ranking. PASLU1 explained why the country did not have an inclusive education policy:

PASLU1: *There are many explanations for that I think. One of them is [country] has a ranked system of schools, especially at the secondary school level and I think that that filters down throughout the entire school system. So that there is a competition to be placed at what we call a top ranked school.*

Researcher: *Do you have universal secondary education here?*

PASLU1: *Yes we do.*

Researcher: *How does the ranking still work then?*

PASLU1: *Well we say everybody must be in a school and so we place everyone in a school based on common entrance scores. We still do the common entrance. There is a call to abolish common entrance but that is a very difficult thing to accomplish in [country] simply because that is the way you determine who is the top performing student, who goes to the top performing school. Actually I don't think it's the top performing school, it is simply the school where the top performers are placed. There is nothing about the school that makes it a top performing school, other than you put all the brilliant children in one place. And by the same token you also put the low achieving children in one school together. So that I think is one of the major engines driving the entire education system. If you take it down to the lower level, the primary school level, seeing that that's what you're working towards, you don't want anyone who is a drag on the system. So the*



*idea of including a lower functioning child in a classroom is seen in many ways as holding things back.*

The mindset that LSEN ‘hold things back’ and the resistance to their inclusion extended outside of the school. Teachers noted that the move to expand the curriculum of LSEN by offering increased access to technical subjects, was met with some unease by skilled artisans:

PASKB1: *You hear the TVET [Technical Vocational Education and Training] people them saying, ‘we don’t want them to just give it [scholarships] to slow learners. We want TVET to be the bright ones’. So everybody—*

PASKB2: *Going ignore.*

PASKB1: *—the slow ones.*

The ways in which negative attitudes towards LSEN are linked to other identified barriers to inclusion, such as an absence of a policy promoting inclusive practices, can be seen from PASLU1’s explanation for the unwillingness to welcome LSEN into some schools. It would appear that for some principals, teachers and the broader society, the inclusion of LSEN at their schools was viewed as a ‘drag on the system’ and should therefore be excluded. These widely held negative attitudes and perceptions of LSEN resulted in their unfair treatment, yet there were reports of persons exhibiting positive attitudes and behaviours towards them which facilitated their successful inclusion in schools.

#### 6.1.4 Positive attitudes promote inclusion

Having a positive attitude towards inclusion and special education seemingly makes the process of implementing inclusive policies an easier one. An acceptance and valuing of LSEN contributes to the success of any inclusive process. Despite the existence of negative attitudes within the education system and communities of the OECS, special education teachers reported the positive impact teaching LSEN had on them:

[Teaching LSEN] *has been very rewarding and it just encourages me to continue.* (TANU1)

*I think the rewards are so much more [when you teach LSEN].* (TANU3)

According to teacher participants, a level of patience was necessary for teaching LSEN. Teachers spoke of how rewarding it was to see LSEN achieve tasks that were previously beyond them, and it was these feelings that encouraged these teachers to continue teaching, despite the less than ideal working conditions:

*It's the satisfaction of working with them, these students, and seeing them achieve.* (TSKB2)

*I love teaching special needs children; one I have good patience with them. I get more love here, I feel more accepted here [at the special school].* (TANU4)

*Teaching students with special education needs, it takes a lot of courage and patience but then these children sometimes, they are a bundle of joy.* (PASLU2)

The teachers felt especially gratified when parents and other members of society expressed their appreciation for the work they did with LSEN and the results they achieved:

*We have had parents who commend the school, and employers who would have called to say how well or how much better our students are at performing their tasks than the regular worker.* (TSKB2)

Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000) state that regular contact and interaction with LSEN was pivotal in changing any existing negative perceptions held by teachers. This research supports this observation as teacher participants reported the development of positive attitudes towards teaching their LSEN due to their daily interactions with these students.

Teacher participants noted that non-disabled students showed an increased acceptance and tolerance for their special needs peers who joined the classroom. Teachers also noted the positive social aspect of school, stating:

*... students with disabilities are students, they are people, and they should be able to socialise with other “regular” students. Learn to function in society and not just in the home. (TFGANU2)*

*I think [having LSEN in mainstream classrooms] is very good because it helps with their self-esteem. Don't always feel that I need to be segregated apart from everybody else, I can be included, I'm not weird. I'm like everybody else. (TANU1)*

*I think it's very important because those students who are not special needs students need to learn tolerance, learn how to deal with these people. (TFGANU3)*

*A good thing when the child does not have a disability, that child would become tolerant to the child with the disability. And they learn a sense of cooperation and see that well everybody is not like me so I need to be [behave] different. (TFGSLU2)*

Interactions between LSEN and their abled peers also had positive social benefits for the LSEN. One parent noted how her child looked forward to going to school:

*She loves that. When she stays home with me, trouble, she doesn't want to stay, she wants to go and meet the children at the school (PSLU2)*

For the LSEN interviewed, socialising with their peers emerged as an important part of their school experience and education: When asked about what they liked most about school, they said:

*Being around others. (SSKB1)*

*Friends. Somebody came and talked to me and then we've been close friends since. (SSLU1)*

Students also expressed a desire for their teachers to be ‘kind’ and ‘nice’ as these types of interactions factored into their perception of how to make the school environment better. Students were not only concerned with the academic aspect of school, but also with the social. They believed that the way in which they are treated greatly impacts on how they respond and learn. The findings of this study suggest

that their interest in learning and their achievement at school can be predicated on whether or not they have positive interactions with their teachers and peers. In addition, teacher participants of this study claimed that students not only benefit attitudinally, but academically as well from the inclusion of LSEN within the mainstream classroom.

The impact of having positive attitudes and student achievement emerged as student participants reported generally feeling accepted and engaged in their current schools as well as their communities. They interacted with friends within and outside of the school and participated in sporting activities at community events. Most students also expressed a positive view of education and conveyed ambitions for future employment of some type:

*...Without an education I cannot go anywhere and I would like to be at a higher position than my mom, in terms of finance. (SSLU1)*

This positive attitude could help to determine the academic achievement of LSEN, as it was an essential aspect of their learning. In contrast, some students reported occurrences of being limited by parents, teachers and society. Whilst LSEN were optimistic about their abilities and plans to achieve their goals, they also seemed to believe that the well-meaning interventions by adults could inadvertently derail these plans. For example, a student aged 18 who had learning difficulties was unsure if she would achieve her desire of becoming a chef because she was not allowed to cook at home:

Researcher: *Do you think you are going to be a chef?*

SFGSKB2: *Maybe, because at home they won't let me near the fire.*

Despite the challenges, students were enthusiastic in expressing their aspirations for life as independent adults:

SFGANU1: *A game designer.*

SFGANU2: *A hairdresser.*

SFGANU3: *I want to be—when I grow up, I want to be a doctor.*

SFGANU4: *A person who just work on music.*

SFGANU5: *A dancer.*

SFGANU6: *I'm going to be, a fireman!*

The present study indicates that positive self-concept affected how LSEN engaged in their education and their outlook on life after school. The same was also seen in teachers in that positive attitudes about self and abilities positively impacted their perspective and performance in and out of the classroom, while negative perceptions has the corresponding negative effect. Self-concept involves three aspects, the self as known to the person, the social self and the ideal self, with the social self being an important determinant of how those with disabilities saw themselves (Ittyerah and Kumar 2007). In line with Berger and Luckman's (1991) primary socialisation theory, Ittyerah and Kumar (2007) posit that the positive or negative reactions and responses of family and those closest to LSEN have the ability to impact what they perceive they are capable of achieving; their ideal self.

#### 6.1.5 Contradictory beliefs about inclusive practice

This research discovered a number of contradictory, mixed attitudes and beliefs held by some teachers in their perception that there were numerous disadvantages associated with inclusion. It was revealed later, however, that these perceptions were based on the lack of resources, support and other policy implementation challenges these teachers faced. As such, whilst they could appreciate advantages to the implementation of inclusion in schools, they could also see the disadvantages if the corresponding supporting structures were not in place. When asked about the disadvantages of inclusive practice within the existing education system, one comment was:

*Now the disadvantages are too numerous to mention. The disadvantages outweigh the advantages. And to think of it you may be able to think about the advantages and a few disadvantages but to actually live, to experience it, to go through it you would realise that—I understand its equality and we're fighting for equality and I understand these things, but some of these children just need to get a special school. Some of them just need that sort of separation where their needs can be met. Especially if we're dealing with*

*the public system and we [teachers] have curriculum mandated things to submit to deal with. (TSLU1)*

Having to meet curriculum-based assessment targets set out by the MOE, hindered teachers' perceived abilities to effectively practice inclusion based on their past experiences. Teachers outlined a number of negative effects for all students if inclusive practices occurred in their classroom:

*I think one of the disadvantages of inclusion would be having that child possibly get discouraged after being in the classroom with so many other kids who are moving so much faster than they are, and then they can't keep up. Or they have trouble keeping up, its more of a challenge, they have to work harder to keep up when these other kids are running past them and they can't keep up. For a child with a physical disability it can be a challenge to have other kids around sometimes, seeing them move a little faster than you, seeing them appear smarter than you, so you have a little more of a disadvantage, a challenge to say 'I can't do like them, why should I try'? (TFGANU1)*

[some will be] *faster than some (TFGSKB1)*

[Others will be] *left behind (TFGSKB2)*

Another teacher thought there were equal positives and negatives to inclusive practices:

*That's a 50/50, because inclusion to some extent they make those people who are challenged or disabled it causes them to feel on par, sometimes. It builds their morale depending on the environment, sometimes, and to me it gives them an extra push, motivation, 'I can', sometimes. The other 50 is that a child knowing I'm in this class, 'I'm never seeing my name on the board in the top 10', 'I can't manage to get everything right', 'I just can't, I just can't', the flip of that coin is that it diminishes that child's morale. (TSLU1)*

Learning to accept difference as well as developing fewer prejudices was reported by teachers to be a direct positive result of the interaction between students with and without special educational needs. Teachers were still cautious in their

pronouncements on the benefits of inclusion, acknowledging that within the current education system there were many challenges to overcome. The availability of adequate structures in place to support inclusion affected the attitudes of teachers towards disabilities. Teacher attitudes were also further dependent on the type and severity of the LSEN's disability.

Teachers' positive attitudes towards LSEN were reflected in their focus on the rewards of continued student achievement. Although remaining positive required high levels of patience, the special education teachers did not let the challenges experienced discourage them or change their overall perspective of the need for effective inclusive practices. Students' beliefs in their ability to achieve despite being labelled 'disadvantaged' and 'special', resulted in a positive attitude towards school, their education and futures. Yet, this study based on the shared experiences of the participants found that there generally seemed to be more negative attitudes being exhibited towards persons and students with disabilities than positive ones. These negative attitudes and perceptions had the correlating negative effect on inclusion, and acted as barriers to its successful practice.

The attitudes and perceptions that others have towards disabilities and persons with disabilities have far reaching effects, both emotionally and physically, on students, teachers and parents. With the push for inclusive practices, methods of identifying, addressing and correcting these preconceived notions of disability and the disabled have been actively sought. Suggested methods of reducing negative stigma and discrimination have included increased interactions and the building of greater awareness of the disorders that challenge LSEN. Calls for changes in negative attitudes and perceptions have been answered with the introduction of various education campaigns and interventions.

## 6.2 Education, Awareness and Advocacy

Education that leads to the increased knowledge and awareness on challenges and experiences of the disabled and LSEN was suggested by participants of this study as a key element in the move towards successful inclusive practices. According to UNESCO (2009), raising awareness should include creative avenues for both better understanding of syndromes and increasing the tolerance and empathy

within communities. This study found that students and teachers being sensitive and tolerant towards the needs of LSEN was essential for the successful practice of inclusive education. To achieve the level of sensitivity and tolerance needed for positive behavioural change will require the use of sustained interventions that include contact with LSEN.

### 6.2.1 Building knowledge and awareness

Increasing people's awareness, knowledge and understanding of the range of physical and learning disabilities students may have is a response designed to reduce the negative perceptions of disabilities that prevail in society. Teachers and parents spoke of how increasing public awareness of disabilities through education may amend public stereotypes attached to the disabled and to the institutions that cater to their needs, such as schools. A number of participants proposed that an increase in community disability awareness education and the potential understanding that may follow may have a positive impact on general members of society. They said that through increased contact and interaction with LSEN, a more sympathetic relationship would develop:

[Increased contact] *humanises and I think it's more done for the normal people to broaden their scope and to not dehumanise the special needs individual.* (PANU1)

[Public education] *would in a sense take away some of the stigma that is attached [to LSEN] and some of the preconceived ideas that 'you're special need, so you're dumb'. You know these terms they use, 'stupid', 'can't do nothing'.* (TSKB2)

[Public awareness and education] *will prevent stigma too, 'cause when they see them, they tend to laugh and make comments. If they are aware, then they will know how to treat them.* (TFGANU4)

*Awareness [about disabilities] because they don't know anything about it.* (SSLU1)

The need to widen the perception and definition of special needs was raised by a group of teachers who understood that children considered as 'gifted' were also



LSEN needing assistance. They believed that the negative connotation of ‘special needs’ could be changed with targeted educational messages:

*I think it all boils down to the awareness and sensitisation, because special needs, even though it has been surfacing over a certain amount of years in [country], to me it’s still new.... If we can sensitise the public more about it and explain to them that even a gifted child should experience special needs, not just a child who cannot function. (TFGSLU1)*

Teachers listed a number of campaigns designed to raise people’s awareness of LSEN that included:

TFGSKB1: *We have a lot of success stories, maybe we should publicise them more.*

TFGSKB3: *What are some of the things we haven’t tried? I’d like to find that out? Because we’ve tried everything. We’ve tried rallies—*

TFGSKB2: *We did workshops.*

TFGSKB1: *Workshops— So I would like to know.*

TFGSKB2: *Parent teacher activities, just to get them [to participate].*

A student explained how the quality of her school experience had improved after continued interaction with her peers:

Researcher: *What was your experience like at primary school?*

SSLU1: *Horrible. I used to get picked on a lot. Children used to call me names and things, but when I got older and they got used to me, it’s like normal school.*

As a means to address stereotypes and enhance awareness, direct contact was a strategy embraced by the participants of this research and other researchers.

MOE policy actors described how facilitating the successful inclusion of LSEN resulted in an increased awareness of positive behavioural and attitudinal changes in schools. They expressed the opinion that there has been a greater

acceptance of persons with disabilities in and out of the education system, and a recognition of the importance of special needs classes and schools: “There is a slow awakening to the existence of special needs and the embracing of it” (PASLU1). Other policy actors shared their views on what still needed to be done, and what they were doing to address and reduce the negative stigma associated with special needs. They agreed that public awareness was key to any effort in this regard:

PASKB1: *We would actually put programmes in place to reduce the stigma associated with disability and special needs. So [we] were supposed to be doing public education spots and we still have to work on that.*

PASKB2: *Public awareness is one big thing that needs to be addressed because we realise that we have to change our mindset.*

PASKB1: *I still think as advocates we still have to make it happen... And raise awareness of what we are doing.*

Policy actors also indicated they were actively engaging in public education and awareness activities:

*The Special Education Unit is making some strides in that department. We're really making efforts to get the word out as to what special education is, and the need to engage children in early intervention, with a view to giving them the most improvement that they can have. (PASLU1)*

*... we here at the school, we need to do some more public awareness along with the parents. Be more proactive. (PASKB3)*

Public awareness and advocacy have been identified by the participants as activities that can positively impact and change negative attitudes and behaviours that acted as barriers to the successful practice of inclusion. However, participants pointed out that not everyone was fulfilling their role as advocates, identifying parents as failing to advocate for the rights of their special needs child. Some parents were reported to be in denial of their child's diagnosis, and refused to accept and seek services on their behalf.

This study found that despite the growing awareness surrounding disabilities such as autism, dyslexia, Down syndrome and others, parents were still faced with negative social stigmas that resulted in many of them afraid to talk about their disabled child publicly or advocate on their behalf. The negative stigma that parents of LSEN faced often caused them in some cases to withdraw from society. Participants of this study suggested that education could make a difference in this area:

*You need to educate—yes they need to be educated. Maybe if the general public is aware of what's going on, maybe they themselves, the parents now can start to talk and reach out and make a case and maybe they can make a difference. (TFGSLU2)*

*Actually last year for the first time, I usually write something for the [newspaper] during April for autism awareness month, and I got some parents to come on board last year and that was a good sign. (DPOANU1)*

The more educated and informed parents were on their child's disorder, the more likely they were to act as advocates for their children. As such targeted interventions aimed at increasing the knowledge and awareness of parents of LSEN within the wider society could see them becoming greater advocates.

### 6.2.2 The need for advocates

Teachers repeatedly called for parents to be advocates and partner with the school for the right of their child to be included. Advocating for a cause was often associated with various groups. The area of parental advocacy and a parent's role in lobbying for the rights of their child or children was seen as being directly associated with helping to increase the knowledge and awareness of the challenges LSEN faced. This was necessary as parent participants reported observing a lack of understanding in society of the various disabilities and challenges associated with them. Teachers suggested that integration and inclusion could not successfully take place and students will continue to be denied equity in education if their parents did not advocate for their right to access it.

*Inclusive education, from what I gather, is the integration of, or sensitisation of 'normal' children with special needs children or people. It will benefit in two ways: one, it will sensitise the 'normal' children to interact and communicate and exist with special needs children.... Also people not taking the time to understand, and I think only through time will that change, but without the interaction we're not going to make much headway. ( PANU1)*

Arriving at a level of awareness needed to alter the negative attitudes and perceptions of disability and LSEN will take intentional action. Traditionally DPOs and non-government organisations (NGOs) especially have been established as a means of presenting a united front in advocating for the rights of their member populations. These organisations have been involved in lobbying and advocacy activities aimed at securing the rights and wellbeing of adults and students with disabilities. Members of DPOs reported having collaborated with MOEs in an effort to bring further training and awareness to general education teachers. Activities of this nature continue to be a part of the regular lobbying strategy for many groups, once given the opportunity:

*The NCPD [National Council for Persons with Disabilities] tries its utmost to reach out to the needy persons with disabilities in our country. We advocate for policies for such persons, and we have seen the need for equalisation of opportunities. (DPOSLU2)*

This community activist and parent of a LSEN outlines some of her awareness building activities:

*I actually started [a] blog a couple of years ago that I actually write about my personal experience or my family's personal experience raising a child with autism. I've partnered with different organisation on the island, like Rotary. I've done some stuff with Rotary over the years and continue to do so. Sometimes for autism specifically and sometimes it's more broadly in terms of special education generally. I write articles for the local newspapers, I've done countless radio and TV interviews. (DPOANU1)*

Organisations have emerged in the OECS islands that aim to champion the cause of the disabled. *Autism Speaks* and general disability associations for the dyslexic and

vision impaired can be found engaging in advocacy work on each island. Parent-led organisations act as a valuable resource to see LSEN provided with equitable access to education within an inclusive environment.

### 6.3 Summary

Negative attitudes, perceptions and behaviours towards the disabled have resulted in the exclusion of LSEN from successfully accessing quality education. Misconceptions about the abilities of LSEN have seen them face limitations and marginalised in the home, school and community. Negative perceptions of themselves and abilities as a consequence of negative feedback and reactions from those around them have also negatively impacted the how LSEN viewed their education and aspirations. The avoidance strategies used by some LSEN to distance themselves from the negative stigma associated with special education provision has also been discovered. This research found that the stigma attached to LSEN also extended to members of their family who often felt judged and stigmatised by some members of society. The effects of society's negative perceptions of the disabled affect families to the extent that they limit their interactions and community participation. Bullying and other acts of discrimination by peers were experienced by students who reported feelings of anger and sadness as a result.

This study can also report that negative attitudes towards the disabled can be altered in the face of education and awareness. The call for increased education and public awareness on disability demonstrates the perception that targeted messages can positively impact long-standing mindsets about the disabled. The need for more community advocates and partnerships to be created between schools for increased education and public campaigns is noteworthy. Fostering positive attitudes such as tolerance, patience and acceptance among members of society are suggested by participants as essential for the success of inclusive practices. The work of parents and DPOs as active lobbyists and advocates for the rights and inclusion of LSEN has raised the awareness level of the community about LSEN and the disabled and has resulted in positive changes in attitudes and behaviours towards LSEN generally and in schools. Engaging the mass media and interventions that increased the interaction and contact with LSEN are among the suggestions made by parent and teacher

participants. However, teachers noted that inclusive strategies can have disadvantages if the appropriate supportive structures did not accompany their implementation. The need for increased parental involvement and networking in securing the right to education for all children will be discussed in the following chapter.

## Chapter Seven

### Accessing Education: Promoting Positive Collaborative Networks and Parental Involvement

The success of inclusive education in schools is influenced by a multifaceted approach that involves members from a wide cross-section of the community and the school (Ainscow and Sandhill 2010; Peters 2003). As seen in the previous chapter, negative and positive attitudes and perceptions can be changed with targeted knowledge and awareness interventions and activities that seek to involve whole schools and communities. This chapter explores further the concept of including important groups with the goal of including learners with special education needs (LSEN) successfully in the education systems of the member countries of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). Parents of LSEN are one group that must engage and participate in the school-based education of their child if students are to access equitable quality education. Parental involvement in the inclusive education process can be the deciding factor in the positive or negative participation and academic achievement of the child (cf. Ferguson 2008; Peters 2003). As a result of community/social perceptions and stigma associated with having a child with a disability, this study found that some parents exhibited behaviours that negatively impacted the education of their child. Hence, parental involvement was an important facilitator of inclusive education, but parental denial of a child's disability diagnosis and a lack of knowledge of the disability acted as barriers to the successful practice of inclusion in schools and the community. The scope of parental involvement was reported by research participants as being small, with some parents of LSEN deferring to the 'knowledge' of teachers rather than actively advocating for their children, when what was needed was mutual interaction and positive partnership between parents and teachers. This chapter explores the overall role of parents in the inclusive education process and discusses the findings within that context.

Following the discussion of parental involvement, the second part of this chapter highlights the emergent findings that suggested the need for collaboration and networking in successful inclusive processes. Similar to parental involvement, collaboration and networking arose as a theme that could positively or negatively impact the inclusion of LSEN and their access to education. Thus, the importance of collaboration and networking has been reiterated by teachers, parents, and disabled people's organisations (DPOs) to advance the inclusive cause within society and the education system. In this chapter collaboration and networking is discussed both from its positive presence and the negatives associated with its absence. Establishing and maintaining avenues for communication, shared knowledge and expertise has been indicated as critical to the successful inclusion of LSEN in schools. Teamwork was reported as making a significant difference in the way in which school principals, teachers and the MOE were able to successfully implement inclusive strategies. The chapter also explores how partnerships between education professionals and DPOs and NGOs have and continue to facilitate the successful practice of inclusion.

Therefore, parental involvement and collaboration and networking are concepts that depend upon the establishment and maintenance of relationships, and play a pivotal role in the approach and overall success of inclusion in schools. This chapter explores not only parental involvement and role in the education of LSEN, but also how collaboration, teamwork and cooperation between education partners can positively influence the successful implementation and impact of inclusive strategies.

## 7.1 Parental Involvement

Parental involvement as a facilitator to the inclusion of LSEN within the education systems of the OECS emerged as a significant finding of this research. It is important for education systems to actively seek the participation of parents and other interest groups such as DPOs and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the education process. In this study, parental denial was an area discussed with parents and other participants, as it was reported that some parents were seen to resist the special education placement of learners who required the focussed attention



of a special education placement. Being a social process, this study explored the ways in which the social<sup>17</sup> and cultural<sup>18</sup> capital of parents was leveraged to positively influence the equitable access and the quality of education LSEN children received, and what happened to those children whose parents possessed less social and cultural capital.

### 7.1.1 The importance of parental involvement in the home

Parents tend to show their support and interest in their child's education through their engagement in homework and other school activities. Students who participated in this research reported being assisted with their schoolwork by a member of the family, usually the mother. While some parents faced academic limitations, their willingness to offer genuine guidance and support to their children was evident. However, time constraints, work and other obligations often interrupted a parent's ability to dedicate the time needed for homework and other school activities. Thus, students may interpret the interest of their parents in their school activities as inconsistent, while acknowledging their other obligations:

Researcher: *Are your parents or guardians interested in your school work?*

SFGSKB3: *Yes.*

SFGSKB4: *Sometimes. Sometimes they busy and they can't help me.*

SFGSKB6: *Sometimes.*

SFGSKB5: *Yes. [Agreeing with the classmates' response of 'sometimes']*

Mothers featured prominently in the conversation with the participants of the research, not just the students. This is not surprising since research into the amount and type of parental involvement with LSEN often spoke of the involvement of mothers. In addition, the presence of parental support and encouragement in building a child's confidence and self-reliance was evident in the data. Students

---

<sup>17</sup> Social capital describes a situation where persons could possibly "use membership in groups and networks" to obtain an advantage (Sobel 2002, 139).

<sup>18</sup> Cultural capital indicates an individual's "familiarity with the dominant" cultures within a society "especially the ability to understand and use 'educated' language," (Sullivan 2002, 145).

clearly understood the supportive role their mother took in their schooling, and that while they were willing to help, they also wanted them to succeed in the future and encouraged them to be independent by furthering their education.

Researcher: *Does your mother or father help you if you have questions when you're home?*

SFGSKB3: *My mother helps me with questions, but it ain't all the time she help me with questions because she trying to say whenever I get anything... [school work], I supposed to learn how to do it. So whenever 'you come big', [and] you go college to get more knowledge, you [are supposed] to know what to do'.*

Nevertheless, teachers reported on parents' presumed failure to work with the child on homework, or revising what was done at school. To them this was an indication that parents did not have an interest in the educational development of the child. However, teachers were split between whether they believed that parents did not know, or were in denial and were refusing to acknowledge that the child had a problem:

TFGSKB1: *There is no support from home.*

TFGSKB3: *Because they don't realise that the child has a problem.*

TFGSKB2: *Because the parents themselves are in denial.*

Parental involvement in homework has been deemed important for the academic success of LSEN. Thus, the lack of this type of parent-child interaction in the homes of LSEN is what teacher participants felt needed to happen more, and linked the lack of home-based support to observed learning problems in their classrooms.

### 7.1.2 Parent school interactions

Students reported that parent-teacher meetings where conversations spanned updates on their academic progress to issues with behaviour, and other official school activities such as end of year talent shows, were the time when the greatest interaction between the school and parents took place.

Researcher: *What are some of the things they [the school] talk about [with your parents]; school work or attitude at school?*

SFGANU3: *School work. Attitude.*

SFGANU1: *School work.*

The means by which parents and teachers interacted was not limited to visits, as this student explained the reason for his mother visiting his school and how the need for her visit was communicated:

*Sometimes when you pass your test, the teacher give you a note and you have to give that to your parents so they have to come to school. And then the parents will talk to your teacher about how you passed your test. (SFGSLU4)*

This example demonstrates that communication between the school and parents can take several forms, whether via memos, telephone, face-to-face visits, or a combination of the three. No matter the method, the establishment and maintenance of communication between the school and parents was reported by teachers and MOE policy actors to be an essential element for LSEN achievement.

Parents varied in their level of interaction with schools but noted that they were generally satisfied with their interaction and the decisions made concerning their child's education. Parent participants indicated they were included in school activities and were updated on the child's progress on a regular basis. A mother of twin autistic six year old children, noted that because of her flexible work hours, she was able to visit the school on a daily basis and was always welcomed:

Researcher: *How often does your child's school communicate with you, keeping you up to date on the programmes they have or might be implementing?*

PSLU1: *I'm here every day.*

Researcher: *Why are you here every day?*

PSLU1: *I always come in, I always check on them. I am always here so I would say yes.*

Whilst other parents did not have as much free time, a number of parents indicated they were satisfied with their frequency of communication with the school and teachers. PSKB1 indicated that her child's school communicated with her often and was included in the general activities of the school. So satisfied with her overall inclusion in her child's education, she responded in the negative to whether she wanted to be more involved in the decision making involving her child at school. Whilst every parent's circumstance was different, PSKB1 added:

*I think the school he goes to is very helpful and the parents are very much involve [sic] as possible.*

It should be noted, that not all parents experience the excellent relationship with their child's school as described by PSLU1 and PSKB1. Other parents reported experiencing difficulties which resulted in the exclusion of their child from school. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

### 7.1.3 Parental denial and a lack of knowledge

Hornby and Lafaele (2011) indicated that the effectiveness of parental involvement was contrasted with the reality of parental involvement. The authors noted that while the benefits of parental involvement were widely documented, in practice the contribution of parents was limited. Factors such as parental denial and disinterest as well as time and knowledge constraints often curtailed the ways parents participated in the education of their LSEN. Parental attitudes, perceptions and actions in relation to their child's special needs have far reaching effects on the success of that child in the education system and within the community. Yet, teachers criticised those parents whom they felt were shirking their responsibility as supporters and advocates for their children. Parental inaction and apparent lack of interest was attributed in part to the non-acceptance of the disorder diagnosis given to that child. In short, parents were reluctant to acknowledge their child's problem. Teachers also suggested that those parents who were willing to be advocates for their children were often neither academically nor socially equipped to do so. Acknowledging that a key role for parents in the successful implementation of inclusion was to be advocates for their child, teachers gave reasons why they felt this was not always the case:

Researcher: *What role do you think parents and the wider community have in facilitating inclusion in schools?*

TFGANU1: *Those parents, their role is to be an advocate for their kids ... Some of them they don't accept the child has a disability. A lot of them.*

TFGANU3: *Most of them.*

TFGANU1: *And those that do don't know what to do with [their child's disability].*

Parental denial of their child's special needs along with parental ineffectiveness emerged as dominant themes in the discussion surrounding parental involvement in the education of LSEN. According to teachers and MOE policy actors, the extent of parental denial was evident in their failure to seek the support and services their child needed; their failure to enrol their child in the appropriate special education schools; and showing little or no interest in their educational development.

This study uncovered stories of parental denial among parents of students with a range of disabilities including obvious physical disabilities and learning disabilities. Research has suggested that parental denial was a reaction to the perceived and actual 'courtesy stigma' attached to disabilities in general (Case, 2000; Gray, 1993). Courtesy stigma is stigma experienced by individuals who are related through the "social structure to a stigmatised individual". A person experiencing courtesy stigma shares some of the discrimination of the stigmatised person to whom they are related and are stigmatised based solely on that affiliation (Goffman 1969; Gray 1993, 30). Teachers reported that parents reacted to courtesy stigma by isolating themselves and their child, along with several other reactions including revulsion, anger, guilt and embarrassment.

The negative stigma associated with a child's disability often affected parental attitudes and behaviours. Teachers described some of the behaviours parents engaged in to avoid this 'courtesy stigma':

TFGSLU2: *Parents do not want to know that their child has a special need. Whether it be physical, learning, any kind of disability.*

TFGSLU1: *I think that title alone turns them off.*

TFGSLU3: *They in denial.*

TFGSLU1: *It creates an immediate stigma.*

This reported unwillingness by parents to enrol their LSEN in the special education schools had negative consequences for the access to quality education of that child and worked to exclude them from the education system. Research by Allweiss and Grant (2013) reported how teachers hypothesized that the very terms used to describe persons and students with developmental challenges and disabilities often perpetuated the negative perceptions held about them in society. Consequently, parents may have felt justified in their belief that their children will face community discrimination if they were identified as being disabled and having special education needs. Teachers pointed to school vacations as specific times when students were most likely to regress or fall behind academically, due to a lack of assistance by parents at home. A teacher shared a hypothetical experience about the challenges she faced with parents:

TFGSKB6: *That's one of the biggest challenges, the parents. I mean you're doing something at school for a whole year. Ok we working on this, say the child can't tie his shoe laces. And ok we tying laces for a whole year, you tell the parents, and they telling you they doing it you know, 'oh I working with Tad, and he doing it'. So when the poor child comes back to school now, you try to see where the child reach from where you leave off, from where you left him. Nothing. And especially when you have holidays, the child reach right back.*

TFGSKB2: *But Tad tying the laces home eh! When he reach, Tad can't lift up one string. [Laugh]*

TFGSKB4: *The same potty training thing, is like you make progress and you had to go way back.*

TFGSKB1: *And writing.*

TFGSKB6: *Especially during vacation.*

TFGSKB2: *Anytime school close.*

Researcher: *They regress?*

TFGSKB6: *Regress yes, they go right back to square one.*

TFGSKB1: *So it's like you not moving forward at all.*

The frustration of the teachers was evident, and this discussion is an example of how parental involvement can negatively affect student achievement at school. Parents who “feel like nothing is wrong with their child” (TGSKB1) serve to further exclude that child from the education system.

