

# Special Vocational Education Needs' Unit in implementing Inclusive Education to Learners with Disabilities at Vocational Education and Training Authority VETA, Tanzania (A Case Study of MVTTC and VETA Headquarter)

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**Abstract**— The purpose of this study was to explore the need to establish the Special Vocational Education Needs Unit for implementing Inclusive Education to Trainees at Vocational Education and Training Authority VETA, Tanzania. A survey design applied by this study where the sample of 50 respondents was covered including the Vocational teachers, Vocational teachers trainees and some of the officers at VETA headquarter participated on job training conducted at VETA headquarter. The study employed a simple random sampling technique to ensure an equal opportunity for an individual to be selected and involved in this study as referred to as inferential statistics. Data was collected from a sample of 50 respondents guided by a semi-structured questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions; Focus group discussion was also applied as and direct researcher's observation. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analyzing the data gathered in the field. The descriptive statistical tool used included frequencies, while the inferential statistical tool used was a correlation. The data collected was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The study achieved a response of 50 out of a sample of 57, representing a response rate of 88%. Findings on the need to establish a Special Vocational Education Needs' Unit for the implementation of inclusion of learners at Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA), achieved the response of 50 out of 50 respondents which takes 100% of all responses, 0% of all respondents disagreed and making no single respondent observed differently hence all agreed that there a need to have a unit. The Pearson relation on the experience of teachers in the helping of learners with disabilities; spearman's rank correlation revealed a very strong positive correlation (.021) which suggests that the existing services to learners with disabilities by teachers are based on the experience of those teachers at work but not the expertise they possess about learners with disabilities, most of them have no idea of special needs education while very few determined by themselves to get knowledge from NGOs working with people with disabilities. The study also discovered that there are initiatives done by VETA headquarter in collaboration with SENSE International in 2022 and prepared Guidelines For Inclusion of People With Disabilities in Vocational Education and Training which in turn a Pedagogical Manual for Trainers on Special Needs and Inclusive Vocational Education and Training was developed. Therefore, the Guideline and manual became a catalyst for the establishments of a Unit at VETA headquarter, MVTTC, and Vocational training Centers across the country. This will solve the challenges vocational teachers confront when having learners with special needs in their classes. It is further observed that the area TVET sector in Tanzania is not well

researched enough to gain scientific solutions on matters related to vocational education and training, hence more studies need to be conducted in order to come up with best practices for sustainable development of- Vocational Education and Training in Tanzania.

**Keywords**— Vocational Education and Training Authority VETA, Morogoro Vocational Teacher Training College (MVTTC), Special Vocational Education Needs.

## I. INTRODUCTION

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), Recognized disability as the concept which resulted from an interaction among individuals with impairments and attitudinal and environmental challenges that hinders the full and effective participation of young boys and girls in society equally with others. According to Tanzania's Act on disabilities (2010) and the Tanzania national policy on disabilities (2004) disability is referred to the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others because of physical, mental, or social factors. Skills Training is identified as the process of acquisition of skills regarded as the fundamental prerequisite in the life span of a person with a disability, the Tanzania national policy on disabilities (2004). The Skills obtained by individuals with disabilities are the key to their employment, which in the end become a vehicle for self-sufficiency and independent living.

Currently, Tanzania is implementing inclusive education at all levels under the concept of "No one left behind" as advocated by the United Nations. Tanzania has a population of 61,741,120 the totality of the men and women Census, (2022). The Tanzanian government, in collaboration with other stakeholders, agreed on improving basic skills training and facilities for people with disabilities. As stated in the Policy first agreed there will be an integration of learners with disabilities and those without disabilities, second, there will be purposive identification of talents to learners with disabilities and those without disabilities, and third, the identified talents will be developed to reach the highest level of achievement, The Tanzania national policy on disabilities (2004).

Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA), is the major component in the implementation of the inclusion of learners with disabilities in Tanzania in collaboration with other stakeholders through providing a conducive environment for inclusion which takes care of the learners with special needs based on the learners with disabilities, the Tanzania policy on disabilities (2004). According to VET Act of 1994 RE 2006 2019 section 4(1), (g) one of the main functions of VETA is “to promote access to vocational education and training for disadvantaged groups”. Despite this commitment, vocational education is rarely accessible to learners with disabilities. This is because the training facilities are inaccessible to people with disabilities. Also, the training institutions available in Tanzania for learners with disabilities currently have no capacity to train competent individuals who can compete in the open labor market. This study aims to investigate services provided to learners with disabilities joining vocational education and training in Tanzania’s vocational training centers. In the end, this study will come up with suggestions on the best practices at VETA that can improve the provision of Inclusive vocation education and training to learners with disabilities.

