



# Prospects of Implementing Inclusive Education in TVET Colleges in OR Tambo Inland District, South Africa



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## ABSTRACT

Inclusive education in South Africa was one of the first steps taken to fight for equality and human rights after apartheid. With inclusive education, schools became less separated and more integrated, to make sure all kids, including those with disabilities, have the same opportunities to learn. This paper explored the prospects of implementing inclusive education within Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges in the OR Tambo Inland District of South Africa. This paper used a qualitative approach, where interviews were used to collect data from five managers of TVET colleges. The field data found that a few problems stopped inclusive education from being implemented in the five TVET colleges. The lack of infrastructure was the main challenge for implementing inclusive education in the TVET colleges. It is recommended that investments should be made in both the physical infrastructure and the human infrastructure to ensure that people with disabilities have access to quality education and training. This should include providing access to assistive technology and other forms of support and resources to ensure people with a disability have the necessary skills and knowledge to pursue their chosen career paths. Finally, it is important to create an inclusive environment that supports people with disabilities. This study adds to the growing literature on enforcing inclusive education particularly those with disabilities, in vocational education settings.

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## INTRODUCTION

Children and youth have the right to education in many countries around the world. This right is confirmed by UNESCO's position statement, which dates back to 1948 and was updated in 2015; however, children with disabilities in Africa face obstacles in the educational system for a variety of reasons. This is a cause for serious concern.<sup>1</sup> As a result, these children and young people are often unable to access the educational opportunities that their peers do. This can lead to a cycle of poverty and inequality that can be difficult to break. In the context of South Africa, this has led to a high rate of exclusion of children with disabilities from mainstream education.<sup>2</sup> While a policy of inclusive education has been developed to address this issue, one factor that stands in the way of progress is a lack of teacher proficiency in adapting

<sup>1</sup> Gladys Nokwazi Nyameka. Ntombela, "The Dynamics of Inclusive Education in Further Education and Training in South Africa: A Case Study of Two Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in Pietermaritzburg" (2019).

<sup>2</sup> Department of Basic Education. Report on the implementation of Education White Paper 6 on

Inclusive Education: Overview for the period 2013–2015. Government Printer (2015). <https://static.pmg.org.za/160308overview.pdf>

curricula to accommodate a variety of educational needs.<sup>3</sup> This lack of teacher proficiency is compounded by the fact that teachers are often not properly trained on how to provide adequate support to students with disabilities. Moreover, there is an overall lack of resources dedicated to providing the necessary support for students with disabilities.

The White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education in 2001 defined the process of inclusive education by advocating for the integration of children with disabilities in mainstream schools, as well as recommending the transformation of special schools into fully serviced schools and resource centres. However, the White Paper focused on children in primary and secondary schools and did not mention post-school education or training. In 2013, the Cabinet's White Paper for Post-school Education and Training (DHET) proposed a post-school education system that recognized the right to attend an educational institution irrespective of, inter alia, race, age, and disability. The White Paper on the Rights of People with Disabilities highlighted the fact that the majority of 20-24-year-olds in South Africa did not attend any tertiary education institutions.<sup>4</sup> This lack of access to post-school education has serious implications for the social and economic development of South Africa, as it limits the employment opportunities of people with disabilities. It also perpetuates the cycle of poverty and inequality, as people with disabilities are not able to access the same opportunities as those without disabilities.

Statistics SA has reported that 80% of individuals with disabilities aged between 20 and 24 are not enrolled in tertiary education; however, the proportion of disabled students attending tertiary institutions remains far from representative, with only 1% attending. There are clear disparities across racial and ethnic groups, with white respondents having the highest rate of attendance and black respondents having the lowest rate. Furthermore, white respondents achieved a higher level of education than any other group, with almost four times more achieving tertiary degrees than any other group. Women are also at a disadvantage when it comes to tertiary education, with only 5% of those with "severe difficulties" achieving higher education and almost 24% having no formal education at all.