Teachers were unable to decide if the parents who were in denial of their child's special needs lacked the academic ability or time or just did not have an interest in their child's school-based development. An example was given of some hearing-impaired children. Both teachers and MOE policy actors on different occasions pointed to the parents of hearing-impaired children specifically as failing to learn sign language and thus being unable to effectively communicate with their child. Despite the offer of free sign language classes, the child's parents had not taken the opportunity to learn to communicate in the language used by their child.

TFGSKB5: *I have deaf children and not one of them [parents] know how to sign.*

TFGSKB 2: *And we've offered class. They have sign language classes and they don't show up.*

TFGSKB1: *They offer free sign language class and they don't come.*

TFGSKB4: *I don't know if I should say they don't have any interest, [or] if they give up.*

TFGSKB1: *They don't have any interest.*

While some parents were reported as trying to be involved in their child's learning needs despite their own limitations, other parent's efforts were cited as being totally absent. In both cases, student learning was ultimately negatively affected, as not

having parental participation in the education of LSEN adversely affects the successful practice of inclusive education.

Teachers were sympathetic to the issue that parents were challenged with responding to their child's disorder and lacked the capacity to be of help. Teachers also acknowledged that the lack of participation of some parents was due to the parents themselves having a learning difficulty. The teachers said:

TFGSKB6: *But some of the parents themselves, they too are special.*

TFGSKB2: *To me they ain't know no better.*

PASKB4: *For the ones in Learning Support, the teachers says it's great pains to get parents on board with them. Not all parents, but it's hard to get that group to come in to meetings, to have a follow through on what's going on with the students, to actually support them with the work. I think, bearing in mind some of the parents themselves are some of the slow learners as well, so you find it might just be a knock-on effect, or may have had a bad experience at school themselves.*

The issue of how parental experiences and capabilities impact on their choice of whether to have their child included in the education system is reinforced by the teachers. The limitations in the ability of an impaired parent in being of help to an impaired child are raised by this teacher:

*Imagine we have a parent who is probably operating at the same level as her own child and she helps the child with the homework, and it's a mess.*  
(TSLU2)

A lack of understanding of disorders was also posited as a reason for the lack of parental involvement:

*I find that a lot of parents don't understand their child's disability, so they don't know how to work with them.* (TFGSKB3)

One MOE policy actor summarized that parental acceptance of the child's diagnosis played a pivotal role in the overall assistance that child received:



*Acceptance by parents, because some parents are saying denial and because if they don't accept they don't seek help for the children, they don't try and get [any help]. (PASKB3)*

Lacking the knowledge and understanding of their child's impairment left some parents open to criticism from teachers. Whether through their own educational limitations and experiences or inaction and failure in seeking out the relevant information about their child's disability, parents who did not have an understanding of their child's disorder and who failed to participate in their child's education were a source of frustration for teachers. Teachers and MOE policy actors contended that more parents needed to actively participate in the education of their LSEN. Parents needed to include their children when engaging with the community if attitudes towards disability were to change, further supporting the notion of the benefits of increased parental involvement and interest to improving the educational experience of the LSEN:

*We need definitely the education, we need also them to be—we need to include them. We need to bring them with us. It's like if \*Joi<sup>19</sup> went out alone, Joi will be—I see the way children look at Joi and they ask, why is she different? What's going on with her? Why doesn't she do this? Why does she run like that? But if people see Joi with me, or Joi with \*Angie, or Joi with her brothers, it's a different story. So we basically are Joi's protectors and I think—and if Joi is here and I'm here, you'll react differently to Joi. If Joi was alone in a room with you without you having experienced what Down syndrome is. But me being here with Joi, basically managing Joi, you as an individual would have that buffer, so that ok, so when you get used to Joi being around, then it won't be really an issue. But I think what's happening is a lot of denial. There is a lot of people also not taking the time to understand, and I think only through time will that change, but without the interaction we're not going to make much headway. (PANU1)*

---

<sup>19</sup> Names changed

The mix of parental denial, inability and unwillingness all result in students being denied full access to the services and support required to achieve academically. As parent PANU1 suggested, increasing the community contact with LSEN could be a way of raising positive awareness and decreasing negative attitudes and behaviours. Parents needed to be more active and show greater interest in the education of their children if they want to fully reap the benefits of education for their child through the important networks they establish with teachers.

#### 7.1.4 Parental advocacy and involvement

MOE policy actors and members of DPOs noted that some parents took a ‘back seat’ and failed to advocate for the rights of their children. While parents should accede to the knowledge of qualified authority in certain matters concerning the education of their child, they still needed to have their voices heard and their presence felt. According to non-parent participants of the study, parents routinely deferred to and totally left decisions concerning their child to others. Seeking greater involvement, engagement, consultation and advocacy by parents, teachers expressed concern that parents sat back and expected others to advocate on their behalf. In response to a question specific to the amount of parental support provided to a LSEN, a principal responded:

*No in the sense that parents do not advocate for the students or children, they are too laid back, they just sit around and they expect teachers and the ministry and everybody to advocate for them. (PASLU2)*

MOE policy actors, teachers and members of DPOs noted that no one could advocate for the best interest of their child better than a parent. As such the act of parents relinquishing their role as powerful advocates for their child garnered some comments like this one:

*Because there are some who are quite reluctant, for whatever reason, just decide ‘you all’ [teachers]— I have parents who say ‘you all know them best, you all do what are you supposed to do’. (TSKB2)*

*Because sometimes I think our parents are not, for lack of a better word, batting for their children. (DPOANU2)*

Speaking specifically of the parents of hearing-impaired students, this MOE policy actor said:

*That's the problem we have with our parents. Our deaf children —their parents don't push them, they see them as basically a next burden to me, and so they let them do what they want. And they can be pushed and they can learn. I've been teaching for 20 something years, and if I had two parents who are actually interested to actually learn to sign with their child, I get plenty. (PASKB2)*

Education is seen as a means to improving the lives of at-risk populations, including learners with special education needs (Frawley 2014; Peters 2003; UNESCO 2009). Frawley (2014) reported that students with special education needs were less likely to reach their educational potential, but added that early intervention strategies could positively influence a child's outcome. The link between disability and poverty has been well researched, with education the component seen as a means to alleviate the potential disadvantage the disabled may face in society. Parental involvement in ensuring that their disabled child succeeds within the education system could set the tone for that child's future. This research found that parents were concerned with whether or not they were doing the best for their child as illustrated below:

*..There were windows that Joi has already passed— some of those windows and you think about that as a parent in terms of the developmental part of it. So it's like do we take her, leave [country] go to Canada have some sort of emersion exercise, or the States and to see hopefully she would then be able to get to maximise her thing [make the best of her disability]. You don't know. These are things that you have to weigh up as parents (PANU1).*

The impact of parental influence was also recognised by students with one student commenting that a school's familiarity with her mother made her transition easy:

*Basically they knew my Mom and they knew what to expect, so it was an easy transition from primary to secondary. (SSLU1)*

In contrast, students did not always report parental involvement in a positive light. One student's response to being bullied revealed that even within the home setting, negative behaviours occurred. A child explained that after experiencing bullying

whilst living with her mother, she was happier to live with her father, as he not only treated her differently, but showed an interest in her abilities by interacting with the school and positively reinforcing her efforts.

Researcher: *What are some of the names they call you?*

SSKB2: *Blind. Tease me about my weight at home, when I used to live at home with mommy.*

Researcher: *Who do you live with now?*

SSKB2: *Daddy.*

Researcher: *Do you like living with your father more than your mommy?*

SSKB2: *Yes*

Researcher: *What are some of the things you like about living with your father?*

SSKB2: *Because they let me do a lot and I love to help them out at home.*

Researcher: *Do you think that your daddy will allow you to be a chef?*

SSKB2: *Yes*

Researcher: *Does he come to school and talk to your teachers?*

SSKB2: *Yes*

Another child faced a similar experience of familial bullying, and his re-telling of the incident reiterates the point that parents need to stand up for the rights of their child, even within the family circle.

SFGANU3: *One family member ... he did tease me and say I go dunce school.*

Researcher: *How did that make you feel?*

SFGANU3: *Bad.*

Researcher: *What did you do? Did you tell anybody what he had said to you?*

SFGANU3: *They heard.*

Researcher: *And what was their reaction?*

SFGANU3: *They tell him that 'stop that'.*

These two scenarios highlight the different reactions of the parent: SSKB2's mother did not readily defend her in the way her father and SFGANU3's parent did, thus, she felt that she was being bullied. Research reports that parents have the ability to protect and positively reinforce self-worth within their child and that home-based parental involvement benefited a child's educational achievements (Hornby and Lafaele, 2011).

In an effort to empower parents with the skills needed to better serve the needs of their children, teachers have hosted training sessions for them. Teachers however indicated that when the training sessions are offered, the parents who regularly show an interest are those who attend, rather than those whom the training is targeted:

Researcher: *Do you have training for the parents then?*

TFGSKB2: *Yes.*

TFGSKB 1: *If training is there [the ones that need it the most] don't show up.*

TFGSKB 2: *They don't come.*

TFGSKB 3: *Like they done give up on the children.*

TFGSKB 6: *And you always see the faces that you just normally see.*

Group: *Yes!*

TFGSKB 3: *The ministry officials need to pressure them as parents, they [parents] need to be held accountable.*

Not all schools offered the same level of engagement activities in which parents could learn and participate. Nevertheless, principals interviewed indicated that they had an ‘open-door’ policy and were always seeking new ways to involve the parents of their students in the activities of the school.

*We interact with our parents, if you notice today, quite a few of [the] parents were here, because we offer an open door. You can come in visit the class, sit down, interact with the teachers, we have an open policy here. (PASKB3)*

Parents who have interacted with teachers who make an effort to communicate with them, expressed their appreciation for that effort:

*I can't complain, I have communication from the school, from the teacher, I thank her for that communication. (PANU2)*

It is evident that some schools were trying to establish and maintain open channels of communication between themselves and parents. Those efforts have not been in vain, as one teacher reported that community attitudes towards disability and special education have been changing:

*The parents who used to not be willing to send their children saying ‘not my child, my child not going there’, we find now that parents are just showing up and saying well ‘my child has a problem and he or she needs help and I know this is the place where they can get that’. (TSKB2)*

A MOE policy actor recalled that she no longer had to go door-to-door to encourage parents to send their child to the special education school, but that parents now approached the MOE officials with questions about placements and interventions for children. Her colleague agreed stating more parents were now engaging with MOE policy actors in the discussion of LSEN. She said:

*You find that parents are now meeting me and asking if I'm the person who went to the school. If I can look for [visit] this child. And persons in the church are asking if I can look at this child who comes to Sunday school who is not doing such. And so you find that the word is getting out that there is something there to intervene and help. (PASKB2)*

Parental partnerships and collaboration with education officials was indicated as being an essential component of the inclusive process. Parental concerns for their child's education have seen some parents take the schooling of their child with special needs into their own hands with varying results. The capacity of parents to positively influence the education their child receives has been associated with the parental level of education and their social and cultural capital. A parent home-schooling her child gave her account of the circumstances that led to this:

PSLU2: *She used to [attend the special education school] before, but then she stopped for a while, for six years.*

Researcher: *Where was she for the gap years?*

PSLU2: *She was home, I went to Canada with her for vacation and when I came back they told me they didn't have space [in the special education school].*

Researcher: *So who taught her during those six years?*

PSLU2: *Me.*

Researcher: *How did you manage to do that?*

PSLU2: *Well I used to follow the little steps like put a ball, make sure I stimulate her hands, teach her sign, not sign language because I don't know sign language. I teacher her colours. Just different little things that she would speak, pronounce the words to her.*

This parent was limited in her choices for educating her child with special needs due to a number of factors: the unavailability of space in the school; her rural location; her unemployed status and financial constraints; and her own educational limitations having only completed secondary school placed her child at an academic disadvantage. In contrast, another scenario cites the choices a parent with a tertiary level education and civil servant job had to provide educational options for their child with special needs:

Researcher: *How did your child get placed at his or her current school?*

PANU1: *We were part of the original parent body that formed the school. Primarily because even though we tried the options for sustained education, long term education for Joi and other children with special needs was very sporadic. We found a place, we found a school they discontinued the programme for whatever reason. There was nothing consistent. One school it was the teachers didn't like that this special needs teacher was making more than them and teaching less children. So in order to keep peace, the principal said, there is strength in numbers and I have to keep my numbers so that was one thing. That's the reality of it. And then I—we was—were paying EC\$2000 a month. Because it was two students so in order to pay the salary of the teacher of EC\$4000, which is not much in the grand scheme of things, you split that cost in two. You see where the education cost is. While if she was enrolled in a normal school, it might have been EC\$1200 for four months or for a term. So we basically through the need we got together and explored other ways, and then once the school was established, Joi got a place there as a result of that.*

These two examples contain valuable insights into the circumstances, ease and difficulties parents can experience in accessing educational options for their child with special needs. The impact a parent with financial and academic means coupled with the confidence to advocate and partner with others in support of their child's education, was advantageous for the child. Conversely, the parent with less economic and social capital, although facing the same problem of placement options, was forced to educate her child at home. She later admitted that impeded the child's development, as once the child gained re-entry into the special education school she made more progress than she did at home.

Teachers noted how the financial capacity of parents influenced the access to education of LSEN. They reported that most of the parents of LSEN were from a lower socioeconomic bracket and were unable to financially fill the gap in government services to bolster the educational success of the child. A teacher shared



her experience with a parent who paid for the support staff that the child needed, which contrasted greatly with the ability of other parents to afford such a measure. She however questions whether this was a sustainable option for most parents:

TFGSLU2: *You have to have somebody there with your child for the whole day. How many of our parents can afford that?*

TFGSLU1: *Most are poverty stricken to be honest*

Furthermore, teachers noted that parents who were better off financially were able to positively impact the quality of education their LSEN received, whilst those parents that lacked the financial capacity were kept from accessing quality education.

In summary, the role and impact of parental involvement with respect to impacting a child's school-based development covers a vast area, most of which could not be explored fully in this study. The study confirmed that parental involvement in the education of LSEN could have a positive or negative effect depending on the attitudes, perceptions and behaviours of parents. Parental involvement varied based on the acceptance of the child's disability, knowledge and education level as well as the time invested in that child. The level of engagement parents had with the education of their child included assisting with homework, partnering with the school or personally funding services. Noted as essential for the implementation of inclusion in education, teachers as well as policy actors agree that parental involvement is a necessary aspect of successful inclusive practice. Willing parents have engaged with education officials and others to ensure their child received equitable and quality education. They have collaborated with other parents and organisations to positively influence the achievement of their child, demonstrating the importance of the relational aspect of inclusion. In reality however, the type and depth of parental involvement varies across parents, teachers, schools, education systems and countries.

## 7.2 Collaborating and Networking

Collaboration and networking are similar concepts that involve establishing partnerships between various interest groups. Ainscow and Sandill (2010) noted that networking, a system of sharing ideas and best practices among schools, departments

and the community, is a key strategy in inclusion. Likewise, collaboration can be defined as the interaction between groups, including professionals, in order to accomplish a goal they share, as often stressed in inclusive schools (Friend and Bursuck 2012). Hence, for collaboration and networking to be effective, relationships need to be formed collaboratively with all stakeholders. Collaboration and networking involved knowledge sharing relationships and teamwork, not only amongst teachers but with parents and the community. Establishing collaborative and collegial partnerships and working together as a team had the potential to yield positive outcomes in the implementation of inclusion in education. Participants reported that involving community groups and disability organisations have resulted in positive results such as influencing policies for inclusive education.

### 7.2.1 Establishing networks aimed at student success

Working effectively as a team in schools towards the goal of establishing quality and equitable access to education for LSEN is essential. Ainscow and Sandill (2010) report that the very nature of inclusion pre-supposes a multisector approach involving members from various cross sections of society. Essentially a social process, the collaborative approach to education advances the idea that involving interest groups will make a positive impact. This study discovered that collaboration sometimes meant that teachers had to personally notify their colleagues of the future presence of a special needs child in that class. This teacher explains:

*One of the things I have to do as the role of that teacher of the preschool is to go back to the next kindergarten teacher and say you have a child coming in who is special needs. (TGANU3)*

Preparing another teacher for the presence of a LSEN in their class is one way teachers indicated they had collaborated with their colleagues as a means of ensuring smooth transitions between classes. This was not always the case however, and the absence of policies or guidelines detailing the procedure for this type of information sharing affected the quality of education an LSEN received. The transitioning process from Primary to Secondary contexts was of concern to teachers as well as MOE policy actors in the participating countries. Acknowledging that the process for

year-end assessment reports to be compiled on each student was a new process, one policy actor said:

*I know when they pass on students, they meet at the end of the school year. Unfortunately most of the things they share is the negative. I don't think they share best practices, just give warning signs, look out for all the negatives the child can do, and they don't focus on the children's positives. (PASKB2)*

Noting the negative nature of the information being passed on about LSEN, teachers were potentially influencing the perceptions of the new class teacher even before they encountered the child. The adverse nature of the information may then influence the attitude towards the child and lead to attitudinal and other barriers to that learner's equitable access to education.

Communication between teachers about LSEN was encouraged as a part of the collaborative aspect for successful inclusive practices. Non-communication and a lack of consultation and collaboration between special education teachers and their MOE officials resurfaced several times in teacher discussions. Specifically in one island, the teachers at the special education school expressed their feelings of neglect because of the lack of communication and collaboration between themselves and the MOE. The need for greater collaborative partnerships between the MOE and schools was identified as vital, as teachers lacked the capacity to positively promote the image of the special education schools without their help:

*The [MOE] themselves need to be pressured because they need to see that we cannot do it by ourselves. We also need their help and when I say their help, as in helping us to promote that this school is not a bad school, and it's an effective school and we all work together to help the students. (TFGSKB)*

The need for the MOE to be an active part of the teachers and parental team working towards the implementation and practice of inclusion was raised:

*Everybody needs to come together ... To me it's more effective if the ministry is there. It's more effective that way because we doing it, and parents doing it. (TFGSKB1)*

Collaboration is a means of information sharing as well as relationship building. This study found that there was ample space for increased collaboration among teachers and MOE officials, however it was revealed that some effective collaboration and networking was taking place within the education systems of the OECS.

### 7.2.2 Making a difference through positive teamwork

The importance of managerial support in the promotion of effective inclusive practices in schools emerged in this research. A teacher explained how a change in principals and leadership styles positively affected the collaboration between herself and the general education school close by:

*I used to take students from here after working with them, or while working with them, take them to the school over there. Ask the principal if they can be placed in different classes so they could get more, because I don't teach everything, I more focus on reading and maths. When it comes to science and social studies, I don't do that. It used to work when they had a different principal, but things have changed. As the head changed, things changed. So we can't do that. It's not working. If I could get children to go into the schools, that would be fine, that would be awesome, but [I] can't. (TSKB1)*

Principals who work proactively to support and facilitate the inclusive practices of teachers were not only providing the support needed, but were also demonstrating the leadership qualities that have been identified as paramount for the effective practice of inclusion in schools.

By way of contrast, teachers across the islands reported positive occasions or networking and collaborative activities amongst teachers and between teachers and the MOE. A teacher described being a part of a team of special education teachers that met regularly in order to report to MOE officials in an ongoing process to improve the provision of special education:

*We modify when we meet, that's why we meet monthly, to bring matters aboard so that when you take it back to the body at the special education unit. (TSLU1)*

The same teacher spoke about working within her general education school setting and developing strategies along with her colleagues who thought a student was in need of special education services:

*The teacher would have identified that student, they will ask me for strategies depending on the behaviour. (TSLU1)*

A MOE policy actor confirmed this practice while discussing efforts that had been made to promote an exchange of experiences among teaching professionals:

*If a child is underachieving or having significant difficulty, the classroom teacher would collaborate with that SEN teacher and determine what interventions can help that child to improve. (PASLU1)*

Regular meetings were noted amongst teachers within special education schools. Teachers also collaborated with members of the MOE's special education unit. A teacher noted that while she prepared students' IEP's on her own, she did so based on reports prepared by the Special Education Unit's multidisciplinary team (MDT):

*We meet weekly to discuss the way forward ... We get reports from the MDT team and we use those reports to develop the IEPs. (TSLU2)*

A special education teacher in a general education school at another site reported working closely with the MOE's special education officer and teachers. As a result of the introduction of universal secondary education (USE), LSEN were intentionally placed at her school for the first time. Other teachers shared their stories of collaboration:

*I work along with the teachers and PAANUI in the ministry of education. (TANU1)*

More teachers shared their stories of collaboration with their colleagues:

*We review it as a team. But I'm the one that does it for the students. (TANU2)*

*I work along with the other members of staff who have an input, because I'm not the only one who is coming across to these students. (TANU4)*

*We would have been briefed before in terms of what to expect with these students and so I have worked something [out] with the teachers. (TANU1)*

Teachers can be seen throughout the Eastern Caribbean islands engaging in teamwork both in the general education setting as well as within special education schools. This collaboration, although not as widespread as necessary for effective inclusion, can foster improved conditions for LSEN.

MOE policy actors and teachers in the schools reported on the instances of collaboration and networking, which included working with other government institutions to improve the services available to LSEN. Support services for students with special education needs and their families are an essential part of the successful practice of inclusion. Explaining the role of other governmental partners TSKB2 said:

*We have the local welfare that we rely on a lot. The child protective services that we rely on and those are all government run institutions that are not actually part of the school but they extend into the school and we can tap on those outside.*

A MOE policy actor noted that, while they had successfully worked along with other government institutions, they were still trying to establish relationships with others. She raised the issue of the health of teen students at the special education school who may be sexually active. Noting that the number was not high, she still recognised the need to work with the National AIDS Program (NAP) to educate those who were at the risk of HIV infection. She also mentioned other collaborative activities that she was involved in:

*I do some counselling at the Directorate of Gender Affairs, where some of the women there are special needs themselves, and they have special needs children. (PAANU1)*

Collaboration also takes place among policy actors within the ministry and PAANU1 explained how this worked in her case:

*I coordinate with the EO [Education Officer] for secondary schools, I coordinate with her and I place them in secondary schools.*

She noted however, that collaborating with her MOE colleagues was not always a smooth process, as sometimes information that she disseminated with EOs and Zone Officers did not get passed on to the schools. Nonetheless, MOE policy actors did recognise the importance and benefits for inclusion, of networking and collaboration between teachers, and worked to encourage the information sharing exercise:

*The SEN teachers meet on a monthly basis. If there is no national meeting then they meet on a district level on a monthly basis. So there is a lot of collaboration and exchange. I have even found that two districts have spoken to each other, and they have met together. So more than just within the district we have inter-district meetings happening sometimes. (PASLU1)*

Networking was similarly identified as a coping mechanism for teachers who often lacked the training to adequately handle LSEN. One principal of a rural school stated:

*How do we cope? We do a lot of research and we do a lot of in school workshops, in island workshops, so the teachers will learn from each other. (PASLU2)*

Information sharing between teachers acted as a forum for the transfer of information on best practices, which could reduce some of the ‘trial and error’ situations that some teachers found themselves in when they encountered unfamiliar disorders and behaviours.

Collaborating was identified as an important tool among students within the classroom. Teachers and students reported that abled students have been called upon to assist their disabled peers. The participants also reported that within the special education schools, students were also encouraged to assist each other. Likewise, teachers have found that having LSEN work together in groups or in pairs also help in their educational development. SSLU1 said:

*Like most times since I need help to see the board, the teacher like, whoever I'm sitting by the teacher like, you help SSLU1 with her work on the board.*

These two special education students reported working together on their schoolwork when one was in need of help:

Researcher: *Does anybody else, friends or people in the community help you with schoolwork? If so who?*

SSKB1: *He help me [points to SFGSKB5]*

Researcher: *And who helps you SFGSKB5?*

SFGSKB5: *The teachers them [the teachers helped him]*

Another group of students affirmed, along with their teacher that was present, that they often worked in groups as a way of helping each other:

TANU4: *If you understand and SFGANU3 doesn't understand what do I do?*

SANU1: *Mek I show him [allows me to show him]*

TANU4: *Yea, [I] let them help each other sometimes.*

The special education teachers in all islands reported grouping their students to encourage teamwork and improve learning. Students who engaged each other in this way learned from each other and also developed critical social skills. Collaborating and networking was an important cog in the inclusion process ensuring the successful development and implementation within schools and society. Creating a climate in which teamwork can thrive and stakeholders can work towards a common goal is a formula for successful inclusive practice. Recognising and utilising the strengths of each group in support of inclusion is one measure that can contribute to effective inclusive practices.

The study found that the inclusive practices in their current forms in the islands could not be possible without the involvement of community and parent groups, corporate citizens and disability organisations. Dialogue between the partners in education is a crucial enabler for inclusive practices and participants across islands and groups indicated ways in which increased teamwork and collaboration could contribute to improved inclusive processes. Corporate citizens and disabled people organisations (DPOs) were identified as collaborating with education officials and teachers in areas of advocacy, finance and training:



*NGOs assist in fund raising for schools like Rotaract or Rotary Clubs. There is a collaboration between the T.N. Kirnon School and Perkins and the Mill Reef Club. So there are those collaborations. (PAANU1)*

In many cases the progress made in the areas of disability rights and awareness, and in particular special education practice, would not have been possible without the lobbying efforts of DPOs. Government collaborations with these organisations have been reported to have been successful over the years. The example is given of the lobbying efforts of the Blind Welfare Association in St. Lucia and the subsequent inclusion of blind students within the general education classroom. A member of the association noted that:

*It would not have been possible for us to have gone into the inclusive education programme if there was no collaboration with the ministry of education. (DPOSLU1)*

In other islands, the education ministry has invited members of DPOs to assist in the facilitation of workshops geared towards educating teachers and other staff on matters of special and inclusive education. Collaboration and networking, however, was still identified as one of the elements that was lacking in the promotion of special and inclusive education. One member of a DPO noted:

Researcher: *Let me ask this then, what do you think is the one major thing that is lacking when it comes to special needs in [country]?*

DPOANU2: *All stakeholders being united.*

Researcher: *Who would be the stakeholders?*

DPOANU2: *The Ministry, the parents, teachers, everybody seeing the same thing. I think we're on different pages when it comes to that, we might be in the same book, but on a different page, and maybe in some cases not even the same book.*

She later added:

*I think for me, I just think that everybody needs to come to the same agreement. (DPOANU2)*

Working collaboratively is not without its challenges, as stakeholders must share common goals and purpose if they are to work effectively as a team. The relationships should also be built on mutual respect free from intimidation and disregard for the opinions and rights of others. It is important that these partnerships are not one-sided, fulfilling the agendas and goals of only one group. It should involve parent engagement with the school and the schools engagement with the parents.

### 7.2.3 Bridging the Gap

DPOs and other stakeholder groups have played, and continue to play a pivotal role in the education of children with disabilities, at one point in history being the only organisations doing so. Schrouder (2008) gave the example of religious groups in the Caribbean, which she reported to have been pioneers in regional education and continue to be major providers of education across the nations. Other pioneers have been reported as working to see the inclusion of traditionally excluded groups:

*However, these services [for the blind] in the Caribbean was formed by the help of the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, because we all come from the colonial experience and you find that in a number of English speaking countries of the Caribbean they would have been involved in starting some of these services. But before they came into the picture, there was a Caribbean man called James Arles, about 101 years ago he waged a one month crusade right across the Caribbean trying to get the governments of the day and civil society to establish training programmes for blind people. The island that responded to him at the time was Trinidad. And that's where the first service for the blind was inaugurated, on the 18th of May 1914. Now that is way before you were born. So we've come a long way. (DPOSLU1)*

Filling this gap in the provision of education for students with disabilities has continued through the years with organisations providing critical programs and services. These stakeholder organisations not only lobby for the inclusion of children with special education needs within the education systems, but also offer additional

support to them and their families. The level of provision varies, for example, the Blind Welfare Association in St. Lucia provides a wide range of services from medical evaluations to support staff for students.

*We offer today inclusive education and rehabilitation, we're now calling it adjustment to blindness and we also provide [an] eye health programme. So under the eye health we have a programme where we provide paediatric ophthalmic intervention for children. (DPOSLU1)*

Recognising that there is still much to be done in ensuring that members of their target population are educated, organisations in the islands have stepped in by offering courses, after school programs and support services. In Antigua, one stakeholder while acknowledging that progress has been made by the government and community in providing access to education for learners with disabilities, commented that “our children are still not getting the full assistance that they need”. Another DPO member explained one of the reasons for providing training to LSEN:

Researcher: *Why did your organisation feel the need to provide these services?*

DPOSKB: *Because for the most part, people with disabilities are under educated. So in an effort to kind of give people with disabilities an equal chance you have to educate them...*

DPOs have demonstrated their ability to influence how LSEN access education, and have developed ways to combat the perceived under education of disabled students. In St. Lucia the Blind Welfare Association, still engages in lobbying activities and continues to offer support to blind students through itinerant teachers, visual aids and other services. The Antigua and Barbuda Dyslexia Association provides targeted plans for students enrolled in their afterschool program, and plan on developing an adult program. The following excerpt demonstrates compressive programs that stakeholder organisation deliver.

Researcher: *What do your classes offer?*

DPOANU2: *We look at reading, writing, spelling primarily and we have a section that we call special needs and that kind of zooms in on*

*an area that a child may have particular need. It can cover one of the three before or something extra the teacher notices. As well as it might even be maths or handwriting or any other need the tutor sees that the child has.*

DPOs and NGOs offer an invaluable service to parents and students. Filling the gap often left by the education system in providing adequate education for children with disabilities continues to be the driving force for many of these DPOs.

### 7.3 Chapter Summary

In summary, inclusion is about relationships: establishing and sustaining them for the benefit of learners and the community. To that end, parents have been identified as posing one of the biggest challenges to inclusive practices in the education system of the islands of the Eastern Caribbean. Teachers convey the negative attitudes and perceptions of parents that in turn inform behaviours that act as barriers to the quality of education students receive. It was also noted that children without the critical support at home are likely to fall further behind in their academic pursuits. The impact of parental denial of their child's diagnosis of special needs and their subsequent behaviours emerged as a major barrier to the success of inclusion in schools and society. Consequently, the need to work as a team for the benefit of students with special education needs involves the participation of not only parents, but a collaborative effort on the part of stakeholder groups working towards the common goal of effective inclusive practice within the education system. In short, inclusion needs collaboration, and for collaboration to be effective it needs the involvement of parents, teachers, schools, disability organisations and the wider community.

In addition to making some concluding remarks on parental involvement and collaboration and networking, this chapter also brings to an end the discussion of all of the findings during the exploration into the barriers to and facilitators of the inclusion of LSEN in the education systems of the OECS islands. The complex issues discussed in these chapters have all emerged from themes identified in the data collection process of this research. Research participants identified the duality of each theme and the ramifications of some of the challenges posed to the

successful practice of inclusion. The ways in which themes are connected was highlighted because as barriers and facilitators, the themes often had a corresponding effect on each other. The ways in which the lack of legislation resulted in the unequal provision of adaptations and accommodations for LSEN within and among islands became apparent. In addition, the absence of sufficient resources and support, insufficient level of teacher training, and a lack of knowledge and awareness of disabilities have negatively affected teacher attitudes towards inclusion and LSEN. As such, the findings also indicated that increased knowledge and awareness could influence the development of more positive attitudes and behaviours towards special needs students and their inclusion. The next chapter will discuss the eight themes discussed prior within the context of the literature on inclusion and LSEN. The chapter will also seek to look at the significance and implications of the research findings.

## Chapter Eight Discussion

This study set out to explore and understand the barriers to and facilitators of the inclusion of learners with special education needs (LSEN) in the education systems of three developing island states of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). In-depth interviews conducted with teachers, students, parents, Ministries of Education (MOE) policy actors and staff members of disabled people organisations (DPOs) provided the basis for the findings presented in the four previous chapters. This chapter presents the discussion of the research findings within the context of the research questions and the implications for the successful inclusion of LSEN within the education systems of the OECS.

The data generated in this research took place in conjunction with members of the participant groups chosen because of their knowledge and experience with OECS education system, and the education of learners with special education needs (LSEN). The constructivist grounded theory (CGT) methodology and method facilitated the emergence of themes that offer important insight into the current educational strategies and practices of inclusion in the OECS states. The empirical data revealed the challenges of implementing inclusive practices in the absence of policy texts and legislation, and the need for training in inclusive education for teachers and other education stakeholders. The necessity for teachers to be trained in pedagogical adaptations and modifications in conjunction with the provision of adequate resources and support signalled the need to improve funding mechanisms in the OECS education sector. The ways in which negative teacher and societal attitudes and perceptions of those with disabilities, and how educational interventions aimed at increasing knowledge and awareness to combat these negative attitudes is discussed. Finally, the need for greater collaboration and participation across all interest groups including parents, students and members of the wider society is suggested as one of the conditions required to create an environment in which inclusion in the OECS education systems can flourish.