**II. METHODS**

This study applied the multiple case design as the basic design used when exploring the situation in its root cause by involving various sources of obtaining data, such as questionnaires, interviews, and observation. This research design helps a lot in reducing the cost of conducting research since the researcher uses a focal point to get important data from respondents. Its behavior of containing a unit with a variety of characteristics or variables allowed an in-depth inspection of the problems. The study involved a sample of 50 respondents drawn from a population of 270 respondents comprising Vocational Teachers involving themselves with learners with disabilities at their Vocational Training Centers , Headquarter officers who attended training program prepared to capacitate the vocational teachers served learners with disabilities in their course of teaching from different vocational training centers across the country., The study also included the vocational student teachers from Morogoro Vocational Teacher Training College (MVTTC). Questionnaires, focus group discussions, and interviews were used to key respondents in the process of data collection. Also, the researcher took advantage of the success stories, and observation of the behavior and attitudes of the teachers and officers at the Headquarter helped in data qualification and allowed this study to get accurate data from primary respondents. Analysis of the data collected in this study involved the use of descriptive and inferential statistical tools, namely frequencies, percentages, mean, and correlation to determine and explain the relationship among the study variables.

**III. RESULTS**

This study achieved a response of 50 out of a sample of 57, representing a response rate of 88% as shown in the explanations and figures below. Dillman et al. (2009)

highlighted that the response rate related to the number above can be legitimate and the results are of good quality. This shows that the findings are of good quality. Also, there was a great relationship between the variables. The study aimed at evaluating the on job training conducted at the VETA headquarter and interestingly the study cultivated if there is a need to establish special vocational needs education unit in implementing inclusion of learners with disabilities at the vocational education and training authority VETA, Tanzania. The assessment on the particular variable revealed that 100% of respondents agreed that there is a need to have a unit for special vocational needs education at the VETA Headquarter and vocational training centers across the country.

TABLE 1.0 illustrates the current situation of training at VETA

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	10	20.0	52.6
	Not sure	7	14.0	36.8
	Disagree	2	4.0	10.5
	Total	19	38.0	100.0
Not administered	31	62.0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>		

The question intended to find out if the current provision of training to learners with disabilities at VETA is sufficient. Vocational Teachers from various colleges in the country were gathered at VETA headquarter for capacity building training. Vocational Teachers showed the background of receiving learners with different disabilities and everyone tried hard to enable the training for learners they received. Most of them succeeded in training them accordingly without special required skills, including using adapted materials, strategies, and environment. With heavy struggles, some managed to qualify their learners with special needs with the support of total communication and other local communication. Some teachers claimed to use students and relatives to accompany the learners to break through communication barriers. The question was administered to Vocational teachers only who attended on job training and the response showed the sufficiency of the training but in reality, the response was based on the limited experience they possess about the approach of training learners with disabilities. Thus, if given enough training on the best practices of training learners with special needs particularly those with disabilities may be the current question could be responded to differently with confidence, as the current response shows a number of Vocational teachers hesitated in their responses.

The below table illustrates that there is a direct relationship between the working experiences of the teachers interviewed with the support given to the learners with disabilities who happen to be by chance at the vocational training centers. It seems experience was the key to the improvisation of various strategies and materials, which helped learners with disabilities to learn. The presence of relationships among the variables of Pearson correlation (.02) stimulated the interest in conducting more training as the current one achieved a lot to

change the attitudes of the teachers and they proved that it is possible to train learners with disabilities in the country.

TABLE 2.0 Illustrating correlation among the variables; working experience and the support provided to learners with disabilities at vocational training centers

	Working experience	Support provided to learners with disabilities at VETA vocational training centers is sufficient
Pearson Correlation	1	.021
Sig. (2-tailed)		.931
Sum of Squares and Cross-products	1.800	.100
Covariance	.095	.005
N	20	20
Pearson Correlation	.021	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.931	
Sum of Squares and Cross-products	.100	12.950
Covariance	.005	.682
N	20	20

All is needed is proper and active coordination of the programs and facilities to be used at the colleges. The relation also suggested that teachers were teaching through experience and not the skills for teaching learners with disabilities. Therefore, there is a need to have proper skills equipped to the teachers.

TABLE 3.0 illustrates the response about the presence of a unit at VETA supporting teachers who train learners with disabilities at their centers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	9	18.0	47.4	47.4
Valid Not Agree	10	20.0	52.6	100.0
Total	19	38.0	100.0	
Valid Not administered	31	62.0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>		

The results show that a larger number of respondents disagreed, yet the number is competing with those who agreed. Researchers discussing with officers in charge of special needs support observed that at VETA Headquarter there are officers assigned with the task of providing minimal assistance to teachers who confront the situation of having learners with disabilities in their classes. The wonderful job done by these pioneer officers created a mind that there is a unit, but in a real sense, the unit does not exist rather than personally motivated support from those dedicated officers. The responses above illustrate that there are nearing numbers between those who agreed and that other side of not agree.

The current situation shows there is a burning need to have a unit at VETA headquarter and at vocational training centers supporting teachers for learner with disabilities, starting with Morogoro Vocational Teacher Training College (MVTTC). In

discussion, the researcher discovered that the current situation created the need to have a unit at the VETA headquarter that will coordinate service provision to all colleges across the country.