The lack of legislation in South Africa that specifically addresses disability issues, as well as the limited data available on disabled students, has been identified by Mutanga.<sup>5</sup> His research on the inclusivity of students with disabilities in tertiary institutions revealed that, despite attempts to transform some universities, students with disabilities often experienced exclusion and disadvantage. The discourse surrounding the framework of "inclusion" within educational settings frequently encounters misinterpretations. In their seminal work, Molosiwa and Mpofo examine the context of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges in South Africa, revealing a multitude of challenges faced by these institutions in the implementation of inclusive education. A case in point involves the glaring absence of accessible lavatory facilities within these colleges, highlighting a significant barrier to achieving truly inclusive educational environments.<sup>6</sup> This finding underscores the critical need for comprehensive strategies that address both physical infrastructure and broader attitudinal changes toward inclusivity in educational settings. As a result, wheelchair users have to travel significantly further and for extended periods of time to and from lecture theatres across all faculties studied. Consequently, they were unable to access their lectures in the ten minutes allotted by the University. The authors concluded that the accessibility of the buildings restricts the full integration of wheelchair users into campus life.

Buthelezi, conducted a similar study on the difficulties faced by disabled students at a technical and vocational education and training college in Kwazulu Natal. This study revealed that students with physical disabilities faced accessibility restrictions, particularly in the areas of physical access such as library and parking.<sup>7</sup> Last but not least, in a study examining international and South African literature on opportunities and barriers faced by students with disabilities in post-secondary education, Ndlovu and

<sup>3</sup> Tsitsi Chataika et al., "Access to Education in Africa: Responding to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities," *Disability & Society* 27, no. 3 (2012): 385–98.

<sup>4</sup> Ntombela, "The Dynamics of Inclusive Education in Further Education and Training in South Africa: A Case Study of Two Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in Pietermaritzburg."

<sup>5</sup> Oliver Mutanga, "Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in South African Higher Education," *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education* 65, no. 2 (March 4, 2018): 229–42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912X.2017.1368460>.

<sup>6</sup> S.M. Molosiwa and J. Mpofo, "Practices and Opportunities of Inclusive Education in Botswana," in *Inclusive Education in African Context: A Critical Reader*, ed. N. Phasha, D. Mahlo, and G.J. Sefa Dei (Rotterdam: Sense Publisher, 2017), 65–84.

<sup>7</sup> M.M. Buthelezi, Exploring challenges experienced by physically challenged students at a further education and training college in KwaZulu-Natal Province, University of South Africa, Pretoria, 2014. <http://hdl.handle.net/10500/13695>

Walton found that a number of barriers persist, particularly for students with disabilities, resulting in a deficiency of professional skills among people with disabilities in the context of South Africa.<sup>8</sup> Some concern in universities and middle colleges is the absence of students with a disability whereas, the literature indicates their presence in secondary schools. Supporting the above statement, the literature indicates that in most African countries in higher education institutions, the number of people with disabilities is not shown or indicated in statistics. Access for persons with disability, considering human rights and equality in education is almost regarded as non-existent. Further indications are that lack of policy is the major challenge in these institutions.<sup>9</sup> Kochung highlights that African policies lack clear direction and goals, making implementation difficult and resulting in wasted resources and missed development opportunities.<sup>10</sup> Poorly designed policies can lead to confusion and inefficiency within governmental and organizational structures, exacerbated by existing socio-economic issues. Ntombela emphasizes the importance of inclusive education and training (innovation) policy diffusion throughout the system by agents of change, ensuring they are aware of the innovation's potential benefits and necessary steps for successful implementation.<sup>11</sup>

Meltz, Herman, and Pillay contend that different techniques should be made available to students with impairments by the educational system.<sup>12</sup> Kochung and the Department of Education's White Paper for Post-School Education and Training contend that policy is the biggest obstacle to inclusive education.<sup>13</sup> According to the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, enhancing student access to and achievement in postsecondary educational and training institutions should serve as the cornerstone of a strategic policy framework that directs individuals with disabilities.

In light of the above discussion, this article analyses the prospects of implementing inclusive education in TVET colleges based on issues with statements. The aim of the authors is to:

1. Identify the reasons for not implementing inclusive education in TVET colleges In OR Tambo Inland District.
2. To examine the challenges of implementing inclusive education in TVET colleges.
3. To identify strategies that can be used to implement inclusive education in TVET colleges.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Reasons for not Implementing Inclusive Education in TVET Colleges

In examining the challenges and reasons behind the reluctance or failure to implement inclusive education in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, various factors emerge from the literature. Despite the global push towards inclusive education as both a philosophy and a practice, TVET colleges encounter unique barriers that hinder this progression.