## 8.1 Barriers to and Facilitators of Inclusion in the OECS

The findings of this research indicate that there are a number of barriers and facilitators to the inclusion of LSEN within the schools of the member states of the OECS. Consistent with the findings of the literature (Peters 2003; Vlachou 2004), these barriers to and facilitators of inclusion have been extensive and varied and include factors such as vague or ineffective legislation (cf. Mitchell 2015), negative teacher attitudes (cf. Golder, Jones and Quinn 2009), negative societal perceptions (cf. McMaster 2012), insufficient teacher training (cf. Idol 2006), inadequate resources, services and support (cf. Peters 2003), as well as the absence of suitable and effective accommodations for LSEN. This study however explored eight of these variables as they emerged within the local empirical context of the education of LSEN within some of the schools of three member countries of the OECS. Peters (2003) also identifies the barriers to successful inclusive education as interactive. The present study reveals that a lack of training negatively affected the perceptions of teachers and students towards LSEN. Further, such perceptions are sustained by the lack of resources and services available to support the inclusion of disabled students into mainstream education environments. Initiatives such as increasing knowledge, avenues for collaboration and positive parental involvement are suggested as ways in which these barriers can be mitigated. These barriers and facilitators, together with other concepts and challenges of legislation and policy, teacher training and professional development, adaptations, resources and support, attitudes and perceptions, education and advocacy, parental involvement and collaborating and networking, will be discussed in the following sections.

### 8.1.1 Legislation and policy

The research findings highlight that effective education policies are an enabling mechanism for the successful practice of inclusion at the school level, and that the implementation of inclusive legislation is an important part of the framework for inclusive education systems. Research participants were all in agreement that specific policies were necessary, but also outlined the need for them to acknowledge and incorporate local contexts prior to implementation. The need for policy development and a review of education governance practices within OECS education

systems emerged in this study. Education policies guide the provision of education and are the foundation for the development of administrative and pedagogical strategies and practices. Peters' (2003) research and others (Mitchell 2015; UNESCO 2005; Vlachou 2004) support these conclusions, identifying national legislation and inclusive education policy as critical prerequisites for the effective practice of inclusion in education. In addition, Vlachou (2004) called for governments globally to analyse existing education policy practices that impede the development of inclusive schools, given the disconnect that exists between inclusive education and the broader educational contexts. This study discovered that this disconnect extended locally and is evident in the gap between policy and practice. While MOE policy actors identified Education Acts and White Papers as a basis for the inclusive strategies being employed in the Eastern Caribbean, the participants questioned the effectiveness of such documents given the complex and multifactorial challenges associated with the effective implementation of inclusive education. Teacher participants particularly questioned the commitment of governments and MOE policy actors in instituting the necessary changes in the education system. Comments by a teacher summarises the feelings of many of the teacher participants: "... it's good on paper but if you don't actually put it—implement what you have signed on to, then you're practically wasting everybody's time," (TANU1). Mitchell (2015, 12) reported that in order for the 'vision' of inclusion to be realised educators at all levels must be committed to its philosophy, and express their support for the vision through appropriate "legislation, regulations and policy documents at all levels of the education system". This included principals, school governing bodies, and national, regional and local entities responsible for education.

MOE policy actors identified the absence of effective standardised policy texts guiding the practice of inclusion as one of the main barriers to the inclusion of LSEN within the school system putting further limitations on any approach to educating these vulnerable students. They referred to the lack of policy as being powerless to effectively enact the necessary changes to the education system. The MOE officials directly linked the negative experiences of issuing directives and having them treated as 'advice or suggestions' by principals and teachers, as a result of not having legislation on which to clearly anchor their directives. Having a sound policy that they could refer to in governing the implementation of inclusive strategies



in schools would have empowered policy actors in not only setting the agenda for change within the education system, but also setting clear priorities for the entire education sector.

As identified by the MOE policy actors, the ramifications of the absence of policy documents to inform the implementation of inclusive practice in schools had other negative consequences. This research found that MOE policy actors lacked the flexibility and power to develop legislation and policies locally within the ministry, PSALU1 said “...we are proposing draft policies to the higher powers. Unfortunately we are not able to create and finalise policies at our level”. The responsibility of officially drafting legislation and policies lay within a separate government ministry, usually the one responsible for legal affairs. Because of this disconnect, the MOE policy actors indicated that while they desired a policy document from which to govern the practice of inclusive education in schools, they were only able to propose draft policies, which then had to go through several steps, including vetting by the Minister and the Cabinet before being taken to Parliament and becoming law. The identification of practical limitations towards enacting policy highlights the role of national governments in establishing inclusive legislation and the partnerships critical to its success. The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) document of 2009, entitled *Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education*, discusses the role of national governments in identifying and acting on the barriers to inclusion. The document also encourages governments to display their commitment to inclusion through appropriate legal frameworks, developed in accordance with the relevant international conventions and recommendations. However, participants cautioned against the wholesale adoption of external frameworks and recommendations that were not first adapted to local contexts.

The roles of international organisations, conventions and recommendations in the implementation of inclusive education practices have only marginally influenced the actual practice of inclusion in the schools of the OECS. Staff of disabled people’s organisations (DPOs) were scathing in their criticisms of regional governments’ failures to ratify in a timely manner the relevant Conventions that would promote more inclusive societies rather than just schools. The successful implementation of any inclusive program should be based on locally developed approaches (cf. Bines

and Lei 2011; Miles, Lene and Merumeru 2014; Nguyen, Terlouw and Pilot 2006). Teacher participants cautioned against the wholesale adoption of policies created outside of their region as they may not be culturally compatible within their local contexts and histories. They spoke of the “...wrong sets of approaches and the wrong sets of principles ... because we look more to Americanised things...,” (TFGSLU1). Nguyen, Terlouw and Pilot (2006) have reported the dangers of applying ‘Western-based approaches’ to education that fail to take into account the cultural complexities of a nation. They summarised that the influx of educational policies into small developing nations could result in the neglect of cultural traditions and a loss of cultural heritage: “We need to go back to what works for us, for our Caribbean children,” TFGSLU2. Teacher participants felt that the influence on strategies and ideologies from the United States of America (USA) and organisations such as UNICEF and UNESCO did not always apply to the current education landscape in their region and needed to be revisited. Research participants suggested that rather than importing policies from outside the region, MOE’s should defer to the expertise of local professionals who are able to shape strategies for inclusive policies around the cultural complexities of the OECS region, with the flexibility required for use in individual islands. Stubbs (2008) noted that having localised policies are not only important on a national scale, but extend to the policies that shape other practices within schools.

Participants recognised the importance of policy texts, but also concluded that policy texts on their own may not guarantee the successful implementation and practice of inclusion in schools. Teacher and parent participants suggested that the MOE’s within the countries were underfunded and understaffed, and MOE policy actors themselves were constrained in their ability to support and implement inclusive strategies in a comprehensive way. This resulted in what teacher TFGSLU2 described as the inability of the “few little people” within the MOE being unable to “function”. Without the financial ability to hire necessary staff, the development of strategies for inclusion is likely to suffer. Of note however, was teachers’ stated belief that the funding of special education schools was not a priority for MOEs, which was reflected in these schools being on the “back burner” (TFGSKB2) and getting significantly less financial assistance than general education schools. This study highlights the relationship between policy texts as an instrumental source that

can serve to justify the allocation of funding towards education initiatives, including staffing. Comprehensive policy texts are also influential when countries are applying for funding from external organisations. Peters (2003) noted that successful inclusion in schools must be accompanied with the appropriate financing mechanisms, as training teachers to function effectively in inclusive settings requires access to adequate resources. Therefore, as recommended by participants, government budget allocations must adequately reflect the needs of education institutions so they can effectively implement the quality inclusive education required.

Data collection has been identified by MOE policy actor participants as one area that has only recently been made a priority in local and regional education systems. This need for statistical data was emphasised by parent activist DPOANU1, who noted that decisions made by the MOE in relation to inclusive education without supporting data was like “shooting from the hip like a cowboy”. Inclusive legislation supported by accurate data is one of the first facilitative steps in the inclusive process. Data collection is an important aspect of policy development as it provides information on the areas that need government attention (Abosi and Koay 2008; Ballard 2013; Croft 2013; Loreman 2007). Statistical data can be used to support funding requests and also be used as benchmarks for monitoring and evaluating policy progress. However, especially in developing countries like those in the OECS, there is a lack of education data as well as data specific to the number of LSEN (cf. Curcic et. al. 2011; Miles and Singal 2010). Inclusive practices are successful when they are developed and implemented in a supportive policy environment (Loreman 2007), and governments need to not only ensure that policies are developed, but that they are also effectively and efficiently funded and practiced based on the relevant statistics (Pivik, McComas and LaFlamme 2002).

Specific to the OECS and prior to publishing its first statistical digest, the World Bank noted OECS countries “lacked timely and reliable data to make policy decisions in the education sector” (World Bank Collaborates 2014). UNICEF (2013) recommended that OECS education plans and policies be targeted, with those that target disadvantaged and at-risk groups being evidence-based. Another critique on the OECS data and education plans reviewed by UNICEF (2013) was that they neglected the important stage of costing and financing, which ultimately set them up

for failure when inadequately resourced. There was also no real way for plans to be adequately evaluated and monitored on whether the targeted goals were being achieved. Hence, the continuous calls for initiatives that strengthened management in data collection and analysis that would positively influence policy formation, programme development and the overall reform process (Jules, Miller and Armstrong 2000). Nevertheless, Miles, Lene and Merumeru (2014) reported that in both countries of the North and South there is a lack of basic data on the number of LSEN who need services. While there have been calls for quantitative data on student numbers, Croft (2013) highlighted the need for corresponding qualitative data, such as the barriers to learning that LSEN face at school, something this research seeks to contribute to. Both these types of data when collected could inform policy and lead to more targeted interventions (Croft 2013). The failure to collect data relevant to LSEN means that the inequalities being faced in the education systems will continue (Jules, Miller and Armstrong 2000).

The emotional impact of MOE policies and strategies on teachers and principals is not often found in the literature, but it is an area that this study highlights. Teachers spoke of the issues they faced in meeting assessment criteria in a work environment challenged by a lack of resources and support. Preparation for the minimum standards test (MST) in particular was mentioned by teachers. The unavailability of special education teachers or teachers' aides in the schools also put added pressure on teachers who were untrained and unprepared for LSEN in their classrooms. On this issue, teacher TFGSU3 said: "Some of the teachers at the secondary school I think they are overwhelmed. They cannot do it alone. And especially one special ed. teacher and there are so many [special education] children in certain schools". Frustrations and challenges associated with the MOE policy of only providing diagnosed LSEN with services is also highlighted in this study. Teachers who were untrained and unqualified to conduct diagnoses themselves, were unable to use the most appropriate strategies for teaching their students in diverse classrooms because of a delay in or absence of diagnosis reports.

### 8.1.2 Teacher training and professional development

Special education teachers who participated in this research affirmed their desire for greater levels of training, especially in the area of inclusive education.

They felt that training for inclusion was an ongoing process with several describing their current practice as “trial and error”. Teachers indicated that to be able to overcome their knowledge and skill deficiency they would need the appropriate ongoing training. Increasing the levels of teacher training and professional development for the successful practice of inclusion has been a reoccurring theme in both the findings of this study and the literature (Armstrong et al. 2005; Idol 2006; Smith and Leonard 2005). Peters (2003, 67) reported the overwhelming evidence that training and professional development were essential to the implementation of inclusive practice in developed and developing countries alike. Teacher participant TFGANU1’s response to questioning on how she mitigated the challenges she encountered as a special education teacher in a mainstream setting noted, “I have to go back and study when I find out about a diagnosis of some child... I have to go and find out everything I can and find out what other people are doing that works and come back”. McMaster (2012) contended that teachers needed knowledge in order to effect positive changes in professional practice and this knowledge should come from a theoretical base attained through formal or informal education and training.

The most vocal group of participants in each island were the special education teachers who expressed their concern at their lack of pre-service teacher training, but more so the lack of training and preparedness their general education colleagues received to teach LSEN. Special needs teachers felt that this absence of professional development training of general education teachers impacted their ability to effectively teach and manage the needs of LSEN. Validating these concerns, Downing and Peckham-Hardin (2007) also questioned if teachers were receiving the type of training that was necessary for the successful practice of inclusion in education systems. Yeung’s (2012) research noted that teachers not only had little training in inclusive education practices, but were limited in inclusive teaching experience and knowledge of inclusive legislation. Special education teachers suggested that LSEN were neglected in the classroom and considered a ‘burden’ by some general education teachers. For example, teacher TANU4 said “teachers are going to find you [LSEN] a burden because they are not trained to specifically deal with students who may have a special need within their classroom”. Her concern was echoed by other teachers, who voiced their anxiety about teachers who failed to adapt their teaching practices to accommodate those with special needs

in their class, or who expressed an unwillingness to have LSEN in their classrooms. Some noted that colleagues also questioned their professional ability to teach LSEN. Classroom management skills of untrained teachers were also brought into question by Golder, Jones and Quinn (2009), who noted that teachers who lacked training were not able to recognise or accommodate LSEN in their classrooms. Consequently, teachers who did not have adequate knowledge of inclusive classroom management strategies negatively impacted the success of inclusive programs (see also Gül and Vuran 2015).

Only some special education teachers indicated that they had the support of their school principal, and PASLU1 reported opposition to inclusion from principals of some schools. However, school leaders including principals, managers and other administrators are critical knowledge transmitters and facilitators of the successful functioning of inclusive schools (Ainscow and Sandill 2010; Bunch 2008), and should be adequately trained and have the capacity to manage all aspects of an inclusive school (Bines and Lei 2011; Conrad and Brown 2011; Jules, Miller and Armstrong 2000). Strong leadership can greatly impact the success and efficiency of any school (Yeung 2012), and help to shape an inclusive school culture, displaying the attitudes and behaviours that enable LSENs to learn effectively (McMaster 2012). Smith and Leonard (2005) suggested that principals who were aware and sought information on inclusive implementation strategies, and empowered their teachers to collaborate on decisions necessary for inclusion, had better success rates. However, administrators are often focused on assessment goals and encourage teachers to do the same. Further, Curcic et al. (2011) found that some principals did not fully embrace inclusion, believing it primarily benefited the child with the disability while having no benefit for their classmates who could possibly be disadvantaged, through some LSENs' frequently disrupting and monopolising the teacher's attention. These notions have been challenged by research that reports that the non-disabled indeed benefit from inclusive practices (Mitchell 2015; Yeung 2012).

Negative attitudes towards the presence of special needs students in classrooms was a primary concern to participant teachers and is broadly recognised in the literature (Ainscow et al. 2012; Avramidis and Norwich 2002; Gül and Vuran

2015; Idol 2006; UNESCO 2005; Yeung 2012). Avramidis and Norwich (2002) identified professional development training for both general education and special education teachers as an important aspect for the formation of positive attitudes towards integrating LSEN into mainstream classes. Avramidis and Norwich (2002, 130) posited that teachers were a key element to the successful implementation of inclusive policies, arguing that “teachers’ beliefs and attitudes are critical in ensuring the success of inclusive practices since teachers’ acceptance of the policy of inclusion is likely to affect their commitment to implementing it”. Teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion and LSEN were found to be partially determined by the type and severity of the disability the child presented. An example of this is seen when teacher participant FGSLU2 suggested that in some cases children needed to be separated and sent to a special school:

So for me I find inclusion does not work for every child. And they seem to want [it] to work for every child, which does not work for every child. For me for a child to be able to progress and for you to see progress in that particular child, the child needs to be separated.

In the absence of appropriate and adequate resources and support to accompany inclusive education strategies, teachers will continue to share feelings similar to FGSLU2. The relationship between teacher preparation, attitudes, resources and support and policies is evident. Golder, Jones and Quinn (2009) posited that attitudes such as these can be curtailed or prevented by exposing pre-service and trainee teachers to knowledge about LSEN and inclusive education practices. They noted that trainee teachers who were placed in special education environments benefited professionally with an increased knowledge and understanding of special needs provision.

MOE policy actors and teacher participants agreed that training was an essential facilitator of increased positive attitudes towards LSEN and for the practice of inclusion. Avramidis and Norwich (2002, 188) noted that teacher attitudes can be a “major barrier to successful inclusion and that it can be influenced by a range of factors including availability of resources, teachers’ skills and knowledge or exposure to pupils with differences or difficulties”. Training in inclusive practices not only altered the negative attitudes of teachers, but increased their levels of confidence and belief in their ability to teach in an inclusive setting. Golder, Jones

and Quinn (2009, 186) reported that training “helped to develop their awareness of a range of teaching and learning strategies in relation to inclusive practice, thus serving to increase their professional confidence in their ability to respond to personalised need”. Abosi and Koay’s (2008, 7) research reported that:

Teacher training programme (sic) in most developing countries for special educators has not been given proper attention in its establishment and structure. This has caused acute shortage of special educators and negative attitude among ordinary teachers towards inclusive education.

The above finding by Abosi and Koay (2008) is consistent with the findings of this study and is demonstrated in chapter four. One MOE policy actor recounted the unsuccessful attempts at mobilising Chief Education Officers (CEOs) within the OECS region to influence the major teacher training institutions within the region to make inclusive education a mandatory aspect of the curriculum. In response to whether the MOE could influence the curriculum at teacher training colleges, she said:

That was brought up in the same CEO’s meeting I went to. We had somebody there from the joint board of teacher education at UWI [University of the West Indies] and she was saying ‘you are CEOs, you are the people who make teacher ed. happen, you have a say’. We’re supposed to come to the joint board of teacher education meeting and make our input. (PASKB1)

Bines and Lei (2011) observed that some countries have included in their teacher training curriculum additional approaches for teaching LSEN as one way of improving teacher proficiency in the area of inclusion. However they noted that these methods were inflexible and not used in practice because of insufficient expertise in the area, class size and a lack of resources. Peters’ (2003) research advocated for train-the-trainer systems using persons with disabilities as facilitators to improve levels of teacher professional development and skills in the area of inclusive practices, citing the success of such approaches in countries of the South. Similar approaches were reported in this study including using allotted staff development sessions to facilitate “little courses in different special ed. areas,” (PASKB3)

Participants in this study were correct in their understanding that increased training and interaction with LSEN for all teachers would positively impact the effective practice of inclusion by changing negative attitudes towards LSEN held by



teachers and the wider community. After being exposed to LSEN, teachers reported improved levels of confidence and coping skills as well as positive attitudinal changes. Ainscow et al. (2012) posited that current teachers' beliefs and school cultures needed to be changed for inclusion to be successful. Other research suggests that one way to proceed with this change was through increasing the experience, contact and interaction between LSEN and teachers (cf. Avramidis and Norwich 2002; Golder, Jones and Quinn 2009; O'Donoghue and Chalmers 2000; Peters 2003). Teachers should to be trained to work in inclusive school environments, and to have a greater knowledge of inclusive practices (Golder, Jones and Quinn 2009). They can be trained during their teacher training degree, or be exposed to in-service professional training. Administrators and school principals should also be trained in order to offer the necessary support to teachers (Conrad and Brown 2011; Peters 2003). Idol (2006, 94) suggested that "as teachers have more practice with inclusion, their acceptance and tolerance of students with disabilities in their classrooms seems to improve". Research by Yeung (2012) reported how attitudes of mainstream teachers changed when they visited inclusive schools and interacted with other teachers in what they described as 'professional sharing' activities.

In addition to insufficient training, teachers face many challenges in the practice of inclusion, and cannot be made to be solely responsible for the success or failure of inclusive education, especially since some of the barriers originate and exist outside of the classroom and have to be removed at the place of their origin (cf. Ainscow et al. 2012; Hodkinson; Peters 2003). Lloyd (2000) and Peters (2003) wrote that while it is important to train teachers in inclusive practices, if their condition of work was not improved they would be unable to effectively practice inclusion in their classrooms. Ainscow et al. (2012) went as far as suggesting that teachers be released from the constraints of national policy so that they can effect change within their context rather than be focussed on assessment targets. Issues such as class sizes, low wages, lack of resources, and inadequate infrastructure significantly impact teachers' ability to deliver quality inclusive education (Hodkinson 2010; Peters 2003).

### 8.1.3 Adaptations

The need for curricula accommodations and modifications for LSEN was of great concern to the majority of teacher participants. They explained how the lack of adaptations presented challenges to their teaching and the learning process for these students. While training for teachers is recognised as an important facilitator of inclusive education, in terms of affecting attitudinal changes, training teachers to accommodate LSEN within their classroom is also essential. Similarly, Mitchell (2015), along with other researchers (Downing and Peckham-Hardin 2007; Peters 2003; Pivik, McComas and LaFlamme 2002), contended that students with significant disabilities can access the core curriculum with the appropriate accommodations and modifications. For example, the legally blind student (SSLU1) who participated in this study reported her ability to participate in a food preparation practical with the help of an assistant who helped her to measure ingredients and in other areas. Teacher participants expressed the belief that teaching assistants and aides in the classrooms could widen the access to education for a number of LSEN with reading and behavioural difficulties. Other adaptations could include modifying the quantity of work for some LSEN who had issues with attention span and other learning difficulties. However, Peters' (2003) research corresponds with the participant teacher beliefs that for countries of the South, such as those in the OECS, curriculum adaptation for LSEN is still the exception rather than the norm, with a large number of LSEN remaining in segregated settings. Peters (2003, 67) also noted that "access and participation are highly interdependent and should be considered together. Students cannot actively participate in instruction if the curriculum is not accessible." As a barrier to inclusive education, the absence of curricula adaptations therefore directly impacts a students' access to equitable quality education and ability to learn.

The accessibility of the curriculum and thus quality education on a whole for many LSEN depends on modes of assessment as well as a modified curriculum. Data from this study indicate that principals and special education teachers were identifying the need for a more flexible curriculum and assessment methods, one that teachers could modify and use to meet the educational needs of diverse classrooms. A teacher gave the example of teachers trying "to force the curriculum down his or

her [LSEN] throat” in order “to fulfil certain things for national exams” (TSLU1). Situations like these result from curricula and assessments that are not modified to meet the needs of LSEN. UNESCO (2009) described an inclusive curriculum as one that takes issues of gender, cultural identity, as well as cognitive, emotional, social and creative development into consideration. The document emphasised the difference in student learning and stressed the importance of a flexible curriculum, outlining that a flexible curriculum is one that teachers can adjust to meet the individual needs, abilities and learning styles of children. By way of illustration, not allowing LSEN additional time to complete tasks or a reader, or some other support, essentially denies them full access to education and works contrary to the premise of inclusion. MOE policy actors and teachers admitted that examination modification in the schools of the OECS was a fairly new initiative. They also noted the unevenness in its practise as there was no policy in place in which to guide its provision.

Further, the data presented in this research corroborated the link between an inability for LSEN to access the curriculum due to a lack of accommodations and modifications, to the high dropout rate of LSEN and their failure to complete their education (cf. Peters 2003). Teachers reported that LSEN who were not able to “cope” in school would eventually dropout. LSEN choosing to cease their formal education had been a trend teachers reported observing for some time. Peters (2003, 33) noted that students were likely to drop out of school if the curriculum adaptations were irrelevant to “functional life skills” and suggested that the content of curriculum needed to be considered for individual students. She posited that while some efforts were made to adapt curricula, often less attention was paid to the content, relevancy and functionality of the curriculum itself to LSEN. Consequently, in order to facilitate the inclusion of LSEN within the education system, there exists a need for specialised curricula accommodations and modifications that meet the needs of these students.

Parent participants were concerned with the level of life skills training that their child was receiving at school. They saw the need for schools to prepare their LSEN for life, providing them with the tools to become independent adults. One way that was suggested to incorporate relevant curricula adaptations and promote relevancy to LSEN is to increase the access to more technical and vocational based

subjects to all students. Noting that LSEN typically tend to be more creative, making technical and vocational subjects available to these students could equip them with skills that would help them reach their full potential. The possibility that students with special needs could go on and engage in fulfilling careers despite their disabilities gave the teachers hope. Teachers reported that instead of focusing primarily on the academic curriculum as the main route to educational success, providing LSEN with the options for skills training broadened their access to education. Providing LSEN the opportunity to pursue subjects that were relevant to their needs and aspirations was suggested as an avenue to effectively including them in the education system. Lloyd (2000) questioned the concept of 'success' in education, and argued that the curriculum and assessment cannot be seen to be the only ways to achieve educational success. In support of widening the curriculum to subjects that are relevant to the needs of LSEN, Lloyd (2000, 43) also noted that "the curriculum for excellence needs to go beyond the emphasis on reading and math".

How LSEN were accommodated during national assessments emerged from the data as one of the areas where effective inclusive practices needed to be visible. Gül and Vuran (2015) reported that the success of LSEN was dependent on the adaptations teachers made on the dimensions of content, process and product. They described 'content' as involving what is being taught, and the 'process' as relating to the pedagogical practices, and the 'product' linked to how student learning was assessed. Consequently, the failure to provide LSEN with the appropriate and adequate adaptations directly impacts on how they access their education and acted as a barrier to their full and equitable participation within the education system. The example a teacher gave of her interaction with an overlooked LSEN, a recent Chinese immigrant student, who by changing the method of assessment (the product), and reading assessment questions aloud to the student, rather than have her try to read them herself, increased that child's ability to comprehend and fully participate in her learning. Mitchell (2015) made two suggestions for inclusive assessment adaptations: i) assessments with accommodations and ii) alternate assessments. Particularly, alternate assessments involve measuring student progress by collecting information under different conditions such as teacher observations and work produced during regular classes. Similarly, Gül and Vuran (2015) identified 'qualitative adaptations', which deals with levels of content difficulties, and

‘quantitative adaptations’, which addresses the amount of content covered. Therefore, adaptations may vary according to the “situation, lesson or activity” (Mitchell 2015, 16), including the same assignments but with a reduced number of items, or a completely streamlined curriculum where the assignments are reduced to emphasise the key points. Research participants reported that some LSEN needed extra time, a reader, braille, a different venue or breaks during assessments. Thus, their suggestions that adaptations should be made according to the assessment needs of LSEN are warranted (cf. Downing and Peckham-Hardin 2007; Gül and Vuran 2015; Mitchell 2015).

The special education teachers and students who were interviewed in this study reported the usage of cooperative group teaching and peer tutoring as strategies that were in practice in the classrooms. It was suggested, however, that some general education teachers did not engage in these adaptive strategies because they were not trained in their application, and because they felt that including LSEN would be too much work. This notion has been dispelled by O'Donoghue and Chalmers' (2000) research that suggested that teachers need not make ‘radical’ or ‘wholesale’ changes to their existing teaching practices in order to accommodate a student with disabilities in their class. Pivik, McComas and LaFlamme (2002) found that when accommodation efforts were undertaken, student participation improved as well as teacher confidence. Mitchell (2015) outlined twelve strategies that have been shown to be effective in meeting the diverse learning needs of students. Some of these include those suggested by participants and are; review and practice, cooperative group teaching; peer tutoring, and memory strategies. In addition, Downing and Peckham-Hardin (2007) proposed that it is the comprehensive provision of the appropriate curricular adaptations and accommodations, strong school leadership, teamwork, resources and support, and parental involvement, that work towards the maintenance of successful inclusive education for LSEN.

#### 8.1.4 Resources and support

An investment in the physical facilities, resources and equipment at schools were among the suggestions made by principals, DPO's and teachers to governments as part of the successful inclusive practices for students in the education system, a suggestion supported by other research (see also Opertti, Brady and Duncombe

2009; Pivik, McComas and LaFlamme 2002). An example teachers gave was that of students who had challenges accessing quality education because they were unable to gain access to a building: “Even just as simple as putting in a couple of ramps around the schools so kids with physical disabilities with a wheelchair, maybe have crutches... they can’t walk up those stairs, they can’t get to those classrooms,” (TFGANU1). Ferguson (2008) described accommodations as ranging from assistive technology to lighting and includes supports such as furniture that fit students’ physical needs. In conjunction with the need to adapt and modify the curricula and assessment process, the availability of infrastructural physical resources and supports are considered by teacher and principal research participants to be just as important for the effective inclusion of LSEN into the mainstream education system (Abosi and Koay 2008; Operti, Brady and Duncombe 2009; Peters 2003). Ensuring the physical environment in which LSEN are being taught is equipped with the necessary facilities to guarantee they can successfully access their learning was a point raised by members of DPOs, teachers and parents. Integral to the successful implementation of inclusion in schools is the availability and suitability of institutions to house the diverse student populations found in the OECS. Drame and Kamphoff (2014) suggested that these simple infrastructural adaptations would allow students previously excluded by physical barriers to access schools and, by extension, learning.

Mitchell (2015) discussed the need for the equitable resourcing of classrooms and schools. This included ensuring adequate physical access to and within the rooms by providing facilities such as ramps and lifts, and adapting toilets and doorways. However, teacher participants complained about the challenges posed by inappropriately designed classrooms that did not facilitate inclusive learning: “Some classrooms are parted with blackboard, so you hearing that teacher, that teacher next to me there I have to listen to,” (TSLU1). The design of classrooms, taking into consideration the placement of furniture, ventilation, as well as acoustics and lighting, work together to include all learners within the classroom setting. Likewise, Peters (2003) provided an extensive summary of the infrastructural needs of the school environment in order to successfully facilitate the inclusion of all students, especially LSEN, which included building schools to facilitate inclusion. The apparent success of the introduction of student desks modified to include a stationary

bike providing stimulation to help students stay focused (Lynch 2016) supports the theory that students that are provided with the necessary innovative resources functioned better in class and experienced an increase in academic success.

The presence of infrastructural supports can also positively impact the attitude of teachers towards inclusion (Avramidis and Norwich 2002). This research revealed that teachers felt limited in their classroom management options because of the lack of space and access to adequate education resources and supports. They opined that the small size of classrooms removed alternatives such as group teaching, and a lack of funding prevented bigger classrooms and other infrastructural amenities from being built. Principals confirmed the lack of facilities for students to engage in carpentry, pottery and other technical and vocational subjects that were discussed as options for widening the subject choice for LSEN. Inclusive school environments require not only the obvious physical access, but also a meaningful facilitative climate that enables learning. One of the ways of evaluating the inclusiveness of a school is through taking a look at the structural environment (Pivik, McComas and LaFlamme 2002). Peters' (2003) research reported that it was often cheaper to rebuild rather than retrofit older buildings. As such, OECS governments would need to engage in a mixture of new construction and retrofitting exercises to fulfil the inclusive vision of teachers, principals and students.

The use of information technology (IT) as a means of including LSEN was repeatedly mentioned by teacher participants. Teachers reported how the use of computer technology in the classroom have, and could further complement LSEN engagement in lessons and the manner in which their students responded positively to its use, even in a limited capacity. Students reported using tablets and computers to help them with subjects such as mathematics, through lessons delivered as games on IT devices. A student expressed his love of the IT lab where he liked "playing games, playing educational games," (SSLU4). Technology as a means of opening up creative avenues for learning and achievement for students was also on the agenda of DPOs. This research found cases of DPOs offering courses that could equip students for their future employment, as well as providing student members with the assistive technology they needed to immediately succeed at school. This was the case of the blind student who was provided with IT software and other devices that helped her to

access the curricula. Hence, the role of DPOs in facilitating inclusion cannot be ignored. Not having access to the essential technological and other learning aids severely limited the efficient practice of inclusion in schools. Utilizing IT software and equipment in schools has increased and has the potential to improve learning as a part of the curricula, and generally making learning more inclusive (Operti, Brady and Duncombe 2009). Avramidis and Norwich (2002) reported that teachers who utilized a combination of teaching materials, IT equipment and human resources such as therapists and learning support assistants, exhibited more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of LSEN in their classrooms. However, Loreman (2007, 34) cautioned that the opportunities technology offered should be used wisely, elaborating that a computer used only for word processing was merely an “expensive pen”. Furthermore, technology not only needs to be purchased, maintained, repaired and updated, but requires technological support, and on-going training.

