

# **University of New England**

## **The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework (2009) of Kenya: Its Impact on Teachers' Instructional Design and Practice in Inclusive Classrooms in Kenya**

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Doctor of Philosophy

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## Statement of Sources

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 qualification.

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

Rose Njoki Mutuota



Signature

Date: 27/08/2019

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## **Dedication**

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It is also dedicated to my family, Mutuota Kigotho, my husband, and our children Wanjikū, Wangūi and Kīgotho. You kept the faith in me.

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## Glossary

**Table 0-1: Glossary of Gīkūyū terms and phrases with their English equivalents.**

<b>Gīkūyū terms and phrases</b>	<b>English equivalents</b>
Aceera (Waceera)	The Aceera clan
Agīkūyū magīkaraga mohanītio othe hamwe na mūgū ūtangīkereka nī mbarī na mīhīrīga	‘The Gīkūyū family and the clan are like the cord of the mūgū tree, they bind the family together.’ - Gīkūyū expression
Aicakamūyū	The Aicakamūyū clan
Ambui	The Ambui clan
Ambura/Akūru/Ethaga	The Ambura/Akūru/Ethaga clan
Angeci/Aitherandū	The Angeci/Aitherandū clan
Angūi/Aithiegeni	The Angūi/Aithiegeni clan
Anjikū	The Anjikū clan
Anjirū	The Anjirū clan
Athūngū	Europeans
Boi-inī	Firelight
Būrūri Wītū	Our land
Agathigia	The Agathigia/Airimū clan
Aithekahuno	The Aithekahuno/Angarī clan
Cīakorire Wacū mūgūnda	‘They found Wacū in the garden.’ A proverb/saying originating from the story of Wacū who, although not invited to a feast by her husband, still enjoyed the meat when a bird stole a piece of meat from the feast and dropped it near her.
Gītiro	A dance for older women
Gīkūyū	Refers to the people, language and name of the father of the Gīkūyū ethnic group according to the Gīkūyū myth of origin
Gīkūyū Karīng’ a	Untainted Gīkūyū
Gīkūyū kīondo	Gīkūyū basket
Gītarūrū	Winnowing tray
Gītatī	Working cooperatively/teamwork
Gīthiūrūrī	The circle
Gītīo	Dignity/Respect
Gīturwa	Stools used by females
Gūtanaha	Generous
Gūteithia	Help
Gūthathaiya Ngai	To appeal to God
Gūthomithia ciana	Education of children
Gūtūngania mwaki	Pushing firewood into the fire
‘Handū harī mūthuri hatiitangagwo maī’	‘Where there is an old man you should not pour water carelessly.’ - Gīkūyū proverb
Ihiga na thīyo	Grinding stone and base

‘Īngiciara mahatha yongithagia tūerī’	‘If it gives birth to twins it feeds both of them.’ - Gīkūyū proverb
Irua	Initiation ceremonies
Ītatī (plural)/gītātī (singular)	Team work
Itūūra	Ridge
‘Kamūingī koyaya ndīrī’	‘A group can lift the heaviest pestle.’ - Gikuyu proverb
Karing’otho	The man with one eye
Kenda mūiyūru	A full/complete nine. This means 10. When the Gīkūyū counted people they always stopped before the last person and used the word ‘mūiyūru’ to indicate there was another person to the group. They believed that counting people to the last person was a bad omen.
Kīa Mbirūirū	Ngong Hills
Kīa Njahi	Kikuyu escarpment
Kīama	Council of elders
‘Kīara kīmwe gītiuragaga ndaa’	‘One finger cannot kill lice’ - Gīkūyū proverb
Kībaata	A dance for warriors.
‘Kīgochi kia mūdū tikīo kīa mutī’	‘A person with a disability is not the same as a tree that is bent’ - Gīkūyū proverb
Kikuyu	Anglicised form of Gīkūyū
Kīrīnyaga	Mt Kenya
Kīrīra kia mucī	Gīkūyū system of education
Kīrīra kīa ūgīkūyū	The ways of the Gīkūyū people
Kūhoria na Kūnyarira	To heal and to scatter
Kwīmenya	Self-knowledge/identity
Maitū	Mother
Matega	Gifts of food and drink
Maūdū ma ūgīkūyū	Gīkūyū ways and knowledges
Mbarī	Clans
Mbarī ya Mūmbi	The house of Mūmbi
Mīgiro	Taboos
‘Mkosa mila mtumwa’	‘Only slaves do not practice their cultures’ - as they were forced to practice the culture of their masters - Swahili proverb
Mūbarīki	<i>Ricinus communis</i> (castor oil plant)
Mūcī	Homestead/home
Mūcūngw’a	A dance for men and women
Mūgai	God/Giver
Mūgīkūyū	Gīkūyū person
Mūgoiyo	A dance for men and girls
Mūhīrīga	Clan
Mūkinyei	<i>Euclea divinorum</i> (diamond-leaved euclea)
Mūkūrū na mūrūna	Older-younger sibling concept
Mūkūrwe wa Nyagathanga	Origin of the Gīkūyū people
Mūkūyū	<i>Ficus sycamorus</i> (fig tree)
Mūmbi	Mother of the Gīkūyū ethnic group according to the Gīkūyū myth of origin/potter

Mūndū wa Nyūmba ya Mūmbi	A person from the house/family of Mūmbi
Mūteta	<i>Strychnos henningsii</i> (red bitter berry)
Mūthī na ndīrī	Pestle and mortar
Muthīrigu	A song sung by men and women in the 1920s to express resistance to colonisation
Mūthūngū	Person of European origin
Mūthūngūci	A dance for old men and women
Mūtiri	Godfather
Mūtūdū	<i>Croton macrostachyus</i> (broad-leaved croton)
Mwana	Child
‘Mwana nī wa mūhīrīga’	‘A child belongs to the clan’ - Gīkūyū proverb
Mwarimu	Teacher
‘Mwire atume nguo’	Tell her to sew her dress
Ndūgū	Relatives/family relationships
Ndūrīrī Mūtukanio	Mixed ethnic groups
Nduumo	A dance for old women
Ng’ano	Stories
Ngurū, Kībaata, Gīcandī and Mūthuū; rūkiū, ngūcū, mūhīroro and mūmbūro	Dances for children
Njūkia	A dance for married women
Njūng’wa	Stools used by males
Nyandarūa	Aberdare Range
Nyūmba	Family
‘Nyūmba nī ya kūraro ti ya gūtinda’	‘The house is a place to sleep and not a place to spend your day’ - Gīkūyū expression
Nyūngū	Cooking pot
Riika	People of the same age
Rūracio	Dowry ceremony
Rūrīrī	Nation
Rūthiomi rūa Gīkūyū	Gīkūyū language
‘Ta ngūachī’	‘Like a sweet potato’ - Gīkūyū expression
Thimo	Proverbs
Thingira	Man’s hut
Ūgīkūyū	The Gīkūyū world view, way of knowing, way of being and way of doing
Ūmūdū	To be human-loving, respecting and caring for the living and the dead
Ūtaana	Generosity
Ūteithio	Caring and helping people
Ūtugi	Hospitality
Uuma andū	Charity
Wagaciaīrī	Woman who has recently given birth
Wangū wa Makeri	A woman who, according to legend, once ruled the Gīkūyū nation
Weka wega nīwe weīka	‘If you do good you do it to yourself’ - Gīkūyū proverb

## Abstract

Including students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms is considered an important factor in meeting the needs and ensuring the rights of students with disabilities. In 2009 Kenya passed *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* which, while it made the inclusion of students with disabilities a formal policy, the strategies for inclusion remain unresolved.

This study was conducted in two phases; the first used a Western methodology (Universal Design for Learning) and the second an Indigenous Gĩkũyũ methodology. Eight teachers and four principals were interviewed and eight classrooms were observed in four schools in Kenya to identify the inclusive strategies employed by the teachers. Results were analysed using thematic analysis. The findings of the study showed ways in which Kenyan teachers used Gĩkũyũ Indigenous strategies, drawn from Gĩkũyũ knowledges, to support students in inclusive classrooms. The study also highlighted the importance of revitalising Gĩkũyũ knowledges, values and practices in schools.

The research adds to the scholarship on the place of Indigenous knowledges, values and practices in schools to support students with and without disabilities, and the place of family relationships and family-school partnerships among the Gĩkũyũ in inclusive education. This study has the potential to inform educational policy and practice in Kenya specifically and in Africa generally. It has created the space for the voices of Gĩkũyũ teachers and principals to be heard in their pursuit to preserve Gĩkũyũ knowledges that have for centuries supported the care and education of children with disabilities through strong family and group relationships.

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

*Change will not come if we wait for some other person, or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.*  
(Obama, 2008)

This chapter introduces the topic of this study. The quote above explains the role of teachers and researchers in changing the status quo in a situation where the global North continues to dictate the agenda for the global South in many spheres of our lives, including education. Educationists and researchers are concerned about the status quo and wish to bring about change. Kenya, like many countries of the global South that were colonies of European powers, inherited education systems based on the colonial legacies and more recently have been prescribed other hegemonic policies from the North that are results of the neoliberal agenda.

The chapter begins with a short account of the effects of colonisation, post-colonialism and neoliberalism in inclusive education in Kenya. It is followed by a brief account of my background to help the reader understand my position as a Kenyan educated under a colonial curriculum and as a researcher interested in deconstructing neoliberalism in inclusive education as an appeal to policy makers and teachers to acknowledge and act against that neoliberal agenda. This is followed by a brief description of the research topic, the research questions and the research assumptions. The chapter also describes the significance of the study in the international context. To contextualise the importance of this study for Kenya, an overview of challenges facing Kenya because of its history of colonisation and the continued hegemony of the North is presented.

## **The impact of colonisation on the Kenyan education system**

The fate of the Gĩkũyũ people - the majority of the population in Kenya- and Kenyans in general changed on that fateful day at the Berlin conference in 1884 when European countries carved out Africa into European colonies. From then on, Africa was divided into parts defined by the languages of the colonising countries – Francophone (French speaking), Anglophone (English speaking), Lusophone (Portuguese speaking) and German speaking (Thiong’o, 1986). Kenya became a British colony and control of the Indigenous people as subjects of the British was enforced through dispossession of land, political control and through an education based on foreign values and concepts (Kenyatta, 1965; Thiong’o, 1986; Wamagatta, 2001). The missionaries and the colonial government enforced the use of English as the language of instruction in schools and disregarded the cultural ways of knowledge acquisition and caring for children.

### **Post-colonisation**

When Kenya attained its independence in 1963, it inherited colonial structures of government, for example, the Westminster system of government and the British system of education. To this day, the language of instruction remains English and the Kenyan curriculum continues to be influenced by the British curriculum. This curriculum and the use of a foreign language as the language of instruction in schools, I argue, contributed to making the children look at themselves through a Western or global North lens and the British continue to influence Kenya’s education system. For example, the new curriculum that was launched in 2019 was developed with the help of the British Council (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), 2017).

Although some work has been done to shift the focus from colonial structures in education, there is more to be done. The new curriculum (KICD, 2017) has committed to including

Indigenous language activities in the lower primary level. While this is a good step, the curriculum developers could go further and include the learning of Indigenous knowledges and values in the curriculum and the use of Indigenous knowledges, values and practices in daily school activities. A curriculum that is not grounded in a people's way of life and knowledges serves only to alienate them further from who they are.

## **Neoliberalism**

Neoliberalism has a negative effect on inclusive education and on teachers' practices.

Neoliberalism recommends that education, including the education of people with disabilities, should be for profit (Romstein, 2015) while the inclusive doctrine aims to provide skills and knowledge to people with disabilities to enable them to live in society (Ashman & Elkins, 2012; Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2014; Romstein, 2015). These two doctrines sit on different ends of a spectrum. Neoliberalism advocates for success (passing exams and school ranking) and market-driven values in education while inclusive education promotes participation of students with disabilities in mainstream classes to the best of their ability.

## **Positionality: Locating the researcher and the research**

This research represents my journey towards using decolonising and Indigenous methodologies and my realisation that it is possible to tell my people's story. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1989) advocates for critical reflection on self and on the world.

Critical reflection, according to Freire, is possible if countries of the South offer liberating or problem-posing education. He explains that 'in problem-posing education, [people] "men" develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation.' Problem-posing education leads to critical reflection that

informs action and action that informs critical reflection. This informed action is what Freire (1989, p. 36) referred to as ‘praxis’, where there is ‘reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it’. It is only through informed action, according to Freire, that the oppressed can liberate themselves.

I am a latecomer to knowing Indigenous methodologies. My supervisors asked me to consider reading more about decolonising methodologies, postcolonial theory and to specifically look at Indigenous methodologies. I realised that I could use Southern theory in my research and I embarked on a search for postcolonial, decolonising and Indigenous methodology literature. This brought back memories of Ngugi wa Thiongo’s books – novels and commentary such as *Petals of Blood* (1977) and *Decolonising the mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986) that I had read in my formative years.

My journey in understanding colonisation and its effects began in my high school years. I was educated in a boarding school in Kenya from my early years of schooling to high school. In primary school I read story books based on European contexts such *Rapunzel* (Grimm, 1994) *Snow White* (Grimm, 2007) and *Cinderella* (Perrault, 1919). The schools I attended from Year 5 were run by missionaries from countries such as Britain and Australia and their mission was to make us think, talk and behave like mūthūngū (a person of European origin). English was the language of instruction in schools and still is. We had to use the correct grammar. Our local languages were discouraged, and we were punished for using them in communication in the school grounds. We were taught to sit at table quietly and eat with a knife and fork, like mūthūngū (a person of European origin). This was far removed from our Gīkūyū experiences. In the village, meal times were happy moments characterised by much laughter. We sang and recited poems, riddles and proverbs while we waited for food to cook. Like Zitkala-Sa (Terrance, 2011, p. 623), a native American who was sent to study in a missionary school, boarding school became a place of denying us the opportunities to

practice our culture because ‘upon a student’s arrival, the school seized his/her means of cultural expression, manner of dress, hair, diet, language, religion’. Terrance (2011) explains that these boarding schools created in the Indigenous people a state of ‘misrecognition’ because one was forced to ‘see the self through the eyes of the other’ (Fanon, 1967, p. 109).

The curriculum exposed our young minds to a contrast between the traditional ways of life and life after the coming of the white man. Texts that I studied in high school included *The River Between* (Thiong’o, 1965), *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* (Thiong’o and Mugo, 1976), *Things Fall Apart* (Achebe, 1958) and *No Longer at Ease* (Achebe, 1960). These books resonated with me because they explained issues that I always wondered about, such as the tensions and contradictions between Christianity and the Gĩkũyũ religion, Christian and Gĩkũyũ names, and the use of English in schools instead of the local languages. Over the school holidays I read more of Ngugi wa Thiongo’s books, including those written in Gĩkũyũ, such as *Matigari (The Patriots who Survived the Bullets)* (1986) and *Ngahika Ndenda (I will Marry when I Want)* (1977), reading aloud to my mother, who was literate in the Gĩkũyũ language.

When I went to university, I was a student of Education with English and Literature in English as my teaching subjects. This exposed me to even more works of African writers who voiced the need for the African scholar to lead the way in reclaiming the narrative about Africa and the way it was told. I read Ngugi wa Thiongo’s *Decolonizing the mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986) and *Moving the Centre* (1993). My love for literature led me to pursue a Masters in Literature. I read literature from all over the world – Africa, Asia, America and the Caribbean. I realised that colonisation had touched Indigenous peoples far and near. The literature covered topics such as dispossession and loss of identity. I was exposed to stories of people who felt displaced, such as the Indians and Africans in the

Caribbean, and I was concerned to learn that Indigenous people continue to be colonised in many ways.

Neo-colonialism and globalisation are some of the ways that the metropole ensures that the South is still serving the interests of the North. The education systems of many countries of the South use policies and methods borrowed from or prescribed by the North. Inclusive education is one such policy. Mwandime (1999, p. 244)) argues that such policies implemented by the neo-colonial African governments devalue local knowledges. He posits that ‘we [Africans] use “models” and “frameworks” of knowledge generated from elsewhere and rarely examine their relevance to our context of history, ecology, culture, political systems, and economic resources.’

Upon coming to Australia, I retrained as a special education teacher and obtained a Masters in Special Education. My quest to find out how schools in two counties in Kenya have implemented the inclusive education policy has led me to the discovery of Indigenous methodologies. My trip back to Kenya in 2015 was a homecoming. I was born in 1964 and raised in Gīkūyū Karīng’ā county, a rural and regional area, and my first job as a graduate teacher was in that county in 1988. I later transferred to Nairobi in 1991. I went back to Kenya in 2012-2013 on holidays with my family and I was now returning as a researcher.

Although I had obtained clearance from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), the institution in charge of research and scholarships in Kenya, I realised soon after my arrival back there that this was not enough. There were various offices that I needed to visit for clearance before I could go to schools. These included the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), which oversees teachers, and the county education officers in Gīkūyū Karīng’ā and Ndūrīrī Mūtukanio counties, who oversee the schools and the students. The county education officers directed me to visit the district education officers and inform them of my intention to do research in their counties. I visited these officers, who endorsed

the letter to the principals by a stamp and embedded a signature. At the TSC, I was granted my letter of approval.

As stated earlier, my choice of schools in Ndūrīrī Mūtukanio and Gīkūyū Karīng’ā counties presumed a position of ‘insiderness’. The population of Ndūrīrī Mūtukanio and Gīkūyū Karīng’ā counties is to a large degree of Gīkūyū origin and it was likely that I would be in schools where most teachers and principals whom I was going to interview spoke my local language of Gīkūyū. This turned out to be true. Indeed, the four principals whom I interviewed were all from the Gīkūyū ethnic group. This sharing of a common language provided me with insider advantage.

Of the eight teachers I interviewed, seven were from the Gīkūyū ethnic group. Some teachers asked me many questions about Australia, such as why I had left Kenya, what I did in Australia and why I was doing my research in Kenya. By so doing, the teachers challenged my ‘insiderness’ and I realised that although the teachers and I had a common geographical origin, this did not guarantee my acceptance as an insider. I had to negotiate other identity markers such as language and kinship. To test my insiderness, the participants often used Swahili and Gīkūyū. I responded in Swahili when spoken to in Swahili and in Gīkūyū when spoken to in Gīkūyū. It appeared that they were testing whether I could speak the two languages to determine if I was indeed an insider.

At the Gīkūyū Karīng’ā District Education office, the officer was quick to assist me. Once again, she asked where I was born. She signed my form and then had a 30-minute chat with me about how and why I had migrated to Australia and about education in Australia. Her daughter, she said, had just completed Form Four (entry to University and the equivalent of Year 10 in Australia) and wanted to study accounting. Like most Kenyans, she wanted to send her daughter abroad to study. I was in a position of trust as both an insider and an outsider to give credible information.

My insiderness was again challenged in the first school where I conducted the interviews. When I introduced myself, the principal asked me ‘From where?’. This is a common question in Kenya that allows the questioner to establish your cultural group before you can get into any business. I answered the question as any Kenyan would, by explaining that I was born in Gīkūyū Karīng’ a county. The principal raised the issue that my name sounded ‘Kamba’, another cultural group in Kenya. I went into detail and explained the intricate details of my place of birth and that I was married to a Gīkūyū Karīng’ a countryman. By so doing, I established that I was what the Gīkūyū people refer to as a ‘*Mūdū wa Nyūmba*’, an exclusive club made up of people from the Gīkūyū cultural group only. It is a term used to include and exclude.

‘*Mūdū wa Nyūmba*’ (a person from the house/family of Mūmbi) denotes the story of origin of the Gīkūyū people. The Gīkūyū believe that they are descended from the house of Mūmbi and her husband, Gīkūyū. Gīkūyū and Mūmbi had 10 daughters (*kenda mūiyūru*, a full/complete nine) after which the nine Gīkūyū clans (*mbarī*) derive their names. The Gīkūyū did not say the complete number of things, believing it was a bad omen, hence the use of ‘complete/full nine’ to refer to 10. These clans are: Anjirū(Wanjirū), Aceera (Waceera), Anjikū(Wanjikū), Ambui (Wambūi), Ambura/Akīuru/Ethaga (Nyambura), Angeci/Aitherandū (Wangecei), Angūi/Aithiegeni (Wangūi), Angarī/Aithekahuno (Wangarī), Airimū/Agathigia(Wairimū), and Aicakamūyū(Wamūyū). According to Muriuki, (1974, p. 113), ‘The myth of *Mbarī ya Mūmbi* (clan/house of Mūmbi) was only relevant when it was vital to foster solidarity and unity within the Gīkūyū community. This usually occurred in times of deep internal crisis or when faced by external threat.’ It is evident that the ‘Mbarī ya Mūmbi’ approach influences the presidential elections in Kenya to this day. According to Ngunyi (2013), in his ‘tyranny of numbers’ analysis of Kenya’s 2013 elections, Kenyans vote along tribal lines.

When one is referred to as ‘Mūndū wa Nyūmba’, a short form of ‘Mundu wa Nyumba ya Mumbi’, you are accepted as a descendant of the family of Mūmbi and Gīkūyū from one of the 10 clans. A woman from another ethnic group who marries into the family of Mūmbi and Gīkūyū may acquire honorary status as ‘Mūndū wa Nyūmba’, qualified with a statement about her origin, that is, that she came from such and such ethnic group. Although a man who marries a woman from the house of Mūmbi does not gain the ‘Mūndū wa Nyūmba’ status, his wife remains a daughter of Mūmbi and Gīkūyū wherever she goes.

Having established my insidership, the principal was relaxed enough to share a joke about an article that was in the local papers and on social media. He asked me if I had read about the plight of Gīkūyū Karīng’a men, who were facing injury or death from their wives as consequences of alcohol overindulgence. We had established rapport. I was not only an insider but an enlightened insider who understood the plight of Gīkūyū Karīng’a men. He was also acknowledging the depiction of the Gīkūyū Karīng’a woman as strong willed. In Kenya, the Gīkūyū Karīng’a woman is portrayed as strong, hardworking, entrepreneurial and quick to punish her amorous husband.

In the Gīkūyū Karīng’a schools, I introduced myself using my maiden and middle names. This was home. I felt the need to declare how closely I identified with the local area. When I introduced myself in the staffroom, various people said they knew someone in my extended family or clan. The principals in these two schools introduced me to the teachers as a local who travelled from Australia to do research. By referring to me as a local, they implied my insidership but they also recognised my outsidership by stating that I had come from Australia.

One of the research schools was a primary school, Mūbarīki, that I had attended from class 1 to Class 4. This is one of the oldest schools in Gīkūyū Karīng’a county and was established by the British Missionary Society in the 1900s. The school mainly served and still serves

students from the local village, which was established as an African reserve by the British during the colonial period. My family history is deeply intertwined with the history of the school. My paternal and maternal grandfathers did not accept Christianity, saying it was incompatible with the Gikūyū way of life. However, my father, who was later to become a Mau Mau freedom fighter, accepted Christianity to get an education so that with this education he could get paid employment. During the colonial period, education was referred to as ‘the white man’s magic’ (Kenya, 1965, p. 262). The white man’s knowledge gave the Gikūyū the opportunities to find employment in the colonial system. Others went to school to learn English which was ‘viewed as the key to many opportunities’ (Wamagatta, 2001, p. 109).

On learning that this was the school I had attended in my formative years, the principal invited me to speak to the students. I spoke at length about my happy life in the village living close to my relatives and what it was like to walk to school every day. I told them that my dream then was to study hard and go to university so that I could get a good job. I also talked about how I migrated to Australia. The students asked many questions about me and about Australia, such as who the Prime Minister of Australia was, who the native people of Australia were and what language was spoken in Australia. One of the students loudly said, ‘I will study and go to Australia’. My insidership was thus used to motivate the students.

### **The complexities and advantages of being an insider or outsider**

Prior to data collection, I was conscious of the binary language of insider-outsider knowledge. It is for this reason that I chose to conduct my research in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, to represent an urban region, and Nyeri, 152 kilometres from the capital, to represent a rural area. I presumed I would be considered an insider and would therefore have few obstacles in obtaining research participants. There is continuing debate about the advantages

and disadvantages of both insider and outsider knowledge. Proponents of insider knowledge argue that being a member of the group provides easy access because of that member's knowledge of the language and culture of the group (Coghlan, 2007). As an insider one has pre-understanding, which refers to 'people's insights into a specific problem and social environment before they start' (Gummesson, 2000, p. 57). As an insider you may have both first- and second-hand understanding (Dewey, 1916, cited in Ryan, 2011). I had both first- and second-hand pre-understanding. I had (and have) first-hand understanding because I have the personal experience through which first-hand experience is acquired. I have the lived experience. I also had (and have) second-hand experience through my extensive engagement with the literature and discussions with people who have first-hand knowledge of Kenya and through other sources of first-hand information about Kenya. As an insider I had the advantage of sharing the same language and culture as the research participants. I also shared the same history and lived experience. This gave me the advantage of 'establishing rapport with the study group ... and a shared outlook or knowledge with the group' (O'Connor, 2004). Opponents of outsider knowledge argue that although outsiders are likely to ask in-depth questions because they do not assume the knowledge, they may also misinterpret local meanings and practices (Clifford & Marcus, 1986). Insiders share the concerns of the group (Merton, 1972) while the outsiders do not. Outsiders on the other hand are said to have greater interpretive ability and seek clarification rather than making assumptions as insiders would do (O'Connor, 2004). As stated earlier, I was not considered an insider just because I stated my name. I had to negotiate other identity markers, such as language and kinship, and my insiderness was tested in various ways.

## Research Topic

The Gĩkũyũ people, as well as other Indigenous people throughout the world, possess knowledges, values and practices that guide them in the care and education of the young. These knowledges, values and practices were undermined by colonisation and continue to be threatened by such global forces as neoliberalism. The introduction of global policies such as the inclusive education borrowed from the North in an effort to adhere to international educational standards erode our way of life, for ‘the Gĩkũyũ child does not need Montessori exercises or class-room lessons in manual dexterity, for with plenty of space to tumble in, and with older people around him doing interesting manual jobs, he will naturally learn by doing real experiments’ (Kenyatta, 1965, p. 300). Indigenous peoples in the global South continue to receive contradictory messages from the North about who they are and the value of their indigeneity and knowledges. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNESCO, 2008b) recognises the right of Indigenous people to be who they are, to practice their values and knowledges. On the other hand, the same world body introduced the inclusive education policies that require Indigenous people to use methods developed in the North for the care and education of people with disabilities.

This thesis argues that there is a place for the use of Indigenous knowledges, values and practices in the education of children with disabilities based on the fact that the Gĩkũyũ culture and indeed Indigenous cultures are based on relationships (Kenyatta, 1965; Maathai, 2006) and are supported by the UN declaration (UNESCO, 2008b) that recognises Indigenous ways. This thesis challenges the use of educational methods from the North in the education of children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. The research was informed by decolonising literature (Kovach, 2009; Smith, 2012; Thiong’o, 1986; Wilson, 2008) and the need to recognise the value of knowledges from the global South (Connell, 2007).

## **Aim of the Research**

The research comprised phases of data collection. In Phase 1, the aim was to examine the inclusive instructional strategies used in mainstream classrooms to assist in the inclusion of students with disabilities. Phase 1 also explored teachers' and principals' knowledge of one target area of inclusive education in *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (2009). Phase 2 explored Gīkūyū knowledge, values and practices that teachers use in the classrooms to support students with disabilities.

## **Research Questions**

The research was conducted in two phases and guided by the following research questions:

### **Phase 1**

1. What is the teachers' and principals' interpretation and understanding of *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009)?
2. What instructional practices do teachers use in inclusive education classrooms?
4. What supports and resources are available to teachers in the implementation of inclusive education?
5. What needs to change to support inclusive education?
6. What role do school principals play in the implementation of *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009)?

### **Phase 2**

1. How do teachers incorporate Gīkūyū values in their teaching in inclusive classrooms?
2. What Gīkūyū practices are employed in inclusive classrooms to support students with disabilities?

3. What other aspects of the Gĩkũyũ traditions could be incorporated in schools to support students with disabilities?

The findings of the research are presented in Chapters 4 and 6. It was observed during the data collection that neoliberal issues were a concern to both teachers and principals. These neoliberal concerns and the teachers' and principals' attempts to subvert the neoliberal agenda are addressed in Chapters 8 and 9 respectively.

## **Assumptions**

### **Assumption One**

*Gĩkũyũ knowledge of educating children, including children with disabilities, is changing.*

As societies change so do their ways of doing things. It is assumed that the Gĩkũyũ people and Kenyans in general will continue to change but the premise of this thesis is that Indigenous people do not have to throw out all their values in order to embrace change.

### **Assumption Two**

*There is need to recognise the value of Indigenous knowledges, values and practices in the education system and to adopt them in policy and practice.*

Gĩkũyũ writer Thiong'o (1986) has long argued that there is an urgent need to decolonise the minds of Indigenous peoples in order for Kenya in particular and Africa in general to shed the yoke of colonisation. Researchers such as Dei (1999), Kovach (2009), Smith (2012) and Wilson (2008) have maintained that not only do Indigenous people need to decolonise their minds but research itself also needs to be decolonised so that Indigenous ways of conducting research are promoted. Including Indigenous knowledges values and practices in the curriculum reinstates the place of stories, riddles, proverbs and songs in the upbringing and education of the children to enable them to understand their identity and culture and to look at themselves through an Indigenous lens.

## **Definition of terms used in this thesis**

### **Family:**

In the Gĩkũyũ world view, *nyũmba* (family) refers to the nucleus family as well as the extended family group comprising all those in the bloodline, including the nucleus family, grandchildren and great grandchildren (Kenyatta, 1965).

### **Global North:**

The global North is associated with the colonising nations that are responsible for the ‘dominant economy of knowledge’ (Connell, 2019, p. 93), in other words, the global metropole whose perspective of what is valued knowledge is accepted as northern hegemony.

### **Global South:**

The global South – which is not necessarily always the geographic south – is associated with colonised groups (Connell, 2019, p. 93).

### **Gĩkũyũ:**

The term Gĩkũyũ is derived from a large *Mũkũyũ* (fig) tree. It is from this tree that the Gĩkũyũ people derive the name of the group as well as the name of their language. The Mũkũyũ tree was the tree that grew at the Gĩkũyũ people’s place of origin, Mũkũrwe wa Nyagathanga.

### **Inclusive education:**

This means that ‘schools should, without question, provide for the needs of all children in the community, whatever their level of ability, disability, educational needs or other forms of diversity (Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2014, p. 19).

### **Primary school:**

In Kenya, under the former 8-4-4 system, primary school refers to Standards 1 to 8. In 2017, a new education system of 2-3-3-3 was introduced and the first phase was launched in 2019,

with two years of pre-primary education, three years of lower primary, three years of upper primary and three years of lower secondary.

## **Thesis overview**

This thesis comprises 10 chapters. **Chapter 1** provides a brief overview of the thesis and explains the position of the researcher as a professional in the field of education for students with disabilities. Chapter 1 also describes the researcher's insights into the effects of colonisation, post-colonialism and neoliberalism on the education of children with disabilities in Kenya. **Chapter 2** presents a literature review related to the study, including a brief overview of issues that shape education in Kenya, such as colonisation, post-colonialism and neoliberalism and a brief overview of inclusive education in Kenya. **Chapter 3** provides the methodology and theoretical frameworks that guided the study. It describes the Western and Gĩkũyũ frameworks used in Phases 1 and 2 of the research respectively and explores Gĩkũyũ ontology and epistemology. **Chapter 4** provides the results of the study using a Western methodology that investigated inclusive instructional strategies used in classrooms to support students with disabilities.

**Chapter 5** provides Gĩkũyũ theoretical framing of Phase 2 of the research. It explores Gĩkũyũ knowledges, values and practices used in the care and education of people with disabilities among the Gĩkũyũ people. **Chapter 6** presents the results of the study using an Indigenous Gĩkũyũ methodology. **Chapter 7** is a discussion of the similarities and differences between the Indigenous Gĩkũyũ framework and the Northern methodologies used in the research. **Chapter 8** highlights some of the issues that make the inclusive education policy a 'wicked problem' by discussing various ways that neoliberalism has affected inclusive education in Kenya. It explains how the neoliberal culture in schools promotes exclusion of students who are different. **Chapter 9** reflects on ways in which teachers and

principals subvert neoliberalism in their everyday lives in classrooms. Finally, **Chapter 10** draws a conclusion of the study and presents implications for the study as well as recommendations for teachers and policy makers.

### **Reading this thesis**

In this thesis, some Gīkūyū words are used, followed by English equivalents or near meanings, which are put in brackets. A glossary of Gīkūyū words and phrases is provided in Table 0-1 p. xi) to assist readers in understanding their meanings and how they are used in the research. This study is about inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms and leans heavily on the use of Gīkūyū knowledges values and practices in the interest of including students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. In this way, I join other Indigenous people in the effort to add Gīkūyū Indigenous knowledges, values and practices in the discourse of world knowledges. For this reason, this study privileges Gīkūyū people and Gīkūyū words and phrases. Indigenous/Gīkūyū words do not have English equivalents or direct translations. Therefore, Gīkūyū words are prioritised because they carry the intended meaning. In this thesis the subjects voices have been edited for easy read and flow. This interpretivist move is an effort to ensure both readability and the essence of the participants' meaning (as interpreted by the researcher) is captured. Where there is any particular issue with a quote I will identify what the issue is in a footnote.

Reading this thesis takes readers on a journey. It is not a linear process because the research itself was not linear. Instead, like Gīkūyū stories, which are also non-linear, reading the thesis will take the reader through unexpected twists and changes brought about by the researcher's desire to decolonise the research methodology used in the research. As noted earlier, the research was conducted in two phases. Phase 2 came about because the researcher realised that the Western methodology used in Phase I did not suit the Indigenous participants.

## **Chapter synopsis**

This chapter highlights what is in this thesis and the content of the rest of the chapters. It explains the position of the researcher as a catalyst for change in Kenya from passive acceptance of hegemonic practices to activism aimed at enlightening the teachers, policy makers and other researchers on the Indigenous knowledges, values and practices in education. It also highlights the effects of neoliberalism on education. The chapter focuses on the main areas of concern for the study. The next chapter reviews the literature used in this study.

## Chapter 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

*Stories become mediums to unmake colonial borders. They help us restore the Indigenous names and relationships rooted in land. (Sium & Riskes, 2013, p. vi)*

This review has seven sections. The first focuses on policy borrowing and the effect it has on countries of the global South. The second addresses colonisation and its legacy to the education system in Kenya. The third discusses neoliberalism and its impact on education. The fourth provides the context and history of the development of inclusive education in Kenya. The fifth looks at international developments in inclusive education and their influences on Kenyan policy on inclusive education and the sixth looks at policy implementation worldwide. The final section will explain the challenges facing the government in the implementation of inclusive education policy in Kenya.

### Introduction

The Kenya government introduced a new special education policy in 2009 in response to global initiatives set by UNESCO, namely *Education for All* (1990) and the *Millennium Development goals* (MDGs) (2000). The aim of *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009) was to address challenges in the provision of education for children with special needs. Some of the issues addressed in the policy include access, equity, quality, relevance, attitude, stigma, discrimination, cultural/taboo, skills, the physical environment, physical facilities and poverty (MOE, 2009). In 2017, UNESCO produced *A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education*, which explained the areas of concern that needed to be addressed to advance inclusion. These included change of attitudes, early childhood interventions, inclusive curricula, teachers and teacher education, provision of resources and legislation. However, the document did not take into consideration the local

contexts, including the strengths to be found in the local communities. The UNESCO *Handbook on Education Policy analysis and Programming* (UNESCO, 2013) states that for policies to be effective they must be built on evidence, be politically feasible, financially realistic and agreed to by the government and relevant stake holders.

## **Policy Borrowing**

Policy borrowing is the transfer of policies from one domain or country to another with the aim of transferring best practice or international standards (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012). Steiner-Khamsi (2012, p. 7), explains that policy borrowing research ‘investigates how policies from one domain or sub-system (education sector, health sector, economic sector, etc.) are transferred to another, or how they are transplanted from one system or country to another’. The *Kenya National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009) is one such policy that was introduced to the Kenyan context to bring about best practice in the education of students with disabilities. There are often conditions for countries of the South to receive aid, such as structural adjustment, poverty alleviation and good governance programs that actually left people worse off (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012). However, policy borrowing has become a burden to the countries of the South, leaving them not only with the policy borrowed but also with unintended consequences, such as little or no control over the implementation of that policy. Steiner-Khamsi (2010, p. 324) argues that:

Policy borrowing in poor countries is to the education sector what structural adjustment, poverty alleviation, and good governance are to the public sector at large: a condition for receiving aid. As a requirement for receiving grants or loans at the programmatic level, policy borrowing in developing countries is coercive and unidirectional. Re-forms are transferred from the global North/West to the global South/East.

Inclusive education is framed by research coming out of the minority world, the Western world, the North. The narrative from the North is that the knowledge from the North is the

only valid knowledge and only Western ways of knowing and a Western world view are legitimate (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012; Connell 2007). This influences what people define as good policy and practice in inclusive education. Attempts to develop policy and implement it in areas of education where a Northern way of thinking is enacted in southern contexts has shown that this does not work very well and that there are huge problems in the implementation. Inclusive education policy in Kenya is still strongly influenced by northern ways of thinking, which assume that Northern policies will work globally regardless of the context. Teachers are trying to implement this policy in Kenya but are experiencing many problems because of this mismatch. Therefore, it is important to understand a) the impact of Northern thinking on policies, b) how practitioners understand the policy and c) how they translate their understanding into their practice in the classroom. Global reform packages funded by world bodies such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank and regional development banks have been accused of solving local problems with ‘packaged global solutions’ (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012, p. 7) that do not suit the context. I argue in this thesis that policy borrowing is a neoliberal construct that has affected Kenya negatively. I use *The Kenya National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009) to explain how neoliberalism has affected the education of student with disabilities in mainstream schools negatively.

## **Colonisation**

The Indigenous people of Africa and indeed many countries around the world that went through a period of colonisation have continued to suffer the effects of colonisation many years after independence. Not all Indigenous people, for example, the Indigenous peoples of Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand and the Indigenous peoples of Canada and the US, can be said to have attained independence.

In Africa, colonisation has been responsible for the deaths of millions of people and the destruction of lands and Indigenous flora and fauna (Thiong'o, 1986; Maathai, 2009). At the Berlin conference of 1884, Africa was divided *ta ngūachī* (like a sweet potato) among European nations. When the Gĩkũyũ share a sweet potato, boiled or roasted, it is meant to be consumed and nothing of it is left. This was the idea the colonialists had in mind, to completely destroy African identity as the people knew themselves to be. As Thiong'o (1986, p. 16) aptly put it, to 'control, through culture, how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world'. It was a brutal and indiscriminate exercise that separated families and ethnic groups, placing some members in one country and others in the other. For example, some Luo families remained in Uganda while others ended up in Kenya, some Masai families were condemned by a foreign border to belong to Tanzania while others remained in Kenya. This injustice has never been corrected.

In Kenya, as in the rest of Africa, the colonialists put in policies to control the colonies, among them, policies related to education and language. The education system was based on British values and practices (Maathai, 2006; Thiong'o, 1986). The language of the colonialists became the language of instruction and it was enforced (Maathai, 2006; Thiong'o, 1986). The education system reflected British history, culture and environment, while the culture of the people, the Gĩkũyũ and other groups, was considered heathen and the practice of culture was prohibited. The colonisers aimed to indoctrinate children and the success of this indoctrination is as clear as day in modern day Kenya, as in many Indigenous communities the Kenyan youth no longer speak their ethnic languages, Gĩkũyũ or others. They speak English and Swahili. The colonialists also took the most fertile land from the Gĩkũyũ people, thereby controlling the peoples' economy and their land, culture, religion and language.

Colonisation was created to benefit the European countries. To do so, they needed a labour force that could communicate with the colonisers, so they required the Kenyans to learn English. The British used education as their weapon of choice in changing people's mindsets about their identity and their relationship as the 'other' with the colonisers. Thiong'o (1986, p. 9) observes that 'Berlin 1884 was effected through the sword and the bullet. But the night of the sword and the bullet was followed by the morning of the chalk and the blackboard.'

The colonialists said that the Gĩkũyũ culture was incompatible with Christianity, yet the Irish, German and Italians among other European countries practice their cultures while they still practice Christianity. How is it then that the missionaries said that the Gĩkũyũ culture was incompatible with Christianity? To their credit, the Gĩkũyũ people are reviving their culture in their homes but are powerless to address the injustices in the education system, such as the issue of language and promotion of Western values at the expense of African values.

Although the colonialists tried to wipe out Gĩkũyũ language and culture, they were unsuccessful because the Gikuyu language and culture did not die out. However, the use of English as the language of instruction continues to this day. The Swahili saying, '*mkosa mila mtumwa*' ('only slaves do not practice their cultures') explains Kenya's predicament. For as long as Kenya privileges a foreigner's language in education, Kenya remains a slave to the owners of that language. According to Masolo (2010), the proverb stems from the end of slavery when freed slaves were unloaded from slave ships to different parts of the world. In their new homes, they had no freedom to practice their culture but had to observe the culture of the countries they found themselves in. The proverb means that using other people's languages, even when there is no reason to, is akin to being a slave. Part of decolonising our minds (Thiong'o, 1986) includes coming to this realisation.

It is possible to shake the yoke of foreign language domination. Europe did the same during the Renaissance when it shook off Latin, which for centuries was the language of intellectual

and written communication (Thiong'o, 2009). Kenyans must start trusting themselves and believing in their knowledge and abilities, as Thiong'o (2009, p. 84) points out when he says that 'our languages are elegant, eloquent and capable of expressing scientific and literary thought'. To preserve our language equates to preserving our memory of our history, values, land and spirituality. Thiong'o (2009, p. 113) aptly puts it that 'memory resides in language and is clarified by language'. By using a foreign language, that is, English, we accept we are carrying forward the hegemonic memory of the coloniser and, in so doing, erasing our cultural memories. By continuing to write in English, to teach our children in English and to store our knowledge in English, we accept we are storing our memory with the enemy, the foreigner. Thiong'o (2009) likens this to owning your own granary but preferring to store your harvest in a neighbour's granary.

The United Nations recognises the right of Indigenous people to maintain their Indigenous cultures. Article 31 of the *United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People* (UNDRIP; UNESCO, 2008b, p. 11) stipulates:

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions.

Before colonisation, the Gĩkũyũ educated children with and without disabilities together, relying on Gĩkũyũ values of familial and community relationships and recognising that it was the responsibility of the community to care for and educate such children. Colonisation disregarded the familial ties and relationships that supported the care and education of children with disabilities; it also introduced diseases that were previously unknown in the African continent before colonisation and that became a major cause of disability (Connell, 2006; Meekosha, 2006).

Disability in African communities was treated differently in different regions. While some Africa communities regarded disability as a curse (Haihambo & Lightfoot, 2010; Phasa et al, 2006) this was not the case among the Gikuyu people. Among the Gikuyu, disability was not given due attention because all children were treated equal and provided education by the community according to their ability and strength.

## **Neoliberalism**

Neoliberalism is defined as ‘a theory of political practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private properties, free markets, and free trade’ (Harvey, 2005, p.2). Neoliberalism places the responsibility of providing for the wellbeing of societies onto communities, even though sometimes these communities do not understand that they have these responsibilities. Again according to Harvey (2005, p. 3) neoliberalism ‘has become hegemonic as a mode of discourse. It has pervasive effects on ways of thought to the point where it has become incorporated into the common sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world.’

Neoliberalism is not limited to the global North and has affected all areas of life in Kenya as well as in the rest of the world in education, health, Indigenous knowledges and practices, disability and welfare services. Its effect on education is widespread and has touched all levels of education, from primary and high schools (Graham, 2016), early childhood education (Sims, Alexander, Nislin, Pedey, Tiko, & Sajaniemi, 2018; Sims, 2017; Sims & Waniganayake, 2015) and inclusive education (Stangvik, 2014) to colleges and university education (Connell, 2013; Connell, 2019; Johnson & Hirt, 2011; Sims, 2019). The impact of neoliberalism is felt throughout the world in countries of the global North such as Britain and in the global South such as Kenya and Zimbabwe. The global North is associated with

colonising nations that are responsible for the ‘dominant economy of knowledge’ (Connell 2019, p. 93), in other words, the global metropole whose perspective of what is valued knowledge is accepted as northern hegemony. The global South, which is not necessarily always geographically south, is associated with colonised groups (Connell, 2019 p. 93). Some countries in the geographic North that are part of the global South include Haiti, Nepal and Afghanistan among others. While countries in the geographic South that are included in the global North are South Africa and Chile. Connell (2019, p. 93) argues that ‘so far, most theory produced in the global South has had little influence in the dominant economy of knowledge.’

### **Neoliberalism discourse**

Neoliberalism can be described as a discourse, a term that Foucault explains as a strongly bounded area of social knowledge system of statements through which the world can be known (Young, 1981). Discourse combines power and knowledge, so that ‘those who have power have control of what is known and the way it is known, and those who have such knowledge have power over those who do not’ (Ashcroft, 2000, p. 72). Neoliberalism as a discourse is a way for the hegemonic North to maintain power over the South. Britzman (1995, p. 235) points out:

Discourses authorise what can and cannot be said; they produce relations of power and communities of consent and dissent, and thus discursive boundaries are always being redrawn around what constitutes the desirable and the undesirable and around what it is that makes possible particular structure of intelligibility and unintelligibility.

In the case of inclusive education in Kenya, power and control of the inclusive education policy sits with the global North. The hegemonic project is to promote programs and policies conceived in the global North to the global South.

Some key tenets of neoliberalism in education are the use of testing mechanisms to leverage accountability and improvement, inter-school competition, marketisation of education and

parental choice, among others. They are present in the Kenyan context and influence inclusive education. The two main aims of this study are to examine how Kenya's *National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009) is enacted in mainstream classrooms and inclusive instructional strategies as well as the ways in which Gĩkũyũ values and practices are used by teachers to support students with disabilities. Instead of drawing the conclusion that teachers are failing to enact *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009), it is important to look at other factors influencing the enactment of the policy, such as the effects of neoliberalism on inclusive education and on teachers' practices. The findings from this study shed light on the tensions between providing inclusive education and success (passing exams and school ranking), market-driven neoliberal values in education as opposed to Indigenous values and practices and the responsibilities of the teacher vis-a-vis the education system in providing an education to students with disabilities. The market strategy of neoliberalism is responsible for creating a web of groups that include philanthropies, think tanks, academic researchers, advocacy groups and policy entrepreneurs. 'Policy entrepreneurs' (Ball, 2012, p. 62) sell policies to countries like Kenya. Policy entrepreneurship refers to investing time and effort in order to influence policy change for personal gain (Ball, 2012; Mintrom & Norman, 2009). Policies borrowed from the North are not easy to enact because those who promote or sell the policy want to create a dependency on resources and services. Ball (2012, p. 62) concludes that policy entrepreneurs are 'paternalistic, neo-colonialists dispensing Western ways of thinking, naming and solving the problems of post-colonial societies and ultimately opening up new forms of exploitation and dependency in the form of profit for multi-national edu-business.' Some of the companies, according to Ball (2012), that are in the business of selling and sometimes writing policies for the countries of the South include Cambridge Education, Pearson Education, Nord Anglia and Price Waterhouse Coopers. Some of these companies, for example, Pearson, not only sell

the policies and expertise but are also the main suppliers of textbooks to schools and other educational institutions.

The policies are tied to continuing professional development (PD) and consultancy, training, support and improvement, as well as technical support and back office services. Mbataru et al. (2015, p.11) found that education entrepreneurs such as Bridge International Academies (BIA) funded by the World Bank have established schools in Kenya that use ‘highly standardised methods’. According to Mbataru et al. (2015), these schools are seen as an ‘incentive for government to not improve the public education system’. Through the World Bank, BIA has received ‘US\$100 million from international investors, including Bill Gates, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, eBay founder Pierre Omidyar, education company Pearson, and the UK’s Department for International Development’ (Mbataru et al., 2015, p. 11).

## **Neoliberalism in Inclusive Education**

### **Testing Regimes**

A neoliberal culture favours testing regimes in schools for all students, including students with disabilities, for school ranking purposes. As a consequence, schools are finding it increasingly difficult to negotiate the tensions created by neoliberal policies on inclusion of students with disabilities. In neoliberal structures, ‘schools and colleges are redefined as firms and forced to compete; students are defined as competitive individuals’ (Connell, 2012, p. 681). Neoliberalism shapes students’ and teachers’ lived experiences in schools. Schools find it hard to embrace the idea of inclusion in a culture that promotes ranking of schools based on students’ test results. Consequently, schools resort to unorthodox ways of excluding students with disabilities (see Figure 8-2). According to Razer, Friedman, and Warshofsky, (2012, p. 1153) ‘the emphasis on standardised testing generated exclusionary teaching

practices such as ability grouping, a competitive atmosphere, and a uniform standard for judging the worthiness of a particular child.’

In Australia, for example, parents are encouraged to apply for disability provisions/exemptions or to keep their children with disabilities at home on National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) test days (Graham, 2016) because schools were concerned that their performance would affect the NAPLAN results. NAPLAN allows government and non-government schools across all Australian states and territories to be compared on the basis of students’ achievements in years 3, 5, 7 and 9. However, standardised tests such as NAPLAN serve to alienate students with disabilities further.

Graham (2016) explained that schools felt the pressure to diagnose students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms and refer them to special education settings in order to remove them from the NAPLAN cohorts.

In a neoliberal culture, students are pitched against each other as competitors. Successful students are rewarded for good scores in examinations and those who do not perform well are named and shamed in public forums, newspapers and school assemblies, a practice common in Kenya. At a prize giving ceremony in a school in Western Kenya, Brent and Foley (2015) noticed the emphasis on passing standardised tests, an achievement which is perceived to result in a well-paying job and a successful life. Neoliberalism has shifted the focus of Kenyan inclusive education from the Indigenous perspective which supports the child to be a better member of society to passing exams.

Neoliberalism positions education as a private good over a public good (Harvey, 2005); in other words, the benefits of education are expected to accrue to students who need to learn what is necessary to obtain employment and become economically self-sufficient. Students are made are made ‘to compete against each other on a curriculum that is largely Western

(Brent & Foley, 2015, p. 742). Students who perform well in exams are the ones who have the best chances of success in the market economy dictated by a neoliberal culture. But testing regimes have many unintended consequences. In a study in the United States, Styron (2012) found that testing regimes fostered unethical practices, superficial teaching of disconnected skills and provided answers to students to ensure they passed exams. Although providing students with exam answers was not evident in this study, it is an issue that the Kenya government has been trying to manage for many years. Stealing exams to give a school an advantage (Wachiuri, Shisha, Nonglait, & Kimathi, 2017) is also a product of the performativity and testing regimes brought about by neoliberal culture.

### **Performativity**

Added to testing regimes is the pressure on teachers of performativity. Performativity is used in schools to judge teachers' and schools' performance. It is evidence-based reporting imposed on teachers and schools to measure outcomes. Ball (2017, p. 57) defines performativity as a 'culture or a system of terror that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of control, attrition and change.' Outcome measures include exam and test results and student retention. Ball (2017) explains that teachers' performances are used to measure teachers' quality or value. Schools' performances are compared on league tables, results are published in newspapers, and appraisals and quality assurance are conducted to measure outcomes.

A performativity culture encourages teachers to teach to the middle and spend little or no time differentiating the curriculum because they have to complete the syllabus and get students to a position where they can pass the standardised tests. As stated earlier, the teachers and principals interviewed for this research argued that that they spent much time and energy preparing students for exams and little time in differentiating the curriculum to meet the diversity in the classroom. In essence, this is also exclusion of students by means of

narrowing the curriculum to teach only what will be tested. According to Ball (2003), teachers use ‘fabrications’ to show that they are meeting performance criteria or the intended outcomes, or, as Dworkin (2005, p. 171) said, they ‘game the system’ and use the language of accountability to demonstrate that they are meeting the performative standards. Booher-Jennings (2006) explains a strategy used by teachers referred to as ‘rationing education’ (p.1) or ‘education triage’ (p.2), where teachers focus their attention on students who are just below the passing score to give them extra help in the classroom so that they can pass the exams.

Exclusion of students with disabilities is also done through keeping them in a lower grade before testing. Students are kept away from sitting exams by retaining or making them repeat a grade so that they are not counted in the exam cohort (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Darling-Hammond adds that students who were unlikely to pass exams would be kept back several times and then be encouraged to drop out of school. When students with disabilities drop out of school and there is no follow up from the school, this could be seen as another form of exclusion. Despite primary schooling being compulsory in Kenya, students can and do drop out without completing that primary education and there is little follow-up (Inoue, Gropello, Taylor, & Gresham, 2015). Inoue et al. (2015) argue that students drop out because of lack of academic remedial support for those performing poorly. This creates a situation that encourages dropping-out and is a clear example of excluding those who are different.

### **Standardised curriculum**

In a neoliberal education culture, testing regimes are closely linked to the curriculum. The curriculum promotes testing regimes that are not suited to including students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. The curriculum promotes the teaching of core subjects, such as mathematics and English, and lacks emphasis on other areas that are not tested, such as music, art and physical education (Styron, 2012), which may be subjects in which students

with disabilities excel. The curriculum also does not allow for differentiation because teachers have to teach to the test (Connell, 2013), hence it has a negative effect on students with disabilities. Graham (2016, p. 570) points out that the ‘the concept of the “average” student informs curriculum development and planning’ because teachers are under pressure to ensure they teach to the prescribed curriculum and have little or no time to respond to the educational needs of students with disabilities. Connell (2012, p. 682) argues that for large-scale testing to occur, the curriculum needs to be standardised in the country and this ‘hoists curricular decision making out of local settings and locates it in centres of social power.’ Narrowing the curriculum to only what is tested is another form of exclusion of students with disabilities. Stangvik (2014, p. 99) found that in New Zealand, although parents wanted their children included in mainstream classrooms, they felt that the curriculum did not suit their children.