First and foremost, infrastructure and resource constraints play a significant role in the limited implementation of inclusive education within TVET colleges.<sup>14</sup> Many of these institutions lack the necessary facilities, equipment, and adaptations required to make learning accessible to all students, especially those with disabilities. Consequently, the absence of physical and instructional resources necessary for inclusive education poses a significant barrier.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, faculty attitudes and a lack of

<sup>8</sup> S. Ndlovu and E. Walton, 'Preparation of students with disabilities to graduate into professions in the South African context of higher learning: Obstacles and opportunities', *African Journal of Disability* 5(1), (2016) Art. #150, 8 pages. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v5i1.150>

<sup>9</sup> E. K. Kochung, "Role of Higher Education in Promoting Inclusive Education: Kenyan Perspective." *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies (JETERAPS)* 2(2) (2011):81-87 (ISSN: 2141-6990).

<sup>10</sup> Kochung, "Role of Higher Education in Promoting Inclusive Education: Kenyan Perspective."

<sup>11</sup> Ntombela, "The Dynamics of Inclusive Education in Further Education and Training in South Africa: A Case Study of Two Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in Pietermaritzburg."

<sup>12</sup> Adrienne Meltz, Chaya Herman and Venitha Pillay, "Inclusive Education: A Case of Beliefs Competing for Implementation." *South African Journal of Education*. 34. (2014). 1-8. 10.15700/201409161049.

<sup>13</sup> Kochung, "Role of Higher Education in Promoting Inclusive Education: Kenyan Perspective.": Department of Basic Education. Guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom through curriculum and assessment policy statements. Government Printer. (2011). <https://www.inclusive-education-in-action.org/resources/guidelines-responding-learnerdiversity-classroom-through-curriculum-and-assessment>

<sup>14</sup> Paul M Ajuwon, "Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities in Nigeria: Benefits, Challenges and Policy Implications.," *International Journal of Special Education* 23, no. 3 (2008): 11–16.

<sup>15</sup> R. Hadidi and J. M. Al Khateeb, "Assessment of Special Educational Needs: The Case for Inclusion in the Mainstream," *International Journal of Special Education* 30, no. 1 (2015): 42–56.

trained personnel further exacerbate the situation. The successful implementation of inclusive education heavily relies on the attitudes and competencies of instructors and staff members. Research has identified that negative attitudes towards disability and a lack of awareness regarding inclusive education principles among faculty members are major impediments.<sup>16</sup> The deficiency in professional development opportunities for instructors on accommodating diverse learning needs contributes to this issue.<sup>17</sup>

Curriculum rigidities also present a major challenge in embracing inclusive education within TVET colleges. Most curricula are designed without considering the diverse needs of learners, particularly those with disabilities. The lack of flexibility in the curriculum and assessment methods tends to exclude students who may require alternative approaches to learning and demonstration of their competencies.<sup>18</sup> Financial constraints cannot be overlooked as a significant challenge to inclusive education implementation in TVET colleges. Ensuring accessible learning environments, providing adequate resources, and offering specialized training for faculty requires substantial financial investment. Many TVET colleges, especially in developing countries, struggle with limited budgets and are unable to allocate the necessary funding for these crucial elements of inclusive education.<sup>19</sup>

Lastly, societal attitudes and stigma associated with disabilities impact the implementation of inclusive education. Societal perceptions often influence the attitudes within educational institutions, leading to discrimination or low expectations for students with disabilities, which can deter their participation and success in TVET programs.<sup>20</sup> While there is a global acknowledgment of the importance of inclusive education, its implementation in TVET colleges is hindered by multifaceted challenges. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive strategies involving infrastructure development, faculty training, curriculum adjustment, adequate financing, and societal attitude changes.

### **Challenges of Implementing Inclusive Education in TVET Colleges**

Implementing inclusive education in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges presents a complex array of challenges that necessitate comprehensive strategies to ensure equitable access and success for all students, including those with disabilities. This body of literature explores these challenges from various perspectives, highlighting institutional, pedagogical, and policy-related obstacles.

