i. Introduction

Youth policy is one of the key vehicles for ensuring that young people’s social inclusion becomes more of a reality; another is a move towards non-discriminatory practices and attitudes of society, particularly towards young people. The combination of significant changes in attitudes and practices, and an innovative and genuinely inclusive youth policy could well pave the way for young people to begin to experience greater recognition and respect within our society. Several major government policy initiatives in recent years have focused on attempting to combat social inclusion and on improving services and opportunities for children and young people. Starting with the early years, some programmes focus on poverty and disadvantage amongst pre-school children. Some deals with health and social services and tackling social exclusion amongst adolescents and school-leavers. These and other initiatives stress the need to give all young people, but in particular those from disadvantaged communities, the best start in life, through improved provision, advice and guidance and opportunities for personal and social development.

ii. Social Inclusion in the United Kingdom

In England and Wales, a rather restricted view of inclusion was taken by the “Green Paper Excellence for All Children: Meeting Special Educational Needs” published in October 1997. It relates to elevating standards, shifting resources to
practical support, and strengthens inclusion. Developed on observations articulated in preceding consultation, the Green Paper seeks to set the future course of special education. However, the Green Paper gives no unambiguous and consistent definition of inclusion such as those found elsewhere. It seems that inclusion in the Green Paper only applies to children being included in an ordinary school rather than a special school. This signifies that to put a pupil in a special school is to exclude, and there is an fascinating similarity here with the argument about whether the special school offers a "least restrictive environment" for specific pupils. However, QCA or Qualifications and Curriculum Authority takes the vision that inclusion means acquiring suitable prospects for learning, assessment and qualifications to facilitate the complete and effectual involvement of all pupils in the process of learning\(^1\). The CSIE definition of inclusive education is all children and young people regardless of disabilities or difficulties learning in ordinary pre-school provision, schools, colleges, universities with proper networks of support\(^2\). Whatever the children needs, inclusion enables all students to participate completely in the life and work of mainstream setting. According to Rustemier (2002), inclusion is a systematic process of eradicating barriers to learning and participation for all children and young people. On the other hand, segregation is a chronic tendency to exclude difference while inclusion increased student’s participation and reduced their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula, and communities of local schools.


This means both issues are not in fixed states but rather continue and schools should work constantly towards resisting segregation and promoting inclusion\(^3\).

The United Kingdom government’s approach to social inclusion is reflected in Curricular 10/99 that highlights the necessity to provide pupils in school rather than by excluding them. Some methods of reducing exclusions from school is seeking to reduce estrangement in particular among pupils in known high-risk group, such as those with Special Education Needs (SEN) who may acquire complex behaviour. Another at-risk group is pupils whose attainment tend to be very low thus, methodologies to such pupils include early intervention, careful planning, and whole-school approaches. School-based pastoral support programmes (PSP) are developed with the help of external services for pupils who are at serious risk of permanent exclusion or of being drawn into criminal behaviours. For pupils who are already have Individual Education Plan, these IEPs should be made to include the features of a PSP. Normally, a PSP will be put into operation and fail before the school resorts to exclusion. Once a pupil is excluded, the head teacher and the Local Education Authorities (LEA) should plan for his or her reintegration into school-based education\(^4\).

Circular 11/99 concerns the LEA’s role in supporting pupils. It stresses that pupils excluded for more than three weeks should get a full-time appropriate alternative education. LEAs and other agencies should work to diminish exclusions in line with a

\(^3\)Rustemier Sharon, 2002, *Inclusive Information Guide*, Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education (CSIE), Bristol, United Kingdom, p.2

national target. The LEA must consider compelling attendance through legal remedies and should support schools that have pupils with PSPs. Of particular significance to social exclusion and pupils with SEN is that pupils with statements of SEN appear to be seven times more likely to be excluded than pupils without statements. While this is of concern, a contribution to the increased rate is pupils with statements relating to behavioural, emotional, and social difficulties, which may be associated with their conduct being detrimental to the education of others, consequently leading to their exclusion. In view of this assessment, socially policy has moved from being dominated by medical assumptions that disabled children are inevitably passive, vulnerable, and in need. The social model has guided the movement probably and social inclusion notions that disable children have rights and are active citizens and should be fully included in educational and cultural activities⁵.

