

**A CASE STUDY OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD
SCHOOL THAT INCLUDED TWO LEARNERS
WHO ARE BLIND**

by

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Abstract

Internationally, the rights of persons with disabilities to participate as full members of society through inclusive education has become a high priority with the adoption of the first legally binding treaty, the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2006). In keeping with our culture of acknowledging the rights of all, South Africa has already made great strides towards fulfilling these rights and is in the implementation phase of *Education White Paper 6: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* (Department of Education, 2001).

In spite of this, the practicability of implementing inclusive education is questioned by many. The inclusion of learners who are blind in neighbourhood schools, as opposed to ‘special schools’, is a particularly daunting task. However, the more local cases we have from which to draw insights, the better our chances of making inclusive education both practicable and widely accessible across a range of local contexts.

A public, mainstream neighbourhood school that included two learners who are blind was therefore investigated to learn more about how the learners who are blind were physically, socially and academically included in the local school community. Qualitative data collection methods including semi-structured interviews and observations were used to uncover useful strategies, challenges and enabling factors that contributed to their successful inclusion.

The findings revealed that the participants in this study had very little knowledge or experience in building an inclusive educational setting at the outset, but engaged in the process with open minds, creativity and trust. By adopting a collaborative approach and an attitude of ‘failing forward’, the objective of social and academic inclusion was to a great extent achieved in the school.

Declaration

I the undersigned hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any other university for a degree, and that all the sources I have used or have quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.



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List of Acronyms

Abbreviation	Name
ADDP	The African Decade of Persons with Disabilities
CEMIS	Central Education Management Information System
CERB	Centre of Education and Rehabilitation for the Blind
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DBTs	District-based Support Teams
DiCaG	Disabled Children's Action Group
DPO's	Disabled People's Organisations
DSD	Department of Social Development
EENAT	Eastern European Network on Access Technologies for Blind & Impaired Persons
EFA	Education for All
EFA-VI	Education for All Visually Impaired Children
FSS	Full-Service School
ICE	International Conference on Education
ICEVI	International Council for People with Visual Impairment
IEP	Individual Education Plan
ILSTs	Institutional Level Support Team
ISP	Individual Support Plan
IWGDD	International Working Group on Disability and Development
JAWS	Job Access for Windows Software
KIEP	Kwa-Zulu Natal Inclusive Education Project
LEAs	Local Education Authorities
LOFOB	The League of Friends for the Blind
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
OBE	Outcomes-based Education
OSDP	Office of the Status on Disabled Persons
SANCB	South African National Council for the Blind
SAQA	South African Qualifications Agency

SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
SIAS	Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment & Support
SNPP	Social Network Pilot Project
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TVI	Teacher of the Visually Impaired
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WHO	The World Health Organisation