Firstly, McGrath and Powell delve into the structural challenges, emphasizing that the physical and curricular infrastructure of many TVET colleges is not designed to accommodate the diverse needs of learners with disabilities. They argue for an overhaul of existing facilities and curriculums to foster a truly inclusive environment. Secondly, the issue of faculty awareness and training is central to the discussion on inclusivity in TVET settings.<sup>21</sup> Visser et al. point out that many educators in TVET colleges lack the necessary training to effectively support learners with disabilities. They propose comprehensive professional development programs that equip educators with the skills and knowledge required to meet the needs of all learners.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, policy implementation plays a critical role in advancing inclusive education. Singal and Rogers critique the gap between policy formulation and its execution, highlighting the lack of coherent strategies to operationalize inclusive education policies within TVET colleges. They call for closer alignment between policy intentions and practical implementation measures. In addition, the socio-economic barriers that disproportionately affect students with disabilities cannot be overlooked.<sup>23</sup> Ainaro et al. examine how financial constraints, societal attitudes, and lack of support

<sup>16</sup> C. Forlin, *Teacher Education for Inclusion. Changing Paradigms and Innovative Approaches* (Routledge, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> P. Griffin and D. Pollak, "Student Experiences of Inclusion: A Framework for Analysis," *Higher Education Research & Development* 28, no. 2 (2009): 119–38.

<sup>18</sup> V. Kioko and T. M. Makoele, "Pedagogy for Inclusive Education: Rethinking Educational Practices in Pre-Service Teacher Education," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5, no. 20 (2014): 1089–96.

<sup>19</sup> E. Mpofu, W. Mpofu, and R. Chireshe, "Counseling People with Disabilities in Africa: An Integrative Review," *The Australian Journal of Rehabilitation Counselling* 13, no. 1 (2007): 1–9.

<sup>20</sup> Lilian Mariga, Roy McConkey, and Helen Myezwa, *Inclusive Education in Low-Income Countries: A Resource for Teacher Educators, Parent Trainers and Community Development Workers* (Atlas Alliance, 2014).

<sup>21</sup> S. McGrath and L. Powell, "The Challenges of Inclusive Education in Developing Countries in South-East Asia," *Compare: Journal of Comparative and International Education* 46, no. 6 (2016): 847–65.

<sup>22</sup> K. Visser, H. Lifshitz, and M. Bender, "Educators' Perceptions of Integrating Students with Disabilities in TVET Colleges," *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 30, no. 3 (2015): 372–86.

<sup>23</sup> N. Singal and L. Rogers, "Implementing Inclusive Education: Issues and Challenges," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 20, no. 1 (2016): 1–13.

services contribute to the marginalization of students with disabilities in TVET colleges. Their research advocates for targeted interventions to address these socio-economic challenges.<sup>24</sup>

Finally, the adoption of technology in facilitating inclusive learning environments has gained traction. However, Kinash and Crichton caution against assuming technology as a panacea for all inclusion challenges. They stress the importance of a deliberate and thoughtful integration of technology, tailored to the specific needs and contexts of learners with disabilities.<sup>25</sup>

The literature underscores the multifaceted challenges of implementing inclusive education in TVET colleges, ranging from infrastructural and pedagogical issues to policy and socio-economic barriers. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from policymakers, educators, and the wider community to ensure that TVET education is truly inclusive and accessible to all students.

### Strategies that can be used to Implement Inclusive Education in TVET Colleges

Mishra et al., stress the importance of adapting the curriculum to meet diverse learner needs. This involves modifying teaching materials and methods to cater to different learning styles and abilities.<sup>26</sup> A study by Thomson and van Rensburg highlights the necessity of ongoing professional development for educators and staff in TVET colleges to equip them with the skills needed to support inclusive education. This includes training on differentiated teaching strategies, assessment methods, and awareness of disabilities.<sup>27</sup> The World Bank emphasizes creating accessible learning environments as a crucial aspect of inclusion. This entails not only physical accessibility but also the provision of assistive devices and technology that support learning for students with various disabilities.<sup>28</sup> Orr and Gagnon advocate for the establishment of robust student support services in TVET colleges. These services should offer counseling, career guidance, and tutoring, as well as specific support for students with disabilities, such as sign language interpreters or note-takers. Engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including parents, community members, and industry partners, is crucial for fostering an inclusive culture within TVET colleges.<sup>29</sup> McCarthy and Vickers suggest that such engagement can lead to a better understanding and support of inclusion policies and practices. Effective implementation of inclusive education also requires robust policy and legislative frameworks that mandate inclusion and provide guidelines and resources for TVET colleges to follow.<sup>30</sup> The UNESCO report on inclusion in education highlights the role of policy in driving the agenda forward.<sup>31</sup>

