




Teaching learners with learning disabilities in inclusive classrooms in Lesotho: Challenges and opportunities

¹Nthama Matsie  and ²Kananga Robert Mukuna 

¹Department of Educational Foundations, National University of Lesotho, Lesotho

²Department of Education Foundations, University of the Free State, South Africa

Abstract – Drawing on lived experiences in Lesotho's primary schools, this paper discusses the challenges educators face in teaching learners with learning disabilities in inclusive classrooms. This study was undertaken using two Mafeteng district schools, namely Primary School and Primary School B. The study found that challenges in teaching learners with Learning disabilities stem from deficiencies in policies and approaches at the national, school, and classroom levels. This study is a timely intervention intended to add knowledge on how learners with Learning disabilities can be best supported without compromising the quality of education, demoralising either the teacher or the learner, and, more importantly, attaining what the education system is set to achieve. The most important finding was that teachers face complex challenges in managing inclusive classrooms; therefore, the Ministry of Education and Training should take appropriate action to remedy the prevailing school situation.

Keywords: Inclusive education, Professional development, Learning disabilities, Ministry of Education and Training, Special education

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I. INTRODUCTION

TEACHING learners with learning disabilities in inclusive classrooms presents both significant challenges and valuable opportunities for educators (Sokal & Sharma, 2018). The concept of inclusive education emphasises the importance of welcoming all students into age-appropriate settings, ensuring they are supported to learn, contribute, and participate fully in the classroom environment, despite their varied learning needs, while simultaneously enriching the educational experience for all learners by fostering diversity and collaboration (Nigmalov, 2014). Challenges in inclusive classrooms often stem from students' diverse needs, requiring teachers to be adept at employing a variety of instructional strategies. Many educators report feeling unprepared to meet these demands due to insufficient training in special education methodologies. As educators navigate these complexities, ongoing professional development and support systems are crucial for equipping them with the necessary skills and confidence to teach all students, including those with learning disabilities, effectively. By embracing both the challenges and opportunities presented by inclusive education, teachers can create a more equitable and enriching learning experience for everyone involved (Ford & Courtois, 2013). For teachers to successfully deploy a variety of instructional strategies, they should be adequately trained, staff-developed, and equipped with the necessary tools. The literature is awash with challenges and suggestions for improving inclusive education and learning disabilities.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the Danish Institute for Human Rights, inclusive education generally opposes a separate educational system for students with special needs (Jokinen, 2018). Put differently, this is a kind of

education that fits all learners. However, Florian and Linklater (2010) argue that inclusive education aims to ensure that learners with diverse needs and preferences such as learners with disabilities have equal opportunities to access learning resources, services, and experiences. This approach is a direct challenge to special education, which separates learners with disabilities from those assumed to have no disabilities. The key to inclusive education is accessibility, universal design, and individual support that meet the diverse needs of students and create a non-discriminatory learning environment. Such is often found missing in poorly resourced schools in the developing world. Recent research has established that students with disabilities are subject to multiple barriers, stigma, and discrimination against them and continue to be the most excluded in education systems worldwide (Masuku et al., 2025).

Another equally important element of inclusive education is staffing schools with appropriately trained staff to meet learners' needs in inclusive classrooms. Such a problem is common in many poor countries across the globe. Inclusive education is not a problem exclusive to developing countries. First-world countries also struggle with inclusion, when, for example, they consider the education of the gypsy, Roma, traveller, and indigenous communities (Bhatti, 2019). The persistence of this problem, therefore, warrants further academic inquiry with a view to developing possible recommendations suitable for specific learning environments. In general, disability encompasses physical disabilities and learning differences. In this context, however, the focus is mainly on learning differences. Accepting learners with learning disabilities should be viewed as part of a normal human experience where people with disabilities and the able live together in harmony. Separating learners with disabilities is thus an infringement not only of their right to education, but also to association. Exclusion, therefore, becomes superficial and artificial. Urwick and Elliot (2010) argue that the system of inclusive schools is a 'social model', in which disability is seen as an artefact of social discrimination and barriers, while, on the other hand, special schools and classes are associated with

a 'medical model', in which disability is regarded as a problem of the individual learner requiring special intervention.

