Executive Summary

This brief serves to address the issue of the relevance for inclusion of disabled people in the curriculum in the Department of Accounting, Auditing and Income Tax at the University of Namibia. In view of the fact that disabled people can perform to their best given the opportunity and resources it was deemed necessary to carry out this brief. It has been noted that youths have been segregated either directly or indirectly in participating equally with their non-disabled counterparts. There has been significant issues contributing to lack of inclusion for the disabled youths, and this has prompted the need to educate all parties concerned on the importance of economic inclusion of the disabled in the curriculum. The parties concerned that are targeted by this brief include the Dean of students, Chairperson for the department, Assistant to Chairperson, Lecturers, Assistant Lectures and the students within the department. The brief will also highlight and discuss the recommendations that will ensure that total inclusion is achieved.

Context and Conceptual Frameworks and Values

Information from interviews conducted and the questionnaires completed by disabled people in Namibia aged 18 to 32 years indicated that inclusion of the disabled people has not been realized in this department. The people who completed the questionnaires and those that were interviewed were randomly selected from Namibia’s capital Windhoek. This was done to establish reasons why they did not enroll in the department of Accounting, Auditing and Income Tax at the University of Namibia. The youths interviewed were 20 and those who completed questionnaires were 80. Of the 100 youths, 40 were disabled whilst 60 were non-disabled. The youths constituted of both male and females. The demographic characteristics of the respondents were mainly gender and age. 88% of the disabled youths indicated that they did not enroll with this department at the University of Namibia as they felt they could not fit in since their special needs were unable to be met. Of the 88% some also indicated lack of funds and general discriminatory tendencies in the selection criteria. The non-disabled youths only indicated unavailability of funding and felt that the selection criteria was fair for them as well as the learning conditions and environment. This then prompted the need for this brief as it was clear that the department was not doing enough to include the disabled youths.

The vision for the University of Namibia is to provide quality education through research and advisory services to customers with the view to produce productive and competitive human resources capable of driving public and private institutions towards knowledge based economy, economic growth and improved quality of life. The mission is to be a beacon of excellence and innovation in teaching, research and extension services. The values are professionalism, mutual respect, integrity and transparency. The assumptions made by the organization from its vision, mission and values are that from the moral point of view everyone is included and no one is discriminated which is in line with the views of Ubuntu and Human Rights Framework. In practice this assumption is not being put into practices as illustrated by the
fact that there are no disabled students enrolling for Bachelor of Accounting Honors Degree at the University of Namibia. In as much as the vision, mission and values are well aligned to inclusion, it is not the case practically. Disabled people are excluded due to the perceptions of incompetence on the basis of their disability. It is important to consider disabled individuals as agents of change rather than simple beneficiaries of development projects in the course of transition to total inclusion for any organization.

The Social Model of disability has been used to describe the experience of invalidation, inequality and injustice for all groups that face discrimination (Kallen 2004). The institution has failed to address this effectively hence the need for this brief. Impairments should not lead to discrimination of any sought where inclusive policies are put in place. Impairment is a functional limitation within an individual caused by physical, mental or sensory impairments (Barnes 1991). It is the role of society to work together in creating a place for everyone in society including the disabled people. Inclusion ensures that disabled people are equally valued in the same manner as their non-disabled counterparts and are exposed to opportunities in the same manner. According to (Jaggar 1992) there is need to create a gendered ethics that aims to eliminate or at least ameliorate the oppression of many groups of people. The major principle of ethics of care is that the values associated with care are central to our lives and these values should not only be adopted by women but also by men and society as a whole. It is therefore duty of society at large to ensure disability equity is attained. According to Article 27, there should be protection of jobs as well as supply of decent jobs and this can only be achieved if the disabled people are awarded equal opportunity to pursue different carriers of their choice without any limitations of any nature.

**Teaching and Learning Context**

Key disability issues noted that need to be addressed included;

- Poor learning environment that does not accommodate the disabled youths.
- General discriminatory tendencies by the staff and other students within the department.
- Lack of experienced staff to cater for the needs of the disabled youths.
- Lack of equipment to accommodate properly the disabled so that they can have a proper learning experience.

**Inclusion Practices and Strategies**

There is need for the Department of Accounting, Auditing and Income Tax to adopt strategies that will ensure total inclusion and these at organizational level include processes, policies, procedures and organizational culture. Such strategies at organizational level include;

- Training academic staff that will be able to deal with the special needs of the disabled youths in delivering education to them.
- Setting up staff compensation structure that encourages staff to deliver their best in a way that will benefit the disabled youths.
- Ensuring that the teaching staffs are trained to deal with individuals with special needs.
- Including teaching staff that are specifically trained to teach students with special needs so that they act as supporting counter parts to aid proper inclusion of the disabled. This will help in situations where the general staff cannot handle complicated situations that may arise.
• Partnering with the community, parents, NGOs, private entities and the government to ensure total inclusion of the disabled youths.

Assessment strategies for inclusion that can be adopted are;

• Routine audits on participation of the disabled people within the department, disability inclusion in current procedures of the organization, disability knowledge and skills of stakeholders involved in implementation of procedures and resources available and utilized in disability issues.
• Consulting with representatives of the disabled people when elaborating strategies.
• Analysis of organizational culture to establish the general commitment to being diversity sensitive in terms of people’s behavior, use of language, images and materials used.

**Recommendations to promote inclusive teaching and learning**

There is need to consider the following in ensuring total inclusion of the disabled youths;

• Clear policy on disability, establishing disability focal point to influence decisions, training and actively recruiting disabled staff.
• Ensure availability of infrastructure and equipment for the disabled such as brail material for the blind, suitable walkways, desks and chairs for the disabled.
• Availability of skilled manpower to cater for the disabled, this also includes availability of information on how to deal with the disabled individuals to ensure their full participation.
• Reducing negative social attitudes through educating teachers, students and the families of the disabled individuals so as to promote their educational possibilities.
• Government and the institutes of higher learning should work together in facilitating transition to higher education and training.
• Increase accessibility and create awareness of financial resources through the use of effective information dissemination and communication strategies.
• Conduct training on disability staff of the organization.
• Employment of assistants to help the disabled in accessing material and equipment that can be used in the learning process.

**References**


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