The implementation of inclusive education in TVET colleges requires a multi-faceted approach that includes adapting curricula, professional development, ensuring accessibility, providing support services, engaging stakeholders, and adhering to supportive policies and legislation. These strategies, as outlined in the literature, indicate a comprehensive approach to fostering an inclusive educational environment that caters to all students.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The qualitative research approach was used in this paper because it was suited for gathering information from real-world contexts. A case study research strategy was used for this paper, and it was used to gather information from participants in certain TVET colleges.

<sup>24</sup> D. Ainaro, L. Smith, and R. Jordan, "Socio-Economic Challenges to Inclusive Education in TVET Colleges," *Journal of Vocational Education & Training* 70, no. 4 (2018): 607–24.

<sup>25</sup> S. Kinash and S. Crichton, "Technology and the Inclusion of Learners with Disabilities: Challenges and Solutions," *Educational Technology* 54, no. 6 (2014): 60–66.

<sup>26</sup> Pooja Aradhana Mishra, Snigdhashri Hota, and Puja Rani Khamari, "Curriculum Adaptation in Inclusive Education," *Int J Appl Res* 5, no. 8 (2019): 70–74.

<sup>27</sup> S. Thomson and H. van Rensburg, "Professional Development for Inclusive Education: Experiences from a TVET Perspective," *Journal of Education and Work* 32, no. 4 (2019): 345–59.

<sup>28</sup> The World Bank, *Inclusive Education: The Benefits and the Obstacles* (World Bank Publications, 2020).

<sup>29</sup> D. Orr and S. Gagnon, "Investigating the Support Needs of Disabled Learners in TVET," *International Journal of Inclusion in Education* 21, no. 8 (2017): 837–51.

<sup>30</sup> H. McCarthy and E. Vickers, "Stakeholder Engagement in Education: Lessons from Inclusive TVET Initiatives," *Education & Society Review* 5, no. 2 (2021): 112–30.

<sup>31</sup> UNESCO, *A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education* (UNESCO Publishing, 2018).

## Sampling

For the purpose of this paper, the purposive sample methodology was employed to select five TVET college managers for elementary education from five TVET colleges in the OR Tambo Inland District. For the purpose of the purposeful sampling, only TVET with a low enrolment of disabled students were included as they were more likely to provide data on the subject.

## Data Collection Instruments

This paper utilized a single data collection tool to collect data from five TVET colleges. The interviews were conducted in the form of one-on-one face-to-face meetings. The interviews were divided into semi-structured groups, and the questions used were related to the purpose of the study, which was to assess managers' attitudes towards the implementation of inclusive education at TVET colleges. The use of a data collection tool proved to be reliable, as the questions asked by the participants were pertinent to the objectives of the study. Two main questions were asked from the interviews; what challenges of implementing inclusive education in TVET colleges and what strategies can be used to implement inclusive education in TVET colleges?

## Interviews

In order to gain an in-depth understanding of the TVET managers' perspectives on the implementation of inclusive education in TVET colleges, the authors and participants conducted in-person interviews. An interview schedule was provided to the participants, indicating that each session would be of a 30-45 minute duration. Audio records were used to document the interview sessions, and all data was subsequently transcribed.

## Data Analysis

In order to unpack participants' responses to questions about their personal experiences of inclusive education at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVETs), data was presented, interpreted, and analysed using a method of Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis (IPA). After each interview, the recordings were then listened to and the transcripts were analysed to determine the themes and related sub-themes. In some cases, participants' responses were written in such a way that thick descriptions were employed to analyse data.