One factor identified in the literature is the lack of proper training for school principals in implementing inclusive education. A study by Sider et al. (2017) found that school principals and vice-principals face challenges in implementing special education in their schools, despite daily encounters with learning disabilities. Research is often preoccupied with how teachers can implement inclusive education in the classroom, without a critical focus on the policy environment and the implementation itself. There is a need to invest in research into how educational leaders can create a holistic environment for inclusive education and become part and parcel of community-based rehabilitation.

Since 1987, the Lesotho government has demonstrated its commitment to a more inclusive educational approach by enacting several laws in this regard (Ahmas et al., 2021). For instance, the Building Control Act (Shale, 2015) stipulates that the designs of new buildings should be accessible to people and learners who experience barriers due to their disability. In addition, the Child Protection and Welfare Act 7 of 2011 (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2011) further states that no individual should treat a disabled child in a humiliating or discriminatory manner. Furthermore, the Education Act of 1995 (Ministry of Education and Training [MoET], 1995), points out that a child who is physically and/or educationally challenged must receive appropriate treatment, education and care required by this condition, as it is also expressed in the Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan 2005-2015 (MoET, 2005). While the policies look impressive on paper, their practical application is something else. This is precisely what this research seeks to establish through participatory action research.

The United Nations (2006) underscores the right of all children, including children with learning disabilities, to an equitable and inclusive education. As a result, for the last ten years, Lesotho schools have been experiencing a high rate of learners with learning disabilities in both special and mainstream schools (Ainscow et al., 2019). The persistence of this problem requires spirited efforts from all stakeholders so that no learner is left behind based on disability.

Since 2001, the Lesotho government has increased access to schooling for all learners by eliminating schools' fees. These led to the high admission rate of learners with disabilities (LD) in both special and mainstream schools (Tseeke, 2021). However, despite the restructuring of the special education system towards full inclusion over the past two decades, the national training and implementation, as well as school- and classroom-based challenges, remain (Seliane & Kgothule, 2022). It is vital to establish whether this inclusiveness has moved hand in hand with the training and deployment of qualified teachers.

Learning disabilities refer to numerous conditions that may affect the acquisition, organisation, preservation, understanding, or use of verbal or non-verbal information (Zakopoulou et al., 2018). Learners with disabilities are characterised by weaknesses in reading, spelling, comprehension, and in the written and spoken word, as well as in social behaviour (Zakopoulou et al., 2018; Ali & Rafi, 2016). Learning disabilities contribute to low performance across all school subjects (Basu, 2014). Globally, research defines teaching as the ability to assist learners in organising, directing, and maximising the stream of developing life experiences (Greenwalt, 2016). A study conducted by the African Child Policy Forum (2021) found that nearly 86.5% of children with learning disabilities are out of school in Senegal (African Child Policy Forum, 2021). This high percentage signifies challenges of equal access and participation in education for students with learning disabilities.

Furthermore, an alliance of Non-Governmental Organisations indicated that children with learning disabilities in the Western Cape, South Africa, are neither enrolled in ordinary schools nor in special education, where included, they receive minimal resources from the Department of Education (McKenzie et al., 2023; Wood et al., 2019). The

absence of assistive technologies is cited as one of the significant factors contributing to the failure to effectively teach learners with disabilities inclusively (Kamran & Bano, 2024).

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is guided by the Socio-cultural Theory (SCT). This framework requires society to contribute to individual development and emphasises the interaction between people and their culture (Cherry, 2017). SCT reiterates that knowledgeable peers and adults in multifaceted roles support children in their exploration and construction of new understandings, knowledge, and skills, as well as in the development of dispositions toward learning (Couchenour & Chrisman, 2016). SCT emphasises the role of social, cultural, and historical factors in the child's mental and cognitive development, as well as their potential performance (Pathan et al., 2018). Therefore, this theoretical framework aligns well with this study, as it advises teachers to base their instructional strategies on learners' prior knowledge.