The availability of physical and human supportive structures has been associated with the development of positive attitudes towards inclusion (Avramidis and Norwich 2002). The opposite is also true in that the lack of such supports effectively becomes a barrier to inclusion. A significant finding during the data analysis of participant interviews revealed how teachers and principals experienced feelings of neglect and isolation. Special education teachers both at the special and general education schools, however, affirmed that they primarily had the emotional support of their school principals. This finding confirms Idol’s (2006) analysis, which found that most principals were noted as being highly supportive of their teachers’ inclusive practices. However, as noted by MOE policy actors, not all OECS principals supported inclusive education based on the perceived effect it would have on the school’s academic ranking. The importance of support of inclusion by school leaders has been identified as critical for the practice of inclusion in schools (Idol 2006; Mitchell 2015). Ineffective and unsupportive leadership has been recognised as being a barrier to inclusive education (Avramidis and Norwich 2002; Idol 2006; McMaster 2012; Mitchell 2015; Yeung 2012). School leaders, according to Mitchell (2015) and Avramidis and Norwich (2002), need to be effective in advocating the equitable distribution of scarce resources as this plays a role in the development of positive attitudes towards inclusion.



Teachers reported an overall lack of support from parents, colleagues and the MOE. Aside from a lack of resource funding, teachers also felt that the MOE was not fully committed to the implementation of inclusion and this was reflected in their lack of attention to special education schools and students. One comment epitomises participant sentiment: “we need a lot more help and a lot of guidance and we don’t get it” (TFGSKB4). The importance of good leadership for inclusion is thereby not relegated to just principals and teachers, but also includes legislators and policy makers (Mitchell 2015), again reinforcing the interconnectedness of the barriers to inclusion. Bines and Lei (2011) advocated for training in inclusive practices for a range of stakeholders including education officials and school leaders. Abosi and Koay (2008) also noted that it was not uncommon to find departments in charge of the implementation of special education being led by persons without the relevant qualifications and experience, which further contributed to a lack of cooperation and progress in the area. Inclusive education therefore goes beyond the mere placement of students, it involves the provision of resources and support and a change to entire education systems (cf. Lloyd 2000; Stubbs 2008). Ainscow and Sandill (2010, 407) observed that teachers must feel supported as well as challenged in “their responsibility to keep exploring more effective ways of facilitating the learning of all students” as their beliefs and attitudes establish the context in which students learn.

### 8.1.5 Attitudes and perceptions

This study found a range of established misconceptions and beliefs about what a disability is and what it means to be disabled in the education systems of the OECS. Data in this research highlights how these misconceptions and beliefs continue to act as a barrier to inclusive education practices. The literature has reported how the attitudes of teachers and students within the classroom can either hinder or facilitate successful inclusive practices (Ainscow et al. 2012; Allweiss and Grant 2013; Peters 2003; Smith and Leonard 2005). Smith and Leonard (2005, 277-278) posited that the positive or negative attitude of teachers towards LSEN is the “most important condition for success or failure of any inclusion initiative”. Negative attitudes towards LSEN often results in acts of discrimination, but does not only reside within teachers, but also in their student peers, parents, and the wider society. One parent reported on her negative interaction with the teacher of her

autistic sons: "...I could have seen it on the teacher's face, like they did not want to deal with it..." (PSLU1). Established negative attitudes that are present within societies have resulted in parents and others feeling ashamed or guilty because of their child's disability, and this often results in lowered expectations or acts of sheltering and patronization (Goffman 1963; Peters 2003). A comment by a special education teacher confirms this reaction by some parents:

They don't want nobody to know that their children are coming to special ed. you know and they know their friends going say 'oh your child go there', 'why you send your child there'? So instead of thinking about the child's wellbeing, they thinking about what other people going [to] say. (TFGSKB2)

Parents and other family members encounter what Gray (1993) called 'courtesy stigma'; negative stigma conferred on them due to their relationship with a disabled child. Teachers interviewed for this study reported that the stigma and label of 'special education' acted as a deterrent to parents enrolling their children in the special education schools. Shifrer (2013) described the labelling element of stigma as accepting the categorising of differences. He noted that disabilities were mainly a social construct which is evident in the case of students with learning disabilities, and was based on relative and inconsistent criteria. The social exclusion experienced by many LSEN in developing countries is a direct result of societal attitudes towards variables such as ability, gender, race and social class (Ainscow and Sandill 2010).

The negative attitudes of teachers in this study towards LSEN and inclusion can be attributed to a lack of professional training that could enable teachers to successfully handle a diverse student population in classrooms that are poorly resourced. Shifrer (2013, 465-466) stated that "people who confer stigma have the power to separate and control access to major life domains". He identified those persons as teachers who help to perpetuate medical and deficiency oriented labels through the development and sharing of evaluations that categorise students as having special education needs. Thus, there is a need to dispel myths about disability that exist in many societies if the implementation of inclusion in schools is to be successful (Peters 2003). Ballard (2013) called for the creation of a non-disabling society, noting social, political and cultural prejudices as barriers to inclusion. Shifrer (2013) citing Goffman (1963) stated that disabled students were often stigmatised because they do not adhere to the norms of society. Some teachers felt

that teaching LSEN was ‘too much work’, reinforcing the negative attitudes some educators have towards supporting inclusive environments (see also Smith and Leonard 2005). An example of this is seen in the following quote from a special education teacher:

After I finish teaching and entering them back into the system, sometimes it does be a problem because teachers will be like, ‘oh they don’t want them there’, they coming from special-ed and they going to keep back the class. (TFGSKB1)

However, not all teachers’ attitudes were negative with some teachers reporting they had both positive and negative opinions of inclusion:

I understand its equality, and we’re fighting for equality, and I understand these things, but some of these children just need to get a special school. Some of them just need that sort of separation where their needs can be met. Especially if we’re dealing with the public system and we have curriculum mandated things to submit [and] to deal with. (TFGSLU1)

While it is true that some teachers had negative attitudes towards LSEN, this study suggests that the negative attitudes were as a result of inadequate resources and support, and a lack of knowledge about managing diversity in the classroom. Some teachers were ambivalent in what they considered the ‘best placement’ for LSEN. Although they held positive views towards inclusion for specific cases, they suggested a segregated setting may be in the best interests of the LSEN, the teachers and the other students. Gal, Schreur and Engel-Yeger (2010) reported finding similar ambivalent views noting that some teachers with generally positive attitudes towards inclusion held specifically negative perceptions about certain disabilities, such as behavioural or emotional disabilities that sometimes presented bigger challenges. The special education teachers who took part in this study also held very positive views towards inclusion, yet were apprehensive about the feasibility of its practice. In these cases the link between the lack of resources and support, as well as policy gaps and the formation of negative attitudes towards inclusion are most evident.

General education teachers and students may face a similar issue in that while they support inclusion in principle, because of a lack of exposure to inclusive settings, they retain some of their prejudices towards the disabled. Consequently, parent PANU1 commented that parents needed to include their children in activities and “bring them with us”, signifying the belief that increased contact and interaction

with the disabled can spur change. This was a view supported by other participants. A principal reported that she had an 'open door' policy to encourage parents and members of the community to visit the schools. Students too have been shown to undergo a change of attitude towards their disabled peers through a process of contact (Krahé and Altwasser 2006; Lupu, Cernat and Petre 2011; Smith and Forrester-Jones 2014; Yeung 2012). Similarly, the positive attitudinal effect of contact with LSEN for students without disabilities has also been noted (Campbell 2006; Krahé and Altwasser 2006; Smith and Forrester-Jones 2014). Lupu, Cernat and Petre (2011) found that abled students' perceptions of LSEN changed through constructive discussions and meaningful interactions with LSEN. Yeung (2012) suggested that attitudes can be changed through interaction after discovering that the attitudes of mainstream teachers changed when they visited the partnering special education school and interacted with other teachers and students in what was described as 'professional sharing' activities. To that end, Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000) argued that early and continuous exposure to LSEN was essential for pre- and in-service teachers in order to foster positive attitudes towards LSEN and facilitate inclusion. However, Smith and Forrester-Jones (2014) cautioned that the type and quality of contact mattered in cultivating more positive attitudes towards students with disabilities.

Based on the results of this study, not all parents were actively advocating for their child. Parents' lack of support in school activities and in homework was a reoccurring topic for teachers, who suggested that this was most likely from a lack of interest, knowledge and negative stigma. Campbell (2006) explains how negative stigma is an attitude which is based on negative stereotypes. Additionally, Gray (1993) wrote that stigma was one of the most difficult aspects of public encounters experienced by families with a disabled child, and this resulted in them isolating themselves and their child. Case (2000) wrote about the parental reactions of revulsion, anger, guilt and embarrassment in response to news of their child's disability. Other literature also identify parental attitudes as being a barrier to the participation of disabled children in the education system (Peters 2003; Pivik, McComas and LaFlamme 2002). Parents' negative reactions can either stem from personal or interpersonal perceptions of adjusting to the disability diagnosis of their

child (cf. Case 2000), and is one of the major barriers to inclusion of LSEN in the OECS.

### 8.1.6 Bullying

An important finding of this study in respect of student bullying is the occurrence of bullying among the student population of special education schools. It was often the case that students who were bullied become bullies themselves and engaging in fights. However, it should be noted that this was sometimes as a result of being provoked. This finding is also one identified by other researchers (cf. Rose, Monda-Amaya and Espelage 2011). Bullying has been identified as another aspect of negative stigma resulting in discrimination and negative attitudes and behaviours towards persons with disabilities (Houchins, Peia Oakes and Johnson 2016). Bullying behaviours are often based on power imbalances and are characterised by repeated aggressive behaviours expressed during interactions between individuals, resulting in emotional, physical or social harm (Houchins, Peia Oakes and Johnson 2016; Rose and Monda-Amaya 2012). In mainstream schools, LSEN were more likely to be involved in bullying incidents than their abled peers (Houchins, Peia Oakes and Johnson 2016). As such, parental fears such as the one expressed by PANU1 about the possibilities of his Down syndrome child being bullied in a general education school, were not unfounded. Parent participants expressed fears that their LSEN would be exposed to more bullying in a mainstream setting with a teacher who was not appropriately trained for inclusion.

Pivik, McComas and LaFlamme (2002, 102) presented two types of attitudinal barriers to inclusion: ‘intentional’ and ‘unintentional’. Intentional bullying manifests as physical actions and typically resulted in isolation for the LSEN. Emotional bullying was experienced by the majority of student participants. It involves name calling, ridiculing and labelling. For example student SFGSKB2 reported being called “specie” and student SFGSLU2 said he was called “lady gorgor” a derogatory form of the special education school’s name. Student participants reported feelings of sadness and anger at being labelled ‘disabled’ and being called names. Upon further questioning, some students indicated they would prefer to attend mainstream schools as a way to avoid the negative stigma associated with special needs. This is also reflected in Norwich and Kelly’s (2004) research,

which reported how negative labels and names were direct associations of the child's disability or the special education school they attended, and was a result of the negative stigma attached to special education provision. While they would not entirely avoid the stigma attached to special needs provision, participating LSEN felt that this would be less in a general education setting, where it would be less likely for some of them to be easily recognised as having a disability, and thus avoiding some of the stigma.

### 8.1.7 Education, awareness and advocacy

Research participants noted that as much as negative attitudes can be a barrier to inclusive practices, positive attitudes towards inclusion and students with special education needs can act as a facilitator to inclusion in the education system and the wider society. Patience and tolerance towards LSEN and their inclusion into mainstream schools and society have been identified by teachers, MOE policy actors and parents as necessary for the successful practice of inclusion in OECS schools. Concurring with the need for positive attitudinal change, Peters (2003, 35) suggested that “a personal change process appears to be important for changing attitudes as part of the process of teaching and learning”. As teacher participants shared their experiences and feelings of reward from working with LSEN, they all hastened to add that it was a job that required “patience”. Yeung (2012) also reported the importance of patience as a quality for teachers of LSEN to have in order to nurture their potential to achieve. Tolerance is another quality emphasised by the teachers, policy actors and parents as playing a part in the effective inclusive practice. Students, teachers, parents and society as a whole needed to demonstrate tolerance if discrimination against students with disabilities was to end. UNESCO's (2005, 28) *Guidelines for Inclusion: Ensuring Access to Education for All*, advocated for school curricula to include tools “for tolerance and acceptance of diversity”. The document suggested that through such an initiative the negative stigma attached to certain disabilities and the resulting discrimination could be reduced.

Suggestions of the use of media and other awareness campaigns in the promotion of more positive attitudes towards LSEN and as a way to tackle the negative stigma and discrimination faced by LSEN was put forward by every group participating in this study. Parents spoke of public education campaigns as a means

of sensitising the public and removing the negative stereotypes associated with the disabled. Teachers and MOE policy actors agreed that raising awareness not only prevented negative stigma by increasing knowledge and awareness, but also taught others how to interact with the disabled. DPOs had always been at the forefront of advocacy and lobbying campaigns for the rights of the disabled, and members of DPOs who participated in this research reported that they continued to do so using avenues such as strategic partnerships and mass media campaigns. A multifaceted approach of using mass media campaigns, workshops, and the production of reading material as tools to encourage positive attitudinal and behavioural change has been reported. Baum (2008) reported the success of mass media campaigns when they occurred within supportive environments. Media is used most effectively in social marketing campaigns when they are accompanied by necessary structural change that empowers the target population to act. There is a need to create social and economic environments to facilitate and enable behavioural change, which includes the development of messages based on relevant data (Baum 2008; Croft 2013).

Teachers, members of DPOs and MOE policy actor participants described engaging in several activities aimed at prompting positive behaviour change among parents and the wider society. Behaviour change theories have long been used as the foundation for interventions that target attitudinal changes. Bandura's (1977) social learning theory has been used by researchers as a basis to attitudinal change interventions (see also de Boer et al., 2014; Roberts and Smith 1999). Bandura's theory contends that persons are more likely to engage in behaviour if they believe the outcome will be positive, and if they believe that they are able to accomplish the desired outcome (Baum 2008). Roberts and Smith (1999, 46) concur:

When children perceived interaction and friendship behaviour toward peers with disabilities to be relatively easy to perform they readily expressed an intention to engage in these behaviours. However, when the behaviours were perceived as difficult or requiring greater amounts of effort, then children expressed fewer intentions to interact with peers with disabilities, even given a positive attitude toward such students.

It is necessary to provide abled students with the knowledge and skills needed for them to positively view their interactions with disabled peers. The exposure and empowering education should result in children not only having intentions to interact with LSEN, but feel at ease in doing so (Roberts and Smith 1999). Azjen's (1988)

theory of planned behaviour, which later became the theory of reasoned action (Roberts and Smith 1999; de Boer et al., 2014), when used in an inclusive education context, sought to establish environments in which negative attitudes towards disabilities and inclusion were reduced, thereby making the way for a more equitable practice. Interventions of longer durations were found to be more effective (de Boer et al., 2014; Krahe and Altwasser 2006) and should also be age appropriate to teach the positive behaviours they are trying to inculcate (Houchins, Peia Oakes and Johnson 2016). Providing parents with a role in such intervention campaigns is necessary for the program's success, as parents play a vital role in shaping and developing children's attitudes (de Boer et al., 2014; Houchins, Peia Oakes and Johnson 2016; Rose, Monda-Amaya and Espelage 2011).

Interventions and strategies targeting an increase in more positive student and teacher attitudes towards disabilities and inclusion have been the focus of inclusive and special education research (de Boer et al., 2014; Houchins, Peia Oakes and Johnson 2016; Roberts and Smith 1999; Rose and Monda-Amaya 2012; Rose, Monda-Amaya and Espelage 2011). These interventions and strategies ranged in target audiences and included students, families, schools and the wider society. Peters (2003) noted that attitudes can be changed through comprehensive education and training, and by building awareness, inclusive policies can gain the momentum needed to be positively practiced within schools and classrooms. Abosi and Koay (2008) contend that attitudes are changeable and suggest that information be spread through 'propaganda' and other information giving techniques such as lectures and seminars, pamphlets and other structured methods. Authors have found that a combined approach to interventions was most effective in reducing negative attitudes towards LSEN. A study by Krahe and Altwasser (2006) found that a combination of cognitive and behavioural intervention strategies increased the possibility of changing negative attitudes when integrated into a school setting. Research by de Boer et al., (2014) suggested that a combination of knowledge and experience, where knowledge is acquired first, was most effective in changing negative attitudes. They suggested that knowledge focusing on understanding the needs of LSEN would help to reduce misunderstandings and feelings of pity by teachers and students. They also stressed that behavioural and attitudinal change interventions needed to be constantly revisited and reinforced for maximum effect. Participant teachers and students



suggested that school engagement is an essential part of academic achievement and inclusion. Frawley (2014) wrote that if students felt attached to the school or teacher, they were more likely to stay at that school. Schoolwide interventions that helped to cultivate positive school cultures by encouraging social awareness were viewed by Rose, Monda-Amaya and Espelage (2011) as a means of reducing occurrences of bullying. For these positive cultures to be established, teachers should be trained in classroom management techniques that involve positive behaviour supports.

#### 8.1.8 Parental involvement

A high level of effective parental support for the education of LSEN was found to be lacking in this study. The role of parents as valuable resource personnel and partners in the successful practice of inclusion has been widely researched (Carrington and Duke 2014; Drame and Kamphoff 2014; Peters 2003; UNESCO 2009). Parents have been identified as key supports in the development of inclusive schools and societies through the promotion of the acceptance of difference and other sensitising activities. Parents are the ones who see firsthand the effects of alienation on their child and are well placed to advocate on their behalf (Bunch 2008; Peters 2003; Pivik, McComas and LaFlamme 2002; Yeung 2012). Parental participation as advocates and lobbyists was viewed by Peters (2003) as integral in involving other parents to send their LSEN to school and become involved in their education. Parents have been identified in the literature as key partners in education with parent groups and parent led DPOs being major advocates for inclusive education (Ferguson 2008; Peters 2003). Students with disabilities whose families participate in their education are likely to stay in school longer and have greater levels of participation and achievement at school (Ferguson 2008). Parental participation, however, can be challenged by issues such as poverty (Stubbs 2008), or attitudinal barriers and perceived power inequities (Burke and Goldman 2016). Ferguson (2008) suggested that teachers and parents may have different ideas of participation in student learning. While the focus of teachers may be on ways in which parents can reinforce what they teach at school with home based activities, parents may be more reluctant due to a sense of academic inferiority (Hornby and Lafaele 2011). Hornby and Lafaele (2011) proposed that both parents and teachers should be aware of the different circumstances, attitudes, histories, cultural and

educational backgrounds that each brings to the table. Burke and Goldman (2016), Hornby and Lafaele (2011), and Lai and Vadeboncoeur (2012) all cautioned that the technical jargon and pedagogical language teachers used in communicating with parents, and the ways in which it could be intimidating in its unfamiliarity, also acted as barriers to parental involvement.

The OECS education systems are built on the assumption that everyone has a specific level and type of cultural capital, but in reality people have varying levels of cultural capital often depending on their social class. The link between the ways in which parents who possess different levels of cultural capital affect the education of their child was evident in this research. Parent PANU1 was able to collaborate with others to establish a school where his daughter could be educated, while PSLU2, temporarily educated her daughter at home due to a lack of economic and cultural capital. Drame and Kamphoff (2014) noted similar circumstances in that parents with cultural and economic capital were able to fund the necessary adjustments needed for their child's access and success in the regular school system, while others had to see their children do without these necessary resources. Ferguson (2008) makes reference to Bourdieu's (1984) theory of cultural capital in seeking to explain the interactions between some parents and educators. Cultural capital is being familiar with, and being able to use the ideas, knowledge and language associated with education of the dominant culture of society (Sullivan 2002). In a climate such as this, schools should to be proactive in involving parents in the inclusive process (Peters 2003) as they may be reluctant for several of these reasons. In doing so, parents become more familiar with the culture of education and schooling.

This study confirmed that both parents and teachers held positive views on parental involvement in the education of students and have a desire to increase and enhance it. Yet, while the views on parental involvement are positive, the actual participation is lacking, resulting in teachers and schools being despondent with the levels of participation shown by parents of LSEN (cf. Ferguson 2008; Hornby and Lafaele 2011). Research cautioned that the sophisticated language and education jargon used by teachers and in policy documents may act as barriers to parental involvement (cf. Burke and Goldman 2016; Hornby and Lafaele 2011; Lai and Vadeboncoeur 2012), hence the importance of cultural capital. Parents' view of their

ability to impact their child's development and educational outcomes influences how involved they become with their child's education and school. Participant teachers indicated that some parents had special needs themselves and may avoid participating in that child's educational development (cf. Hornby and Lafaele 2011; Lai and Vadeboncoeur 2012). The negative impact this had on the education of LSEN was highlighted during this study. Teachers indicated that this could be one of the reasons for parents' unwillingness to participate and advocate on behalf of their child. Despite this limitation, Hornby and Lafaele (2011) and Lai and Vadeboncoeur (2012) argued that partnerships cannot be one-sided, or seem to fulfil the agendas and goals of only one group: they should include parent engagement with the school and the school's engagement with the parent. Ferguson (2008) noted that within these linkages, persons must be culturally aware and critically reflective.

The collaboration and active participation between key stakeholders in education including parents is the foundation on which inclusive education must be built (Bunch 2008). However, Lloyd's (2000) research findings cautions that in some cases parents are the root cause of a child's SEN, and thus parental involvement is not always an adequate or appropriate response. Situations of child abuse and neglect could result in behavioural and developmental challenges for some students. These and other issues must be taken into consideration during the discussions of inclusive education policy development, implementation process and practice.

### 8.1.9 Collaborating and networking

The findings of this study highlighted not only the need for more collaborative activities, but the varied ways in which teachers, parents and DPOs were already engaging with each other and establishing important facilitative networks. The participants reported teamwork within regular teacher meetings to plan individualized education programs (IEPs), or preparing a colleague for the presence of an LSEN joining their class. This act of informing a new class teacher of the future presence of a LSEN is referred to as 'debriefing' by Gül and Vuran (2015). Teachers that collaborate on inclusive practices are more likely to see successes in the implementation process (Smith and Leonard 2005). Principals must also demonstrate their commitment to collaborative networks and engagements, as it not only empowers teachers to work as a team, but also fosters their collaborative

skills and problem solving abilities. Collaborative relationships help in knowledge sharing and best practice, as well as building a sense of community and a common purpose (Curcic et al. 2001). Conrad and Brown (2011) reported how consultative collaboration was used in Trinidad to provide teacher training opportunities in special education and to further advocacy for special education reform.

Collaboration and networking are similar concepts that involve the coming together of stakeholders from various groups, both government and non-government (Ainscow and Sandill 2010; Curcic et. al. 2011; Miles, Lene and Merumeru 2014; Opertti, Brady and Duncombe 2009; Peters 2003; Smith and Leonard 2005). Ensuring the access to equitable education for LSEN and the removal of barriers requires a multisectoral approach and necessitates the collaboration between policy actors, teachers, DPOs and members of the community (Mitchell 2015; UNESCO 2009). Inclusive structures are implicitly collaborative (McMaster 2012) and at the core of establishing effective inclusive cultures within the school and community (Curcic et. al. 2011). Mitchell (2015, 24) wrote: “Successful collaboration depends on such factors as establishing clear goals, defining respective roles, adopting a problem-solving approach, and establishing mutual trust and respect. Those involved should also be trained in the principles of collaboration”. Establishing networks aimed at improving student success requires teachers to work as a team in the OECS.

Collaboration between schools and counsellors, speech and physical therapists and other para-professionals that provide services to students with disabilities was conveyed as essential for the successful practice of inclusion by teachers, parents and MOE policy actors. The research participants suggested that partnerships that foster positive inclusive practices should be established between organisations that offer support services, government agencies, as well as parent organisations and DPOs. Cross-disciplinary collaborations are necessary in the effort to mitigate the challenges posed in seeking to educate diverse student populations (cf. Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle 2000; Curcic et. al. 2011). Furthermore, according to Halinen and Järvinen (2008), successful inclusion requires the cultivation of local, national and regional cultures and traditions through which the equitable participation of all members of society is sought and embraced. Importantly, inclusive policies must be made in conjunction with other social

policies that enable and support their implementation (Operti, Brady and Duncombe 2009). Curcic et al. (2011) suggested the need for collaborative relationships that facilitated the sharing of ideas and expertise as well as the development of creative problem solving ideas. Ferguson (2008, 116) reported that teaching in groups resulted in better learning outcomes for students, since “teachers with different skills and expertise help each other respond to student learning needs, but also leads to effective and ongoing professional development”. Teamwork as a means to facilitate inclusion not only happens among teachers and other stakeholders, but also students. Teacher participants reported placing their LSEN in groups in which they were encouraged to work together to problem solve as a team. This technique is consistent with that found in Lloyd’s (2000) work. Group learning also resulted in the transformation of negative attitudes of teachers and students in Yeung’s (2012) study.

Collaboration and networking should also take place between countries as is the intention of the Education Development Management Unit (EDMU) (OECS 2013). According to its director, working within the established network of the OECS, the EDMU regularly facilitates collaboration between MOE’s in the sub-region. Peters (2003) suggested that collaborative activities can be used to mitigate some of the challenges of inclusion for countries of the South. A study by Miles and Singal (2010, 12) promoted collaboration between countries of the South, as they saw this as essential to the development of policies and practices of inclusion that were “culturally and contextually appropriate”. The study by Miles, Lene and Merumeru (2014, 350) looked at the levels of networking between Pacific islands, island nations similar to those of the Eastern Caribbean, concluding that “networking can provide an opportunity to develop contextually and culturally appropriate responses to the needs and shared experiences of island communities, which in turn will promote reflection on decision-making processes”. Ainscow and Sandill (2010) suggested that networking, the system of sharing ideas and best practices among schools, departments and the community, is a key strategy in inclusion. For the introduction of inclusive practices to be effective, however, positive relationships need to be formed among the stakeholders involved. Collaboration is not always easy to achieve, especially in an education policy climate that stresses school accountability (Curcic *et. al.* 2011). This was concurred by participants and Ainscow

and Sandill (2010) who noted that bureaucracy and red tape can act to impede the process of collaboration, as its structures do not facilitate collaboration.

## 8.2 Summary

The chapter explored the eight major barriers to and facilitators of inclusion of LSEN within the education systems of the OECS which emerged during the course of the research. The eight themes were discussed within the context of existing literature. The discussion highlighted that both positive and negative outcomes can manifest within the same general theme, based on the levels of absence and presence. The absence of policy documents to guide the implementation of inclusive practices acts as a barrier to the effective practice of inclusion in schools; however, culturally appropriate policy documents have been posited as active facilitators of inclusion in schools. The same has been identified in the other themes: teacher training and professional development; adaptations; resources and support; attitudes and perceptions; building awareness and advocacy; parental involvement and collaborating and networking, in that when they are present, they act as facilitators to the inclusion of LSEN, but in absence, bars their inclusion into schools and hinders the access LSEN have to equitable quality education. Hence, a level of purpose must guide education stakeholders in order to strengthen supportive structures and engage in the transformation of inclusive barriers into facilitators. Inclusion takes more than a one-dimensional approach; it requires governments to move beyond rhetoric on the issue to the development of strategic plans focused on effective implementation. Successful inclusion demands that governments make the commitment to support the creation of inclusive environments focused on problem solving that takes into consideration local conditions, families, community initiatives and needs. Therefore, providing access to education for students with special education needs is not the sole goal of inclusion. The goal of inclusion is to provide the most effective learning environment for all students.

The failure to implement appropriate policies supporting inclusion was identified by research participant teachers, parents and DPOs as a major barrier to the inclusion of LSEN in schools in the OECS sub- region. Infrastructural changes are also needed, as well as funding for the provision of necessary resources and

support. Neglecting these vital provisions and failing to ensure that teachers are adequately trained to function in diverse classrooms have been shown to negatively impact on the positive attitudes of teachers towards the disabled and inclusive education. Teachers should be adequately trained, have access to essential resources and experience, as well as improved working conditions. Interventions targeting positive behavioural and attitudinal change towards the disabled should be conducted in facilitative environments in order to be successful. While collaborating and networking has been proven to be essential for inclusive practice, stakeholders must ensure that they respect the views of all members of any interdisciplinary team. This study has demonstrated that schools and teachers are not the only challenges in the education of LSEN and cannot be the only solution for the problem of inequalities. Society must also seek to address some of the socio-cultural issues that are acting as barriers to inclusion. The following concluding chapter will outline several recommendations if countries of the OECS are to convert inclusive education barriers into facilitators.

## Chapter Nine Conclusion

This research found the barriers to and facilitators of the inclusion of learners with special education needs within the education systems of the islands of the Eastern Caribbean to be varied, complex, interconnected and interdependent. This investigation spanned the countries of Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Lucia, all members of the intergovernmental sub-regional body known as the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). On each island, interactions with members of the five participating groups yielded significant insight, with eight major themes emerging from the data collected. The special education teachers and students as well as parents, Ministry of Education (MOE) policy actors and members of disabled people organisations (DPOs) all made valuable contributions that shed light on the significant factors that hindered the successful practice of inclusion of learners with special education needs (LSEN) in schools. Empirical in nature, through its focus on highlighting the experiences of the participants, this study discovered that each emergent theme had the potential to be both a barrier and a facilitator of the successful inclusion of LSEN in schools.

This final chapter reflects on and highlights the findings of this research within the context of their significance to the inclusion of LSEN into the education systems of the OECS. It begins by examining the research findings regarding the consequences of the absence of specific policy to guide the implementation of inclusion strategies. The chapter also discusses how a lack of policy negatively affects the provision of relevant curricula and assessment adaptations to meet the educational needs of LSEN, and the way in which the provision of inadequate resources and support for teachers and students further excludes LSEN from accessing equitable quality education. In addition, it is clear that insufficient teacher preparation, the prevalence of negative attitudes and widespread misconceptions about persons with disabilities also result in barriers to the successful practice of inclusion in schools of the OECS. Moreover, negative aspects of parental involvement and the failure to establish effective collaborative networks all contributed to the current challenges to the successful inclusion of LSEN.



Importantly, based on the data analysis of the descriptions given by participants, the chapter suggests ways in which each of the identified barriers can be transformed into active facilitators of inclusion in schools. The chapter concludes with three brief recommendations aimed at transforming and facilitating the inclusion of LSEN into the education systems of the OECS. The major recommendation is policy-based and is directed to the education governing body of the OECS, the Education Development Management Unit (EDMU). Finally, the limitations of the study as well as areas for further research are outlined.

## 9.1 The Barriers to and Facilitators of Inclusive Education in the OECS

The successful removal of barriers to inclusion and the strengthening of facilitative mechanisms of each of the emergent themes of this research necessitate thinking of inclusion in education in a totally new way. Based on the premise of human rights and social justice, inclusive education goes beyond integrating disabled students; inclusion involves improving the provision of, and access to equitable quality education to all students within the education system. All students should be able reach their full potential as learners and members of society. It is evident that successful inclusion requires a transformation of attitudes, ways of thinking about ability and disability, and changes to everyday pedagogical practices. While this may seem like a daunting task, it is both possible and necessary. Without making a start, the transformation needed in education systems to see the inclusion of LSEN will not be realised. Thus, it is important for education practitioners to make that first move if the successful practice of inclusive education is to be seen in the schools of the OECS. The successful future of LSEN in schools of the OECS depends on it.

### 9.1.1 Policy development and governance

This research has provided evidence that policy texts are needed as a foundation for effective governance. Research interviews revealed that the lack of appropriate frameworks and guidelines for inclusive practice was a major barrier to the successful inclusion of LSEN into the education systems of the islands. According to MOE policy actors, not having their directives taken seriously significantly limited their ability to enact inclusive strategies. In addition, it is

evident that without a policy MOE policy actors were constrained in their ability to plan for the equitable provision of education as there was no standardised approach that they could follow. Thus, the practice of special and inclusive education continues to take place in an *ad hoc* fashion in the OECS.

Further, based on the research findings, policies governing the provision of education aimed at including LSEN need to be local, comprehensive and flexible. Governments that achieve a balance in the establishment of inclusive education policies within the requisite international conventions and recommendations, as well as the local cultural principles and complexities, are more likely to see successful inclusive practices. The need for educators to feel a level of ownership of the policies they were responsible for implementing was evident in this research. The misapplication of policies that originate outside of the region have the potential to be incompatible with local contexts and thus at risk of failure or produce further challenges. The ongoing impact of a history of colonisation and the celebration of academic achievement on educational provision in the OECS must be taken into consideration. This is significant as teachers specifically spoke of the inappropriate ‘Americanised’ strategies being implemented in the region and the frustrations these caused them and their students. As one principal noted, ‘experts’ from international organisations often overlooked the actual needs of the students because they were seeking to address problems that simply did not exist locally. While the participants of this research agreed that inclusive policies needed to be developed and implemented based on a foundation of human rights and social justice, they also cautioned against the ‘wholesale adoption’, rather than adaption of relevant policies. As noted in chapter four, this challenge of culturally appropriate inclusive policies is encountered by many countries of the South seeking to attain global education goals, and is one to which policy actors within the OECS should pay keen attention.

