

Editorial

On behalf of the Editorial Board of *Papers in Education and Development (PED)*, I am delighted to welcome you to enjoy reading the papers published in this **Special Issue on Inclusive and Special Education**. The publication of this issue emerged as one output of the conference to celebrate 44 years of the University of Dar es Salaam's experience (through the School of Education) in providing services to learners with special educational needs. The conference was convened in the famous Nkrumah Hall of the University of Dar es Salaam in October 2022. It is imperative to narrate, albeit briefly the genesis and background of the provision of services to learners with special educational needs at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania.

Since the academic year 1978/79, the University of Dar es Salaam has been providing support services to learners with special educational needs. Initially, the university through Special Educational Needs Unit (SENU) extended its support to two male learners with visual impairment. The primary aim of this initiative was to ensure equitable educational opportunities for learners with special needs. Eventually, there was an evident increase in the number of learners with visual impairment and other categories of disabilities. Subsequently, in the 1980s, the university expanded its enrolment criteria to include learners with other disabilities, such as physical impairments, total blindness, low vision, albinism, deafness, and hard of hearing.

In 2022, SENU was upgraded to a standalone Centre for Disability Services. This was done in compliance with Section 4.1.3 (i) of the University of Dar es Salaam Policy on Disability and Special Educational Needs of 2022. The Centre for Disability Services focuses on providing appropriate support services to both learners and staff with diverse disabilities and promoting inclusivity and equal participation within the learning and working environments. Currently, the centre has 158 learners with special educational needs from undergraduate and post-graduate programmes. The centre has recruited seven specialists including three transcribers for learners with visual impairment and four sign language interpreters supporting learners with deafness and hard of hearing.

While reflecting on such great achievements, this issue contains the following papers:

- i. Identification of Children with Hearing Impairment in Pre-primary Schools in Tanzania.
- ii. The Dynamics of Preparing Children with Special Educational Needs to Start Schooling in Tanzania.

- iii. The Efficacy of Exemplary Learning Materials for Enhancing Writing Skills among Primary School Children with Susceptible Writing Difficulties.
- iv. Challenges in Supporting Children with Autism in Tanzanian Primary Schools: Voices from Teachers.
- v. Parents' Experiences in Provision of Social Support to Children with Intellectual Impairment in Tanzania Inclusive Primary Education Settings.
- vi. Bilingual Deaf Education: Enhancing Literacy Skills among Deaf Learners in Secondary Education in Tanzania.
- vii. Access to Guidance and Counselling as a Determinant for Academic Performance among Students with Hearing Impairment in Tanzania.
- viii. Promoting Support Services of Special Education Units for Enhancing the Educational Achievements of Students with Disabilities in Tanzanian Universities.
- ix. Challenges and Coping Mechanisms in Sign Language Interpretation at the University of Dar es Salaam.
- x. Intervention services for people with disabilities in Tanzania (1961-2022): what lessons do we learn?

On behalf of the Editorial Board, I extend our heartfelt appreciation first and foremost, to the Dean of the School of Education for accepting to finance the production of this issue. Additionally, acknowledgments are due to all anonymous peer reviewers, authors, and both content and language editors for making this special issue a reality. Together We Can!

Eustella P. Bhalalusesa

Chief Editor

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