The relevance of SCT in teaching and learning scenarios cannot be overemphasised, as it integrates all learners' socio-cultural attributes in the social construction of knowledge. It refrains from viewing learners as empty vessels, considering them instead important partners to their educators in the co-construction of knowledge, without adopting stereotypes based on race, sex, age, ethnicity, religion, or disability (Mutekwe, 2018). Therefore, teachers within this framework do not simply follow children's development but also adopt socially valued goals as children learn, in line with the opportunities given to them. These opportunities may be environments that allow them to take an active and inventive role and to co-construct meaning with teachers and peers to improve teaching strategies for their education (Felderman, 2010).

Without overlooking the other objectives of SCT, like culture and communication (Lemmer et al., 2012; De Witt, 2009; Evans & Cleghorn, 2012; Evans, 2013), the objective of inclusion and active participation assisted in understanding that research is never complete and workable if it does not include other people as co-researchers or active participants. This approach helped the authors move away from oppressing others, such as teachers and learners, by sharing power equally to enable well-informed and productive contributions.

IV. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study explores how learners with LD can be best supported without compromising the quality of education, demoralising either the teacher or the learner, and, more importantly, attaining what the education system is set to achieve.

V. METHODS

Research approach

This study adopted a qualitative research approach, which is usually subjective and contextual. Its process includes taking people's life experiences seriously as the essence of what is real for them and permits multiple views of reality and the exploration of the experiences of their world. This approach was appropriate for exploring how learners with LD can best be supported without compromising the quality of education, as it emphasises human action from the "insider's" perspectives by explaining and understanding it (Babbie & Mouton, 2007). It presents the constructivist perspective on relativism, truth, and reality from the perspectives of participants and researchers (Morgan, 2014).

Research design

Participatory action research (PAR) was employed in this study to identify challenges and develop solutions for teaching learners with LD in a Grade 1 inclusive classroom. PAR is a systematic inquiry conducted in collaboration with those affected by the problem being studied, for education and for acting or causing change (Green et al., 2003; Seliane & Kgothule, 2022). PAR advocates that power be distributed equally

between the researcher and the research community, thus preventing unequal power relationships and developing a relationship in which the researched become the researchers in all aspects of the research process (Raynor, 2019; Coons & Watson, 2013). Furthermore, Dedding et al. (2020) indicated that PAR is beneficial because it promotes democratic participation, equality, inclusion, and respect for people taking part in research, such as learners with LD, who are often negatively stereotyped and stigmatised. This study discussed the challenges in educating learners with LD from grade 1 at primary schools A and B in the Mafeteng district.

Data collection instruments

Focus group discussions

Data were generated through meetings with teacher groups; three meetings were conducted and recorded. The discussions focused on different issues relating to an LD, as presented by the facilitator. One of the researchers facilitated all the meetings. The meetings were conducted in Sesotho and English, where necessary (code-switching was allowed). The first meeting was in January 2024, the second in February, and the last in March. All meetings took place at the two selected primary schools. Each group was encouraged to express its views on the teaching of learners with LD. During the meetings, two members of the group were asked to take minutes of the discussions, which were transcribed and themes identified for analysis.

Free-attitude interviews

Free-attitude interviews (FAI) were conducted during data collection. According to Nzuza (2020), FAI may be conducted between two people or in a group, with participants speaking as they would in an everyday conversation. Even though the discussion focused on a few questions to obtain an overview of the study, the central research question was: How can the teaching of learners with LD in grade 1 be enhanced? This meant that FAI allowed participants to discuss in a comfortable atmosphere, so that all the co-researchers would feel free to talk and share their perceptions in a non-threatening environment. The current study was conducted in Lesotho, in the Mafeteng district. This is the youngest and most disadvantaged district in the mountainous areas of the mountain kingdom of Lesotho. The research focused mainly on two local primary schools. The first school, Primary School A, is a government school, while the other, Primary School B, is a church-based school. Both schools receive a subvention from the MoET to support their survival. The number of learners in these two schools is very high due to the implementation of Free Primary Education, which was aimed at aligning with the Education for All Basotho.