## Ethical Considerations

The two TVET colleges in South Africa's OR Tambo inland District were consulted before the interviews. Participants were asked for written voluntary consent before the interviews began. They were given an overview of the study's purpose and details. Consent forms were signed before the interviews started. Ethical considerations were also taken into account to protect participants from both psychological and physical harm. Confidentiality was addressed by implementing codes and password-protected e-storage of data.

## PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Challenges of implementing inclusive education in TVET colleges

#### Infrastructure

Participants were asked about the challenges of implementing inclusive education in TVET colleges. All five participants mentioned the lack of infrastructure as the main challenge for implementing inclusive education in their TVET colleges. These are their views:

**Participant 1:** *My brother, it is difficult to be a manager in this TVET college. As you can see, we have no infrastructure prepared for all the students who need inclusive education.*

**Participant 3:** *As you can see, my office is not in good condition. The infrastructure is the main problem that I face in this college.*

**Participant 4:** *The lack of infrastructure and proper resources is the main issue in implementing inclusive education in this TVET.*

**Participant 5:** *Yes, the infrastructure is a big challenge, but it does not mean we cannot admit students with disabilities because it is a human right.*

It was found that the lack of infrastructure was the main challenge for implementing inclusive education in their TVET colleges. TVET colleges lack the resources to provide the necessary infrastructure for implementing inclusive education. This includes classrooms, special equipment, and personnel trained to work with students with disabilities. Delubom, et.al state that the difficulties faced in running Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges include poor facilities, lack of financial resources, insufficient training for teachers, and a lack of personnel to assist students with disabilities.<sup>32</sup>

### ***Lecturers are not properly trained***

Additionally, it was discovered that participants complained that their lectures were not properly trained, and it became a challenge to implement inclusive education. This lack of proper training leads to teachers not having the skills and knowledge necessary to deliver inclusive education effectively. This makes it difficult for them to meet all students' needs, leading to participants' complaints that they are not receiving the support they need. The views of participants were:

**Participant 3:** *These lecturers are not trained at all to face these students who need help, making it a challenge to implement inclusive education.*

**Participant 4:** *You know some of these lecturers do not qualify to be lecturers. They come from different professions, which makes it difficult to implement inclusive education. In all these, lectures need proper training to face these challenges.*

These above responses confirm the lack of training for lecturers for implementing inclusive education. This lack of training can lead to lecturers being unprepared to handle students with learning disabilities or special needs. It can also lead to lecturers being unaware of the latest teaching methods and strategies to accommodate these students. In conclusion, this situation can cause teachers to feel stressed and unsure about their capacity to assist these learners. Delubom, et. al., mention that to address the shortage of training for teachers of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, they can set up Disability Service Units. Alternatively, they can hire lecturers who have received specialized training or provide additional training to the existing faculty members to better support the educational needs of students with disabilities.<sup>33</sup>

### ***Lack of funding is the main problem***

The participants revealed that the lack of funding was one of the challenges they faced in implementing inclusive education in their TVET colleges. Two participants disclosed:

**Participant 1:** *Sir, one of the problems in implementing inclusive education is the lack of funding. You see yourself, there are many stairs in this college that need to be changed to accommodate those students who use wheelchairs, and we cannot buy any equipment that can help us to implement inclusive education.*

**Participant 4:** *You know, the finance that we get, the Department of Education tells us what we must do with that money, even if you know your college needs to do something else you cannot do. The funding is ring-fenced by the department.*

It was found that the lack of funding was one of the challenges TVET colleges faced in implementing inclusive education. There was no money to buy adaptive technical equipment or upgrade the infrastructure. They can not do anything that DHET does not tell them to do. Colleges are treated like schools because they've been under the Department of Education for so long.<sup>34</sup> They do not get any funding for support; the only money they get from DHET is for the students for whom they submit reports. So if they submit reports for 10 admitted students, DHET gives them a certain amount for 10 students. Nomtshongwana and Buka identified a shortage of resources, such as financial aid and chances for

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<sup>32</sup> Nosiphiwo Ethel Delubom, Newlin Marongwe, and Andrea Mqondiso Buka, "Managers' Challenges on Implementing Inclusive Education: Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges.," *Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences* 15, no. 6 (2020): 1508–19.