The identification of the relationships between factors such as policies and the provision of adaptations serves to enrich the understanding of the barriers to and facilitators of successful inclusive practice. Acknowledging the relationships and interconnectedness of the barriers to and facilitators of successful inclusion, research participants suggested ways in which the presence of policy texts could address some of the other noted barriers to the inclusion of LSEN. They specified how the absence of policy translated into the inconsistent, unequal and inequitable provision of

education for LSEN. Conversely, policies that clearly identified the services to be provided and made provisions for them to be adequately financed and supplied could result in a more equitable provision of services and support, such as suitable infrastructure and teachers' aides for LSEN. Inclusive policy texts are necessary as they form one part of the foundation on which successful practice rests. Undoubtedly, effective education policies are an enabling mechanism for the successful practice of inclusion at all levels. Hence, inclusive education policies are critical prerequisites for the effective practice of inclusion in education. However, while the current education strategy document published by the EDMU outlines eight core areas for focus in education, inclusive education has not found a place as one of those areas.

### 9.1.2 Adaptations

As reported by teachers, principals and MOE policy actors, this research found that there was no consistent provision of relevant adaptations in schools on any of the islands. Further, the range of provision also varied between islands of the OECS. The absence of extensive, consistent and appropriate curricular and assessment modifications and accommodations for LSEN effectively denied them access to the national curriculum and thus equitable quality education. The role of suitable adaptations to the education of LSEN was reiterated by teachers, who spoke of students who could not "cope" because they were not being adequately supported through the provision of accommodations and modifications. This research also found that due to the reliance of official assessments and diagnoses, many LSEN were excluded from equitably accessing education. The failure to plan for the transition of LSEN from primary to secondary schools resulted in a lack of curricula and assessment adaptations being provided. Considering that within these education systems where universal secondary education (USE) mandates that all children be placed in a secondary school, consistency in both primary and secondary schools in the provision of adaptations for LSEN is paramount.

In all islands teachers reported that they were being encouraged to engage in differentiated teaching only to face unchanged curricula and assessment criteria from the MOE. This effectively obstructed the teacher's ability to successfully prepare LSEN in their classrooms and limited LSEN's achievement in school. Consequently,

the practice of inclusion continues to face challenges because of the ineffectiveness of education strategies such as differentiated teaching which depended on under resourced and unprepared teachers to implement them. The absence of mechanisms that supported teachers' attempts to effectively include LSEN in their classrooms such as para-professionals, access to assistive technology and infrastructural resources continue to act as barriers to the successful inclusion of LSEN. However, as suggested by principals and MOE policy actors, the development of clear and concise policies that detail what and how adaptations are to be made for LSEN (the curricular and assessment accommodations and modifications that are to be provided) could also help to remove the ambiguity within the practice and could provide a level of equality within the education systems, thus opening up avenues for LSEN to achieve educationally.

### 9.1.3 Teacher preparation and professional development

The research found that across the islands there have been calls for special and inclusive education courses to become core curricula for pre-service teachers, and included in the topics for on-going professional development courses for teachers and principals. This is yet to be done in the OECS and continues to act as a barrier to the successful inclusion of LSEN. Importantly, teachers should be educated on the existing strategies for inclusion and education leaders need to be trained to effectively and successfully include LSEN in schools and into the education system. The current inability of the OECS Chief Education Officers (CEOs) to successfully influence the regional training institutions such as the University of the West Indies (UWI) to make courses in special and inclusive education a part of the core curriculum for pre-service teachers demonstrates the need for their continued advocacy supported by parent and DPO lobby groups. Ironically, it seems that OECS institutions charged with educating teachers need to be 'educated' on the importance of teacher knowledge in the successful practice of inclusion.

The importance of teacher preparation and training was repeatedly underscored by research participants. Reports of LSEN being neglected in mainstream settings or functioning in environments that were not conducive to their optimal learning have been made by the teachers, parents, members of DPOs and

principals. The classroom management skills of untrained teachers was questioned because they were often unprepared to recognise the needs of LSEN and subsequently unable to provide the necessary adaptations. Supported by research, teachers have reported that student learning is closely linked to the professional knowledge and training of teachers. Untrained teachers were unwilling and unprepared to effectively implement inclusive strategies, which ultimately affected their classroom management skills and the practice of inclusion. As such, here too the importance of having enforceable policy texts that outline the training and qualification requirements for teachers and principals, is noted as it could see more teachers being trained for inclusion.

Highlighted in this research is the need for principals as managers and school leaders to be educated and trained in areas such as effective school management if they are to assist teachers in successfully implementing inclusive strategies. Fostering an enabling environment in which inclusive cultures can be created and maintained is a critical role for principals. The findings also point to the importance of school leaders being familiar with and understanding the policies emanating from the MOE that govern inclusion if they are to establish and maintain the partnerships necessary for their successful implementation. Thus, education as a facilitator of successful inclusion also encompasses learning how to establish and maintain successful partnerships. Education as a facilitator of inclusion is not limited to teachers, however, as it was found that students, parents and other stakeholders would also benefit from training in how best to interact and maximise their interactions with disabled students for the successful inclusion of LSEN.

#### 9.1.4 Knowledge and awareness

Communities need to be educated and the need for knowledge building and awareness activities and interventions surrounding disabilities and LSEN are demonstrated in this study. Education and training for inclusion should therefore go beyond just increasing the knowledge and skills of teachers and principals. Entire school populations, parents and communities should also be exposed to knowledge that facilitates a greater understanding of the challenges faced by LSEN to help remove the negative stigma and misinformation about persons with disabilities. Education, knowledge and understanding have been shown to counter the prevalence

of negative attitudes, perceptions and behaviours towards the disabled and LSEN within schools and society. Teachers' negative attitudes, as a result of a lack of training, has been found in this and other research as a barrier to inclusion and the role of education and knowledge acquisition in positively affecting the attitudes of other members of society including parents has been noted. The positive effects of 'debriefing' and other knowledge building exercises on the attitudes of peers of LSEN and the positive impact on behaviours towards LSEN after these interventions have also been recorded.

According to participants, sensitisation campaigns and interventions have been carried out by DPOs, parents, schools and teachers in the islands of the OECS. Education for behaviour change can take many forms and can be delivered via several means, including mass media and other media used to transmit positive messages and information aimed at transforming negative attitudes and behaviours. Participants of this research were of the opinion that the longstanding negative attitudes associated with difference in the OECS could be modified or changed. They suggested several means by which change can be achieved for greater inclusion, including acceptance, tolerance of LSEN, and contact with LSEN. It was noted, however, that behaviour change interventions needed to take place within supportive environments that empowered members of the target audiences with the knowledge needed to act. Inclusive education policies and the provision of adequate resources form part of these supportive environments. The recognition that education and training was essential to build understanding, and ultimately the inclusion of LSEN within schools and society, served as impetus for the ongoing sensitisation campaigns by many of these groups.

#### 9.1.5 Resources, support and services

Resources to facilitate inclusion involve the provision of adequate physical infrastructure and access points. Research participants called for suitable infrastructure to facilitate inclusive environments including ramps, elevators, toilets, ergonomically designed furniture, adequately sized classrooms with sufficient ventilation and lighting, as well as the competent use of assistive technologies. Information technology (IT) as a facilitator to widening the access of LSEN to quality education was in use in some classrooms, but all teachers reported the need

for its increased access and use. Students embraced the use of IT in the classroom lauding its positive effects on their equitable access to education. Therefore, it would be useful to utilise more IT in classrooms especially since it was linked to the ability of LSEN to acquire the relevant skills to successfully function in society. In addition, the influence of IT on the provision of technical vocational education technology (TVET) subjects is important, especially considering that TVET is suggested as one way of facilitating the inclusion of LSEN through the acquisition of the relevant skills needed for gainful employment.

Unfortunately, the services and support structures that were needed to facilitate the inclusion of LSEN were found to be lacking in OECS schools. Teacher aides, counsellors and other para-professionals were described as being inaccessible for several reasons: governments did not provide the service, it was too expensive for some to access privately and in some cases, they were just not available at all. Noting the importance placed on support services and effective partnerships as essential for inclusion, teachers and parents having to ‘make do’ with what was available, or travelling overseas to access services, is a finding that illustrates the potential for negative consequences of the absence of these services for families and LSEN. The cases of parents having to educate their child overseas because the services were not available locally to successfully include them in the education system further demonstrated the need for greater attention by governments to the efficient funding of inclusive education structures and use of scarce resources. Parents and teachers also reported on the lack of emotional support by MOE and other government officials. Often overlooked, feeling empowered and supported is critical for the successful practice of inclusion, but parents, students and teachers all reported how the lack of resources, services and support, both physical and emotional, negatively impacted them and the successful practice of inclusion in the OECS.

Hence, corresponding to the previously identified need for education and training is the need for the adequate provision of resources and support to facilitate the successful inclusion of LSEN within schools. The provision of resources and support was noted by respondents as affecting the attitudes of teachers welcoming the presence of LSEN in their classrooms; having adequate resources was regarded as a facilitator while the lack of resources acted as a barrier. The research findings

support the call for supportive structures in terms of a policy, but also environments that fostered positive attitudes, which included being efficiently resourced. Ultimately, resources and services need funding. Hence, funding for education and inclusion as a matter of government priority was a point raised by several research participants. Although described as costly, the lack of adequate funds to successfully include LSEN within the education system remained an area of concern for participants engaging in the unsustainable act of often using their personal finances to fill the funding gap. MOE policy actors, schools and teachers also reported having to depend on charity and donations from business entities to fund inclusive strategies and practices, which results in uncertainty and unevenness in education provision.

#### 9.1.6 Attitudes, perceptions and behaviours

Another significant finding is connected to the impact of negative attitudes and stigma attached to LSEN and special education provision. Marginalised and discriminated against based on uninformed assumptions, LSEN, their parents, teachers and schools continue to face levels of exclusion. Additionally, LSEN reported feelings of anger and sadness at the labels conferred on them, as well as the behaviours of certain people towards them. Instances of bullying, which at times escalated into physical altercations, were directly linked to having a disability and being educated in a special education school. It is alarming that non-disabled students and community members continue to engage in name calling and other discriminatory behaviour. It is however noteworthy that bullying as an exertion of power was demonstrated with the occurrence of bullying among LSEN of varying abilities. This suggests that some LSEN who were bullied often went on to inflict similar actions on those more vulnerable than themselves. Hence, engaging in interventions that targeted the reduction of negative attitudes towards LSEN could result in creating a safer and more accepting environment in which all LSEN could learn and interact with society.

Conversely, the role of patience, tolerance and understanding as positive attitudes that facilitated successful inclusive practices was reiterated throughout the research. Teachers and parents pointed to the overwhelming sense of reward when LSEN attained educational achievements. Students too expressed the positive influence of having persons be ‘nice’ and ‘kind’ to them and how that affected their



attitude and eventual performance in school. However, feelings of self-loathing, anger and inadequacy were reported among LSEN who expressed the desire to be 'normal'. Consequently, in the face of the devastating effects of negative attitudes there is a need that possibly through changes in socialisation using approaches that involved entire schools and communities, the exclusion which LSEN endured could be decreased.

### 9.1.7 Parental involvement

Another critical finding of this research concerned the way in which parents reacted to the education of their child who had special needs. Parental involvement is critical to whether or not LSEN are included or excluded. Parental denial as a barrier to the inclusion of LSEN in schools was found to be present in all the islands under study. Parents were often affected by traditionally discriminatory perceptions of the disabled and reacted with various emotions including anger and shock. Difficulty in adjusting to their child's diagnosis and an attempt to avoid the courtesy stigma of being associated with a child with a disability often led parents to engage in behaviours that were counterproductive to inclusion. As a result of parental denial and lack of involvement, some LSEN were unable to fully participate in the education system or reap the rewards of school. Parents who were in denial often failed to seek or accept the assistance the child needed, thereby severely limiting the capacity of teachers and students to ensure effective inclusion took place. As such, parental involvement posed one of the more significant challenges to the daily practice of inclusive education.

Further, parental involvement was limited when parents did not possess the required social capital to engage with the education system and its members. As seen in this research, parents who had more social, cultural and economic capital were able to leverage it to the educational advantage of their child. However, those without were often excluded from the education system along with their LSEN. Other parents who were limited academically in their capacity to help their child due to their own disabilities, perceptions of inferiority to teachers and others, or from a lack of time as a result of employment circumstances, acted as a barrier to the successful inclusion of LSEN. Also, the use of jargon by teachers that was unfamiliar to some parents acted as a barrier to effective communication and

collaboration, both necessary aspects of effective inclusive practice. Finding effective ways and common grounds for communication and interaction between parents and educators is necessary to mitigate some of the challenges associated with parental involvement and the resultant exclusion of some LSEN.

### 9.1.8 Collaboration and networking

Collaboration for successful inclusion as reported by members of all participant groups of this research involved the sharing of ideas, knowledge and at times simply providing emotional support. This study reiterates the point that successful partnerships between parents, teachers and the community are important for the successful inclusion of LSEN in schools. The very nature of inclusion presupposes collaboration on several levels including among teachers and parents, principals and teachers, general education and special education teachers, and teachers and para-professional staff. Equipped with this knowledge, members of DPOs have been in the forefront of establishing collaborative networks and partnerships as a part of their advocacy and lobbying activities in the region. In addition, teamwork was reported as essential for successful inclusive practice among teachers, parents and students, who recognised its importance in addressing the challenges faced by LSEN and also those faced with successfully including them in the education system.

Overall, the findings of this study has led to the conclusion that not only is the inclusion of LSEN in the education systems of the islands of the OECS a multifaceted problem, but transforming barriers into facilitators would necessitate a multilevel and multi-sectoral approach within and among the islands of the sub-region. The progress made through the intergovernmental partnerships established in and by the OECS, should be leveraged to address the challenges facing the successful practice of inclusion in the schools.

## 9.2 Recommendations for the OECS

Successful inclusion of LSEN requires all eight of the emergent themes to function in tandem. This is depicted by an illustration of the emergent model based on the findings of this research. Following the model is a brief summary of specific

recommendations that could contribute to the successful inclusion of LSEN into the education systems of the countries of the OECS, and are based on the findings of this and other research are included in this section. By no means are these recommendations exhaustive, but successfully implemented actions could transform the current barriers into effective facilitators of inclusion in education and ultimately society. The most extensive recommendation harks back to the initial premise of this research, in that a targeted policy document could be used to anchor implementation strategies for inclusion in education in the OECS. However, as these barriers and facilitators identified in the research have been shown to some way impact and to be impacted on by each other, it is recognised that policies on their own will not guarantee the successful practice of inclusion. Hence, all of the recommendations should be understood as components of any possible action plan rather than actions that individually would see the successful inclusion of LSEN in schools.

### 9.2.1 Emergent Model

A visual representation of the emergent model developed from the findings of this research demonstrates the interactive cyclical process that is necessary for successful inclusion, hence the model does not identify a specific starting point. However, for the purposes of this description, it begins with the need for culturally relevant policies if the barriers to inclusion are to be successfully removed and facilitative mechanisms strengthened. Such policies should outline avenues for teacher preparation and professional development, standards and procedures for governance as well as leadership requirements. Education leaders and teachers who are adequately prepared and trained for inclusion would be able to adapt their instruction styles to offer learners accommodations that correspond with their individual needs providing that the appropriate policies are in place. However, for LSEN to be appropriately accommodated, there must be adequate resources and support provided to schools, teachers and parents. However, this is contingent on the level of education and awareness about the challenges LSEN face. Increased knowledge about learning difficulties and disabilities have been shown to positively impact negative attitudes and perceptions about those students in need of special education provision. Since negative attitudes towards LSEN often affect their parents, increasing education and awareness allows for greater parental involvement

as the negative stigma attached to LSEN would be reduced. In turn, increased participation by parents in the education of their child opens up more avenues for collaboration and networking through increased conversations between them and key stakeholders. Through these interactions policies can be discussed and evaluated and the necessary changes made to ensure that they remain culturally relevant in an ever changing global policy environment. Hence, it is evident that each of the eight themes identified are simultaneously necessary for the successful inclusion of LSEN in schools.

Figure 2. Emergent Model



### 9.2.2 Develop and implement special and inclusive education policy

The OECS has long enjoyed the benefits of the collaborative partnerships and harmonisation aimed at economic growth, social inclusion and integration among

member countries (OECS 2013). Many of the education structures within the sub-region already see ongoing collaboration and harmonisation as members of the OECS and of the wider Caribbean Community (CARICOM). However, despite the production of three OECS education strategy documents intended to guide and align education practice in the OECS, there is still no policy document dedicated to the provision of special and inclusive education for the sub-region. It is therefore recommended that the OECS education development management unit (EDMU) embark on a consultative process aimed at the development and implementation of a regional special and inclusive education policy. The presence of sustainable policy systems are critical for the successful implementation of inclusive education strategies. A policy that provided the framework for the practice of inclusion would be one that welcomed the contribution of all stakeholders, including LSEN.

The policy document should be flexible and amenable to each island's cultural complexities, yet based on their shared knowledge and experiences. Culturally appropriate policies increase the chances for successful implementation and practice. In the OECS the benefit of such a policy would not only be harmonisation in the face of increased free movement within the region, but as Miller (2002) suggested a harmonised policy tailored to the sub-region could help to curtail the cost of individual islands having to develop policies on their own. The goal of the EDMU continues to be to guide the direction of education within member states, offering avenues for the alignment of national policies (OECS 2013). A special and inclusive education policy coming out of the EDMU would only have to be adapted for specific local contexts as necessary. This research uncovered the need for a multilevel approach in policy development that included strategies for principal and teacher training, the provision for adaptations, funding and collaborative structures. It is important that policy makers pay attention to the concerns raised by the teachers, principals, parents and other stakeholder groups in order to develop an effective and relevant policy. This research provides a starting point.

### 9.2.3 Prioritise and plan for inclusive education

Prioritising and planning for inclusive education necessitates that sufficient financing structures be created to facilitate the provision of adequate resources, services and support for the successful practice of inclusion. This also needs to be

supported by accurate, timely and comprehensive data. Specific to disability data, the importance of both quantitative and qualitative data to plan, monitor and evaluate strategies has been highlighted. Data is also important to plan for the cost of providing quality education, as it was reported as being costly by MOE policy actor participants. This research suggests that failing to adequately prioritise and plan for inclusion could end up costing governments more. An example is given by Peters (2003) who noted that retrofitting infrastructure to accommodate LSEN was often more expensive than including the necessary infrastructure in the initial stages. It is recommended that both sub-regional and island governing entities make adequate provisions within their education plans and budgets for the sustainable financing of inclusive education.

#### 9.2.4 Strengthen collaborative networks

Collaborative networks already exist within the OECS. What is needed in the case of special and inclusive education is a strengthening of these essential networks to facilitate knowledge sharing within and across the islands. Research done in comparable small island developing states (SIDS) to those of the OECS, such as the Pacific region, report that collaborating and networking at both the policy development and grassroots levels, has the potential to strengthen the practice of inclusion. Networking provides the opportunity to develop the contextually and culturally relevant policies that respond to the needs and experiences of LSEN and education stakeholders in the OECS. That there is strength in numbers has particular meaning for SIDS. Attempting to enact changes individually can be enhanced if resources, personnel and expertise are combined effectively and efficiently. A greater collaboration among the OECS member states focusing on the successful implementation and practice of inclusion is recommended.

### 9.3 Limitations

First, as with any qualitative study, the level to which the results can be generalised is limited to the extent that they can only give an overview of the possible findings. This study explored the barriers and facilitators that can be found in the OECS region, however the islands of the OECS are not totally homogeneous, and social constructs do differ within and between the islands. Therefore research in

other member countries that were not included in this study would provide further insights. Also, because the islands are at different stages of inclusion strategy implementation, further research could reveal a different set of barriers and facilitators.

Moreover, as a researcher exploring a topic as wide and varied as special and inclusive education, there are time and human resource constraints that limits the ability to extensively cover all of the emerging themes, hence the focus on the major emergent themes presented.

Gender did not play a significant role in this study although the gender of parents and of teachers could have been examined for comparisons in attitudes and responses in dealing with LSEN. Also, the significance of the prevalence of male students being identified as LSEN was not explored, although it is acknowledged as an important area for further investigation. This research did not differentiate LSEN according to disabilities. However, it is noted that LSEN could face varying degrees of challenges based on their disability, and some barriers and facilitators could have a greater impact on LSEN based on those differences.

Finally, this study did not investigate if there were differences in the practice of inclusion between public and private schools within the OECS sub-region. In a study such as this, an examination of the differences between public and private provision of education could have been instrumental in adding a comparative dimension to the research. Ultimately, while this research could not cover all the areas that warranted attention, the findings have provided insights that can be the basis for further research by this and other researchers in the Eastern Caribbean.

## 9.4 Further Research

This research has uncovered questions that need further investigation. Several teacher participants noted that there was a prevalence of boys being labelled as needing special education services. It is felt that this is a critical area that is in need of further research, as it has implications for the education and achievement potential of male students within the sub-region.

More broadly, research is also needed to determine the pedagogical and social impact of the implementation of universal secondary education in facilitating the inclusion of LSEN within the education systems of the OECS. The feedback from MOE policy actors and teachers seem to be in variance with each other. Teachers question the implementation of the strategy without the adequate support structures, while some MOE policy actors continue to trumpet the policy as being an effective means of inclusion in schools. Research aimed at exploring and evaluating the strategy could shed light on how best to maximise it so that the current challenges are resolved, and that as an inclusive strategy it achieves the goal of providing quality equitable education to all students.

In addition, a further study could assess the role of school principals and their leadership styles and how that influences the successful implementation of inclusion in schools. Here too a comparative analysis between government and private schools could be conducted. Anecdotal stories suggest that there is a perception that private schools better cater to the needs of LSEN than public schools. Research into this with the aim of extracting best practices which could be adapted to public school environments has potential to see the improvement of inclusive practices in the public education system.

## 9.5 Concluding remarks

Several things are clear from this study, the foremost being that without a shift in education priorities by those responsible for the provision of education in the OECS, there will continue to be limitations on the access LSEN have to equitable quality education. Small developing states like those that make up the member countries of the OECS face unique challenges associated with education in general. One of these is the continued valuing of traditionally academic education programs, a vestige of the islands' colonial past. Teachers have called for a change in this culture indicating the importance of acknowledging difference as something positive rather than perpetuating what Lavia (2007) described as a segregated, *ad hoc* and socially stratified education system.

This research raised questions as to the ways in which teachers, principals and MOE policy actors in OECS member states felt that they needed ownership of



the strategies outlined in the OECS education strategy document. Although the document, *Every Learner Succeeds*, outlines performance indicators for each of its strategies, because there is no specific priority placed on inclusive education, local MOEs are left to their own judgement on the scope and level of provision. The challenge of data collection specific to LSEN is another hurdle that needs to be overcome in the OECS. A limitation faced by many countries of the South, the EDMU should be commended for their ongoing effort in compiling educational statistics for the OECS. Member countries need to do their part in collecting and supplying the Unit with this important relevant data. Without reliable comprehensive data on LSEN, making preparations to successfully include them into the education system will continue to encounter barriers.

Culture as a barrier to inclusive practices in the classrooms of the OECS was raised by teacher participants, who indicated that some teachers were reluctant to change their authoritarian teaching styles and attitudes in order to offer LSEN access to education through inclusive classroom practices. The dual systems of special and general education present in OECS education systems continues to segregate learners which goes against the inclusive philosophy. Ultimately policy texts and strategies need to move away from the special education rhetoric towards more inclusive language and intentions. It is recognised that special education is the current discourse in the OECS, but this needs to change for inclusive practice to be normalised.

The growing individualistic nature of OECS societies, as noted by Girvan (2012) and Weedmark (2013) as being a consequence of colonial legacies and persistent consumption models, have negatively affected the education of LSEN in the OECS. Moreover, the extended family in the OECS now plays a decreased role in a child's education as compared to other small states such as those in the Pacific region, which remain community oriented (Forlin et al. 2015; Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai 2016). While a culture of inclusion is an integral part of the way of life in the Pacific, in the OECS there is broadening culture of individual responsibility which leaves many parents of LSEN without the supportive structures needed to facilitate successful inclusion.

As DPOs and NGOs continue to advocate on behalf of the disabled and LSEN in the OECS, perhaps a more unified regional voice could work towards making inclusive education a priority in the sub-region. The current practice of each islands' disability organisation individually trying to spur change should be maximised through a combined call for change. Without a doubt, for inclusive education and the successful inclusion of LSEN in the OECS to become a reality, there is need for the renewed establishment of partnerships, the empowerment of key education stakeholders and the wider society, and a commitment by all to fully engage in the process.

A multifaceted concept, inclusion of LSEN requires a corresponding multilevel approach if it is to be successful. This research saw the emergence of eight major themes that acted both as barriers and facilitators of successful inclusive practice in schools. Parents, teachers, MOE policy actors, members of DPOs and the LSEN themselves reiterated the importance of policy texts, teacher training and professional development, adaptations, resources and support, negative attitudes and perceptions, education and advocacy, parental involvement and collaboration and networking, as essential in their positive presence for the successful practice of inclusion, but limiting the practice in their absence. The provision of quality education for LSEN depended on these connected factors, as each built on the other and could be maximised to create supportive structures and environments for the successful inclusion of LSEN into the education systems of the islands of the OECS.

## References

- Abosi, Okey, and Teng Leong Koay. 2008. "Attaining Development Goals of Children with Disabilities: Implications for Inclusive Education." *International Journal of Special Education* 23 (3): 1–10.
- Acedo, Clementina. 2008. "Inclusive Education: Pushing the Boundaries." *Prospects* 38 (1): 5–13.
- ACT Government Education and Training . 2014. "Learning Difficulties: Factsheet 1: The difference between a learning difficulty and a learning disability." *DSF Literacy & Clinical Services*.  
[http://www.education.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0020/714332/Learning-difficulties-Factsheet-1.pdf](http://www.education.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/714332/Learning-difficulties-Factsheet-1.pdf).
- Afroditi, Kalambouka, Peter Farrell, Alan Dyson, and Ian Kaplan. 2007. "The Impact of Placing Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools on the Achievement of their Peers." *Educational Research*, 49 (4): 365–382, doi: 10.1080/00131880701717222
- Ainscow, Mel, and Abha Sandill. 2010. "Developing Inclusive Education Systems: The Role of Organisational Cultures and Leadership." *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 14 (4): 401–416. doi: 10.1080/13603110802504903
- Ainscow, Mel, Alan Dyson, Sue Goldrick, and Mel West. 2012. "Making Schools Effective for All: Rethinking the Task." *School Leadership and Management* 32 (3):197–213. doi:10.1080/13632434.2012.669648
- Ainscow, Mel, Peter Farrell, and Dave Tweddle. 2000. "Developing Policies for Inclusive Education: A Study of the Role of Local Education Authorities." *International journal of inclusive education* 4 (3): 211–229.
- Ainscow, Mel, Tony Booth, and Alan Dyson. 2006. *Improving Schools, Developing Inclusion*. USA: Routledge.
- Ainscow, Mel. 2005. "Developing Inclusive Education Systems: What Are the Levers for Change?" *Journal of Educational Change* 6 (2): 109–124.

- Alasuutari, Pertti, Leonard Bickman, and Julia Brannen. 2009. *The SAGE Handbook of Social Research Methods*. Los Angeles/ Mass: Sage.
- Alasuutari, Pertti. 1995. *Researching Culture: Qualitative Method and Cultural Studies*. London: Sage.
- Albertin, Marcellus. Interview by Carel Hodge. (November 24, 2014).
- Alcock, Cliff, Guy Daly, and Edwin Griggs. 2008. *Introducing Social Policy*. 2nd ed. London/ New York: Pearson Education Limited.
- Alderson, Dawn, Chris Hall, and Paul Latreille. 2014. "Transition and the First Year Experience: University Students' Expectations." *Cylchgrawn Addysg Prifysgol Cymru [University of Wales Journal of Education]* 17 (1): 73–87.
- Alemu, Getaneh, Stevens Brett, Penny Ross, and Jane Chandler. 2015. "The Use of a Constructivist Grounded Theory Method to Explore the Role of Socially-Constructed Metadata (Web 2.0) Approaches." *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries (QQML)* 4: 517–540.
- Ali, Eduardo Raoul. 2010. "Decolonizing Educational Policy in the Caribbean: Shifting our Practice from an Internationally-Dependent Policy Consumption Model to a Contextually Relevant Policy Research Model." *Caribbean Educational Research Journal*: 2 (1):75–86
- Allman, Dan. 2013. "The Sociology of Social Inclusion." *SAGE Open* 3 (1): 1–6. doi:10.1177/2158244012471957.
- Allweiss, Alexandra, and Carl A. Grant. 2013. "Progressives, Conservatives and Educational Disadvantage: The Limits of the Bifurcation." *Race, Gender & Class* 20 (1/2): 8.
- Alvesson, Mats, and Kaj Sköldböck. 2009. *Reflexive methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Amadio, Massimo. 2009. "Inclusive Education in Latin America and the Caribbean: Exploratory Analysis of the National Reports Presented at the 2008 International Conference on Education." *Prospects* 39 (3): 293–305. doi:10.1007/s11125-009-9114-1

- American Foundation for the Blind (AFB). "Key Definitions of Statistical Terms," accessed February 10, 2017, <http://www.afb.org/info/blindness-statistics/key-definitions-of-statistical-terms/25/>.
- Anh, Dang Thi Kim, and Simon Marginson. 2013. "Global learning through the lens of Vygotskian sociocultural theory." *Critical Studies in Education* 54 (2): 143–159. doi:10.1080/17508487.2012.722557.
- Apple, Michael, Jane Kenway, and Michael Singh, eds. 2005. *Globalizing Education: Policies, Pedagogies, and Politics*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Apple, Michael. 2011. "Democratic Education in Neo-liberal and Neoconservative Times." *International Studies in Sociology of Education* 21 (1): 21–31, doi:10.1080/09620214.2011.543850
- Arksey, Hilary, and Peter T. Knight. 1999. "Interviews and Research in the Social Sciences." *Interviewing for Social Scientists*, 2–21. London: Sage. doi:10.4135/9781849209335.n1.
- Armstrong, Cheryl A., Derrick Armstrong, Carlyle Lynch, and Sonia Severin. 2005. "Special and Inclusive Education in the Eastern Caribbean: Policy Practice and Provision." *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 9 (1): 71–87, doi:10.1080/1360311042000302905
- Armstrong, Felicity, Derrick Armstrong, and Len Barton. 2000. *Inclusive Education: Policy, Contexts and Comparative Perspectives*. London: David Fulton.
- Atchoaréna, David, Patricia Dias Da Graca, and José Manuel Marquez. 2008. "Strategies for Post-Primary Education in Small Island Developing States (SIDS): Lessons from Cape Verde." *Comparative education* 44 (2): 167–185.
- Avramidis, Elias, and Brahm Norwich. 2002. "Teachers' Attitudes Towards Integration/Inclusion: A Review of the Literature." *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 17 (2): 129–147.