*The school agenda is set by a subject-oriented curriculum and assessment orientation, and they do not feel that the needs of their children are located in this day-to-day agenda. They easily become marginalised. Therefore, many do not consider inclusion a viable option and opt for special school.*

Another aspect of a neoliberal education culture is that the standardised curriculum does not suit children with disabilities and diversity in the classroom is not given much consideration. Giroux (2013, p. 462) states that ‘the notion that students come from different histories and embody different experiences, linguistic practices, cultures, and talents is strategically ignored within the logic and accountability of management pedagogy theory.’

## **Language**

The language of neoliberalism has infiltrated all spheres of schooling. The vocabulary used in education is borrowed from finance and economics. Giroux (2018) argues that neoliberalism appropriates words from the language of economics and commerce so that a word like ‘freedom’ is used to mean ‘freedom to consume’ while ‘equity of opportunity’ means ‘engaging in ruthless forms of competition’. The language of business has been adopted by

education institutions, for example, ‘audit’, ‘accountability’ and ‘performance’ (Connell, 2013; Ball, 2012). MacDonald et al. (2018, p. 11) found that teachers used words such as ‘maximising student success’ and spoke of education as ‘human business’. Giroux (2008, p.182) concludes that ‘neoliberalism has become one the most pervasive and dangerous ideologies of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’.

The teachers do what Luks (2017, p. 87) calls ‘bullshitting’, referring to ‘grandiose phrasings, plastic words and misplaced metaphors’ that are empty and that lead to a ‘perversion of the truth’. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the use of these neoliberal terms is detached from the reality in the classrooms, a situation that teachers understand all too well. In using these neoliberal terms to describe their work, the teachers are doing what according to Frankfurt (2017), a bullshitter does best, namely, bullshitting. He argues:

*When an honest man speaks, he says only what he believes to be true; and for the liar, it is correspondingly indispensable that he considers his statements to be false. For the bullshitter, however, all these bets are off: he is neither on the side of truth nor on the side of false. (...) He does not care whether things he says describe reality correctly. He just picks them out, or makes up, to suit his purpose (Frankfurt, 2017, p. 88).*

This adds to the complexity of inclusion as a wicked problem. The language used inhibits a good understanding of the inclusive education policy, the realities in the classrooms and the solutions to the problems.

### **School Choice**

In the neoliberal education market, school choice is closely linked to exams and school league tables. As stated above, some parents whose children have no disabilities and some teachers consider students with disabilities as a liability because their performance negatively affects the school ranking in league tables. Ranking is also used to advertise private schools, which I argue matches the neoliberal aim of supplying education to the population through outsourcing it to private providers. In Kenya, as in many other countries around the world, schools are ranked based on students’ performance in national/state examinations and schools

use unscrupulous methods, such as cheating in exams, to lift their rankings (Niraxi 2014). The advertising of national exam results (Newsblaze, 2018) is targeted at parents who, in a neoliberal world, are regarded as consumers with the power of choice of schools for their children. Parents want their children to attend a school that will give them the opportunity to get the best outcome; they therefore buy the argument presented by the league tables that the top schools are the best for their children. Due to the competition among schools, private schools are reluctant to enrol students with disabilities and sometimes advise parents to enrol their children with disabilities in public schools.

### **Funding**

Neoliberal policies have impacted funding of students with disabilities in mainstream schools. Resource allocation for inclusive education in neoliberal policies is generally based on diagnosis (Stangvik, 2014). For example, in New South Wales, Australia, students in special education schools and units receive more funding than students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms (Graham, 2016). In the United States of America, Giroux (2008, p. 185) explains that in order to improve under-funded schools, the *No child left behind* policy ‘places high priority on accountability, tying what little federal monies schools receive to improved test performance’, indicating that funding is linked to student performance, an approach where students with disabilities are likely to be disadvantaged. Schools in the United States of America have had to turn to other sources of income/resources to support their students with disabilities. The situation in Kenya is similar to this; government funding for students in inclusive classrooms as well as in special education units and schools is minimal. Accessing appropriate funding to provide a good quality education for students with disabilities is a widespread problem with stakeholders generally perceiving funding as inadequate (Stangvik, 2014). Stangvik (2014) found that in New Zealand parents with

children with disabilities did not think that their children received adequate educational funding.

Another issue related to funding is the manner in which agencies from the global North provide funding to the countries of the global South to influence the way services are developed and implemented. Funding bodies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, from which many of these development and implementation policies originate, enforce their own agendas (Slee, 2013). They place conditions on the loans to the recipient countries to effect neoliberal changes in the targeted sector, be it education, health or the economy. These conditions address ways of life that reflect Western values but shaping sectors in this way does not necessarily improve the lives of the people. An example discussed earlier in this thesis is the Structural Adjustment Program that forced countries including Kenya to reduce public sector spending and encourage private investment (Slee, 2013). The consequence of this in Kenya is evident in the results of this study. Teachers said that as a result of the free primary education policy, supported by grants from the World Bank and Britain's Department for International Development (Ogola et al., 2014), enrolments increased but there was no increase in teachers or classrooms to serve the increased number of students, nor address the diversity of learning opportunities required to deliver a good education.

Funding bodies spend most of the funds they give in aid on expatriates and international consultants while only a small proportion goes to the intended project, a practice aptly known in Papua New Guinea as 'boomerang aid' (Slee, 2013). These funding bodies do not necessarily understand the context in which the policies they introduce would be enacted and they have no lived experience of these countries. They fail to understand the complexity of imposing policies conceived in the global North on the global South where the context is very different from their own. They also fail to consult with the local community that will actually

implement the policies. They therefore do not prioritise Indigenous people, their knowledges, values, practices and relationships; nor do they understand the effect colonisation has had and continues to have on the people. The funding bodies and expatriates involved in these decisions ignore the fact that their actions can perpetuate the hegemonic neo-colonial oppression of the global South. In pursuit of neoliberal policies of globalisation, policy makers and funding institutions discard Indigenous people's values and practices which, if facilitated, would help meet some of the shortfalls in resourcing of schools.

### **Marketised teacher in the global education business**

Teachers are part of the neoliberal education market economy. They are consumers of Professional development (PD) workshops and materials. As neoliberal subjects, teachers around the world are regularly pushed to improve their performance in their professional and personal lives (Ball, 2015) to be marketable to their employers. This push is generally enacted through requirements for ongoing PD. Sims (2019, p. 30) explains this as 'the discourse of continuous improvement [that] positions staff as though they never perform their jobs correctly, always needing to improve something about their performance, thus creating an image of imperfection.'

In some countries like Kenya, the teachers have to bear the cost of retraining, having to attend PD workshops to meet the professional standards or to improve their skills (Freeman et al., 2014, p. 79). In contrast, in an OECD study of PD attended by teachers, 'Australian teachers reported that 75 per cent of PD activities undertaken were not self-funded, compared with only two thirds for the TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey) average' (Freeman et al., 2014, p. 79).

Teachers are not only buyers in the education market economy, but they are also expected to be part of the sales team. Giroux (2013) argues that teachers have become salespeople who sell knowledge and skills. They are required to be team players in the sale of their school's

product, education and knowledge, and the result of their efforts as salespeople is judged on good exam results. Everyone in the education world is selling or buying. There are big players and small players. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), for example, ‘derives a significant income stream from its testing services – countries have to pay to participate’ (Ball, 2015, p. 300). Both small and large players aim to reach bigger markets. Ball (2015) explains that the OECD is expanding to reach more countries; thus the impact of the neoliberal agenda of organisations such as the OECD that is evident in this study is likely to be replicated elsewhere.

Under a neoliberal culture, teachers are de-professionalised. Teachers are expected to uphold the neoliberal values and practices of teaching to the test and to abide by the set standards and curriculum without critiquing them. According to Giroux (2013, p. 461), this makes teachers ‘objects of educational reforms that reduce them to the status of high-level technicians carrying out dictates and objectives decided by experts far removed from the everyday realities of classroom life.’ Much as teachers would like to be able to determine what they teach in an inclusive environment because they know their students better, they work under a neoliberal system in which they have no influence over the curriculum and the conditions under which they work (Giroux, 2013).

Teachers are also de-professionalised by the competitive neoliberal work culture that makes them compete against each other to produce better results than their colleagues. This competitive spirit takes away and negates the teachers’ ethics of autonomy, collegiality and public service that have always governed teachers’ sense of professionalism (Ball, 2003; Holloway & Brass, 2018). This competition tends to result in less collegiality, so that teachers focus more on their own achievements rather than on supporting and learning from each other.

## **The context and history of the development of inclusive education in Kenya**

Historically, provision of education for people with disabilities dates back to the 1940s during Kenya's colonial era. Missionaries and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) started special education schools and ran them as boarding schools. Before colonisation, there was no segregation of children with disabilities in education in the community. The reason for establishing boarding schools was for the colonial government to limit the use of resources. The colonial education policy at the time dictated self-sufficiency, meaning that colonies had to cater for their needs in order not to be a drain on the imperial treasury (UNESCO, 1988; Eshiwani, 1990). Through boarding schools, the missionaries and NGOs were able to offer education to children from many parts of the country.

The Salvation Army missionaries started the first school for the visually impaired in 1946 in Thika (Gebrekidan, 2012). They later established St Nicholas' School and the Agha Khan School for the Mentally Handicapped, which amalgamated in 1968 to become the Jacaranda School.

To this day, NGOs continue to play a significant role in the education of children with disabilities. They are involved in donating and raising funds for school projects, running public awareness campaigns, influencing legislation by lobbying the government on behalf of people with disabilities and conducting research (Handicap International 2013; UNESCO, 1988). The Presbyterian Church of East Africa is one such organisation that runs two schools for deaf children in Kenya. Other NGOs that play a big role in the education and support of people with disabilities today in Kenya and the rest of Africa are the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), UNESCO Sub-Regional project for Special Education in Eastern and Southern Africa, the Swedish International League for Persons with Mental Handicaps and the British Red Cross. Others include Handicap International, Leonard Cheshire Disability, Sight Savers International, Girl Child Network, Peace Corps, Save the

Children, Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) and Sense International (Handicap International, 2013). Handicap International conducts training for teachers, head teachers and education officials as well as for Education Assessment Resource Centre (EARC) staff (Handicap International, 2012)

The first special education school in Kenya was started for people with physical disabilities in 1940 (Abilla, 1988). Education for the hearing impaired and the visually handicapped were among the first to receive attention from the government and from NGOs (UNESCO, 1988). Children with less severe physical disabilities continued to be educated in mainstream classrooms, with little or no modification.

Education for children with disabilities has faced challenges in Kenya due to negative attitudes and superstition (UNESCO, 1988). In 1984, Kenya started district-level assessment programs tasked with the job of identifying children with disabilities. This allowed for early detection and early intervention. Some of the organisations that run private special education schools in Kenya are churches and NGOs. Special needs education is provided in special schools, integrated schools and special education units attached to regular schools (MOE, 2012, p. 37). Most of the special schools are in urban areas.

Access to and participation in education for people with disabilities in Kenya has remained low. For instance, in 1999, there were only 22,000 students with disabilities enrolled in special schools, units and integrated programs out of 750,000 children with disabilities (GOK, 2001). Enrolment of students with disabilities rose to 26,885 in 2003 and 45,000 in 2008. The Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) was established in 1986 to provide training and research in Special needs education. KISE also runs an educational and psychological assessment centre and produces resources and special equipment for people with disabilities.

Kenya's Vision 2030 (MOE, 2012) aims to provide all Kenyans with a high quality of life and targets the economy, education and health among others. The government intends to provide education for students with disabilities and Kenya is a signatory to various international declarations regarding provision of education to people with disabilities. These include the *Universal Declaration of Human rights* (UN, 1948), the *Jomtien Declaration on Education for All* (UNESCO, 1990), the *UNESCO Salamanca Statement* (UNESCO, 1994) and the *Dakar Framework for Action* (UNESCO, 2000). Although Kenya has aimed to fulfil the obligations of the conventions above and the government of Kenya is committed to providing education for people with disabilities in regular classrooms, the education needs of students with special needs have not been adequately met. In line with this, the government passed *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework in 2009* (MOE, 2009). This policy provides a comprehensive framework for creating equal access to quality and relevant education and training for all students (Republic of Kenya, 2009)

## **International development and influence on Kenyan policy on inclusive education**

The discussion that follows explains the international conventions that have influenced the world in general and Kenya in particular in the movement towards inclusive education. The human rights movement advocated for equal treatment of all human beings regardless of their race, gender, circumstance or ability. This led to *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, (UN, 1948), which is seen as a major milestone in the search for justice for people with disabilities. Article 26 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UN, 1948), states that education is a human right, as follows:

Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory.

The provision of education for people with disabilities in Kenya and elsewhere in the world is grounded on this article.

Another landmark ruling that helped progress the case for inclusion of people with disabilities in education is Public Law (P.L.) 94-142 (Department of Education, USA, 1975). In 1975 the United States Congress enacted the *Education for All Handicapped Children Act*, Public Law (P.L.) 94-142 (Department of Education, USA, 1975). This act made it a legal requirement and a right for students with disabilities to be provided with education (Dempsey, 2014; Ashman & Elkins, 2012; Kozleski & French, 2000). This was a landmark law that was significant for people with disabilities the world over. Subsequent amendments to this law, such as the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* (P.L. 108-446) (Department of Education, USA, 2004), protects the rights of people with disabilities and stresses the need for provision of individual education programs and provision of family-centred support instead of child-centred support. This law was aimed at ensuring that resources and appropriate and fair services were available for students with disabilities.

The *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC) (UN, 1989) went further than previous conventions. It mentioned the right of the child to survival and development and to freedom from discrimination. It also called for respect for children's views and provision for an education that serves the best interests of the child. *The International Year of Disabled Persons* (UN, 1981) led to *The World Programme of Action*, (UN, 1982), which emphasised the need to place the responsibility for education of people with disabilities in the hands of the education authorities instead of health and social services, as was the case in many countries. It also stated that the education of people with disabilities should take place in general school systems. It stipulated that laws for compulsory education should apply to all students, including those with severe disabilities. Finally, it emphasised the need to have

flexible, locally accessible and comprehensive education for students with disabilities (Stubbs, 2008). Rule 6 of the *Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities* (UN, 2016) maintains that governments should:

- (a) have a clearly stated policy, understood and accepted at the school level and by the wider community
- (b) allow for curriculum flexibility, addition and adaptation
- (c) provide for quality materials, ongoing teacher training and support teachers.

Another convention that influenced the development of inclusive education in Kenya was *The World Declaration on Education for All* formulated in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 (UNESCO, 1990). Article 5 of this convention asserted the need to provide equal access to education to people with disabilities as an integral part of the education system. At the Jomtien conference (UNESCO, 1990), delegates revisited the fact that education was a basic right for all and acknowledged that some particular groups were marginalised and excluded from their education system. Some examples of groups that face discrimination and exclusion from the education system were children with disabilities, girl children, Indigenous peoples, rural and remote populations and racial minorities.

The *Salamanca Statement* (UNESCO, 1994) and the *Dakar Framework for Action* (UNESCO, 2000) marked a change in the dominant thinking that students with disabilities should be educated in special schools and advocated for inclusive education. Article 2 of the *Salamanca Statement* (UNESCO, 1994, p. 15) stated:

Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.

The *Salamanca Statement* (UNESCO, 1994, Article 3) placed the mandate on governments to adopt the principle of inclusive education as law or policy. The Statement also raised some key issues regarding participation, flexible curricula, child-centred pedagogy and the need for children to be enrolled in their neighbourhood schools. Many countries, Kenya included, use this statement as a foundation for developing policies on inclusive education.

The World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, (UNESCO, 2000) emphasised national plans of action and regional strategies for implementation and monitoring of inclusive education, the first time that such actions were addressed. The participating countries also pledged to formulate inclusive education policies that would form the basis for legal frameworks and practices for including previously excluded groups of people in society. It is as a result of this that the Kenya government passed the *Persons with Disability Act* (ROK, 2003). The main concerns of this Act were the integration of people with disabilities in schools and in the workplace and to address discrimination of people with disabilities.

The 2006 *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)* (UN, 2006) broke new ground as the first international legally binding instrument to specifically promote inclusive education as a right. It mandated governments to provide inclusive education to people with disabilities at all levels of schooling and to provide reasonable accommodation for them. The convention went further and underscored the training of teachers in inclusive instructional practices such as ‘appropriate and augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, educational techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities’ (Article 24, 3). It also emphasised the employment of qualified teachers who had disabilities. The 2008 report, *Education for All by the Year 2015: Will we make it?* (UNESCO, 2008) outlined the progress made and existing challenges, highlighting that people with disabilities were still disadvantaged in their access to education.

The Kenya government had produced sessional papers and had commissioned reports on education for people with disabilities long before the Salamanca Statement. These include *The Ominde Commission* (ROK, 1964) and *the Parliamentary Sessional Paper Number 5* (ROK, 1968). *The Ominde Commission* (ROK, 1964) was the first national initiative to recommend education and training policies for people with disabilities and it advocated the integration of children with special needs into regular schools. The commission also supported the inclusion of special education units in pre-service teacher training institutions to help all classroom teachers prepare for the various ability levels and special needs in their classrooms. This led to the *Parliamentary Sessional Paper Number 5* (ROK, 1968), which recommended government leadership in the provision and coordination of services for people with disabilities.

Another policy influenced by the *Salamanca Statement* (UNESCO, 1994) was the *Report on National Educational Objectives and Policies – Gachathi Report* (ROK, 1976). This recommended the integration of children with special needs into regular schools. Other recommendations included coordinating the early identification and assessment of children with special needs, collecting data on the number of people with special needs to guide provision of special education, awareness campaigns on the causes of disabilities as a way of facilitating prevention of disabilities, and integrating special needs learners into schools (KISE, 2008).

Two other national initiatives on inclusion were the *Kamunge Report* (ROK, 1998) and the *Koech Report* (ROK, 1999). One of the most important suggestions from the *Kamunge Report* (ROK, 1998) as far as inclusion was concerned was the recommendation that education for people with special needs should be provided in regular classrooms. The *Koech Report* (ROK, 1999) recommended suitable curriculum content for early childhood education, special education, tertiary education and vocational education. Although these

recommendations were not implemented in totality, their effects influenced the course of inclusive education in Kenya. They marked a change in the viewpoint of the policy makers from integration to inclusion of all students into mainstream schools.

*The Children's Act* (ROK, 2001) provides guidelines on the care and education of children. Although it does not explicitly mention inclusive education, it addresses the rights of a child and the protection of children from all forms of injustice and abuse. *The Persons with Disabilities Act* (ROK, 2003) prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment and education and specified the provisions for an integrated approach in special and non-formal education. It states that learning institutions must 'take into account the special needs of the persons with disabilities with respect to the entry requirements, pass marks, curriculum, examinations, auxiliary services, use of school facilities, class schedules physical education requirements and other similar considerations.' This calls for reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities by schools and the staff. As a consequence of this Act, the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (ROK, 2003) was established to oversee the participation of people with disabilities in education, employment, sporting, recreation and cultural activities.

*Sessional Paper Number 1 2005* (MOEST, 2005) went further and addressed the challenges facing students with and without disabilities. These included relevance of education, access, equity, quality, efficiency in management and distribution of resources, cost, gender equity, regional disparities and teacher quality (MOEST, 2005). This policy also highlighted that there were no clear guidelines and support for the implementation of such an education policy. It also stated that there was no data available on the number of children with special needs and there was no formal process or resources for assessing those with disabilities.

According to *Sessional Paper Number 1* (MOEST, 2005), special education was grossly underfunded and depended on the civil society and NGOs for financial assistance. The same

paper highlighted the fact that children with special needs started school when they were much older than other children. It also stated that the enrolment of people with disabilities in tertiary institutions was very low and recommended strengthening assessment programs to ‘facilitate identification and placement of learners with special needs’ (MOEST, 2005, p. 50) and the development of a special needs policy. The paper recommended public awareness campaigns to encourage communities to send children for assessment and placement in schools and the development and implementation of a flexible curriculum that would be child-centred and user friendly for people with special needs, that addressed the barriers to inclusion in schools and the training of teachers in inclusive education practices.

The *National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009) was then developed to address the challenges to providing education for children with special needs. Some of the issues that needed to be addressed (some of which are listed in the discussion above about *Sessional Paper Number 1(2005)*) included access, equity, quality, relevance, attitude, stigma, discrimination, cultural/taboo, skills, the physical environment, physical facilities and poverty (MOE, 2009). This policy aimed to cater for the needs of children with disabilities and addresses the following: hearing impairments, visual impairments, physical impairments, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, mental disability, downs syndrome, autism, emotional and behavioural disorders, learning disabilities, speech and language disorders, multiple disabilities, albinism, other health impairments, gifted and talented, orphaned, abused, homeless, heading household, nomadic/ pastoral communities and internally displaced. This framework is the most comprehensive policy document in Kenya so far with regard to special education and inclusion, albeit this is only one of 15 target areas the framework addresses.

Articles 20 and 27 of the *Constitution of Kenya* (ROK, 2010) stipulate that every person has rights and freedoms and prohibits all forms of discrimination. Articles 53 and 54 (ROK, 2010) make provision for the delivery of free and compulsory basic education and quality

services and access for children with disabilities. Regarding reasonable adjustments, Article 54 (ROK, 2010) stipulates that a person with any disability is entitled to access to educational institutions and facilities and to reasonable access to all places, public transport and information. The same article also states that people with disabilities are entitled to appropriate means of communication and to access materials and devices to overcome constraints arising from the person's disability.

Even with these policies in place, provision of inclusive education remains a challenge for the Kenya government. While the West looks at inclusive education from the point of view of including students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties, mental health and other health issues, in Kenya, inclusive education encompasses inclusion of girl children in schools as well as students from marginalised communities. Some cultures, for instance the Maasai, Samburu and other pastoralist communities, have for a long time not seen the need to educate girls beyond the age of 13 (Mwaiko, 2017), primarily because the girl child is seen as a source of income for the parents and is married off at adolescence. The inclusion of girls in schools in these communities remains a challenge because of such community attitudes. Research in West Africa (Coe, 2013; Hui, Vickery, Njelesani, & Cameron, 2018) indicates that girls with disabilities experienced not only isolation and stigmatisation but also discrimination and are at risk of physical and sexual abuse.

## **Policy implementation**

Policy implementation can be defined as 'a politically derived intervention (often taking the form of a law) whose purpose is to resolve a societal problem' (Hope, 2002, p. 40). Inclusive education is one such policy. Since teaching students with disabilities in segregated settings is perceived as a societal problem, many governments the world over have adopted an inclusive education policy aimed at educating students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms with peers without disabilities. According to Fullan (2007, p. 84):

...implementation consists of the process of putting into practice an idea, a program, or a set of activities and structures new to the people attempting or expected to change. The change may be externally imposed or voluntarily sought; explicitly defined in detail in advance or developed and adapted incrementally through use; designed to be used uniformly or deliberately planned so that users can make modifications according to their perceptions of the needs of the situation.

Policy implementation is complex and involves various people and stages. According to Carney (2019), policy implementation involves the following steps:

1. Stage one is the planning stage and involves identifying the problem that needs attention as well as defining the problem. Problem identification involves understanding a problem that needs attention while identifying the problem involves describing the problem, understanding who is affected by it and thinking about interventions for the problems.
2. Stage two is the governance stage and involves setting tasks and objectives, selecting instruments and estimating the cost of the project.
3. The third stage involves engaging stakeholders to ensure they support the policy. This could be done through public discussions, suggested methods for which include traditional ways of public consultation, such as town hall meetings, focus groups, providing documentation for comment, undertaking surveys or questionnaires, setting up consultative committees or working groups and contemporary methods including video or audio broadcasts, web-based seminars or workshops (webinars), internet forums or blogs, social media tools such as Twitter, Facebook or YouTube and crowd-sourcing techniques (Commonwealth of Australia, 2014).
4. The fourth stage is the implementation stage while the next stage is evaluation. At the evaluation stage the policy makers and implementers assess the success of the project assessing to what extent the implementation was successful and determine if the goals set were achieved.

5. The final stage is policy maintenance, succession and termination.

According to Carney (2019), this final stage comprises making decisions as to whether the policy should be continued and if so, what extra resources, including staff training, need to be injected into the project.

Enabling services are crucial if policy implementation is to be successful (Commonwealth of Australia, 2014). These services include engaging stakeholders and creating channels of communication. Successful implementation also requires legislation, funding, risk management, feedback mechanisms and evaluation teams. Policy implementation is complex and has several interacting factors which according to Honig (2006) include the people with their beliefs and knowledge, the policies, and the context in which the policy is being implemented. Breaking this down further, the people include the policy makers, education officers, school principals, teachers and students. The policy dimensions, according to Honig (2006) include the goals, target and tools that need to be considered carefully to suit different contexts. The context in which an education policy is implemented includes the school, the local and geographical areas in which the school operates, the socio- economic status of the people in the area, the race and class of the population and the historical and cultural contexts. All these factors relate to inclusive schooling, which is a major change in the way education is delivered. Fullan (2007) categorises the interactive factors that affect implementation into three groups. The first group is the characteristics of change, which comprises need, clarity, complexity and quality/practicality. The second category represents the local characteristics, including the district, the community, the principal and the teacher. The third category represents the external factors, namely government and other agencies. Research (Eshiwani, 1990; Hope, 2002) indicates that the obstacles experienced in implementing policies include lack of resources, lack of understanding of the policy goals

and objectives by the implementers, implementers who lack the necessary skills to implement the policy, negative attitudes on the part of the implementers and lack of planning to determine the time frames for implementation and evaluation.

Hope and Pigford (2001, p. 44) agree that ‘policy makers and policy implementers, “the street level bureaucrats” (Lipsky, 1980, p. 31) need to work together during both policy development and implementation.’ This allows the policy makers and the implementers to understand the goals and objectives of the policy and to lay down a plan for its implementation. Also according to Hope and Pigford, (2001, p. 45) the plan must ‘a) identify specific tasks to be completed, b) designate persons responsible for completion of tasks, c) identify realistic timelines for completion of tasks, and d) include a formative and summative evaluation component.’

The implementers need to be clear about the policy, its origin and the problem it is expected to solve. This can be done through guidance from the heads of institutions and through ongoing PD for the implementers to increase their knowledge about the policy, that is, what the policy is, its purpose and how it will be implemented.

The other factor that is important in policy implementation is the context in which it will be implemented. Governments borrow policies and systems from other countries for various reasons but pay little attention to the context; borrowing education policies is one example of this practice. One reason for this is to improve education outcomes in schools. The second is to transfer ‘best practice’ from one context to another, as recommended by such international bodies as the OECD and the World Bank, and to adhere to international conventions (Silova, 2012, p. 231). In the same document, Silova explains that ‘historically, educational borrowing has been conceptualised as one of the key tools of pursuing progress and change in comparative and international education.’ Silova adds that educational borrowing is

perceived as a catalyst for economic growth, social progress and political development. Some policies fail because they do not suit the context in which they are implemented. In the case of Kenya the concept of inclusive education in Kenya which has been informed by international declarations mimics borrowing and might face challenges.

### **Implementation of inclusive education policy worldwide**

The success of inclusive education programs is highly dependent on how they are implemented. It is essential that the policy is implementable from the beginning and that a good approach to the implementation is taken. Stubbs (2008, p. 12) proposes three key ingredients for developing inclusive education policies that can adapt, grow and survive in a range of contexts. These ingredients are: (1) a strong framework or skeleton of values, beliefs, principles and indicators of success, (2) implementation within the local context and culture, this being the flesh that takes account of the practical situation, use of resources and cultural factors, and (3) establishing who should be involved, how, what and when, for ongoing participation and self-critical reflection, this being the life-blood of the implementation. Dempsey (2011) agrees that good policy and codes of ethics for the provision of inclusive education are important in achieving education for all.

Studies in many countries show that one of the problems with implementing inclusive education is the lack of clear policy about how this should be done. Since the UNESCO Salamanca Statement of 1994, many African countries have expressed interest in implementing inclusive education yet have not developed any comprehensive policies. For example, in Ghana, Botswana and Nigeria, researchers such as Ajwon (2008), Kuyini, Desai, and Mangope (2007), and Kuyini and Major (2012) concluded that the lack of comprehensive policies on inclusive education are partly to blame for the limited success of inclusive education.

Australia by contrast has professional teaching standards that clearly require teachers to demonstrate their ability to teach students with different abilities, including those with disabilities. School policies on inclusion need to be clear to all principals, teachers, students and education officers without the use of vague terms that according to Clark, Dyson, Millward, and Robson (1999) enable the exclusion of students with disabilities.

Competency in inclusive instructional practices is deemed important for inclusive education to be successful. Kuyini, Yeboah, Das, Alhasan, and Mangope (2016, p. 12) carried out a study of 20 schools and 163 participants in Ghana. They observed that teachers considered ‘competency in adapting instructional materials, behaviour management, identifying special needs, modifying content, adapting curriculum goals and using effective questioning as important skills in implementing effective inclusion programs.’ In another study, Kuyini and Desai (2008) examined instructional practices of teachers in inclusive classrooms in Ghana. They observed 37 teachers from 20 primary schools in their inclusive classrooms and found that teachers generally used few adaptive teaching practices, but those teachers who had training in special education inclusion and experience working with students with disabilities tended to use more adaptive teaching practices.

Policy implementation in African countries is also derailed by corruption and lack of political will (Armstrong, Armstrong, and Spandagou, 2011). Okoromo (2006) states that some African countries, like Nigeria, face barriers to policy implementation because the gatekeepers are interested in lining their pockets. He explains that ‘the budgets for implementation of the policies are often passed by lawmakers with strings attached to them’ (Okoroma, 2006, p. 255). Lawmakers generally demand a share of the funds often donated by world bodies to implement policies. Mbaku (2009, p. 1278) explains that in countries where high levels of corruption exist, power regarding policy implementation is concentrated in the hands of a few who stand to benefit through corrupt means from the resources intended for

that implementation. The Corruption Perceptions Index (2015) lists Kenya, Sudan, Somalia, Central African Republic, Angola and South Sudan as some of the most corrupt countries in Africa. The public servants in such countries according to Mbaku (2009, p. 1278), do not want the centre of power to shift from them and therefore 'bureaucracy remains rigid and relatively unresponsive to the productive sector and members of the entrepreneurial class are still unable to participate fully and effectively in the design and implementation of public policies.' Zeelen, Rampedi, and De Jong (2011) add that corrupt practices have led to failure in the implementation of some education programs in South Africa.

Furthermore, the actual implementation of inclusive education policies has been found to be poor or slow in some African countries. One reason given is the mismatch between the knowledge requirements for the policy being implemented and the qualifications of the person or persons leading the process. In Africa, some people heading government posts have little or no education and/or training in that field. Zeelen et al. (2011) found that the gap between policy formulation and implementation of an adult education policy in South Africa was partly due to the lack of practical experience of those appointed to government posts. Policy implementation in the global South, including inclusive education in Africa, continues to be dominated by approaches from the North (Stubbs, 2008; Armstrong, Armstrong, & Spandagou, 2011). Armstrong et al. (2011) point out that the colonial legacy power play continues to be felt in developing countries as former colonial masters and their aid agencies push countries such as Kenya to adopt policies, including inclusive education, regardless of the context on the ground.

Another factor that hampers the implementation of inclusive education policies is the use of top-down approaches. Top-down approaches allow little or no collaboration between the policy makers and the implementers, or participation by the local communities and the people

with disabilities themselves. As a result, these approaches have been known to slow down the inclusive education implementation process. Superstition in some African countries has also held back implementation of these policies. Some teachers hold the belief that disability is a result of a curse and these teachers are unlikely to have a positive attitude towards students with disabilities.

### **Challenges facing the government in the implementation of inclusive education policy in Kenya**

The Government of Kenya has produced many policy documents, including the *Children's Act* (ROK, 2001) and the *People with Disability Act* (ROK, 2003), that support inclusive education. In 2009, a policy to guide inclusive education, *The Kenya National Special Needs Policy* (MOE, 2009), was passed. This was the first policy to specifically address the education of children with special needs and thus stimulated for the first time a focus on this issue. One of the major challenges has been the lack of clear guidelines on inclusion policy (MOE, 2009; Njoka, Riechi, Obiero, Kemunto, Muraya, Ongoto, & Amenya, 2012). This lack of clarity has prevented inclusion policies being translated into practice, partly due to a general lack of understanding of the relationship between policy and practice. According to Foreman and Arthur-Kelly (2011), principles guide legislation and policies, which in turn guide practice. It is therefore necessary for government and policy makers to promote an awareness of the relationship between the principles (normalisation, people first, least restrictive environment, all children can learn, and partial participation), laws and policies (legislation and organisation policies) and practices (supporting students) (Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2011). For the principles of social justice to be adhered to, legislation and policies within schools and other social institutions are required.

Some of the factors that affect government policy implementation include a lack of qualified personnel, implementers' attitudes, lack of leadership and control from political leaders, opposition to the policy itself, little or poor knowledge of the policy, and corruption. Kenya is no exception to the above issues.

The Kenyan government (ROK, 2005; MOE, 2012) acknowledges the challenges faced in the provision of education for students with special needs. First, there is a lack of clear guidelines on the implementation of an all-inclusive education policy. Second, the government recognises the lack of reliable data on children with special needs. Third, there are inadequate resources. Fourth, implementation is hampered by teacher attitudes and beliefs about inclusive education. Fifth and finally, the curriculum is not tailored to meet the needs of students with disabilities. The emphasis is on examinations and academic performance, which creates a competitive rather than an inclusive environment.

Furthermore, the top-down approach currently used in the implementation of the inclusive education policy does not give voice to other stakeholders, such as principals, teachers, parents and the students with disabilities themselves and therefore may not receive support from these groups.

The central government, and the Ministry of Education in particular, is responsible for formulating education policy. Once a new policy is adopted, the document passes down from the Ministry of Education to provincial education officers and then to the county education officers who then pass it on to the principals. By the time the policy reaches the teachers it has passed through many hands and it is the teachers who have to construct meaning out of it. The implementation process falls into the hands of county governments who took no part in the implementation of the policy and therefore have little understanding of it. As Zeelen et al. (2011) point out, this leads to structural discontinuity characterised by a breakdown of communication between the national government and the local governments.

When there is a breakdown of communication between the centre and the periphery, teachers find themselves in a position where they have no chance of improving the implementation process. They have nowhere to send feedback or grievances. The top-down approach used by the government in Kenya is a one-way process and the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) is more concerned with teachers' pay (Sawamura & Sifuna, 2008) and pays little attention to their concerns about implementing government policies. This is similar to Zeelen's findings that reports from the implementers to the central government about the implementation of adult education in the Limpopo province of South Africa were not followed up.

Another problem often cited as a cause for poor or slow implementation of education policies is lack of funds. Zeelen et al.'s (2011) study provides some insight into some of the reasons for slow or poor implementation of education policies often labelled as 'lack of funds' (Zeelen et al., 2011, p. 396). They found that due to corruption, 'funds disappeared before they could be used'. Corruption in Kenya has infiltrated all levels of government and may well be a factor in the slow implementation of the inclusive education policy.

### **Inclusivity and Inclusive Education in the African contexts.**

In African education 'inclusion' is conceptualized as special education or the education of learners with physical disabilities. In the African and more specifically the Gĩkũyũ tradition, all children were included. The Gĩkũyũ philosophy was about sharing and caring for each other and inclusivity (Gathigira, 1933; Kabetu, 1947; Kenyatta 1965; Maathai, 2006).

Phasha, Mahlo and Dei (2017, p. 5) point out that inclusion in the African context means 'we all belong and a responsibility of every citizen is to ensure that mutual interdependence is respected as an ideal and a virtue'. The problem that researchers and educators are faced with in addressing inclusion in schools is that the education system that they are working towards building is flawed because of its colonial history. In this context, inclusion tends to be

understood as special education particularly for children with physical disabilities. This creates a disconnect between the traditional Gīkūyū philosophy and the practice of inclusion in schools. Dei (2016a, p. 28) poses the question, ‘How do educators begin to think of radical notions of inclusion as beginning anew to realise the limits of integrating into what already exists when “that which already exists”- the current education system is the source of the problem in the first place?’

Inclusion and exclusion are more about power relations than schooling. Phasha et al. (2017, p. 5) point out that ‘ we must understand inclusion and exclusion as being about power and how it is enacted to meet different needs and expectations for diverse people.... Schools work with a dominant view of the learner and this interpretation is transposed to every learner, making it difficult for the one who fails to conform to what is viewed as “normal”. For inclusion to be meaningful in schools in Africa, African leaders, curriculum developers and policy makers would benefit from looking back at African knowledges where education was considered ‘as a source of connections with family life, community and social relevance’. A hybrid curriculum discussed later in this thesis which prioritises indigenous knowledges, values and practices would support and enhance family and community connections.

### **Decolonial and anti-colonial education in Africa?**

In decolonial thought there is emphasis on who tells the people’s story. For centuries the African story has been told by the outsider- the white colonisers. Anti-colonialism goes further because it not only looks at who is telling the story but also uses indigenous knowledges to subvert colonial structures in areas such as education. According to Hart (2004), ‘anti-colonialism involves the recovery of traditional knowledge as a strategy that resists the replacement of indigenous ways and knowledges with Western ways and knowledges, processes endemic in colonialism’. In this thesis I argue that teachers have a role

to play in anti-colonialism work to ‘ stop the attack on indigenous knowledge and people [ and have an important role to play] in the recovery of indigenous intellectual traditions [and] the protection of indigenous lands and environment from environmental destruction’

(Simpson, 2004, p. 381, )

Other theories that have been used in research to address the use of indigenous knowledges, values and practices in inclusive education are anti-colonial, de-colonial and integrative perspectives. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss these theories. However, it is worth noting that Phasha et al (2017), suggest that to reframe inclusive education in Africa, researchers could engage with literature and other theorists working in anti-colonial, de-colonial and integrative perspectives. Phasha et (2017) argue that this would assist research address the following question,

- How do we decolonise education and the school curriculum in Africa? How do we subvert the structures and processes of educational delivery (structures for teaching/learning/administration of education) that end by creating sites of marginality and colonising education for African learners?
- How should African educators, school administrators and policy workers take up ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, class, religion, language and disability as important identities that trouble and complicate the notion of the ‘universal’ and ‘disembodied’ learners as significant social categories and relations of power and domination in schools?
- What powerful markers of identity and difference connect to schooling for knowledge production, curriculum, pedagogy, classroom and anti-colonial transformations of schools and educational systems?
- How does inclusive education acknowledge colonial hierarchies and relations of schooling as revolving around certain ontological, epistemological and axiological hegemonic foundations?

- How does a critical inclusive education approach challenge power and the rationality for dominance?
- How do we bring a more holistic and multidimensional understanding of inclusion and social justice to include spiritual, emotional and socio-environmental dimensions of learners?

### **Testing Regimes in Kenya.**

The secondary school curriculum in Kenya is the 8-4-4 system which is under review. The new 2-6-6-3 curriculum framework will be implemented in stages. Students are tested at every level from standard 1 to university. Exams and tests are used as an indicator of students' performance and a marker of acquisition of knowledge. The main exams in the Kenyan education are Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) (MOE, 2011). While the former determines entry to the latter determines entry to university. According to, Carr-Hill, Mbwika & Peart (2019, p. 226-227)

*'Passing exams at primary level determines whether you will join an elite school or be relegated to poor county and sub-county secondary schools where chances of excelling in secondary exams are limited. Even then, only a small percentage who sit primary examinations proceed to secondary schools because there are limited places and because the cost of secondary education is also high. At the end of secondary education, students again have to sit examinations and this determines if they proceed to University or not; but the main hurdle is the Form 4 Examination. The system therefore creates two main layers of dropouts, those who drop out after primary school or with primary level education and those who drop out after secondary exams or within the secondary school education.'*

Testing regimes are also seen as a measure of teachers' performance in the classroom.

Schools in Kenya are graded according to the students they send to university (Carr-Hill et al., 2019). This puts a lot of pressure on teachers and students. As a result, both teachers and students seek ways to attain better exam results sometimes by providing unfair advantage to students. The ministry of education has been grappling with malpractices such as stealing examinations in the examination sector for many years.

## **Chapter Synopsis**

In this chapter, policy borrowing, seen as the link between neoliberalism and inclusive education, was discussed. The context and history of inclusive education in Kenya and the implementation of inclusive education in the rest of the world were discussed, followed by an explanation of the challenges facing implementation of an inclusive education policy in Kenya. In the next chapter, the methodology for the study is presented.

## Chapter 3

### METHODOLOGY

*Why do you go away? So that you can come back. So that you can see the place you came from with new eyes and extra colors. And the people there see you differently, too. Coming back to where you started is not the same as never leaving. (Pratchett, 2004)*

#### Theoretical frameworks

##### Phase 1

##### Universal Design for Learning

Phase 1 of this research was informed by the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, a framework that encourages differentiation to support students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. UDL is a concept borrowed from architecture, where Universal Design (UD) is used by architects to design buildings, products and environments for people with various physical and cognitive needs. UD was designed to eliminate the retrofitting of buildings and environments to meet accessibility requirements. UDL is a framework used to plan instruction for all learners from the outset to accommodate learner differences (Meyer & Rose, 2006)

UDL has three essential qualities that need to be incorporated in curriculum planning to meet the needs of all learners. These include:

1. multiple means of representation, including visual presentations, recorded material such as cds, tapes and e-books, voice readers, online activities and videos
2. multiple means of student engagement, including auditory activities such as songs, raps, discussions and listening to texts read aloud, use of visuals such as posters, pictures, manipulatives, and technology options among others
3. multiple means of expression such as song and dance, pictures, speeches and stories (Rose & Meyer, 2006; Hall, Meyer & Rose, 2012).

The first essential quality of UDL, as stated above, is multiple means of representation. It refers to the various ways in which information can be presented to students (Gargiulo, 2013), including auditory, tactile and kinaesthetic and the use of technology. The Gīkūyū taught the young through all these means except technology. Children learnt through song, reciting poems, acting, saying proverbs and tongue twisters. These activities were not separated from everyday life. For example, children would recite a poem as they walked to the river to fetch water or formed age-appropriate groups to play a game. Learning was visual and kinaesthetic. There was integration of theory and practice. When children accompanied the elders to herd the cattle, they learnt to count the cows and examined the herds for signs of illness. They learnt what herbal remedies were available for humans and animals, where to find them and how to make the remedies from tree leaves, roots and bark.

The second essential quality of UDL is multiple means of engagement. This means ‘different ways to motivate students, challenge them and boost their interest in learning’ (Gargiulo, 2013, p. 45). There are many ways that the Gīkūyū kept their children motivated and engaged. As stated earlier, learning was not separated from everyday life. The children learned to dance, sing, role play and tell stories and children with different abilities were included. Children learned by doing/making models, ropes, building children’s play pens, working in groups or alone. Children in a Gīkūyū village to this day are very creative and make their toys from locally available material. Stories are used to teach moral lessons and for recall.

The third essential quality of UDL is multiple means of expression. This refers to the ways in which students respond to questions using what they have learnt. UDL suggests audio, visual, kinaesthetic, affective and technology options. These include oral reports, story-telling, speech, drawing, posters, dance, role play and multimedia. The Gīkūyū do just that; they express themselves using story-telling, dance, song and role play. Riddles and proverbs were

and still are used to test people's knowledge. UDL is a Northern construct but I argue in this study that the way the Gikūyū taught their young has a lot in common with it. They both encourage using different ways of expressing self, for example song, poetry and dance. What is today referred to as discipline areas in education in the North was taught as integrated knowledge among the Gikūyū. From one task, children gained various skills and knowledge. For example, a trip to get firewood in the forest involved learning the names of trees, their uses (such as healing, building, fencing, making traps and toys), learning what parts of the tree were used for which medicine, the names of birds and other animals that were observed, how to use environmental markers to retrace their way back out of the forest, the plants and animals that could be used for food and how to keep safe in a forest where there were dangerous animals and poisonous plants. The children accompanied the adults who modelled the expected behaviour and provided information on these animals and plants. UDL in Kenyan classrooms is achievable because it has characteristics that are similar to the Gikūyū way of life. Teachers can use culturally appropriate pedagogy when they deploy Gikūyū teaching practices and they can use locally available materials. For example, in my primary school years, we made hoola hoops from sticks. As teachers, the elders showed us what trees produced malleable branches and the length of stick needed to make a usable hoola hoop. We made dance and music costumes from sisal and leaves. Teachers could use the UDL concept with ease in Kenya if the system allowed them to think beyond Western concepts. They could use maize and beans, which are readily available, to teach counting. Gikūyū stories can be used to teach such narrative techniques as structure, description and didactic reasoning. They could use Gikūyū songs and poetry to teach repetition and other poetic devices.

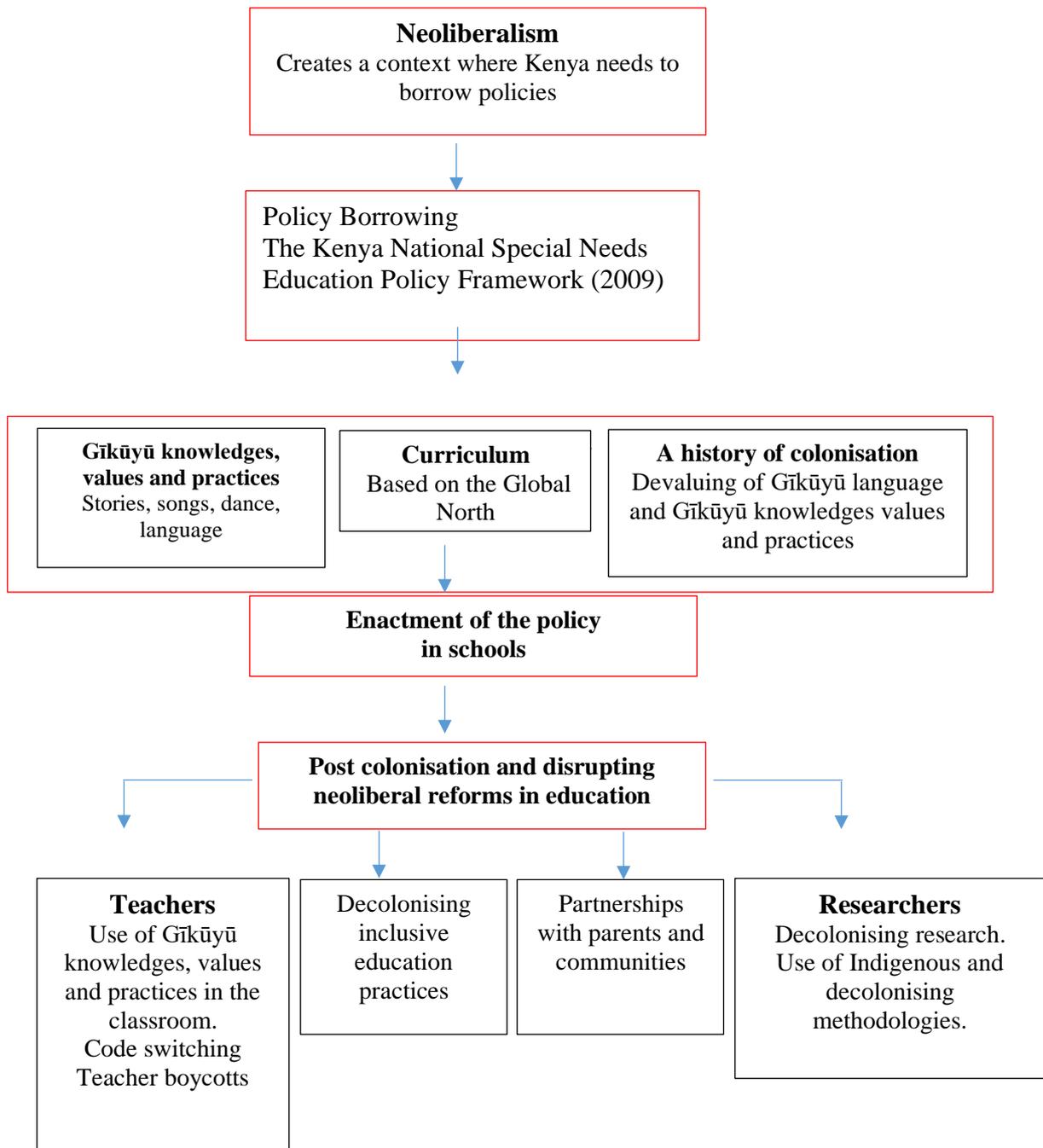
The Gikūyū education system and UDL have other similarities. They both encourage cooperative learning. The Gikūyū way of life encourages collectivism. Working in pairs or in

groups is encouraged and praised and is emphasised in stories, proverbs and song. For example, sayings such as '*kamūingī koyaga ndīrī*' ('many people can with ease lift a pestle') and '*Kīara kīmwe gītiūragaga ndaa*' ('one finger cannot kill lice') emphasise the need to work collectively. Individualism is considered selfish, negative and detrimental to the fabric of the community. UDL encourages working together in pairs or in cooperative groups. Cooperative learning is not only fun for students but is also interactive, allows discussion and encourages students to think and solve problems together.

Another important principle of UDL is social justice, that is, it 'accommodate[s] students who have a wide range of intelligences and ability' (Gargiulo, 2013, p. 33). UDL supports differentiation specifically to accommodate students of different abilities and the same differentiation is built into the Gīkūyū way of life. The Gīkūyū believe in social justice and promote it in stories, song, dance and proverbs. Kavetsa and Kabira (1985, pp. xvi-xvii) point out that in African stories, 'children, women, disabled people, orphans, the weak and impoverished, slaves, and outcasts, are of deep concern to the narrator and the narrative is woven around them with sympathy. There is a consistent effort to integrate these victimised characters into society; they are accepted, appreciated, rewarded: they are the heroes and heroines of the narratives.' UDL promotes teaching adjustments to allow for different languages, learning styles and to accommodate students' interests and cultural backgrounds. The students in the classrooms observed for this research spoke three languages, their mother tongue, Swahili and English, and they were from various cultural backgrounds. It is anticipated that allowing students to speak the language they are most comfortable with can increase student participation in class. UDL can inform teaching in Kenyan classrooms and the use of the Gīkūyū way of life, its values and practices can conversely enhance UDL. Teachers can use Gīkūyū values and practices in classrooms to promote the inclusion of students with disabilities. Combining these positions has guided me in designing and

analysing the data obtained in this research, as outlined in the diagram below. The next section discusses the methods used for data collection.

Figure 3-1: Conceptual Framework (Mutuota, 2019)



In the previous section I described the theoretical framework, UDL, that guided Phase 1 of this study and the similarities I identified between Gīkūyū ways of educating children and UDL. The next section presents the questions, methods and data collection procedures used for Phase 1 of this study. It begins with the overarching questions that guided the study.

## **Methodology**

### **The overarching questions**

1. What are the teachers' and principals' interpretation and understanding of *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework (MOE, 2009)*?
2. What instructional practices do teachers use in inclusive education classrooms?
3. What supports and resources are available to teachers in the implementation of inclusive education?
4. What needs to change to support inclusive education?
5. What role do school principals play in the implementation of *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework (2009)*?

### **Case study**

Case studies are unique because of their ability to deal with a full variety of evidence—‘documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation, and physical artefacts’ (Yin, 2014, p. 102), all of which will be used in this research. This research used an educational case study format and multiple sites. The definition of a case study that was adopted for this research is ‘a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context’ (Miles, 1994, p. 25). To ensure that data collection was finite and bounded, four schools were selected as the object of the case study. The case study allowed the researcher to look at the case ‘in its real-life context’ (Cohen, 2007, p. 254), a method that suited this research because it allowed ‘direct observations of events being studied and

interviews of the persons involved in the events' (Yin, 2009, p. 11). The case study method was also the best fit for this research because the study was done in a natural environment.

### **Sampling of schools**

In this study, the schools were purposively sampled. Purposeful sampling according to Merriam (2003) allows the researcher to select a sample that can provide the most information. The population of schools selected for this study was those in the Ndūrīrī Mūtukanio and Gīkūyū Karīng'a counties. Several factors influenced the choice of schools. At the Teacher's Service Commission (TSC), the institution charged with the responsibility of employing teachers, I was asked to identify what counties I was going to visit. I chose Ndūrīrī Mūtukanio (urban) and Gīkūyū Karīng'a county (rural) counties because they were easily accessible by road and I was fairly familiar with the local areas. At the county offices, I was asked to select the schools I wished to visit from a list of schools. I chose 10 schools, five from each county. From the five schools in each county, two schools in each county were selected because they had students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. In Ndūrīrī Mūtukanio county, I chose to visit Mūtūdū and Mūteta primary schools. In Gīkūyū Karīng'a county, I chose to visit Mūkinyei and Mūbariki primary schools. These schools were within a 100km radius from the main town centre in each county. The sample size for this study was eight classrooms, and each classroom was selected because it had students with disabilities. When I visited the schools, I learned that Mūbarīki, Mūtūdū and Mūteta primary schools also had Special Education Units attached to them, facilities in regular schools that provide specialist support for children with special education needs. Table 3-1 below shows the counties and schools selected for the study.

	<b>Selection criteria</b>	<b>Resulting sample</b>
Counties	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Easy access to road</li> <li>2. Include rural and metropolitan</li> <li>3. Approval from education officers</li> </ol>	School Mūkinyei and Mūbarīki (rural) School Mūtūdū and Mūteta (urban)
Schools	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Must have students with disabilities</li> <li>2. Must have approval from principal and relevant teachers</li> <li>3. Must have approval from county education officers and Teachers Service Commission</li> </ol>	Schools Mūkinyei and Mūbarīki (rural) School Mūtūdū and Mūteta (urban)
Classes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Class must have a student with disability in attendance full-time</li> <li>2. Must have approval from teachers</li> </ol>	
Lesson	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There must be a student with a disability in attendance</li> <li>2. Lesson chosen by the teacher</li> </ol>	Classes 2, 3, 4, 5, 8

Table 3-1 The selection criteria for counties, schools, classes and lessons.

### **Population**

In this study, the population was teachers and principals in four public primary schools in Kenya, Mūkinyei, Mūbarīki, Mūtūdū and Mūteta chosen from the 10 schools that agreed to participate. There are about 20,000 primary schools in Kenya (Ogola, 2010), categorised as rural, urban and semi-urban schools. The results of this study are not generalisable given the small number of schools, teachers and principals selected for this study.