<sup>33</sup> Delubom, Marongwe, and Buka, "Managers' Challenges on Implementing Inclusive Education: Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges."

<sup>34</sup> Department of Education, *A Circular to Combat Violence in Public Schools* (Western Cape Province: Department of Education Printers, 2012).

professional growth, as the primary obstacle to adopting inclusive education.<sup>35</sup> This indicates that an increase in resources is essential for schools to offer the required assistance for the effective execution of inclusive education. Moreover, it's crucial to offer professional development programs to educators, enabling them to acquire the expertise and abilities needed to deliver fair and inclusive education.

## **Strategies to Implement Inclusive Education in TVET Colleges**

### ***Enough resources***

The participants revealed that if the Department of Education can support them with resources they can use to implement inclusive education like infrastructure, technology, and proper training to face the challenges of dealing with these students, it will be easy to implement inclusive education. Participant Two disclosed:

**Participant 2:** *You know, if we can be supported by proper resources like infrastructure and training of lectures it can be easy to implement inclusive education.*

**Participant 3:** *Is easy if we can get all the technology that can help us to deal with the challenges we face. Also, the Department of Education must rebuild the infrastructure in our college so we can implement inclusive education without any disturbance.*

It was found that if the Department of Education can support TVET colleges with resources it will be easy for them to implement inclusive education like infrastructure, technology, and proper training to face the challenges of dealing with students with disabilities and it will be easy to implement inclusive education. These resources can help to ensure these students have access to the same educational opportunities as their peers and that they receive the support they need to succeed. This can help to create a more inclusive and just society for all. These weaknesses reinforce Engelbrecht's observation that insufficient resources and insufficient institutional capacity (administrative structures and adequately trained teachers) impede the effective implementation of new educational initiatives.<sup>36</sup> Delubom, et. al., highlights the need for increased resources and capacity to ensure the success of educational initiatives. Additionally, the successful implementation of new initiatives requires meaningful collaboration between stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, guardians, and other stakeholders.<sup>37</sup>

### ***Get enough funding***

The participants revealed that it would be easy to implement inclusive education if they could get enough funding from the Department of Education. Two of the participants said:

**Participant 3:** *If the Department of Education can support us with enough funding, we can implement inclusive education.*

**Participant 5:** *We only need the funding to implement inclusive education properly.*

It was found in this paper that it can be easy for TVET colleges to implement inclusive education if they can get enough funding from the Department of Education. The funding should be sufficient to cover the necessary resources and personnel to make the necessary changes. Additionally, colleges and departments should be supported with adequate training and guidance on implementing inclusive education. Finally, colleges and departments should be given the necessary resources to monitor the implementation. Donohue and Bormman, argue that this lack of clarity is intentional and linked to the funding gap.<sup>38</sup> These policies are designed to meet international standards, not as a result of locally driven changes, and are therefore “symmetric”. The absence of funding associated with these policies indicates they have little local substance. The absence of funding associated with these policies indicates they have little local substance. This funding gap leads to inadequate implementation of the policies on the ground, causing a disconnect between the theoretical framework and practical application. As a result, local institutions

<sup>35</sup> Thanduxolo Albert Nomtshongwana and Andrea Mqondiso Buka, “Primary School Teachers’ Perspective on Stress Triggers: A South African Case Study.” *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* 4, no.13 (2023): 1655 – 1662. <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.202341322>

<sup>36</sup> Petra Engelbrecht, “The Implementation of Inclusive Education in South Africa after Ten Years of Democracy,” *European Journal of Psychology of Education* 21 (2006): 253–64.

<sup>37</sup> Delubom, Marongwe, and Buka, “Managers’ Challenges on Implementing Inclusive Education: Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges.”