- Avramidis, Elias, Phil Bayliss, and Robert Burden. 2000. "Student Teachers' Attitudes Towards the Inclusion of Children with Special Educational Needs in the Ordinary School." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 16 (3): 277–293.
- Babbie, Earl. 2016. *The practice of social research*. 14th Edition. USA: Cengage Learning.
- Bacchus, Mohammed Kazim. 2008. "The Education Challenges Facing Small Nation States in the Increasingly Competitive Global Economy of the Twenty-first Century." *Comparative Education* 44 (2): 127–145.
- Baffoe, Michael. 2013. "Stigma, Discrimination and Marginalization: Gateways to Oppression of Persons with Disabilities in Ghana, West Africa." *Journal of Educational and Social Research* 3(1): 187–198.
- Baglieri, Susan, and Janice H. Knopf. 2004. "Normalizing Difference in Inclusive Teaching." *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 37 (6): 525–529.
- Ball, Stephen J. 1997. "Policy Sociology and Critical Social Research: A Personal Review of Recent Education Policy and Policy Research." *British Educational Research Journal* 23 (3): 257–274.
- Ballard, Keith, ed. 1999. *Inclusive Education: International Voices on Disability and Justice*. London: Falmer Press.
- Ballard, Keith. 2013. "Thinking in another way: ideas for sustainable inclusion." *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 17 (8): 762–775.
- Banks, Joanne, Denise Frawley, and Selina McCoy. 2015. "Achieving Inclusion? Effective Resourcing of Students with Special Educational Needs". *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 19 (9): 926–943. doi:10.1080/13603116.2015.1018344.
- Barton, Len and Armstrong, Felicity 2001. "Disability, Education and Inclusion: Cross Cultural Issues and Dilemmas". In *Handbook of Disability Studies*, edited by Albrecht, Gary L., 693–710. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Bates, Peter, and Fabian A. Davis. 2004. "Social Capital, Social Inclusion and Services for People with Learning Disabilities." *Disability & Society* 19 (3): 195–207.
- Baum, Frances. 2008. *The new public health*. 3rd ed. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Béland, Daniel. 2010. *What is Social Policy?: Understanding the Welfare State*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Berger, Peter L., and Thomas Luckmann, 1991. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Penguin Books.
- Bergsma, Sijtze. (2000). "The Regular Classroom as Battleground for Inclusive Special Needs Education: An Assessment of Options of Special Needs Education in the Commonwealth Caribbean." In *Education for All in the Caribbean: Assessment 2000 monograph series*, edited by Lynda Quamina-Aiyejina, 1–37. Kingston: UNESCO.
- Berry, John, Deo Poonwassie, and Dean. B. Berry. 1999. "Improving Learning Outcomes in the Caribbean: Challenges and Lessons. *Curriculum Reform*. Discussant's paper prepared for the World Bank / EDI Workshop, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago,
- Berry, Ruth A. Wiebe. 2006. "Inclusion, Power, and Community: Teachers and Students Interpret the Language of Community in an Inclusion Classroom." *American Educational Research Journal* 43 (3): 489–529.
- Bines, Hazel, and Philippa Lei. 2011. "Disability and Education: The Longest Road to Inclusion." *International Journal of Educational Development* 31 (5): 419–424.
- Blackman, Stacey, Dennis Conrad, and Launcelot Brown. 2012. "The Attitude of Barbadian and Trinidadian Teachers to Integration." *International Journal of Special Education* 27 (3): 158–168.
- Blaikie, Norman. 2000. *Designing Social Research*. Oxford: Polity.

- Booth, Tony, and Mel Ainscow. 2002. *Index for Inclusion: Developing Learning and Participation in Schools*. London: Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education.
- Booth, Tony, and Mel Ainscow. 1998. *From Them to Us: An International Study of Inclusion in Education*. New York: Routledge.
- Bourdieu, Pierre, and Jean-Claude Passeron. 1990. *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. Vol. 4. London: Sage.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1989. "Social Space and Symbolic Power." *Sociological Theory* 7 (1): 14–25.
- Bray, Mark. 1992. *Educational Planning in Small Countries*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Breckenridge, Jenna, Derek Jones, Ian Elliott, and Margaret Nicol. 2012. "Choosing a Methodological Path: Reflections on the Constructivist Turn." *Grounded Theory Review* 11 (1): 64–71.
- Brown, Lalage (Ed.). 2003. *Education in the Commonwealth: the First Forty Years*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.
- Browne, Laura. 2007. *St. Vincent and Grenadines Country Report at Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education*. Jamaica: UNESCO.  
<http://www.ibe.unesco.org>
- Bryman, Alan. 2012. *Social Research Methods*. 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bunch, Gary. 2008. "Keys to Successful Inclusive Education: A Perspective from Experience in the Field." *Revista Education Inclusiva* 1: 91–101.
- Bunch, Gary, and Angela Valeo. 2004. "Student Attitudes Toward Peers with Disabilities in Inclusive and Special Education Schools." *Disability & Society*, 19 (1): 61–76, doi:10.1080/0968759032000155640.
- Burbules, Nicholas, Carlos Torres. eds. 2000. *Globalization and Education: Critical Perspectives*. New York: Routledge.



- Burke, Meghan M., and Samantha E. Goldman. 2016. "Documenting the Experiences of Special Education Advocates." *The Journal of Special Education*. In press.
- Bush, Tony. 2007. "Educational Leadership and Management: Theory, Policy and Practice." *South African Journal of Education* 27 (3): 391–406.
- Bywaters, Paul, Zobia Ali, Qulsom Fazil, Louise M. Wallace, and Gurnam Singh. 2003. "Attitudes Towards Disability amongst Pakistani and Bangladeshi Parents of Disabled Children in the UK: Considerations for Service Providers and the Disability Movement." *Health & Social Care in the Community* 11 (6): 502–509.
- Cambridge International Examinations. "Special Educational Needs." *Education Brief 9. November 2015*. <http://www.cie.org.uk/images/271195-special-educational-needs.pdf>.
- Campbell, Jennifer, Linda Gilmore, and Monica Cuskelly. 2003. "Changing student Teachers' Attitudes towards Disability and Inclusion." *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability* 28 (4): 369–379.
- Campbell, Jonathan M. 2006. "Changing Children's Attitudes toward Autism: A Process of Persuasive Communication." *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities* 18 (3): 251–272.
- CARICOM. 1997. "Creative and Productive Citizens for the Twenty-first Century." *Special Session of the Conference on Education and Human Resource Development: Strategies for Building a Creative and Productive Workforce during the Eighteenth Meeting of the CARICOM Conference*. Montego Bay, Jamaica.
- Carrington, Suzanne, and Jennie Duke. 2014. "Learning about Inclusion from Developing Countries: Using the Index for Inclusion." *Measuring Inclusive Education* 3: 189–203.
- Carrington, Suzanne, and Robyn Robinson. 2006. "Inclusive School Community: Why Is It So Complex?" *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 10 (4–5): 323–334.

- Carter, Stacy M., and Miles Little. 2007. "Justifying Knowledge, Justifying Method, Taking Action: Epistemologies, Methodologies, and Methods in Qualitative Research." *Qualitative Health Research* 17 (10): 1316–1328.
- Case, Stephen. 2000. "Refocusing on the Parent: What are the Social Issues of Concern for Parents of Disabled Children?" *Disability & Society* 15 (2): 271–292. doi:10.1080/09687590025676.
- Chapman, James W. 1988. "Learning Disabled Children's Self-concepts." *Review of Educational Research* 58 (3): 347–371.
- Charmaz, Kathy 2008. "Grounded Theory as an Emergent Method." In *Handbook of emergent methods*, edited by Sharlene. N. Hesse Biber and Patricia Leavy, 155–172. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Charmaz, Kathy, 2005. "Grounded Theory in the 21st Century: Applications for Advancing Social Justice Studies". In *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.), edited by Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln. California: Sage.
- Charmaz, Kathy. 2003. "Grounded theory." *Qualitative psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods*, 81–110. London: Sage
- Charmaz, Kathy. 1996. "The Search for Meanings - Grounded Theory". In *Rethinking Methods in Psychology*, edited by Jonathan A. Smith, Rom Harré and Luk Van Langenhove, 27–49. London: Sage.
- Cheung, Chau-kiu. 2013. "Public Policies That Help Foster Social Inclusion." *Social Indicators Research*, 112(1): 47–68. doi:10.1007/s11205-012-0039-3.
- Chhabra, Simmi, Rama Srivastava, and Ishaan Srivastava. 2010. "Inclusive Education in Botswana: The Perceptions of School Teachers." *Journal of Disability Policy Studies* 20 (4): 219–228.
- Child Rights International Network (CRIN). 2012. *Antigua and Barbuda: Child Rights References in the Universal Periodic Review*. UPR Report. <https://www.crin.org/en/library/publications/antigua-and-barbuda-child-rights-references-universal-periodic-review>.

- Child Rights International Network (CRIN). 2016a. *Saint Lucia: Children's Rights References in the Universal Periodic Review*. UPR Report. <https://www.crin.org/en/library/publications/saint-lucia-childrens-rights-references-universal-periodic-review>.
- Child Rights International Network (CRIN). 2016b. *Saint Kitts and Nevis: Children's Rights References in the Universal Periodic Review*. UPR Report. <https://www.crin.org/en/library/publications/saint-kitts-and-nevis-childrens-rights-references-universal-periodic-review>.
- Chimombo, Joseph PG. 2005. "Issues in Basic Education in Developing Countries: An Exploration of Policy Options for Improved Delivery." *Journal of International Cooperation in Education* 8 (1): 129–152.
- Chitolie-Joseph, Esther. 2014. *Saint Lucia Education for All 2015 National Review*. Corporate Planning Unit, Ministry of Education, HRD and Labour, St. Lucia.
- Clark, Catherine, Alan Dyson, Alan Millward, and Sue Robson. 1999. "Theories of Inclusion, Theories of Schools: Deconstructing and Reconstructing the 'Inclusive School'." *British Educational Research Journal* 25 (2): 157–177.
- Clough, Peter, and Cathy Nutbrown. 2007. *A Student's Guide to Methodology*. 2nd ed. London: Sage.
- Connell, Raewyn. 2013. "The Neoliberal Cascade and Education: An Essay on the Market Agenda and Its Consequences." *Critical Studies in Education* 54 (2): 99–112.
- Conrad, Dennis A., and Launcelot I. Brown. 2011. "Fostering inclusive Education: Principals' Perspectives in Trinidad and Tobago." *International journal of inclusive education* 15 (9): 1017–1029.
- Conrad, Dennis A., Nicole Paul, Margaret Bruce, Suzanne Charles, and Kirk Felix. 2010. "Special Schools and the Search for Social Justice in Trinidad and Tobago: Perspectives From Two Marginalized Contexts." *Caribbean Curriculum* 17: 59-84

- Cook, Bryan G., Melvyn I. Semmel, and Michael M. Gerber. 1999. "Attitudes of Principals and Special Education Teachers toward the Inclusion of Students with Mild Disabilities Critical Differences of Opinion." *Remedial and Special Education* 20 (4): 199–207.
- Cooney, G., A. Jahoda, A. Gumley, and F. Knott. 2006. "Young People with Intellectual Disabilities Attending Mainstream and Segregated Schooling: Perceived Stigma, Social Comparison and Future Aspirations." *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research* 50 (6): 432–444.
- Croft, Alison. 2013. "Promoting Access to Education for Disabled Children in Low-income Countries: Do We Need to Know How Many Disabled Children There Are?" *International Journal of Educational Development* 33 (3): 233–243.
- Croft, Alison. 2010. "Including Disabled Children in Learning: Challenges in Developing Countries. CREATE Pathways to Access." *Research Monograph* No. 36. Pathways to Access series, University of Sussex, Brighton
- Croll, Paul, and Diana Moses. 2000. "Ideologies and Utopias: Education Professionals' Views of Inclusion." *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 15 (1): 1–12
- Crossley, Michael. 2008. "The Advancement of Educational Research in Small States." *Comparative Education* 44 (2): 247–254.
- Crossley, Michael, Mark Bray and Steve Packer. 2009. "Education in the Small States of the Commonwealth: Towards and Beyond Global Goals and Targets." *The Round Table* 98 (405): 731–751. doi:10.1080/00358530903371429.
- Crotty, Michael. 1998. *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Crouch, Mira, and Heather McKenzie. 2006. "The Logic of Small Samples in Interview-based Qualitative Research." *Social Science Information* 45 (4): 483–499.

- Crozier, Gill. 1999. "Parental Involvement: Who Wants it?" *International Studies in Sociology of Education* 9 (3): 219–238.
- Cummings, Joanne G., Debra J. Pepler, Faye Mishna, and Wendy M. Craig. 2006. "Bullying and Victimization among Students with Exceptionalities." *Exceptionality Education Canada* 16 (2/3): 193.
- Curcic, Svjetlana, Susan L. Gabel, Virginia Zeitlin, Shannon Cribaro-DiFatta, and Carmel Glarner. 2011. "Policy and Challenges of Building Schools as Inclusive Communities". *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 15 (1): 117–133.
- Dale, Roger. 1989. *The State and Education Policy*. Stony Stratford: Open University Press.
- Daniels, Harry and Philip Garner, eds. 2000. *Inclusive Education: Supporting Inclusion in Education Systems*. London: Kogan Page.
- Dawkins, David. 1986. *Economics, Politics and Education*. Victoria: Deakin University Press.
- de Boer, Anke, Sip Jan Pijl, Alexander Minnaert, and Wendy Post. 2014. "Evaluating the Effectiveness of an Intervention Program to Influence Attitudes of Students Towards Peers with Disabilities." *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* 44 (3): 572–83. doi:10.1007/s10803-0131908-6.
- Dean, Hartley. 2012. *Social Policy*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Denzin, Norman K., and Yvonna S. Lincoln. 2008. *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. Vol. 3. California: Sage.
- Denzin, Norman K., and Yvonna S. Lincoln. 2005. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 3rd ed. California: Sage.
- Denzin, Norman K., and Yvonna S. Lincoln. 2003. *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and issues*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. California: Sage.

- Dixon, R. M., and I. Verenikina. 2007. "Towards Inclusive Schools: An Examination of Socio-cultural Theory and Inclusive Practices and Policy in New South Wales DET Schools". *Learning and Socio-cultural Theory: Exploring Modern Vygotskian Perspectives International Workshop* 2007, 1 (1), <http://ro.uow.edu.au/llrg/vol1/iss1/13>
- Dixon, Raymond A. 2015. "Trends and Issues in Technology Education in the USA: Lessons for the Caribbean." *Caribbean Curriculum* 21: 47–79.
- Downing, June E., and Kathryn D. Peckham-Hardin. 2007. "Inclusive Education: What Makes It a Good Education for Students with Moderate to Severe Disabilities?" *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities* 32 (1):16–30.
- Drame, Elizabeth R., and Kaytie Kamphoff. 2014. "Perceptions of Disability and Access to Inclusive Education in West Africa: A Comparative Case Study in Dakar, Senegal." *International Journal of Special Education* 29 (3): 69–81.
- Drimmer, Jonathan C. 1992. "Cripples, Overcomers, and Civil Rights: Tracing the Evolution of Federal Legislation and Social Policy for People with Disabilities." *UCLA Law Review* (40): 1341-1345.
- Dyson, Alan, and Carlo Raffo. 2007. "Education and Disadvantage: the Role of Community-oriented Schools." *Oxford Review of Education*, 33(3): 297–314.
- Dyson, Alan. 2001. "Special Needs Education as the Way to Equity: An Alternative Approach?" *Support for Learning* 16 (3): 99–104.
- Dyson, Alan. 1997. "Social and Educational Disadvantage: Reconnecting Special Needs Education." *British Journal of Special Education* 24 (4): 152–157.
- Eaves, Yvonne D. 2001. "A Synthesis Technique for Grounded Theory Data Analysis." *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 35 (5): 654–663.
- Eleweke, C. Jonah, and Michael Rodda. 2002. "The Challenge of Enhancing Inclusive Education in Developing Countries." *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 6 (2): 113–126. doi:10.1080/13603110110067190.
- Elliott, Anthony. 2008. *Concepts of the Self*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Emmer, Edmund T., and Laura M. Stough. 2001. "Classroom Management: A Critical Part of Educational Psychology, with Implications for Teacher Education." *Educational Psychologist* 36 (2): 103–112. doi:10.1207/S15326985EP3602\_5.
- Espinoza, Oscar. 2007. "Solving the Equity–Equality Conceptual Dilemma: A New Model for Analysis of the Educational Process." *Educational Research* 49 (4): 343–363.
- Evans, Jennifer, and Ingrid Lunt. 2002. "Inclusive Education: Are There Limits?" *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 17 (1): 1–14. doi: 10.1080/08856250110098980.
- Farrell, Peter, Alan Dyson, Filiz Polat, Graeme Hutcheson and Frances Gallannaugh. 2007. "Inclusion and achievement in mainstream schools." *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 22 (2):131–145.
- Farrell, Peter. 2000. "The Impact of Research on Developments in Inclusive Education." *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 4 (2): 153–162. doi:10.1080/136031100284867.
- Ferguson, Dianne L. 2008. "International Trends in Inclusive Education: The Continuing Challenge to Teach Each One and Everyone." *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 23 (2): 109–120.
- Filmer, Deon. 2008. "Disability, Poverty, and Schooling in Developing Countries: Results from 14 Household Surveys." *The World Bank Economic Review* 22 (1): 141–163.
- Fine, Michelle, and Adrienne Asch. 1988. "Disability beyond Stigma: Social Interaction, Discrimination, and Activism." *Journal of Social Issues* 44 (1): 3–21.
- Flick, Uwe, Ernst Von Kardorff, and Ines Steinke. 2004. *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. Ebook Library. London: Sage.
- Florian, Lani, Judith Hollenweger, Rune J. Simeonsson, Klaus Wedell, Sheila Riddell, Lorella Terzi, and Anthony Holland. 2006. "Cross-Cultural

- Perspectives on the Classification of Children With Disabilities Part I. Issues in the Classification of Children With Disabilities.” *The Journal of Special Education* 40 (1): 36–45.
- Forlin, Chris, Umesh Sharma, Tim Loreman, and Beth Sprunt. 2015. “Developing disability-inclusive indicators in the Pacific Islands.” *Prospects* 45 (2): 197–211.
- Francis, Brian, and Sunday Iyare. 2006. “Education and Development in the Caribbean: A Cointegration and Causality Approach.” *Economics Bulletin* 15 (2): 1–13.
- Frawley, Denise. 2014. “Combating Educational Disadvantage through Early Years and Primary School Investment.” *Irish Educational Studies* 33(2): 155–171. doi:10.1080/03323315.2014.920608.
- Frederickson, Norah, and Tony Cline. 2002. *Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Diversity: A Textbook*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Friend, Marilyn, and William D. Bursuck. 2012. *Including Students with Special Needs: A Practical Guide for Classroom Teachers*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. New Jersey: Pearson.
- Furze, Brian, Pauline Savy, Robert Douglas Webb, S. James, Theresa Petray, R. Brym, and John Lie. 2008. *Sociology in Today's World*. Melbourne: Cengage Learning.
- Gal, Eynat, Naomi Schreur, and Batya Engel-Yeger. 2010. “Inclusion of Children with Disabilities: Teachers' Attitudes and Requirements for Environmental Accommodations.” *International Journal of Special Education* 25 (2): 89–99.
- Gatt, Suzanne, Mikko Ojala, and Marta Solar. 2011. “Promoting Social Inclusion Counting with Everyone: Learning Communities and INCLUDE-ED”. *International Studies in Sociology of Education* 21 (1): 33–47. doi:10.1080/09620214.2011.543851.
- Gilbert, Nigel. 2001. *Researching Social Life*. 2nd ed. London: Sage.



- Gindis, Boris. 1999. "Vygotsky's Vision Reshaping the Practice of Special Education for the 21st Century." *Remedial and Special Education* 20 (6): 333–340.
- Gindis, Boris. 1995. "The Social/Cultural Implication of Disability: Vygotsky's Paradigm for Special Education." *Educational Psychologist* 30 (2): 77–81.
- Girvan, Norman. 2012. *Colonialism and Neo-colonialism in the Caribbean: An Overview*. <http://www.normangirvan.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Girvan-St-Vincent-paper.pdf>
- Glaser, Barney G. 2007. "Constructivist Grounded Theory?" *Historische Sozialforschung* [Historical Social Research]. Supplement (2007): 93–105.
- Glatthorn, Allan A., and Randy L. Joyner. 2005. *Writing the Winning Thesis or Dissertation: a Step-by-step Guide*. California: Corwin Press.
- Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc.
- Golder, Gill, Nicky Jones, and Erica Eaton Quinn. 2009. "Strengthening the Special Educational Needs Element of Initial Teacher Training and Education." *British Journal of Special Education* 36 (4): 183–190.
- Gordon, Theresa. 2013. "Education Official Hopeful OECS Strategy will Cater to Special Needs". *The Daily Observer*. <http://www.antiguaobserver.com/education-official-hopeful-oecs-strategy-will-cater-to-special-needs/>
- Gray, David E. 2002. "'Everybody Just Freezes. Everybody Is Just Embarrassed': Felt and Enacted Stigma among Parents of Children with High Functioning Autism." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 24 (6): 734–749.
- Gray, David E. 1993. "Perceptions of Stigma: The Parents of Autistic Children." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 15(1): 102–120.
- Green, Sara E. 2003. "'What Do You Mean 'What's Wrong with Her?': Stigma and the Lives of Families of Children with Disabilities." *Social Science & Medicine* 57 (8): 1361–1374.

- Grue, Jan. 2016. "The Social Meaning of Disability: A Reflection on Categorisation, Stigma and Identity." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 38 (6): 957–964.
- Guba, Egon G., and Yvonna S. Lincoln. 1994. "Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research." *Handbook of Qualitative Research* 2 (105): 163–194.
- Gül, Seray Olcay, and Sezgin Vuran. 2015. "Children with Special Needs' Opinions and Problems about Inclusive Practices." *Education and Science* 40 (180): 169–195.
- Halinen, Irmeli, and Ritva Järvinen. 2008. "Towards Inclusive Education: The Case of Finland." *Prospects* 38 (1): 77–97.
- Hall, Anthony, and James Midgley. 2004. *Social Policy for Development*. London: Sage.
- Hammersley, Martyn. 2011. *Methodology, Who Needs It?* London: Sage. doi:10.4135/9781446287941.n2.
- Hardy, Ian, and Stuart Woodcock. 2015. "Inclusive Education Policies: Discourses of Difference, Diversity and Deficit." *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 19 (2): 141–164.
- Harris, Alma, and Janet Goodall. 2008. "Do Parents Know They Matter? Engaging All Parents in Learning." *Educational Research* 50 (3): 277–289.
- Hartley, Michael T., Sheri Bauman, Charisse L. Nixon, and Stan Davis. 2015. "Comparative Study of Bullying Victimization among Students in General and Special Education." *Exceptional Children* 81 (2): 176–193.
- Hegarty, Seamus. 1993. *Meeting Special Needs in Ordinary Schools: An Overview*. 2nd ed. London: Cassell Educational Limited.
- Heimans, Stephen. 2013. "Education Policy Enactment Research: Disrupting Continuities." *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*. 35 (2): 307–316 doi:10.1080/01596306.2013.832566.
- Heimans, Stephen. 2012. "Coming to Matter in Practice: Enacting Education Policy." *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 33 (2): 313– 326.

- Heimans, Stephen. 2012. "Education Policy, Practice, and Power." *Educational Policy* 26 (3): 369–393.
- Hess, Robyn S., Amy M. Molina, and Elizabeth B. Kozleski. 2006. "Until Somebody Hears Me: Parent Voice and Advocacy in Special Educational Decision Making." *British Journal of Special Education* 33 (3): 148–157.
- Heyneman, Stephen P. 2003. "The History and Problems in the Making of Education Policy at the World Bank 1960–2000." *International Journal of Educational Development* 23(3): 315–337.
- Hickling-Hudson, Anne. 2014. "A Caribbean Experiment in Education for Social Justice." *Social Justice and Third World Education* 113–133.
- Hickling-Hudson, Anne. 2014. "Caribbean Schooling and the Social Divide - What Will It Take to Change Neo-colonial Education Systems?" *CIES 2015 Annual Conference of the Comparative and International Education Society*, Washington, USA, 8–13 March 2015.
- Hinds, Henry. 2007. *Universal Secondary Education in the OECS: Policy and Access, Quality and Rewards*. A Paper for Discussion. Castries: OECS Education Reform Unit (OERU).
- Hodkinson, Alan. 2010. "Inclusive and Special Education in the English Educational System: Historical Perspectives, Recent Developments and Future Challenges." *British Journal of Special Education* 37(2): 61–67.
- Holiday, Adrian. 2002. *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
- Hoppey, David, and James McLeskey. 2010. "A Case Study of Principal Leadership in an Effective Inclusive School." *The Journal of Special Education* 46 (4):245–256 doi: 0022466910390507.
- Hornby, Garry, and Rayleen Lafaele. 2011. "Barriers to Parental Involvement in Education: An Explanatory Model." *Educational Review* 63 (1): 37–52. doi:10.1080/00131911.2010.488049.
- Hornery, Samantha, Marjorie Seaton, Danielle Tracey, Rhonda G. Craven, and Alexander S. Yeung. 2014. "Enhancing Reading Skills and Reading

- Self-Concept of Children with Reading Difficulties: Adopting a Dual Approach Intervention.” *Australian Journal of Educational & Developmental Psychology* 14:131–143.
- Houchins, David E., Wendy Peia Oakes, and Zachary G. Johnson. 2016. “Bullying and Students with Disabilities: A Systematic Literature Review of Intervention Studies.” *Remedial and Special Education* 37 (5) 259– 273. doi: 0741932516648678.
- Idol, Lorna. 2006. “Toward inclusion of special education students in general education a program evaluation of eight schools.” *Remedial and Special Education* 27 (2): 77–94.
- Ittyerah, Miriam, and Nimisha Kumar. 2007. “The Actual and Ideal Self-Concept in Disabled Children, Adolescents and Adults.” *Psychology and Developing Societies* 19 (1): 81–112.
- Jahoda, Andrew, and I. Markova. 2004. “Coping with Social Stigma: People with Intellectual Disabilities Moving from Institutions and Family Home.” *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research* 48 (8): 719–729.
- Jahoda, Andrew, Alastair Wilson, Kirsten Stalker, and Anja Cairney. 2010. “Living with Stigma and the Self-Perceptions of People with Mild Intellectual Disabilities.” *Journal of Social Issues* 66 (3): 521–534.
- Jennings, Zellynne. 2001. “Teacher Education in Selected Countries in the Commonwealth Caribbean: The Ideal of Policy versus the Reality of Practice.” *Comparative Education* 37 (1): 107–134. doi:10.1080/03050060020020453.
- Jones, Reginald L. 1972. “Labels and Stigma in Special Education.” *Exceptional Children* 38 (7): 553–564.
- Jones, Susan R, Vasti Torres, and Jan Arminio. 2006. *Negotiating the Complexities of Qualitative Research in Higher Education: Fundamental Elements and Issues*. London: Routledge.

- Jones, Tiffany. 2013. *Understanding Education Policy: The 'Four Orientations' Framework*. New York: Springer.
- Jules, Didacus. 2008. "Rethinking Education for the Caribbean: A Radical Approach." *Comparative Education* 44 (2): 203–214. doi:10.1080/03050060802041142.
- Jules, Didacus, Errol Miller, and L. Ancilla Armstrong. 2000. "A Caribbean Education Strategy 2020." *Caribbean Education Task Force Report*. World Bank.
- Jules, Tavis D. 2014. "The Political Economy of 'Open Regionalism' and Education in Small (and Micro) States: The Construction of the Caribbean Educational Policy Space in CARICOM". *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 12 (4): 474–497. doi:10.1080/14767724.2013.861708.
- Jules, Tavis D. 2013. "Ideological Pluralism and Revisionism in Small (and Micro) States: The Erection of the Caribbean Education Policy Space." *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 11 (2): 258–275.
- Jules, Tavis D. 2012. "Re-reading the Anamorphosis of Educational Fragility, Vulnerability, and Strength in Small States." *Current Issues in Comparative Education* 15 (1): 5–13.
- Kalambouka, Afroditi, Peter Farrell, Alan Dyson, and Ian Kaplan. 2007. "The Impact of Placing Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools on the Achievement of their Peers." *Educational Research* 49 (4): 365–382.
- Kathuria, Sanjay, Mustapha Rouis, Michael Corlett, James Hanson, Rina H. Oberai, Kevin Tomlinson, Elizabeth Ruppert Bulmer. 2005. *A Time to Choose: Caribbean Development in the 21st Century*. No. 10330. The World Bank.
- Keane, Elaine. 2015. "Considering the Practical Implementation of Constructivist Grounded Theory in a Study of Widening Participation in Irish Higher Education." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 18 (4): 415–31.

- Kelly, Ruth. 2012. "Social Inclusion Policy." *Community & Enterprise Directorate Clare County Council*. <http://test.clarecoco.ie/community/publications/social-inclusion-policy-6116.pdf>
- Kim, Yanghee. 2009. "Minority Parental Involvement and School Barriers: Moving the Focus away from Deficiencies of Parents." *Educational Research Review* 4 (2): 80–102.
- Klees, Steven J. 2008. "A Quarter Century of Neoliberal Thinking in Education: Misleading Analyses and Failed Policies." *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 6 (4): 311–348.
- Klees, Steven, Joel Samoff, and Nelly Stromquist, eds. 2012. *The World Bank and Education: Critical Alternatives*. The Netherlands: Sense.
- Knight, Verna C., and Jennifer Obidah. 2014. "Instituting Universal Secondary Education: Caribbean Students' Perceptions of their Schooling Experiences." *Feedback* 5 (32): 71–81.
- Knight, Verna. 2014. "The Policy of Universal Secondary Education: Its Influence on Secondary Schooling in Grenada." *Research in Comparative and International Education* 9 (1): 16–35.
- Krahé, Barbara, and Colette Altwasser. 2006. "Changing Negative Attitudes towards Persons with Physical Disabilities: An Experimental Intervention." *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 16 (1): 59–69.
- Kumar, Ranjit. 2005. *Research Methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners*. 2nd ed. New South Wales: Pearson Longman.
- Lai, Yuan, and Jennifer A. Vadeboncoeur. 2012. "The Discourse of Parent Involvement in Special Education: A Critical Analysis Linking Policy Documents to the Experiences of Mothers." *Educational Policy* 27 (6) 867–897. doi:0895904812440501.
- Lalvani, Priya. 2015. "Disability, Stigma and Otherness: Perspectives of Parents and Teachers." *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education* 62 (4): 379-393.

- Lam, Elaine. 2011. "Sharing Best Practices in Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago: Patterns of Policy Implementation and Resistance." *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 41(1): 25–41. doi:10.1080/03057925.2010.530746.
- Lashley, Jonathan. 2008. "Institutionalization of Social Policy in the Caribbean". Organization of American States (OAS), Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI), First meeting of ministers and high authorities of social development. Valparaiso Chile: Organization of American States.
- Lavia, Jennifer. 2007. "Girls and Special Education in the Caribbean." *Support for Learning* 22 (4): 189–196.
- Leacock, Coreen. 2009. "Quality Education for All in the Eastern Caribbean: Rethinking the Curriculum in the Face of Universal Secondary Education." *Journal of Eastern Caribbean Studies* 34 (3): 19–38.
- Leicester, Mal, Celia Modgil, and Sohan Modgil, eds. 2000. *Education, Culture and Values. Systems of Education: Theories Policies and Implicit Values*. Volume 1. New York: Farmer Press.
- Leithwood, Kenneth, and Carolyn Riehl. 2005. "What Do We Already Know about Educational Leadership?" In *A New Agenda for Research in Educational Leadership*, edited by William Firestone and Carolyn Riehl, 12–27. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Lesforis, Verneta. 2011. "Secondary Teachers' Perceptions of the Introduction of Universal Secondary Education in St. Lucia." PhD diss. Lindenwood University.
- Lewis, Theodore. 2007. "Reconceptualizing Vocational Education and training (VET) in Caribbean Schooling." In *Reconceptualising the agenda for education in the Caribbean: Proceedings of the 2007 Biennial Cross-Campus Conference in Education*, edited by Lynda. Quamina-Aiyejina, 477–488. St. Augustine, Trinidad: School of Education, UWI.
- Lindsay, Geoff. 2003. "Inclusive Education: A Critical Perspective." *British Journal of Special Education* 30 (1): 3–12.

- Link, Bruce G., and Jo C. Phelan. 2001. "Conceptualizing stigma." *Annual Review of Sociology* 27 (1): 363–385.
- Lloyd, Chris. 2000. "Excellence for All Children False Promises! The Failure of Current Policy for Inclusive Education and Implications for Schooling in the 21st Century". *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 4 (2):133–151. doi:10.1080/136031100284858.
- Loreman, Tim. 2007. "Seven Pillars of Support for Inclusive Education: Moving from "Why?" to "How?"" *International Journal of Whole Schooling* 3 (2): 22–38.
- Loreman, Tim, Chris Forlin, and Umesh Sharma. 2014. "Measuring Indicators of Inclusive Education: A Systematic Review of the Literature." In *Measuring Inclusive Education International Perspectives on Inclusive Education* 3:165–187. doi:10.1108/S1479-363620140000003024
- Louisy, Pearlette. 2001. "Globalisation and Comparative Education: A Caribbean Perspective." *Comparative Education* 37 (4): 425–438. doi:10.1080/03050060120091238.
- Louisy, Pearlette. 2004. "Whose Context for What Quality? Informing Education Strategies for the Caribbean". *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 34(3): 285–292. doi:10.1080/0305792042000257121.
- Lupu, Elena, Constantin Cernat, and Cristina Petre. 2011. "Identifying the Attitude of Healthy Individuals towards Disabled Children - A chance to be educated for all." *Procedia- Social and Behavioral Sciences* 29: 266–271.
- Lynch, Alison. 2016. *Teacher Installs Desk Cycles to Help Students Focus in Class*. September 5. <http://metro.co.uk/2016/09/05/teacher-installs-desk-cycles-to-help-students-focus-in-class-6109728/>.
- Maanum, Jody L. 2009. *The General Educator's Guide to Special Education*. 3rd ed. California: Corwin.