## **Sampling of participants**

While all the principals of the selected schools were automatically chosen for the study, four teachers in each of the selected primary schools were purposively selected and invited to participate in the research because they had students with disabilities in their classrooms. When I visited the schools, I presented the school principals with my letter of request to conduct research in the school (see Appendix 2) and approvals from both the University of New England to conduct research (see Appendix 9) and from the Kenya Ministry of Education (see Appendix 10). A request was sent out by each principal asking for volunteer teachers to participate in the research. Of the 18 teachers who responded to the request, eight (two from each school) were chosen because they had students with disabilities in their classrooms, as stated above. In total, eight teachers were interviewed and observed, and four principals were interviewed.

Before the interview session, each teacher or principal was provided with an information sheet about the study (see Appendix 3) and was requested to sign the consent form (see Appendix 4). Demographic information was gathered regarding age, teaching qualifications, number of years they had been teaching, the grades they were currently teaching and if they were aware of students with disabilities in their class (without providing names of students) (see Appendix 5). Pseudonyms, for example, Wangūi and Wambūgū, were used for the teachers and principals. The interviews can be located throughout this thesis by the pseudonyms for the participants and the date of the interviews, for example, ‘Wangūi 12/1/2015’.

Table 3-2: Classes observed.

School	Lesson	Teacher	Class	Number of students	Age of students	Students with diagnosed disabilities
Mūkinyei	Swahili	Wangūi	2 A West	45	7	3
Mūkinyei	English	Wangūi	2A West	45	7	3
Mūkinyei	Maths	Wambūi	2East	42	7	2
Mūkinyei	English	Wambūi	2 East	42	7	2
Mūbarīki	Science	Wangarī	7B	49	12	3
Mūbarīki	Science	Wangarī	8B	49	13	1
Mūbarīki	Physical Education	Wambūgū	5A	65	10	2
Mūbarīki	English	Wambūgū	5A	65	10	2
Mūtūdū	Social Studies	Waṅjirū	5A	64	10	2
Mūtūdū	Maths	Waṅjirū	5B	64	10	4
Mūtūdū	Swahili	Wairimū	3A	72	8	2
Mūtūdū	CRE (Christian Religious Education)	Wairimū	3A	72	8	2
Mūteta	Maths	Waṅjikū	4A	65	8	2
Mūteta	English	Waṅjikū	4B	65	9	3
Mūteta	Class activity-spelling using plasticine	Waithīra	1	82	6	4
Mūteta	Reading/English	Waithīra	1	82	6	4

The table above shows the classes that were observed, the teacher, the lessons observed and the ages of the students in each class. While the teachers could not give a definite number of students with disabilities, the table shows those who had a diagnosis from the Educational

Assessment and Resource Centres (EARCs), the organisation responsible for identification, assessment, intervention and placement of learners with special needs and disabilities.

The teachers pointed out that several others in the class showed signs of disabilities but the children had not been formally diagnosed. The smallest class had 42 students and the largest had 82 students. Large classes were more common. Other than Class 1, which had 82 students, where two teachers taught cooperatively, the teachers in the other classes taught alone without classroom assistants. The principal explained that he would like to split the class into two but there was no classroom available in the school.

## Participants

Table 3-3: Demographic information about the teachers

Teacher	School	Qualification	Experience	Age	Classes taught
Wangūi	Mūkinyei	Bachelor Degree in Education	10-14 years	35-39	1-5 5-8
Wambūi	Mūkinyei	Certificate of Primary Teacher Education	20-24 years	45-49	1-4
Wangarī	Mūbarīki	Diploma in Education	10-14years	40-44	5-8
Wambūgū	Mūbarīki	Diploma in Education	10-14 years	40-44	1-4 5-8
Wanjirū	Mūtūndū	Bachelor Degree in Education	5-9 years	35-39	5-8
Wairimū	Mūtūndū	ATS 3 (Approved Teacher Status 3)	25-29 years	50-54	1-4
Wanjikū	Mūteta	Bachelor Degree in Education	5-9 years	30-34	1-4 5-8
Waithīra	Mūteta	Diploma in Education	25-29	50-54	5-8

The table above shows that three teachers had attained degrees in Education, three held a Diploma in Education, one a Certificate of Primary Teacher Education, and one had an

Approved Teacher Status (ATS). ATS teachers are untrained and can attain a certificate through in-service education offered by the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE).

Table 3-4: Demographic information about the principals

Principal	School	Qualifications	Experience	Age
Mwai	Mūkinyei	Masters degree in education	25-29 years	55-59
Wamūyū	Mūbarīki	Masters degree in education	20-24 years	45-49
Wambura	Mūtūdū	Masters degree in education	20-24 years	50-54
Maina	Mūteta	Masters degree in education	25-29 years	55-59

The principals in all four schools had attained a Masters degree in education and had between 20 and 29 years of teaching experience.

## **Procedure for data collection and data collection instruments**

### **Interviews and observations**

Three main data collection instruments were used in this study. These comprised a classroom observation checklist (see Appendix 6), an interview guide for teachers (see Appendix 7) and an interview guide for principals (see Appendix 8). In addition, the researcher reviewed *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009). This is a document that ‘addresses issues of equity and improvement of learning environment in all schools’ (MOE, 2009, p. 8) for students with special needs. It is a document that teachers and principals are expected to be familiar with so that they can adhere to the policy in the provision of education to students with disabilities.

Each element of the data collection process is described below.

## Interviews

The teacher interviews (see Appendix 7) focused on the instructional methods used by teachers in their classrooms, their understanding of *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009) and their understanding of inclusion. The principal interviews focused on policy, school structures and provisions (see Appendix 8).

## Interview sessions

The interview sessions took place in various places within the schools. The principals were interviewed in their offices at a time that was suitable for them. The teachers were interviewed in the classroom after students left for recess or lunch or in a resource room. Each teacher chose the time and place for the interviews. One interview was conducted outside the classroom but after 20 minutes the researcher and participant had to move to the resource room because of noise. I started the interview sessions by introducing myself and my heritage. As a Kenyan Indigenous person, it is considered impolite not to explain who you are and your heritage when you meet people for the first time. The following script shows how I introduced myself.

Me: *Habari yako* (How are you?) (Swahili) or Good morning or good afternoon (It is common practice for people in Kenya to code switch in conversation.) I am NN of the family of KK from Gikūyū Karīng'a county. I now live in Australia, but my family still lives in Gikūyū Karīng'a (showing my connection to the land).

Teacher: *Karibu sana* (Welcome).

The teacher then introduced him or herself specifying their heritage. That is how rapport was established. After the introduction, the teachers were then requested to complete a four-item questionnaire about their demographics. I was conscious of the university ethics protocols

governing this research. The teachers were asked if they accepted their responses to be recorded. All the teachers and principals allowed their responses to be recorded. The teachers were reminded that they could withdraw from the research at any stage.

The interview sessions took 40 to 60 minutes. I varied the word 'adaptations' to 'changes' in the interview sessions and sometimes rephrased the questions. I relied on participants' verbal skills, body language and silences during the interview process for the responses to questions, their feelings and whether they were comfortable or uncomfortable with the questions. I asked the questions in Swahili and English as my participants understood both languages well and they are both official languages in Kenya. The teachers responded in English or Swahili, switching from one to the other. At the end of the interview sessions, the participants were asked if they had any questions. Afterwards, I thanked the participants for their time and participation in the interviews and for accepting that their classes were observed.

### **The Observation Checklist**

The observation checklist (see Appendix 6) was an adapted version of *The Effective Teaching Practices* checklist (ETPC) by Kuyini & Desai (2008) and Kuyini (2012), developed to evaluate inclusive instructional practices in Ghanaian schools based on an extensive literature review. The items of the checklist are designed to be rated as 1= Not in Evidence, 2= Partly in Evidence and 3= Fully in Evidence. Among the instructional practices assessed by Kuyini & Desai (2008) were involving students with disabilities in class activities, providing independent practice, working on the same curriculum, modifying evaluation procedures and the use of peer tutoring and cooperative groups. Thus, the checklist was aligned to the Universal Design of Learning discussed earlier.

The observation checklist was used to provide a way of identifying the instructional strategies used by teachers in in the classrooms. The checklist had instructional strategies that are suitable for use in a regular classroom to assist students with disabilities.

### **Conducting the observations**

After the initial discussion about the research, the teachers came to the staffroom where I waited and invited me to their classrooms. On the way to the classroom, the teachers informed me about the class I was going to observe (for example, Class 4). They also provided me with information about the number of students with disabilities in the class, who were diagnosed and undiagnosed, and where some of the students with disabilities would be sitting. In the classroom, the teachers introduced me to the class and showed me a place to sit at the back of the classroom. I used the observation checklist (see Appendix 6) to mark what was observed and made notes on the observation sheets. I did not conduct any audio-recording in the classrooms because I had not been granted permission to do so. I sat at the back of the classroom, observing the teacher-student interaction and filled in the observation checklist described above (see Appendix 6) as necessary.

At the end of the lesson and after the students had left the classrooms, I asked a few questions of the teacher to clarify what was observed, for example, the number of students in the class and about code switching. All observations took place before the interview sessions.

### **Checking the data collection strategies**

Prior to data collection, I contacted via phone an expert reference group made up of educators in Kenya (teacher trainers and teachers) to comment on the content of the interview schedule and the observation checklist. The comments received from this group included the need to reduce the number of interview questions and to revise some questions for clarity. The feedback from these educators was taken into consideration when I was conducting the interviews. For example, some questions were compressed, and others separated. Questions 7 and 10 were further split into two questions each for clarity in specifying resources (material) and supports (teacher's aides, parents and special education teachers).

## **Data analysis**

### **Analysis of stories**

I used thematic analysis to identify themes and analyse the data. Braun & Clarke (2006, p.86) explain that a 'thematic analysis involves the searching across a data set /be that a number of interviews or focus groups, or a range of texts to find repeated patterns of meaning.' Tape-recorded interviews were transcribed. I had recorded the interviews on my iPad and my iPhone. I listened to each interview and looked at the notes made after the interview session to make sense of the context. After I completed transcribing, I re-read the stories and coded them manually. Reading through the responses and transcribing gave me deeper insight into what the teachers and principals were talking about. I had drafted six different codes that I expected the data to fall neatly into. These were: understanding of the policy, inclusive educational practices, support from the school and MOE, resources to support implementation, role of the principal in implementation of the policy, attitudes towards students with disabilities.

As I read through the interviews it became apparent that I needed to include more codes. For example, I further identified the role of the church and religion in schools, the language used to describe people with disabilities and community attitudes. I read through the transcribed teacher/principal responses several times. I coded the transcribed interviews by listing ideas of what I found in the data with short notes about each idea. I re-read the transcribed interviews and highlighted the themes that began to emerge on each transcribed interview and noted the themes on the margin. Table 3-5 shows an example of data coding in the interview analysis. A mind map was used to sort out themes and codes.

Table 3-5: Examples of Codes and Themes

Number	Interview text	Coding	Themes
1	That they should be given access to schools.	Students with disabilities should have access to the local schools.	Access to schooling
2	The problem we are having is free primary education. The other problem is that we do not have enough infrastructure. Like Class 4, they are supposed to be three (streams) but they are only two	Free primary education has resulted in overcrowding. There aren't enough classrooms for the students enrolled at the school.	Challenges, for example, overcrowding caused by free primary education.
3	Last year we had a child who was integrated, and he made it to the national athletics competition.	Teachers speak about integration when they respond to a question about inclusion.	Understanding of inclusion.
4	Some parents hide children at home... Like we have a child in kindergarten and the parents have really been discouraged by the outside world.	Attitudes towards students with disability.	
5	She is A B and she is mentally challenged.	Negative language addressing people with disability.	Negative views of disability.

### **Classroom observations analysis**

As with the stories above, I used thematic analysis to identify and highlight the themes that emerged from the observations of the classrooms and analyse the data collected. The findings were aligned with the dimensions of the UDL framework, such as instruction, assessments, materials, flexibility, engagement and expression.

### **Ethical clearance**

Ethical clearance was sought from the University of New England Ethics Committee before Phase 1 of the data collection. The researcher also sought permission from the Kenyan

Ministry of Education, Teachers' Service Commission, County Directors of Education and school principals. Once the teachers were identified, I talked to each one of them separately when they were available. I made it clear to each of them that participation was voluntary. I asked them to read the Information Sheet for Participants (see Appendix 3) and sign the Consent to Participate form (see Appendix 4) if they wanted to participate in the study. Several issues were discussed with the participants before they signed the consent forms. These included the use of pseudonyms in place of their real names in the thesis, storage of the interview responses and observation sheet material, and the right to discontinue with the interviews if they no longer wanted to participate. I drew their attention to the address on the Information Sheet where they could send their complaints if they were not happy with any of the data collection strategies. I also explained the benefits of the study. The date and time of the interviews and when and where they wanted the classroom observations to occur were discussed. Participants were informed that the results of the research findings would be made available to the public and online through libraries.

### **Challenges and limitations**

The first challenge that arose during Phase 1 of the research was the feeling that I had the obligation to adhere to the rules and regulations of the Academy and the university ethics, which meant beginning my research in 'a colonised place' (Kovach, 2009, p. 151). I also strongly wanted to remain true to my culture and adhere to the protocols of Gĩkũyũ communication. I tried to integrate the two as best as I could. I experienced tensions of meeting Northern (Australian) requirements in Southern (Kenyan) settings within Southern frameworks. I needed to remain culturally grounded and at the same time meet the Academy's ethics protocols. Cultural grounding according to Kovach (2009, p. 116) is 'the way that culture nourishes the researcher's spirit during the inquiry, and how it nourishes the research itself'. Gĩkũyũ protocols dictate that we enter someone else's space with humility. I

was respectful in requesting the teachers and principals' participation in my research. To resolve this tension, I positioned myself as an Indigenous researcher working in the field of education.

The second challenge was negotiating the power relations within the school hierarchy and between the participants and me. Some teachers did not want to answer the question about the extent of assistance offered by the executive, i.e. the principal and deputy principals, for fear of repercussions. Other teachers did not feel comfortable criticising a government policy because they were public servants. I reassured them that in my research I would use pseudonyms and that my research was not commissioned by the Kenyan government. To mitigate the power differentials between the participants and me to some extent, I used open-ended question structures and listened without interrupting too often.

A third challenge presented by using a Northern methodology in an indigenous space was that some of the Gĩkũyũ words and concepts do not have English equivalents. This meant that some meaning was lost in translation. For example, *ũmũndũ* (to be human-loving, respecting and caring for the living and the dead) does not have an equivalent in the English language.

The choice of language presented the fourth challenge. I was torn between using Gĩkũyũ language, English and Swahili during the interviews. English and Swahili are the official languages in Kenya, English is the language of instruction in schools and it is a colonial legacy. This was one of the factors that led me to want to conduct Phase 2 of the research using a decolonising lens and provide teachers with an opportunity to use Gĩkũyũ instead of English, the main instrument of colonisation. The interviews can be located throughout this thesis by use of pseudonyms for the participants and the date of the interviews, for example, Wangũi 12/1/2015.

## **Phase 2**

### **Unravelling Colonialism**

In the previous part I addressed the theoretical framework, UDL, that guided Phase 1 of this study. I also explained the data collection procedure used in Phase 1. In this section, I describe the Gikūyū theoretical framework and data collection procedure employed in Phase 2. As I analysed the data collected in Phase 1, I deepened my understanding of the research and identified gaps in the data collected in this cycle. I realised that in Phase 1 of data collection I was looking at my people through the lens of the hegemonic North and it was important for me to see them through an Indigenous lens as I was on a journey of decolonising myself. Hence the use of an Indigenous methodology in Phase 2 that suited the Gikūyū teachers and principals. Phase 2 of data collection occurred in Term One of the Kenyan school system.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Several theoretical frameworks were employed to guide Phase 2 of this research. They include Gikūyū framework, postcolonial theory and neoliberalism. They are explored below.

#### **African/Gikūyū Framework**

The first theoretical framework that informed Phase 2 of this study was the African/Gikūyū framework which recognises my Indigenous /African/Gikūyū world view, and Gikūyū knowledge and realities. My African/Gikūyū framework is one of many Indigenous methodologies.

#### **Overview of the Gikūyū framework**

I developed the Gikūyū framework to best reflect the underlying context and positioning of my research. It is one among many Indigenous frameworks. Africa has many ethnic groups, all with their own traditions and different colonial experiences. It would therefore be inaccurate to speak of an African world view. Instead, I will write from a Gikūyū world view

because I belong to the African continent but more specifically to the Gĩkũyũ people of Kenya. The framework includes a Gĩkũyũ paradigm/world view, ontology, axiology and epistemology as well as a decolonising perspective. Gĩkũyũ people are often referred to as the Kikuyu, an anglicised/colonial form of the word. The traditional land of the Gĩkũyũ is central Kenya, spreading around Mount Kenya, and includes the Kiambu, Nyeri, Embu, Mũrang'a and Meru administrative districts.

Major influences in the creation of this framework included researchers such as Smith (2012), Kovach (2009), and Asante (1987), who have used Indigenous methodologies as a rejection of hegemonic colonising research practices. These authors developed frameworks with ontological relevance that leverage the knowledge-making practices of the South. For example, Kaupapa Māori research, according to Smith (2012), is concerned with social justice and self-determination. Smith quotes Graham Smith who states that Kaupapa Māori research is 'related to being Māori, is connected to Māori philosophy and principles, takes for granted the validity and legitimacy of Māori, the importance of language and culture; and is concerned with the struggle for autonomy over our own cultural being' (Smith, 2012, p. 187). Kovach (2009) advocates that Indigenous people make research relevant by telling their stories. Asante's Afrocentricity (1987, 1998) is an African paradigm that promotes the use of the African world view in research and recognises the African voice in providing solutions to African issues. The Gĩkũyũ framework fits in with this general positioning of Indigenous research and thus shares features with other Indigenous research frameworks. According to Martin (2003, p. 5), the main features of Indigenous research are:

- recognition of [Indigenous] worldviews, our knowledges and our realities as distinctive to our existence and survival

- honouring our social mores as essential process through which we live, learn and situate ourselves as Aboriginal [Gĩkũyũ] people in our lands and when in the lands of other Aboriginal [Indigenous] people
- emphasis on the social, historical, and political contexts that shape our experiences, lives, positions and futures and
- privileging the voices, experiences and lives of Aboriginal people and Aboriginal lands [in my case privileging the voices of the Gĩkũyũ people and Gĩkũyũ lands].

It is important for people conducting research among the Gĩkũyũ to have a Gĩkũyũ world view, the lived experience of a Mũgĩkũyũ (a Gĩkũyũ person) and Gĩkũyũ language.

Otherwise the research remains research conducted on the Gĩkũyũ people by outsiders. By using an Indigenous research methodology, I honour the Gĩkũyũ way of life, customs and beliefs. Using an Indigenous research methodology also allows me to write about the influences of historical, social and political contexts to education in Kenya.

I am a Kenyan who was educated through the British curriculum and uses English as a medium of instruction. I speak Gĩkũyũ, Swahili and English. I have lived and worked in Kenyan and Australian schools. I have observed the differences in inclusive education in both countries and I can speak as a practitioner. I have the knowledge of the Gĩkũyũ people, language and culture. Dei et al. (2000) explain that Indigenous knowledge is unique because it is situated in the cultures, localities and societies of each indigenous group. Martin (2003, p. 209) adds that ‘ways of knowing are specific to the ontology and entities of land, animals, plants, waterways, skies, climate and the spiritual systems of Aboriginal [Indigenous] groups.’ I have the lived experience to be able to speak as a Mũgĩkũyũ (Gĩkũyũ person).

## **Gĩkũyũ ontology and axiology**

The ontology of the Gĩkũyũ man or woman (*Mũgĩkũyũ*) is tied to our heritage and history. Ontology according to Wilson (2008, p. 33) is the ‘theory of nature of existence, or the nature of reality’. The Gĩkũyũ ontology assumes that there is a relationship among all things, including man, animals, plants, the cosmos and the deity. Gĩkũyũ mythology provides answers for phenomena. For example, the Gĩkũyũ story of creation states that God created Gĩkũyũ (man) and Mũmbi (Woman) who fathered nine daughters. From these daughters came the nine Gĩkũyũ clans. The Gĩkũyũ have a kinship system that connects the individual to the society and the individual and society to the cosmos and to the land. An individual’s affairs are the affairs of the ethnic group; for example, marriage, death, birth. A child is born in to the community and when one dies, he/she joins the spirit world. The communal spirit (Kenyatta, 1965; Dei & Kemp, 2012) is emphasised in stories, proverbs, songs and sayings such as ‘kamũingĩ koyaya ndĩrĩ’ (‘a group will lift the heaviest pestle’). The positioning of relationships as important in peoples’ lives is a positioning shared amongst several Indigenous peoples; for example, Wilson (2008, p. 5), writing about the Cree people of Canada, states that ‘we could not be without being in relationship with everything that surrounds us and is within us.’

## **Gĩkũyũ epistemology**

A Gĩkũyũ epistemology is defined by language, place and relationships. It is passed down from the elders (Kenyatta, 1965; Gathigira, 1933; Kabetu, 1947). The Gĩkũyũ know the world through stories, proverbs, riddles, ceremonies, songs and rituals. Indigenous epistemology is influenced by knowledge passed down through story telling (Gathigira, 1933; Hart, 2010; Kabetu, 1947; Kenya, 1965; Sium et al., 2013). In the past, this knowledge was passed down orally but today it is passed down both orally and in writing. There are books explaining the ways of the ethnic group, for example, Gathigira, (1933),

Kabetu (1947) and Kenyatta (1965). According to Kovach, (2009, p. 5), ‘Indigenous epistemology is interactional, interrelated, broad-based, whole, inclusive, animate, cyclical, fluid, and spiritual.’ This world view is shared by many Indigenous cultures, the Gĩkũyũ included. Kovach adds that place and language are two important elements in the identity of an Indigenous person. The Gĩkũyũ people share this view.

The Gĩkũyũ do not have separate words for ontology and axiology. This is because the term ugĩkũyũ refers to the Gĩkũyũ world view, way of knowing, way of being and way of doing. The word ugĩkũyũ is complemented by ũmũndũ, which means being human, behaving like a human being in relation to others and the universe, fair, respectful and responsible for the living and the dead in the world. ũmũndũ is a philosophy that cuts across African regions and is known as Ubuntu in South Africa and in Zimbabwe (Sigauke, 2016). Members of the Gĩkũyũ community, teachers included, are expected to use ũmũndũ in treating people with disabilities with fairness and including them in communal activities. It is the Gĩkũyũ way of life. Before the colonial period, people with disabilities were not segregated from the rest of their peers. The *riika* (age group) system (Gathigira, 1933; Kabetu, 1947; Kenyatta, 1965) ensured that peers learned, worked, danced, sang and went to war together. It was the missionaries who introduced special education schools which not only segregated the people with disabilities but also emphasised difference by doing so.

### **Why choose a Gĩkũyũ framework?**

I chose to use the Gĩkũyũ framework in this study because it is grounded in the Gĩkũyũ way of knowing and the individual’s relationship with others, the land, the deity and the cosmos. This framework allows me the space to advocate for the Gĩkũyũ people and the wider Kenyan community who are still experiencing the effects of colonisation/globalisation. There is research being carried out all the time in areas such as education and agriculture. Many

NGOs have come and gone without making much change in the way people practice. Being an insider and outsider, I can hear and articulate the concerns expressed by teachers, farmers and researchers. Kenyans have seen many outsiders/colonisers/athūngū come with all manner of claims; the missionaries-to save our souls, farmers to develop the land, administrators to create order, the expatriates to help the third world country develop and now researchers to help us solve our local problems. According to Smith, (2012, p. 1) ‘the term research is inextricably linked to imperialism and colonialism.’ She adds that ‘the word research is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous vocabulary.’ Denzin and Lincoln (2008, p. 4) explain that this castigation is because the word ‘research’ serves as a ‘metaphor for colonial knowledge, for power and for truth ... in the colonial context, research becomes an objective way of representing the dark skinned other to the world.’

By using the Gīkūyū framework, I am an insider/outsider Indigenous researcher taking a position to speak to the education debates in the Kenyan context. The stories allow the voices to speak for themselves, hence handing back to my people the power to speak. Some Indigenous communities hold the view that research conducted by outsiders on Indigenous people is disempowering. Indigenous scholars suggest that research with Indigenous communities should be carried out by Indigenous people (Smith, 2012; Foley, 2003; Rigney, 1999). They possess an understanding of the cultural, religious and political contexts of their people and ‘have a level of experience and knowledge of colonisation and dispossession that a non- Indigenous person could not possibly acquire’ (Gilroy, Donnelly, Colmar, & Parmenter, 2013, p. 47). Kovach (2009, p. 157) highlights the importance of ‘acknowledging the historical influence of the Indigenous-settler relations on educational policy, practice and research.’ It is for this reason that I, a member of the Gīkūyū cultural group, pursued this research to find out how the Kenyan inclusive education policy is influenced by Northern

thought and how Gikūyū values and practices can be used in mainstream classrooms for the benefit of students with and without disabilities.

Indigenous methodologies (IM) ‘can be defined as research by and for Indigenous peoples, using techniques and methods drawn from the traditions and knowledges of those people’ (Evans, Hole, Berg, Hutchinson, & Sookraj, 2009, p. 894) and are regarded as a decolonising (Smith, 2012; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008). Decolonising methods encourage local ways of knowing. This idea is captured in Southern theory that contests the view put forward by the Northern theory that ‘all societies are knowable, and they are knowable the same way and from the same point of view’ (Connell, 2007, p. 44). Southern theory presents social thought from the countries of the global South and argues that these societies are a source of knowledge and history. The Southern theory addresses countries south of the equator that were colonised and that continue to feel the consequences of the colonial legacy in areas such as education, language and culture. According to De Sousa Santos (2014), using the Southern theory means privileging the South. This study privileges the African Gikūyū knowledge and worldview.

The second theoretical position that informs this study is postcolonial theory, which aids in uncovering the colonial legacy on Kenyan peoples’ lives and culture. The term ‘postcolonial’ is subject to debate about its meaning. Childs and Williams (1997) argue that when the term ‘postcolonial’ is used to mean the period after colonisation, it is misleading because it suggests that colonisation ended at a point in time. In contrast to this position, this study adopts the meaning used in *The Empire Writes Back* (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1989, p. 2), where the term ‘postcolonial’ refers to ‘the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonisation to the present day.’ Postcolonial theory according to Young (2001, p. 65) is ‘designed to undo the ideological heritage of colonialism not only in the decolonised countries but also in the west.’ The current research on the impact of *The Kenyan*

*National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009) on teachers' instructional design and practice in inclusive classrooms in Kenya is counter hegemonic and concurs with other researchers (Foley, 2003; Kovach, 2009; Rigney, 1999; Smith, 2012) who oppose the representation of Indigenous knowledge by the West and give voice to Indigenous people. To illustrate this knowledge, I use an African/Gĩkũyũ framework that honours local ways of knowing and values the knowledge of the local people.

### **Indigeneity and colonialism**

I have used an Indigenous framework for several reasons. Indigenous knowledges refer to 'knowledge of the Indigenous peoples of a particular land used for everyday living, self and collective actualization, survival and social existence' (Dei, 2012, p. 111). It is the knowledge of the people of their place in their universe, their relationships with others and to the land, knowledge of their culture, their physical and spiritual worlds. This knowledge is based on traditional knowledge, that is, intergenerational knowledge passed on by community elders, empirical knowledge, which is based on careful observation of surrounding environments (nature, culture and society), and revealed knowledge, which is provided through dreams, visions and intuition (Castellano, 2000, pp. 23-25).

Indigenous knowledges are as diverse as the number of Indigenous groups. But the similarities within the Indigenous groups lies in colonisation and the destruction of Indigenous languages and cultures (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008; Kovach, 2009). There is a growing movement internationally to reclaim Indigenous knowledges, to use this knowledge to look at the world in different ways and to investigate the worlds using different frameworks. In doing so, Native Americans, the First Nations of Canada and the Māori of Aotearoa/New Zealand have led the way in the use of Indigenous methodologies in research (Kovach, 2009; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008).

First, I use an Indigenous framework because IM are decolonising methodologies (Kovach, 2008; Smith, 2012). As an African researcher, I am conscious that the Northern lens used over the decades to study African issues has resulted in the continued colonisation and oppression of the African people. Colonisation has continued by other names, such as globalisation, free trade, structural adjustment programs (SAPS), and others. Research using the Eurocentric lens, according to Connell (2007, p. 44), has four characteristics:

(a) The first characteristic is the claim of universality, ‘that all societies are knowable, and they are knowable from the same point of view’. Indigenous researchers such as Kovach (2009), Smith (2012) and Dei (2012) have shown through research using decolonising methodologies that it is possible to know the world through other methodologies, such as Cree, Māori and African methodologies among others. This claim of universality has held universities back from accepting methodologies from the South.

(b) The second characteristic is reading from the centre. Connell (2007) explains that reading from the centre represents one way of explaining events. What the African research regards as colonisation and loss, the North regards as discovery and exploration. The story of Australia Day/Invasion Day celebrated in Australia on 26th of January every year explains this dichotomy. While white Australians celebrate the day Captain Cook ‘discovered’ Australia, the Aboriginal people mark the day as ‘Invasion Day’- the beginning of colonisation.

(c) The third characteristic is exclusion. Connell (2007) points out that research from the colonised, the South, is rarely cited in theories from the North and ideas from the periphery are not included in the knowledge books.

(d) The fourth characteristic is grand erasure. Connell (2007) argues that when only Northern knowledge and thought is used as a point of reference, the theorists intentionally erase the experiences of other cultures and treat the South as a blank canvas. Connell (2007) provides

the example of Australia where the white conquerors renamed the land '*terra nullius*', land belonging to nobody, disregarding the Aboriginal people who had lived on that land for thousands of years and who had a connection to the land. Other researchers, such as Swadener and Mutua (2008), agree with Connell that the knowledge forms and voices of the South are excluded and only the voices and knowledge forms of the North are used in research. Kincheloe and Steinberg, (2008, p. 139) add that 'there is no single, privileged way to see the world, there is no one way of representing the world artistically, no one way of writing history.' Decolonising research recognises the role colonisation played and continues to play in silencing and oppressing the colonised.

Second, by using an Indigenous framework I join other Indigenous researchers who endeavour to rewrite their histories from their world view and unweave the narrative that has been told by the Academy propped up and promoted by the northern (Connell, 2007) political, educational, and economic structures. As an Indigenous person from the land of the Gĩkũyũ, which 50 years after independence is still feeling the effects of colonialism, I posit that the question to be asked is how colonisation/globalisation has affected knowledge production, validation, interrogation, agency, politics and resistance (Dei, 2012). In common with the colonial education in many other nations (Smith, 2012), in Kenya it was one of the agencies that placed Western knowledge in a position of superiority over Indigenous knowledge. I was educated using a curriculum based on the British system, which continued in schools after Kenya's independence. Although my Gĩkũyũ epistemology is based on the understanding of the Gĩkũyũ way of life, language and place, I know the world through the eyes of one who grew up under the influence of colonial education. By using an Indigenous methodology, I am privileging Indigenous knowledge, voices, experiences, reflections and analysis of their social, material and spiritual conditions (Rigney, 1999) in retelling/rewriting the story of the effects of colonisation on the Gĩkũyũ.

Third, my using an Indigenous research framework is an attempt to take back the power of the Gĩkũyũ people, language and culture that was eroded by colonisation. Proponents of the Indigenous research framework (Asante, 2008; Dei, 2012; Kovach, 2008; Smith, 2012) argue that in the past, research of Indigenous people has been carried out by non-Indigenous people using Western methodologies and on Western terms which has resulted only in the perpetuation of colonial power relationships. These scholars call for acceptance of Indigenous knowledges and Indigenous methodologies in the Academy. They argue that ‘Indigenous knowledges do not sit outside the effect of other knowledges (Dei, 2000, p. 113) but continue to influence and be influenced by other knowledges –a phenomenon referred to by the term- ‘hybridity of knowledge’ which means that knowledges continually influence each other.

Another reason for using an Indigenous framework is to respond to the needs of the education system in Kenya. By so doing, I will be giving back to the community. Indigenous researchers argue that Indigenous research needs to give back to the world and to the people (Kovach, 2009; Smith, 2012; Wilson 2001). This study centres on the teachers’ and principals’ understanding of inclusive education policy and inclusive educational practices in regular classrooms. It is through research that policies are formulated to improve education outcomes; it is therefore important that the policies are relevant to the people. This research adds to other African voices such as Ngugi wa Thiong’o (1986), Chinua Achebe (1958) and Dei et al. (2012) who remind us that it is important for Africans to remain true to their African ways, a process referred to by Thiong’o (1986) as ‘decolonising the mind’ in his book *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. This research also highlights the role of education in perpetuating Northern thought and maintaining the status quo and offers some recommendations regarding how to conduct research among the

Gĩkũyũ and the relevance of considering the cultural context when borrowing policies (Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi & Quist, 2000).

Furthermore, I have the privilege of doing research using an Indigenous framework, unlike other Indigenous researchers in the past such as Martin (2002), Smith (2012), Steinhauer (1999) and others who faced much resistance from the Academy and the fear of being marginalised. I was introduced to Indigenous methodologies by my two supervisors who are not Indigenous, perhaps an indication that the Academy is currently more accommodating of other knowledges.

In addition to using an Indigenous framework, I use a decolonising lens throughout the study to counter the claims that only the knowledge produced in the North counts and I proclaim that another knowledge is possible. In this research, I show that it is possible to see the world through an African/Gĩkũyũ lens, to use an Indigenous methodology to explain African knowledge and to show African experience, history, culture and belief. I use a decolonising lens to unite with other researchers such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986), who used the same language to talk about 'the history, the sociology, the psychology and the politics of imperialism as an epic story telling of huge devastation, painful struggle and persistent survival' (Smith, 2012, p. 21). Most importantly, I use a decolonising lens as a tool to decolonise myself, to be able to see clearly not only where 'the rain began to beat us' (Igbo proverb) but also 'how much the rain has beaten us'.

### **Postcolonial theory**

The second theoretical framework that influences this study is postcolonial theory that assists me in interpreting the plight of the students with disability in Kenya in the postcolonial space. The term 'postcolonial' is subject to debate about its meaning. In this study, I adopt the meaning used in *The Empire Writes Back*, which uses 'the term postcolonial to cover the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonisation to the present day'

(Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1989, p. 2). Postcolonial studies are concerned with place, displacement and loss of identity. Postcolonial writers such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Chinua Achebe in Africa and others in Asia and the Caribbean counter the works written by writers from the metropole such as Joseph Conrad (2007) in the *Heart of Darkness* who paint Africa as barbaric, strange, exotic and cruel as opposed to the calm, rational and civilised Europe. Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993, p. 2) argues that it is time for countries in the South, in Asia and Africa, to 'assert their right to define themselves and their relationship to the universe from their own centres in Africa and Asia.' Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha are credited with championing postcolonial theory. They argue that the west uses knowledge and representations to dominate the global South, the 'other'. They point out that the dominant culture encourages the periphery to mimic Western culture, resulting in an hybridity of culture. According to Bhabha, hybridity takes the colonised from his/her own culture and creates a people who are in between, a people without identity, like those described in V S Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* (1997) and Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963). According to Castle, (2001, xv) 'the twofold responsibility of postcolonial theory [are] articulation and resistance'. The postcolonial writers articulate the concerns in their regions regarding colonialism and resist the authority of colonialism. Spivak (1988) writes about the ability of colonised people or "subaltern" subjects to speak for themselves while Said (1978) explores how the North sought to 'represent and thus contain the "otherness" of the non-Western cultures'.

I join other researchers who oppose the representation of the colonised by the west and wish to show that Africa produces and possesses knowledges that are valued and valuable in the care and education of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

The postcolonial critic contests the colonial discourse and challenges the history of binaries as presented by the North such as self-other, metropolis-colony and centre and periphery.

## **Neoliberalism**

Another framework that influences this study is neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is defined as ‘a theory of political practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private properties, free markets, and free trade’ (Harvey, 2005, p. 2).

As stated earlier, neoliberalism places the responsibility of providing for the well-being of societies on to communities. Neoliberalism according to Harvey (2005, p. 3) ‘has become hegemonic as a mode of discourse. It has pervasive effects on ways of thought to the point where it has become incorporated into the common-sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world.’

Neoliberalism affects all areas of life, including the education of people with disabilities.

Although neoliberalism is felt by countries of the Global North and Global South, its effects on Indigenous and postcolonial communities like Kenya are detrimental because neoliberalism adds to the problems created by colonisation. Like colonisation, neoliberalism is a way for the hegemonic North to maintain power in the South. Programs created in and controlled by the North, for example the inclusive education policy, are sold to the South.

The North ensures that there is profit to be made by tying the programs to continuing PD and consultancy, training and technical support.

## **Phase 2: Iterative interviews**

1. How do teachers incorporate Gīkūyū values in their teaching in inclusive classrooms?
2. What Gīkūyū practices are employed in inclusive classrooms to support students with disabilities?
3. What other aspects of Gīkūyū traditions could be incorporated in schools to support students with disabilities?

## **Prompting questions used were:**

1. What Gīkūyū values do you use in your classroom?
2. When do you use them?
3. How do you use them?
4. Why do you use them?
5. Tell me a story you can use to teach these values.
6. What Gīkūyū practices do you use in your classroom?
7. When do you use them?
8. How do you use them?
9. Why do you use them?
10. Give an example of a Gīkūyū practice you use in your classroom.
11. Can you think of other ways you could use Gīkūyū ways in your teaching?
12. Can you think of Gīkūyū traditions that could be incorporated in schools to support students with disabilities?

### **Sample**

The same schools selected purposefully in Phase 1 were used in Phase 2. The teachers had been selected in Phase 1. Since only five of the eight teachers were still teaching in the same schools by the time I reached Phase 2 of the research, I decided to schedule the story telling sessions with those five. When I travelled to the schools, I presented each principal with a letter of request to conduct additional research in their schools (see Appendix 11). I also presented them with approvals to carry out additional research from the University of New England (see Appendix 15) and another from the Ministry of Education, Kenya (see Appendix 16). The teachers were informed that I was interested in conducting further research and were asked if they wanted to participate. Five teachers of the eight interviewed

in Phase 1 were available and agreed to participate in the research. The other three had left their stations. I presented each teacher with an Information Sheet (see Appendix 12) and requested them to sign a ‘Consent to Participate’ form if they were willing to participate in the research (Appendix 13). I discussed with the teachers when and where they would like to tell their stories. I informed them that they could withdraw at any time and that in their responses they could tell their stories in Gikūyū, English or Swahili. I also explained that I would use pseudonyms in the thesis. I used a story telling guide (see Appendix 14). The story telling sessions lasted about 40 to 60 minutes. I prompted the story tellers to provide explanations as they narrated their stories and they are referred to by their pseudonyms, the same pseudonyms that were used in Phase 1, for example, Wangūi. The interviews can be located throughout the thesis by use of pseudonyms for the participants and the date of the interviews, for example, ‘Wangūi 12/1/2015’.

## Participants

Table 3-6: Demographic information about the five teachers

Teacher	School	Qualification	Experience	Age	Classes taught
Wambūi	Mūkinyei	Certificate of Primary Teacher Education	20-24 years	45-49	1-4
Wangarī	Mūbarīki	Diploma in Education	10-14years	40-44	5-8
Wambūgū	Mūbarīki	Diploma in Education	10-14 years	40-44	1-4 5-8
Wairimū	Mūtūdū	ATS 3 (Approved Teacher Status 3)	25-29 years	50-54	1-4
Wanjikū	Mūteta	Bachelor Degree in Education	5-9 years	30-34	1-4 5-8

The table above shows that one teacher had attained a Bachelor degree in education, two held a diploma in education, one a certificate of primary teacher education, and one had approved teacher status (ATS). ATS teachers are untrained and can attain a certificate through in-service education offered by the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE).

## **Method**

### **Storytelling**

In the Gikūyū culture, as in many Indigenous cultures, the interview method is a foreign concept and is not used in either group or one-on-one communication. Instead, people hold discussions, conversations and talks, or tell stories (Kovach, 2009). Often, people sit in a circle and discuss matters. Considering this, I guided the discussion by asking questions and allowed the participants to tell their stories. I avoided interrupting the flow of the story to ask the next question on the storytelling checklist. Thus, rather than an interview schedule I shall use the term ‘story guide’ and the process as storytelling.

Storytelling is a widely-used form in Indigenous communities, Africa included, as a ‘teaching tool’ (Wilson, 2008), a way of transmitting our ways and knowledge. The story guide for teachers in Phase 2 focused on the Gikūyū values and practices used to support students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms (see Appendix 14). This allowed the teachers to tell their lived experience. Boylorn (2012, p. 2) defines lived experience as ‘a representation and understanding of a researcher or research subject's human experiences, choices, and options and how those factors influence one's perception of knowledge.’

### **Storytelling sessions**

The storytelling sessions took place in various places within the schools, in the classroom after students left for recess or lunch or in a resource room. Each teacher chose the time and

place to tell their stories. I started the storytelling sessions by introducing myself and my heritage. As a Kenyan Indigenous person, it is considered impolite not to explain who you are and your heritage when you meet people for the first time. The following script shows how I introduced myself.

Me: *Wi mwega?* ('How are you?'). I am NN of the family of KK from Gikūyū Karīng'a county. I now live in Australia, but my family still lives in Gikūyū Karīng'a (showing my connection to the land).

Teacher: *Ndimwega* (I am well). The teacher then introduced him or herself, specifying their heritage. That is how rapport was established. I was conscious of the university ethics protocols governing this research. Therefore, I had to weave back and forth between the Indigenous and the dominant, Western ways of doing research. The teachers were asked if they accepted their stories to be recorded and they all assented. The teachers were reminded that they could withdraw from the research at any stage.

The storytelling sessions took 40 to 60 minutes. I used the storytelling guide schedules (see Appendix 14) for teachers to guide the process and I relied on the participants' verbal skills, body language and silences during the interview process for the responses to questions, their feelings and whether they were comfortable or uncomfortable with the questions. I asked the questions in Gikūyū. The teachers responded in Gikuyu, English or Swahili, switching from one to the other. In Kenya, it is common practice for speakers to switch codes as they speak. At the end of the storytelling session, the participants were asked if they had any questions. Afterwards, I thanked the participants for their time and participation.

### **Data analysis**

#### **Analysis of stories**

I used thematic analysis to identify themes and analyse the data. Braun & Clarke (2006, p.86) explain that a 'thematic analysis involves the searching across a data set, be that a number of interviews or focus groups, or a range of texts to find repeated patterns of meaning.' Tape-

recorded stories were transcribed and translated. I had recorded the stories on my iPad and my iPhone. I listened to each story and looked at the notes made after the storytelling session to make sense of the context and content. After I completed transcribing and translating, I re-read the stories and coded them manually. Reading through the stories, transcribing and translating them gave me deeper insight into teachers' use of Gīkūyū knowledges, values and practices in classrooms to support students with disabilities.

I coded the transcribed interviews by listing ideas of what I found in the data with short notes about each idea. I re-read the transcribed interviews and highlighted the themes that began to emerge from each transcribed interview and noted the themes on the margin. Table 3-7 shows an example of data coding in the interview analysis. A mind map was used to sort out themes and codes.

Table 3-7: Examples of Codes and themes

<b>Number</b>	<b>Interview text</b>	<b>Coding</b>	<b>Themes</b>
1	Gīkūyū practices used in the classroom to support students with disabilities	Relationships  Use of Gīkūyū Stories  The circle/semi-circle learning structure	Support at school for students with disabilities provided by family/community and older/younger sibling  Storytelling  The circle/semi-circle learning structure
2	I find that this affects my teaching performance.	Neoliberal culture	Performativity Students with disabilities considered a liability
3	I use Gīkūyū sometimes because they understand it better than English	Subversion of the neoliberal culture	Use of Gīkūyū language in teaching
4	I tell them the story of a man who had one eye to story/to teach them to value people with disabilities. The moral	Identity	Use of Gīkūyū and culture to enhance identity

	lesson is that someone with a disability has value and ... sometimes saves people from problems.		
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**Ethical clearance**

Ethical clearance was sought from the University of New England Ethics Committee and from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) before Phase 2 of data collection, as was done in Phase 1 of data collection. I then sent letters to the principals explaining that I needed to do a follow-up with the teachers I had interviewed in Phase 1. I requested the principal to ask if the same teachers would be willing to participate in further research. When the approval from the principals and responses from the teachers agreeing to participate in the interview were received, I visited the schools to schedule the interviews with the teachers. On the scheduled dates and times, I attended the schools and interviewed the teachers who had agreed to participate in the follow-up interviews.

I talked to each one of them separately when they were available. As I had done in phase 1, I made it clear to each of them that participation was voluntary. I asked them to read the Information Sheet (see Appendix 12) for Participants and sign the Consent to Participate form (see Appendix 13) if they wanted to participate in the study. Before they signed the consent forms I discussed with the participants, as I had done in phase 1, the use of pseudonyms in place of their real names in the thesis, storage of the stories and observation sheet material, and the right to discontinue with the storytelling sessions if they no longer wanted to participate. Again, I drew their attention to the address on the Information Sheet where they could send their complaints if they were not happy with any of the data collection strategies. I also explained the benefits of the study. The date and time for the storytelling sessions were discussed. Once again, I informed participants that the results of the research findings would be made available to the public and online through libraries.

In line with Indigenous research and looking at ethics through a decolonising lens, I adhered to the four principles that protect indigenous people from exploitative research practices. The first principle is ownership. At the Ministry of Education office, I signed a document accepting I would send them a copy of the dissertation when it was completed. The government wishes to build on the knowledge collected on various aspects of the Kenyan community. I would also send a letter of thanks to the participants, outlining the outcome of the research and the recommendations made.

The second principle is control, which maintains that Indigenous people have a right to control various aspects of the research on them, including the formulation of research frameworks and dissemination. My choice of counties and schools was regulated by the Ministry. I was informed that the government would like me to collect data only on the topic stated and in the designated schools. I was informed that in the past, outsiders posing as international agencies collected data and used it to their advantage. The Indigenous people did not receive recognition for ownership of the knowledge or copies of the documents in which this information was presented. There is a desire by the government of Kenya to control how such knowledge is collected, used and distributed.

The third principle pertains to accessing ‘the ability for Indigenous people to retrieve and examine data that concerns them and their communities’ (Kovach, 2009, p. 145). As stated earlier, I agreed to send a copy of the dissertation to the Ministry of Education. This will be accessible to researchers and members of the public.

The fourth principal is possession, which refers to the ways in which ownership is protected. The Government of Kenya has set up a body through which all research applications must pass. Other checks include showing the approval to conduct research to the county officers and school principals. Finally, as an insider, I was conscious of the values of the Kenyan society and more specifically the Gikūyū community. Insider knowledge provided me with

the advantage of knowing my place in the Gĩkũyũ way of life and the protocols of communication.

I made the research adhere to protocols of carrying out Indigenous research by following the Gĩkũyũ protocols of communication while adhering to the university research ethics. As stated earlier, I greeted all participants in Swahili and Gĩkũyũ and explained my heritage, as is protocol in every communication among the Gĩkũyũ. I also explained why I was conducting research in the school.

### **Challenges and limitations**

As was the case in Phase 1, one of the challenges of using an Indigenous framework in a Northern space was that some of the Gĩkũyũ words and concepts do not have English equivalents. This meant that some meaning was lost in translation. For example, ũmũndũ (to be human-loving, respecting and caring for the living and the dead) does not have an equivalent in the English language.

The second challenge presented by use of Indigenous methodology within a Northern space was the constant need to balance the two. It felt like I was ‘walking simultaneously in two worlds’ (Sigh & Major, 2017, p. 5). Ethics documents presented to participants, such as the information sheets and the consent forms, were formal and foreign to an Indigenous methodology and appeared to create distance between me and the participants. For example, as I read aloud the information sheet, ‘You can choose to have the interview in your classroom, a café or a library,’ I noticed the discomfort expressed by the teachers. The expression on their faces seemed to imply that I was behaving like a foreigner/outsider who did not know the realities of primary schools in Kenya. The reality is that most primary schools have no libraries and sitting at a café for an interview is a foreign concept. Yet I was required by the ethics committee to include options such as these in my formal letters of information.

A third challenge was how to conduct research in a manner that respected the cultural protocols of the Gikūyū people. Unlike in Phase 1 when I went out into the field armed with interview questions, in Phase 2 I had deliberately reframed the research approach to be culturally responsive to fit in with the Southern lens. In the Gikūyū culture, as in other Indigenous cultures, we do not interview people, we have discussions or talks and tell stories (Kovach, 2006; Wilson, 2008). Using an indigenous methodology allowed the participants to tell their stories.

A fourth – and unique - challenge in Phase 2 was the fact that my research team included non-Indigenous supervisors. While we maintained a respectful and trusting relationship, they acknowledged that I was the expert in Gikūyū ways, which positioned me in a lonely place in exploring and addressing my cultural identity. However, my supervisors had a genuine willingness to empower me within a Northern Academy to explore my Indigenous identity and knowledge. The supervisors supported and challenged me to explore and identify Gikūyū values and practices and to critically respond to hegemonic discourses in education.

A fifth challenge related to the dissemination of the research. Under the protocols of Indigenous Methodologies there is emphasis on participants being involved in the research – helping to determine the content of the research; being involved in the analysis, or at least having the opportunity to comment on the analysis and reciprocity, and giving back to the community in some way. This thesis will be sent to the Ministry of Education for dissemination but it was not possible to engage with the teachers after data collection to comment on the analysis as this is not provided for in the university's ethics protocols. This reflects the tensions of carrying out IM framework in a country unfamiliar with this approach, using a western ethics framework. I will, however, write to all the participants when this thesis is available online through The University of New England, and let them know that they could read it that way.

## **Rigour**

This research employed interviews/stories and classroom observations to meet the objectives of the study. These two methods complement each other. According to Yin (2014, p. 121), ‘convergence of evidence’ is achieved by collaborating the data from various sources.

Convergence of data is also referred to as triangulation (Denzin, 2012). According to Denzin, (2012, p. 82) ‘the combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry.’ The interviews/stories allowed the teachers to clarify what was observed in the classroom. These interviews/stories also provided the teachers and principals with the opportunity to tell their lived experience as practitioners implementing inclusive education policy.

As stated earlier, I employed thematic analysis to identify themes in the stories. I translated and transcribed the stories, read the transcribed stories and immersed myself in the data searching for meanings and patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2008). While transcribing, I deepened my interpretation of what the teachers and principals said about their views on inclusive education in their schools. Quotations from the interview scripts were used to illustrate how the themes were situated in the data. An audit trail was maintained on coding decisions and data analysis procedures.

## **Chapter synopsis**

In this chapter I have highlighted the theoretical frameworks that guide this study, namely, Indigenous methodologies, postcolonial theory, critical race theory, neoliberalism and universal Design for Learning. The frameworks helped me explore how principals and teachers in Kenya implement *The National Special Needs Framework* (MOE, 2009) and support the inclusion of students with disabilities in the classrooms. In the chapter I have also examined the implementation of that framework using the Southern-Gĩkũyũ viewpoint and

attempted to tell the Gīkūyū story. Finally, the chapter has addressed the procedure for data collection and analysis. The next chapter provides the result of the research conducted using a UDL/Western framework.

## Chapter 4

### RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH USING A WESTERN METHODOLOGY

*Research ‘through imperial eyes’ describes an approach which assumes that Western ideas about the most fundamental things are the only ideas possible to hold, certainly the only rational ideas, and the only ideas which can make sense of the world, of reality, of social life and human beings (Smith, 2012, p. 58)*

#### Introduction

This chapter describes the analysis of the data obtained from the classroom observations and interviews in Phase 1 of the research. Interviews were conducted with eight teachers and four principals. Two lessons taught by each of eight teachers were observed, making a total of 16 lessons observed. The interviews and observations focused on the instructional practices used by teachers in the classroom to assist students with disabilities. The interviews also sought teachers’ and principals’ views on the implementation of an inclusive education policy. The research for Phase 1 was carried out using a Western theoretical framework, Universal Design for Education (UDL,) which I later realised was research ‘through imperial eyes’, as explained above. Each teacher and principal was given a pseudonym to protect their identities. The interviews can be located by use of pseudonyms for participants and the date of the interviews, for example, Wangūi, 12/7/2015. The teachers’ and principals’ responses are presented in italics.

#### Description of research participants

##### Teachers

The participants in this research were four primary school principals and eight primary school teachers. The principals were two males and two females. The teachers interviewed were seven females and one male. The teachers were all over 30 years old and had attained the

qualification of Approved Teacher Status 3 (ATS 3 Certificate), a diploma or a degree.

Below is a table of information about the teachers, including their qualifications, age, experience, their classes and their school. For demographic information of teachers see tables 3-3 and 3-4.

Mwai (male) was the principal of Mūkinyei Primary school. He was aged between 55 and 59, had a Masters' degree in education and had been teaching for 25-29 years. Mūkinyei School had 700 students, 366 female and 334 male. Among the four schools visited during this research, Mūkinyei did not host a special education unit but had students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. On hearing about my interest in research on students with disabilities, Mwai at first resisted my carrying out my research in his school, saying that he did not have a special education unit. I explained that I was interested in students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

Wamūyū (female) was the principal of Mūbarīki Primary School. She had a Masters' degree in education, was aged between 45 and 49 and had been teaching for 20-24 years. Mūbarīki had 422 students, 208 of them female and 214 male. Mūbarīki had a special education unit that catered for students with intellectual disabilities.

Wambura (female) was the principal of Mūtūdū Primary School. She also had a Masters' degree in education, was aged between 50 and 54 and had been teaching for 20-24 years. Mūtūdū had 4098 students, 2041 female and 2057 male and had a special education unit that catered for students with intellectual disabilities.

Maina (male) was the principal of Mūteta Primary School, had a Masters' degree in education, was aged between 55 and 59 and had been teaching for 25-29 years. Mūteta Primary School had 1390 students, 685 female and 705 male. Mūteta hosts a special education unit that caters for students with autism.