The expression ‘full inclusion’ indicates that all pupils with SEN should be educated in mainstream schools. A range of provisions in which SEN could be met such a mainstream school, special school, and home teaching would not be acceptable. It would be better to have increased support and resources in mainstream schools in proportion to the severity and complexity of the SEN⁶.

The Green Paper does not support full inclusion but still speaks of strong educational as well as social and moral grounds for educating children with SEN with their peers. More realistically, the Green Paper states that ‘parents will continue to

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have a right to express a preference for a special school’. The government document *Meeting Special Educational Needs: a Programme of Action* continues this theme. An important view is that where possible even if pupils are not placed in mainstream schools they should spend as much time as possible in mainstream settings.\(^7\)

### iii. Social Inclusion in South Africa

In South Africa, the history of special needs education and education support services reflects extreme neglect and lack of provisions for the large majority of learners. Throughout the apartheid era, legislation and policy pertaining to education entrenched racial segregation and inequality. There is a need to realize that the apartheid system characterized and officially classified people in terms of ‘race’. These racial classifications of South Africans affected every aspect of their lives—education provision and support services operated along racial lines with gross inequities between white and black learners, particularly African learners. These disproportion in provision resulted in highly specific and costly provision of special needs education and support services for a restricted number of learners, the mainstream being white and Indian learners.\(^8\)

Since 1994, the new South African Government has been dedicated to transforming educational policy to deal with the inequality and disregard of the past and to bring the country aligned with international standards of recognition of human rights. Some of the voices in these processes have been that of disabled people’s

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organizations such as the South African Federal Council on Disability and parent organizations such as Down’s Syndrome South Africa and the Disabled Children’s Group. A strong human rights emphasis is evident in educational policy and legislation. In addition, education policy and legislation with respect to disability reflected a move away from welfare to a rights and development approach.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 sets a constitutionally binding structure for national and provincial legislative action in the field of education. The concept of a democratic society based on human dignity, freedom, and equality is well established in the Constitution. One of the significant provisions in the Constitution is the one dealing with equality of rights. In 1995, the White Paper on Education and Training declares the objective of the Minister of National Education to appoint a National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and a National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS). The tasks of the Commission and Committee were to explore and make proposals on all aspects of ‘special needs’ and ‘support services’ in education and training. The Terms of Reference indicated the following key areas of focus for the investigation: Providing a picture of the current situation with respect to ‘special needs’ and ‘support services’. Develop a conceptual framework within the context of a holistic and integrated approach. Develop a vision, principles, and strategies for the future for

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provisions of education with respect to ‘special needs’ and ‘support services’ with a particular focus on ‘inclusion’ and the strategy of mainstreaming. To investigate the implications of the above for curriculum and institutional development; the organization, governance and funding of schooling, and other levels of education, including higher and further education; and the staffing of educators and education support personnel. Development and training of educators and education support personnel and strategic implementation plan\textsuperscript{12}.

The work of the Commission and Committee is guided by the principles that were developed and approved upon by all members. Both parties agreed to uphold democratic processes in its investigation where all work will be done in a participatory and transparent manner, involving all members in the decision-making and in all facet of the investigation. This includes participatory approach to public participation, and intensive effort was made to engage relevant stakeholders in the fullest possible manner. This approach was in line with the democratic culture of public policy development that was rising in South Africa. Although there was a pledge to consider international opinion and trends, both parties decided to investigate a homegrown or local response to South Africa’s needs\textsuperscript{13}.

The foremost important tasks was the development of a concept for ‘special needs’ and ‘education support’, and to clarify the relationship between special needs and support. One specific effort is focussed towards building inclusive education and training system, which is mainly through indomitable, and sustained lobbying and

through participation of key activists in the policy development processes in the area. Consequently, the Department of Education finally published the long awaited White Paper 6 on special needs education in July of 2001. Similar to other policy documents, the White Paper oppose earlier stereotypes about disabled people and the learning process and obligate the government to realizing the right of disabled people to equal education opportunities within a single, integrated education and training system\textsuperscript{14}. Specifically, the paper acknowledges that all children can learn and that all need support, accepts, and respect that all learners are different in some way. In addition, acknowledging and respecting differences in learners, such as age, gender, ethnicity, language, HIV status, disability, language, and class. More importantly, consider the need to maximize the participation of all learners in the curricula and cultures of institutions and to uncover barriers to learning.