- Mahbub, Tahiya. 2008. "Children's Views on Inclusion: Inclusive Education at a BRAC School—perspectives from the Children." *British Journal of Special Education* 35 (1): 33–41.
- Maras, Pam, and Rupert Brown. 2000. "Effects of Different Forms of School Contact on Children's Attitudes toward Disabled and Non-disabled Peers." *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 70 (3): 337–351.
- Markey, Kathleen, Mary Tilki, and Georgina Taylor. 2014. "Reflecting on the Challenges of Choosing and Using a Grounded Theory Approach." *Nurse Researcher* 22 (2): 16–22.
- Marks, Veronica. 2009. "Universal Access to Secondary Education in St. Vincent and the Grenadines." *Journal of Eastern Caribbean Studies* 34 (2): 56–70.
- Marshall, Jeffery H., and Valentina Calderón. 2006. *Social Exclusion in Education in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Sustainable Development Department, Technical Paper Series EDU-122. Washington: Inter-American Development Bank
- Marvasti, Amir B., 2004. *Qualitative Research in Sociology*. London: Sage.
- Matthews, Clark. 2013. *Quality Education Counts for Skills and Growth*. Caribbean Knowledge Series. Washington DC: World Bank.  
<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2013/06/17893756/quality-education-counts-skills-growth>
- Maulik, Pallab K., and Gary L. Darmstadt. 2007. "Childhood Disability in Low-and middle Income Countries: Overview of Screening, Prevention, Services, Legislation, and Epidemiology." *Pediatrics* 120 (Supplement 1): S1–S55.
- Maxwell, Joseph. 2009. "Designing a Qualitative Study." In *The SAGE Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods*, 2nd ed., edited by Leonard Bickman and Debra J. Rog, 214–54. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. doi:10.4135/9781483348858.n7.
- McCarthy, Paul, Michael Sheeham, Susanne Wilkie, and William Wilkie. 1998. *Bullying: Causes, Costs and Cures*. Brisbane: Beyond Bullying Association.

- McClelland, Alison, and Paul Smyth, eds. 2006. *Social Policy in Australia: Understanding for Action*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- McDonald, Lex, and Rasela Tufue-Dolgoy. 2013. "Moving Forwards, Sideways or Backwards? Inclusive Education in Samoa." *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education* 60 (3): 270–284.
- McLachlan, Benita, and Geraldine Davis. 2013. "Educating the Educators: Developing Those Who Support Learning for Students with Additional Learning Needs." *Support for Learning* 28 (4): 173–180.
- McLaughlin, Margaret J., Alan Dyson, Katherine Nagle, Martha Thurlow, Martyn Rouse, Michael Hardman, Brahm Norwich, Phillip J. Burke, and Michael Perlin. 2006. "Cross-cultural Perspectives on the Classification of Children with Disabilities Part II. Implementing Classification Systems in schools." *The Journal of Special Education* 40 (1): 46–58.
- McLeskey, James, and Nancy L. Waldron. 2007. "Making Differences Ordinary in Inclusive Classrooms." *Intervention in School and Clinic* 42 (3): 162–168.
- McMaster, Christopher. 2012. "Ingredients for Inclusion: Lessons from the Literature." *Kairaranga* 13 (2): 11–22.
- Miles, Matthew B., and A. Michael Huberman. 1994. *Qualitative Data Analysis*. California: Sage.
- Miles, Susie, and Nidhi Singal. 2010. "The Education for All and Inclusive Education Debate: Conflict, Contradiction or Opportunity?" *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 14 (1): 1–15.
- Miles, Susie, Donna Lene, and Laisiasa Merumeru. 2014. "Making Sense of Inclusive Education in the Pacific Region: Networking as a Way Forward." *Childhood* 21 (3): 339–353. doi:0907568214524458.
- Miller, Errol. 2009. "Universal Secondary Education and Society in the Commonwealth Caribbean." *Journal of Eastern Caribbean Studies* 34 (2): 3–18.

- Miller, Errol, Didacus Jules and Leton Thomas. 1991. *Foundations for the Future*. Report of the Education Reform Group established by the OECS Secretariat, Castries: OECS Central Secretariat.
- Miller, Errol. 2000. *Education for All in the Caribbean in the 1900s. Retrospect and prospect*. Kingston: UNESCO.
- Miller, Errol, Didacus Jules, and Leton Thomas. 2000. *Pillars for Partnership and Progress: The OECS Education Reform Strategy: 2010*. St. Lucia: OECS Education Reform Unit.
- Miller, Errol. 1999. "Commonwealth Caribbean Education in the Global Context." In *Educational Reform in the Commonwealth Caribbean*, edited by Errol Miller, 3–23. West Indies: OAS.
- Mills, Jane, Ann Bonner, and Karen Francis. 2006. "Adopting a Constructivist Approach to Grounded Theory: Implications for Research Design." *International Journal of Nursing Practice* 12 (1): 8–13.
- Minkoff, Debra C. 1997. "Producing Social Capital National Social Movements and Civil Society." *American Behavioral Scientist* 40 (5): 606–619.
- Mishna, Faye. 2003. "Learning Disabilities and Bullying Double Jeopardy." *Journal of learning disabilities* 36 (4): 336–347.
- Mitchell, David. 2015. "Inclusive Education is a Multi-faceted Concept." *Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal* 5 (1): 9–30
- Mittler, Peter. 1999. "Equal Opportunities - For Whom?" *British Journal of Special Education* 26 (1): 3–7.
- Morris, Halden A. 2010. "Will Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Guarantee Economic Development of Caribbean islands?" *Caribbean Educational Research Journal*, 2 (1): 104–112.
- Morris, Halden A. 2013. "Revisiting Quality Assurance for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in the Caribbean." *Caribbean Curriculum* 21: 121–148.

- Morrison, David E. 1998. *The Search for a Method: Focus Groups and the Development of Mass Communication Research*. Bedfordshire: University of Luton.
- Morton, Missy, Nancy Higgins, Jude MacArthur, and Hazel Phillips. 2013. "Introduction to the Special Issue—making Inclusive Education Happen: Ideas for Sustainable Change." *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 17 (8): 753–761.
- Nagel, Daniel A., Victoria F. Burns, Carla Tilley, and Diane Aubin. 2015. "When Novice Researchers Adopt Constructivist Grounded Theory: Navigating Less Travelled Paradigmatic and Methodological Paths in PhD Dissertation Work." *International Journal of Doctoral Studies* 10: 365–383
- Nakken, Han, and Sip Jan Pijl. 2002. "Getting along with Classmates in Regular Schools: a Review of the Effects of Integration on the Development of Social Relationships." *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 6 (1): 47–61.
- Neuman, W. Lawrence. 2011. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. 7th ed. Boston/ Mass: Pearson.
- Nguyen, Phuong-Mai, Cees Terlouw, and Albert Pilot. 2006. "Culturally Appropriate Pedagogy: the Case of Group Learning in a Confucian Heritage Culture Context." *Intercultural Education* 17 (6): 1–19.
- Norwich, Brahm, and Narcie Kelly. 2004. "Pupils' Views on Inclusion: Moderate Learning Difficulties and Bullying in Mainstream and Special Schools." *British Educational Research Journal* 30 (1): 43–65.
- Norwich, Brahm, and Tricia Nash. 2011. "Preparing Teachers to Teach Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities: The Significance of a National PGCE Development and Evaluation Project for Inclusive Teacher Education." *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs* 11 (1): 2–11. doi:10.1080/0305764X.2010.526588.
- Nowicki, Elizabeth A., and Robert Sandieson. 2002. "A Meta-analysis of School-age Children's Attitudes towards Persons with Physical or Intellectual

- Disabilities.” *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education* 49 (3): 243–265.
- Nutbrown, Cathy, and Peter Clough. 2004. “Inclusion and Exclusion in the Early Years: Conversations with European Educators.” *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 19 (3): 301–315.
- O'Donoghue, Thomas A., and Ron Chalmers. 2000. “How Teachers Manage Their Work in Inclusive Classrooms.” *Teaching and Teacher Education* 16 (8): 889–904.
- Ong, Beng Kok. 2012. “Grounded Theory Method (GTM) and the Abductive Research Strategy (ARS): A Critical Analysis of Their Differences.” *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 15 (5): 417–32.
- Opertti, Renato, Jayne, Brad and Leana Duncombe. 2009. “Moving forward: Inclusive Education as the Core of Education for All.” *Prospects*, 39 (3): 205–214.
- Opertti, Renato, and Carolina Belalcázar. 2008. “Trends in Inclusive Education at Regional and Interregional Levels: Issues and Challenges.” *Prospects* 38 (1): 113–135.
- Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. 2013. *Every Learner Succeeds: 2012 to 2021 OECS Education Reform Strategy*. St. Lucia: OECS Education Reform Unit.
- Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. September 2014. *OECS Education Sector Strategy Moves to Implementation Phase*. <http://www.oecs.org/edmu-press-releases/895-oecs-education-sector-strategy-moves-to-implementation-phase>.
- Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. 2014. *OECS Education Statistical Digest: Statistics on Education 2012–13*. <http://www.oecs.org>
- Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. 2012. *OECS Education Statistical Digest: Statistics on Education for the base year 2010–11*. <http://www.oecs.org>
- Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. October 2003. *Towards Developing a Model of Governance for Economic Union in the OECS: A Case Study of the*

*European.*

Union<http://www3.nd.edu/~ggoertz/rei/reidevon.dtBase2/Files.noindex/pdf/e/http---www.oecs-1.pdf>.

- O'Rourke, John. 2015. "Inclusive Schooling: If It's So Good - Why Is It So Hard to Sell?" *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 19 (5): 530–546.
- Ozga, Jenny, and Bob Lingard. 2007. "Globalisation, Education Policy and Politics." In *The Routledge Falmer Reader in Education Policy and Politics*, edited by Bob Lingard and Jenny Ozga, 65–82. London: Routledge.
- Ozga, Jenny. 2000. *Policy Research in Educational Settings: Contested Terrain*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Panofsky, Carolyn P., and Jennifer A. Vadeboncoeur. 2012. "Schooling the Social Classes: Triadic Zones of Proximal Development, Communicative Capital, and Relational Distance in the Perpetuation of Advantage". In *Vygotsky and Sociology*, edited by Harry Daniels, 192–210. Canada: Routledge.
- Panofsky, Carolyn P. 2003. "The Relations of Learning and Student Social Class." In *Vygotsky's educational theory in cultural context*, edited by, Alex Kozulin, Boris Gindis, Vladimir Ageyev and Suzanne Miller, 411–431. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Pedro, Joan, and Dennis Conrad. 2006. "Special Education in Trinidad and Tobago. Educational Vision and Change." *Childhood Education* 82 (6): 324–326.
- Peters, Michael A., and Tina AC Besley. 2014. "Social Exclusion/Inclusion: Foucault's Analytics of Exclusion, the Political Ecology of Social Inclusion and the Legitimation of Inclusive Education." *Open Review of Educational Research* 1 (1): 99–115.
- Peters, Susan J. 2007. "Education for all? A Historical Analysis of International Inclusive Education Policy and Individuals with Disabilities." *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 18 (2): 98–108.

- Peters, Susan J. 2003. "Inclusive Education: Achieving Education for All by Including Those with Disabilities and Special Education Needs." Washington: The World Bank.
- Pillay, Hitendra, Suzanne Carrington, Jennifer Duke, Megan Tones, Subhas Chandra, and Joyce Heeraman. 2015. *Mobilising School and Community Engagement to Implement Disability-Inclusive Education through Action Research: Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu*. Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology.
- Pillay, Hitendra, Suzanne Carrington, Jennifer Duke, Subhas Chandra, Joyce Heeraman, Megan Tones, and Rukh Mani. 2015. *National Profiles of In-Country Capacity to Support Disability-Inclusive Education: Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu*. Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology.
- Pivik, Jayne, Joan McComas, and Marc Laflamme. 2002. "Barriers and Facilitators to Inclusive Education." *Exceptional Children* 69 (1): 97–107.
- Polat, Filiz. 2011. "Inclusion in Education: A Step towards Social Justice." *International Journal of Educational Development* 31 (1): 50–58.
- Puamau, Priscilla. 2007. "Advancing Inclusive Education in the Pacific." In *Inclusive education in the Pacific*, edited by Priscilla Puamau and Frances Pene, 9–28. Suva, Fiji: Institute of Education, University of the South Pacific.
- Puddephatt, Antony J., and Kathleen C. Charmaz. 2006. "An Interview with Kathy Charmaz: On Constructing Grounded Theory." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 2 (3): 5–20
- Rabiee, Fatemeh. 2004. "Focus-group Interview and Data Analysis". *The Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, 63 (4): 655–60. doi:10.1079/PNS2004399.
- Ramalho, Rodrigo, Perter Adams, Peter Huggard, and Karen Hoare. 2015. "Literature Review and Constructivist Grounded Theory Methodology." *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 16 (3): N/a.

- Randolph, Justus J. 2009. "A Guide to Writing the Dissertation Literature Review." *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation* 14 (13): 1–13.
- Reay, Diane. 2005. "Doing the Dirty Work of Social Class? Mothers' Work in Support of Their Children's Schooling." *The Sociological Review* 53 (2): 104–116.
- Reay, Diane. 2004. "'It's All Becoming a Habitus': Beyond the Habitual Use of Habitus in Educational Research". *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 25 (4): 431–444.
- Richardson, Arthur, G. 2005. *Study of Teacher Training Processes at Universities and Pedagogic Institutions in the English Speaking Caribbean*. Venezuela: International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Rieser, Richard. 2012. *Implementing inclusive education: A Commonwealth Guide to Implementing Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.
- Roberts, Clare M., and Peta R. Smith. 1999. "Attitudes and Behaviour of Children toward Peers with Disabilities." *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education* 46 (1): 35–50.
- Robeyns, Ingrid. 2003. "The Capability Approach: An Interdisciplinary Introduction." In *Training Course Preceding the Third International Conference on the Capability Approach*. Pavia, Italy.
- Rodina, Katarina A. 2006. "Vygotsky's Social Constructionist View on Disability: A Methodology for Inclusive Education." *Enabling Lifelong Learning in Education, Training and Development: European Learning Styles Information Network (ELSIN)*. University of Oslo: Oslo, CD/ISDN (2006): 82–8075.
- Rose, Chad A., and Lisa E. Monda-Amaya. 2011. "Bullying and Victimization among Students with Disabilities: Effective Strategies for Classroom Teachers." *Intervention in School and Clinic* 48 (2): 99–107. doi:1053451211430119.



- Rose, Chad A., Lisa E. Monda-Amaya, and Dorothy L. Espelage. 2011. "Bullying Perpetration and Victimization in Special Education: A Review of the Literature." *Remedial and Special Education*. 32 (2): 1140–130
- Ross-Hill, Rorie. 2009. "Teacher Attitude towards Inclusion Practices and Special Needs Students." *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs* 9 (3): 188–198.
- Rouse, Martyn. 2008. "Developing Inclusive Practice: A Role for Teachers and Teacher Education." *Education in the North* 16 (1): 6–13.
- Ruijs, Nienke M., and Thea TD Peetsma. 2009. "Effects of Inclusion on Students with and without Special Educational Needs Reviewed." *Educational Research Review* 4 (2): 67–79.
- Salend, Spencer J., and Laurel M. Garrick Duhaney. 1999. "The Impact of Inclusion on Students with and without Disabilities and Their Educators." *Remedial and Special Education* 20 (2): 114–126.
- Sbaraini, Alexandra, Stacy M Carter, R Wendell Evans, and Anthony Blinkhorn. 2011. "How to do a Grounded Theory Study? A Worked Example of a Study of Dental Practices." *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 11:128 doi:10.1186/1471-2288-11-128.
- Schrouder, Sandra. 2008. "Educational Efficiency in the Caribbean: A Comparative Analysis." *Development in Practice* 18 (2): 273–279. doi:10.1080/09614520801899200.
- Scotch, Richard K., and Kay Schriener. 1997. "Disability as Human Variation: Implications for policy." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 549 (1): 148–159.
- Seale, Clive. 1999. "Grounding Theory." In *The Quality of Qualitative Research*, e dited by Clive Seale, 87–106. London, London: SAGE Publications Ltd. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9780857020093.n7>.
- Seale, Clive. 1998. *Researching Society and Culture*. London: Sage.

- Sharma, Umesh, Chris Forlin, Beth Sprunt, and Laisiasa Merumeru. 2016. "Identifying Disability-inclusive Indicators Currently Employed to Monitor and Evaluate Education in the Pacific Island Countries." *Cogent Education* 3: 1170754.
- Sharma, Umesh, Tim Loreman, and Setareki Macanawai. 2016. "Factors Contributing to the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Pacific Island Countries." *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 20 (4): 397–412.
- Sharma, Umesh, Chris Forlin, and Tim Loreman. 2008. "Impact of Training on Pre-service Teachers' Attitudes and Concerns about Inclusive Education and Sentiments about Persons with Disabilities." *Disability & Society* 23 (7): 773–785.
- Shelton, J. Nicole, Jan Marie Alegre, and Deborah Son. 2010. "Social Stigma and Disadvantage: Current Themes and Future Prospects." *Journal of Social Issues* 66 (3): 618–633.
- Shifrer, Dara. 2013. "Stigma of a Label Educational Expectations for High School Students Labeled with Learning Disabilities." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 54 (4): 462–480.
- Silverman, David. 2000. *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook*. London: SAGE.
- Skrtic, Thomas. 1991. "The Special Education Paradox: Equity as the Way to Excellence." *Harvard Educational Review*, 61 (2): 148–207.
- Slee Roger. 2001. "Social Justice and the Changing Directions In Educational Research: The Case of Inclusive Education." *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 5 (2–3): 167–177. doi:10.1080/13603110010035832.
- Slee, Roger. 2013. "How do We Make Inclusive Education Happen When Exclusion is a Political Predisposition?" *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 17 (8): 895– 907.

- Slee, Roger. 2001. "Social Justice and the Changing Directions in Educational Research: The Case of Inclusive Education". *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 5(2-3): 167-177. doi:10.1080/13603110010035832.
- Smith, Carly, and Rachel Forrester-Jones. 2014. "Experiential Learning: Changing Student Attitudes towards Learning Disability." *Tizard Learning Disability Review* 19 (3): 110-117.
- Smith, Ransford. 2015. "The Caribbean and the Post-2015 Development Agenda." [http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/39286/1/S1500769\\_en.pdf](http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/39286/1/S1500769_en.pdf)
- Smith, Rebecca, and Pauline Leonard. 2005. "Collaboration for Inclusion: Practitioner Perspectives". *Equity & Excellence in Education* 38 (4): 269-279. doi:10.1080/10665680500299650.
- Smyth, John. 2010. "Speaking Back to Educational Policy: Why Social Inclusion Will not Work for Disadvantaged Australian Schools." *Critical Studies in Education* 51 (2): 113-128.
- Sobel, Joel. 2002. "Can We Trust Social Capital?" *Journal of Economic Literature* 40 (1): 139-154.
- Special Education Council. September 2013. *SEN Code of Practice: Antigua and Barbuda*. <http://www.ab.gov.ag/>
- Srivastava, Aashish, and S. Bruce Thomson. 2009. "Framework Analysis: A Qualitative Methodology for Applied Policy Research." *Joaag* 4 (2): 72-9.
- Stewart, David, Prem Shamdasani, and Dennis Rook. 2009. "Group Depth Interviews: Focus Group Research." In *The SAGE Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods*, 2nd ed., edited by Leonard Bickman and Debra J. Rog, 589-617. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. doi:10.4135/9781483348858.n18.
- Strauss, Anselm, and Juliet Corbin. 1994. "Grounded Theory Methodology." In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, 273-285. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications

- Stubbs, Sue. 2008. *Inclusive Education: Where there are Few Resources*. Gronland: Atlas Alliance.
- Subran, David. 2013. "Making TVET Relevant to a Postmodern Caribbean." *Caribbean Curriculum* 21: 81–96.
- Sullivan, Alice. 2002. "Bourdieu and Education: How Useful is Bourdieu's Theory for Researchers?" *Netherlands Journal of Social Sciences* 38 (2): 144–166.
- Sutton, Paul. 2005. *Caribbean Development: An Overview*. <http://swisscaribbean.org/?i=10>
- Swearer, Susan M., Cixin Wang, John W. Maag, Amanda B. Siebecker, and Lynae J. Frerichs. 2012. "Understanding the Bullying Dynamic among Students in Special and General Education." *Journal of School Psychology* 50 (4): 503–520.
- Terzi, Lorella. 2007. "Capability and Educational Equality: The Just Distribution of Resources to Students with Disabilities and Special Educational Needs." *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 41 (4): 757–773.
- Thomas, Clive Y. 2001. *Social Policy Framework: A New Vision for Social Development in the OECS*. Report Prepared for OECS/UNDP Preparatory Assistance Project.
- Thomas, Philippa. 2005. "Disability, Poverty and the Millennium Development Goals: Relevance, Challenges and Opportunities for DFID." *GLADNET Collection*, 256.
- Timmermans, Stefan, and Iddo Tavory. 2012. "Theory Construction in Qualitative Research from Grounded Theory to Abductive Analysis." *Sociological Theory* 30 (3): 167–186.
- Tomlinson, Sally. 2015. "Is a Sociology of Special and Inclusive Education Possible?" *Educational Review*, 67 (3): 273–281.  
doi: 10.1080/00131911.2015.1021764.
- Torres-Velasquez, Diane. 2000. "Sociocultural Theory: Standing at the Crossroads". *Remedial and Special Education* 21 (2): 66–69.

- Tzanakis, Michael. 2011. "Bourdieu's Social Reproduction Thesis and the Role of Cultural Capital in Educational Attainment: A Critical Review of Key Empirical Studies." *Educate* 11 (1): 76–90.
- Unianu, Ecaterina Maria. 2012. "Teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education." *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 33: 900-904.
- United Nations. 2015. *Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015*. Washington: United Nations.
- United Nations. 2006. "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities." *Treaty Series* 2515 (December): 3.
- United Nations. 1989. "Convention on the Rights of the Child." *Treaty Series* 1577 (November): 3.
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP). 2012. *Caribbean Human Development Report 2012*. <http://www.undp.org>.
- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). 2005. *Guidelines for inclusion: Ensuring access to education for all*. Paris: UNESCO.
- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). 2007. *The State of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean: Guaranteeing Quality Education for All: A regional report, reviewing and assessing the Progress toward Education For All within the framework of the Regional Education Project (EFA/PRELAC) -2007*. <http://www.unesco.org>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. 2009. *Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education*. Paris: UNESCO
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). 2014. *UNESCO Education Strategy 2014–2021*. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002312/231288e.pdf>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). 2014b. "The Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013/14." *Teaching and Learning: Achieving quality for all. Gender Summary*.

<http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/gmr-2013-14-teaching-and-learning-education-for-all-2014-en.pdf>

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). September 2016. “50th Anniversary of International Literacy Day: Literacy Rates are on the Rise but Millions Remain Illiterate.” *UNESCO Institute of Statistics*. <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs38-50th-anniversary-of-international-literacy-day-literacy-rates-are-on-the-rise-but-millions-remain-illiterate-2016-en.pdf>.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). 2013. *Review of Education Plan & Policies in the Eastern Caribbean Area*. <http://www.unicef.org>

Villegas-Reimers, Eleonora. 2003. *Teacher Professional Development: An International Review of the Literature*. Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning.

Vlachou, Anastasia. 2004. “Education and Inclusive Policy-making: Implications for Research and Practice”. *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 8 (1): 3–21.

Vygotskaya, Gita L. 1999. “Vygotsky and Problems of Special Education.” *Remedial and Special Education* 20 (6): 330–332.

Vygotsky, Len. S. 1978. “Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes.” 14th ed . Editors/translators Michael Cole, Vera John-Steiner, Sylvia Scribner, & Ellen Souberman, London: Harvard University Press.

Wallace, Susan. 2009. *Dictionary of Education*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Ward, Sophie C., Carl Bagley, Jacky Lumby, Philip Woods, Tom Hamilton, and Amanda Roberts. 2015. “School Leadership for Equity: Lessons from the Literature.” *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 19 (4): 333–346.

Warner, Laverne, Sharon Lynch, Diana Kay Nabors and Cynthia G. Simpson. 2008. *Themes for Inclusive Classrooms: Lesson Plans for Every Learner*. Maryland: Gryphon House Inc.

- Watts, Andrew. 2011. *Issues in Curriculum Development and Harmonization in the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States: A Report to the OECS and the World Bank*. <https://www.scribd.com/document/149290511/Curriculum-Harmonization-in-the-OECS-AW-0511>
- Weedmark, Vennesa. 2013. "Caribbean Dependency Theory and the Case of Jamaican Development". *Glendon Journal of International Studies* 6. <http://pi.library.yorku.ca/>
- Weeks, Cynthia. 2007. *St. Lucia Country Report at Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education*. Jamaica: UNESCO. <http://www.ibe.unesco.org>
- White, Barry. 2011. *Mapping your Thesis: The comprehensive manual of theory and techniques for masters and doctoral research*. Victoria: ACER Press.
- Will, Madeleine C. 1986. "Educating Children with Learning Problems: A Shared Responsibility." *Exceptional Children* 52 (5): 411–415.
- Williams, Malcolm, and W. Paul. Vogt. 2011. *The SAGE Handbook of Innovation in Social Research Methods*. Los Angeles, CA/ London: SAGE.
- World Bank. n.d. Data. *Antigua and Barbuda*. <http://data.worldbank.org/country/antigua-and-barbuda> (accessed February 6, 2017).
- World Bank. 2017. Data. *St. Kitts and Nevis*. <http://data.worldbank.org/country/st-kitts-and-nevis>
- World Bank. n.d. Data. *St. Lucia*. <http://data.worldbank.org/country/st-lucia> (accessed February 6, 2017).
- World Bank. (n.d). "Data". *World Bank Country and Lending Groups: Country* 6 (Feb. 17, 2017)
- World Bank Collaborates With OECS In Enhancing Education Policy*. 2014. *Jamaica Gleaner*. <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/extra/article.php?id=3558>
- Yell, Mitchell L., Antonis Katsiyannis, Chad A. Rose, and David E. Houchins. 2016. "Bullying and Harassment of Students with Disabilities in Schools Legal

Considerations and Policy Formation.” *Remedial and Special Education* 37 (5): 274–284.

Yeo, Rebecca, and Karen Moore. 2003. “Including Disabled People in Poverty Reduction Work: “Nothing about us, without us”.” *World Development* 31 (3): 571–590.

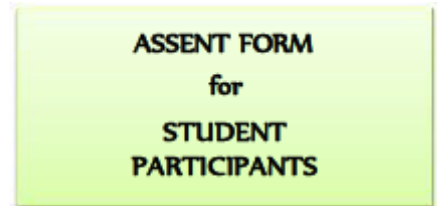
Yeung, Alison S. 2012. “Exploring Organisational Perspectives on Implementing Educational Inclusion in Mainstream Schools.” *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 16 (7): 675–690.



Appendix 1. Example of an assent form for student participants



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social  
Sciences University of New England  
Armidale NSW  
2851 Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6778 2992 or +61 2 6778 2250  
Fax + 61 2 6778 8748  
bcss-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au



**Research Project: *Who are the disadvantaged? A case for social inclusion in the education system of small Caribbean islands.***

Please write your name after 'I', and circle the yes/no answer you want.

I, ....., have read the Information Sheet for Students and any questions I asked have been answered and I understand them. Yes/No

I agree to take part in this research study. Yes/No

I know that I can change my mind at any time. Yes/No

I agree that any information taken and anything we talk about will be written about using an invented name. Yes/No

I agree that the interview being recorded and transcribed. Yes/No

.....  
Student Date

.....  
Parent Date

.....  
Researcher Date

Appendix 2: Example of a consent for adult participants



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2992 or +61 2 6773 2250  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bccs-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

**CONSENT FORM  
for  
PARTICIPANTS**

**Research Project: *Who are the disadvantaged? A case for social inclusion in the education system of small Caribbean islands.***

---

I, ....., have read the information contained in the Information Sheet for Participants and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. Yes/No

I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I may withdraw at any time. Yes/No

I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published using a pseudonym. Yes/No

I agree that I may be quoted using a pseudonym. Yes/No

I agree to the interview being audio recorded and transcribed. Yes/No

I would like to receive a copy of the transcription of the interview. Yes/No

I am older than 18 years of age. Yes/No

.....  
Participant Date

.....  
Researcher Date

## Appendix 3. Example of information sheet for student participants



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2992 or + 61 2 6773 2250  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bcss-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

### INFORMATION SHEET for STUDENT PARTICIPANTS 11-16

**Research Project: *Who are the disadvantaged? A case for social inclusion in the education system of small Caribbean islands.***

---

#### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

##### 1. What is the study about?

Students with disabilities can feel left out and unwanted at school. This study is about how students with disabilities are treated at school and will try and find ways to make the school system more welcoming and comfortable for all students.



##### 2. What does the study involve?

I would like to ask you a number of questions about different parts of your life and how you feel.

##### 3. How much time will the study take?

It should take about an hour of your time.



##### 4. Can I choose whether I take part in the study?

You can choose whether you want to take part in the study or not. If you do not want to take part, that's fine, it's totally up to you! If you choose to be involved, whatever you tell me will be private.



It's OK if you want someone you trust to support you in taking part in the study. A teacher or your parent will be in the room with us at all times.

You can stop taking part in the study at any time. If you stop taking part in the study, you will not be punished in any way.

If you stop taking part in the study any information you did give will not be used and will be destroyed.

#### **5. Will anyone else know the result?**

Whatever you tell me is private. Only myself and my supervisors, Associate Professor Habib Zafarullah and Dr. Cary Bennett, will know what you say. We will not tell anybody else what you say. However, the results of this study may be used in special magazines or at special meetings, but your personal information will not be discussed. We will replace your name with an invented name.



#### **6. Can I tell other people about the study?**

Yes, you can tell other people about the study.



#### **7. Has this study been approved?**

Yes, this project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No....., Valid to .././...).



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2992 or + 61 2 6773 2250  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bcss-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

INFORMATION SHEET  
for  
STUDENT PARTICIPANTS  
11-16

### 8. What if I become upset during the study?

It is unlikely that this project will raise any personal or upsetting issues but if it does someone who can talk to you about what upset you will be asked to speak with you.

### 9. What if I need more information?

If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to phone Carel at (268)770-0233 or (268) 461-1860

### 10. What if I have a complaint?



Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact Bernard Warner at:

The Antigua & Barbuda Association of Persons with Disabilities (ABAPD) P.O Box W123

St. John's

Antigua, W.I.

Tel: 720-7263

E-mail: info@abapd.org or abapd1995@yahoo.com

You can also contact the Research Ethics Officer at:

Research Services

University of New England

Armidale, NSW 2351

Tel: +61(2) 6773 3449 Fax: +61(2) 6773 3543

Email: ethics@une.edu.au

Thank you for considering this request and I look forward to talking with you.

Carel

***This information sheet is for you to keep***

## Appendix 4. Example of teacher information sheets



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
 University of New England  
 Armidale NSW  
 2351 Australia  
 Phone + 61 2 6773 2992 or + 61 2 6773 2250  
 Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
 bcss-school@une.edu.au  
 www.une.edu.au

**INFORMATION  
 SHEET for  
 TEACHER PARTICIPANTS**

I wish to invite you to participate in my research project, described below.

My name is Carel Hodge and I am conducting this research as part of my PhD in the Department of Sociology in the School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences at the University of New England. My supervisors are Associate Professor Habib Zafarullah and Dr. Cary Bennett.