I will present the themes and sub-themes that emerged during the analysis and discuss each theme in detail. The chapter concludes with a detailed discussion of the research findings.

## Key Findings

Thematic analysis was used to code and analyse the data. The table below shows the results of the observations. It contains the inclusive instructional strategies that the teachers used in their classrooms and some of the challenges noted during the observations. In many of the lessons, the students with disabilities participated fully or partially in class activities, including peer and group activities, they participated in whole class discussions and most teachers distributed their questions among students with and without disabilities.

Table 4-3: Analysis of observations

School	Class	Number of students	Number of teachers	Instructional strategies	Participation of students with disabilities.	Comments
Mūbarīki	7 Science	49	2	Peer tutoring. Cooperative learning – 9 students per group. Students with disabilities working on the same topic as peers without a disability.	Student with disabilities paired up with peers without disabilities.  Students with disabilities included in the groups with students without disabilities.	Too many desks. Little space in aisles for teacher to move around. Inadequate lighting. No electricity. No distraction.
Mūbarīki	8 Science	49	1	Varied language between Swahili and English. Teacher at front of class. Questions directed only at students without disabilities.	Students with disabilities not participating in lesson.	Too many desks. Little space in aisles for teacher to move around. Inadequate lighting. No electricity.
Mūbarīki	5 Physical Education	65	1	Varied activities. Singing in Gīkūyū. All students involved, with partial participation for students with disabilities. Teacher modelled each exercise. Teacher used clear language and provided clear instructions. Students paired by teacher according to size. Brisk pace of lesson.	Partial participation for some students with disabilities (walking for those who could not run). Other students with disabilities participated fully (running and singing). Students with disabilities received praise from the teacher just like their peers without disabilities.	Out in the field. Students in normal school uniforms– tunics for girls and shorts and shirts for boys. No electricity.

				Teacher provided feedback on students' performance.		
Mūbarīki	5 English	65	1	Clear instructions. Teacher walked around the class but remained at the front most of the time. All students worked on same task. Use of chart. Large and clear writing on chart. Group work. Individual practice.	Students with disabilities shared text with peers without disability. Students with disabilities responded to questions from the teacher.	Too many desks. Little space in aisles for teacher to move around. No electricity. Students shared text books –1 between 3, 4 or 5 students.
Mūkinyei	2 East Swahili	45	1	Clear instructions. Praise. All students working on the same activity. Clear writing on board. Group work – students with disabilities grouped with those without disabilities. Peer work.	Students with disabilities participated in group discussions.	3 students per desk. Inadequate lighting. No electricity.
Mūkinyei	2 West English	45	1	Clear explanations of task. Praise. All students worked on same activities. Previous lesson reviewed. Whole-class activity of reading and responding to questions. Group work. Individual practice. Questions spread among students with and without disabilities.	Students with disabilities responded to questions from the teacher. Students with disabilities participated in group discussions.	Wide aisles. Inadequate lighting. No electricity.
Mūkinyei	2 East Maths	42	1	Use of drawings. Code switching from English to Swahili and Gĩkũyũ (e.g., <i>bangaraini ithano haha</i> ('make 5 lines here'), <i>haha gathiūrūrīnī gaaka</i> ('in this small circle')). Teacher walked around the class. Teacher was loud and clear. Drawings on the board to demonstrate multiplication. Clear bold writing on board. Use of manipulatives (bottle tops). Whole-class activity then individual practice.	All students used manipulatives. Students with disabilities participated in counting the bottle tops with teacher's help – partial participation. Students with disabilities received assistance from peers to count the bottle tops to count by fives.	Inadequate lighting. No electricity. Desks too close to each other .

				Teacher provided feedback. Peer activities.		
Mükinyei	2 East English	42	1	Clear voice. Clear instructions. Use of repetition. Praise. All students working on same activity. Topic written on board.	Students with disabilities participated in responding to oral and written questions.	Wide aisles but desks were touching each other to create them. Inadequate lighting. No electricity.
Müteta	4A Maths	65	1	Teacher moved around although hindered by desks. Lesson objective clearly stated. Teacher provided many examples on the board. Clear and bold writing on board.	Students with disabilities participated fully in the lesson activities. They receive help from the teacher	3 to 4 students per desk. Better lighting in this class because there were more windows. No electricity.
Müteta	Pre-school – Year 1 Maths/counting	82	2	Praise. Varied activities. Use of manipulatives, e.g., plasticine and toy animals. Short tasks. Singing, with song related to task, e.g., ‘I am collecting cards’ as they collect the cards. Group activities in groups of 8. All students worked on same activities.	Students with disabilities grouped with students without disabilities.  Students with disabilities responded to questions.  Students with disabilities used plasticine and toy animals and received help from peers and teachers.	Good lighting. No electricity. Noise from road behind the classroom. Classroom overcrowded.
Müteta	Pre-school – Year 1 English	82	2	Praise. Varied activities. Use of manipulatives, e.g., plasticine and toy animals. Short tasks. Singing, with song related to task, e.g., ‘I am collecting cards’ as they collect the cards. Group activities in groups of 8. All students worked on same activities.	Students with disabilities grouped with students without disabilities.  Students with disabilities responded to questions.  Students with disabilities used plasticine and toy animals and received help from peers and teachers.	Good lighting. No electricity. Noise from road behind the classroom. Classroom overcrowded.
Müteta	4B English	65		Topic on the board. Praise. Students engaged. Clear explanation of lesson. Large clear writing on board.	Students with disabilities responded to questions from the teacher.	Desks too close to each other. Little room for teacher/students to move. Inadequate lighting.
Mütündū	3 Swahili	72	1	Teacher walked around the class with difficulty. Topic on board. Clear explanations Large writing on board. Whole class teaching.	Students with disabilities responded to questions from the teacher.	Desks very close to each other – only 60 centimetres between them. Inadequate lighting. No electricity.

Mūtūndū	3 Christian Religious Education	72	1	Teacher walked about the classroom Topic on the board. Praise. Students engaged. Clear explanation of lesson. Large clear writing on board. Individual practice – students told stories of forgiveness.	Students with disabilities responded to questions from the teacher.	No visuals displayed in the classroom. Desks very close – 60 centimetres between desks. Inadequate lighting. No electricity.
Mūtūndū	5 Maths	64	1	Students with disabilities worked on the same activity as peers without a disability. Cooperative learning groups. Peer tutoring.	Students with disabilities participated in group discussion. Students with disabilities attempted the maths questions and received peer support.	1 text book was shared between 3 or 4 students.
Mūtūndū	Social studies	64	1	Students with disabilities worked on same activity as peers without a disability. Cooperative learning groups. Peer tutoring	Students with disabilities participated in group discussion. Students with disabilities responded to teacher's questions.	Inadequate lighting. There was electricity but it was not switched on. 1 text book was shared between 3 or 4 students

The diagram below illustrates the amalgamated themes and the sub-themes that emerged from the study interviews and observations. The main themes that emerged from this study are grouped under the following titles: 1) Policy implementation, 2) Inclusive instructional practices, 3) Attitudes of teachers, principals and parents towards inclusive education and 4) Professional Development (PD).

## Themes

Table 4-4: Themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Challenges
Policy enactment	Enactment Enrolment Inclusion	Not addressed at training Lack of a whole-of-school policy
Instructional strategies	Language seating	Large class sizes Limited resources

	Large print Peer tutoring Working in pairs Cooperative learning Variation of texts Code switching Differentiated tasks More time for slow students and students with disabilities Remedial work	Inadequate support Overcrowding due to free primary education
Attitudes of teachers, principals, parents and the community	Positive and negative attitudes towards students with disabilities.	Negative attitudes affect implementation of inclusive practices.
PD	Funded by Ministry of Education for teachers in special education units. No funding for PD for mainstream teachers.	Mainstream class teachers pay for PD.

The main themes that emerged from this study were policy enactment, inclusive instructional strategies used in the classrooms to support students with disabilities, attitudes of teachers and principals towards students with disabilities, and PD. In the section below, I discuss each theme one at a time.

### **Policy enactment: The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework 2009**

One of the stated objectives of *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009) was to promote and facilitate inclusion of children with special needs in formal and non-formal education and training (MOE, 2009, p. 25). The policy is important in the elimination of disparities and enhancement of equity and equality for all learners, especially

learners with special needs and disabilities. The role of the school is to enact the policy to meet the above objective. Braun, Maguire & Ball (2010, p. 547) define enactment as an understanding that policies are interpreted and translated by diverse policy actors in the school environment, rather than simply implemented.

As discussed earlier, policies are borrowed from one country or domain and transferred to another. The *National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009) is one such policy borrowed from the North to improve education of children with disabilities but without consideration for the local context.

When I visited the schools, I had with me a copy of *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009). I showed the policy to the teachers and principals during the interviews to show them what it looked like and to discuss some of its elements. Evidence I obtained during my interviews with the teachers and principals shows that many teachers had not seen or heard of the policy. Nor was there a whole-of-school policy based on *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009) to guide the teachers in enacting the policy at school level. The responses from the principals and teachers indicated that a gap existed in the interpretation and translation of the policy. As stated above, most teachers said that they were not aware of *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009). Wangūi, Wangarī, Waithīra and Wambūgū all said that they had not seen or heard of the document.

Wangūi: *I am not aware of it... I have not seen it. I have not seen the document... All I know is that inclusive education has been put into the normal classroom.* (Wangūi: 14/7/2015)

Wangarī: *You see I was not aware that it is there. I have never heard about it.* (Wangarī: 15/7/2015)

Waithīra: *I am not conversant with it. I was planning to sit with them [special education teachers] so that they can give me the guidelines.* (Waithīra: 7/7/2015)

Wambūgū: *I have not seen it.* (Wambūgū: 15/7/2015)

It appeared that there were no copies of *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009) in the schools to guide the staff in enacting the policy at school level. None of the teachers or principals said they had seen the document. Those teachers who said that they had seen or heard about *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009) had only sketchy information about its content. This may explain why they said that the policy was not well implemented. Teachers said that they were not exposed to the policy at the teacher training colleges they had attended, although this can be explained by the fact that some of them would have trained well before the policy was introduced. Waithira pointed out that the policy was not discussed in the teachers training colleges. She said:

*No, I am not conversant with it... because what we get in colleges is about the children not about the policies. (Waithira: 7/7/2015)*

### **Enrolment**

The second major theme that emerged from this study was enrolment of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. The *National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009) provides some reasons why enrolment of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms is low. These reasons included, among others, lack of guidelines to support inclusive education implementation, inappropriate infrastructure, inadequate facilities and lack of equipment for the learners with special needs and disabilities in regular institutions (MOE, 2009, p. 32). While it is beyond the scope of this research to discuss enrolment of students with disabilities with regards to the number of students in the locality, I will mention here the use negative language in the policy document. Instead of indicating the assets and strengths in the schools and communities around the schools, such as school partnerships with parents, elders and NGOs, the policy emphasises what is lacking in schools. What is within the scope of this research, and my key discussion here, is the element of the

policy that focuses on the teachers' understanding of the enrolment of students with disabilities.

While most of the content of the policy was unclear to the principals, the one policy item that all four principals addressed was that students with disabilities must have access to education. They said that the policy indicated that students with disabilities should not be discriminated against and must be allowed to enrol at a school. However, this enrolment may not be at a school of their choice. Mwai, a principal in Mūkinyei Primary School, agreed that all students should be able to enrol at any school regardless of disability or not. He said, 'I have seen the [policy] document. Children who are disabled emotionally or physically, we integrate them, we include them in our programs without discrimination' (Mwai: 15/7/2015). Mwai also said that his school did not discriminate against any students with disabilities who wished to enrol there. He explained his understanding of the enrolment policy further:

*It entails including the children ... we do not discriminate when we are admitting those students into our schools. We afford them equal opportunity (Mwai: 15/7/2015).*

Wamūyū explained that education was free and students with disabilities had access to free education, like their able-bodied counterparts. She said:

*My observation or my understanding of an inclusive education setting is that the government is trying to bring all children on board to access education that is free, particularly for students with special needs and it is trying to get to a place where these children can be accommodated and put together and they go through the learning with regular learners, or the ones we would call 'normal' in quotes.(Wamūyū: 15/7/2015)*

Wanjikū explained her understanding of the policy, namely, that students with disabilities should not be discriminated against and should be given an equal chance as other students without disabilities.

*My understanding is that all those students with special needs, they should be given the same special attention we are giving the others. We should not discriminate whatsoever. Like now, we are lucky we have the special children, the autistic ones.*

*And there are some who are being integrated into our normal classes. There is a boy, he is now in pre-unit ... At times he is in the special unit, at times he is brought to the class[mainstream]. We have another one who is in Class 5. The time she came from a private school, we discovered that there is something wrong with her. She was taken for assessment. We were told that she had mild autism. She has been accommodated in the normal mainstream classroom. We do not discriminate[against] them. They should be given an equal chance. (Wanjikū: 7/7/2015)*

Wanjikū talked about including students diagnosed with autism in the mainstream classroom, but I later learnt that this was not the case for all students. The school principal said that the school has a special education unit that catered for students on the Autism Disorder Spectrum. He said that although enrolment was not denied, children with disabilities needed a referral from the Department of Learners with Disabilities so that their disabilities could be assessed for placement in appropriate schools.

When asked if a student could be denied enrolment, Wamūyū explained:

*The only thing we don't do, we cannot enrol you when you have a disability without a placement from the Department of Learners with Disabilities (Wamuyū: 15/7/2015).*

She explained that after assessment students were placed in various schools according to their diagnoses. If the students were diagnosed with autism, they were sent to enrol in Mūteta primary school special education unit which caters for students for students diagnosed with autism and students with intellectual disabilities were enrolled in Mūtūdū special education units. From there, they were integrated into mainstream classes slowly, if at all. According to Juma and Malasi (2018), Kenya's Educational Assessment and Resource Centres (EARC) do not give inclusion first priority in child placement options.

In all four schools, no teachers or principals had a clear understanding of the difference between inclusive education and integration. Many teachers used the words interchangeably. Integration according to Foreman (2014, p. 558) means that a student attends a regular school and this may include a child in a special education unit in the school. Inclusive education refers to providing for the needs of the students in a mainstream classroom whatever the level of their ability, disability, educational need or other form of diversity (Foreman, 2014, p.

558). I observed a mix of inclusion and integration in the schools in this research. An example of integration is a student in Mūteta described by teacher Waithīra as attending some classes in the mainstream classrooms and then going back to the special education unit for most of the school day. As a result, this student could not be said to be included in all class activities. She said:

*First of all, he has to arrive in his class in the special unit. They do the activities, play together and sing with the others. Then after that they start the lesson and they bring him here [to the mainstream class]. (Waithīra: 7/7/2015)*

Waithīra explained that the student went back to the special education unit at recess to have his morning tea and stayed in the special education unit for afternoon classes. Waithīra explained:

*In the afternoon we have rest time, so he goes to his class. He stays in the special unit for afternoon activities. (Waithīra: 7/7/2015)*

This is what research refers to as integration (Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2014; Ashman, 2012).

### **Inclusive education**

In most of the schools, I observed partial and full participation of students with disabilities, as indicated in the table. Students with disabilities participated in most lessons, such as Maths in Mūteta and Mūkinyei, Physical Education in Mūbarīki, English in Mūkinyei and Swahili in Mūtūdū and Mūkinyei. In these classes, it can be said that there was inclusion of students with disabilities, as they participated fully or partially to the best of their ability. In one class, students with disabilities were not asked questions, as shown in Table 4-3.

Students with disabilities were included not only in classroom activities but also in extra-curricular activities, such as the student council. Mūbarīkī and Mūteta schools included students with disabilities as representatives of their classes in the student council to represent both students with disabilities in the mainstream classes and those in the special education

units. Wamūyū explained how Mūbarīkī worked with the student representatives, using the following example:

*She is Waitherero Mwangi (pseudonym). She is mentally challenged. She is in the student council to represent the students with disabilities. And sometimes we walk with her and I tell her to assist other students, the ones who have torn dresses. I tell her in our local language [Gĩkūyū] 'mwire atume nguo' ('Tell her to sew her dress'). She will whisper to the girl and show [her] where the dress is torn. The girl feels good because it comes from a student like them [with a disability]. (Wamuyū: 15/7/2015)*

At Mūteta, the principal, Maina, said that student representative named Njeri (pseudonym), who had mild intellectual disabilities, helped other students with disabilities in the school with activities, listened to students' concerns and raised them with the school staff.

### **Professional Development (PD)**

The teachers and principals felt that they needed PD to be able to include students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. The teachers said that PD was available to teachers who taught in the Special Education units, while according to both the principals and teachers, a cascade program was run by the Ministry of Education. In this approach, a few teachers were trained by the Ministry of Education and these teachers would then conduct training within their schools to assist the mainstream teachers. Maina, the principal of Mūteta, explained:

*We are lucky because the three trained teachers on Special Needs Education are frequently conducting INSETS (In-service Education and Training) within the school. (Maina: 7/7/2015)*

The cascade model has been used more often than not in Kenya for PD. Hardman et al. (2011) and Pryor et al. (2012) in their studies outline its use alongside school-based and distance-learning approaches. For example, in the past, the school-based teacher development program for primary school teachers employed key resource teachers (KRTs) to train other teachers from national down to local district level. The cascade model was also used to train teachers in improving the level of mathematics and science teaching in Kenya, a joint venture

between Japan and Kenya (JICA, 2013). According to Kipkemboi (2016), the model is currently training teacher champions in information and computer technology (ICT) as the government rolls out laptops for students in schools. These champions will then go on and train selected teachers who in turn train teachers in schools in the counties they work. The cascade model has some advantages, including that it can reach more teachers in a short period of time and is cost effective (Dichaba & Mokhele, 2012; Hardman, 2011; Mwangi, 2013; Ono, 2010). However, it also has some disadvantages; one of the criticisms levelled against this model is its ‘trickle-down effect’, whereby, as some researchers argue, the content of the training is watered down as it is passed down (Hayes, 2000; Gathumbi, Mungai & Hintze, 2013). The cascade model is also criticised for assuming that teachers are ignorant and lack experience and knowledge and need more training from experts. In the Kenyan context, teachers are better placed to understand the needs of their students and their styles of learning than what is assumed in the Northern model of teaching by people who have no experience of the needs of Kenyan children (Ono & Ferreira, 2010).

Another criticism levelled against the cascade model is the difference between the training centres where the first tier of teachers attend training and the everyday school situation faced by the majority of teachers around the country. The teaching methods learned at the training centres are sometimes not transferable to the classroom and for various reasons, such as lack of resources in the schools (Hardman et al., 2011; Hunzicker, 2011; Kennedy, 2005). Further, even with the use of the cascade model of PD, training is not available and free for all teachers.

At the Ndūrīrī Mūtukanio schools, the principals indicated that PD was conducted by NGOs, such as the Autism Society of Kenya, but this PD was available only for the special needs teachers in Special Education units. Maina said:

*... for the mainstream teachers, we have not started the training [PD].*  
(Maina:7/7/2015)

Some principals said that they were unaware of PD available for mainstream teachers outside the school. Other principals said that PD was optional and at a teacher's own discretion.

Mwai explained:

*A few choose [to go for PD] because they feel that they are inclined to help with students who have disabilities.* (Mwai: 14/7/2015)

Mwai also explained that most of these PD opportunities were not funded by the MOE but by individual teachers themselves, which was a demotivating factor for teachers who wanted to increase their knowledge of inclusive education. It was sometimes impossible for teachers to attend because of their circumstances and some simply could not afford it. The data shows that none of the teachers interviewed had attended special education training precisely because of some of the problems described above.

### **Inclusive instructional practices**

During the interviews and the observations conducted for this research, the teachers indicated that they often found it difficult to engage in inclusive instructional practices to cater for the diversity in the classes because they were overwhelmed by the large number of students in their classrooms. In all the four schools in this study, there were between 45 and 85 students in each classroom and they had little room for movement or for rearranging the tables.

The teachers said that they were aware of the students with disabilities in the classrooms and the interview responses indicate that the teachers both played a major role in identifying students with disabilities and they made accommodations for those students. Some of the instructional practices that I observed in use in the classrooms in all four schools and those discussed by the teachers are discussed below.

#### ***Peer tutoring***

Teachers said that they used peer tutoring because it benefited both the peer tutor and the student receiving assistance. The gifted children acknowledged the recognition provided by their teacher and feel challenged to do better while the students with disabilities benefited from a peer using student language.

Wanjikū, Wanjirū, Wambūgū and Wairimū explained how peer tutoring worked in their classes. They said that they appointed some of the bright students to assist the students with disabilities.

Wanjikū: *I use other students to help them so I put one student with special needs in a particular group whereby there is a bright one who can help them. (Wanjikū: 7/7/2015)*

Wairimū: *I use my pupils. The best ones. I make them help them [students with disabilities] (Wairimū: 8/7/2015)*

Wambūgū : *The seating arrangement. The gifted ones I put with the ones with disabilities. I mix them up. (Wambūgū:15/7/ 2015)*

Wairimū: *I appointed five bright kids, make sure you teach them three words every day. (Wanjirū:8/7/2015)*

Wangūi: *When I am not in, the brighter ones teach the others when they come [to school] in the morning. (Wangūi: 14/7/2015)*

Wairimū explained that peer tutoring worked in two ways. The students who received the help wanted to be given the responsibility of being a tutor in future while the tutors felt that their effort and knowledge were recognised by the teacher:

*The ones who are down (the ones receiving help) will admire those ones giving help and these ones [providing help], they feel recognised by the teacher. (Wairimū: 8/7/2015)*

### **Seating arrangement**

Some teachers said that they adapted the classroom environment to accommodate students who were visually impaired by sitting them at the front or back of the class. They had also referred others to Kikuyu Hospital, which specialises in eye care.

Wangarī: *They need to sit in front so that they can see the board well, you can be close to them (Wangarī: 15/7/2015)*

Wairimū: *And especially for those who have eye problems, I put them in front. There are those we put at the front and those we put at the back. Long and short sighted. (Wairimū: 8/7/2015)*

Wanjikū: *I have this kid who has partial visual impairment. So, this kid, I make sure he sits near the front where he is able to see the blackboard. (Wanjikū: 7/7/2015)*

Wairimū said that she had shorter desks for some students.

### *Large print and magnifying glasses*

Teachers identified their use of large print on the black board and on charts as another form of adjustment that they employed to include students with disabilities. Other students were provided with magnifying glasses.

Wanjikū: *I have this kid who has partial visual impairment... I make sure that I write big letters so that he is able to see. (Wanjikū: 7/7/2015,)*

Wanjikū: *The charts are in large print. The work on the board is in large print. (Wanjikū: 7/7/2015)*

Wanjikū and Maina pointed out that some of the students in the school used magnifying glasses for reading, sometimes provided after assessment by the MOE to meet their needs.

Maina explained,

*So we send the child to Kikuyu (hospital) for assessment and he was provided with that magnifying glass. So that is one of the equipment that he uses. (Maina: 7/7/2015)*

The magnifying glass is left at school at the end of the day for safe keeping, but this also means that the student cannot read at home.

### *Variation of language, tasks and texts*

To include students in class activities, teachers often varied the tasks to suit the ability levels of students in their classes. Waithīra explained that she varied the tasks to ensure that students with disabilities could achieve success in their work. She explained:

*I give work so that I can see what the student can do. If a child cannot do, I try to give work that is within his ability.* (Waithīra: 7/7/2015)

Variation of tasks may also include variation of texts. Wangarī said that she varied the texts, providing those with reading difficulties with books at their level.

*For those who have a problem reading, you can look for story books with easy words because some them are even unable to read words like 'boy', 'girl'.* (Wangarī: 15/7/2015)

Wanjirū also said that she used Year 1 books, *Sound and Read* (Irungu, 1989) for some of the students in her Year 3 class. When teachers realised that students lacked some prerequisite knowledge, they sometimes took it upon themselves to buy a book that they could use to teach their students the skills that they needed. This practice seemed to be employed by other teachers. Wangūi explained that she was teaching nursery (kindergarten) material to some of her students in Year 3 because she realised that they needed some basic knowledge in sounds. She said:

*I have gone back to teaching nursery work [prerequisites] so that they can acquire the sounds where they skipped.*(Wangūi: 14/7/ 2015)

Waithīra said, *'I try to give work that is within his ability'*. (Waithīra, 7/7/2015). The teachers also said that they used simpler language to accommodate students and borrowed books from lower classes or purchased books at their own cost that were at the level of those students who were struggling. The teachers said:

Wambūi: *You cannot use the learning materials the way they are. The language must be a bit simpler for the child to understand.* (Wangarī:15/7/ 2015)

Wanjirū: *I use the language that they can understand.* (Wanjirū: /8/72015)

Wangarī : *...even the language you use, it must be a bit simpler for them to understand. You cannot use the learning materials as they are. The language must be a bit simpler for a child to understand.* (Wangarī, 15/7/2015)

There was a willingness on the part of the teachers to vary the language in their teaching and to use the language that the children understood best, Gikūyū or Swahili. With a change of policy in Kenya towards use of mother tongue in lower primary schools (Sessional Paper 14, MOE, 2012), the classroom will become a place where cultural knowledges are transmitted. Kenya has a lot to learn from Pacific island nations where there are policies for strengthening Indigenous languages. New Zealand established Te Kōhanga Reo to revitalise Māori language to enable children to understand their culture through use of the Māori language (Cooper, Arago-Kemp, Wylie & Hodgen, 2004). Samoa has a similar program that emphasises the use of the mother tongue in early childhood (Ministry of Education, Samoa, 2015). Singapore also promotes the use of its children's mother tongue in the learning environments to promote their culture (*Nurturing Early Learners* (NEL); Singaporean Ministry of Education, 2013).

Some of the teachers in this study varied the texts used in the class to provide simpler reading material to students with disabilities. Like Wanjirū in Mūtūdū primary School, Wairimū said that some of the students in her class were behind in literacy. She explained that since the school provided the same text book for all students, she resorted to using her own resources to buy books for these students. She said that she had bought *Sound and Read* (Irungu, 1989), a book used by lower classes such as pre-primary and kindergarten. Wairimū said:

*You are supposed to use the syllabus. Now I am in Class 3. I am supposed to follow the syllabus. But I have 'Sound and Read' for Class 1. Because some of them are very [much] behind and they are in this class.* (Wairimū:8/7/2015)

Furthermore, teachers said that they differentiated classroom tasks to allow students to work within their ability. For students working at different levels, Wairimū said that she provided different tasks to each group:

*For example, when I am giving dictation, their dictation is different. (Wairimū: 8/7/2015)*

I observed the use of code-switching, that is, alternating between two or more languages in a single conversation, from English to Swahili and Gĩkũyũ, during the lessons in all the schools. When I pointed out this observation to Wambūi and Wambūgū during the interviews, Wambūi responded:

*... to make students understand because most of them don't understand English well. So, I come down to mother tongue (Gĩkũyũ). (Wambūi: 14/7/2015)*

Wangūi and Waithīra also explained why they code-switched in the classroom.

Wangūi : *I mix the two languages because the students are good with Kiswahili. But you find that English 'watoto hawaelewi' (children do not understand). (Wangūi:14/7/2015)*

Waithīra: *When I talk, I may talk quickly. And the children may not understand me. I may use words that are difficult to them and it is not good, so I have to come down to their level so that they can get what I am teaching. Even when I use my language (Gĩkũyũ), the way I deal with them I have to be at their level so that they can understand what I am teaching. (Waithīra: 7/7/2015)*

#### **More time**

Teachers indicated that they gave more time to students with disabilities to complete their tasks. Wairimū, for example, said that she had 85 students in her class, some with physical and intellectual disabilities and some of those students were slow in completing class activities. She said that she allowed these students more time and to work at their own pace.

*I allow them to finish as others have already started the second one[task], they go at their own pace until they finish. Sometimes they leave the class late. (Wairimū:8/7/2015)*

It is worth noting here that the children were allowed more time but at their own expense, in that the time they sat in class after their peers had left ate into their recess and lunch time.

While students were allowed extra time to complete class tasks, this was not the case at exam time. The teacher said that all students, with and without disabilities, sat the same exams and for the same length of time.

From the examples above, it can be seen that the teachers in the four schools were making adjustments to include students in their classrooms. The adjustments were not based on the policy documents, since most teachers admitted to not having seen or heard of the document, but from the teachers' own resourcefulness and Gīkūyū knowledge of catering for different levels of ability.

### **Challenges to enacting the policy**

The process of policy enactment needs to be clearly explained to all stakeholders so that they understand the goals of the policy, the expected outcomes and how to measure when the policy is or has been implemented. In the case of the schools where this research was conducted, the teachers and principals did not demonstrate a clear understanding of the policy and its contents. The first challenge that the schools faced was that they did not have the document. Despite the fact that the teachers had not seen the policy, they had devised different ways of assisting students with disabilities based on each student's needs. Lack of a policy meant that teachers had different conceptions of inclusion and there was no uniformity in the way accommodations were carried out. For example, in some schools the teachers modified tests while in others they did not. Wanjiru indicated that she gave students more time to students with disabilities during test time, stating, 'In the other class, there is one with physical disability so that one we give them time.' (Wanjirū, 16/1/2019)

While some teachers said that they modified tests for students with disabilities, others said they did not. Wanjikū said that she did not modify the test or allow more time for students with disabilities in class or in exams because she believed a student in a regular class needed

to do the same activities as the rest of the class. She said, 'Because he (the student with a disability) is in a regular classroom, so, we want him to do what others are doing.' (Wanjikū, 7/7/2015). Her explanation showed a lack of understanding of the purpose of inclusion.

Wambura said, 'They sit the same exam with the rest. You cannot differentiate them with the regulars during the day. You only differentiate when you look at the performance sheet.' (Wambura: 8/7/2015).

The second challenge was, as discussed above, that the teachers had received no training about the policy. They said that it was not discussed at the teacher training colleges they had attended and it was also possible that some of the teachers had trained before the policy was introduced. For *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009) to be enacted at a large scale as was intended, and for it to be successful, it was important to have prior planning and include it in the teacher education curriculum.

Thirdly, all teachers and principals expressed concern about the large class sizes, a problem that manifested itself in the lack of adequate learning spaces and an unmanageable teacher-to-pupil ratio. The classrooms I observed had between 45 and 85 students in a 24ft x 40ft room that was originally designed to accommodate an average of 40 students. I also observed that the desks were placed very close to each other and sometimes four, five or six students shared a desk. The teacher-pupil ratio stood at 1:45 or 1:80 and Mwai lamented that the teacher-to-student ratio in most classrooms was in fact 1:80.

Principals Mwai and Maina expressed their frustration at the overcrowding in the classrooms and wanted assistance from the Ministry of Education to build more classrooms and furnish them. For example, Mwai said:

*Because of the policy of free primary education, we need to give access to each and every person. We have no limit in the number of students that we need to admit in our classes. That becomes a challenge because to have special attention to those young children becomes a challenge because the teacher is also handling other students.*  
(Mwai: 14/7/2015)

Maina said:

*The problem we are having here is free education. All the children have to access (education). The other problem is that we do not have enough infrastructure. Like class 4, they are supposed to be three (streams) but there are only 2. 65 times three is around 130. So there are supposed to be three streams. (Maina: 7/7/2015)*

Some teachers said that the reason they had no time to help those who were behind was the large class sizes. Wairimū added that she also faced challenges not just in teaching and managing the large number of students but also in marking the students' work. She explained that she used students to mark their own or their partner's book. Wairimū observed:

*I have two groups and you see the class is over populated. Like me, I have 85 [students in the class]... Even marking their books is hard. I have a way in which they mark by using students to mark each other's books. (Wairimū: 8/7/2015)*

The principals Mwai, Maina, Wamūyū and, and Wambura all said that there was a need for more classrooms to reduce the numbers in the classes that had 50 students or more.

The fourth challenge is a direct consequence of the lack of planning for the Free Primary Education Policy introduced in 2003. Since the policy was introduced, the MOE has been unable to meet the resource needs of schools. The principals participating in this study explained that some of the resources that schools required were classrooms, books and other school resources, as well as more teachers to meet the needs of the large number of students. A shortfall of resources existed when *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009) was introduced. I observed four or five students sharing one text book and some students were too far away to read the tiny text on the page. Lack of resources seemed to be a common challenge in all schools. As stated earlier, some teachers said that they had to buy books using their own finances for students who required different learning materials. Wanjikū said that she bought books to assist those who were behind in literacy, stating, 'Like the one who is reading *Sound and Read*, I bought it.' (Wairimū:8/7/2015).

There were basic class resources in all the schools I visited during this research, but teachers and principals reported that the lack of resources affected students both with and without disabilities. The principals and teachers said that in most cases the parents of these students were poor and could not afford to buy all the required textbooks. Mwai said that he had engaged the assistance of NGOs to provide stationery, books and school uniforms for all the students in his school.

The teachers pointed out that the available text books came in small print and that they did not have the resources to print or copy test and examination papers into large print. Most of them expressed a willingness to make accommodations for students with disabilities but they were frustrated by the lack of resources. In addition, teachers and principals pointed out the unequal distribution of resources for use with students with disabilities between the special education units and mainstream classrooms. While the students in special education units had resources, the students in mainstream classes had few. Waithira explained that ‘the teachers in the special unit are given books from the office.’ (Waithira: 7/7/2015) while Wanjikū said ‘We don’t have books for the special ones [in mainstream classes].’ (Wanjikū: 7/7/2015)

A fifth challenge facing schools in implementing *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009) was inadequate support from the Ministry of Education, from the school executive and from special education teachers. The principals explained that there were few visits from Ministry of Education officials and that they would like more help with implementing the inclusive education policy. Some teachers said that the special education teachers attended mainstream classes once a term to provide guidance on inclusive education to the mainstream class teachers. Waithira pointed out that although these special education teachers were not always available to offer assistance to mainstream teachers who had students with disabilities, when they did, they suggested helpful strategies. She said:

*The support they give us ... First of all, they have to make us understand the child because they know them better. Some [students] have problems and we don't understand them (Waithira: 7/7/2015).*

Wanjikū also said that there was intermittent assistance for mainstream teachers of students with disabilities from the special education teachers based in the special education units. This was usually when they were at the beginning of integrating a student with disabilities into their classrooms. Wanjikū reported:

*She comes to the classroom, or maybe she asks, how is Kimani (pseudonym) doing? Is there a problem? If there is no problem, I tell her there is no problem. If there is any, then she might come. (Wanjikū: 7/7/2015)*

When asked to clarify what 'once in a while' meant, she said, 'once a term' (Wanjikū: 7/7/2015). Waithira explained that more support was available for teachers in the special education unit but only minimal support for teachers in the regular classroom, stating, 'In the classroom we do not get support ... support is given to the special class.' (Waithira: 7/7/2015)

A sixth unintended and unforeseen consequence created by the Free Primary Education policy is that since pre-primary and kindergartens are still fee paying, parents hold their child back at home until they are ready to enrol in the first year of primary school (Standard 1). Teachers and principals said that they had noticed that those students who had not attended nursery schools and kindergartens were underachieving in literacy, numeracy, social skills and general readiness for school. Wamūyū similarly said that since kindergartens and nursery schools were still fee paying, parents chose not to send their children to kindergarten and nursery schools because they could not afford to or did not want to pay the fees. She explained, 'Kindergartens and nurseries are not free' (Wamūyū: 15/7/2015). She explained that when the children started school in Standard 1, the gap between those who had basic knowledge of letters and sounds and those who did not was noticeable.

## Attitudes towards inclusive education practices

Attitudes of teachers, principals and parents can affect the implementation of *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009). Most teachers said that there were benefits to including students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. Waithira said that there were benefits to students both with and without disabilities learning together in the same classroom, ranging from helping each other to changing students' attitudes towards students with disability. She explained:

*When they are with the others, the normal children, when they are with this child with a disability, they know they are the same children. It is only that they have a disability. But when they are together, they are able to help one another. And even the ones with disabilities, they get to know these ones and they do play together with them ... they play together, sharing things. (Waithira:7/7/2015)*

On the benefits of having students with and without disabilities attending the same classes and schools, Wairimu said that students without disabilities

*... get used to these others [with disabilities], like here we have one who needs to be assisted ... Even from home, they [other students without disabilities] help him, they take him home, they bring him to school, they take him to the toilet. Children just accept him. (Wairimū: 8/7/2015)*

Wanjikū felt that local schools needed to enrol students with and without a disability to make it easier for parents, especially those who were struggling financially. She said:

*I feel it is okay because some parents cannot afford special school for them. And even the special schools are not within [the locality]. Some parents cannot afford to take them far. So, we have to accept them because after all they will be in the community. They have to feel loved. They have to feel accepted. (Wanjirū: 8/7/2015)*

Some teachers had reservations about including students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. Wangūi said that students with disabilities needed to be in special education units. Although she had the class with 45 students, one of the lowest numbers in the school, she felt that trying to meet the needs of students with disabilities in an under-resourced

classroom was a challenge and that the needs of students with disabilities would be better served for in special education units. She said:

*I don't find it good. If it were possible, they be on their own because they would be handled better in a special education class than when they are included [in regular classes] ... But if they were in their own class, they would benefit. Wangūi: 14/7/2015).*

She went on to clarify that the reason she felt this way was because of the large class sizes.

*I'm looking at a class of 40 students. 30 are okay. I have five who have disabilities also. It does not sit well with me. I find that this affects my teaching performance. You will find that you must lack somewhere. (Wangūi: 14/7/2015)*

Overall, principals and teachers were supportive of having students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms and they showed resourcefulness in providing for the students in their classrooms. It was beyond the scope of this research to interview parents about *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009). However, teachers and principals pointed out that children with disabilities were sometimes stigmatised in the community. As a result, parents preferred to keep their children with disabilities at home rather than expose the children and themselves to ridicule. Wamūyū, the principal of Mūbarīki School, pointed out:

*Some parents hide their children at home. We have another [case] we are working on who are not accessing education. Like, we have a child in kindergarten and the parent had really been discouraged by the outside society. Just the disability caused by the growth in the neck made everybody say ... don't take her to school. (Wamūyū:15/7/2015)*

Mwai, the principal of Mūkinyei School, explained that they had a parent the previous year who did not want to take the child to school because he was diagnosed with albinism. He explained that there was

*... a case of one[student] last year of albinism, and we had talked to these parents who in the first place were not accepting the challenges. (Mwai:14/7/2015)*

Wamūyū pointed out that the school administration faced threats from parents who did not want their children without disabilities in the same classes with those with disabilities. They

threatened to withdraw their children or demand that the children with disabilities be withdrawn from school. Wamūyū explained:

*Other parents will say, 'Hey mwalim (teacher in Swahili),...why don't you have this child out or else we are going to take our children away.' Parents right away will say, 'No we don't want our children going to Standard 2 with that boy, call the mother, let the mother withdraw this child' ... (Wamūyū: 15/7/2015)*

Another finding that emerged from the interviews was that some parents were reluctant to have their children assessed even when the teachers had identified that the child needed assessment. According to both the teachers and principals, parents did not want their children labelled as having intellectual impairments, autism and other disabilities. They pointed out that the difficulty of educating a child with disabilities in Kenya due to people's limited resources explained some of the choices made by some parents. Maina explained that in some instances, parents of children with disabilities were unwilling to take those children to school at all. Instead they would leave these children at home while they went out to look for casual work. The respondents said that some parents argued that it was too time-consuming to push one child in a wheel chair to school while they had other children to care for and the teachers explained that no assistance was offered by the government in the form of transport for students with disabilities.

To improve parents' and students' attitudes towards students with a disability, awareness campaigns had been conducted in the country to create awareness in communities about the availability of assessment services and where help for students with disabilities could be obtained. These campaigns were carried out by schools, churches, the government and NGOs. Principal Wamūyū said, 'Sometimes we call all the stakeholders, including faith based organisations and the local authority, so that we can start right at home.'  
(Wamūyū:15/7/2015).

Both principals and teachers pointed out that they created awareness of disability at school in classrooms and at assembly and out in the community, to make those without disabilities understand the people with disabilities and to encourage them to socialise with them. The awareness campaigns had been instrumental in encouraging parents to take children with disabilities to enrol in schools and to get assessed, which led to further support. They created the awareness that the government wanted children with disabilities to be educated.

### **Chapter Synopsis**

In summary, this chapter indicates that teachers and principals did not view the implementation of *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009) as feasible because of the challenges they faced, including inadequate resources, lack of space and lack of training, among others. Although the teachers said that they had received no training on how to support students with disabilities, they were quite resourceful. Some teachers resorted to buying books and using locally-available materials, such as clay and bottle tops. The teachers' stories indicated that they made various adjustments with few resources and with little support from the Ministry of Education to include students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

Some participants pointed out that they did not know the contents of *The National Special Needs Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009) and had never even seen the document. The teachers also said that they had had no training in inclusive instructional practices, yet they showed resourcefulness in their use of such practices. This can only be put down to their knowledge of traditional values, which include all people regardless of their abilities. For example, teachers said that they used cooperative and peer learning groups, concepts that they had borrowed from their knowledge of traditional education. They also varied tasks and texts to

support students, as was done in traditional education where children did the tasks that were suited to their level of ability and age.

The next chapter introduces Gīkūyū knowledges, values and practices that are important in the care and education of children with disabilities. This chapter was borne out of my realisation that the teachers were overcoming challenges in including students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms by turning to what was already available to them in the Gīkūyū culture.

## Chapter 5:

### ŪGĪKŪYŪ - GĪKŪYŪ KNOWLEDGES, VALUES AND PRACTICES

*Kīnya kīrī itina ni kīo kīigaga (a gourd that has a flat base will sit still). This is a Gīkūyū proverb that means that a person or people who are grounded in their values can withstand outside influences.*

This chapter explains the theoretical framing of Phase 2 of the research. After the data collection in Phase 1, it was apparent to me that there were Gīkūyū strengths and assets that teachers used in the classrooms to support the inclusion of students with disabilities in the classrooms. It was also clear to me that the Northern methodology used in Phase 1 was not enough to navigate a research project among Indigenous people. While collecting data in Phase 1 I heard from the teachers about the collective responsibility of everyone in the community for participating in the care and education of children with disabilities. I heard the teachers tell stories of the families helping their kin in the school. I wanted to find out more.

This chapter analyses the Gīkūyū values and practices that relate to the education and care of people with disabilities, values and practices that are expected of every Gīkūyū man and woman. I start with a short explanation of the derivatives of the word Gīkūyū that are used in this research. The words ‘Gīkūyū’ and ‘Agīkūyū’ both refer to the people. In this research ‘Gīkūyū’ is used to refer to the people. The language of the Gīkūyū people is Gīkūyū, while ‘Ūgīkūyū’ refers to the way of life of the Gīkūyū people. Mūkūyū is a sacred tree after which the ethnic group is named. A big Mūkūyū tree is known as Gīkūyū. The diagram below shows the Gīkūyū knowledges and how they relate to one another.

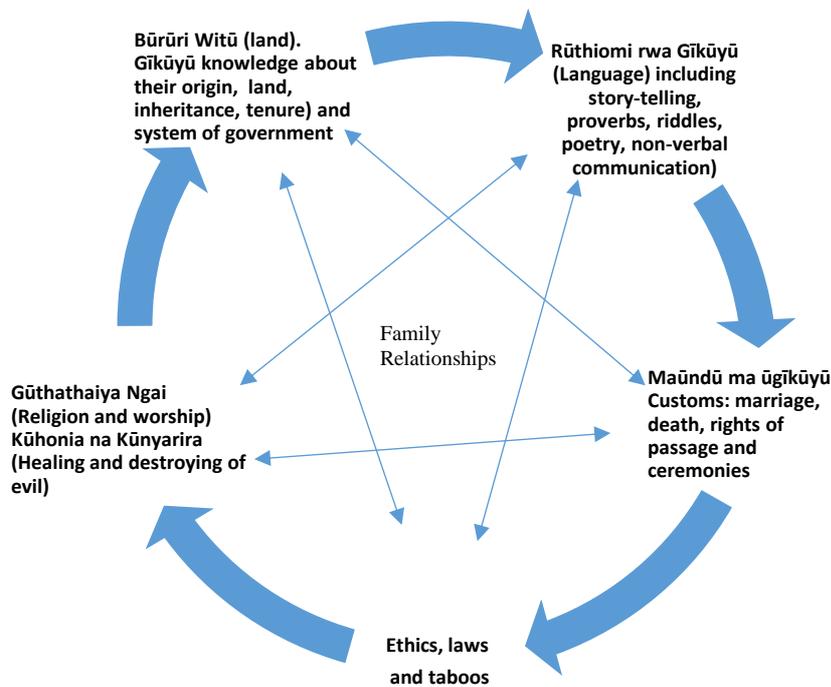


Figure 5-1: Gĩkũyũ knowledges, values and practices (Mutuota, 2019)

The Gĩkũyũ have a rich history of knowledges, all of which are connected and interrelated, hence the use of a circle to represent them in Figure 5-1 above. Gĩkũyũ knowledges include knowledge of the origin of the Gĩkũyũ, one’s identity in relation to the ethnic group, knowledge of the land and its sacredness, knowledge of the origin of the group, knowledge of Gĩkũyũ religion and customs including taboos, ethics, laws and punishment and knowledge of the language as the vehicle that carries and stores the other knowledges. These knowledges are embedded in the Gĩkũyũ epistemology and ontology. Most of Gĩkũyũ Knowledge is passed on through the oral medium, but there have been some books written as a way of preserving these knowledges. These include *Kĩrĩra kĩa Agĩkũyũ*, (Kabetu, 1947), *Facing Mount Kenya* (Kenyatta, 1965), *Mĩikarĩre ya Agĩkũyũ* (Gathigira 1933), *Southern Kikuyu Before 1903* (Leakey, 1979); and *A History of the Kikuyu: 1500-1900* (Muriuki, 1974), among others.

As stated above, Gĩkũyũ knowledges in this research are represented in the circle because the circle is an important concept among the Gĩkũyũ. It is the shape of the Gĩkũyũ *nyũmba* (woman's hut) and *thingira* (man's hut), the Gĩkũyũ *kĩondo* (basket) and the base of the earthen pot, as well as most of the items in the Gĩkũyũ community, including the *njũng'wa* and *gĩturwa* (stools used by females and males respectively). The circle was used in dances and in story-telling, in meetings in the *mũciĩ* (homestead) or in the *itũũra* (ridge) or in larger meetings. All huts and animal enclosures were circular. The square or rectangular concept in housing was introduced by the British in Kenya after the Mau Mau insurgency in 1952. To suppress the Mau Mau uprising, the British forced the Gĩkũyũ to move into villages/reserves, disregarding family units. This brought the *thingira* (man's hut), whose courtyard provided space for learning for young men and boys, to an end.

Gĩkũyũ knowledges are interrelated and inter-twined and if one of the knowledge principles is affected, the effect is felt in other areas of the knowledge circle. For example, the introduction of Christianity by the colonialists affected all other parts of the Gĩkũyũ way of life. It affected worship and language, culture and personal relationships. Christianity also affected people's relationships with each other and the Gĩkũyũ people's relationship to nature and land. The missionaries preached that land was to be exploited for human kind's benefit, for profit. Land was no longer to be viewed as sacred. It could be desecrated, destroyed, cleared of vegetation and animals could be shot for sport. Among the Gĩkũyũ, land was considered sacred and all in it, plants and animals, were treated with respect. Children, including children with disabilities, learnt as they grew up that land and all in it was sacred and had to be cared for and protected, and it was everyone's responsibility to do so.

Knowledge of Gĩkũyũ language, including proverbs, is considered very important. This is because language contains the knowledge of the ethnic group and is a means of passing on this knowledge to the next generation. This is done through story-telling, proverbs, riddles,

songs and poetry. The introduction of English language as the language of instruction had a major effect on the transmission of Gĩkũyũ culture. The Gĩkũyũ have an oral tradition through which the knowledge and customs of the group were/are passed.

One way through which knowledge is passed is through proverbs. Proverbs are ‘metaphorical statements that summarise a cultural context, event, a happening or an experience’ (Kabira & Mutahi, 1988 p. 37). Proverbs are based on the culture of a people and carry messages of advice. Children learnt the meanings of proverbs from the older people. They began to learn the how and when of proverbs as they grew older. The responsibility of teaching them about proverbs, which were part of everyday language, lay on everyone in the community and more so on the parents.

Another way in which the knowledges of the ethnic group were and are passed is through stories. Stories carry the philosophy and knowledges and values of the ethnic group (Cagnolo, 1933; Kabira & Mutahi, 1988). The Gĩkũyũ have many categories of stories aimed at communicating different messages and these categories include, but are not limited to, history, biographies, autobiographies, heroic narratives and stories of origin. The stories communicate a range of messages, including caring for children, for people with disabilities and the old, calamities, sacrifice, the sacredness of life and courage. It is expected that adults in the community have the ability to recall stories for specific purposes. Story-telling was inclusive of children with disabilities both in terms of place and content. The children both with and without disabilities sat together during story telling sessions and were not segregated. Stories portrayed children with disabilities as members of the community who took part in community events to the best of their ability. The stories told of the triumphs and challenges experienced by children with disabilities which were no different from those experienced by other people.

Song and dance were and are other ways that the Gĩkũyũ pass on their culture from one

generation to the next. Song and dance were linked together, and it was rare to have one without the other. Songs, like stories and proverbs, carry the knowledge, philosophy and culture of the people (Kabira 1988). Gĩkũyũ songs record events in society such as heroic deeds, famines, natural disasters and social upheavals. Few dances and songs were for amusement only. Most songs and dances were part of ceremonies. One example is the *Kibaata*, a song to call people to assemble for an important announcement such as an upcoming raid (Leakey, 2007); another example is *Mũthĩrigu*, which was sung and danced in the 1920s ‘at the height of cultural nationalism in Kenya’ (Kabira, 1988, p. 23) as a dance of resistance against colonial rule . Kabira, (1988, p.23) explains that through *Mũthĩrigu*, the ‘Gĩkũyũ campaigned against colonial administration and missionary efforts to distort, erase and totally change the Gĩkũyũ way of life in order to make them more effective servants of the white man.’ As stated earlier, among the Gĩkũyũ, dance was accompanied by song, the Gĩkũyũ dances were performed in a circle and each dance had a name. They included *Njũkia*, *Mũgoiyo*, *Mũthũngũci* (for old men and women), *mũcũngw’a* (dance for men and women), *Nduumo*, *Gĩtiro* (a dance for older women), and *rũkiũ*, *ngũcũ*, *mũhĩro* and *mũmbũro* (dances for children). Children with and without disabilities danced and sang together, learning the steps, actions and rhythm of the dance (Leakey, 2007). More importantly, teaching of dance and song to children was carried out by the adults as well as by older children. In the *rũkiũ* dance, ‘older children acted as instructors to the younger ones until they were old enough to pass on to the *ngũcũ* dancers.’ (Leakey, 2007, p.393)

### **Kũndũ (space)**

The Gĩkũyũ concept of space and its use is very different from the Western concept. Land was the physical space provided Mugai (God) to Gĩkũyũ and Mumbi for them and their descendants. The land of the Gĩkũyũ spread between four mountains: Kĩrĩnyaga (Mt Kenya) to the north, Nyandarũa (Aberdares) to the west, Kĩa Njahĩ (Kikuyu escarpment) to the east

and Kīa Mbirūrū (Ngong Hills) to the south (Leakey, 2007). The land is very fertile and forms a pattern of alternating ridges (Kenya, 1965). To the Gīkūyū, land and all in it is sacred. That includes the unborn, the living, the dead, the trees and animals. The Gīkūyū live in a continuum where the soil represents the past, the present and the future. It represents the past because the ancestors are buried in it. When the Gīkūyū have a celebration, they pour some of the drink to the soil as libation to the ancestors. The soil also represents the present as it continues to provide for the present generation. The soil also holds the promise for the future of the ethnic group. Land (būrūri witū/our land) was collectively defended but ‘every inch of land within it had its owner’ (Kenya, 1965, p. 22). There was communal ownership of forests, sacred groves, rivers and trees. This collective responsibility was important for the education of children, as education was not confined to a particular space. Every space, including communal spaces, provided the opportunity and space for learning. Education for children with and without disabilities was provided through apprenticeship, observation and practice of skills, including language, geographical features while grazing animals, cultivating the fields or doing household chores such as fetching water or cooking.

The Gīkūyū manner of housing illustrates the Gīkūyū concept of space at another level. The mucī (homestead) was a loose circle surrounded by a growing hedge. In the homestead were the thingira (man’s hut), and the nyūmba (wife’s/wives’ hut/s) (nyūmba is singular and plural). If a man had many wives, each wife’s nyūmba was built in a designated place in the homestead. The thingira was on the right as you entered the homestead, followed by the first wife’s nyūmba a few metres away to the left of the thingira. The second wife’s nyūmba would be built a few metres from that of the first wife and so on in an anticlockwise fashion. The word nyūmba carries two meanings: ‘family of’ and ‘hut’. The women’s nyūmba, the man’s thingira, the granary, the animal shelters formed a homestead and the fence around the homestead were all circular, as shown in Figure 5-2.