Participants

Participants in the study were from two local primary schools in the Mafeteng district of Lesotho. Four teachers and one student-teacher who teaches grade 1 at St John's Primary School formed a group as co-researchers. The facilitator emphasised the importance of trust, mutual respect for cultural perspectives, honesty, open communication, and shared decision-making (Meier & Marais, 2012). The study was conducted in the Mafeteng district at two different primary schools.

Data analysis

The conversations in the meetings and the observational data were video-recorded, and the generated data were analysed using conversation analysis. This method of data analysis studies talk-in-interaction through a detailed inspection of tape recordings and transcriptions, and relies much more on the patterns, structures, and language used in speech (Maree, 2007; Hutchby, 2019). To this, Wu (2020) stresses that conversation analysis is the study of 'talk-in-interaction', with the general aim of showing how conversation is sequentially organised, turn by turn and action by action. This method of analysis was helpful because it enabled the researchers to uncover what different co-researchers considered a privilege during discussions in meetings. The researchers were then able to make various interpretations of what should be done.

Context

Education specialists with international influence have been

advocating for a policy that ensures all children with special educational needs are included in regular schools and classrooms. Since this has become policy, low-income countries have been compelled to transition from no provision for people with disabilities to a fully integrated system (Urwick & Elliot, 2010). The same authors also note that, as of 2010, Lesotho, then with a population of about 2 million, had only 4 special schools, none of which offered inclusive education. A policy statement on special needs education was published by the Ministry of Education in 1989, followed in 1991 by the creation of a Special Education Unit (Urwick & Elliot, 2010). Before 1989, Lesotho had no clear policy on inclusive education (Macheli & Kgothule, 2016). There was no commitment to retrain teachers to meet the new demand, nor was there a clear policy on special schools beyond the directive that they would not be closed and would be used to support integration.

The unveiling of Free Primary Education in 2000 and the prevalence of orphans because of the AIDS pandemic created further problems for inclusive education. Enrolment of primary school learners skyrocketed, and untrained teachers had to be recruited. With the new situation, it was now difficult to effectively teach students with learning disabilities. Urwick and Elliot have noted that between 2004 and 2007, about 30% of primary school teachers were unqualified. Orphaned children over the same period constituted another category of learners with special needs. Since the implementation of inclusive education, learners with disabilities are now attending school instead of staying at home (Macheli & Kgothule, 2016). The missing link is the requisite mechanism and leadership skills to apply inclusivity effectively.

Ethical considerations

For this study, the rights of the participants and the responsibilities of the researcher constitute the research ethics. Their rights and responsibilities demand strict respect throughout the research process (Mirza et al., 2023). The researchers strictly adhered to ethical procedures when providing information to participants to obtain their consent to participate in the study.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study's findings reveal that teachers face several challenges in educating learners with learning disabilities in grade 1. The challenges are significant but can be overcome. For discussion, the challenges were organised into three categories: national policy on teacher training and implementation; school-level challenges; and classroom-level challenges.

National policy on teacher training and implementation challenges

Although new policies may create opportunities, they also introduce threats and challenges that can be detrimental to achieving the expected policy outcomes (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015). Ali and Hamza (2018) define training as the process of teaching a person a particular skill to perform their roles effectively and efficiently. According to Jepketer et al. (2015), teachers are critical to influencing the teaching and learning process in schools; therefore, teachers should be competent to meet the requirements of ever-changing classroom practices. Equipping teachers with the necessary teaching competencies will contribute to the effective implementation of education. One way to capacitate teachers who were already employed before inclusive education was implemented is to enable them to access new developments in education and receive in-service training on educational technologies (Balta et al., 2015). This will ensure the continuance of their professional development. One of the teachers during the discussion suggested that the government, or the Ministry of Education, should do so if ever.

ka implementa taba ea liworkshop hore re ee workshopong rona as teachers more often e ka re thusa hore re fumane inclusive teaching skills (Teachers are eager to be accommodative of every student; the only problem that hinders their inclusiveness is the lack of workshops, which the Ministry of Education should organise).

In addition to the above point, another teacher pointed out that,

"The Ministry of Education ka Special Education Unit ea teng, bonyane e organise, rebe le liworkshop bonyane habeli khoeling, re chakeloe hoba joale hare

na mokhoa oa ho access to their office in Maseru (The Ministry of Education, through its office of the Special Education unit, should organise workshops at least twice a month. Teachers need to be visited by his office, as it is not easy for them to access this office because they are far from it)".