<b>Research Project</b>	<b>Who are the disadvantaged? A case for social inclusion in the education system of small Caribbean islands.</b>
<b>Aim of the research</b>	The purpose of this research is to look at and compare the education strategies and policies within individual islands of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). The research aims to examine the education policies and practices that are inclusive and to see how students who are thought of as being disadvantaged are treated in OECS schools. The aim is also to know the views and opinions of parents, students, teachers and other officials on the inclusiveness of current education policies, strategies and practices. Policies, strategies and practices that address inclusion and disadvantaged groups will be examined to fully understand how they impact the development of individuals and society and to find ways to make the schools and education system in the OECS fully inclusive and beneficial to all groups of students.
<b>Interview</b>	I would like you to participate in a focus group session and a face-to-face interview at a mutually agreed upon location and time. The focus group session will be no longer than one and a half hours and the interview will take approximately one hour. With your permission, I will make an audio recording of the interview to ensure that I accurately recall the information you provide. Following the interview, a transcript will be provided to you if you wish to see one.  You have been asked to participate in this research because you are a teacher whose student(s) have special educational needs.
<b>Confidentiality</b>	Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study will remain confidential. No individual will be identified by name in any publication of the results. All names will be replaced by pseudonyms; this will ensure that you are not identifiable.
<b>Participation is Voluntary</b>	Please understand that your involvement in this study is voluntary and I respect your right to withdraw from the study at any time. You may discontinue the interview at any time without consequence and you

	do not need to provide any explanation if you decide not to participate or withdraw at any time.
	If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form.
<b>Questions</b>	The interview questions will not be of a sensitive nature: rather they are general, aiming to enable you to enhance my knowledge in the area of inclusive education.
<b>Use of information</b>	I will use information from the interview as part of my doctoral thesis, which I expect to complete in April 2017. Information from the interview may also be used in journal articles and conference presentations before and after this date. At all time, I will safeguard your identity by presenting the information in way that will not allow you to be identified.
<b>Upsetting issues</b>	It is unlikely that this research will raise any personal or upsetting issues but if it does, please indicate and a counsellor will be sourced for you.
<b>Storage of information</b>	I will keep hardcopy recordings and notes of the interview in a locked cabinet at the researcher's office at the University of New England's School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences. Any electronic data will be kept on a password protected computer in the same School. Only the research team will have access to the data.
<b>Disposal of information</b>	All the data collected in this research will be kept for a minimum of five years after successful submission of my thesis, after which it will be disposed of by deleting relevant computer files, and destroying or shredding hardcopy materials.
<b>Approval</b>	This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No....., Valid to .././....).
<b>Contact details</b>	Feel free to contact me with any questions about this research by email at <a href="mailto:chodge4@myune.edu.au">chodge4@myune.edu.au</a> or by phone on (268) 770 0233.
	You may also contact my supervisors. My Principal supervisors name is Habib Zafarullah and he can be contacted at <a href="mailto:hzafarul@une.edu.au">hzafarul@une.edu.au</a> or +61 2 6773 2250 and my Co-supervisors name is Cary Bennett and he/she can be at <a href="mailto:cary.bennett@une.edu.au">cary.bennett@une.edu.au</a> or +61 2 6773 2992.



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England

Armidale NSW  
2351 Australia

Phone + 61 2 6773 2992 or + 61 2 6773 2250  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748

[bcss-school@une.edu.au](mailto:bcss-school@une.edu.au)  
[www.une.edu.au](http://www.une.edu.au)

**INFORMATION  
SHEET for  
TEACHER PARTICIPANTS**

**Complaints**

Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact Bernard Warner at:

The Antigua & Barbuda Association of Persons with Disabilities  
(ABAPD)

P.O Box W123

St. John's

Antigua, W.I.

Tel: 720-7263

E-mail: [info@abapd.org](mailto:info@abapd.org) or [abapd1995@yahoo.com](mailto:abapd1995@yahoo.com)

You can also contact the Research Ethics Officer at:

Research Services

University of New England

Armidale, NSW 2351

Tel: +61 (2) 6773 3449 Fax: +61 (2) 6773 3543

Email: [ethics@une.edu.au](mailto:ethics@une.edu.au)

Thank you for considering this request and I look forward to further contact with you.

regards,

Carel Hodge



## Appendix 5. Example of information sheet for parent participants



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
 University of New England  
 Armidale NSW  
 2351 Australia  
 Phone + 61 2 6773 2992 or +61 2 6773 2250  
 Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
 bcss-school@une.edu.au  
 www.une.edu.au

**INFORMATION  
 SHEET for  
 PARENT PARTICIPANTS**

I wish to invite you to participate in my research project, described below.

My name is Carel Hodge and I am conducting this research as part of my PhD in the Department of Sociology in the School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences at the University of New England. My supervisors are Associate Professor Habib Zafarullah and Dr. Cary Bennett.

<b>Research Project</b>	<b>Who are the disadvantaged? A case for social inclusion in the education system of small Caribbean islands.</b>
<b>Aim of the research</b>	The purpose of this research is to look at and compare the education strategies and policies within individual islands of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). The research aims to examine the education policies and practices that are inclusive and to see how students who are thought of as being disadvantaged are treated in OECS schools. The aim is also to know the views and opinions of parents, students, teachers and other officials on the inclusiveness of current education policies, strategies and practices. Policies, strategies and practices that address inclusion and disadvantaged groups will be examined to fully understand how they impact the development of individuals and society and to find ways to make the schools and education system in the OECS fully inclusive and beneficial to all groups of students.
<b>Interview</b>	I would like you to participate in a focus group session and a face-to-face interview at a mutually agreed upon location and time. The focus group session will be no longer than one and a half hours and the interview will take approximately one hour. With your permission, I will make an audio recording of the interview to ensure that I accurately recall the information you provide. Following the interview, a transcript will be provided to you if you wish to see one.  You have been asked to participate in this research because your child/ward is a student, who has special educational needs.
<b>Confidentiality</b>	Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study will remain confidential. No individual will be identified by name in any publication of the results. All names will be replaced by pseudonyms; this will ensure that you are not identifiable.
<b>Participation is Voluntary</b>	Please understand that your involvement in this study is voluntary and I respect your right to withdraw from the study at any time. You may discontinue the interview at any time without consequence and you

	<p>do not need to provide any explanation if you decide not to participate or withdraw at any time.</p> <p>Parents/guardians are asked to gain the consent of their child or ward to participate in this research. Please discuss the information in this form with the child and please indicate that while you as a parent/guardian can consent on his/her behalf, the final decision is theirs. Also indicate to the child that they may withdraw their consent at any time.</p> <p>If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form.</p>
<b>Questions</b>	The interview questions will not be of a sensitive nature: rather they are general, aiming to enable you to enhance my knowledge in the area of inclusive education.
<b>Use of information</b>	I will use information from the interview as part of my doctoral thesis, which I expect to complete in April 2017. Information from the interview may also be used in journal articles and conference presentations before and after this date. At all time, I will safeguard your identity by presenting the information in way that will not allow you to be identified.
<b>Upsetting issues</b>	It is unlikely that this research will raise any personal or upsetting issues but if it does, please indicate and a counsellor will be sourced for you.
<b>Storage of information</b>	I will keep hardcopy recordings and notes of the interview in a locked cabinet at the researcher's office at the University of New England's School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences. Any electronic data will be kept on a password protected computer in the same School. Only the research team will have access to the data.
<b>Disposal of information</b>	All the data collected in this research will be kept for a minimum of five years after successful submission of my thesis, after which it will be disposed of by deleting relevant computer files, and destroying or shredding hardcopy materials.
<b>Approval</b>	This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No....., Valid to .././....).
<b>Contact details</b>	<p>Feel free to contact me with any questions about this research by email at <a href="mailto:chodge4@myune.edu.au">chodge4@myune.edu.au</a> or by phone on (268) 770 0233.</p> <p>You may also contact my supervisors. My Principal supervisors name is Habib Zafarullah and he can be contacted at <a href="mailto:hzafarul@une.edu.au">hzafarul@une.edu.au</a></p>



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW  
2351 Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2992 or +61 2 6773 2250  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bccs-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

**INFORMATION  
SHEET for  
PARENT PARTICIPANTS**

**Complaints**

or +61 2 6773 2250 and my Co-supervisors name is Cary Bennett and he/she can be at [cary.bennett@une.edu.au](mailto:cary.bennett@une.edu.au) or +61 2 6773 2992.

Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact Bernard Warner at:  
The Antigua & Barbuda Association of Persons with Disabilities (ABAPD)  
P.O Box W123  
St. John's  
Antigua, W.I.  
Tel: 720-7263  
E-mail: [info@abapd.org](mailto:info@abapd.org) or [abapd1995@yahoo.com](mailto:abapd1995@yahoo.com)

You can also contact the Research Ethics Officer at:  
Research Services  
University of New England  
Armidale, NSW 2351  
Tel: +61 (2) 6773 3449 Fax: +61 (2) 6773 3543  
Email: [ethics@une.edu.au](mailto:ethics@une.edu.au)

Thank you for considering this request and I look forward to further contact with you.

regards,

Carel Hodge

## Appendix 6. Example of information sheet for policy actor participants



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
 University of New England  
 Armidale NSW  
 2351 Australia  
 Phone + 61 2 6773 2992 or + 61 2 6773 2250  
 Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
 bcss-school@une.edu.au  
 www.une.edu.au

**INFORMATION  
 SHEET for  
 POLICY ACTOR PARTICIPANTS**

I wish to invite you to participate in my research project, described below.

My name is Carel Hodge and I am conducting this research as part of my PhD in the Department of Sociology in the School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences at the University of New England. My supervisors are Associate Professor Habib Zafarullah and Dr. Cary Bennett.

<b>Research Project</b>	<b>Who are the disadvantaged? A case for social inclusion in the education system of small Caribbean islands.</b>
<b>Aim of the research</b>	The purpose of this research is to look at and compare the education strategies and policies within individual islands of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). The research aims to examine the education policies and practices that are inclusive and to see how students who are thought of as being disadvantaged are treated in OECS schools. The aim is also to know the views and opinions of parents, students, teachers and other officials on the inclusiveness of current education policies, strategies and practices. Policies, strategies and practices that address inclusion and disadvantaged groups will be examined to fully understand how they impact the development of individuals and society and to find ways to make the schools and education system in the OECS fully inclusive and beneficial to all groups of students.
<b>Interview</b>	I would like you to participate in a focus group session and a face-to-face interview at a mutually agreed upon location and time. The focus group session will be no longer than one and a half hours and the interview will take approximately one hour. With your permission, I will make an audio recording of the interview to ensure that I accurately recall the information you provide. Following the interview, a transcript will be provided to you if you wish to see one.  You have been asked to participate in this research because you are a policy actor who has a role in the practice of inclusive education.
<b>Confidentiality</b>	Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study will remain confidential. No individual will be identified by name in any publication of the results. All names will be replaced by pseudonyms; this will ensure that you are not identifiable.
<b>Participation is Voluntary</b>	Please understand that your involvement in this study is voluntary and I respect your right to withdraw from the study at any time. You may discontinue the interview at any time without consequence and you

	do not need to provide any explanation if you decide not to participate or withdraw at any time. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form.
<b>Questions</b>	The interview questions will not be of a sensitive nature: rather they are general, aiming to enable you to enhance my knowledge in the area of inclusive education.
<b>Use of information</b>	I will use information from the interview as part of my doctoral thesis, which I expect to complete in April 2017. Information from the interview may also be used in journal articles and conference presentations before and after this date. At all time, I will safeguard your identity by presenting the information in way that will not allow you to be identified.
<b>Upsetting issues</b>	It is unlikely that this research will raise any personal or upsetting issues but if it does, please indicate and a counsellor will be sourced for you.
<b>Storage of information</b>	I will keep hardcopy recordings and notes of the interview in a locked cabinet at the researcher's office at the University of New England's School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences. Any electronic data will be kept on a password protected computer in the same School. Only the research team will have access to the data.
<b>Disposal of information</b>	All the data collected in this research will be kept for a minimum of five years after successful submission of my thesis, after which it will be disposed of by deleting relevant computer files, and destroying or shredding hardcopy materials.
<b>Approval</b>	This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No....., Valid to .././....).
<b>Contact details</b>	Feel free to contact me with any questions about this research by email at <a href="mailto:chodge4@myune.edu.au">chodge4@myune.edu.au</a> or by phone on (268) 770 0233.  You may also contact my supervisors. My Principal supervisors name is Habib Zafarullah and he can be contacted at <a href="mailto:hzafarul@une.edu.au">hzafarul@une.edu.au</a> or +61 02 6773 2250 and my Co-supervisors name is Cary Bennett and he/she can be at <a href="mailto:cary.bennett@une.edu.au">cary.bennett@une.edu.au</a> or +61 02 6773 2992.



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW  
2351 Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2992 or + 61 2 6773 2250  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bccs-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

INFORMATION  
SHEET for  
POLICY ACTOR PARTICIPANTS  
ANTIGUA

**Complaints**

Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact Bernard Warner at:  
The Antigua & Barbuda Association of Persons with Disabilities  
(ABAPD)  
P.O Box W123  
St. John's  
Antigua, W.I.  
Tel: 720-7263  
E-mail: info@abapd.org or abapd1995@yahoo.com

You can also contact the Research Ethics Officer at:  
Research Services  
University of New England  
Armidale, NSW 2351  
Tel: +61 (2) 6773 3449 Fax: +61 (2) 6773 3543  
Email: ethics@une.edu.au

Thank you for considering this request and I look forward to further contact with you.

regards,

Carel Hodge

## Appendix 7. Example of information sheet for stakeholder participants



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW  
2351 Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2992 or + 61 2 6773 2250  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bcss-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

### INFORMATION SHEET for STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPANTS

I wish to invite you to participate in my research project, described below.

My name is Carel Hodge and I am conducting this research as part of my PhD in the Department of Sociology in the School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences at the University of New England. My supervisors are Associate Professor Habib Zafarullah and Dr. Cary Bennett.

<b>Research Project</b>	<b>Who are the disadvantaged? A case for social inclusion in the education system of small Caribbean islands.</b>
<b>Aim of the research</b>	The purpose of this research is to look at and compare the education strategies and policies within individual islands of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). The research aims to examine the education policies and practices that are inclusive and to see how students who are thought of as being disadvantaged are treated in OECS schools. The aim is also to know the views and opinions of parents, students, teachers and other officials on the inclusiveness of current education policies, strategies and practices. Policies, strategies and practices that address inclusion and disadvantaged groups will be examined to fully understand how they impact the development of individuals and society and to find ways to make the schools and education system in the OECS fully inclusive and beneficial to all groups of students.
<b>Interview</b>	I would like you to participate in a focus group session and a face-to-face interview at a mutually agreed upon location and time. The focus group session will be no longer than one and a half hours and the interview will take approximately one hour. With your permission, I will make an audio recording of the interview to ensure that I accurately recall the information you provide. Following the interview, a transcript will be provided to you if you wish to see one.  You have been asked to participate in this research because you are member of a Stakeholder organisation or an NGO that facilitates persons with disabilities.
<b>Confidentiality</b>	Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study will remain confidential. No individual will be identified by name in any publication of the results. All names will be replaced by pseudonyms; this will ensure that you are not identifiable.
<b>Participation is Voluntary</b>	Please understand that your involvement in this study is voluntary and I respect your right to withdraw from the study at any time. You may

	<p>discontinue the interview at any time without consequence and you do not need to provide any explanation if you decide not to participate or withdraw at any time.</p> <p>If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form.</p>
<b>Questions</b>	<p>The interview questions will not be of a sensitive nature: rather they are general, aiming to enable you to enhance my knowledge in the area of inclusive education.</p>
<b>Use of information</b>	<p>I will use information from the interview as part of my doctoral thesis, which I expect to complete in April 2017. Information from the interview may also be used in journal articles and conference presentations before and after this date. At all time, I will safeguard your identity by presenting the information in way that will not allow you to be identified.</p>
<b>Upsetting issues</b>	<p>It is unlikely that this research will raise any personal or upsetting issues but if it does, please indicate and a counsellor will be sourced for you.</p>
<b>Storage of information</b>	<p>I will keep hardcopy recordings and notes of the interview in a locked cabinet at the researcher's office at the University of New England's School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences. Any electronic data will be kept on a password protected computer in the same School. Only the research team will have access to the data.</p>
<b>Disposal of information</b>	<p>All the data collected in this research will be kept for a minimum of five years after successful submission of my thesis, after which it will be disposed of by deleting relevant computer files, and destroying or shredding hardcopy materials.</p>
<b>Approval</b>	<p>This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No....., Valid to .././....).</p>
<b>Contact details</b>	<p>Feel free to contact me with any questions about this research by email at <a href="mailto:chodge4@myune.edu.au">chodge4@myune.edu.au</a> or by phone on (268) 770 0233.</p> <p>You may also contact my supervisors. My Principal supervisors name is Habib Zafarullah and he can be contacted at <a href="mailto:hzafarul@une.edu.au">hzafarul@une.edu.au</a> or +61 2 6773 2250 and my Co-supervisors name is Cary Bennett and he/she can be at <a href="mailto:cary.bennett@une.edu.au">cary.bennett@une.edu.au</a> or +61 2 6773 2992.</p>





School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW  
2351 Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2992 or + 61 2 6773 2250  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bcss-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

**INFORMATION  
SHEET for  
STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPANTS**

**Complaints**

Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact Bernard Warner at:  
The Antigua & Barbuda Association of Persons with Disabilities  
(ABAPD)  
P.O Box W123  
St. John's  
Antigua, W.I.  
Tel: 720-7263  
E-mail: info@abapd.org or abapd1995@yahoo.com  
You can also contact the Research Ethics Officer at:  
Research Services  
University of New England  
Armidale, NSW 2351  
Tel: +61 (2) 6773 3449 Fax: +61 (2) 6773 3543  
Email: ethics@une.edu.au

Thank you for considering this request and I look forward to further contact with you.

regards,

Carel Hodge

## Appendix 8. In-depth focus group interview guide for student participants



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2250 or +61 2 6773 2992  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bcss-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

### FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCRIPT (Students) Research Project

*Who are the disadvantaged? A case for social inclusion in the education system of small Caribbean islands.*

Welcome and Introductions:

My name is Carel Hodge, a research student at the University of New England in Australia.

Please take some time now to refresh yourselves with the information in your Information Sheets.

**Guidelines:** Today we'll be having a discussion, and my role as moderator is to facilitate that discussion. There are no right or wrong answers, only varying opinions.

As mentioned in the Information Sheet the session will be recorded, so I ask that only one person speak at a time.

Please be respectful of other people's thoughts and opinions; while you do not have to agree, you do need to respect their views.

Please turn off or place on silent all cellular phones.

[Take a few minutes to collect demographic information: name, age, school, grade and address.]

Any Questions before we begin?

---

Question 1: What are some of the things you like and don't like about school?

Question 2: What do you understand by the term "bullying"?  
a. Have you ever been bullied at school?  
b. How did you handle it?

Question 3: What are some of the challenges you face at school, and how do you handle them?

Researcher use only



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2250 or +61 2 6773 2992  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bcss-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

Question 4: How involved are your parents/guardians in your education and other aspects of your life? How do you feel about that?

Question 5: Do you feel accepted in your school and community? How are you treated by members of your community (e.g. teachers, other students, other parents)?

Question 6: How has having a disability impacted your education and life generally?

Question 7: What are some of the things the school could do to make life a bit easier for you?

Question 9: Do you have any other experiences, issues or problems in regards to your educational needs that you would like to share?

---

Concluding words and thanks.

Researcher use only

## Appendix 9. In-depth focus group interview guide for teacher participants



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2250 or +61 2 6773 2992  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bcss-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

### FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCRIPT (Teachers) Research Project

*Who are the disadvantaged? A case for social inclusion in the education system of small Caribbean islands.*

Welcome and Introductions:

My name is Carel Hodge, a research student at the University of New England in Australia.

Please take some time now to refresh yourselves with the information in your Information Sheets.

**Guidelines:** Today we'll be having a discussion, and my role as moderator is to facilitate that discussion. There are no right or wrong answers, only varying opinions.

As mentioned in the Information Sheet the session will be recorded, and so I ask that only one person speak at a time.

Please be respectful of other people's thoughts and opinions; while you do not have to agree, you do need to respect their views.

Please turn off or place on silent all cellular phones.

[Take a few minutes to collect demographic information: name, age, school, years teaching, and level of training.]

Any Questions before we begin?

---

Question 1: What is your definition of an "inclusive classroom and school"?

Question 2: To what extent is inclusion important?

Question 3: What are the advantages/disadvantages of inclusion?

Question 4: Do you feel as educators you have the support, resources, training, and time to implement inclusion effectively?

Researcher use only



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2250 or +61 2 6773 2992  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bcss-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

- a. What are the current challenges or barriers to inclusion that you face?
- b. How have you been mitigating these challenges?

Question 5: To what extent do you believe that including students with special education needs into mainstream classrooms affects their fellow non SEN students and impacts the quality of education they all receive?

Question 6: What role do you think parents and the wider community have in facilitating inclusion in schools?

Question 7: What policies or guidelines dictate your actions in the classroom in terms of practices of inclusion?

Question 8: If you were given the chance, what advice would you give to policy makers to make schools more inclusive?

Question 9: Do you have any other experiences, issues or problems in regards to the special educational needs of students, and as a teacher that you would like to share with us?

---

Concluding words and thanks.

Researcher use only

## Appendix 10. In-depth focus group interview guide for parent participants



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2250 or +61 2 6773 2992  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bccs-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

### FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCRIPT (Parents/Guardians) Research Project

*Who are the disadvantaged? A case for social inclusion in the education system of small Caribbean islands.*

Welcome and Introductions:

My name is Carel Hodge, a research student at the University of New England in Australia.

Please take some time now to refresh yourselves with the information in your Information Sheets.

**Guidelines:** Today we'll be having a discussion, and my role as moderator is to facilitate that discussion. There are no right or wrong answers, only varying opinions.

As mentioned in the Information Sheet the session will be recorded, so I ask that only one person speak at a time.

Please be respectful of other people's thoughts and opinions; while you do not have to agree, you do need to respect their views.

Please turn off or place on silent all cellular phones.

[Take a few minutes to take down demographic information of participants: Name, age, occupation and address.]

Any Questions before we begin?

---

Question 1: What do you think about or understand by the notion of "inclusive education"?

Question 2: What sorts of options were available for educating your special educational needs child in your community?

Question 3: Have you or your child faced discrimination because of their disabilities? If so, when and by whom?

Researcher use only



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2250 or +61 2 6773 2992  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bcss-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

- Question 4: In what ways do you think inclusive education could benefit your child?
- Question 5: To what extent do you believe the school that your child attends has adequate resources to effectively and efficiently provide for the needs of your child as well as those without special needs?
- Question 6: To what extent do you feel the education your child is receiving is equal to that of other students who do not have special educational needs?
- Question 7: What has been the attitude of teachers towards your child since they have started school?
- Question 8: What do you know of current government policies that relate to special education?
- Question 9: What are your thoughts on the adequacy and effectiveness of the current strategies and practices that deal with inclusion and special education?
- Question 10: Do you have any other experiences, issues or problems in regards to the special education of your child that you would like to share?

---

Concluding words and thanks.

Researcher use only

## Appendix 11. Example of one-on-one in-depth interview guide for student participants



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2250 or +61 2 6773 2992  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bcss-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

### IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW SCRIPT (Students) Research Project

*Who are the disadvantaged? A case for social inclusion in the education system of small Caribbean islands.*

Age:

Sex:

Grade level:

School:

Disability:

1. Describe your typical day at school.
2. What are some of the things you like about your school?
3. Is gaining an education important to you? Why?
4. What would be your ideal school to attend?
5. Do you feel welcomed and accepted at your school? What are the things you like or don't like?
6. Do you have a lot of friends? Are you friends with students who do not have special educational needs?
7. Do you usually feel accepted by the other students?
8. What sort of actions do you consider to be bullying?
  - a. Have you ever been bullied?
  - b. Can you describe an incident?
9. Do you socialise with your friends outside of school? What are some of the things you like doing?
10. Have you faced other types of discrimination or treated differently because of your disability? What type of discrimination and by whom?

Researcher use only





School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2250 or +61 2 6773 2992  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bcss-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

11. What do you understand an inclusive school to mean? (or explain inclusion and ask if they believe their school is inclusive).
12. Do you think your class and school are inclusive?
13. Does your teacher or teacher's aide take the time to help you with your assignments?
14. Do other students accuse you of taking up too much of the teacher's time?
15. How do you feel about the attention you get in class?
16. Do you participate in class discussions often? If no, why not?
17. What are some of the challenges you face at school?
18. Is getting an education important to you? Why?
19. What career would you like to pursue when you leave school?
20. Are you being allowed to do the subjects that lead to that career?
21. Do you get any help with your school work outside of school? If so, from whom?
22. What school and community activities do you participate in?
23. What school and community activities would you like to participate in but you are unable to participate in at present?
24. How do you feel about being called labelled disabled or disadvantaged?
25. What's the hardest part about dealing with your disability?
26. What do you think can be done to better cater for students with special educational needs?
27. Do you have any other comments regarding your experience and needs that you would like to share?

---

Concluding words and thanks.

Researcher use only

## Appendix 12. Example of one-on-one in-depth interview guide for teacher participants



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2250 or +61 2 6773 2992  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bcss-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

### IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW SCRIPT (Teachers) Research Project

*Who are the disadvantaged? A case for social inclusion in the education system of small Caribbean islands.*

Age:

Sex:

Level of Education:

Grade level being taught:

1. How many years have you worked as an educator?
2. Were you always a special needs educator?
3. Were you specifically trained as a Special Needs Educator? If not, in what area were you trained?
4. Have you had any training in facilitating inclusive classrooms?
  - a. If so, do you think this type of training was useful?
  - b. If not, do you think this type of training would be useful?
5. Would you like further training? In what areas?
6. Who do you think should provide such training?
7. What are some of the special educational needs of the children in your class?
8. Are you trained to deal with all of these areas?
9. What are some of the barriers in education for a student with a disability?
10. To what extent do you think inclusive education is helpful for students?
11. How does inclusion affect non-disabled children in your class?

Researcher use only



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2250 or +61 2 6773 2992  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bcss-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

12. To what extent do you practice inclusion in your class? Do you feel that it is working well? Why?
13. Do the children with special needs have access to specialised services, such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, counselling, hearing services, speech therapy, crisis management, mobility services or vision services?
14. Are the resources in your school adequate in the promotion of equity and equality in the provision of education of children with special needs as well as those without needs?
15. Should students with special educational needs be segregated or mainstreamed? What has contributed to this opinion?
16. Are you solely responsible for developing and implementing the individual education plans (IEP) for the students that you teach?
17. What resources do you think needs to be available in order for you to feel confident to teach or work in an inclusive classroom?
18. Do you get the support from your school manager and co-workers?
19. How responsive do you believe schools are to the needs of disadvantaged students?
20. How does cost affect the availability and quality of inclusive education in schools?
21. Do policies in [insert country name] promote inclusion as a human rights issue and use human rights as a justification for inclusive policies?
22. What would you say is the main indicator of an inclusive school?
23. How do you see yourself as a teacher promoting inclusion?
24. Do you have any other comments regarding your experience in teaching students with special educational needs that you would like to share?

---

Concluding words and thanks.

Researcher use only

## Appendix 13. Example of one-on-one in-depth interview guide for parent participants



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2250 or +61 2 6773 2992  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bcss-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

### IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW SCRIPT (Parent/Guardian) Research Project

*Who are the disadvantaged? A case for social inclusion in the education system of small Caribbean islands.*

Age:

Sex:

Employed? Yes NO

Occupation:

Average monthly income in Eastern Caribbean Dollars?

\$0-1500  \$1501-\$2500  \$2501-\$3500 over  \$3500

Level of Education: Primary Secondary Technical Tertiary

1. What do you understand by the term “inclusive education”?
2. As a parent, what does inclusive education mean for you and your child?
3. What were your major concerns and considerations when approaching the education of your special needs child?
4. How did your child get placed at his/her current school?
5. How long has your child been enrolled in his/her current school?
  - a. Was he/she enrolled in another school before?
  - b. What was that experience like for you and your child?
6. What type of setting is your child being educated in? A special class, special school or within a mainstream environment?
7. Are you satisfied with your child’s placement?
  - a. If not, where would you like to see your child placed?
  - b. What is preventing you from getting your desired placement?
8. Are you satisfied with the level of education your child is receiving at his/her school?

Researcher use only



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2250 or +61 2 6773 2992  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bcss-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

9. Do you feel that your child is more likely to succeed academically and socially in an inclusive environment?
  10. What learning environment do you think could better prepare your child for real world experiences?
  11. Have you noticed any behavioural changes in your child that you can say is as a result of his/her learning environment?
  12. How often does your child's school communicate with you, keeping you up to date on the programmes they have or might implementing?
  13. Would you like the school where your child is learning to involve you more in decision-making issues involving your child?
  14. Does your child's school include you and other parents in general activities at the school?
  15. Do you feel that parents of non-disabled children oppose your child being in the same class as theirs?
  16. In your personal view, to what extent are schools willing to enrol children with disabilities in your area?
  17. Do you believe that there are adequate support mechanisms in the community and at the school to facilitate inclusion?
  18. Does your child have access to specialised services outside of school? What type of services and who provides it?
  19. Do you have any other comments regarding your child's experience and needs that you would like to share?
- 

Concluding words and thanks.

Researcher use only

## Appendix 14. Example of one-on-one in-depth interview guide for policy actor participants



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2250 or +61 2 6773 2992  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bcss-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

### IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW SCRIPT (Policy Actors) Research Project

*Who are the disadvantaged? A case for social inclusion in the education system of small Caribbean islands.*

1. What informs [insert country/organisation name, e.g. Antigua's] policies and strategies of inclusive education?
2. What are some of the education policies in [insert country/organisation name] that are inclusive or promote inclusion?
3. What do you see as inclusive education's role in society?
4. Do other sectors and organisations contribute to education (e.g. cooperation between sectors such as ministries and also with the private sector)?
  - a. If so, in what ways?
5. Is there a systematic information exchange between different levels of education as well as between schools and parents?
6. Have efforts been made to promote exchange of experiences among teaching professionals?
  - a. Do such efforts encourage a view of inclusive education as a natural way of working for every teacher?
7. Do you consider special education teachers to be happy with the policies and practices of inclusive education in their schools?
8. To what extent is there a policy focus on the training of teachers in inclusive education and special educational needs?
9. Do policies in [insert country/organisation name] encourage curriculum reform that engages stakeholders and incorporate their input?

Researcher use only



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2250 or +61 2 6773 2992  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bcss-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

- a. Who are some of the major stakeholders in curriculum development?
  - b. In what ways do they contribute?
10. Do policies support local flexibility in curriculum development?
  11. What are the policies concerning budgeting for inclusive education?
  12. Given the international emphasis on inclusion, do you think enough emphasis is being placed locally on enacting inclusive education policies?
  13. As a policy actor, how do you contribute to the formulation of education policies in your country?
  14. Do you have any other comments regarding [insert country/organisation name] policies and strategies of inclusive education and the special needs of students?

---

Concluding words and thanks.

1

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.inclusive-education-in-action.org/>

Researcher use only

Appendix 15. Example of one-on-one in-depth interview guide for stakeholders/NGO/DPO



School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2250 or +61 2 6773 2992  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bcss-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

**IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW SCRIPT (Stakeholder/NGO)  
Research Project**

*Who are the disadvantaged? A case for social inclusion in the education system of small Caribbean islands.*

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Organisation:

Position:

1. What services and programmes does your organisation offer?
2. To whom are these services offered?
3. Why did your organisation feel the need to provide these services?
4. Do you have programmes aimed specifically at students with special educational needs?
  - a. If so what are some of these programmes?
  - b. To what extent have parents and students been utilising these services?
5. What has the community response been towards your organisation?
6. How many persons work within your organisation?
  - a. Are they all employed or are some volunteers?
7. Are staff members of your organisation specifically trained to deal with persons with disabilities?
  - a. If so, what kinds of training has the staff been exposed to?
  - b. Who provided or facilitated this training?
8. How is your organisation funded?

Researcher use only





School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6773 2250 or +61 2 6773 2992  
Fax + 61 2 6773 3748  
bcss-school@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

9. What kinds of (“other”, if answer to is 8 includes “the government”) governmental support, if any, does your organisation get? Do you consider this to be adequate?
10. To what extent do you believe that policies and strategies of the government are adequate to meet the needs of the disabled within the society, especially children in school?
11. Has your organisation been consulted or approached by the government to collaborate on the development of educational policies, or school curriculum and activities?
12. Do you have any other comments regarding [country’s name] policies and strategies of inclusion and the special needs of students?

---

Concluding words and thanks.

Researcher use only