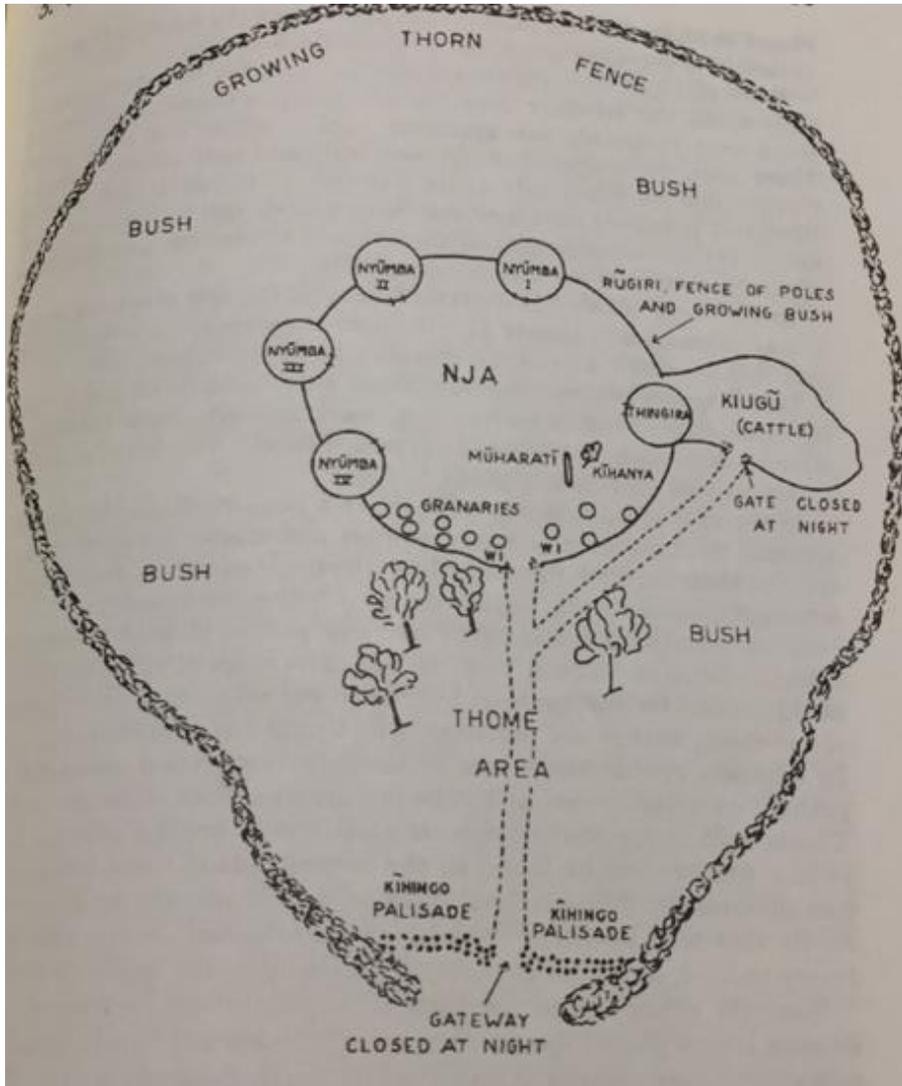


Figure 5-2: The layout of a homestead of a man with four wives. (Leakey, 2007, p. 133)

**Glossary:**

W1:	first wife's granary
Thome:	entrance
Kiugū:	cattle enclosure
Nja:	outside
Mūharatī:	wooden feeding troughs
Nyumba I, II, III, IV	wives' huts

In the nyūmba and thingira were circular items such as the *nyūngū* (cooking pot), the *njūng'wa* (stool), the *ihiga na thīyo* (grinding stone and base), the *mūthī na ndīrī* (pestle and mortar) and the *gītarūrū* (winnowing tray). The women's space (nyūmba) was a place of learning for the children, where they sat in a circle by the fire while food was cooking and

were told stories by the mother and engaged in singing, telling proverbs, riddles and tongue twisters. It was important during these learning sessions that everyone sat facing all present. This was because it was important to read the gestures and facial expressions of the storyteller. The children joined in the song if a story contained a song and they responded to the story-telling at intervals to show they were listening. The mood of the story was communicated through song, facial expressions and gestures and the children experienced catharsis, releasing their emotions through laughter or tears.

The house was a place to spend the evenings. The outside was the place to be during the day, to work on the land, to herd the animals, to participate in social activities and communal activities and to learn by taking part in the activities. My mother always said '*nyumba nī ya kūraro ti ya gūtinda*' (the house is a place to sleep and not a place to spend your day).

The thingira was the men's space where they slept and spent time in the evening with friends. When the boys were not in their mother's hut in the evening, they sat in circle outside the thingira in front of a *boi-inī* (firelight) and listened to *kīrira kīa ūgīkūyū* (the culture of the Gīkūyū) from their father, elder brothers or uncles (Cagnolo, 1933). It was another place where learning took place.

The forced move to villages in the 1950s during the Mau Mau resistance movement had an effect on the education of children. Men were no longer allowed to build the thingira, hence they lost the space outside the thingira where young people sat to hear *kīrira kīa ūgīkūyū* from their fathers. Another effect of moving the Gīkūyū to colonial villages was the creation of a class of children in society who did not have carers. For the first time, Kenya's children experienced homelessness. In the Gīkūyū community, children, including those with disabilities, were considered an asset to the ethnic group and were protected by everyone. No child was homeless as they could be adopted in a cultural way by other family members.

Before the colonial period when people were moved to villages, all children were included in

all community activities and were educated among other children, whether or not they had disabilities.

### **Ndūgū (Family Relationships)**

Ndūgū (family relationships) among the Gīkūyū are very important. It is a central value that is embraced by the community because it helps keep families together. Relationships among the Gīkūyū are based on kinship and tribal affiliations, hence the reason that Gīkūyū people introduce themselves as so-and-so, a Gīkūyū man or woman of the such-and -such clan.

Family relationships are not taken lightly. It is obligatory according to Gīkūyū traditions for a relative to help another financially, or in kind. The Gīkūyū believe 'I am because you are'.

Family relationships among the Gīkūyū are inclusive of all children, including those with disabilities.

The ties that bind the Gīkūyū are the family and clans (Kabetu, 1947). A child belongs to the clan and the education of children is everyone's affair. Figure 5-3 shows the support systems available for every child. The care of children with disabilities and the elderly is the responsibility of all members of the clan. The value of ndūgū also involves sharing property with clan members. A visitor is always offered food and drink, a custom that has extended today to paying fees for relatives and meeting other needs, including educational and medical bills.

The Gīkūyū hold gatherings of clan members annually where possible. These gatherings are important as they enable the children to know their relations, for it is taboo among the Gīkūyū to marry a relative. The gatherings also serve as forums to discuss how the members can help each other in business, such as the upcoming wedding of a member, matters of inheritance and other issues relating to the clan.

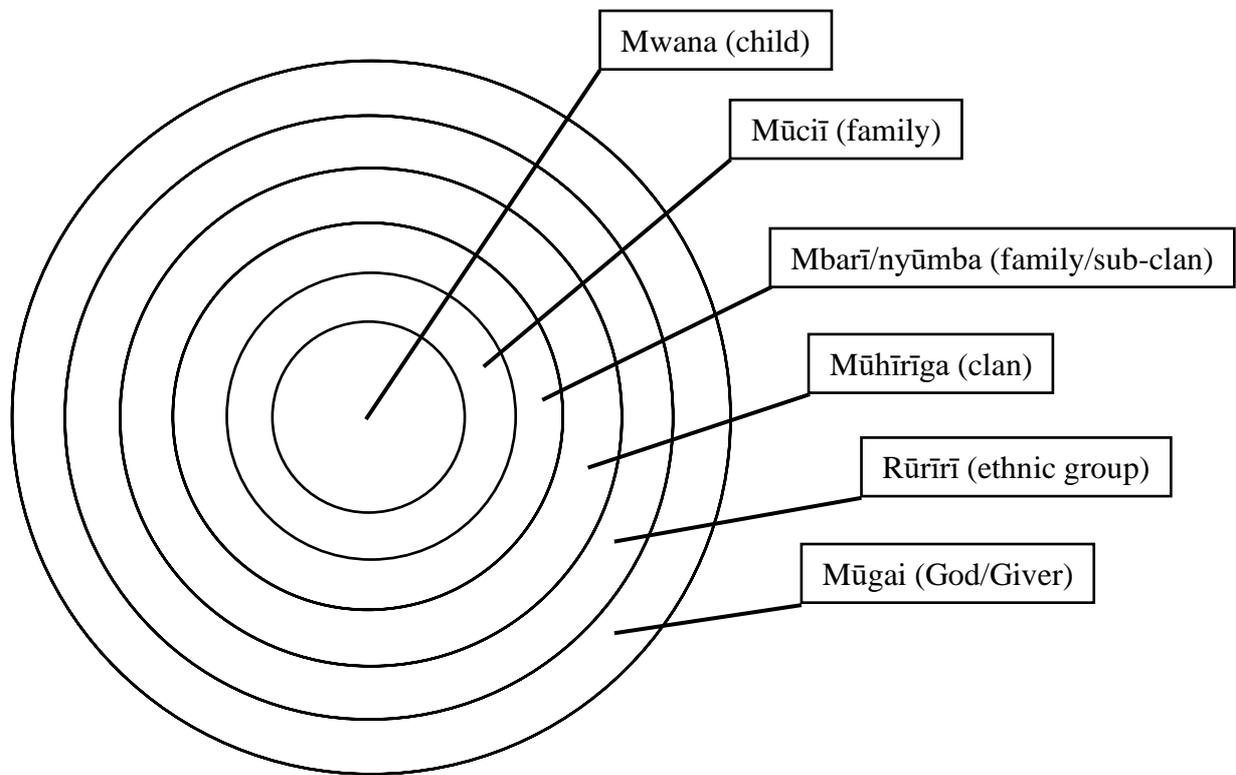


Figure 5-3: Ndūgū (Gīkūyū relationships) (Mutuota, 2019)

### **Uma andū (charity and care for the elderly and people with disabilities)**

Among the Gīkūyū, children belong to the society (Cagnolo, 1933; Kenyatta, 1965; Leakey, 2007). It is everyone’s duty in the Gīkūyū community to care for and assist other people, especially children, the elderly and people with disabilities. That is the Gīkūyū way.

Everyone was/is responsible for providing care to children. This includes feeding, guiding, disciplining and providing for the physical, emotional, psychological, safety and caring needs of all children, including those with disabilities. In the past, children were fed in every home they visited, and each household had a responsibility of ensuring the safety of every child in the household. For example, it was accepted practice for children out in the field who were herding the families’ animals or for travellers to go to the nearest garden for sweet potatoes, maize combs, yams, or arrowroots (Cagnolo, 1933).

## **Gītō (dignity and respect)**

Both dignity and respect have the same Gīkūyū translation, although they have different meanings. Gitio was and is reciprocal and was/is expected from everyone among the Gīkūyū. Older people were expected to respect the younger people and vice versa. Respect was expressed in many ways. One way that respect is shown is through addressing each other. Children and their age mates address the older men and women in the community with respect. A child refers to her father as *'baba'* (father) while the mother is referred to as *'maitū'* (mother). A man or woman of their mother's age is referred to as father of so-and-so or mother of so-and-so. It is taboo to call the father or mother or their age-mates by name. At school and in the community, teachers are referred to by their title of *Mwarimū* (teacher). Another way respect is shown is through greetings. The Gīkūyū used and continue to use special greetings for different members of the society as a mark of respect.

*A young girl greeted her mother and her mother's age mates by saying, 'Wakā maitū.'* ('Greetings, my mother.')

*Response: 'Wakā iyū.'* ('Greetings, my child.')

*A young boy greeted his mother and his mother's age mates by saying: 'Wakā maitū.'* ('Greetings, my mother.')

*Response: 'Wakā awa'* ('Greetings, my father' to the young boy)

*A young girl greeted her father and her father's age mates by saying: 'Wakā awa.'* ('Greetings, my father.')

*Response: 'Wakā maitū.'* ('Greetings, my mother' to the young girl)

Respect was shown to the old and people with disabilities. According to custom, old people spent a lot of time with the grandchildren, including children with disabilities, and passed on the knowledge of the ethnic group through folklore to the young girls and boys. The old people were not lonely as the grandchildren provided company. According to Cagnolo (1933, p. 129), an old man was treated with awe and 'decorum was always observed in his presence since he was one of the custodians of all folklore, the dos and don'ts (mīgiro)'. Respect for the old also meant that the young would never curse or use profanities in their presence. This

is reflected in the Gĩkũyũ saying '*handũ harĩ mũthuri hatiitangagwo maĩ*' ('Where there is an old man you should not pour water carelessly'). This called for good behaviour when one was in the presence of old people.

### **Gĩtatĩ (working cooperatively/teamwork)**

Another important value among the Gĩkũyũ is teamwork, gĩtatĩ. This working cooperatively/teamwork means pooling resources to assist each other. Parents helped each other to care for children with and without disabilities. Parents were able to do the necessary family chores such as go to the farm or fetch water because there was always somebody to look after the young ones in the homestead. Teamwork was an important aspect of the Gĩkũyũ way of life to meet various needs of the ethnic group, such as constructing houses and cultivating the fields (Cagnolo, 1933; Kenyatta, 1965; Leakey, 2007). For example, if a villager needed assistance to build a hut, they invited the other villagers, who came and constructed the hut. People brought equipment needed for building, they brought food and drink and musicians entertained the builders. Oral and written literature on Gĩkũyũ illustrates how able-bodied men and women and people with disabilities in the village all collaborated in community tasks such as building and construction. The men cut the trees and brought the planks for constructing the house, the women worked on the walls and thatch and the young women cut the grass for thatching the huts and brought it to the construction site (Cagnolo, 1933; Gathigira, 1933; Kenyatta, 1965; Leakey, 2006). Team work ensured that all people in the society got the help they needed to build dwellings, cultivate farms and, most importantly, care for the children.

Children too contributed to the ethnic group by doing small tasks as apprentices. They did most of these tasks in teams or pairs. For example, girls went to the river to fetch water in teams or pairs, for the Gĩkũyũ believed that they would be able to help each other lift the

water vessels on to their backs. The team also provided companionship and safety. The boys went out grazing the sheep, goats and cows in teams of siblings or other children from the clan. Hence learning was carried out in pairs or cooperative groups made up of children with and without disabilities.

### **Mūkūrū na mūrūna (older sibling-younger sibling concept).**

The concept refers to the relationship or bond between the older and younger siblings in the community and is based on the kinship system of the Gīkūyū. It means that the older sibling has responsibilities towards his/her younger siblings in the community, responsibilities that entail teaching tribal lore, protecting the siblings and providing support at any time and any place. This concept has ensured that the Gīkūyū knowledges are passed on from more knowledgeable members of the clan to younger people. As stated above, siblings carried out tasks together in pairs or in groups. The older female siblings, for example, helped in caring for babies and young children and educated young girls in household chores while the older boys cared for the younger boys and taught them games as well as the skills needed in the community, such as hunting, milking cows and goats, and carpentry.

### **Kwīmenya (self-knowledge/identity)**

Inherent to Gīkūyū culture is knowledge of the kinship systems or *kwīmenya* so that individuals know where they are positioned in their family, their clan, their tribal networks and their place in wider society (see Figure 5-3 above). This knowledge involves understanding the Gīkūyū world view. It also requires understanding the historical, environmental, political, social and economic effects of colonisation on the Gīkūyū people. Gīkūyū children are taught their family relationships when they are young. As they grow older, their knowledge of the extended family is extended. They learn to recall their name,

family, clan and ethnic group; they learn their kinship system and how each extended family member is related to them. The coming of the *Mūthūngū* (a person of European origin) and the changes this caused in the communities is also explained to them.

### **Gūthomithia ciana (Education of children)**

Among the Gīkūyū, education of children was everybody's responsibility. Kenyatta, (1965, p. 119) maintains that 'the ties of family and kinship, sex, and age-grouping ... form the basis of the whole structure of Indigenous education.' The girl child learnt from her mother and the boy child was instructed by his father. The children learnt the knowledge of the ethnic group, song and dance and stories, as well as how to carry out tasks in the community such as constructing houses or herding animals. Education was inclusive of children with disabilities. As stated earlier, learning occurred at many times and places, for instance, in the evening as children waited for the evening meal. They sat in the nyumba in a circle listening to stories told by their mother as she prepared meals and they also engaged in story-telling and exchanging riddles. During the daytime, the young were apprentices of their parents. The girls helped their mothers with cooking and went to the garden to harvest food and learnt the skills of identifying crops ready for harvesting while the boys followed their fathers to the grazing fields (Cagnolo, 1933; Kenyatta, 1965)

The education of children was/is everyone's business and was carried out by parent, uncles, aunts and other relations. According to Cagnolo (1933, p. 73), 'the Gīkūyū boy depended wholly on folklore and verbal instruction for all the learning that he required as he grew up. There were *boi-ini* (firelight) stories from the father or elder brothers or uncles and later, when he reached the age of circumcision, he received lessons on the character and behaviour expected of a man from his *mūtiri* (godfather)'. Education included learning good behaviour, such as honesty, obedience, character and social responsibility as well as the skills needed in

caring for each other. The care of children involves providing guidance. In Gĩkũyũ culture, a child is guided by their parents and other members of the community. If a person displayed inappropriate behaviour, such as disrespecting elders, they were chastised by their parents and other members of the community. The person's peers also played an important role in guiding the person who had done wrong to mend their ways.

In summary, the Gĩkũyũ had a system of education, *Kĩrĩra kia mucii* (the culture of the Gĩkũyũ), that was provided by parents (Kenya, 1965). Children were taught skills by parents and they learned by watching their parents carrying out various activities. Children were trained in crafts and in nature, for example the names of various plants and roots and their uses. Kenya (1965, p. 99) explains that 'if the father is a wood-carver [carpenter], smith, hunter, bee keeper etc., he will teach the boy by examples in the same way'. Among the Gĩkũyũ, all children were included in these teaching and training sessions and no child was left out because of a disability. Parents encouraged partial participation for children with disabilities and the children learned not to see their disability as something that prevented them from participation in community activities. Instead these children were encouraged to excel in other activities that they could perform, despite their disabilities. Some became musicians and poets, among other trades.

### **Chapter Synopsis**

In this chapter, I have explained Gĩkũyũ knowledges that are embedded in the Gĩkũyũ epistemology and ontology and are mainly passed on orally. In particular, I have outlined the knowledges, values and practices that relate to the care and education of children with disabilities in the community. Parents, family members, elders and indeed the whole ethnic group had a role to play in bringing up children with and without disabilities, hence the proverb '*mwana ni wa muhiriga*' ('a child belongs to the ethnic group'). Among the Gĩkũyũ,

family relationships play an important role. The individual's relationship to other members sustains the ethnic group. The bond that ties every individual to the ethnic group is the family/sub-clan and the mūhīrīga (clan) from which one cannot run, either in life or in death. Kabetu (1947, p. 6) sums up this knot as '*Agīkūyū magīkaraga mohanītio othe hamwe na mūūgū ūtangīkereka nī mbarī na mīhīrīga*' ('The cord that binds the Gīkūyū together is the family and the clan'). This proverb metaphorically means that the family/sub-clan and clan are unbreakable. Every child, including one with disabilities, was and is valued in the community and provided with education opportunities appropriate to their needs and abilities. In the next chapter I explain the themes that emerged from the research using a Gīkūyū theoretical framework. I describe the Gīkūyū values and practices that I observed in the classrooms that support students with disabilities. I also include the explanations provided by teachers and principals about their use of Gīkūyū values and practice in the classrooms to give that support.

## Chapter 6

### RESULTS OF RESEARCH USING INDIGENOUS METHODOLOGY

*The traditional African concept of the community should not be forgotten in our rush for Western culture and political institutions, which some regard as the ready-made solutions to our problems. In the African way, the community serves the individual. And the individual finds fullest development of his personality when he is working in and for the community. In this community, culture belongs to all. For the rich and poor, the foolish and the wise are all free to participate in the national life of the community in all its manifestations. (Thiong'o, 1972, p. 25)*

This chapter explains the Gĩkũyũ values and practices observed in the classrooms and discussed by teachers and principals. It was evident from phases 1 and 2 of the research that the teachers were drawing on their knowledge of Gĩkũyũ knowledges and practices to support students with disabilities in the classroom. As Thiong'o says in the quote above, the Gĩkũyũ/African has ways of solving problems that must not be discarded in favour of solutions from foreigners who are responsible for creating those problems in the first place. Expecting solutions to Kenya's problems from foreigners is like entrusting the safety of your house to a thief. The thief/locksmith will always leave your house vulnerable so that you can call them back to fix the problem and in the course of fixing the fault have access to more treasures in your house.

Key themes that emerged from the research based on Gĩkũyũ theoretical framework include the centrality of Gĩkũyũ knowledge, the centrality of family relationships and the centrality of self-knowledge/identity. Examples will be drawn from the interviews sessions in Phase 1 and the story-telling sessions in Phase 2. As stated earlier, it was during the data collection in Phase 1 that I realised that teachers were using Gĩkũyũ ways to support students with disabilities.

## Theme 1: The centrality of Gĩkũyũ knowledges

### Rũthiomi rũa Gĩkũyũ (Gĩkũyũ Language)

All the participants agreed that Gĩkũyũ knowledge – values, practices, beliefs and language – were important and needed to be given a more prominent place in the curriculum. They argued that Indigenous languages needed to be taught and used in primary schools because children needed to understand the basic concepts in their languages before they could understand them in English. The teachers said that most of the students knew the stories of their communities' origins. Despite this, I observed in all the four schools that I attended that the students and teachers used English for communication. English was the language of instruction in the classrooms because this was and is the law. I did however observe some teachers in all four schools code switching to Swahili and Gĩkũyũ when students did not understand a concept and the teacher needed the language in which students were fluent to explain to the students effectively. Wanjirũ explained to me that she code-switched to ensure that the students understood the concepts taught in class. She said that some students struggled with English, especially those students with disabilities that involved communication barriers, and those from a refugee background. She stated:

*I use the language that they can understand. I use Swahili or Gĩkũyũ since it is easier for them to understand (Wanjirũ: 8/7 July 2015)*

Wambũi stated:

*[I speak in Gĩkũyũ] to make them understand because most of them don't understand English well. So, I come down to mother tongue. (Wambũi:14/7/2015)*

During the story-telling sessions in Phase 2, I spoke to the teachers in Gĩkũyũ. They told me stories in Gĩkũyũ and, as is the case in Kenya, they switched codes often from Gĩkũyũ to English and Swahili. As I sat in the staffrooms while I waited to be taken to the classrooms, I observed that the teachers in all four schools, most of whom were Gĩkũyũ, were multilingual, speaking to each other in Gĩkũyũ, English and Swahili.

### **Githiūrūrī (The circle)**

The circle is an important concept in Gikūyū culture, as discussed earlier. From my observations of the lessons in the four schools, the teachers used the circle a lot. At Mūbarīki school, for example, I observed the use of the circle in a physical education (PE) lesson whereby the students sat in a circle and one student went around the circle singing while the others responded. They also sang a song '*Nyambaga kiondo gīakwa*' ('I start weaving my basket') as they joined hands and snaked around the field. At recess and lunch, I observed that students used the circle when playing games which were a mix of local and Western games. One game was '*kūhūra mbīa*' ('chasing mice') where students were divided into two groups, one half forming a wide circle, the other half inside the circle. The students in the outside circle threw a soft ball aiming to hit as many students inside the circle as possible; In another game, called *Nyama, nyama, nyama* ('meat, meat, meat'), the students also stood in a circle and one student called out animals found in the African environment. The other students jumped if the meat of the animal called out was edible and stood still if it was not. In yet another game, students sat in a circle and took turns to throw small rocks or fruits (about 1.5cms) into the air and catch them. Other games included rounders, hop skip and jump, *bano* (the Swahili name for a game played with marbles) and *chenga chobo* (the Swahili name for a game that is similar to football where players form a circle and a player in the middle tries to pass the ball between the other players' legs).

By contrast, when I attended school assemblies in two schools, Mūtūdū and Mūbarīki, I observed students standing in rows as they sang the national anthem and in the classrooms the students sat in rows facing the front. As stated earlier, standing in rows was a concept introduced by the colonisers as the Gikūyū prefer the circle or the semi-circle for effective and efficient communication. This is because all involved can see each other's body

language. I observed that in Standard 1, pupils sat in circles around large table as they carried out class activities.

### **Ng'ano (Story-telling)**

Story-telling is another important aspect of the Gĩkũyũ culture. It is used as a means of passing on cultural wisdom and moral lessons to the people. Although I did not observe story-telling in the classrooms, Wambũgũ and Wambũi said that during the story-telling sessions they would tell stories to their students to pass on moral lessons, for example, caring for people who are disadvantaged or being kind to everybody. Wairimũ told the story of Karing'otho (a young one-eyed man) and the ogre (see Appendix 17) to teach her class that people with disabilities are respected members of the society and can be the saviour of their community. She explained that in traditional Gĩkũyũ, people with disabilities are portrayed as possessing great talents, wisdom and intuition. This was to show that even if they had a disability, they were valued members of the society and contributed to the society's wellbeing in their own way. According to Wairimũ, the story of Karing'otho showed that although he had a disability he had more wisdom than six men who had two eyes each. While on a hunting expedition, he decided not to drink the blood offered by their host because he was suspicious of the meal. In this story, Karing'otho avoided death because he had more wisdom and intuition than his peers. The wisdom of people with disabilities is valued, they are believed to have intuition and Gĩkũyũ society treats them with respect. Wairimũ said that whenever she tells this story she wants her class to treat the students with disabilities with respect and dignity. Wambũi explained that she uses the story of Wagaciariĩ to teach the virtue of caring for people who are sick or who are disadvantaged in society (see Appendix 18). Wagaciariĩ refers to woman who had just given birth and needed help, which was offered by an ogre. The story according to Wambũi teaches children to stay strong in the face of problems because God provides solutions that may come in unexpected ways.

Other teachers reported that they used stories in the classroom to teach other Gīkūyū values such as being of service to others, honesty, the value of hard work and the evils of greed.

Wangarī narrated to me the story of the hyena and the cow that she uses to teach her students the value of providing assistance to people in need (see Appendix 23). In this story, the cow helped the hyena out of a hole that he had fallen into but, as in all good stories, the complication is that when the hyena got out he wanted to eat the cow's heifer. An elephant came along and helped solve the tricky situation. Wangari explained that the story teaches that there is a role for everyone in the community to play, including, for example, mediators and elders (teachers). Wangari added that teachers/carers have a role to play in helping students with disabilities.

Stories were also used to help the children understand lore and traditions of their culture.

Wairimū described how she used stories to help children make links between their experiences and Gīkūyū culture.

*I use them so that they can see relevance of what was happening in the Gīkūyū traditions. You know sometimes these young children don't find value in what was happening in our traditions. You help them find the relevance. They are going to appreciate their culture. And also, they enjoy. They find a lot of fun in it. (Wairimū: 24/1/2018)*

The teachers said that through story-telling, children learnt about diversity of human bodies, the environment, the trees, the animals, the land and sky and the changing seasons. They learnt about calamities such as floods and drought and about solutions that have been applied to community problems. According to Wairimū, story-telling among the Gīkūyū reflects the peoples' way of life.

In schooling contexts, stories are also used to encourage children with and without disability to work hard and achieve good outcomes. Wairimū uses a Gīkūyū story of the legendary woman Wangū wa Makeri who ruled the Gīkūyū society with an iron hand to share with the

children the belief that girls and indeed anyone who is disadvantaged in society, including students with disabilities, can achieve success (see Appendix 19).

*Mostly I find myself using story-telling whereby I am able to encourage the students. You know we have the story Wangū wa Makeri. Some girls feel that the boys are great and are outdoing them in the classroom. So, I come up with the story of Wangū wa Makeri- she was able to beat the men, she could sit on them, she was able to command all those men. From that concept the girls know that what boys can do they can do it better. If Wangū wa Makeri made it, why not us girls? (Wairimū: 24/1/2018)*

The teacher teaches that disadvantage or disability should not inhibit students from achieving their goals. Wambūgū said he used stories in his classes to show the consequences of greed and lack of patience. He said that he translated the stories from Gīkūyū to English because he has some students in his class who were from the Gīkūyū ethnic group but did not understand the Gīkūyū language. He said,

*We use Gīkūyū stories and then translate for the students. Gīkūyū language is rich with riddles and proverbs from other communities. We use Gīkūyū stories and proverbs and we translate them. They are valid to other communities. (Wambūgū: 22/1/2018)*

He narrated a story about the avaricious hyena (see Appendix 20) which he used to teach students that greed brings pain and suffering. The hyena is a scavenger and is portrayed as greedy in African folklore. In the story, the hyena could smell delicious food cooking somewhere. It walked towards where the smell was coming from. When it came to a fork in the road it chose to follow both paths and ended up splitting its body in two. Wambūgū explained that he uses the story to teach students to be patient and use the right means to get what they want, saying that the story explains the importance of focusing on a goal and following through. This moral lesson applies to all students, with and without disabilities. Stories were also used to teach people to be good to others. The Gīkūyū believed *weka wega nīwe weīka* ('if you do good you do it to yourself'). Wanjirū explained how she used the story of the tortoise and the monkey to teach students in her class to treat all students, including those with disabilities, and other people in the community as they would like to be treated

(see Appendix 21). According to the story the tortoise was treated poorly by the monkey who invited the tortoise to a meal and placed it in a deep gourd that the tortoise could not reach.

The tortoise had his revenge one day when he invited the monkey to a meal. The monkey was not able to eat the meal because his hands were dirty. The story teaches that the world has a way of returning good for good and bad for bad. Wanjirū said that the moral of the story was ‘What goes around always comes around.’ (Wanjirū:16/1/2018).

Story-telling is as valuable a resource in the Kenyan classroom as it is in the Gĩkũyũ community because it is a way of communicating moral lessons in an interesting way without shaming students. The story-teller develops a relationship with the audience in the course of narrating the story, a relationship based on shared emotions created by the story and, more importantly, on sharing the understanding of the content/knowledge in the story.

### **Thimo (Proverbs)**

Proverbs are based on stories and every proverb passes on a moral lesson in few but pithy words. Proverbs are used in everyday language among the Gĩkũyũ and a person who has mastered the art of using proverbs in conversation is regarded very highly in society.

Proverbs are mainly used by adults in society and are a mark that one understands the Gĩkũyũ language, including its metaphors and symbols. Children do not normally use proverbs but adults (teachers) use proverbs to explain a phenomenon or teach a moral lesson to them.

While I did not observe the use of Gĩkũyũ proverbs in the classrooms, the teachers and principals said that they used them, and they were also integrated into the interview conversations we had.

Wambũgũ said that he used proverbs in his classroom and explained what they meant to the students. With regards to the way in which students with disabilities are perceived, he explained the proverb ‘*kĩgochi kia mundu tikĩo kĩa mutĩ*’ (‘a person with a disability is not the

same as a tree with flaw’) to his students. It means that a person with disability has more uses in the community while the tree with a flaw (bend) is useful only for hanging things on it (Wambūgū, 22/1/2018). In other words, people with disabilities can contribute to the community’s welfare in their own unique way based on their strengths. For example, they joined with others in constructing houses, singing and playing musical instruments at community events. Wambūgū added that he used another proverb *‘ingīciara mahatha yongithagia tūerī’* (‘If it gives birth to twins it feeds both of them’) (Wambūgū: 22/1/2018), to teach students that society has a responsibility for caring for children with disabilities. They must accept and treat their peers with disabilities with respect because they are part of society.

Wanjirū said that not many of her students would understand proverbs although she did explain some to her students. She said that she used the proverb *cīakorire ‘Wacū mūgūnda’* (‘They found Wacū in the garden’) (Wanjiru:16/1/2018) to teach students that Mūgai (God) provides for those who are disadvantaged. The proverb is based on the story of a woman known as Wacū (see Appendix 22) who was disliked by her polygamous husband. One day he slaughtered a goat for a party to which Wacū was not invited. She spent her day cultivating her garden. When the meat at the party was roasted, a bird picked up a juicy piece and as it flew past Wacū it dropped it near her. She ate to her satisfaction. Wanjirū added that she uses the proverb to teach that people who are disadvantaged, including people with disabilities, should be treated well because Mūgai (God) has a way of caring for them.

Wangūi also believed the proverb was relevant to classroom practice in teaching students to be inclusive.

Many proverbs explain/explained the importance of relationships in the Gīkūyū culture because they are the cord that holds and sustains the community together. The next section explains the centrality of relationships.

## **Theme 2: The centrality of relationships**

Relationships are fundamental to the Gīkūyū people. They bind the Gīkūyū together, providing physical, emotional and psychological support. Relationships are therefore an essential part of the care for students with disabilities in the community and in schools. Much of the unspoken/unrecorded assistance for them in schools is provided by their kinfolk.

Maina explained that in some instances next-of-kin come to school to help their children with disabilities in the classroom. He stated, ‘She was in diapers. She was also being assisted by one of her parents or her aunty during lunch and break time when going to the toilet because she was very new.’ (Maina, 7/7/2015)

Relations are held together by a set of values which if broken destabilise the relationship.

Using the proverb ‘*Mwana nī wa mūhīrīga*’ (‘a child belongs to the clan’), Wambūgū said that the care and upbringing of children was and is still considered the responsibility of every member of the community. He said that in the past, children with disabilities were cared for by all family members.

*The parents of a child with disabilities always had people to help care for that child and other children. Like other parents they were able to go about their daily activities such as fetching water from the river, joining itatī (cooperative group activities) because they could leave the children with disabilities under the care of older siblings or older members of the family such as grandmothers or grandfathers ---because they were old they did not join in the cooperative group activities. They contributed to the communal affair by caring for the children, even those with disabilities.*  
(Wambūgū:22/1/2018)

Wambūgū said that teachers in schools act as surrogate parents of students with disabilities, often working in conjunction with their older siblings to support them. As stated earlier, the older siblings themselves have a responsibility to care for their younger brothers and sisters and extended relatives. Wambugu stated, ‘For example, in those schools where children have to bring lunch to school, the younger ones are not given the responsibility of carrying their own food to school. We (teachers) like the older ones to assist in this task.’ (Wambūgū: 22/1/2018)

In the next section, I discuss the relationship concepts of Uuma andū (‘charity and care for the old and people with disabilities’), Mūkūrū/Mūrūna relationships (older sibling/younger sibling relationships), Gītō (dignity/respect) and Gītatī (working cooperatively/teamwork) that bind the Gīkūyū.

### **Uuma andū (Charity and care for the old and people with disabilities)**

Uuma andū (charity) is expected of every Gīkūyū man or woman. Children are taught to be charitable. This includes helping your brothers and/or sisters or other members of the ethnic group without expecting anything in return. During this research I observed students with disabilities getting assistance from the other students who sat next to them and from the teachers. These peers were being charitable with their time to help the students with disabilities. I observed them help with academic activities such as explaining mathematic problems. Wambūgū commented that in the Gīkūyū society people were obligated to help each other. People who were able helped those with disabilities to achieve their set goals. People with disabilities participated in society according to their ability and were regarded as useful in the Gīkūyū society; they had a role to play. Children with a disability were encouraged to try different activities so that they could find what suited them. Some became soloists and entertained the community during building of houses or planting and harvest times, others became wood-carvers. Wambūgū said:

*Those who knew how to weave were allowed to do that. There were people who were lazy but were recognised as Gīkūyū music soloists. They were invited to functions to sing or play instruments. (Wambūgū: 22/1/2018)*

According to Wambūgū, the strength of the community lay in caring for all their members, including students with disabilities. Wambūgū stated that he explained the plight of people with disabilities to his class by referring to the deity-God, saying that everyone had different

talents bestowed on them by God. He said that he always tells his class to respect and value all children.

*We tell them that God has given people many gifts. Those with disabilities may have talents. They may only have a disability of the hand but may have a superior brain. So, he may not use the hands but can give you advice and directions to fix something They have a place in society. (Wambūgū: 22/1/2018)*

I observed students sharing books, pens and other items in the classroom – sharing is a cultural value that is practiced daily in Kenyan classrooms. Students without disabilities assisted those with disabilities to find the pages of the text required for the activity; they assisted them find the right text book and the right equipment for the task. Charity is a value expected of everyone in the community and exemplified by the charitable deeds by one sibling to another. The next section explains this older sibling-younger sibling relationship.

### **Mūkūrū/Mūruna (older-younger sibling relationships)**

The Gīkūyū relationship of mūkūrū mūruna (older-younger sibling relationship) is used in schools. There, students who are older siblings take the role of helpers/aides to guide the younger siblings. Older siblings pass on knowledge to the younger ones at their linguistic level and also help carry items for the younger siblings with or without disabilities to and from school. Wambūgū said:

*If you have students in Standard 3, and they have got a question, or Standard 4, you can ask them to go and do research from the older brothers and sisters because the older one is knowledgeable ... For example, in those schools where children have to bring lunch to school, the younger ones are not given the responsibility of carrying their own food to school, we [the teachers] like the older ones to assist in this task. Even when we distribute school equipment or instruments for learning for students to take home, we request the older child to carry it home for the younger one. The older one takes responsibility. (Wambūgū: 22/1/2018)*

Family relationships are considered important in schools. Wanjiru pointed out that if a student with disabilities needed assistance, teachers would ask the student's relative in the same school to come and assist before they looked for help outside the family group.

*We do share the resources. Students help each other. You know disabled [students with disabilities] children are helped by sisters, brother and family and anybody else. We call the sister and brother and say, 'Can you do this and this for your sister.'*  
(Wanjiru:16/1/2018)

Teachers informed me that older siblings would look for their younger siblings with disabilities at the end of the school day so that they could walk home or catch the bus together. In the classrooms, older relatives attending the same school will help their kin with disabilities with classroom tasks. The relatives understand how family members with disabilities communicate when they are in any discomfort and can tell the teacher when the student with disabilities needs assistance. I observed students holding students with disabilities to guide them to their group activities and taking them where the teacher wanted them to go. The teacher did not have to request that the student provide this help; the kin did it of their own volition. The younger sibling in turn trusted and respected the older siblings. The concept of *gītīo* (respect) is addressed in the following section.

### **Gītīo (Dignity/Respect)**

*Gītīo* (dignity/respect) is another value that holds the *Gīkūyū* together. Children are taught how to show respect to their elders and *gītīo* is reciprocal. To the *Gīkūyū* people, a teacher is considered an elder and is always treated with the utmost respect. Students and members of the community always show their respect to teachers by prefacing their names with their title, for example, 'Mwarimu Njoiburī' (Teacher Njoiburī). The teachers in turn play their role as elders by showing respect to their students. In the classrooms that I attended, I observed that students with disabilities were treated with respect and dignity by their teachers and their peers. Teachers and students referred to the children with disabilities by their names and not by their disabilities; they spoke of them in positive terms and not by using derogatory terms. Nor did the teachers point them out to me in front of the other children in the class. Instead, they told me before we entered the classroom where these students sat. The other students were patient and waited for the students with disabilities to give their answers to the teachers

when they were asked a question. I observed that even when the students with disabilities did not have an answer, the teachers did not move on quickly to other students but guided the student to provide the right answer. I also observed students without disabilities respectfully assisting those with disabilities with their written activities in Maths and English. In the Physical Education class, I observed one student hold a student with disabilities and help her lead a song ‘*Nyambaga k̄iondo ḡakwa*’ (‘I start weaving my basket’) as other students joined the train. The student with disabilities was smiling and enjoying the game.

During the interview, Wambūgū said that he taught ḡt̄io (respect) to the students in his class. He explained that children were taught to respect anyone older than they were, including their siblings, teachers and other members of the community. He said that Ḡikūyū society valued diversity of human beings and that in his school students with disabilities were treated with dignity and respect. Wangūi explained that respect included using the Ḡikūyū tribal protocols for greeting elders and conducting introductions as well as being available to assist people with disabilities. As discussed earlier, she lamented that many Ḡikūyū youth did not know the proper and respectful Ḡikūyū greetings. Similarly, Wambūgū explained that while respect and care of students with disabilities was evident in the classrooms, he lamented that the respectful Ḡikūyū forms of greeting would slowly be forgotten because children were not learning them at home, at schools and from their elders. At the same time, he pointed out that respect for others was expected of everyone in the Ḡikūyū community and in other African communities, particularly respect for the elders.

*From the parents and any other person who was older than you, anyone who may be considered to be your parent. They may not be your parent but are old enough to be the age of your parent. Even your older brothers. Respect the teachers and all the elders in the society. You must give respect to teachers even if they don't teach you. You must also help people who have disabilities. This is the Ḡikūyū way. (Wambūgū: 22/1/2018)*

Wambūgū added that in the Ḡikūyū community the elders were considered the carriers of knowledge and he pointed out that teachers sought advice and knowledge from the elders:

*Elders are more knowledgeable than the rest of the people. Even when you want to ask a question or request for advice, you go to the elderly people. (Wambūgū: 22/1/2018)*

Waithīra explained that respect for people who were different, including the opposite gender and people, with disabilities was regarded highly in Gīkūyū society and this was a virtue she would like students to learn. Waithīra said that she taught life skills to girls, explaining that during these sessions boys and girls were separated and had a discussion with the teacher about career choices, acceptable behaviour in society and upholding their dignity in society according to Gīkūyū values. Waithīra added that one of the concerns in society today was that young people with and without disabilities were engaging in sex at an early age. She said that the community protected children, especially children with disabilities who were more vulnerable to sexual exploitation in the society, and that her role as a respected elder was to teach the cultural norms surrounding respectful relationships between the opposite sexes. She stated:

*I am able to advise the girls. Among the Gīkūyū there were activities meant for girls and activities for boys. So, in life skills, I am able to help the children think of their talents; for example, the girls how to cook, how to knit. I guide them in their behaviours, the way they relate with each other, You know in the past the young men and the girls could go for the dances. They made sure that they took care of themselves. They did not engage in sex even if they went for those dances... they knew how to control themselves. I can use that as an example to tell the class that if those people were able to control themselves, why not you? I listen to all children, including those with disabilities and provide advice. I play the role of their elder.’ (Wairimū: 24/1/2018)*

Principal Wamuyu explained that the school had had to build a boarding house for students with disabilities who were at risk of sexual abuse when they walked to school through an area near a quarry. She stated, ‘They have to pass the quarries, and the quarry men are molesting them ... We have three big rooms built, but they are just big rooms’ (Wamuyu: 15/7/2015).

Waithīra explained that people with disabilities need to be integrated in the classroom. She lamented that in some schools they were segregated, yet people with disabilities had talents to contribute to society.

*These children, in some areas, some people segregate them. They are seen as incapable. My main aim is to assist them identify what they are good at whereby they are able to find their talents. Some are good in drama, some are good in drawing, computers, painting. People did the same in the Gĩkũyũ tradition. (Wairimũ: 24/1/2018)*

Respect and dignity for community members entailed caring for each other and ensuring that one participated in community matters and contributed to team activities in kind and/or by providing materials. Children, including those with disabilities, learn the value of gĩtatĩ (working cooperatively/teamwork) because they are expected to carry this value forward because it is the way the Gĩkũyũ community grows and avoids self-destruction. The next section addresses this topic of gĩtatĩ.

### **Gĩtatĩ (working cooperatively/teamwork)**

The teachers and principals spoke of the importance of gĩtatĩ in the Gĩkũyũ community and in their classrooms. Gĩtatĩ meant that everyone in the larger village took part in community activities, for example, the rũracio (ceremony when a dowry is exchanged) and irua (initiation ceremony) (Gathigira 1933, Leakey, 2009; Maathai, 2009). Villagers brought matega (gifts of food and drink) and took part in the ceremony in various ways. Wangũi and Wambũgũ said that when they were growing up, they saw their parents taking part in ĩtatĩ (plural) of gĩtatĩ (singular) in the construction of traditional huts.

Wambũgũ said that in his social studies class he explained the example of ĩtatĩ to teach the concept of microfinance. He explained that current programs on microfinance in Kenya used the gĩtatĩ model and it was used by parents to help students with disabilities receive the necessary assistance in the classroom. For example, Maina stated, ‘She was in diapers. She was also being assisted by one of her parents or her aunty during lunch and break time when going to the toilet because she was very new’ (Maina, 7/7/2015).

Wambũgũ explained that itatĩ were used in Gĩkũyũ society for much more than construction of huts. They were also used in the cultivation of farming areas.

*In the traditional Gĩkũyũ life, monetary value was not used. Instead people helped one another to till the ground. They met on one person's farm and would help till the land and plant for him/her. The land owner did not cook for the helpers. They brought a plate to share. The next day they went to another person's piece of land and did it all over again. (Wambũgũ: 22/1/2018)*

The itatĩ were used after independence in order to meet new demands. After Kenya attained independence from the British colonialists in 1963 and people left the colonial villages, the itatĩ were used in the construction of new iron roofed houses. Wambũgũ explained:

*These itatĩ in my village were started to help people buy iron sheets on their houses. Groups of women worked together and bought iron sheets for each other (Wambũgũ: 22/1/2018)*

Itatĩ continue in Kenya today among the Gĩkũyũ. When a person has a celebration, for example the wedding of a son or daughter, it is the clan's responsibility to ensure that the marriage negotiations are carried out in the traditional way. They also provide financial and material support. Wambũgũ explained:

*They do that [itatĩ/team work] when a person in the village has a child's wedding. People bring itega, they bring food and firewood and anything that you might need. They also cook for the event. (Wambũgũ: 22/1/2018)*

Wambũgũ said that he used the gĩtatĩ concept in the classroom to get students to work together in assisting students with disabilities. For example, if students are working together on a group project, one brings the clay that is available only in river beds and another brings a container to carry water to the classroom from the central water point at the school. The students with disabilities in the group participate to the best of their abilities. Wambũgũ stated:

*You can tell the students to work together. If they are using clay, one to bring clay, the other water and the other to start moulding. They work in a group. (Wambũgũ: 22/1/2018)*

Wangũi and Wambũi explained that these values of gĩtatĩ and collective responsibility had been eroded by colonisation and that communities these days tended to be more

individualistic. Wangūi said the colonial system of education did not value the place of parents in schools and discouraged them from getting involved in school matters except to pay school fees and attend to disciplinary matters. However, they were not provided with the opportunities to express their views. Colonial education placed the responsibility of teaching children solely on the teacher to the exclusion of the parents.

Wambūi pointed out that she encourages students in her class, including those with disabilities, to work as a team because the Gīkūyū believe that work is made lighter by working together. As the proverb says: *'Kamūingī koyaga ndīrī'* ('Many hands make work lighter'). All the teachers said that they encouraged their students to work together in the classroom, sharing the resources available and assisting each other with class tasks. In the Gīkūyū community, working cooperatively forms part of one's identity of being a mūdū wa nyūmba of Mumbi (a person belonging to the house of Mūmbi, wife of Gīkūyū, the father of the ethnic group) and those who were not team players were, figuratively speaking, considered outcasts, people who do not identify with the house. In the next section, the centrality of self-knowledge/identity is discussed.

### **Theme 3: The centrality of self-knowledge/identity**

#### **Kwīmenya (self-knowledge/identity)**

Among the Gīkūyū, the clan system works as a cooperative and plays an important role in keeping people together and making every individual understand what makes them Gīkūyū. To identify with the Gīkūyū, one must have self-knowledge of their place in the house of Mumbi and identify with the house of Mumbi through deeds that keep it alive. Colonisation has had an effect on the way Gīkūyū children identify themselves. The teachers and principals interviewed for this research agreed that students had some knowledge of who they were as Kenyans/Africans but that they lived in an ambivalent state where they valued and

live by some Gĩkũyũ/Kenyan values, such as kinship and mũkũrũ/mũruna relationships, but also accepted some Western ways such as dressing styles, language and behaviour. The teachers and principals stated that knowing one's identity was important and that they taught their students that they were African and should therefore have African values. The educators in this study could derive many lasting benefits from promoting Gĩkũyũ cultural values, not only for themselves, but for their students, their schools and their communities. Although there might be a variance to their current day-to-day practice, a traditional approach to inclusive education would align with their core values. The teachers said that the topic of the family was often discussed in class, the goal being to help students to identify their nuclear family, their extended families and clans, understand the kinship system and also the role of the community in caring for students with disabilities in schools. In the urban schools, the teachers said that the stories of origin told by students varied from community to community but were important in enabling the students to understand their identity. Wanjikũ said that only a few students could articulate their *mĩhĩrĩga* (clans), which are the basis of group cohesion and communal responsibility. Wairimũ said that it was important to help students to learn to appreciate their culture because they needed to know that they also had responsibility for each other and for peers and siblings with disabilities attending the same school.

*The main aim of using these [stories, songs and proverbs] is that the Gĩkũyũ people wanted to have their children growing up in the right way. So you want to mould the child the right way. You also want to show them the need of appreciating their culture. To create confidence in them. But the main aim is to help them to grow up properly –children who can be emulated by others. (Wairimũ: 24/1/2018)*

The teachers said that some children did not appreciate their culture and instead had been influenced by the ways of the mũthũngũ (a person of European origin). Wairimũ explained that she used story-telling at the beginning of the lessons as a way of preparing the children for the lesson and at the end of the lesson to ground the students in their cultural identity. She lamented the loss of Gĩkũyũ cultural values and practices among the young people.

*You know, sometimes these young children don't find value in what was happening in our traditions. You help them find the relevance. They are going to appreciate the culture. And also, they enjoy. They find a lot of fun in it. You can use these [values and practices] in your classroom. (Wairimū:24/1/2018*

From my analysis of the data, I conclude that the teachers and principals were aware of the role language and culture play in both the care and education of students with disabilities and in fostering the cultural identity of students. They demonstrated the use of Gĩkũyũ knowledges, values and practices in the care and education of students with disabilities, using older siblings to assist the younger ones in the school and to help carry school resources to and from school for them.

The teachers and principals recognised that partnerships with parents and communities could play a role in enhancing learning for the students with disabilities. Collaboration between schools and parents was also considered important by the principals and teachers who participated in this study. They acknowledged that these partnerships needed to be strengthened so that parents could be allowed to visit schools to help in the classrooms with tasks such as physical support of students with disabilities, changing them, taking them to bathrooms and feeding them, as well as assisting with other classroom activities. Teachers recognised the role that an increased role of community elders could play in helping to teach students about their cultural identity, as well as the history of the people and the role relationships play in the life of an Indigenous child. Teachers said that elders needed to be invited to schools to teach the school community to accept their Indigenous ways of caring for children with disabilities.

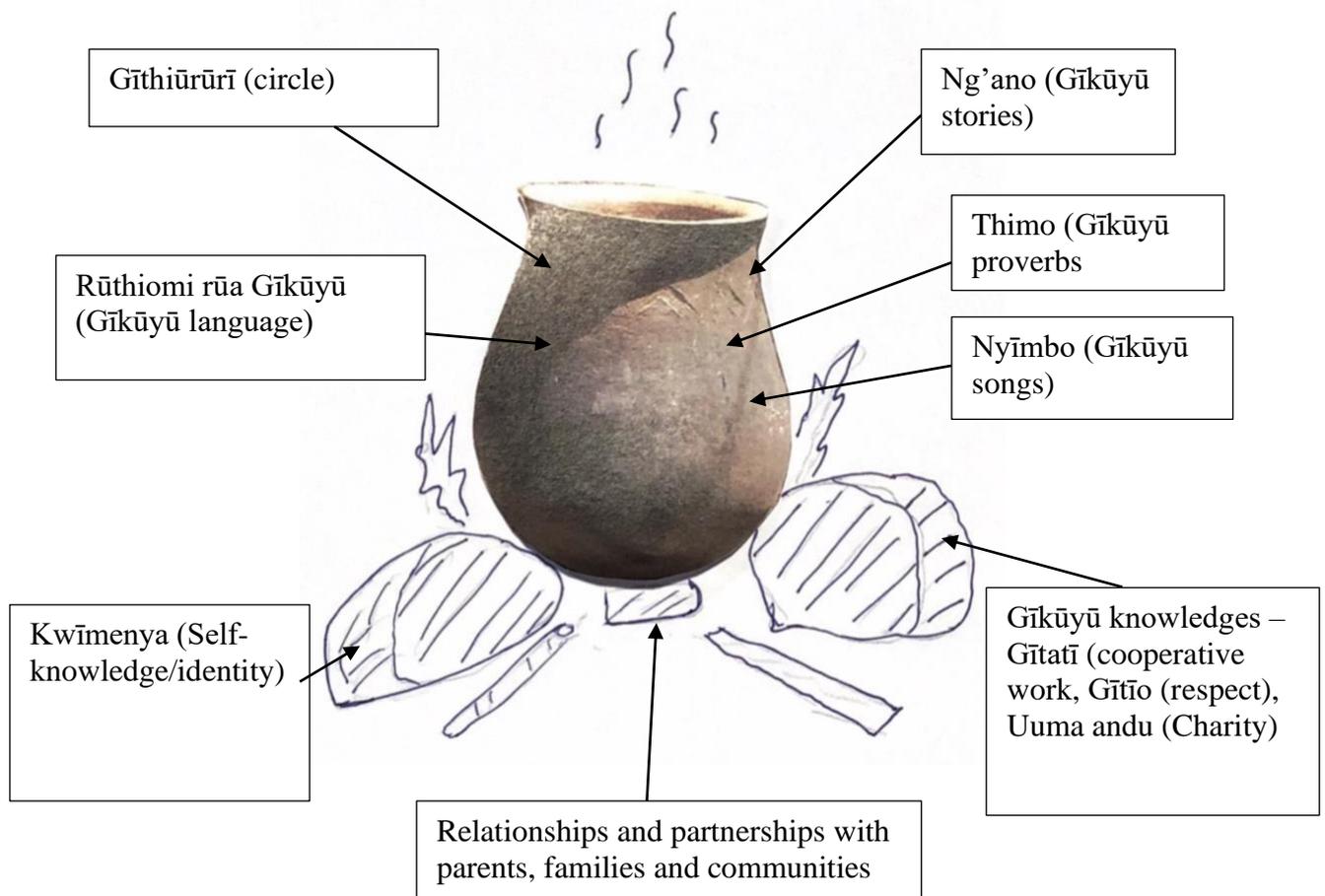
It is important for Kenyan/African children to study their local languages and their cultures, for only then can they fully identify as Kenyans/Africans. The strength of the Kenyan nation lies in children from different Indigenous communities speaking their languages. The Kenyan education system would in turn produce people who could teach and promote Gĩkũyũ and

other Kenyan languages in schools and universities. In South Africa there are university professors teaching in Zulu, Xhosa and other local South African languages (Mberia, 2016). There is a role for teachers in Kenya to play to change the education system so that the African child experiences the world from an African perspective and not from a Northern perspective. Thiong'o (1986, p. 93) aptly explains the plight of children like me who encountered colonial education.