Another teacher was in total agreement with the previous comments and pointed out that:

"Curriculum e ncha e qeta ho kena, mmuso ka bo oona o leke ka matla oohle hore o ise matichere ana koetlisonng ha ngata feela, hore ba tsebe ho atamela bana bana ba rona ba sentse bana le bofokoli ka mona ka sehlopheng (Teachers need to be workshopped or trained on how to implement the newly introduced curriculum, and how, as teachers, they should deliver it to learners confidently)."

The above extracts indicate that the absence of regular in-service training opportunities for teachers is of great concern. Although the Special Education Unit in the Ministry of Education has worked diligently to ensure that all schools in all districts of Lesotho receive teacher training (Johnstone & Kgothule, 2018), there is a substantial difference between the number of schools with trained teachers and those without. To date, only one in three teachers has received special education training (Mosia, 2014). A lack of sufficient, qualified teachers compromises students' ability to learn, negatively affecting students' achievement and diminishing teacher effectiveness and quality (Ladd & Sorenson, 2016; Sorensen & Ladd, 2018).

Given the importance of positivity among teachers, it is worth noting that the overall positive outlook regarding their empowerment to teach learners with LD offers reasons for optimism in all instances. All teachers who participated in this study agree that in-service training is crucial. Professional development courses are vital for the successful implementation of inclusive education because they provide effective pedagogical strategies (Van Mieghem et al., 2018). This implies that capacity-building workshops are important for every teacher, as they refresh their expertise and equip them to become effective educators.

Considering the above, the MoET could, through the district support teams, provide teachers with access to appropriate pre-service, in-service education and training, and professional support services (Department of Education, 2001). Teacher education during initial teacher training could include relevant knowledge and skills in inclusive education policy and its implementation, ensuring that confident, competent, skilled, and qualified educators enter the inclusive classroom. A focus on evolving inclusive practices would go a long way toward adequately preparing teachers for the challenges ahead. The implication in this regard is that learners with LD do not receive instruction congruent with their learning disabilities because teachers do not know how best to implement it, as they have not had any training and are thus not sufficiently competent.

Shortage of teaching and learning materials/resources

In the words of Zwane and Malale (2018), in most schools in Swaziland (now Eswatini), inappropriate teaching and learning support materials negatively affect the implementation of inclusive education. A study by Adjei et al. (2015) shows that learners enjoy and understand more lessons when teachers use teaching-learning resources than when they do not. It should be emphasised that the teacher is an important element of human resources and whenever the word "education" is mentioned, the concept of "teaching and learning" is usually implied. This means that, in the teaching-learning process, instructional resources should be readily available so that the concept to be delivered is easily comprehended (Sheu & Ijaiya, 2016).

One of the teachers wished for the following:

"E se eka 'muso oa rona o ka re thusa ho eketsa li-classroom moo e leng hore bonyane re ka re bana ka sehlopheng ka seng ba ka ba forty or fifty (I wish that our government could help us by building more classrooms that could at least accommodate forty or fifty learners)".

To support the above wish, one of the teachers commented as follows:

"Ngoana e mong le e mong o tlo khona ho nka part in classroom activities, in that way re tlo khona ho bona ngoana ea utloileng le ea sa utloang (If learners

are not too many in the classroom, they will be manageable; as a result, all learners will be able to take part in classroom activities. Again, this will allow teachers to identify learners who have understood and learners who have not understood)".

One of the concerned teachers pointed out that:

"Ministry of Education e tlameha hore e hire matichere a ma ngata hore li needs tsa ngoana e mong le e mong li tsebe ho fihleloa (It is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to ensure that there are enough teachers at schools who will teach in a manner that all learners' individual needs are well met)."

Another concerned teacher stated that:

The same general trend observed in the previous section holds regarding the challenges of ensuring the availability and mobilisation of resources. Teachers agree that teaching and learning resources encompass not only material resources but also physical and human resources. A shortage of good, qualified teachers has significant implications for the quality of education offered and thus, the developmental prospects of children (Gaikhorst et al., 2017). This indicates that physical buildings with enough classrooms and an adequate number of trained teachers who teach learners with LD have classroom-specific implications (Johnstone & Kgothule, 2018).