The approach taken by the policy is double, namely that of ‘mainstreaming’ or ‘integrating’ and ‘inclusion’. The objective of mainstreaming is to put together learners into the existing system and supporting them so that they can fit, while inclusion is essentially recognizing and respecting the differences among learners and building on their similarities\textsuperscript{15}. The South Africa Schools Act of 1996 has set out frameworks, norms, and standards for the finance and governance of schools. It stipulates that all schools should have democratically elected governing

bodies on which parents are the majority, with powers to determine admissions policy, language policy, and school fees\textsuperscript{16}.

iv. Discussion

The move towards a democratic and non-discriminatory policy and practices in education predominantly for young people, has paved the way for a combination of significant changes in attitudes and practices and genuinely inclusive youth policy in the United Kingdom and anywhere else in the world. However, inclusion in South Africa varies considerably as the history of special needs and education support services suggest intense neglect and do not have provisions for the large majority of learners. This is because legislation and policy related to education entrenched racial segregation and inequality during the apartheid era. We must always bear in mind that once, the country was under an apartheid system that officially categorize and classifies people in terms of race, which had eventually affected every aspect of South Africans’ lives. More importantly, education and services operates along racial lines with gross inequities between white and black learners. The United Kingdom on the other hand do not have the same history as inclusion concerns in the country are mainly focus on children with special needs and not by extreme racism. By the year 1994, when new South African Government took over, it has started to transform the existing apartheid-based educational policy into internationally accepted standards. This new educational policy and legislation are conspicuously giving strong emphasis on human rights and disability. In 1996, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

sets a strong constitutional framework in the field of education based on human dignity, freedom, and equality. Also created by the constitution are bodies that will develop a vision, principle, and strategies for the future provisions of education with emphasis on special needs, better support services, inclusion, and the strategy of mainstreaming. Although the United Kingdom does have much advanced social inclusion policy and practices, they are in a way similar to the South African strategy of inclusion and mainstreaming as they both aim for ‘full inclusion’ of children of all race, with or without disabilities into a regular school.

The South Africans like the United Kingdom are developing and training educators and education support personnel to be able to implement strategic inclusion and mainstreaming. Public and relevant stakeholder’s involvement is also a major feature of the South African education policy that resembles the Green Paper’s parent right in expressing their preference particularly in educating children with SEN. In 2001, the South African Department of Education released the White Paper 6 that specifically challenges the previous stereotypes about disabled people and the learning process and realizing the right of these people to equal education opportunities within a single, integrated education, and training system. In addition, it also promotes recognition and respect learners differences such as age, gender, ethnicity, language and so on. The South African social inclusion policy in general resembles policies and practices of other country as their government from the very beginning is trying to come up with an internationally accepted one even though there have been attempts for localized approach. The major difference between policies and practices in the United Kingdom and South Africa is the strong emphasis on race. The
South African educational policy struggles to remove the deep-rooted social inequality and classification left by the apartheid system while the United Kingdom is now working on ‘full inclusion’ or ‘mainstreaming’. Understandably, the South African social inclusion is still in its early development and like any other country, they must continue to struggle and resist segregation.

v. Conclusion

Social inclusion in the United Kingdom and South Africa is by principle not far from each other. This is not surprising since South Africa even in the beginning is looking for policies and practices that are widely accepted in the democratic world. Although the history of special education needs and education support services in South Africa was overwhelmed by racial segregation and inequality, the present democratic government’s move towards a new educational policy is commendable. Similar to the United Kingdom, South African’s educational policy includes special needs, better support services, inclusion, and mainstreaming. The main difference between the United Kingdom and South Africa as far segregation and inclusion is concern is extreme racism that makes any democratic approach to education problematic. Unlike the United Kingdom who is more concern on children with special needs, South Africans are more concern on the issue of race and deep-rooted social inequality in their society. However, although implementations of new educational policy particularly inclusion seems slow and complicated, and like many other country struggling to resist segregation, South Africa will soon realize their dream of mainstream education for all.
vi. Bibliography