*African children who encountered literature in colonial schools and universities were thus experiencing the world as defined by and reflected in in the European experience of history. Their entire way of looking at the world, even the world of the immediate environment, was Eurocentric. Europe was the centre of the universe. The earth moved around the European intellectual axis. The images children encountered in literature were reinforced by their study of geography and history, and science and technology where Europe was, once again, the centre.*

To conclude this section, I use the Gĩkũyũ hearth to show the results obtained through observations and story-telling sessions. A Gĩkũyũ hearth contains three stones (see Figure 6-1 below.) The Gĩkũyũ pot sits on three stones which I use to represent Gĩkũyũ knowledges, Gĩkũyũ relationships and Gĩkũyũ self-knowledge (identity). The pot holds the various areas of Gĩkũyũ knowledges that were identified in the classroom.

Figure 6-1: The Gīkūyū hearth represents the classroom (Mutuota, 2019)



The people at different ends of the hearth have to participate in *gūtūngania mwaki* (pushing firewood in the fire- a deliberate act of keeping the fire alive). The hearth is the centre of the hut. A pot is placed on the three stones to cook food. As the food cooks, the mother tells stories to the children. The hearth and pot symbolise the richness of the classrooms in Gīkūyū knowledges, as evidenced from the data. The Gīkūyū pot is made from clay found near the rivers. The Gīkūyū pot is fragile but can withstand high temperatures for extended periods of time. The food produced by the pot cooks to perfection and is tasty because of the earthy smell and taste transferred from the pot. The classroom is like the Kikuyu pot. It nurtures the Indigenous child with Gīkūyū knowledges and values and partners with parents and the community to produce a child who is proud to be Gīkūyū/Kenyan and a carrier of their

heritage. It upholds the right of all children with and without disabilities to an education. As state earlier, the Gikuyu culture did not treat children with disabilities as different.

Children with disabilities were included in all activities and participated to the best of their ability. The stigma against students with disabilities arose as a consequence of a curriculum based on the North that segregated students with disabilities. This tension could be addressed by a hybrid curriculum that values children regardless of their ability level and by incorporating Gikuyu knowledges into the Kenya curriculum.

The Gĩkũyũ pot/classroom is overflowing with good things. It is possible to have a hybrid of Gĩkũyũ and Western Knowledges in the curriculum. Kenya has many ethnic groups and the classroom is a melting pot of stories, proverbs, riddles and songs, all of which carry moral lessons. This diversity is to be celebrated and exploited in supporting students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. The Gĩkũyũ, for example, can share with other communities the values that support the education of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

### **Chapter Synopsis**

In this chapter I have discussed the Gĩkũyũ values and practices that I observed in the classrooms and those that the teachers said they use in classrooms to support the inclusion of students with disabilities. The teachers said that they taught Gĩkũyũ values through songs, proverbs and stories, draw strategies from their knowledge of the Gĩkũyũ culture to support students with disabilities.

The next chapter explains my experience using Indigenous (Gĩkũyũ) and Northern frameworks in the two phases of the research and the position I occupied as an insider and outsider respectively in each phase. I demonstrate the value and richness of using the Indigenous framework in gathering data from Gĩkũyũ participants compared to using a

Northern framework and critique the applicability of Northern methodologies to the Kenyan context. The next chapter suggests looking for solutions to including students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms from within our Southern Indigenous knowledges, values and practices instead of importing Northern constructs.

## Chapter 7

### A HYBRID CURRICULUM

*'Kūngū maitū na hunyū wake (Long live my mother and all her shortcomings).'* A Gikūyū proverb that teaches the Gikūyū to appreciate what is theirs – knowledges, values and practices.

This chapter explores the possibility of creating a blended/hybrid curriculum that values Indigenous knowledges, values and practices but also uses ideas selectively from the North. It also explains the differences and similarities between UDL, a Northern based framework, and an Indigenous Gikūyū framework. Western knowledges have influenced the Kenyan education system. Researchers argue that studies of education and systems based on Northern frameworks ignore the lived experiences of the global South, such as the history of colonisation (Connell, 2011; Meekosha, 2011). In light of this, there is a need for schools to consider the lived experience of the Kenyan child and integrate Indigenous knowledges in the education system. This would create a hybrid education system that privileges Indigenous knowledges over Western knowledges in the school curriculum. Teachers, principal, students and parents could use cultural knowledges, values and practices to support students with disabilities in the classrooms. In addition, teachers could provide opportunities in the classroom for students to learn their cultural knowledge. This would be an act of resistance to the of colonial legacies (Childs & Williams, 2013).

A hybrid curriculum would not only reconnect the teacher with their own cultural identity (Dei 2000) but would also disrupt the colonial structures (Nyaga, 2006). According to Nyaga (2006, p. 140), 'Hybridity has power of transforming and dislocating taken-for-granted thoughts and ideas, and with its temporalities one is able to go between and beyond a sentence or story and identify possibilities'. Researchers such as Dei, (1996) and Nyaga, (2017) suggest that African teachers could find way indigenous knowledges, values and

practices to enter the academic space. Figure 7-1 below shows the proposed pedagogical model and explains what a hybrid curriculum would look like.

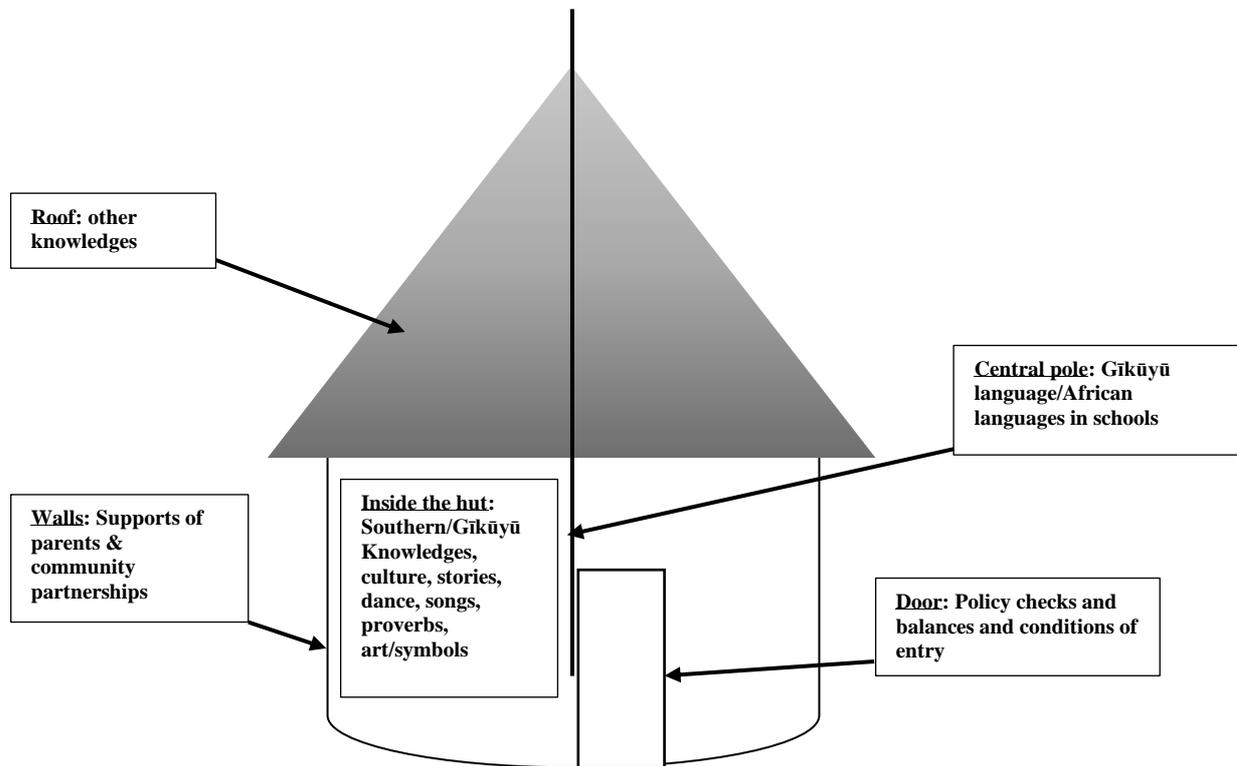


Figure 7-1: A hybrid curriculum Mutuota, 2019)

The **wall** of the Gĩkũyũ hut is circular and has a break only at the door. The wall is like people holding hands around a precious child who stands in the middle. They represent the partnerships of parents and schools and the community, the people who care about the child.

The **door** represents the checks and balances for those policies that are allowed in the Kenyan education system and conditions of entry; for example, a policy must fit the Kenyan context if it is to be implemented. The **central pole** in the Gĩkũyũ hut and the main support for the hut is the Gĩkũyũ language. According to Thiong’o (1986, p.13), ‘Language, any language ... is the carrier of culture’. Gĩkũyũ language should be encouraged in schools. The **inside space**

**of the hut** is the space where education takes place. It represents Gīkūyū Knowledges, values and practices that schools could use to support all students, including those with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. These include stories, songs, dance, and proverbs. Teachers must continually engage in acts of resistance to colonial education by including Gīkūyū language, history and symbols in the overt curriculum. The **roof** represents the other knowledges, including knowledges from the North and other influences that schools use to support students with disabilities. The roof also protects the house from the elements and represents the space where accommodations can be made to allow for changes and outside influences.

This research has concluded that many of the solutions to the challenges that teachers face in including students with disabilities can be found within the community. I was able to look at the Gīkūyū community not from a deficit point of view but as a community with values and practices that have been used in the past to include children with disabilities in communal and educational activities. The teachers and principals I interviewed said that if they followed the Gīkūyū cultural ways and adhered to its values, including relationships, children with disabilities could be included in all school activities and there would be people available to provide support in the classroom. This is what researchers Moll (2014), Subero, Vujasinović and Esteban-Guitart (2017) and Vygotsky (1978) refer to as using the funds of knowledge. Moll, Amanti, Neff, and González (1992, p. 133) define funds of knowledge as ‘these historically-accumulated and culturally-developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being.’ Funds of knowledge originate from peoples’ lived experiences (Sobero et al., 2017) and they suggest that teachers incorporate these funds of knowledge into the curriculum.

Northern frameworks such as UDL which are suggested for use in inclusive classrooms are similar to the Gīkūyū ways of teaching and many of the UDL concepts are not new to the

Gĩkũyũ people. The Gĩkũyũ used concepts such as peer teaching and cooperative learning in educating and including students with disabilities long before UDL was promoted for use in inclusive education. What is problematic is that these frameworks are labelled as ‘new’, Northern ways of practicing inclusive education yet they are an example of erasure and/or reclaiming of Southern knowledge. My findings are compatible with the research undertaken by Song (2017) in 15 South African schools about the applicability of UDL to classrooms there. She found that teachers were using strategies similar to those promoted by UDL before she introduced the framework to them.

The world view from which UDL arose and that is reflected in its approach is incongruent with the Kenyan context. Many of the strategies may not make sense to the people meant to use them, i.e., the teachers and principals, although they may make sense to the practitioners in the North. For example, UDL is a technology-based framework, premised on technology that is unavailable in Kenyan classrooms. I propose that Southern challenges need solutions from the South and I concur with Connell (2011, p. 1372) who argues that policies and theories that come from the global North ‘are conditioned by the perspectives on the world that are available in the metropole’ [and aim to solve] ‘problems internal to their society without reference to its global positioning’. Simply put, teachers in Kenya would benefit from strategies that are specific to the Kenyan context.

### **Benefits of using an Indigenous methodological approach**

There are benefits to using an Indigenous methodological approach. I am Gĩkũyũ and all except one of the participants in this research were Gĩkũyũ, but she was fluent in Gĩkũyũ language. The teachers and principals in this study all carry the shadow of colonisation, as do I. An Indigenous methodology was therefore a perfect fit for this study. I have grown up with Gĩkũyũ cultural knowledge and connection, my education was based on the Gĩkũyũ

knowledge systems and world view and I was able to situate myself in the space occupied by my people. I brought my lived experience into this research and drew on it to guide me, and this gave me confidence in using an Indigenous methodology. By contrast, when I used a Western approach in the first phase of the research, it occurred to me that I was perpetuating the paternalistic approach of conducting research *on* the Gĩkũyũ people. Therefore, in the second phase of the research, I made a conscious decision to prioritise the Gĩkũyũ framework, which resulted in research *with* and *for* the Gĩkũyũ people.

The Gĩkũyũ framework privileges the voices and lived experiences of the teachers and principals, not my voice, hence giving power back to the participants.

Another benefit of the Gĩkũyũ framework was the use of story-telling, which is an Indigenous way of giving and receiving information among the Gĩkũyũ. In the process, the power imbalance in the researcher-participant relationship is removed or reduced because the research respectfully allowed the storytellers to tell their stories without too much interruption. The Indigenous methodological approach also provided flexibility in the use of language. I speak Gĩkũyũ, which was spoken by the participants, and together we privileged it because it was more appropriate to use it than English. In addition, I had the benefit of being an insider to Gĩkũyũ culture, values and practices. Like the participants, I was educated under the colonial British system. From Standards 1 to 4, students learned through Gĩkũyũ language and all my teachers were Kenyan. From Standard 5 to Form 4 (Year 5 to Year 10 in Australia) I attended a boarding school that was run by Consolata missionaries from Britain and another in Forms 5 and 6 (Years 11 and 12 in Australia) run by missionaries from Italy. In both these schools I was taught to hate Gĩkũyũ cultural values and practices. Our parents were discouraged from coming to see us except on two designated Sundays in a term. I learned to look at everything including family and community relationships through a Northern lens.

The use of the Gĩkũyũ framework was thus a journey for me to explore and validate my approach to research and to teaching practice, an approach that may be of benefit to others considering an Indigenous framework and research in an Indigenous community. As stated earlier, an important lesson learnt was that by using an Indigenous methodology, I was privileging Southern theory over Northern theory (Connell, 2007). It was important for me not to perpetuate the hegemonic view that Western methodologies contain the only lens with which to view the world.

### **Similarities and differences in using an Indigenous Gĩkũyũ framework and Northern methodologies.**

Table 7-1 below compares the results obtained from conducting research using the Gĩkũyũ framework and Northern methodologies. In this section, I demonstrate the value and richness of using the Indigenous (Gĩkũyũ) framework in gathering data from Gĩkũyũ participants compared to using a Northern framework. I critique the applicability of Northern methodologies to the Kenyan context and question their usefulness in Kenyan schools. I argue that Kenya should look inwards towards Southern frameworks that are based on Indigenous values and practices for both conducting research and the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms, instead of uncritically importing Northern constructs. I use Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as an example of a Northern framework promoted for supporting students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms in the global South. Table 7-1 below is a comparison of the Indigenous Gĩkũyũ Framework and UDL.

Table 7-1: Comparison of Indigenous Gikūyū Framework and the Northern framework, UDL

	<b>Indigenous Gikūyū Framework</b>	<b>Northern Framework UDL</b>
<b>Approach</b>	Asset/strengths-based approach that looks at existing resources such as family, community and culture.	Deficit-based approach: looking for problems and identifying needs. Teachers spoke about what they lacked to make inclusion successful: e.g., lack of both personnel and resource materials, lack of training, lack of space, poor infrastructure and inadequate funding.
	Use of community connections and links made with traditional values.  Relationships with family are paramount in providing support to students with disabilities. Collaboration of family/relatives in raising and providing education and care of students with disabilities.	Focused on external solutions, i.e., they look for solutions outside the community.  Frames solutions in terms of what is lacking and inability of community to implement the inclusive education policy. Schools lack books, cds, videos, charts and other material items, accessible paths, assistive devices, computers and photocopiers and extra teachers in the classroom to support students with disabilities.
	Elder siblings and families assist the child with disabilities.  Elders and parents considered as sources of knowledge.	Caters for child as an individual. Adheres to neoliberal principals of producing individuals for the market who are productive in the market economy.
	Based on philosophy of dignity, charity and collective responsibility	Based on a Northern perspective of inclusive education.
	Internally focused for solutions	Externally-focused for solutions
	Frames the solutions in terms of colonisation and resistance- colonisation destroyed some of the cultural values but the community continues to decolonise itself.	Disregards or erases Kenyan contexts such as colonisation.
<b>Method</b>	Use of story-telling: teachers found it easier to tell their stories.	Semi-structured interviews: they are contrived and can seem unnatural.
<b>Teacher awareness of the Kenyan context</b>	Teachers acknowledged that challenges relate to the history of colonisation and the resulting social and economic context.	Northern methodologies do not take into consideration the Kenyan context, its histories, cultural values and practices. Nor do they recognise the history of colonisation (Connell, 2007).
<b>Relationships</b>	Relationships were built with the teachers and principals. Teachers were receptive and welcoming.  Researcher considered to be an insider on the basis of shared culture and history experience.	Unbalanced relationship: researcher/ participant. Teachers more closed and responded with short sentences. Researcher considered an outsider.
<b>Respect</b>	Demonstrated respect in the Gikūyū way.	Demonstrated respect as required in Western research.

Note. Essentials of UDL from Gargiulo & Metcalf (2013).

Table 7-2. Comparison of Instructional Strategies

Indigenous Gikūyū Framework	Essentials of UDL an example of a Northern Framework	Similarities
<p><b>Multiple ways of teaching</b></p> <p>Code switching from English to Swahili and Gikūyū.</p> <p>Sit students who have visual impairments at the front of the class.</p> <p>Learning by watching and apprenticeship.</p> <p>Use of clay for projects.</p> <p>Cooking.</p>	<p><b>Multiple means of representation. The <i>what</i> of learning</b></p> <p>Adapting for different ages, learning styles, stages of development and sensory needs.</p> <p>Adjusting material to suit student.</p> <p>Accommodating the environment-enlarging print, books, podcasts, videos.</p> <p>One-on-one support.</p> <p>Varied activities and resources, e.g., books, posters, videos.</p>	<p>Both use various strategies to present lesson content.</p>
<p><b>Multiple ways of engaging students</b></p> <p>Group work.</p> <p>Ability grouping.</p> <p>One-on-one support.</p> <p>Giving students work at their level.</p> <p>Extra tuition/invite elders to tell their stories.</p>	<p><b>Multiple means of engagement. The <i>why</i> of learning</b></p> <p>Group work.</p> <p>Considering students' interests.</p> <p>Building models.</p> <p>Debating/discussion.</p> <p>Using song/rap, stories</p>	<p>Both have various ways that students can present their learning.</p> <p>Group activities: cooperative and peer learning.</p>
<p><b>Multiple ways students show their learning</b></p> <p>Group activities: Learning through group activities Sharing and working cooperatively.</p> <p>Use of songs, stories, proverbs and dance.</p> <p>Role play.</p> <p>Use of clay for projects.</p> <p>Painting, drawing.</p> <p>Inclusive – all children participated. Partial participation for students with disabilities assisted by relatives.</p>	<p><b>Multiple means of action and expression. The <i>how</i> of learning</b></p> <p>Group activities: collaborative learning.</p> <p>Presentation through oral reports, song/rap, stories, dance.</p> <p>Visual demonstrations.</p> <p>Charts, written reports.</p> <p>Portfolios.</p> <p>Journal/diary, cd, video, song, dance.</p> <p>Inclusive: reliance on technology – computers and machines.</p>	<p>Both allow students to present work in various ways.</p> <p>Inclusive: both encourage participation by all.</p>

The data in Table 7-1 above illustrates that there are differences between the Gikūyū and Northern frameworks. The first difference is the approach used by the two frameworks. The

Gīkūyū framework is an asset- or strengths-based approach while the Northern framework is deficit based. The Gīkūyū framework looks at the assets and strengths in the community including family, community and culture, whereas the UDL approach capitalises on what is not available in the community to include students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. During my visit to the schools in Phase 1 of the research, teachers and principals reported lack of resources for supporting students with disabilities. These included support teachers/teachers' aides in the classroom, accessible paths, assistive devices, computers and other material resources. In Phase 2, when I used the Gīkūyū framework, teachers and principals indicated that they had a lot of resources available in the community, such as family and community support, cultural values and practices and relationships to support students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

The second difference lies in the identity I created using each of the frameworks when entering the principals' and teachers' space. Each framework influenced the nature of the relationship I had with the participants. When I conducted research using the Gīkūyū framework, I was considered an insider. I spoke to the teachers in Gīkūyū. I entered their space with respect, showing the Gīkūyū way by introducing myself with my Gīkūyū names and explaining at length my place of birth and where I was brought up. The teachers and principals in turn introduced themselves in the same way and we established a mutual relationship. During the semi-structured interviews in Phase 1, which was based on the Northern framework for research practice, I introduced myself by stating that I was a researcher from the University of New England in New South Wales Australia. By doing so, I had constructed my identity as an outsider and I was treated as one. I had entered their space using a process that was ethically appropriate according to the terms specified by my university. I was necessarily a researcher outsider, using these protocols with an agenda that

involved gathering data and building knowledge that is valued in the global North and this located the teacher and principal participants mainly as data sources.

The third difference was the outcome of my dual identity as an outsider and outsider. When I used the Gīkūyū framework, teachers and principals felt able to tell their stories freely.

However, when I used the semi-structured interviews compatible with a Northern framework, I received short and measured answers from the teachers and principals. To give a specific example, when I used the semi-structured interviews in Phase 1, the teachers and principals made no connection between the social and historical context of Kenya and the challenges they faced in the implementation of the inclusive education policy, *The National Special Needs Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009). However, the story-telling in Phase 2 allowed these same teachers and principals to open up and discuss the links between social and economic issues, the Kenyan education system and the implications for their realities. During these story-telling sessions, the teachers and principals acknowledged the effect colonisation had had on state education and in particular on the care and schooling of people with disabilities. Teachers said ‘we used to----’, or ‘the Gīkūyū used to ----’, referring to the time before colonisation.

The fourth difference pertained to the resources available for the classroom that were described by teachers and principals. Using the Gīkūyū framework, the teachers and principals indicated that a number of resources were available to support students with disabilities in the classroom. The main resource was based on relationships between the school, families and the wider community and the teachers spoke of using family, relatives and community members to support students with disabilities in mainstream schools.

Although they spoke of the need to strengthen partnerships with families, they said that collaboration with families in addressing their children’s needs was based on Gīkūyū values

and practices, which placed the care of all children, including children with disabilities, on the community. As discussed in Chapter 5, Gikūyū culture is based on relationships. The saying ‘*mwana ni wa mūhīrīga*’ (a child belongs to the clan) explains this relationship. Teachers and principals added that they used siblings to help their brothers and sisters with disabilities at school. UDL, on the other hand, relies not on family or community support but on material resources such as assistive devices. UDL is a framework that is based on neoliberal market ideas. Neoliberalism devolves responsibility from the state to individuals and communities; in effect, it is the responsabilisation of individuals, which assigns personal responsibility to the individual to work hard, pass exams and find work. In a neoliberal world, policy makers and politicians, or ministries or departments of education are not accountable. It becomes the community’s problem and they are blamed when things go wrong.

The fifth difference discussed in Table 7-1 is that the Gikūyū framework pointed towards finding solutions to challenges from within the community. When I spoke to the teachers and principals about where help for children with disabilities came from, they indicated that they asked for help from the community as well as from faith-based organisations, such as church groups. They explained how parents and community members as well as other schools come to their aid in response to their requests. In contrast, Northern frameworks focus on external solutions: for example, during the first phase of the research, the teachers said that they needed funding from the Ministry of Education and Training and from donors from other countries (the North).

The sixth difference presented in Table 7-2 between Gikūyū and Northern frameworks relates to inclusive instructional strategies, a list of which I identified in both phases of the research. The strategies identified in Phase 2 related particularly to the Kenyan context, were therefore

relevant, more likely to be taken up by educators and likely to be effective in the context, although further research is warranted in this area to verify this. For example, one strategy was code switching from English to Swahili and Gĩkũyũ to explain concepts to students; another was the use of Gĩkũyũ songs, stories and proverbs and a third was the use of locally-available materials such as clay. The strategies identified in Phase 1 of the research were based on Northern concepts such as the use of videos and podcasts. The public schools where this research was conducted were in areas of limited resources and family deprivation and would struggle to buy the resources suggested by Northern frameworks such as UDL. From this analysis, it is fair to conclude that since the impacts of colonisation and globalisation will not disappear, it is necessary to create a blend of Indigenous and Northern frameworks that suits the Kenyan population, a blend that values local practices, beliefs and values and selectively blends in what is suitable from the Northern framework.

### **Chapter synopsis**

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that using a Gĩkũyũ framework to conduct research in an Indigenous context can yield richer results than a Northern framework. I have also shown that the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms in Kenya would be better achieved by using a hybrid curriculum that privileges Southern practices that are based on relationships. A hybrid curriculum that prioritises Gĩkũyũ or African knowledges, values and practices in schools, presented alongside Northern knowledges would keep the children grounded in their culture.

The following chapter, Chapter 8, discusses the effect of neoliberalism on inclusive education. During the data collection in Phase 1, neoliberal practices were found to be present in the schools. This chapter was born out of the researcher's desire to point out how neoliberalism is experienced by teachers and principals in the schools where the research was conducted.

## Chapter 8

### EFFECTS OF NEOLIBERALISM ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

*Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter. (Achebe, 1994)*

*The danger of a single story. (Adichie, 2009)*

In the introduction to this thesis I referred to inclusive education policy as a ‘wicked problem’ (Australian Public Services Commission, 2007). Wicked problems refer to policy problems that are complex and beyond the ability of one organisation to provide a solution. Wicked problems also present conflicting goals (Australian Public Services Commission, 2007). This is the situation facing the special education sector in Kenya. While the aim of inclusion is to ensure the enrolment and participation of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms regardless of their level of participation, the goals and values of neoliberalism are guided by accountability and testing where only the best are valued (Connell, 2013). Stakeholders, teachers and parents agree that implementing an inclusive education policy is complex.

The data collected in this research revealed that the teachers and principals interviewed were experiencing neoliberal practices in their schools and were consciously or unconsciously subverting the neoliberal agenda. In this section I highlight some of the issues (shown in Figure 8-1) that make inclusive education policy a ‘wicked problem’ by discussing various ways in which neoliberalism has affected inclusive education in Kenya. I explain how the hegemonic neoliberal culture has changed the way schools operate and how teachers teach. I also point out how the neoliberal culture in schools promotes exclusion of students who are different (Figure 8-2). As Slee and Allan (2011, p. 179) point out:

*There is the tendency to speak in one breath about inclusive education but fail to acknowledge the policy context that presses us relentlessly towards educational exclusion in the other. Here we refer to marketization of schooling, national*

*curriculum, ... standardized testing; published league tables [and] a pernicious regime of inspection.*

These two issues will be discussed concurrently as it is not possible to discuss one without the other.

Figure 8-1: Effects of neoliberalism on inclusive education (Mutuota, 2019)



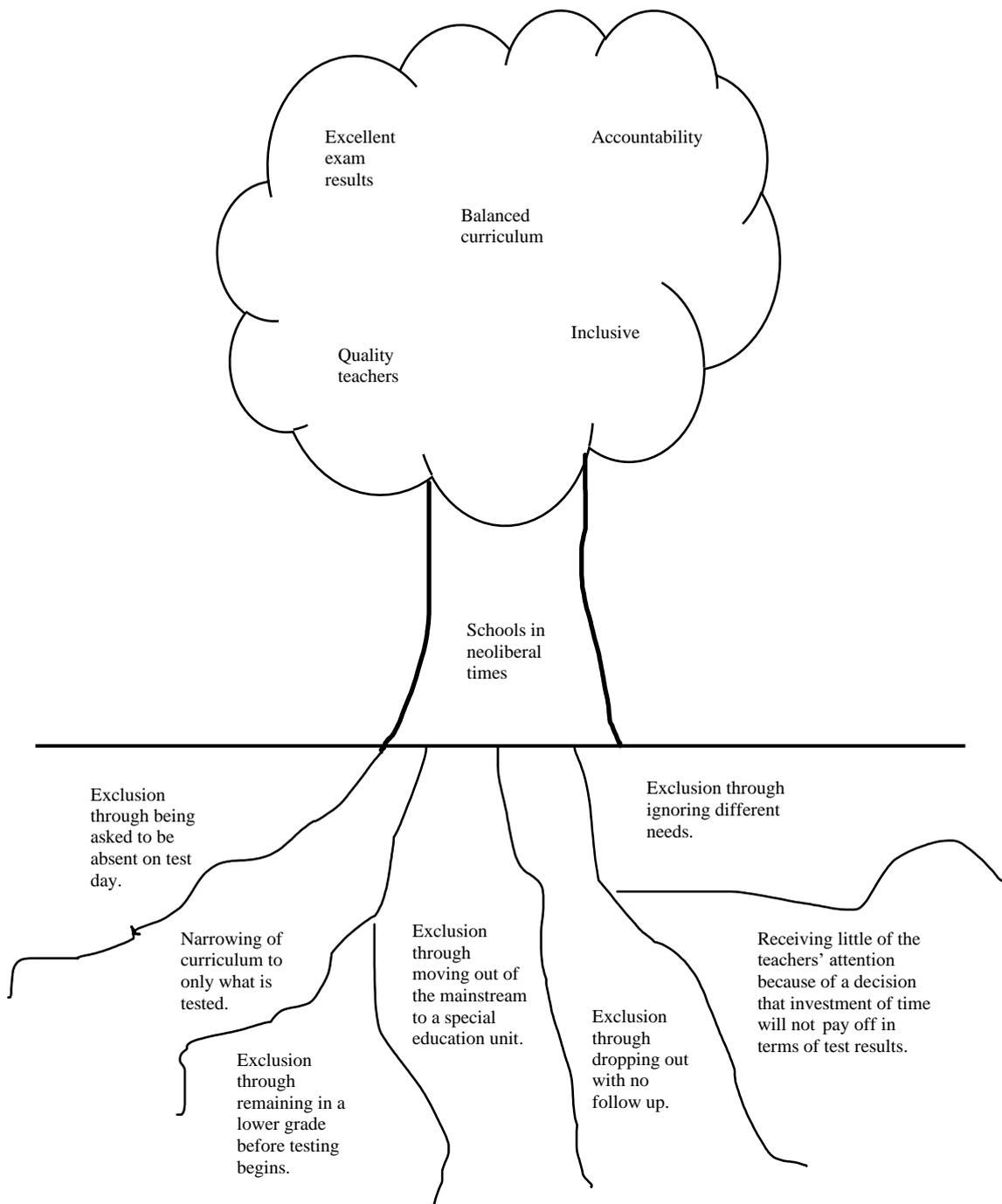


Figure 8-2. Exclusion of students with disabilities (Mutuota, 2019)

Figure 8-2 shows ways in which students with disabilities are excluded in the mainstream classroom due to the demands of a neoliberal school culture. The tree represents a vibrant school that promotes itself as inclusive and has excellent school results among other

successes. In order to maintain the façade of excellent schools, students with disabilities are excluded in various ways.

## **Testing Regimes and Performativity**

### **a) Testing regimes**

As stated earlier, standardised testing results in practices that exclude some students such as students with disabilities. One of the teachers in this study, Wangūi, confirmed this, saying that student testing using the same exam was carried out for all students with and without disabilities. She said, ‘They sit a common exam.’ (Wangūi, 14/7/2015). The teachers interviewed for this study said that by including students with disabilities in their classrooms their schools were disadvantaged because the performance of these students affected school ranking. As a result, schools would often prevent students with disabilities from participating in these examinations, hence excluding them. Maina said that students who were struggling were advised to repeat classes: ‘When he came, he was given an interview and he got everything wrong so the teachers were advising that the child should go back or repeat’ (Maina, 7/7/2019). Maina, said that this happened often.

Another form of exclusion was carried out enrolling students disabilities who attended mainstream classrooms into a special education unit. Maina explained that although students with disabilities like Waihenya (pseudonym) might be receiving classroom instruction in the mainstream classroom in the name of inclusion, their reports were produced in the special education class, a way of making them not count in the test scores. He said, ‘They normally get reports. There is a file for them in the special unit’ (Maina, 7/7/2015).

In a neoliberal culture, students are pitched against each other as competitors. Successful students are rewarded for good scores in examinations and those who do not perform well are named and shamed in public forums, newspapers and school assemblies, a practice common

in Kenya. At Mubariki Primary School, I attended a school assembly where students who had achieved good results in their tests were paraded in front of the school and praised for good performance.

In a neoliberal culture students are made to compete against each other. Wanjiru hinted at the nature of the competition in the classrooms when she said that she used the story of Wangū wa Makeri to encourage the girls to work as hard as the boys and pass exams. She said, 'Mostly I find myself using story telling whereby I am able to encourage the students. You know we have Wangū wa Makeri. Some girls feel that the boys are great and are outdoing them in the classroom. So I come up with the story of Wangū wa makeri.'

### **Performativity**

Performativity is used in schools to judge teachers' and schools' performance. Wamuyu explained that at the end of every month she sent a performance report to the central education office. She said:

*We call them the monthly returns. It is there to show you who is integrated in which class. It will show you the vocational learners, it will tell you how many children are currently in the special unit, those who come day in day out, it will tell the teachers who are included, the assistants of inclusive learning, we have records of these integrated ones, records of their performance, from when they came. When we have an exam, we have a teacher who enters everything that we do, whether it is academic, co-curricular activities, other activities, community participation and the information is available in school right now.*

In Kenya, according to the teachers interviewed, the results of National exams are compared on league tables. Teachers said that students with disabilities affected the performance of the school negatively. Wangūi said that she would like to see all the students with disabilities kept in special education classes, explaining that her performance was affected by having students with disabilities in her class. She said, 'I don't find including students with disabilities good for me. I am looking at a class of 40 students, 30 [without disabilities] are okay, I can manage. I have 5 who have disabilities also. It does not sit well with me. I find

that this affects my teaching performance' (Wangūi, 14/7/2015). In her research in Kenya, Maina (1998) found that teachers were so scared of not performing as required that they did not question 'teaching to the test'. The teachers in Maina's (1998) study asked 'What can we little people at the bottom of the ladder possibly do? Ours is to serve the system as it were. We only teach what we are expected to. We have to complete the syllabus. If we don't teach what the examination council wants us to teach, our students will fail. And then we cannot explain such failure to the community, administration and even to ourselves. We assume that those above us know what is best for us' (Maina, 1998, p. 81). This is a sentiment expressed by teachers in this study; they said that they felt helpless and worked mainly to prepare students for exams.

Performativity encourages teacher to teach to the middle. Teachers interviewed for this study were teaching to the middle. They applied their focus to those students who did not need too much help. Wambūi explained, 'I put them in ability groups, especially when reading, because those with reading problems, there is no need to group them together with those who do not have the disability' (Wambūi:14/7/2015). In a sense the teachers were allocating their attention to those students who were likely to demonstrate a return on investment by passing the tests. Students most unlikely to pass the tests were thus positioned as an unfair impost on the teachers. As explained on the previous page, Wangūi explained that her performance was affected by the fact that she had students with disabilities and for whom she had to differentia, a problem compounded by the large class sizes.

Another form of exclusion of students in schools according to the teachers interviewed is carried out by keeping them in a lower grade before testing. Keeping students back and then allowing them to drop out is, according to the teachers interviewed for this study, a common practice in Kenya. It stems from the requirement for all students, including those with disabilities, to sit the same examination. The teachers interviewed said that some students

dropped out of school or repeated a class several times. Wangarī said sometimes some repeat the classes [to keep them from sitting the exams] and sometimes they would drop out just before exams (Wangarī:15/7/2015).

According to the teachers who were interviewed for this study, there is also pressure from parents to withdraw students with disabilities from classrooms. Wamūyū explained that sometimes the school received demands from parents of students without disabilities to withdraw a child with disabilities because they were disruptive in the classroom. She explained that some parents would come to her and say, ‘We don’t want our children going to Standard 2 with that boy [with disability], call the mother, let the mother withdraw this child’ (Wamūyū: 15/7/2015). Parents of children with no disabilities felt that their learning was affected by the presence of students with disabilities in the same classroom because they took a lot of the teacher’s time.

### **Standardised curriculum**

In a neoliberal culture the curriculum is narrowed to only what is tested and it usually does not suit students with disabilities. The curriculum is top-down. Teachers receive it from policy makers and are not expected to alter it. The teachers interviewed for this study said that they did not make changes to the curriculum. Waithīra said that teachers adhered to the curriculum document and they could not make any adjustments as it was prepared by curriculum developers. She said, ‘We don’t make any changes’ (Waithīra: 7/7/2015).

Wanjikū also said that teachers did not make any changes to the curriculum when she said, ‘The curriculum, I think that is the work of curriculum developers’ (Wanjikū: 7/7/2015).

Those teachers who were teaching exam classes at the time of data collection were more up-front about not wanting students with disabilities in their classrooms. Wangari said, ‘For tests and exams, they do the same [as the students without disabilities]. And it is hard for them.

You know they will not do well. What can you do?’ (Wangari: 15/7 2015). The teachers expressed feeling helpless in the face of neoliberal, market-driven standards and teachers and principals alike felt powerless to make any adjustments to the curriculum. Principal Wambura expressed her frustration that the teachers and principals had no input in curriculum implementation. She said, ‘The problem is they do not include the implementers, the people at the grassroots. So there is a big gap there. The policy makers just make policies and they do not include implementers’ (Wambura, 8 July 2015).

### **Language**

The language of neoliberalism was found to in use in the schools in this study. The teachers and principals I interviewed talked about accountability and meeting targets, which shows that they have accepted the language of neoliberalism and it had become part of their repertoire. As stated earlier, Wamūyū used the language of neoliberalism to explain reasons for record keeping stating that ‘we have records of these integrated ones, records of their performance’ (Wamūyū, 15/7/2015).

### **School choice**

This study identified that private schools are reluctant to enrol students with disabilities and encourage parents to seek enrolment for their children with disabilities in public schools. Principal Wanjiku explained that a student came to her school because the private school refused to accept her because of her disability. She said, ‘We have another one who is in Class 5. She came from a private school. They couldn’t have her because she had a disability. We discovered that there was something wrong with her. She was taken for assessment and an assessment was done. We were told that she has mild autism. She has been accommodated in the normal mainstream classroom. So we just take them as the other kids. We don’t discriminate [against] them. They should be given an equal chance, just like any other

children' (Wanjiku 7/7/2019). Clark, Millward & Robson (1999) found that in England schools that were committed to inclusive education principles felt that including students with disabilities made them less attractive in the marketplace.

## **Funding**

The teachers and principals in this study said that funding for students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms was inadequate. The teachers and principals interviewed for this study did not have an understanding of the neoliberal agenda in schools and blamed the lack of funding on the *Free Primary Education* policy that caused the increase of enrolments to unmanageable levels. For example, Mwai said, 'We are challenged in the sense that our enrolment is high ... we lack funds to implement inclusive education. We would like to help them [students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms] as much as possible. But financially we are challenged' (Mwai:14/7/ 2015).

Another funding issue discussed by principal Wamuyu is that although the parents had cooperatively built rooms to ensure their children with disabilities were accommodated in a boarding facility to avoid the unsafe walk to school every day, the idea was not taken up by the central and county governments because they did not want the responsibility of continually funding the boarding school. Principal Wamuyu said, 'There are three big rooms ...[but] who would be responsible for these children? Who? Was it the school? Is it the county government? Who would take care of them?' (Wamuyu 15/7/2015). At the time of the data collection for this research, the boarding rooms were sitting empty. Mwai explained that his school had resorted to requesting funds from international NGOs and pointed out that some of the facilities in his school, such as the classrooms and toilets, had been constructed by NGOs. Another NGO provided uniforms and shoes to all the students at the school. Principal Mwai said, 'Because of the policy of free education we need to give access to each and every person. We have no limit in the number of students that we need to admit in our

classes. [It] becomes a challenge to [provide] special attention to those young children [with disabilities], it becomes a challenge because the teacher is also handling other students. We use the available facilities in the school' (Mwai, 14/7/2015). As Wambura said, 'The problem is they do not include the implementers, the people at the grassroots. So there is a big gap there. The policy makers just make policies and they do not include implementers' (Wambura 8/7/2015).

### **Marketised teacher in the global education business**

The teachers and principals whom I interviewed in Kenya said that teachers were expected to attend PD courses to improve their performance. However, government funding for PD was not available for mainstream class teachers who were expected to include students with disabilities in their classes. Mwai explained that the PD provided by the MOE was only for those teachers working in special education units. He said:

*There are professional developments, others through distance learning, they get special education [PD] on how to handle students with disabilities. And also the Ministry of Education organises seminars on inclusive education and making sure that teachers are sensitised enough to provide all students with access to education.* (Mwai:14/7/2015)

In this study, the responses of some teachers and principals indicated that if they wanted to gain more training in the inclusion of students with disabilities, they had to meet the cost of PD from their personal income. Principal Maina said that PD was available in his school for teachers in the special education unit that was attached to the school for students diagnosed with autism. Principal Maina said, 'We normally have in-service education training (IN-SET) conducted by the Autism Society of Kenya ... Mainstream teachers enrol privately in local universities' (Maina, 7/7/2015). He explained that those who wanted to acquire special education qualifications had to meet their own costs for a diploma or degree. He said, 'Most of them have diplomas, others have degrees. So they enrol privately in the local universities and study for the diploma or degree' [additional qualifications in special education] (Maina,

7/7/2015). None of the mainstream teachers whom I interviewed admitted to attending the seminars/workshops to improve their instructional inclusive education strategies. Thus, it appears that while PD was available for some teachers in relation to some elements of inclusion, it was not universally available for teachers in mainstream settings.

Neoliberalism de-professionalises teachers. Wanjikū explained that the curriculum was ‘the work of curriculum developers’ (Wanjikū: 7/7/ 2015) and that teachers could not make changes. They are also made to compete against each other. Wangūi said, ‘I have a teacher here who has done special education, so when I am quite stuck at times, I go to him and ask him for help. At times I will browse the internet. At times I go for autism seminar. You have to pay for the internet on your own’ (Wangūi: 7/7/2015). Since most schools and many homes in Kenya do not have internet access, the teachers themselves pay for internet access at the local cafes to do school work, such as finding resources to better their classroom performance so that they can get ahead of their colleagues

### **Chapter synopsis**

This chapter explored the tensions that exist in including students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms in the face of neoliberal policies whose tenets act against the goals of inclusion. Neoliberal discourse purports that every child should be educated so that they can be responsible for their own wellbeing. This is in contrast to the Gīkūyū way of thinking in which every child receives Gīkūyū education and has roles to play for the good of all in the community, no matter their level of ability/disability. The Gīkūyū philosophy of inclusion is about as different as possible from the neoliberal agenda of inclusion of making everyone fit in to pass the tests and become employable. As Bloom (1995, pp. 429-430) points out, in an inclusive classroom,

*... we need to learn to function as an orchestra, sometimes performing a classical symphony, but more usually improvising jazz. Wonderful music requires many*

*different kinds of instruments, with different ranges, different tones, and different levels of participation. But they all must be properly tuned and able to make the appropriate individual contribution to the whole. The best music happens when each individual musician is a virtuoso who integrates his or her unique creative gift with other gifted performers until the results of their efforts make a melody and a harmony, a sound that is far greater than that of each individual alone.*

If Kenyan teachers are compliant with neoliberal practices in schools, they are, to extend Bloom's analogy, attempting to educate all children to become violinists rather than teaching them most appropriate musical instrument for their strengths and abilities. In other words, they will be accepting the hegemonic practices that have plagued Africa for years and have eroded Indigenous values and relationships.

I have shown in this chapter that teachers find it hard to practice inclusion because of competing neoliberal demands. As discussed above, neoliberal practices make it difficult for teachers to teach to the strengths of each individual child, particularly for students with disabilities who require additional/different supports to enable their participation in classroom activities. The teacher's role in neoliberal cultures is reduced to managing and enacting a set curriculum rather than adjusting that curriculum to meet the needs of the diverse students in the classroom (Giroux, 2013, p. 461). Thus, teachers are operating more as technicians, implementing pre-determined learning opportunities rather than structuring the learning around the funds of knowledge brought in to the classroom by each student (Gonzalez, 2005).

Teachers are aware that inclusion means that equitable educational opportunities are available to students with disabilities as they are for students without disabilities but due to the demand to produce good exam results, they teach to the middle. The testing regimes and curricula that are skewed towards the production market do not support the goal of inclusion. Teachers have been reduced to labourers on the production line and their job is to produce more workers.

The discussion above explains the difficulty teachers face in meeting the needs of students with disabilities in mainstream schools because of competing neoliberal practices. The teachers whom I interviewed in Kenya find themselves negotiating Indigenous values and practices and neoliberal demands in the classroom. A balance is difficult to achieve because the teachers have been trained for the neoliberal market using a curriculum aimed at producing teachers who continue to promote neoliberal ways of teaching. My own experience as a school child in Kenya reflects that positioning. I grew up hearing that I had to work hard and go to university so that I could find a well-paying job. I now realise that I was sucked into the neoliberal vortex.

I conclude by suggesting that there should be another way of measuring success for students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms instead of the current system where success is calculated by passing exams. A more appropriate way of measuring success for students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms would be by providing them with an education that is just, includes Indigenous knowledges, and prepares them for life, not just the labour market. The current system based on neoliberal ways only produces the ‘Matthew effect’ (Connell, 2019, p. 111): ‘For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him’ (Matthew 22:29 New International Version). In other words, those students who are already doing well in the class receive most of the teacher’s attention while the students with disabilities continue to be disadvantaged. The next chapter explores how teachers, principals and researchers disrupt neoliberal practices in inclusive education.

## Chapter 9

### SUBVERSION OF NEOLIBERAL PRACTICES IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS IN KENYA

*This world keeps trying to stomp out our strength and smother our stories. It doesn't realise that one smoke alarm can wake up a neighbourhood, that one song can start a revolution. This world forgets that I sing with the strength of my mother. (Godfrey, 2016)*

This chapter addresses the latter part of the conceptual framework, disrupting neoliberalism. I reflect on my observations of the classrooms and my interviews with the teachers and principals about different ways in which they in their everyday lives engage in 'everyday resistance' (Scott, 2005) to subvert neoliberalism in their classrooms and schools. I will begin by defining resistance using the available literature and then look at how teachers and principals are consciously or unconsciously subverting the neoliberal agenda in schools in Kenya. I will also highlight the role researchers like me could play in enlightening the teachers in Kenya about the effects of neoliberalism in Kenyan schools and in a small way of disrupting its march.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

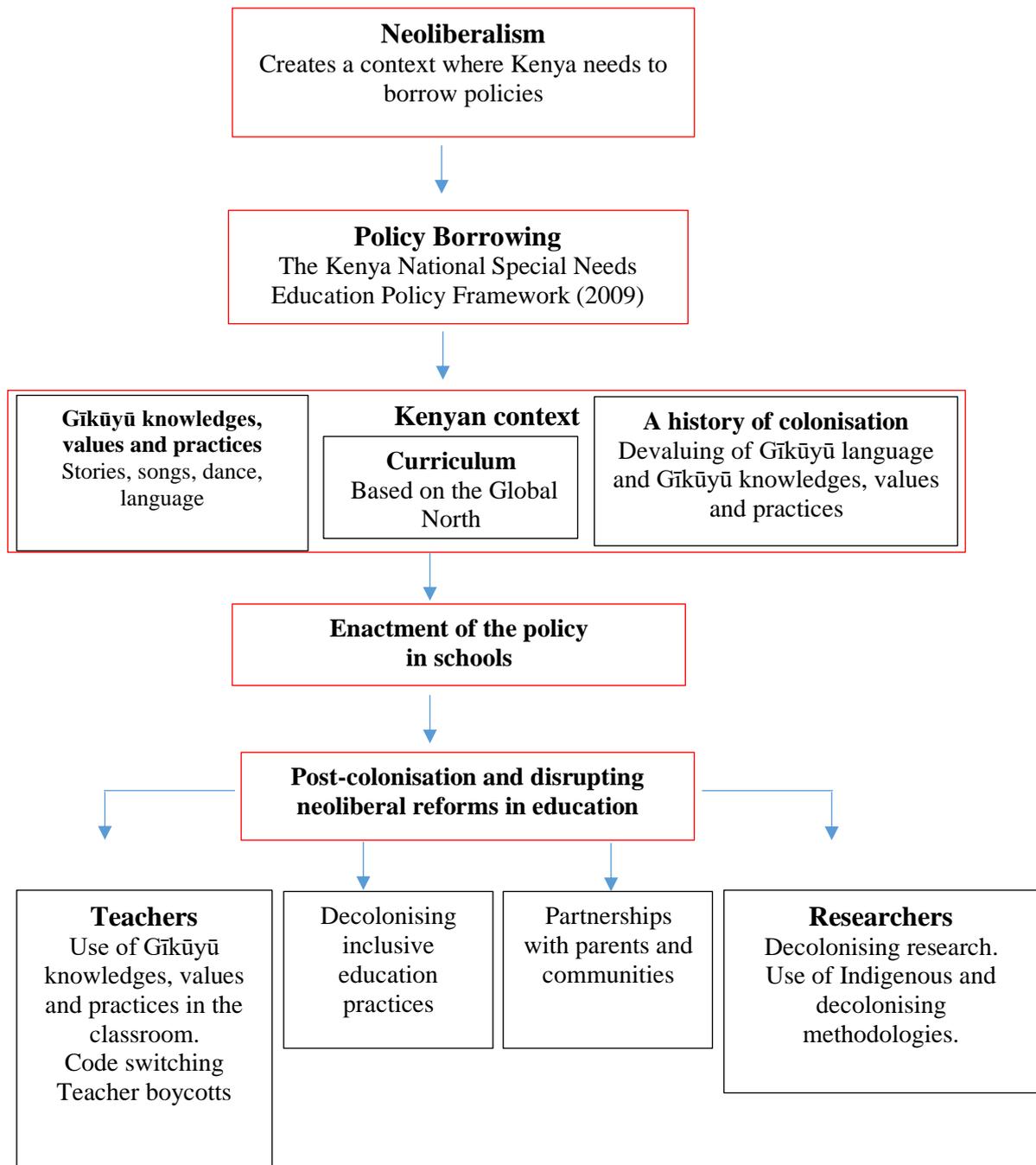


Figure 9-1: Disrupting neoliberal practices in inclusive classrooms in Kenya (Mutuota, 2019)

## **Resistance**

Resistance is defined as ‘oppositional activity’ (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2016, p. 418), ‘a social action that involves agency; and that act is carried out in some kind of oppositional relation to power’ (Johansson & Vinthagen 2016, p. 424). Resistance can be overt, such as the Arab Spring uprising in 2010, or covert, such as small acts teachers often engage in.

Resistance is also situated in time, space and relationships. According to Ball and Olmedo (2013) and Duckworth et al. (2016), resistance is not a set-piece process; it presents in many forms and structures. In the age of technology, resistance has evolved to include social media.

Although teachers still use some of the traditional resistance methods, for example picketing, today they have a larger list of ways and means of resistance, which includes blogging, Facebook and Twitter. One example is ‘You Can’t Test This’ in Britain, which resisted standardised testing of children (Stevenson, 2017). The need to disrupt neoliberal practices in education is now more urgent than ever because, according to Giroux (2012), the effects of neoliberalism on schools and teachers, such as deskilling the teachers, weakening unions and dumbing down the curriculum, are pertinent.

In their classrooms, teachers engage in small ways to disrupt neoliberalism; this often begins with self-care (Ball & Olmedo, 2013). Ball and Olmedo (2013, p. 86) explain that self-care occurs ‘when the teacher begins to look at the how(s) of power inside and around him or her, the how(s) of his or her beliefs and practices. In these moments, the power relations in which the teacher is imbricated come to the fore’. As a result, teachers share their worries with other teachers and this in effect translates into shared understanding of their concerns and mapping out ways to make changes. Teachers begin to challenge the neoliberal culture of individualisation which performativity promotes. Ball & Olmedo (2013) suggest that in order

for teachers to be effective in disrupting neoliberalism, they should get together with others in their staffrooms, in union meetings and on social websites.

### **Education as a site of resistance in Kenya**

Education has been a site of resistance since the first missionaries established mission schools in Kenya in the 1900s (Wamagatta, 2001). Independent schools were established to counteract the oppression and alienation of the mission schools (Wamagatta, 2001).

According to Wamagatta (2001, p.126) ‘the independent school movement was also a manifestation of the growing political consciousness amongst the [Gĩkũyũ] which found expression in a desire to control their own affairs.’ In the independent schools, the Gĩkũyũ celebrated their cultural values and practices and learnt Gĩkũyũ knowledges, including stories, songs and riddles (Kenyatta, 1952). The language of instruction in these schools was Gĩkũyũ.

Teachers in Kenya have for many years engaged in acts of resistance in various forms against their employers. There have been 10 major teachers strikes – in 1962, 1966, 1969, 1997, 1998, 2002, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, organised by the Kenya National Union of teachers (KNUT) and the Kenya Union of Post Primary Education Teachers (KUPPET) (Lifestyle, 2019). Except for the strike in 2009 when the teachers demanded adequate staffing because of an influx of students caused by the 2003 *Free Primary Education Policy*, all the other strikes related to teachers’ remuneration.

### **Teachers’ and principals’ lived experiences and their subversive acts against neoliberal hegemony**

There is no literature found on teachers’ resistance to neoliberalism in Kenya. There are, however, blogs and twitter chats on the subject (Njoya, 2019). In contrast, there is a wealth of literature on resistance to neoliberal practices in schools in America and Britain (Compton & Weiner, 2008; Slater, 2015). Although this research did not set out to investigate teachers’

subversion of neoliberalism in schools in Kenya, the interviews and classroom observations provided evidence that teachers engage in everyday subversive acts to disrupt neoliberalism. Researchers such as Sims (2017) argue that educators need to engage in acts of active resistance to ‘disturb the balance of power’ (Tesar, 2014, p. 366), a stand taken by Freire (1973) as the most useful course of action for those who wish to resist oppressive systems and regimes. What does resistance for these teachers of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms in Kenya look like? The teachers said during the interviews that they used Indigenous knowledges, values and practices in the classrooms. Although English is the language of instruction, some teachers said that they chose to use Gĩkũyũ in the classrooms when instructing students because using a student’s first language helps students acquire knowledge. Language is the carrier of culture (Thiong’o, 1986) and by using Gĩkũyũ the teachers are reaching for the students’ own fund of knowledge (Moll, 1992). The neoliberal Eurocentric curriculum demands that English is used as the only language of instruction but Wangũi and Wambũi realised that the students were better placed to learn in Gĩkũyũ and Swahili, in which they were more fluent. Wangũi said,

*I mix the two languages because the students are good with Swahili and Gĩkũyũ. You find that students do not understand English (Wangũi: 7/7/2015).*

These teachers engage in false compliance (Scott, 1985) to benefit their students. They say that they do as they are told while in fact, they run the classrooms using Gĩkũyũ instructional strategies which they know suit the students. As far as policy enactment is concerned, Kenyan teachers in the schools that I visited seemed to be engaged in what Scott, (1985, p. 278) calls ‘routine compliance and resistance that covers its tracks.’ The teachers did not overtly resist the policy and neither did they do anything to show that they were enacting the policy. Wambũgũ said that although students with and without disabilities were meant to sit the same exam, he prepared a different exam for the students with disabilities. He said,

‘Sometimes we give them the same test that we give to others. But when I prepare my classes’ test, I make sure that I accommodate them. I prepare another one for them [students with disabilities]’ (Wambūgū: 15/7/2015).