Regarding material shortages in Lesotho schools, there appears to be a perplexing paradox. Teachers know they need concrete materials, but they do not specify the types of materials that will best suit their efforts to implement inclusive education.

A possible solution to the above is that pre-service and in-service training should incorporate disability awareness and the use of appropriate, augmentative, and alternative modes, means, and formats of communication, as well as educational techniques and materials to support learners with disabilities (Forlin et al., 2009). The time has come for educational leaders at every level to work towards high-quality training opportunities for teachers (Murano et al., 2019). Several software packages exist to support learners with LD in the classroom. This software package consists of an audio- and video-based curriculum that the teacher can adjust to meet learners' specific academic capacities (Turnbull et al., 2007), as well as learning software that can tailor content to address learners' particular interests.

High enrolment, a common problem in the education system, manifests as overcrowded classrooms with large numbers of students and limited space (Fatima et al., 2019). According to Marals (2016), the effects of overcrowded classrooms are far-reaching for teachers and learners alike. Overcrowded classrooms are those in which the learner-teacher ratio (S/PTR) exceeds the educational policy recommendation of a given country. For instance, some classrooms in Lesotho have as few as 30 learners, while others have as many as 100. During our discussion with teachers in our respective groups, the issue of large or overcrowded classrooms emerged as a serious problem affecting the teaching of learners with LD in grade 1.

One of the teachers highlighted the fact that:

"We are two teachers joalokaha you bona re le babeli tjena. Re ruta bana ba 148 ntse ba le joalo, re ba rutela hona ka classeng ena ha re ba a role hohang. (Learners are too many in the grade 1 class; there are 148 learners, and they are taught in one small classroom)."

As a result, teaching is not conducive to learning. This is a clear indication that learners can never be treated according to their identified learning problem.

Another teacher added to this by commenting:

"Thuto ena ea mahala e sa lefelloeng has overloaded us with large numbers of learners (Owing to free primary education that the Ministry of Education and Training implemented, learners are crowded into one class, and teachers feel that they cannot cope with these large numbers)".

The participants were vocal on this matter, and another teacher revealed that: Learners are taught in small classrooms that are not meant to accommodate large numbers, so there is no free movement for both teachers and learners. However, another teacher concurred, indicating that Learners with LD need more attention to progress. One teacher within that group suggested:

"Principal a ka fokotse lenane la bana ba amoheloang (The principal should not admit large numbers of learners without considering the size of the classrooms they have).

Another teacher even indicated that:

"U qeta nako e telele u ntse u leka ho controla classroom, lerata la bona! (Large and overcrowded classrooms are noisy; teachers spend most of their time controlling the learners as they are very noisy)".

The above extracts illustrate that valuable aspects of the social and intellectual growth of learners with LD may be lost in learning environments where teachers must maintain control over large numbers of learners (Johnstone & Kgothule, 2018). It can be inferred that the teachers can identify impediments and even suggest ways to overcome them. This optimism is nevertheless tempered by some teachers who apparently indicate that overcrowded classrooms have a variety of disruptive consequences for learners' education. Both teachers and learners feel uncomfortable in an overcrowded classroom; they become frustrated and unhappy due to excessive noise and chatter. Thus, learners pay little attention to the teacher, and the teacher is unable to be heard, their voice drowned out by the class turmoil (Fatima et al., 2019).

From the perspective of Mukurunge et al. (2019), children should not simply go through an education system for the purpose of attending class and attaining a certain level; the education of the learner should be quality-driven to produce a citizen sufficiently competent to meet the demands of the global world today. Therefore, solutions can include careful planning for future increases in learner enrolment; financial support from the government to enable schools to purchase additional teaching and learning resources; and the construction of classrooms. Recruiting additional teachers to prepare for teaching learners with LD may also be helpful (Seliane & Kgothule, 2022).