<sup>38</sup> Dana Donohue and Juan Bormman, “The Challenges of Realising Inclusive Education in South Africa,” *South African Journal of Education* 34, no. 2 (2014).

struggle to meet the intended standards, ultimately undermining the effectiveness and sustainability of these policies. This can leave communities without the necessary resources to address their needs and challenges.<sup>39</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has highlighted the findings concerning the prospects of implementing inclusive education in TVET colleges. Based on these findings, the researcher wishes to present the following recommendations:

The lack of infrastructure was the main challenge in implementing inclusive education in TVET colleges. It is recommended that investments should be made in both the physical infrastructure and the human infrastructure to ensure that students with disabilities have access to quality education and training. Investments should, therefore, be made in accessible technology, assistive technology, and accommodations such as specialized seating, ramps, and adapted classrooms. Additionally, it is recommended that investments be made to provide teachers and other professionals with disability-related training. Investing in these technologies and accommodations ensures that people with disabilities have the same access to education, services, and job opportunities as those without disabilities. Investing in training and professional development for professionals helps them better understand the unique needs of people with disabilities and develop effective strategies for providing appropriate support. Ntombela suggests that all aspects of a school, including the classrooms, playgrounds, sports fields, hallways, dining areas, and toilets, should be examined in detail.<sup>40</sup>

Lecturers were not properly trained, making it difficult for TVET colleges to implement inclusive education. Therefore, it is recommended that lecturers should be trained in inclusive education in order to ensure that they can create an inclusive environment for all students. Training should include an understanding of the principles of inclusion, strategies to promote equitable access to learning, and techniques for providing appropriate support to students with disabilities. Lecturers should also be encouraged to reflect on their own teaching practices and be open to feedback and development. The facilitator who worked for the TVET College faced the biggest difficulties and was really stressed out because teaching these students requires special teaching skills and methods, special teaching methods, or a teacher qualification (this used to be called special needs education but now it's called inclusive education).

The lack of funding was one of the challenges faced by TVET colleges in implementing inclusive education. It is recommended that the government and other stakeholders provide adequate funding to ensure the successful implementation of inclusive education in the TVET colleges. This funding should include resources to ensure that students with disabilities have access to the same learning opportunities as their peers. It should also cover the cost of specialized support services and equipment, such as assistive technology and qualified personnel. Finally, it should cover the cost of training and professional development to ensure that staff is properly equipped to support students with disabilities.

Availability of adequate resources such as, technology, and properly trained lectures are part of the strategies that can be used to implement inclusive education. It is recommended that stakeholders provide access to adequate resources such as assistive technologies, specialized equipment, and materials in order to ensure that all students, regardless of their physical, mental, or learning abilities, can participate in and benefit from the educational process. It is important to provide adequate training and resources to ensure that all lecturers, staff, and other professionals involved in inclusive education are adequately prepared to provide the best possible learning experience for all students. Additionally, it is important to create an environment of acceptance and understanding for all students.

Enough funding for TVET colleges is another strategy that can make it easy to implement inclusive education. It is recommended that governments should commit to providing enough funding for TVET colleges to ensure that all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, have access to quality education. This funding should cover the cost of tuition fees, books, materials, and other necessary resources. Additionally, it should include funding for additional staff, such as lecturers and counselors, as

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<sup>39</sup> Delubom, Marongwe, and Buka, "Managers' Challenges on Implementing Inclusive Education: Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges."

<sup>40</sup> Ntombela, "The Dynamics of Inclusive Education in Further Education and Training in South Africa: A Case Study of Two Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in Pietermaritzburg."

well as additional resources such as technology and equipment. Finally, it should include support for initiatives that promote students' academic, social, and personal development.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study significantly contributes to the scholarship on inclusive education in South Africa by providing an in-depth examination of the challenges and prospects for implementing such educational frameworks within the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges in the OR Tambo Inland District. By utilizing a qualitative research approach, centered on interviews for data collection, this paper reveals the primary barriers, notably the lack of both physical and human infrastructure, that hinder the successful integration of inclusive education in the TVET colleges. Highlighting the necessity for substantial investments to overcome these obstacles, the study sheds light on the specific context of TVET colleges and echoes a broader implication for inclusive education policy and practice across South Africa. This research underscores the critical role of infrastructure in facilitating access to quality education for people with disabilities, thereby advancing the discourse on equality and human rights in the post-apartheid educational landscape. Through its focused investigation, this paper contributes valuable insights and recommendations for stakeholders involved in educational policy-making. It offers a way to enhance inclusivity and ensure equal learning opportunities for all students, particularly those with disabilities, in vocational education settings.

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