In another act of subversion, some teachers feigned ignorance of the policy. They said that they had little knowledge of the policy. Faced with large class sizes, some teachers chose not to acknowledge the existence of the inclusive education policy that requires them to differentiate work in the classroom. The teachers that I interviewed also subverted the neoliberal practice that demands individuality by working towards maintaining a collective community, an Indigenous way of living. This they did by teaching and retelling to the students the stories, songs and proverbs that teach collective responsibility regardless of the demands of performativity.

Evidence suggests that the biggest form of sabotage of the neoliberal culture occurs when teachers are involved in forms of stealing exams to meet the demands of performativity (Iraxi, 2014). This is perhaps their way of ‘equalising’ the unequal playing field. Private schools with more than adequate resources are compared with schools in rural or poor neighbourhoods. Students who walk many kilometres to school and where there are no school libraries are required to compete with students who are boarders or who are dropped at school by their parents/drivers and have modern and well-resourced libraries at their homes and schools.

When I asked principal Maina whether students with disabilities in the mainstream classrooms got reports like all the other students, his response showed that the school got around the issue of reporting by producing the reports for these students from the special education unit, another way of excluding the students with disabilities. He said, ‘They normally get reports. There is a file for them in the special education unit’ (Maina: 7/7/2015).

Principal Mwai said that his school did not seek to implement the inclusive education policy precisely because of the complexities created by the large school enrolment as a result of the 2003 *Free Primary School Education policy*. He said, ‘We lack funds to implement (the policy), we would like to help them (students with disabilities) as much as possible but we are financially challenged. We are challenged in the sense that our enrolment is very high’ (Mwai: 14/7/2015).

Another way that teachers appeared to disrupt the neoliberal agenda was by showing concern for the students and enriching their experiences at school, such as teaching them social skills and learning to be independent, qualitative skills that are not tested yet are useful in preparing the children for adult life. The teachers showed concern about the welfare of students with disabilities, which is a factor considered unimportant in the neoliberal culture because it is not put through any testing procedures. Wairimū said that she taught life skills to all her students, including those with disabilities.

The teachers and principals acted individually in these ways and some were not aware that they were disrupting the neoliberal culture. But they recognised the power they had to do what was right by their students. Ball and Olmedo (2003, p. 94) suggest that teachers like these could find others who shared their discomfort in ‘every day relations, union meetings and on social media sites.’ Kenyan teachers would benefit from social media sites where they could exchange ideas.

Story-telling in the classroom is a subversive act in itself against neoliberalism. Sium and Ritskes, (2013, p. iii) point out that ‘stories as Indigenous knowledge work to not only regenerate Indigenous traditions and knowledge production, but also work against the colonial [and neoliberal] epistemic frame[s] to subvert and recreate possibilities and spaces for resistance.’ To the Indigenous people, ‘the story is a living thing, an organic process, a way of life’ (Graveline, 1998, p. 66). Stories have been used by Indigenous people in the past

and continue to be used to resist colonial erasure and violence (Sium, 2013). The village poet and story-tellers are important commentators on political and social situations; for example, they keep the story of our lives before and during colonisation and after independence alive. As story tellers, teachers would encourage their students to tell their stories, making ‘story-telling a site and tool for survival’ (Sium & Ritskes, 2013, p. v), a means whereby students and teachers collaborate in ‘recreating and regenerating Indigenous philosophies, epistemologies and theories’(Sium & Ritskes, 2013, p. v). Teachers are considered as elders in the Gĩkũyũ and other Indigenous communities and play an important role in resisting colonial and neoliberal agendas to erase our Indigenous knowledges, values and practices by telling stories and teaching students to do the same. All the teachers interviewed said that they used stories as a way of passing on moral lessons and exposing students to phenomena in the world. For example, Wambui said, ‘I tell them stories and proverbs. I also advise them regarding how a Mũgĩkũyũ should behave’ (Wambũi, 21/1/2018).

By continuing to tell our stories, teachers demonstrate to students that ‘the colonial project has been ultimately unsuccessful in erasing Indigenous existence’ (Sium & Ritskes, 2013, p. iv). Sium and Ritskes (2013) and Tuck and Yang (2012) argue that by telling our creation stories, Indigenous people disrupt the colonial arrival stories of terra nullius.

## **Researchers**

No studies were found that looked at teachers’ resistance to neoliberalism in Kenya. As suggested above, it is possible that they do not have an understanding of neoliberalism and how it affects teaching and learning. In their research, Hara and Sherbine (2018, p. 674) examined student-service (pre-service) teachers’ understanding of neoliberalism and education in Massachusetts, USA, and found that the pre-service teachers had ‘little understanding of neoliberalism and its impact on education’. According to Hara and Sherbine, (2018, p. 674), the pre-service teachers associated this lack of knowledge to the

‘absence of direct, explicit instruction ... through their teacher education course-work.’ It may be the same case in Kenya.

Researchers have realised that neoliberalism is enhancing inequalities and exclusion of students with disabilities, the very concerns that inclusive education was created to address. Researchers are now creating a space where teachers and others can assert their identities and the virtues of schooling that are not governed by performativity and numbers (Denzin & Giardina, 2017). Through decolonising research, itself a form of subversion of the hegemonic forms of research from the North, there is hope that the needs of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms will be addressed. Denzin and Giardina (2017, p. 12) point out that ‘as teachers, researchers, and public servants, qualitative researchers of all traditions are uniquely equipped to take up this charge, to reach beyond the walls of the profession, to engage with disparate and competing publics, to conduct research that materially affects if not changes the course of the historic present.’ As will be discussed in the next chapter and using the metaphor of the Gikūyū Kīondo (basket), the role of the of researchers is to point out the beauty of Gikuyu knowledges and practices that have been tainted by colonial remnants in the Kenyan education system in the society and also to highlight the effects of neoliberalism on the fabric of the Gikūyū way of life. By so doing, the teachers, principals and other researchers will begin to notice the oppressive nature of neoliberal practices and in their own small way begin to unpick these threads, in the classrooms, schools and in research, and this may create a flow-on effect that may be felt in the village.

The complicating factor in Kenya is that while some academics have a good understanding of neoliberalism and its evils, they feel that they are not being listened to by policy makers and the government. However, they do point out the evils of allowing the North to continue leading curriculum and education changes in Kenya. In her blogs and podcasts, Njoya, (2019)

says that Kenya is allowing neoliberals to take over the education agenda in Kenya and that Kenyan policy makers have required Kenyan universities to adhere to the Bologna Process, a move opposed by those university lecturers who oppose neoliberalism and the hegemonic agenda. The Bologna Process (Department of Education, Australia, 2019) is based on cooperation of European countries to standardise higher education in the 48 countries that are signatories to the process. For the Kenyan policy makers to expect African universities to teach units similar to European universities is accepting colonisation and giving away their autonomy.

There is a role for researchers and teacher trainers to create critical consciousness (Freire, 1970) in pre-service teachers so that they can begin to question what and how they teach. Teachers will then reflect on their colonial histories and perhaps begin to understand the role neoliberalism is playing in keeping the unequal power relationship between the North and the South.

### **Chapter synopsis**

In this chapter I have shown that there is developing consciousness among Kenyan researchers and teachers on subverting the march of neoliberalism. The teachers are fighting back against neoliberalism even though they have little understanding of its nature. There are conversations among researchers to create consciousness among the masses about the effects of neoliberalism on education in general and the vulnerability of students with disabilities under neoliberal conditions.

The next chapter provides a conclusion of the study and offers some recommendations and suggestions for practice to policy makers, school executives, curriculum developers and teachers on ways in which they could work together towards decolonising the Kenyan education system, in particular the education of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. It also explains some challenges in teaching and using Gĩkũyũ/African values

and practices in schools. It concludes with a reflection of my journey during this research that took me through a greater understanding of Northern methodologies and the role of the academy in perpetuating these methodologies as the only lenses through which to view the world. I explain how during the journey I became aware of Indigenous and decolonising methodologies which gave me permission to decolonise myself and instilled in me a reawakened interest in promoting Gikūyū knowledges.

## Chapter 10

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*Gūcokia Rūi Mūkarō (returning the river to its natural course). This is a Gīkūyū proverb that advises about returning to our ways.*

This research was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 explored teachers' and principals' understanding of *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009); instructional practices in inclusive education classrooms; supports and resources available to the teachers in the implementation of inclusive education and the role played by school principals' in the implementation of *The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2009). Phase 2 of this research investigated how teachers incorporate Gīkūyū knowledges, values and practices in inclusive classrooms to support students with disabilities and how other aspects of the Gīkūyū culture could be incorporated in schools to support students with disabilities. This chapter aims to explain how to '*gūcokia rūi mūkarō*' (reshape the course of the river to as close to natural as possible), that is, how to decolonise the education system in Kenya. It offers some recommendations for teachers, curriculum developers and policy makers, including teaching Indigenous knowledges and using local resources as well as suggesting caution on the part of policy makers in borrowing policy. The chapter also provides a brief account of my journey as a researcher. To explain these recommendations, I use the metaphor of a river that has moved course.

The Gīkūyū country has many rivers that make it possible for the people to grow food crops in the ridges and valleys. Through folklore and knowledge passed from one generation to the other, the people knew that sometimes the river changed its course as it flowed down to the coast. They knew not to plant crops in the abandoned river course because they had the knowledge that no matter how long the river flowed in the new course, it would one day return to its natural course and crops planted in the old course would be washed away.

In this thesis the crops in the river valley metaphorically represent colonial values that the colonialists planted on the Gĩkũyũ culture, values that have become ingrained over more than 500 years. It is time for the river to return to as close as possible to what was its course. Sometimes the river may need help from people to clear the unwanted weeds in the natural course and sometimes the river might need to detour around elements before returning to its natural course, that is, blending. The Gĩkũyũ people and indeed Indigenous people worldwide who have been affected by colonisation need to rekindle important values that may have been supplanted. This research aims to enlighten citizens and governments on the effects colonisation has had on societies and make suggestions to people in power including policy makers, school executives and curriculum developers about ways in which they can help teachers, principals and researchers decolonise their practices. This thesis contributes to the voices of others, such as the Maathai, the creator of The Green Belt Movement (Maathai, 2006), and writers such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) and Dei (2000), who argue that a renaissance for Africa is possible. It starts with people returning to use their community assets, such as interconnectedness/relationships to care for and educate the vulnerable in their society, particularly in the case of this research, children with disabilities. Together we will work to assist people to kwĩmenya (gain self-knowledge) and appreciate their culture. The notion of inclusiveness that was embedded in Gĩkũyũ practices in the past is something to offer the northern world around what inclusion is and how to do it. In addition to resisting colonisation, this thesis also contributes knowledge about Gĩkũyũ knowledge values and practices around inclusion to the Western world.

### **Effect of Colonisation on Gĩkũyũ Knowledges**

#### **Kĩondo (The Gĩkũyũ basket)**

In this research, the kĩondo is used as a symbol to show Gĩkũyũ knowledges and the effect of colonisation on these knowledges, including the care and education of children with

disabilities. Like the Gīkūyū hut, the Gīkūyū basket is spiral. It has horizontal strings, *mīrūgamo* (warp) and two vertical strings, *ndigi* (weft) (see Figure 10-2), that are twisted after each warp to hold the basket together. The weaving is spiral (see Figure 10-1). On completion, the basket is strong enough to sit by itself without collapsing, hence the saying '*kīondo kirī itina nīkio kīigaga*' ('a kīondo that has a good bottom will sit without collapsing').



Figure 10-1: The base of the kīondo (basket). Weaving is started from the middle and spreads outwards. (Mutuota, 2019)

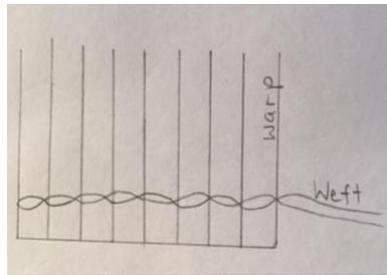


Figure 10-2: Warp and weft (Mutuota, 2019)



Figure 10-3: The (basket) on completion (Mutuota, 2019)

The kīondo has several *matīna* (stages) marked by changes in colour. The different coloured threads are inserted for aesthetic purposes (see Figure 10-3). The kīondo base is flat and firm and the basket is open at the top to allow for overflow, representing as many children as a woman can bear or as much food as she can fit into it. It is strong enough to carry heavy items such as the earthen cooking pot, deep enough to carry food items from the farm that

would feed the family for days and firm to enable the carrying of delicate items, such as eggs or vegetables. It is also tightly woven to carry small grains, such as millet. The *kĩondo* is also used to carry items to be exchanged with other families/clans and as such it is a symbol of building relationships.

The *kĩondo* is given as a gift to every woman at marriage. The *nyakinyua* (older women of the clan) place the *kĩondo* strap/s on the head of the *kĩngei* (newly married woman) to symbolise her role in carrying the clan forward. In this way, the *nyakinyua* pass on the role of production (of children and food) to the *king'ei*. In this research, the *kĩondo* represents the *Gĩkũyũ* and the knowledges of the ethnic group. The middle of the base is the origin of the ethnic group and the intertwining threads represent the knowledges of the ethnic group as well as the ethnic group's spread. Just like each thread is made strong by the presence of the others, so are the knowledges intertwined and held together by each other. The individual is bound to the ethnic group by his knowledge of the ways of the *Gĩkũyũ* and his knowledge of his identity in relation to the group. The *kĩondo* threads remain tightly knit regardless of how small or big the *kĩondo* may be. It means that, no matter how far or wide we go, we are bound by our knowledges. Keeping *Gĩkũyũ* knowledges alive is the duty of every member of the *Nyumba ya Mumbi* (house of Mumbi) and more so the responsibility of the elders who are the teachers of the ways of the ethnic group.

Colonisation can be compared to the ugly thread that the *kĩondo* maker inserts in pursuit of making the *kĩondo* brighter and colourful but later realises that it does not suit the *kĩondo*.

The thread is tightly woven into the fabric of the *kĩondo*. Unpicking the thread to rectify the mistake is difficult and it affects the tension of the *kĩondo*. The *kĩondo* owner may choose to leave the ugly thread in place but is always conscious of the *kĩondo*'s limitations. Colonial ways (the ugly thread) are tightly enmeshed in *Gĩkũyũ* society, through Christianity, language, education, dress and food, amongst others. The colonial ways have caused an

imbalance in Gĩkũyũ society, making it lean too far towards Northern culture, language and attitudes. To make the society lean towards the ways of the Gĩkũyũ, there is a need to strengthen the other threads. This, I suggest, can be done through education.

### **Recommendations for teachers**

There are various ways in which teachers can decolonise their classrooms. First, students could learn Gĩkũyũ and other Indigenous languages through story-telling, songs, proverbs and riddles. Knowledge of Gĩkũyũ language would be promoted through teaching and use of the Gĩkũyũ language by students and teachers in the school. Currently, Indigenous languages are promoted through songs and dance at a national music festival, but this is optional.

Instead, they could be promoted through their use in the classroom, through drama and role-plays and in normal daily interactions. Instead of teaching French and German, colonial languages, Kenyan children would benefit from learning languages from other ethnic groups in Kenya to promote cohesion among various groups of people. In this respect, it must be acknowledged that Kenya has reintroduced the teaching of local languages in primary school (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, (MOEST), 2014) from Class 1 to Class 4, and this is a welcome step towards decolonising the classroom.

Second, story-telling, which is an important part of Gĩkũyũ culture, could be strengthened in schools as a way of teaching and embedding other Gĩkũyũ knowledges and values. As stated earlier, through stories children learn about charity, dignity and respect, about working together for the common good and other values of the ethnic group. According to Burnett (2014, p. 46), children who regularly listen to stories told from memory develop an ‘imaginative ear’ for pictorial language; they grasp concepts embedded in images intuitively, and maintain associations at a deep, often sub-conscious level as emotional associations which may only come to consciousness in adulthood. They hear stories of characters who

experience joy and difficulties and who come up with solutions to their problems. In this, they learn valuable life lessons.

Third, teachers could decolonise classrooms by teaching knowledge of *ndūgū* (family relationships); this is fundamental in keeping the *Gīkūyū* people together and is a great asset in the classroom to promote inclusion of all students. *Ndūgū* encompass (but are not limited to) *uuma andū* (charity), *gītatī* (cooperatives/teamwork), *mūkuūrū mūrūna* (older/younger sibling). It is important that students are taught the role of *ndūgū*, as well as the value of sibling relationships, at school. This is because among the *Gīkūyū*, family relationships keep the group closely knit in good and bad times. Family relationships ensure that every child is cared for and kept safe because it is everyone's responsibility. Older siblings care for the younger siblings in the community. Teachers and schools could invite elders to schools to talk about family relationships and other aspects of *Gīkūyū* culture. The elders would model to the class peer teaching, organise a buddy system and teach about collaborative group work in caring for the vulnerable in our society. Students would learn the value and knowledge of team work. This is a useful practice in classrooms to ensure that students work together and include students with disabilities. These Indigenous knowledges are important in the care and inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular classroom. Teachers could also teach students to be benevolent through the use of stories. *Uuma andū* (charity), for example, is closely related to relationships and it ensures that the *Gīkūyū* community, old and young, receive the care and provisions necessary for survival.

The fourth way that teachers could decolonise their classrooms is to expose students to *Gīkūyū* and other Indigenous knowledges to help students gain *kwīmenya* (self-knowledge). One way of promoting self-knowledge is by the teaching of genograms or family trees. I have always known my family tree, that is, my larger extended family four generations down the line because of my strong grounding in my *Gīkūyū* culture. The need for identity is so strong

that many people spend a lifetime and large sums of money searching for their ancestry. One of the reasons the well-established Gīkūyū way of keeping this knowledge is dying out is the individualism introduced by colonisation. Coupled with that is the fact that some people do not care to teach their children about their extended families. It is imperative that schools and teachers incorporate teaching of family trees to students to build their knowledge of who they are and reawaken pride in their heritage. The Gīkūyū believe that family ties are a very important factor in anyone's life. The proverb '*ndūgū ni makinya*' ('family relationships are kept by keeping in touch') means that people keep family ties by getting to know their relatives. Nor are the Gikuyu alone in this. The support provided by the extended family is recognised by many cultures. Sims and Hutchins (2011, p. 47) acknowledge that 'without a supportive extended family parenting can be the most difficult task any person undertakes, and yet it the task for which we are least prepared.' The loss of knowledge of the extended family has been accompanied by loss of other values, some of these values being respect and care for the elderly and people with disabilities. The Gīkūyū provided for people who were elderly and those with disabilities and made sure that they were included in society. People with disabilities are now treated as the 'other' in the school system, a concept that did not exist before colonisation. In many schools, there are special education units where the students are educated and kept away from the rest of the school. Mūtūdū, Mūteta and Mūbarīki primary schools all have such special education units.

A fifth way that teachers could decolonise their classrooms is by using the so far unexploited resources in Gīkūyū and other Indigenous communities and that could be useful in supporting students with disabilities in the classroom. These are resources that are locally available and they include elders who could be invited to the schools to provide information about Gīkūyū knowledges such as building Gīkūyū huts or making the Gīkūyū stool or weaving baskets. Other skills that students can learn include pest control methods that are environmentally

friendly, honey production and soil conservation. When I attended primary school, students learned about their traditional culture. The girls learnt to make traditional baskets and the boys how to construct traditional huts. The students learned skills from these activities that built bridges between the activities and the curriculum itself. As an example, building a round hut encompasses geometry, measurement and science about the materials and their properties. This initiative was not sustained as the curriculum gave preference to other subjects that suited the neoliberal agenda.

Other unexploited community resources that teachers could use to make education relevant for students with disabilities include local farms, *Mūkūrwe wa Nyagathanga* (the origin of the Gĩkũyũ people), green belt movement working sites and other centres where Indigenous knowledges are being generated. Teachers and schools could plan excursions to all these places. Schools could also include topics on medicinal trees and roots to build an interest in knowledge of local trees and plants and they could link this knowledge to the curriculum in terms of biology and community health. Teachers could also organise excursions to local communities to see how families preserve food. Most of the Kenyan rural population does not have electricity; therefore, this would be useful practical knowledge as well as address key elements of science and sustainability in the curriculum, while helping students understand local conservation methods and the reasons behind their use.

A sixth way that teachers could decolonise their classrooms is by use of readily available resources such as Gĩkũyũ stories, songs, proverbs, poetry and riddles and seeking books that contain these Gĩkũyũ/Indigenous knowledges. These could be added to the curriculum to teach concepts related to their understanding of the world around them, as in social studies, of counting, rhymes and rhythms for numeracy, language development and literacy. Teachers could also invite elders for story-telling, to teach songs, to talk about the proverbs, riddles and poetry. Dei (2012, p. 106) argues that ‘we must go to Indigenous sources for knowledge

and not rely on theories and theorists elsewhere whose work speaks to different realities.’ Elders could also retrain teachers in the traditional pedagogies of caring for children with disabilities that they can use to support students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. A seventh way to decolonise the classrooms is to make education relevant to students with disabilities by use of Indigenous foods in cooking lessons, particularly as these foods are readily available in the local environment. Schools could promote healthy eating using what is locally available such as *ngwacī* (sweet potatoes), *thūkūma* (kale) and *mūgīmbī* (millet), instead of promoting expensive and processed foods introduced into Africa from Europe and America. It is interesting to note that the foods promoted in Western supermarkets today as superfoods such as kale are the same foods that the colonialists disregarded as ‘traditional foods’ in Africa and in other Indigenous communities such as in South America. They discouraged their cultivation and instead introduced cultivation of foods such as English potatoes, wheat and cabbage, which have very little nutritional value. It has been shown that schools can grow and use Indigenous foods in class activities (Maathai, 2006).

An eighth way of decolonising the classroom and including students with disabilities would be the use of the African teaching set up, the circle or semi-circle. Research (Ukwoma, 2016) shows that the circle or semicircle in the classroom is the best seating arrangement. During my time as a teacher both in Australia and in Kenya, I have noticed contrasting features in the seating arrangement of students in Kenyan classroom and the Australian classroom.

Classroom layout in some schools in the Western world has changed from rows with students facing the front to tables made up of groups of students who work collaboratively. The Western world has realised the importance of the circle or face-to-face interaction as it is practiced in Gīkūyū story-telling sessions so that children can see each other’s gestures and facial expressions. In Kenya I observed that students in all but one of the classrooms I attended sat in rows facing the front. Countries of the global South like Kenya were left with

the colonial legacy of the square/rectangular classroom and students sitting in rows, a practice introduced by the North during colonisation that does not suit Indigenous teaching methods.

I have argued in this section that there are resources available in local communities and funds of knowledge (Moll, 2014) that can be used to assist students with disabilities in classrooms. Connell (2011, p. 1379) points out that even in megacities, ‘social resources—skills, customs, networks, cultural understandings’ can be found that teachers and schools could use to support students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. The teachers need only to look to the past to move forward.

### **Recommendations for policy makers and curriculum developers**

*Cūngīthua ndongoria itīngikīnyīra nyeki (if the lead animals in the herd are limping, the herd will never get to the green pastures). This Gīkūyū proverb means that if the leaders are not competent, the community fails to meet its goals and objectives.*

In this section I will make recommendations for Ministry of Education officials and policy makers about promoting Gīkūyū knowledges, values and practices for, as the proverb above states, if the leaders lack wisdom and foresight, the education system will continue to privilege knowledges and values from the North. In using student’s funds of knowledge (Moll, 2014), policy makers and curriculum developers would be supporting students to learn from what they already know. I use the four-legged Gīkūyū *gīturwa* (stool) (see Figure 10-4) below to explain my recommendations to the policy makers.

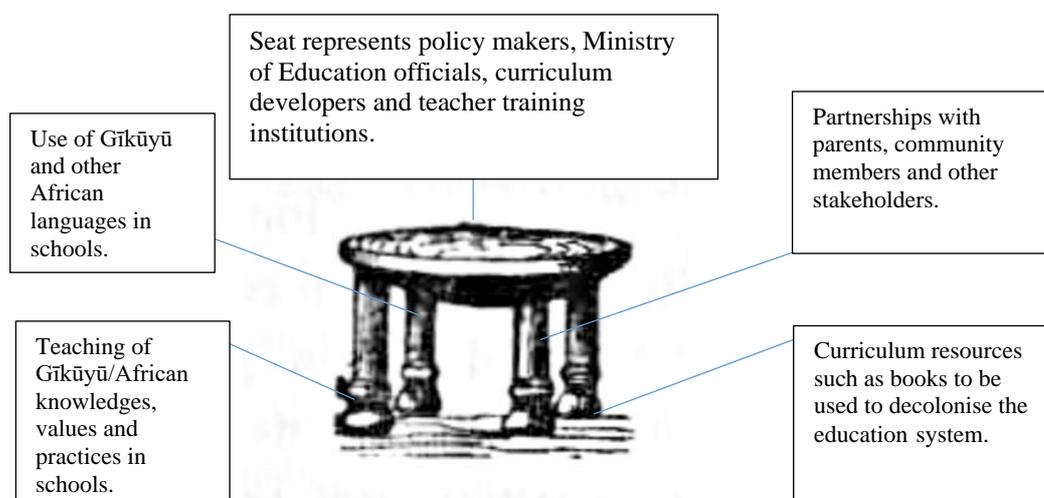


Figure 10-4: Gĩturwa (the four-legged Gĩkũyũ stool). Cagnolo (1933, p. 40)

As stated earlier, the Gĩkũyũ stool was made from the trunks of hardwoods in Gĩkũyũ country such as mūringa (*Cordia Africana*), mūnunga (*Ekerbergia capensis*), mūkũyũ (*Ficus sycamorus*), mūhũtĩ (*Erythrina Abyssinia*), mūruurĩ (*Trichilia roka*), mūthaitĩ (*Ocotea usumbarensis*), and mūkũi (*Newtonia buchanii*). The stool was very sturdy because it was made from one piece of wood. The seat was hollowed for comfort and was a perfect circle. According to Leakey (2007, p. 332), the Gĩkũyũ stool was not decorated but was polished with castor oil. The stool was close to the ground to give it a centre of gravity to ensure the elders did not tip over—it was taboo for a man to fall and a goat would be slaughtered should such an event occur. It was also a shameful thing for children to see a man’s nakedness which would be potentially exposed in a fall. The Gĩkũyũ made stools with four legs (gĩturwa) or with three legs (njũng’wa), which was made from a lighter wood so that a man could carry it from place to place.

The four-legged stool will be used in this research to represent ways that leaders/policy makers, Ministry of Education officials and curriculum developers could decolonise the education system in Kenya, inclusive education in particular. The seat represents policy

makers, Ministry of Education officials, curriculum developers and teacher training institutions. These are the people responsible for formulating policies. The first leg stands for the use of Gĩkũyũ and other African languages in schools, and at community meetings because our languages are the carriers of our history, culture, values and our memory (Thiong’o, 2009). The second leg represents Gĩkũyũ/African knowledges, values and practices that could be taught in schools. These include, but are not limited to, caring for each other and for people with disabilities, for hospitality, stories and songs. The third leg represents partnerships with parents, with community members and with other stakeholders in the care and education of children with disabilities. The fourth leg stands for the ways the curriculum resources could be employed in the education system to decolonise the education system. These include the use of books written about Africa or Kenya *by* Africans or Kenyans respectively, teaching African knowledges and ways of knowing and learning in teacher training institutions and reducing reliance on the North for donations to ‘improve’ education.

I provide recommendations to curriculum developers and policy makers based on the premise that this thesis has addressed only the inclusive education element in the policy. Given that what is decided at the top trickles down to the classroom, it is important that decolonisation of the curriculum is supported by the leaders. I will start by providing a short story to show the effect of a curriculum that does not meet the needs of an Indigenous person. Ngugi wa Ngugi wa Thiong’o, a Kenyan writer, contracted his architect to build him a house using traditional architecture. Thiong’o wanted a Gĩkũyũ house that reflected his Gĩkũyũ roots. According to Kamenju, as quoted in his thesis (2013, p. 169), the brief for the architect, Nyanja, was that the home was to ‘accommodate a professor of literature who wanted the benefits of modern technology in a house that reflected his need of “moving the centre” (Thiong’o, 1983) from a Eurocentric to an Afrocentric design that was in line with his

ideology of ‘decolonising the mind’ (Thiong’o, 1986). Kamenju explains that Nyanja, a graduate of a university in Kenya, admitted that he had learnt European architecture, including construction of gothic and rose-coloured windows, but had no knowledge of local African architecture such as Gĩkũyũ, Luo or Kamba huts. His greatest challenge was the construction of the circular roof.

The example above presents the first recommendation, which is that there is urgent need for policy makers and curriculum developers to provide education in schools and universities that is relevant to the Kenyan context, to privilege the knowledge from the South and to plan for use of a culturally responsive pedagogy in the classroom. Culturally responsive pedagogies have produced better outcomes in the education of Indigenous people in New Zealand (Savage, Hindle, Meyer, Hynds, Penetito, & Sleeter, 2011) and Canada (Maina, 1997; Hamme, 1996; Billings 1995).

Kenyatta (1965) argues that teaching Indigenous knowledges to Indigenous children will ‘promote progress and at the same time preserve all that is best in traditions of the African people and assist them to create a new culture which, though its roots are still in the soil, is yet modified to meet the pressures of modern condition.’ Educating students in Indigenous knowledges and values will increase their pride in who they are (Dei, 2012; Kenyatta, 1965; Maina, 1998; Thiong’o, 1986) while including the teaching of these values in the curriculum will legitimise their teaching (Maina, 1998). Nyerere (quoted in Coysh, 2017, p. 98) perceives education as a tool to transmit Indigenous cultures when he states that the purpose of education should be ‘to transmit from one generation to the next the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of the society, and to prepare the young people for their future membership of the society and their active participation in its maintenance or development.’ Research (Billings, 1995; Hamme, 1996; Maina, 1997) indicates that in communities that have experienced colonisation, schools that use students’ cultural values in education attain better

outcomes. In the same vein, the policy on inclusive education needs to align with the Kenyan context, taking into consideration the historical and social influences that include the role of Indigenous families in the care and education of children with disabilities, colonisation and religion (Dei, 2000; Maina, 1998; Omulando & Shiundu, 1992). Making the curriculum relevant also means privileging Kenyan history, geography, environmental studies and other subjects. When I was in primary school, I learned about wheat farming in the prairies of Canada, about kangaroos in Australia and about Russia's longest railway line, yet I found out about Kenya's wheat belts in the Rift Valley only when I travelled to the Western part of Kenya in high school.

A second way that policy makers could make education relevant for students with disabilities is to make the curriculum in inclusive classrooms relevant and accessible to those students with disabilities and flexible enough to allow teachers to respond to the needs of a diverse classroom (Slee & Allan, 2011). The principal of Mūtūdū Primary School indicated that many of the students with disabilities were steered towards a vocational (life skills) curriculum. A vocational curriculum could include excursions for schools to sites where they will learn skills that they are likely to use in their communities, such as valuing and protecting land; after all, land inheritance among the Gīkūyū and in many African communities is inclusive of people with and without disabilities. There are books available that could be introduced in the curriculum to teach these values, such as *The Green Belt Movement* (Maathai, 2006) which would explain traditional methods of farming, their importance and value to the community. The Green Belt Movement project for which Maathai received a Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 (Maathai, 2006) promotes Indigenous farming methods and healing the land to restore man's interconnectedness with nature and man's relationship to the land that was lost due to colonisation. Policy makers and school executives

could support enrolment of students with disabilities into The Green Belt Movement so that students can learn cultural practices of protecting the land, as stated above.

A third way to make education relevant for children with disabilities is to use the values that are known to help in learning among the African communities, such as the circle or semicircle in the classroom (Maina, 1998; Ukwuoma, 2016). Policy makers and curriculum developers need to promote the circle and semi-circle sitting arrangement, an African concept that was and is used in story-telling, to maximise student learning. Ukwuoma (2016) argues that there is merit in this sitting arrangement because it allows for more interaction among students. Story-telling is another cultural practice that if included in the curriculum enhances learning for an Indigenous child. Story-telling was and is a way used by many communities in Kenya to transmit knowledge to students. Maathai (2006) and Thiong'o (1986) recall story telling sessions in their villages that had the structure of adults telling the stories and then peer groups retelling those stories later. As Thiong'o (1986, p. 10) states, 'I can vividly recall those evenings of story-telling around the fireside. It was mostly the grownups telling stories, but everybody was interested and involved. We children would re-tell the stories the following day to other children.'

Students with disabilities would benefit if the curriculum developers would include Indigenous learning methods, including language and thinking games such as story-telling and riddles, thereby promoting teaching methods that are based on Indigenous knowledges and values. The colonial legacy of rote learning where the teacher provides the information and the student 'records, memorises and repeats' (Freire, 1990, p. 58), a style referred to by Freire (1990, p. 57) as 'the banking concept of education', produces students who can recall but not solve problems. Freire (1990, p. 58) argues that this makes education 'an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students

patiently receive, memorise and repeats.’ Indigenous learning is hands and trains students in critical thinking to solve day-to-day problems.

A fourth way to make education relevant for students with disabilities is for policy makers to embrace the interrelated nature of lives among African people and allow parents and relatives to provide the support in the classrooms that these students need. Literature from Africa and the rest of the world indicates that parental involvement in the education of their children, with and without disabilities, is a major contributor to improved outcomes. Sims and Hutchins (2011) explain the importance of partnerships between caregivers and parents in supporting both the parents and their children. The lives of the Gĩkũyũ people are interrelated and everyone has a responsibility to work for the benefit of the people (Leakey, 2007). The Ministry of Education could encourage parents to form collective working groups in schools. Parent volunteers could assist the students with disabilities in classrooms to keep them comfortable, changing them, turning them and helping with literacy and numeracy. The values of the kinship system and the collective system have existed among the people since time immemorial and these systems worked well in enabling the people to take care of each other. Principals and teachers could help parents form cooperatives, which could also assist all students with pick up and drop off, as well as in the classrooms.

A fifth way curriculum developers and policy makers can make education relevant for students with disabilities is to ensure that Kenyan concepts and those used specifically by local peoples are used in education. Local concepts need to be used so that education is meaningful to the students, teachers, parents/carers and community. Masolo (2010) who is from an African background provides the example of the pie chart concept that eluded him in his mathematics class at school because he had never eaten or seen a pie; as a result, he had no idea what his teacher was talking about. He argues that the concept would have been

clearer to him had the teacher used other circular culinary delights from his world, such as a chapati.

A sixth way of making education relevant for children with disabilities is to make the teaching and speaking of local languages in schools by students and teachers a set policy (Mberia, 2016; Thiong'o, 1986). When people speak their own language, they get a sense of belonging and feel that their language is valued (Mberia, 2016; Thiong'o, 1986). South Africa, for instance, has 11 official languages, including the languages of such ethnic groups as isiZulu, isiXhosa, and Setswana, as well as Afrikaans and English (Maathai, 2009; Mberia, 2016). By placing local languages alongside English, children could learn to appreciate and value their respective languages and not accept the North's judgement of their languages as primitive or 'vernacular', a word used by the colonisers according Thiong'o (1983, p. 94) to describe Indigenous languages as 'language[s] of the slaves or merely barbaric tongues.' Furthermore, by teaching students to read and write in their local language is a way of empowering them, giving them the opportunities to reclaim their identity and to understand proverbs and metaphorical language.

Use of local languages at school events, at community meetings and in policy and curriculum documents is important if parents with children who have disabilities are expected to understand them. The inclusive education policy could be translated into local languages so that the parents can access the information easily. Teachers could be encouraged to communicate to parents of children with disabilities and indeed all parents and students in the school in their local languages. Where possible, teachers should be posted to work in their local communities if they so wish so that they can promote the teaching of local languages and, as respected members of the community, lead the way in reintroducing the parents and students to the Gikūyū/African way of sharing and working together.

A seventh way of enhancing learning for children with disabilities is for curriculum developers, policy makers and the Ministry of Education to involve parents more in the education of their children. This will make children and their parents feel a sense of belonging in the decision-making process of the school. As suggested earlier, school could be encouraged to have a partnership with the parents in educating the children because, as Sims and Hutchins (2011, p. 50) point out, ‘Parents are the experts regarding their own children.’ Omulando and Shiundu, (1992) argue that in the African community, the education of the child started with family members followed later by the community. Currently, parents have very little say in the running of schools in Kenya other than raising funds for building projects. Maathai (2009) argues that the extended family system is dying because the Indigenous cultural practices such as song and stories that sustained the community are now practised by only a few people and even those who do incorporate only a few of these cultural aspects into their lives. In her study of curriculum relevance on cultural development in Ontario Canada, Maina (1998) found that cultural identity was strengthened by including elders as community resources in development of teaching materials for local schools. The study also found that when there is collaboration among parents, teachers and community members in the education process, such as setting up curriculum programs, the education provided to children is not only effective but also relevant. When and if these partnerships are established, the community elders would be able to go to the local schools to make presentations to all the students, with and without disabilities. In African communities, elders are considered to be carriers of wisdom, accumulated knowledge and spirituality (Dei, 2002; Dei & Kempf, 2012; Kenyatta, 1965).

Another recommendation for Ministry of Education officials and policy makers to make education relevant to the Kenyan context with regards to students with disabilities is to construct classrooms from local materials that are cheap and locally available. From an

Indigenous perspective, learning does not have to occur in square or rectangular rooms (Ukwuoma, 2016). Constructing classrooms from available local materials could solve the problems of impressive-looking stone classrooms that take many years to complete yet are cold and inadequately furnished and do not meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Schools could be built using locally available support in the spirit of *itātī* (team work) as has been done over thousands of years. Although primary school education is free in Kenya, there are still costs referred to as building funds; reducing these building costs will decrease the cost of education for parents of children with disabilities.

A ninth recommendation is to integrate African ways of learning and teaching and ensure that all teachers are equipped to use them (Kenyatta, 1965; Maina, 1998). It is crucial to prepare teachers to deliver a curriculum based on Indigenous values and practices and that respects Indigenous contexts if Kenya is to un-weave the threads of colonialism in the education system in particular and in society in general. Kenya, and Africa in general, have a lot to learn from New Zealand. It is time to ensure that all teachers have an understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing and learning. Sims and Hutchins (2011, p. 53) point out that the *Te Whāriki* (the New Zealand early childhood curriculum) demands that ‘all adults working in the early childhood are expected to understand and support Maōri ways of knowing, being and learning, understand different *iwi* (extended kinship group) and the meaning of *whānau* (extended family) and *whānaungatanga* (relationship, kinship) and provide opportunities for children to learn and use Maōri language in social interactions.’ A similar vision to integrate Indigenous knowledge into education in Kenya was contained in the *Ominde Reports* (ROK, 1964), as stipulated in Sessional Paper No 10 (1965). The idea was that education needed to be accessible and relevant to the social, economic and political needs of the students and their communities.

Policy makers and the Ministry of Education could include teaching of Indigenous values such as the role relationships and partnerships play in educating students with disabilities in pre-service teachers' curriculum. Researchers such as Akuno (1997) and Kamenyi, (1977) support the view that the Kenyan education system needs to produce teachers who are trained in African values and practices. The Gĩkũyũ proverb says, *'ūtakanyuĩrĩre ndoĩ karĩ rita'* (he who has not drunk from a particular container does not know the effort taken to do so'. It means that for one to know the Gĩkũyũ, Luo or Luhya culture, one needs to engage with it and to live it. It would benefit children if curriculum developers and policy makers privileged Kenyan Indigenous knowledges in schools and teachers had an understanding of cultural values to be able to teach them.

There is value in drafting policies that are relevant to the Kenyan situation and to plan a curriculum that responds to the Kenyan context and upholds Indigenous values instead of having an 'adopted education policy of educating the Africans in the ways which the Europeans think fit for the "poor savages"; a policy that has been carried out without due regard for the ideals and aspirations of the people concerned' (Kenyatta, 1965, p. 121). School principals and teachers are likely to notice the spaces in the curriculum to teach Indigenous knowledges, stories, songs, proverbs and riddles. It is recommended that policy makers partner with teachers in curriculum and syllabus development as teachers understand the classroom situation better than the policy makers who are often removed from the realities of the classroom (Maina, 1998).

A tenth and final recommendation relates to training students to be the leaders of tomorrow who would, subject to receiving relevant education, decolonise development projects in Africa, including those in education, by using local funds of knowledge (Moll, 2014) and finding local solutions to local problems. I concur with Dei (2000, p. 73) who, writing about African development, argues that 'for the idea of "development" to have any credibility at all,

it must speak to the social, cultural, economic, political, spiritual, and cosmological aspects of local peoples' lives, as well as their specific needs and aspirations.' Indigenous people understand their problems better than outsiders and the curriculum should aim to train students to find solutions to these problems.

## **Challenges of using and teaching Gĩkũyũ values and practices in schools**

*Wĩra mūritũ no ũria ũtarĩmwambĩrĩe (a difficult job is the one that is not yet started). The proverb encourages people to face challenges because once started a task gets easier.*

There are challenges to gũcokia rūi mũkaro (returning the river to its course). When a river has not used the course for some time, the ecosystem of that land is altered. The effects are many and they vary in their intensity. These effects include: the land around the river which would have been evergreen loses its vegetation; the trees that grow on the edge of the river dry up; unwanted weeds grow in the river bed; the animals and birds that have depended on the river move away and human beings have to find another source of water for their domestic animals and for home consumption. The effect of colonisation on education, and especially the education of students with disabilities, has similar effects to a river that has left its course. Gĩkũyũ ways have been eroded and/or contaminated by Western ways.

One of the challenges relates to teachers' and students' loss of Gĩkũyũ/African values. The teachers and students have normalised living under the yoke of the colonial legacy.

Individualism instead of collective responsibility is now deeply entrenched in their psyche. Teachers and students have grown up during and after colonisation in an age where individualism, rather than collective sharing and caring for people, including the elderly and people with disabilities, is the norm. An example of the normalisation of Western ways is demonstrated by Wanjirũ, who said that she would like to see students with disabilities educated in special education units instead of being educated in mainstream classrooms.

*[Students with] physical disability[ies are] okay because they can understand whatever you are talking about. The ones with intellectual disabilities should be given their special class where they can catch up with the syllabus ( Wanjirū: 8/7/2015).*

The Gīkūyū have always believed in collective responsibility in the care and protection of children and Gīkūyū values and practices saw all children cared for by the community.

Teachers could use this cultural value to support students with disabilities in their classrooms.

A second challenge is that the teachers, who in the Gīkūyū tradition would be carriers of Gīkūyū knowledge, now lack depth in their knowledge of Gīkūyū ways. Some of the teachers grew up under colonialism or after colonisation, in a system that did not allow the teaching of the Gīkūyū values or use of local languages in schools. These teachers have not learnt to appreciate Gīkūyū knowledge and values and thus struggle to teach them. Wangūi said that a lot of young teachers did not know their culture and may not be able to pass on Gīkūyū values to the next generation. The problem is that some teachers and students have not attained a state of knowing their identity, *Kwīmenya* (self-knowledge). Without *kwīmenya*, the teachers may not feel the obligation to identify with their Gīkūyū/African cultural values or carry these values and practices forward (Maathai, 2009; Maina, 1998). Only by developing *kwīmenya* will the teachers begin to question the history they teach in the classrooms, asking themselves such questions as whose history is taught, who is telling the story, and whose lens and perspectives are used in telling the story. Maathai (2009, p. 171) states that ‘the reawakening of *Kwīmenya* (self-knowledge) can provide individuals with deep psychological and spiritual clarity.’ Pre-service teacher institutions could, therefore, reassess their curriculum and make it relevant to African culture and context and put the importance of African values at the core (Maina, 1998). For those teachers already in the field, the Ministry of Education could partner with the local elders to run programs aimed at upskilling teachers in local Indigenous knowledges and assist in teaching these to students. In Canada, for example, pre-service teachers complete a course in Aboriginal education that

guides them in integrating Aboriginal perspectives into mainstream education (Frank, 2013). Indigenous teacher education programs established after the 1972 policy of *Indian Control of Indian Education* are incorporated into teacher training programs (Haig-Brown & Hoskins, 2019). Aotearoa/New Zealand established Māori language schooling pathways and Māori medium teacher education programs after the 1840 *Treaty of Waitangi* (Haig-Brown & Hoskins, 2019), which train teachers in Māori knowledges and how they can be used in the classroom.

A third challenge is the colonial legacy of using English in schools as an official language and the language of instruction. English as the lingua franca was introduced by the colonial government and was promoted as the language of instruction in schools after independence on the recommendation of the *Ominde Commission* (1964). Wairimū said that she teaches in an urban area where children come from many ethnic groups and to provide a balance in her class, she uses examples from other ethnic groups. She explained that although there is a policy aimed at implementing the use of local languages in the lower levels of primary school, she does not know any school that practised this; the teachers and students used English and/or Swahili instead. As stated earlier, Kenya needs to learn from South Africa which after the end of apartheid increased its official languages to 11, among them Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele, Swati, English and Afrikaans (Mberia, 2016).

A fourth challenge, which compounds the issue for teachers, is the competing Christian faith introduced by the colonisers against indigenous religious beliefs. Children have grown up learning that their Gĩkũyũ cultural and spiritual traditions are evil. Teachers said that the children seem to know and value the Bible more than their Gĩkũyũ values. While the curriculum has for many years allowed the teaching of Christian religious education in the middle years, Indigenous languages were reintroduced into the lower classes of primary school only in 2019 with the introduction of the new curriculum.

A fifth challenge teachers face is the diversity of cultures in the classroom. Diversity in the classroom should be viewed as a positive thing because it introduces students from different regions and with different abilities and brings variety in stories and cultural values into the classroom. The challenge here is that the teacher cannot assume that each cultural value is translated to another culture, so teachers could create a context where multiple and different values are to be addressed. Researchers have highlighted the benefits of sharing Indigenous values in the classroom, as this benefits students from other communities as well. Dei (2011) points out that values such as the learner who never walks alone, and who is accountable to the world around her or him, including the environment, and learning as community and as cooperative and collaborative undertakings (Dei, 2008) would benefit all students. Students from other communities would benefit from learning how the Gĩkũyũ people cared for people with disabilities. They would learn how they were provided for and treated with respect.

A sixth challenge pointed out by the teachers is the lack of interest shown by the students. Wangũi and Wambũgũ said that students have only sketchy information about the Gĩkũyũ stories and traditions and show little interest in learning stories and values from their cultures. The teachers said that this might point to a lack of teaching of their culture at home. While researchers and writers advocate for *gũcokia rūi mũkaro*, the education system in Kenya does not make it easy. Wangũi pointed out that some schools in Kenya follow a strictly British system of education, including examinations, and expressed doubt that students in such schools would be willing to learn Gĩkũyũ values. It is a shame that some schools in Kenya, such as Braeburn, follow a strictly British system 50 years after Kenya attained independence from the British. The Braeburn website states: ‘Braeburn schools are co-educational, offering the British system of education’ (Braeburn, 2018) while St. Andrews Turi’s (Turi, 2019) website states, ‘St Andrew’s School is a co-educational, Christian boarding school offering the British Curriculum to pupils aged five to thirteen’ (Turi, 2019). Other schools offering the

British system in Kenya include Hillcrest, Peponi Brookhouse and Banda, among others. This points to the hegemonic agenda that is promoted through the current education system.

Wangūi pointed out that most of the students in the schools whose curricula are based on the British system speak no other language at school or at home than English and are taught all things Western in these schools. Language, according to Thiong'o (1986), is the carrier of culture and much of a people's culture is lost if its language is not spoken. Maathai (2009, p. 155) urges African governments to teach African values in schools, stating that: 'One measure to which I would give priority is for children throughout Africa, from the first grade of primary school through the last year of secondary school, to be taught the value of hard work, honesty, justice, fairness, and accountability as part of the normal curriculum, so they might grow into the leaders and citizens that Africa needs.' For decolonisation of the African continent to occur so that people start valuing their culture, it is important that schools are at the heart of the process of change.

A seventh challenge that I observed in all the schools was the ignorance of the inclusive education policy. Their practice was determined by their Indigenous values and their training. The teachers and principals interviewed for this study said that if they needed information about supporting particular students, they would ring the staff at the Nairobi and Nyeri assessment centres. The teachers said that they had not seen or read the policy and they did not know what it contained. Like other policies in the past, Kenya introduced the inclusive education policy in line with recommendations from world bodies. Kenya's history of implementing policies recommended by the North to improve various aspects of Kenyans' lives is noteworthy for the negative effects produced by those policies. As stated earlier, the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) (Rono, 2002) introduced in the 1990s to improve the economy, and the *Free Primary Education policy* introduced in 2003 to get every child in school, produced enormous challenges to the people they were expected to assist. The effects

of the SAP, among other challenges, included retrenchment and unemployment, which left families poorer and traders facing competition from imported products (Milu, 2013). Free primary education had the effect of introducing large numbers of students to schools, stretching their resources to breaking point. These challenges point to the need to find local solutions from within the community for local problems, instead of accepting solutions suggested and enforced by the North.

An eighth challenge is the Kenyan government's dependence on external donors to support education reforms. According to Owuor (2007, p. 31), this dependence has led to education reforms being influenced by the external forces, '... forcing the government to focus on the goals of globalisation above local needs.' These external donors support policies and research in education that are based on their Northern perspective of education, and the findings are not usually relevant to the Kenyan context. Policy makers could, when necessary, negotiate funding so that it did not involve expatriates (outsiders) being entrusted with writing the policies and determining the context in which policies were implemented, thereby protecting Indigenous knowledges, values and identity.

### **Implications from this study**

In this study I have shown that research conducted with the Gĩkũyũ people can be based on a Gĩkũyũ cultural framework that has been long established, including Gĩkũyũ world views. Indigenous researchers such as Kovach (2009), Smith (2012) and Wilson (2008) have pointed out the importance of respecting Indigenous methods of conducting research, methods that are aligned to Indigenous cultures. Phase 2 of this research was carried out using Gĩkũyũ protocols and was a response to the researcher's concern that Phase 1 of the research using Western methods did not suit the Gĩkũyũ people. This was discussed in Chapter 3.

The study shows that there is a need to address the complex question of educating students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms in face of the spread of neoliberalism in schools and policies borrowed from the North. This implies that Kenya needs to look within its cultural groups for strategies for the care and education of students with disabilities. The possibilities include partnerships between parents and schools, inviting elders to schools to tell stories and teach other Indigenous knowledges, and working with the community to empower students to rekindle their indigenous identities. Another implication is that a hybrid curriculum that privileges indigenous knowledges and blends in those elements from the North that are suitable to the Kenyan context is possible.

### **Implications for pedagogy**

Children bring to school ‘funds of knowledge’ (Moll, 1992). These include their lived experiences, including their languages, their family and social interactions and their culture, among others. Teachers could incorporate these funds of knowledge into the curriculum ‘in order to bridge gap between school culture and practice and students’ lives’ (Subero et al., 2017, p. 250). According to Subero et al. (2017, p. 250), the ‘funds of knowledge approach allows teachers to recognise the family and community resources and use them for pedagogical purposes.’ Teachers also bring to the classroom their own funds of knowledge, for example, story-telling, singing, and crafts, all of which could be formally recognised in consultation with curriculum developers as applicable tools and strategies in the classroom.

### **Broader implications of the study for educational options for Kenya and Africa.**

There are many African scholars who have written research papers and books on the educative, instructional and pedagogic significance of African Indigenous knowledge in schools and the academy. They include Dei (1996, 2000, 2017); Gitari, (2003); Karangi,

(2008); Mahlo, (2017) and Nyaga, (2017) among others. This study has broad implications for Kenya in particular and Africa in general. Africa must embrace its history and cultural knowledges in school curricula. Dei (2008, p. 235) points out that , ‘the African belief that no people can exist without a past, without a history, without a way of life, and without a culture is fundamental to rethinking education and schooling’. Education should be relevant to the African child and reflect the interconnectedness of the life of the individual to all aspects of their community.

Phasha et al (2017, p. 5) suggest that Africa needs to look at its cultural practices and learn how questions of difference were spoken about and addressed in order to identify the “sites of marginality and exclusion in learning process’. They add that African schooling would benefit from drawing on African cultural ‘lessons of how knowledge is impacted through early socialisation practices, childrearing practices, teaching and learning responsibilities of community membership, and the application of knowledge to solve practical everyday problems within one’s backyard and beyond’ (Phasha, et al. p. 5). These lessons could be included in pre-service units to prepare teachers.

### **Possibilities for Future research**

Kenyans need to understand the role of indigenous knowledges in their lives. Topics for future research could include indigenous methods of building collaboration between schools and parents, indigenous methods of conducting research in Kenyan schools, indigenous methods of protecting the environment and cultural ways of keeping children safe.

Other areas of future research could include the effects of neoliberalism on Kenyan schools, teachers’ understanding of neoliberalism, acts of resistance to neoliberalism in Kenyan schools and school and parent partnerships in educating students with disabilities.

It is important for Kenyan leaders to fund research by Kenyans with Kenyans instead of allowing researchers from the North to conduct research *on* Kenyans. This would include the government funding research on indigenous cultures and how they could be promoted in schools. The next section explains my PhD journey – where I have travelled and what it might mean for the road ahead.