According to Chimhenga (2016), teachers' attitudes towards learners with LD are important in teaching, and they play an important role in children's academic performance. It is the teachers' attitudes and expectations that will either improve or worsen that performance. Adewumi and Mosito (2019, p. 4) stress that teachers undermine their own work when they hold negative views of disability. Arm et al. (2016) emphasise that inclusion will not be successful without changing the attitudes of all those involved in the educational process, including students, teachers, schools, families, and society. This means that, for effective inclusion of learners with LD in the regular classroom, teachers should ensure a welcoming demeanour so that teaching and learning can proceed effectively.

One of the teachers during the discussion declared that:

"Bana bana ba nang le LD do not really perform well, so due to their poor performance, we tend to have a negative attitude towards them. (Learners with LD do not perform satisfactorily, and as a result, we have an unfavourable attitude towards them).

Another teacher gave evidence that:

"Ha a sa utloe ehlile ke qetella ke teneha. (If they do not understand the concepts, I end up feeling offended)".

The above evidence suggests that some teachers develop a pessimistic attitude towards learners with LD because their achievement is not satisfactory, as evidenced by low marks. This should not be a valid reason why some teachers do not treat learners with LD properly; it does not mean that those learners cannot pass at all. They need educators who understand and are patient with them. In the words of Sokal and Sharma (2018), the success of inclusion programmes depends mostly on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Alharthi and Evans (2017) stress that all learners, including those with LD, should be provided with the appropriate educational support that they need. Professional development courses are necessary because they change teachers' attitudes, increase their self-efficacy, and motivate them to educate learners with special needs, including those with LD (Van Mieghem et al., 2018).

Feasible solutions involve educators working hard to maintain a positive, compassionate attitude towards learners with LD, as this

disposition will help them reach their potential. After teachers have identified learners with learning barriers in class, depending on the nature and severity of those barriers, they are expected to assess and support those learners (Adewumi & Mosito, 2019). Furthermore, teachers should influence learners' performance by interacting with them positively, thereby supporting both learners with LD and those without LD. Another solution is for teachers to understand the different learners in their classrooms, love and accept them for who they are, so that they will have a positive attitude towards them, especially those learners with LD. Teaching learners with diverse needs requires teachers with specific knowledge and skills to identify and support them. Thus, they will cultivate a positive attitude and a willingness to accept them in class and assist them (Mahlo, 2017).

VII. CONCLUSION

Although this study shows that MoET has tried to ensure a change in the approach towards learners who experience barriers to learning, there is a need to address the remaining challenges. As this study points out, there are problems at three levels. At the national level, there is a national policy on teacher training and on implementation challenges. At the school level, there is a critical shortage of teaching and learning materials/resources. At the classroom level, issues include class size in primary schools and teachers' attitudes towards learners with LD (Abegglen & Hessel, 2018; Johnstone & Kgothule, 2018; Rashid & Zaman, 2018).

Educating learners with LD in grade 1 inclusive classrooms in Lesotho will stand or fall by the teaching process. In this regard, teachers are most likely the link between the MoET and the schools. Teachers will need to be capacitated through workshops, be supplied with teaching and learning resources, develop inclusive school policies that focus on enrolment and class sizes, and foster a culture of progressive expectations by developing positive attitudes towards teaching in inclusive classrooms. A caveat is that meetings and conversations are beneficial for identifying challenges and solutions thereto. It is also essential to look collectively at how different countries address challenges like Lesotho's and take cognisance of different contexts. The contribution this article makes is to hopefully show that inclusive education teachers are willing to identify challenges and propose possible solutions, with the government facilitating workshops and in-service training. All these challenges appear to be surmountable (Johnstone & Kgothule, 2018) and therefore require clear, inclusive school policies, together with internal and external support. Overall, the success of teaching learners with LD depends on identifying related problems and providing solutions. Provided with ample opportunities for freely accessing a vast number of Open Educational Resources (OERs) that are available through existing OER initiatives. To support inclusive education, differentiated instruction can be utilised, as such a framework recognises the broad diversity of learners with respect to ability, language, culture, gender, age, and other forms of human difference (Navarro et al., 2016).

VIII. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There are no conflicts of interest in this study.

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