## **My PhD journey**



Figure 10-5. My lonely research journey (Mutuota, 2019)

My PhD journey started in 2012 when I was employed as a casual lecturer at a university in New South Wales, Australia. I worked part-time and studied part-time. To be eligible for a fulltime ongoing position, I needed to complete a PhD, so I enrolled. I already had a Masters of Literature and another in Special Education. Two of my colleagues in the special education team, a senior lecturer and a lecturer, were my first supervisors. They recommended that I attend methodology workshops as soon as I enrolled for my PhD. I attended all the

methodology workshops offered to new PhD students. At that time, Indigenous methodology was not on the list of methodologies explored. I liked narrative methodology and decided that was what I was going to use. Perhaps my Indigenous cultural make up of telling and listening to stories led me to narrative methodology. After speaking with my principal supervisor, it became apparent that she was not comfortable with my using narrative methodology. While I tried to work out what methodology to use, she left the university. A few months after that, the co-supervisor left too.

I was handed over to two new supervisors. One had just returned to Australia from America, the other was a long-time lecturer at the university. At the time of our first meeting, I explained that I had found a fulltime ongoing job outside the university. By the time we met the second time, my relationship with my supervisors had deteriorated. My personal life and my professional lives had crossed and this caused a big problem for me. At the professional level, I had resigned from the university in the middle of a semester for personal reasons, one of which was that I had secured a fulltime ongoing position in the public service. The fact that I was going to leave the university before the end of semester angered my team leaders, one of whom was my principal supervisor. He expressed his disgust that I was going to leave without marking the examination papers and assignments. Up to this time, my dream was to re-apply for a full-time ongoing position at the university about two years after I had progressed in my PhD studies. The casual job I held at the university was unpredictable due to the neoliberal casualisation of university jobs and, as the name suggests, could end at any time. This was the first and only time I considered quitting the PhD program. I had never quit anything in my life before and I realised that I needed to overcome the difficulties instead of quitting.

After my second meeting with my (second) principal supervisor and co-supervisor, I was sure that I did not want to continue with this team. The meeting had not gone well, to say the least.

This led to a third team of supervisors. This team got me to the confirmation of candidature and past the first phase of data collection. Then I learnt that this principal supervisor was also leaving and he would not be able to see me through the rest of the journey. I felt like an unwanted and unloved foster child being tossed from one home to the next, as in the Australian child care system for which I worked. Unlike the foster care system in Australia, the African child's relationship with the extended family, referred to by Connell as 'local care mechanisms' (2007, p. 1379), is for life. I was on to a fourth team. I retained the co-supervisor who as I write this piece is still on the team.

My journey was challenging and characterised by changes. Each change had some influence on my project. I do not see the changes in supervisors as negative in any way. My faith and the fact that immigrating to Australia was such a difficult ordeal in equal measure had taught me to be resilient. I remained positive that I could progress but always cautiously. I accepted that change was inevitable regardless of my fear. I had been there too many times to pretend or even hope and pray for no change. My story is one of changes, as highlighted in the following pages. These included changes in education systems, change of places I called home and change of methodologies.

I was born in Nyeri in a colonial village in Kenya soon after Kenya attained independence from British colonial rule. I dream of and about that village. It was my home. I learned to speak Gĩkũyũ and acquired the knowledge the language carries in that village. I learnt to use proverbs in my everyday speech as I grew up and Gĩkũyũ knowledges and customs from my family. I remember many happy evenings sitting around the fire while dinner cooked singing Gĩkũyũ songs, listening to stories from my mother, or my grandmother when she visited, or exchanging riddles and tongue twisters. It is through family that I learned about my lineage. I learnt how people in the family and clan were related to me. My identity as a Gĩkũyũ woman was cemented at this time.

My primary school days were happy days. I had Gĩkũyũ reading and writing lessons. I still recall phrases from my Standard 1 reading book such as '*cucu curia mirĩo*' ('Grandmother, put the sweet potato vines on the tree branch'). I sang Gĩkũyũ songs and told and listened to Gĩkũyũ stories at school. It was in upper primary school that the British curriculum was introduced. I remember reading books by Enid Blyton while I was in standard 5 to 7. I also read *Cinderella* (Perrault, 1974), *Rapunzel* (Grimm, 1997) and others, like *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Twain, 1884), all about people and places I did not identify with. I did not look like them, I did not have hair like theirs and the meadowlands and orderly lifestyles they described looked nothing like the dusty Nyeri village known for its red soil and its unusual characters where I grew up. In upper primary school, secondary and high school, I was introduced to a Western education, the British curriculum that ran in schools then. It included learning English language and studying some English literature and European history. Some of the text books and novels used in schools during my time in primary and high school were written by people from the global North. By the time I got to secondary school, changes had begun to occur and some African literature was introduced. It was in high school that I was first exposed to African writers such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1965) and Chinua Achebe (1960). Their works were beautiful to read and spoke to me about my culture. I was able to identify with them because the places and people they discussed looked like my ridge or my next door neighbour. They spoke of things I knew and saw, unlike the European novels that were so far removed from my world.

Migrating to Australia removed me from my people and place. I have lived in Australia for over 20 years. I have returned to Kenya on many occasions, two of which were to collect data in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this research. When I started this research, I knew only one way of carrying out research and that was using Northern frameworks, hence Phase 1 of the research was carried out using that framework. After data analysis and during a discussion with my

supervisors, I expressed the view that I had a feeling that I was not hearing the real stories from the teachers and principals. My last two supervisors, who are both from New Zealand, where decolonising methodologies are advanced, suggested that I look at Indigenous methodologies. This was the beginning of a journey that allowed me to discover decolonising methodologies. I decided to go back to the field and interview the same teachers using the Gĩkũyũ Indigenous framework about their use of Gĩkũyũ knowledges, values, and practices in supporting students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. This became Phase 2 of the study.

I hold both Kenyan and Australian citizenship. As stated above, I consider myself an insider in matters to do with the Gĩkũyũ culture. I speak the language and have a deep knowledge of Gĩkũyũ knowledges, values and customs and use proverbs in speech. Living in Australia has not lessened this. I still speak Gĩkũyũ at home. However, as pointed out earlier, living away from home and presenting my Kenyan participants with ethics documents from Australia created the first encounter where I felt like I was being treated like an outsider. The ability to move from insider to outsider simultaneously (Kikumura, 1998, p. 42) was an advantage. As an outsider myself and as someone who has worked in special education in Australia, I had the advantage of understanding the differences in the Kenyan and Australian contexts.

In Phase 2, I was treated as an insider. I shared the participants' world view and history of colonisation and its effects on the people. I adapted the questions to suit the Indigenous methodology. I focused on the strengths and assets in the community as seen from the people's eyes, unlike in the first phase when I looked at the enactment of the policy through a Western lens. By using an Indigenous lens, I found out that there were a lot of resources in the community to support students with disabilities. This was in contrast to the Western lens, which was a deficit framework whose results indicated that teachers lacked resources to support students with disabilities in mainstream classes.

## **Self-discovery**

My PhD journey has been one of self-discovery. When I decided to use a decolonising Indigenous framework, I had to resolve the ambivalence in my life which existed because of the place I occupied as an Indigenous researcher who saw and blamed colonial threads everywhere in my life and society, and as someone who at the same time adhered to the Christian faith, the religion of the coloniser. To resolve the ambivalence, I had to think of God as the Gikūyū deity, Mugai (provider).

Through this journey, I learnt to see the Western effects on many aspects of society in Australia and Kenya. I developed a voice to speak up against the use of the Northern lens on Indigenous affairs. I learnt to use a Southern lens in my work as a social worker in Australia with one of the departments responsible for the removal of hundreds of thousands of Indigenous Aboriginal children from their families. My research sensitised me to notice Eurocentric language and writing everywhere, including at work, and I now challenge such writing and language.

My PhD journey taught me time management. I had to develop a consistent pattern so as not to lose track of what I needed to do as I was also working full time and had a family. I was also a member of Rotary and was leading a water project for a village in Kenya. In juggling all of these commitments, I realised that I needed to add more hours to my waking moments. I developed a pattern of going to bed early and waking up at 4 or 5 each morning and putting in two or three hours of PhD work before reporting to work at 9 am. Even those days when I wanted to throw the books out the window, I still woke up at 4 or 5 and read something different. I had to keep the momentum going.

There are many things that have made my journey manageable. One advantage I had was that my work place was less than 10 minutes from my house and 10 minutes to the university. I could go to the university over my lunch period if I needed to see my supervisors or to collect

readings from the library. The other advantage was that I was a mature student when I started my PhD and besides resilience and the wisdom of age, I had a calm home environment because my three children were well over 18 years old and did not need my constant attention. My husband remained cautiously supportive, not wanting to interfere or give any advice that he would be forever blamed for.

Although the PhD journey was manageable, I faced challenges along the way. As stated, before it was very much like the immigration journey I had travelled before. Only then, I was accompanied by my husband who made the journey bearable. On this journey, I was alone and lonely, feeling uneducated and inadequate. My travelling guides on this journey of Indigenous discovery were my two white supervisors in an academic context with little recognition of decolonisation and Indigenous methodologies. My supervisors constantly reminded me that since they were not Indigenous, I was the expert in my journey. This only accentuated my loneliness and created a deep desire to do more to decolonise myself and participate in decolonising the education system in Kenya, particularly the education of students with disabilities in regular classrooms. My supervisors walked alongside me and pulled me back when I wandered way off my topic. I did so regularly because I found other interesting things to read that did not quite relate to my topic. They challenged me to use my Indigenous lens constantly. On many occasions after meetings with them I realised how conditioned I had been to seeing things through Eurocentric eyes and had to relearn to be me, the Gĩkũyũ woman. My PhD has led me on a journey of self-discovery and of decolonising myself.

**What would I do differently if I were to start again?**

My research journey, like many journeys I have taken, was an adventure. I experienced many highs and lows and it brought out feelings of fear and insecurity. I was lucky that the fourth

set of supervisors were passionate about supporting me in using an Indigenous framework.

This made it easier for me to commit to the search for knowledge about decolonising myself and to discover how Indigenous knowledges could be used in an inclusive classroom. If I were to start again, there are a few things I would do differently.

First, if I had known about Indigenous methodologies from the very beginning of my studies, it would have been wiser for me to choose only Indigenous methodologies. The problem of using both became evident at the writing up stage. While writing the results of the Indigenous data was easier because I had the insider knowledge, I faced hiccups in writing the analysis of the data collected using the Western framework. I had come so far in looking at my community using an Indigenous (asset/strengths) framework that I contemplated doing away with the first phase of the research altogether. My feeling was that the more I wrote about the results of the Western methodology, the more I continued to propagate the hegemonic view of my people. I struggled with this. After discussions with my supervisors, we decided to leave the chapter in the thesis to show my journey and change of thinking from adhering to the demands of the academy in research, even when they did not suit the context of my study, to the use of an Indigenous methodology that respected the people and their culture.

Secondly, I would have chosen a more exciting topic. At the writing up stage I was feeling rather tired of looking at the work. I realised that I liked to read widely and deeply about Indigenous methodologies and would have had greater interest if my topic had allowed me to interview parents and community members. Whenever I had a discussion with people in the community about my research, they were always willing to talk and engage me in discovering the Gīkūyū knowledges and values. This is partly because that is the natural way in which the Gīkūyū people communicate.

Thirdly, I would choose the topic of research based on interest or need in the community rather than job prospects. I chose my topic because I wanted to keep the job I was holding at

the university. This was a big mistake. I soon realised the casual university job was not enabling me to meet my financial obligations and I needed to step out of the university system altogether to be able to earn a decent living. I should have talked to more PhD students. I am finally at the end of this long and arduous journey. I can finally look up and beyond my computer for whatever else the world throws at me. I am ready.

**What would I tell an Indigenous student about to begin PhD studies about decolonising research?**

To Indigenous students thinking of going back to Indigenous communities for research, I would advise that you explore Indigenous and decolonising methodologies. Unfortunately, they may not be taught in your universities. Although I attended methodology workshops at my current university, Indigenous/decolonising methodologies were not featured in the presentations. The academy is still controlled by advocates of Northern methodologies who do not welcome a change to the status quo. I would also advise that you speak to other Indigenous students and read widely and explore the online videos that explain decolonising methodologies. Using an Indigenous framework will be respectful to the Indigenous community where you will collect your data. It will also allow you to enter the community using the correct community protocols.

An Indigenous framework connects you to the community so that they are likely to treat you as an insider, just as I was treated like an insider because I used an Indigenous framework. I am a Gĩkũyũ woman, a Kenyan and a person who understood the colonial and post-colonial realities of Kenya. I also speak the Gĩkũyũ language of the people. My advice to new PhD students who are considering using an Indigenous framework and are hesitant because they cannot speak the language of the community is to use other identifying markers. These include locating your identity through your history and family relations. If you can genuinely show that you are one of them, they are likely to treat you as an insider. This can be

contrasted to data collection in Phase 1 when I approached the teachers and principals as a researcher from the University of New England in New South Wales, Australia. I was considered an outsider and treated as such.

The data you gather as an insider is richer than the material you gather as an outsider. As an insider, participants may tell you their truths and paint the situation as they see it. They are proud to be who they are. As an outsider, there is the danger that participants will tell you what you want to hear. The narratives told by the teachers and principals in Phases 1 and 2 of my research were inherently different. While in Phase 1 I heard about lack of resources, in Phase 2, I heard stories about strengths and assets in the community that are and could be engaged to support students with disabilities in regular classrooms. As an insider, I was treated as a Gīkūyū woman and the body postures and the happy dispositions marked how they felt about me. Their stories flowed. When they spoke about Gīkūyū knowledges, values and practices that they used in the classrooms, they had a lot to say. They were happy to talk about their history and culture. This was in stark contrast to Phase 1 of the research, when the teachers responded only to my questions and then kept quiet waiting for the next question.

### **Chapter Synopsis**

In conclusion, I offer alternative views on strategies for including students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. Rather than looking at inclusion of students with disabilities in Kenya through the Northern lens, in which Kenya is painted as poor, under-resourced and needing policies and resources from the global North, I have shown that resources exist among the people, the most important being relationships referred to by Connell (2011, p. 1379) as ‘social resources [and] care mechanisms.’

The interviews I conducted indicated that among the Gīkūyū, the care and education of children with disabilities was shared by all members of the community. Children with disabilities were included in all communal activities and were not viewed as different. The

literature shows that segregation of students with disabilities into special schools in Kenya was introduced by the missionaries. This is one of the threads of colonisation that decolonising methodologies are engaging in undoing.

It is a timely contribution of this research to leverage an argument that policy makers stop accepting what the North says of Africa, that its education systems are inadequate and flawed, that policies do not work because they are not implemented properly, that Africa needs the expertise of the North to implement and run these programs. Although there are complexities associated with funding from the global North, it is important that Africa re-evaluates its reliance on the North to assess its education and set its own objectives for education grounded in the importance of culture and place. Maathai (2009, p. 77) laments that African voices speaking of our challenges ‘... are muted in comparison with those of the industrialised world speaking about the needs of Africa.’ African values such as *uuma andū* (charity) and *Gĩtĩo* (dignity, respect) and *ndūgū* (relationships) have maintained the family system for thousands of years and are vital elements for education in the 21st century. This is a right for Indigenous people (UNESCO, 2008).

The *Gĩkūyū* have a saying that ‘*mūrimū wa mūcoka nĩguo ūriaga mūndū*’ (‘a disease that strikes you a second time will kill you’). This proverb refers to any issues in society, from rekindling a relationship with boyfriends/girlfriends/partners with whom you have broken up to friendships with people with whom you have fallen out. These people know your weaknesses and vulnerabilities and the next time there is a falling out, they are likely to destroy you because they know what would hurt you most. The North continues to interfere in matters of the South in the name of promoting development. The disease for the South is the dependence on the North and acceptance of everything Northern without questioning the effect these acquisitions have on our culture and the people. This could be seen as re-colonisation of the country by the North by modern means, in other words, the introduction

of policies that do not suit the Kenyan context, such as the structural adjustment programs, the Special Education Policy and the neoliberal market economy. For the South to be heard, and to make the North accountable for treating the South as the ‘other’, the South needs to meet the North on its own ground, the academy. This is what this thesis and other works (Maathai, 2006; Maathai, 2009; Thiong’o, 1986; Thiong’o, 2009) from the South are doing: challenging the status quo and rewriting the narrative of the South. Mathai (2009) challenges Africans to change our attitudes to our plight and believes that we are capable of forging our own identity, to honour and practice our cultures and make them relevant to today’s needs. In her work in the Green Belt movement, Maathai (2006) emphasises the role of Gĩkũyũ culture in protecting the environment. She argues, ‘Before the Europeans arrived, the people did not look at trees and see timber, or at the elephants and see ivory stock, or at cheetahs and see beautiful skins for sale. But when Kenya was colonised, and we encountered Europeans, with their knowledge, technology, understanding, religion, and culture—all of it new—we converted our values into a cash economy like theirs. Everything we now perceived as having monetary value’ (Maathai, 2006, p. 175). The re-establishment of our cultural values will not only benefit students with and without disabilities in schools but will also benefit the environment as well as enhance better relations with other cultural groups in Kenya.

There is hope that the policy makers in Kenya will heed the call to restore Indigenous languages, values and practices in schools, for ‘*mũgĩ nĩmwĩre*’ (‘he who has wisdom has received advice’). Thiong’o (2009, pp. 97-98) tells the story told by Kweggyr Aggrey of a farmer who brought up an eagle among chickens, and the eagle thought he was a chicken and behaved like one. In the story:

*The eagle grew up behaving like a chicken and believing he was a chicken. One day a hunter visited the farmer and an argument ensued as to whether the eagle could remember who he was. The farmer was absolutely sure that he had turned the eagle into a chicken. The hunter asked whether he could revive the eagle’s memory. On the first day he was unable to make it fly beyond the distance the chickens can manage. I told you, says the farmer: I have turned him into a chicken. The next day the same*

*disappointment occurred, with the eagle flying a few yards and then diving downward, earthbound. I told you, he cannot remember, says the farmer in triumph: He walks like a chicken, and thinks like a chicken; he will never fly. The hunter does not give up. On the third day, he takes the eagle atop a hill and talks to him, pointing his eyes to the sky and reminding him that he is an eagle. And then it happened. Looking at the limitless immensity of the blue skies above, the eagle flapped his wings, raised himself, and then up he soared, flying toward the azure.*

The colonialist represented in this story by the farmer seems to be saying to the Kenyan population: ‘Look at your children, they speak the language of the white man, they think like a white man, their bodies carry the names of white people, they carry forward the culture and memory of the white man, they will never remember who they are.’ I and other researchers who are on a mission to decolonise ourselves and our people have the conviction that like the eagle, Kenyan children with and without disabilities will one day speak in their mother tongues, they will sing their Indigenous songs and tell their Indigenous stories. They will keep their history alive and will no longer want to be washed as white as snow (Isaiah 1:18 New King James Version). What they require is for their elders and the leaders to create in them the memory that they are Gikūyū/Indigenous. They would like the hunter, represented in the story by the parents, the policy makers, curriculum developers, the teachers and community elders, to guide them to that place where they can remember, re-value and reconnect with their Indigenous ways.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: List of Acronyms

The following acronyms are used in the study.

ATS	Approved Teacher Status
CLS	Critical Legal Studies
CRT	Critical Race Theory
ETPC	Effective Teaching Practices checklist
IM	Indigenous Methodology
IN-SET	In-service Education Training
KNSNEPF	Kenya National Special Needs Education Policy Framework
KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
KIE	Kenya Institute of Education
KNUT	Kenya National Union of Teachers
MOE	Ministry of Education
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program -Literacy and Numeracy
NGOs	Non-Governmental organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PD	Professional Development
ROK	Republic of Kenya
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TSC	Teachers Service Commission
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
UN	United Nations

UNCRC United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child –  
UNESCO United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation  
UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund

## Appendix 2: Letter of invitation to principals to participate (phase 1).



University of New England

Armidale NSW 2351  
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Fax: 02 6773 2817  
[kuyinia@une.edu.au](mailto:kuyinia@une.edu.au)  
[www.une.edu.au](http://www.une.edu.au)

Dear Principal,

My name is Rose Mutuota and I am conducting this research as part of my PhD in the School of Health at the University of New England. My supervisors are Dr. Kuyini-A Ahmed Bawa and Dr. Jennifer Charteris.

I am undertaking research leading to the production of a thesis or other publications on the subject of **The Kenya National Special Needs Education Policy Framework (2009): The Impact on Teachers' Instructional Design and Practice in Inclusive Classrooms in Kenya**

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No....., Valid to .././....).

*I wish to invite you to participate in my research project, which will require yourself and selected teachers in your school to be interviewed and classroom sessions observed.*

*I will record the interview sessions and, use the recordings and/or transcripts in preparing the thesis report or other publications. Names or identity of participants will not be revealed. I will make recordings available to other researchers on the same conditions. It may be necessary to make the recording available to secretarial assistants (or a transcription service) for transcription, in which case you may be assured that such persons will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement which outlines the requirement that the names of participants or their identity not be revealed, and that the confidentiality of the material is respected and maintained.*

*I am interested in observing two classes that have students with disabilities in your school and would appreciate if you would assist me in identifying these classes for this exercise.*

Any enquiries you may have concerning this project should be directed to me at the address given above or by telephone on 67725757 or by email [rmutuota@une.edu.au](mailto:rmutuota@une.edu.au)

Thank you for your attention and assistance,

Rose Mutuota

### Appendix 3: Information sheet for teachers and principals (phase 1)



School of Health  
Health Annexe  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Ph: 02 6773 3676  
Fax: 02 6773 2817  
[kuyinia@une.edu.au](mailto:kuyinia@une.edu.au)

## INFORMATION SHEET For PARTICIPANTS

I wish to invite you to participate in my research project, described below.

My name is Rose Mutuota and I am conducting this research as part of my PhD in the School of Health at the University of New England. My supervisors are Dr. Kuyini-A Ahmed Bawa and Ms Jennifer Charteris.

<b>Research Project</b>	<b>The title of the project:</b> The Kenyan National Special Needs Education Policy Framework (2009): Impact on Teachers' Instructional Design and Practice in Inclusive Classrooms in Kenya.
<b>Aim of the research</b>	This research aims to examine how The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework (MOE, 2009) has been implemented in four schools of Kenyan classrooms. It will examine how the new <i>National Special Needs Education Policy Framework (2009)</i> influences practices in the four schools, teacher training, resources, instructional design and teachers' instructional practices.
<b>Interview</b>	I would like to observe your teaching for two periods and conduct a face-to-face interview with you at a café, library or a place of your choice. The interview will take approximately one hour. With your permission, I will make an audio recording of the interview to ensure that I can accurately recall the information you provide. Following the interview, a transcript will be provided to you if you wish to see one. A pseudo name will be used whenever you are quoted.
<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.
<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 of how The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework (MOE, 2009) has been implemented in Kenyan schools/ classrooms. The questions will also enhance my knowledge on how the new <i>National Special Needs Education Policy Framework (2009)</i> influences practices in schools, teacher training, resources, instructional design and teachers' instructional practices.
<b>Use of information</b>	I will use information from the interview as part of my doctoral thesis, which I expect to complete in September 2018. Information from the interview may also be used in journal articles and conference presentations before and after this date. At all times, 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, you may wish to contact your local Community Health Centre in Nyeri Hospital on phone number 2032681 or Kenyatta Hospital on phone number 406939
<b>Storage of information</b>	I will keep hardcopies of the recordings and notes of the interview in a locked cabinet at the researcher's office at the University of New England's School of Health. 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 -----

## Complaints

Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact:

The Manager,  
National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation  
(NACOSTI),  
P.O. Box 30623-00100,  
Nairobi, Kenya  
Tel: 020-2242175/020-310571  
Fax: 020-2213215  
Website: [www.nacosti.go.ke](http://www.nacosti.go.ke)

Or

Research Services  
University of New England  
Armidale, NSW 2351  
Tel: (02) 6773 3449 Fax: (02) 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,

Rose Mutuota

**Appendix 4: Consent form for teachers and principals (Phase 1)**

**CONSENT FORM  
for  
PARTICIPANTS**

Research Project: **The Kenyan National Special Needs Education Policy Framework (2009): Impact on Teachers' Instructional Design and Practice in Inclusive Classrooms in Kenya**

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 agree to be observed. 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 5: Demographic information form teachers and principals (phase 1)

### The Kenyan National Special Education Policy Framework (2009): Impact on Teachers' Instructional Design and Practice in Inclusive Classrooms in Kenya

#### PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

---

1. What is your age

20-24

35-39

50-54

25-29

40-44

55-59

30-34

45-49

60 years+

2. What are your teaching qualifications? (i.e. certificate/diploma, degree, post graduate)

---

3. How many years have you been teaching?

0-4

20-24

5-9

25-29

10-14

30yrs+

15-19

4. What grades are currently teaching?

Year 1-4

Year 5-8

5. Are you aware of any students with disabilities in your class?

Yes

No

## Appendix 6: Observation checklist (phase 1)

### Effective Teaching Practices Checklist (ETPC) (Kuyini, 2004, 2012)

**Instructions:** Observers should check each item as follows:

3= Fully in evidence. 2= Partly in evidence. 1= Not in evidence.

	Practice or behaviour	Scoring			Notes
		3	2	1	
	<b>A. Classroom and Behaviour Management</b>				
	<i>A1: Classroom Organisation &amp; Order</i>				
1)	Arranges instructional environment to accommodate the needs of all students: i) Provides wide aisles for easy movement around room. ii) All students are sitting in the same seat arrangements or formation. iii) Students with disabilities are seated where : a) sound is clear. b) light is adequate c) distraction is less.				
2)	Positions self in room to have close proximity to students and to have better communication (e.g., can make eye contact with all students).				
3)	Gains students' attention at the beginning of the lesson. i) There is quiet ii) Students are focusing attention on teacher.				
	<i>A2 Behaviour Management</i>				
4)	Rules and procedures exist for all events (for instructional and non-instructional events): i) Rules are stated during teaching ii) Classroom rules are stated in simple and clear language for students with disabilities to understand lesson and class activities. iii) Cites rule or procedure in responding to routines or disruptive behaviour.				
5)	Scans and circulates frequently (every 2-3 mins) among students during lesson.				
6)	Maintains students' attention during instruction: Speaks when it is quiet or uses pauses in talk to get students to focus on teacher.				
7)	Attends to students' non-compliance of rules.				
8)	Reinforces positive behaviour through a variety of motivational techniques: i) Uses specific praise statements. ii) Praises contingently (ensures the immediacy of rewards) iii) Praises consistently				

9)	Uses Positive Behaviour Strategies to get students to demonstrate appropriate behaviour i) Uses task or activity variation to manage problem behaviour ii) Uses environmental alteration techniques to manage problem behaviour				
10)	Maximises students' engagement time: i) Limits time spent on non-academic activities. ii) Maximises students' time on-task behaviour during seatwork. iii) States expectations for seatwork and transitions in advance and informs students that lesson is drawing to a close. iv) Keeps transition time between lessons short.				
<b>B. Lesson Planning and Presentation</b>					
11)	Uses IEP as guide to lesson preparation for students with disabilities: Specifies instructional objectives for students with disabilities related to IEP goals. e.g. focuses on fewer objectives for students with disabilities( <i>check teacher's lesson plan</i> ).				
12)	Reviews the knowledge and skills of students to match the entry behaviour of the new lesson: i) Reviews past learning before introducing new information. ii) Tests students' understanding and retention of previous lesson content (e.g., Asks questions regarding lesson content).				
13)	Provides a clear overview of the lesson: i) States the purpose and objective of the lesson ii) Explains lesson tasks in terms of teachers' and students' actions ( tells students what they will be accountable for knowing or doing). iii) Introduces topic(s) of the learning task and displays lesson structure in visual form (e.g., text, structure, and diagram of lesson topics and subtopics)				
14)	Ensures clarity in lesson presentation:  i) Uses clear and direct language. ii) Provides concrete examples of information and concepts and points out distinctive features of new concepts and uses examples and non-examples to show relevant and irrelevant features of the concept. iii) Uses bold writing or large print to make reading texts legible or uses braille for students with visual impairment. iv) Breaks lesson content and tasks into smaller segments ( task analysis).				
15)	Adapts the pace of instruction for students with disabilities: a) Maintains a brisk pace during the lesson and adjusts the pace of lesson presentation to meet needs of students with disabilities.				
16)	Provides guided practice activities of lessons to students.				
17)	Provides independent practice activities of lessons to students.				
18)	Provides feedback to students during instruction: Feed back is i) immediate, ii) specific and iii) appropriate.				
19)	Ensures mastery of lesson content: i) Emphasises the most important aspects of lessons.				

	ii) Highlights important information and key concepts. iii) Provides practice opportunities until students are not making errors or provides error correction procedures / drill on missed concepts.				
20)	Uses questions to promote active responding and evaluate students' mastery of lesson concepts: i) Asks students "what, how, when, why"- type questions related to the targeted skill or concepts or strategies.				
21)	Summarises lesson content and accomplishments of individuals and groups.				
22)	Forecasts upcoming lesson content.				
	<b>C. Adaptive Instruction.</b>				
23)	Students with disabilities are working on the same curriculum area as other students				
24)	Adapts instructional and curriculum materials to enhance and support learning for students with disabilities.				
25)	Provides both individual and group instruction.				
26)	Uses additional instructional strategies recommended for inclusive classrooms: i) Uses co-operative learning groups formats and opportunities to support learning ii) Uses Peer-tutoring formats strategies to support student learning				
27)	Uses multi-level teaching: Varies the level of difficulty of the same curriculum content being taught to peers of students with disabilities.				
28)	Students with disabilities are called upon to answer questions in teacher-led activities.				
29)	Modifies task requirements and assessment procedures for students with disabilities OR Modifies the lesson evaluation procedures for students with disabilities  i) Provides extra time for students with disabilities to complete tasks and / or respond to teacher questions. ii) Students with disabilities are given reduced number of tasks to perform or Students with disabilities are given shortened assignments or reduced number of problems to complete. iii) Alternative projects are designed to allow students with disabilities to demonstrate mastery.				

## Appendix 7: Interview guide for teachers

### Interview schedule for teachers

1. What adaptations do you make to the class environment to accommodate students with disabilities?
2. What accommodations do you make to the curriculum to accommodate students with disabilities?
3. What accommodations do you make to your teaching to accommodate students with disabilities?
4. What adaptations do you make to your evaluations (tests and exams) to accommodate students with disabilities?
5. What is your understanding of the *National Special Needs Education Policy Framework (2009)*?
6. What is your attitude towards inclusion?
7. What supports (teacher's aide, parents, special education teachers) do you have in the class?
8. How often do you have them?
9. What supports do you get from the school executive and ministry of education officials in the implementation of inclusion in your classroom?
10. What resources do you get to help you with implementing inclusive teaching practices?

## Appendix 8: Interview guide for principals

### Interview Schedule for Principals

1. What is your understanding of the *National Special Needs Policy Framework (2009)*?
2. How is the *National Special Needs Policy Framework (2009)* implemented in this school?
3. What inclusive education policies are employed in this school?
4. What resources (materials, personnel, time, class size) are available to the teachers to enable the implementation of inclusive education practices?
5. How do you create a learning environment that promotes inclusive education in the school?
6. What professional development is available for staff to improve their knowledge and skills of inclusive educational practices?
7. What assistance is available to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of students with disabilities?
8. What steps do you take to provide an education setting that identifies and reduces barriers to learning and increases participation of people with disabilities?
9. What steps do you take to restructure the culture, policies and practices in the school to respond to diversity of students in the school?
10. How do you promote a positive attitude towards inclusive education in the school?
11. What steps do you take to strengthen and sustain participation of pupils, teachers and community members in promoting inclusive education?
12. How are parents involved in promoting inclusive education in the school?
13. How do you promote involvement and engagement of students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms?
14. What steps do you take to provide transparent and accessible information on inclusive education policies and practices to students, parents and stakeholders?

## Appendix 9: Approval to conduct research- UNE phase 1



**Ethics Office**  
**Research Development & Integrity**  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Australia  
**Phone** 02 6773 3449  
**Fax** 02 6773 3543 jo-  
**ann.sozou@une.edu.au**  
**www.une.edu.au/research-services**

### HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM TO: Dr Ahmed Bawa Kuyini-Abubakar, Ms Jennifer Charteris & Ms Rose Mutuota

#### **School of Health**

This is to advise you that the Human Research Ethics Committee has approved the following:

PROJECT TITLE: The Kenyan National Special Needs Education Policy Framework (2009): Impact on teachers' instructional design and practice in inclusive classrooms in Kenya

APPROVAL No.: HE15-003

COMMENCEMENT DATE: 18 February, 2015

APPROVAL VALID TO: 18 February, 2016

COMMENTS: Nil. Conditions met in full

The Human Research Ethics Committee may grant approval for up to a maximum of three years. For approval periods greater than 12 months, researchers are required to submit an application for renewal at each twelve-month period. All researchers are required to submit a Final Report at the completion of their project. The Progress/Final Report Form is available at the following web address:  
<http://www.une.edu.au/research/research-services/rdi/ethics/hre/hrec-forms>

The NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans requires that researchers must report immediately to the Human Research Ethics Committee anything that might affect ethical acceptance of the protocol. This includes adverse reactions of participants, proposed changes in

the protocol, and any other unforeseen events that might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

In issuing this approval number, it is required that all data and consent forms are stored in a secure location for a minimum period of five years. These documents may be required for compliance audit processes during that time. If the location at which data and documentation are retained is changed within that five year period, the Research Ethics Officer should be advised of the new location.



18/02/2015 A15/15

Jo-Ann Sozou  
Secretary/Research  
Ethics Officer

**Appendix 10: Approval to conduct research from MOE, Kenya (phase 1)**

**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:**  
**MS. ROSE NJOKI MUTUOTA**  
**OF UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND,**  
**0-2151 Armidale, NSW, has been**  
**permitted to conduct research in**  
**Nairobi and Nyeri County**  
**on the topic: THE KENYAN NATIONAL**  
**SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICY**  
**FRAMEWORK (2009). IMPACT ON**  
**TEACHERS INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN AND**  
**PRACTICE IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS**  
**IN KENYA**  
**for the period ending:**  
**31st December, 2015**

**Permit No : NACOSTI/P/15/2392/4918**  
**Date Of Issue : 25th February, 2015**  
**Fee Received :Ksh. 2000**



**Applicant's Signature**

**Secretary**  
**National Commission for Science,**  
**Technology & Innovation**

**CONDITIONS**

- 1. You must report to the County Commissioner and the County Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit.**
- 2. Government Officers will not be interviewed without prior appointment.**
- 3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.**
- 4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.**
- 5. You are required to submit at least two(2) hard copies and one(1) soft copy of your final report.**
- 6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice.**

**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**



**NACOSTI**  
**National Commission for Science,**  
**Technology and Innovation**

**RESEARCH CLEARANCE**  
**PERMIT**

**Serial No. A 4989**

**CONDITIONS: see back page**

## Appendix 11: Letters to principals (phase 2)



University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Ph: 61 02 6773 3676  
Fax: 61 02 6773 2817  
msims7@une.edu.au  
www.une.edu.au

Dear Principal,

My name is Rose Mutuota and I am conducting this research as part of my PhD in the School of Education at the University of New England. My supervisors are Professor Margaret Sims and Dr. Jennifer Charteris.

I am undertaking research leading to the production of a thesis or other publications on the subject of The Kenya National Special Needs Education Policy Framework (2009): The Impact on Teachers' Instructional Design and Practice in Inclusive Classrooms in Kenya

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No....., Valid to .././....).

I wish to invite you to participate in my research project. You and selected teachers in your school will be interviewed.

I would like to interview teachers who teach mainstream classrooms that have students with disabilities.

I will record the interview sessions and, use the recordings and/or transcripts in preparing the thesis report or other publications. Names or identity of participants will not be revealed. I will make recordings available to other researchers on the same conditions. It may be necessary to make the recording available to secretarial assistants (or a transcription service) for transcription, in which case you may be assured that such persons will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement which outlines the requirement that the names of participants or their identity not be revealed, and that the confidentiality of the material is respected and maintained.

Any enquiries you may have concerning this project should be directed to me at the address given above or by telephone on 61 02 67725757 or by email rmutuota@myune.edu.au .

Thank you for your attention and assistance,

Kind regards,

Rose Mutuota

## Appendix 12: Information for teachers phase 2



School of Health  
Health Annexe  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Ph: 02 6773 3676  
Fax: 02 6773 2817  
[kuyinia@une.edu.au](mailto:kuyinia@une.edu.au)

### INFORMATION SHEET For PARTICIPANTS

I wish to invite you to participate in my research project, described below.

My name is Rose Mutuota and I am conducting this research as part of my PhD in the School of Health at the University of New England. My supervisors are Professor Margaret Sims and Ms Jennifer Charteris.

<b>Research Project</b>	<b>The title of the project:</b> The Kenyan National Special Needs Education Policy Framework (2009): Impact on Teachers' Instructional Design and Practice in Inclusive Classrooms in Kenya.
<b>Aim of the research</b>	This research aims to examine how The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework (MOE, 2009) has been implemented in four schools of Kenyan classrooms. It will examine how the new <i>National Special Needs Education Policy Framework (2009)</i> influences practices in the four schools, teacher training, resources, instructional design and teachers' instructional practices.
<b>Interview</b>	I would like to observe your teaching for two periods and conduct a face-to-face interview with you at a café, library or a place of your choice. The interview will take approximately one hour. With your permission, I will make an audio recording of the interview to ensure that I can accurately recall the information you provide. Following the interview, a transcript will be provided to you if you wish to see one. A pseudo name will be used whenever you are quoted. No classroom observations will be conducted.
<b>Confidentiality</b>	Any 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.
<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 of how The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework (MOE, 2009) has been implemented in Kenyan schools/ classrooms. The questions will also enhance my knowledge on how the new <i>National Special Needs Education Policy Framework (2009)</i> influences practices in schools, teacher training, resources, instructional design and teachers' instructional practices.
<b>Use of information</b>	I will use information from the interview as part of my doctoral thesis, which I expect to complete in September 2018. Information from the interview may also be used in journal articles and conference presentations before and after this date. At all times, 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, you may wish to contact your local Community Health Centre in Nyeri Hospital on phone number 2032681 or Kenyatta Hospital on phone number 406939
<b>Storage of information</b>	During field work, I will keep the data locked In a suitcase and my computer and ipad will n\be password protected. I will keep hardcopies of the recordings and notes of the interview in a locked cabinet at the researcher's office at the University of New England's School of Education. 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 .././.....).

**Contact details**

Feel free to contact me with any questions about this research by email at ----- or P.O Box ----- or my supervisors :

Professor Margaret Sims  
University of New England  
Tel 6773 3823  
Email \_\_\_\_\_ or

Dr Jennifer Charteris  
University of New England  
Tel 6773 3513  
Email \_\_\_\_\_ -

**Complaints**

Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact:  
The Manager,  
National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI),  
P.O. Box 30623-00100,  
Nairobi, Kenya  
Tel: 020-2242175/020-310571  
Fax: 020-2213215  
Website: [www.nacosti.go.ke](http://www.nacosti.go.ke)  
Or  
Research Services  
University of New England  
Armidale, NSW 2351  
Tel: (02) 6773 3449 Fax: (02) 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,

Rose Mutuota

**Appendix 13: Consent forms (phase 2)**

**CONSENT FORM  
for  
PARTICIPANTS**

Research Project: **The Kenyan National Special Needs Education Policy Framework (2009): Impact on Teachers' Instructional Design and Practice in Inclusive Classrooms in Kenya**

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 agree to be observed. 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 14: Story telling guide for teachers phase 2**

## Introduction

My name is Rose Mutuota. I am a PhD student at the University of New England in Australia. I was born and brought up in Kenya. I currently live and work in Australia. I am here to ask a few questions about inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

## Interview questions

Please tell me about the ways in which you incorporate Gikūyū values in your teaching.

2. What Gikūyū practices do you use in your classroom to support students with disabilities?

3. What other aspects of the Gikūyū traditions could be incorporated in schools to support students with disabilities

## Appendix 15: Approval to conduct research- UNE (phase 2)



**Ethics Office**  
**Research Development & Integrity Research**  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Australia  
**Phone** 02 6773 3449  
**Fax** 02 6773 3543 [jo-ann.soizou@une.edu.au](mailto:jo-ann.soizou@une.edu.au)  
[www.une.edu.au/research-services](http://www.une.edu.au/research-services)

## HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM TO: Prof Margaret Sims, Dr Jennifer Charteris & Mrs Rose Mutuota

### **School of Education**

This is to advise you that the Human Research Ethics Committee has approved the following:

PROJECT TITLE: The Kenyan National Special Education Policy (2009): Impact on Teachers' Instructional Design and Practice in Inclusive Classrooms in Kenya

APPROVAL No.: HE17-220  
COMMENCEMENT DATE: 01 October, 2017  
APPROVAL VALID TO: 01 October, 2018  
COMMENTS: Nil. Conditions met in full

The Human Research Ethics Committee may grant approval for up to a maximum of three years. For approval periods greater than 12 months, researchers are required to submit an application for renewal at each twelve-month period. All researchers are required to submit a Final Report at the completion of their project. The Progress/Final Report Form is available at the following web address:  
<http://www.une.edu.au/research/research-services/rdi/ethics/hre/hrec-forms>

The NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans requires that researchers must report immediately to the Human Research Ethics Committee anything that might affect ethical acceptance of the protocol. This includes adverse reactions of participants, proposed changes in the protocol, and any other unforeseen events that might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

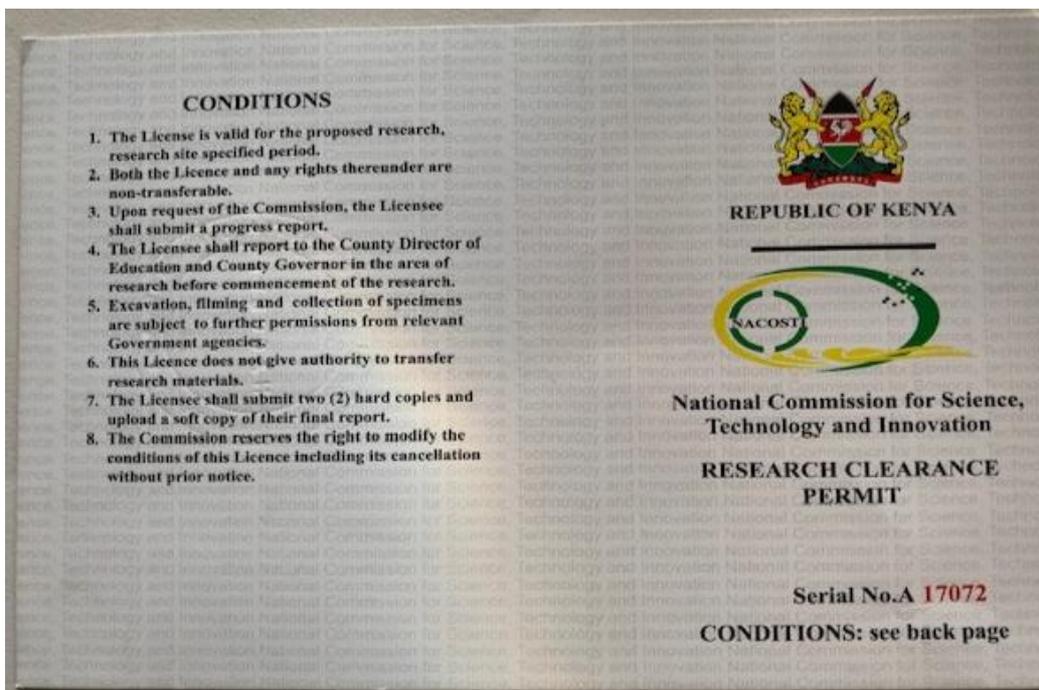
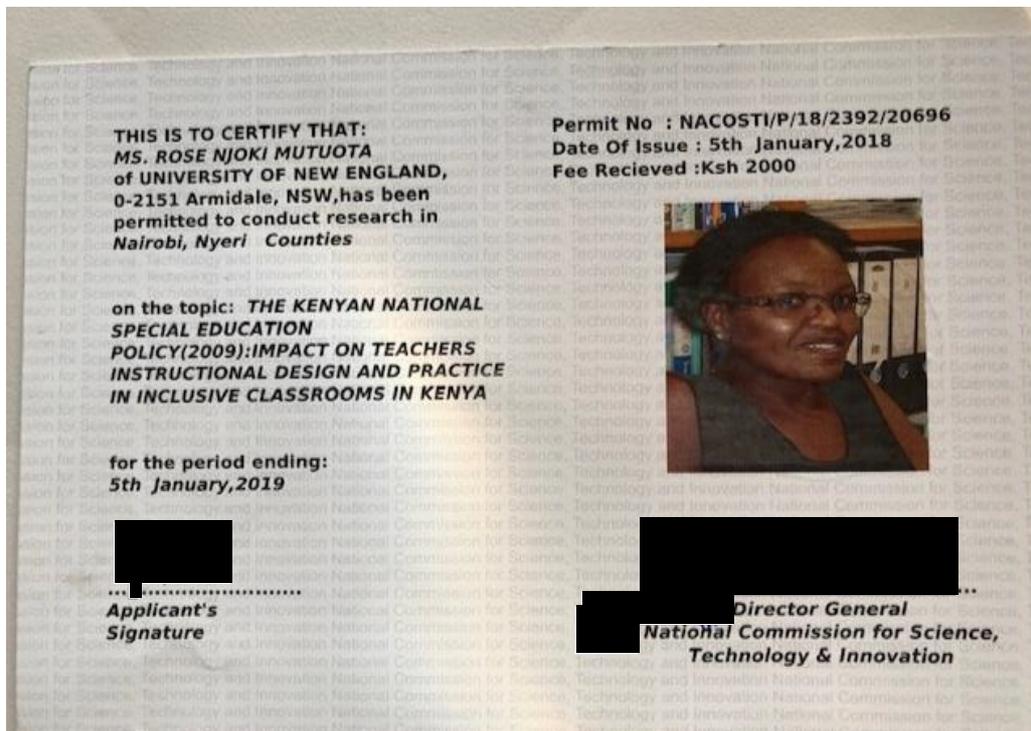
In issuing this approval number, it is required that all data and consent forms are stored in a secure location for a minimum period of five years. These documents may be required for compliance audit processes during that time. If the location at which data and documentation are retained is changed within that five year period, the Research Ethics Officer should be advised of the new location.



28/09/2017 A17/79

Jo-Ann Sozou Secretary/Research Ethics Officer

## **Appendix 16: Approval from Kenya (phase 2)**



**Appendix 17: Karing’otho**

A long time ago there were seven young men who needed hides to make shields. They went out in the bush to hunt for buffalo. Among the seven men was a young man with one eye who was called Karing’otho a nickname referring to one eye. They travelled far into the bush. It was getting late in the day. They saw what looked like a buffalo in the next ridge. When they got there, they did not see the buffalo but there was an old man sitting down. He offered to

take them to the forest where buffalos were in plenty the next morning. Since they were far away from home, he offered them accommodation for the night which they accepted. At his home, he milked the cows and brought the milk to the young men. Then he pieced himself, collected the blood and offered to them. They argued about who should drink first. As each drank, he fell without a sound. They thought it was normal sleep as advised by the old man. Karing'otho was suspicious and decided not to drink the blood. His friends had all drunk the blood and were all dead. He poured the blood in the fireplace but a drop fell on his leg. Then he lay among the bodies. When the old man came, he was excited saying he had a big feast of good meat. He decided to go and fetch water from the river so that he could come back and enjoy his meal. He counted the bodies before he left. Upon his return he realised one was missing. Meanwhile Karing'otho has escaped. The old man (ogre) followed him calling out, "where is my blood?". A voice from his leg would respond, "I am here". Karing'otho went home. The old man turned himself into a beautiful girl and entered the village looking for Karing'otho. She was shown Karing'otho's home where she was welcomed by his mother. Karing'otho was away. The young girls of the village came to keep her company, but she said that she was tired. She was shown a place to sleep. When she slept, she swelled and grew very big. When Karing'otho came he was told the bad news of his guest. The villagers locked the hut and burnt the ogre inside the hut. From the ashes grew a big gourd. Karing'otho's father used it for brewing beer. But the gourd drank it all. So, he broke it into pieces. A small piece flew into the hut. It was where Karing'otho's brother sat in the evenings. It threatened him every evening to give it food or it would eat him. He grew thin over time. His father decided to sit on the young boy's stool one evening. The gourd piece asked him for food. He took it down the river and threw it into the deepest part of the river.

### **Appendix 18: Wagaciari**

Long time ago a black smith joined other black smiths on an expedition to go and make some implements. They went far away. One black smith left his wife pregnant. The smiths were out there a long time. The pregnant woman gave birth. An ogre came to her hut. The woman asked the ogre to come and help her because she needed assistance. The ogre made lots of food each time but gave the woman very little. She and her child grew very thin. The ogre would tell the women Wagaciari ke tuhiuhio (Wagaciari means someone who has given birth, here is some little food). Warega ngaria (If you refuse, I eat it). Before the woman could reach the food in the ogre's hand, he would put it in his mouth and eat it. The ogre used to go and look for firewood. Upon his return he would drop the wood from his back with a thud and say, Wagaciari uri nyumba urogwa na mururumo ucio (Wagaciari may you fall like that thud).

One day the ogre went to the forest for firewood. Some birds used to come outside her hut. One day the woman said, if I send these birds would they tell my husband that an ogre is looking after me and he might one day eat me up. One day she fed them lots and lots of millet and she spoke to the birds saying her husband had gone to the black smiths' factory. He left her pregnant and now she has a child and is being cared for by an ogre.

The birds flew to the blacksmiths' factory. The birds settled in trees near the blacksmiths and sang. They tried to chase the birds away, but they kept coming back. One blacksmith said that they needed to listen to the birds, they may have a message. The birds sang,

Muturi ugutura cangarara i ca blacksmith smithing away

Turatura narua ī	Hurry up smithing
cangarara īca	cangarara īca
Mūkaguo anaciara -ī	Your wife gave birth
cangarara ī ca	cangarara īca
Aciarithio ni irimu-ī	And is being cared for by an ogre
cangarara ī ca	cangarara īca
Wagaciairī ndūke tūhiūhio	She is told Wagaciairī take this little food.
cangarara ī ca	cangarara īca
Nawarega ngarīa-ī	And if you do not eat, I eat it
cangarara ī ca	cangarara īca

So, the men looked at each other and asked who left a pregnant wife at home. One man said that he had. He left for home at one. When he got home, he told Wagaciairī to eat all the food the ogre had kept for himself. After that he hid in the rafters. When the ogre came from collecting firewood as he said as always did, Wagaciairī may you fall like that thud. Wagaciairī responded, may you fall the same way too. The ogre was surprised and said to Wagaciairī, wagaciairī why are you speaking with so much strength to me, have the blacksmiths returned home? She responded, don't remind me of people who disappeared. He walked in and asked wagaciairī where his food was. The woman's husband pulled out his spear and killed the ogre. When he was dying, he said, I said that the ones who went to the blacksmith's factory may be back The end.

### **Appendix 19: Wangū wa Makeri**

In the story of Wangū wa Makeri, women were the original rulers of the Gīkūyū society. Wangū wa Makeri was a very strong woman who was a ruthless leader. She is said to have sat on men's backs during meetings that is a man would be asked to go down on all fours and Wangū would sit on his back. The women who governed with Wangū were said to be very cruel and unsympathetic to the men. The men therefore conspired to overthrow the women's rule. They made all the women pregnant at the same time. When the women were pregnant the men used their state of weakness to take over the leadership of the society. That is how the Gīkūyū society changed from a matriarchal society to a patriarchal society

### **Appendix 20: The greedy hyena**

The greedy hyena was walking and could smell meat. It got to cross roads. It could not tell where the smell was coming from. It was afraid of following one road. It felt that if it followed one road, it may not find the meat at the end of one road and by the time it goes back to the crossroads and follows the other road, it might find all the meat has been eaten. So, it opted to follow both roads. It was not long before he split in to two.

### **Appendix 21: The tortoise and the monkey**

There is the story may be of the tortoise and the monkey. The monkey invited the tortoise for a meal. The food was placed at the bottom of a very big guard. The tortoise could not reach the food because he his four legs are short. So, he did not eat and left the Monkey's house

hungry. The tortoise wanted revenge. After some time, he invited the monkey for a meal. Before the monkey came to his house, the tortoise burned the grass between his house and that of the monkey. There was a river between the two houses. It required the monkey to cross the river then walk on the grass up to the home of the tortoise. The monkey likes to have clean hands. He would wash his hands in the river ready for the meal and walk on burnt out land and get his hands dirty. By the time he reached tortoise's home, the hands were dirty, and he could not eat so he went back to wash and walked again to the river to wash them. So, he could not eat because the hands were always dirty.

### **Appendix 22: Cīakorire Wacū mūgūnda**

Wacū was hated by her husband and co-wives. The husband decided to slaughter a goat for a feast for his favourite wife. Wacū was not informed about the feast so she went to the garden as she always did. She was a hard-working woman. The man slaughtered the goat and roasted the meat and as he got ready to enjoy it with his favourite wife. A hawk flew over and snatched a big piece of meat. The chunk of meat was too hot for the hawk to carry so he dropped it soon after leaving the home. The meat fell in front of Wacū who was busy tilling her piece of land. Wacū sat down and enjoyed her meat. Hence the proverb cīakorire Wacū mūgūnda (It (meat) found Wacū in the garden)

### **Appendix 23: The hyena and the cow**

One day a long time ago a hyena fell into a hole. A cow and her heifer were passing by. They saw the hyena in the hole. The hyena said to the cow, "hey cow, could you please get me out of here". The cow helped the hyena out of a hole that he had fallen into. When the cow got out, he said to the cow, "cow, you have done well to get me out of that deep dark hole where I was stuck. I am very hungry and will only feel better if I eat your heifer. The cow did not know want to let the hyena eat her heifer. So they began to argue. An elephant came

But as in all good stories the complication was that when the hyena got out he wanted to eat the cow's heifer. An elephant came along and helped solve the tricky situation.