TABLE 4.0 illustrates the need to have a unit for special vocational education needs at the VETA Headquarter and vocational training centers across the country

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	20	40.0	100.0	100.0
Valid Not Assigned	30	60.0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>		

This demand emanated from the fact that there is a great purposive initiative by VETA to open door for many learners with disability to be enrolled in the coming year of 2023/2024. The initiative started in the year 2022/2023. Learners with disabilities were given special attention whoever applied for the training at any college was given the opportunity. Hence, the rise in the number of learners with disability come up with some challenges, including communication, teaching and learning strategies, teaching and learning materials, and a friendly learning environment. Meanwhile, the administration assigned some officers to take care of the issues arising by Vocational teachers of learners with disabilities. This is supported by the above description, which shows services are considered to current learners with disabilities through currently assigned staff.

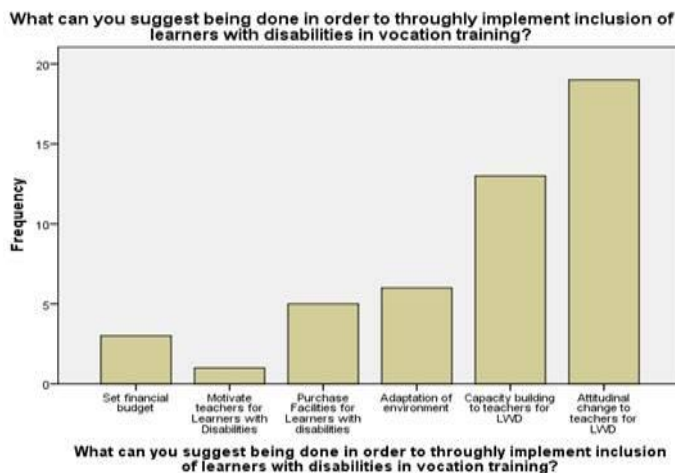
TABLE 5.0 illustrates the outcome of on job training of teachers for the learners with disabilities conducted at Vocational Education and Training Authority headquarter.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	19	38.0	100.0	100.0
Valid Not assigned	31	62.0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>		

This item aimed at evaluating the on job training on SNE conducted at VETA headquarter to Vocational teachers from some the vocational training centers if it has changed the attitudes of the teachers. The response was 100% agreed on the changes they discovered from the training. Teachers agreed in the discussion that they all came across learners with disabilities in their career and they all realized that everyone had his/her way of teaching learners with disability and there was no uniform accepted way of conducting lessons to various learners with disabilities. This also contributes a lot to the need to have a proper and uniform way of teaching in the whole country as a result of the unit which will be established at VETA headquarter that will act as the focal point for opening the units at vocational training centers across the country..

Graph: 1.0 depicts the suggestions for improving the training of learners with disabilities at the Vocational Education and Training Authority in Tanzania.





The results shown in the graph above are led by the attitudinal change to teachers for learners with disabilities. Previously, some teachers were not active in helping learners with disabilities as most of them did not know how they can help. After training, most of them reported on the changes, they made cognitively and they asked for further support from other teachers who did not attend the on job training. The second aspect proposed was capacity building for vocational teachers. Also, some touched on the adaptation of the environment, purchasing facilities, motivating teachers, and the last list was setting the budget for running the learning for learners with disabilities.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) is a body corporate established by the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Act No. 1 of 1994(Cap 82 Revised Edition 2019 and its amendment (No. 4) of 2021). It was established with overall responsibility for the purpose of provision of required skills for effective socio-economic development in both, the formal and informal sectors based on flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and responsiveness to the needs of the labor market within and outside the country. This study discovered that there are services related to learners with disabilities that teachers try individually to practice but there is no proper and agreed framework that every teacher who confronts a learner with a disability may follow. It was also discovered that there was a tremendous determination to support every learner who enrolled in any course at VETA in consideration of the special needs they have. This is supported by the presence of on job training for some teachers who have shown an interest in helping learners with disabilities in their colleges as shown in the results above. Therefore, the study observed that there is a need to bridge the gap existing now at VETA in order to make sure every student enrolled at any vocational training centers in the country should achieve his/her better expectation. The training should be conducted regarding individual differences and backgrounds; whether physical, mental, social, or emotional.

#### V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study came up with several suggestions. Some are from the respondents, while others are from the discussion and observation of the researcher. First and foremost, VETA Headquarter has to keep on the positive spirit of helping learners with disabilities as the situation exists now. Then, capacity building may be very important to the teachers and officers working with those with disabilities. To ensure there is an official framework and constant support to teachers meeting the situation in the field, VETA has to establish a Special unit at VETA headquarter and at MVTTC where teachers are trained. This will equip all teachers trained at MVTTC to have the component of Special Vocational Needs Education (SVNE). On job trainings need to be in priority for an immediate solution. The current officers who showed an interest and working hard in helping teachers with disabilities should be developed and transformed to become experts in the area of Special Vocational Need Education so that they become a think tank of the VETA on matters pertaining to learners with special vocational educational and training needs. Government should increase the budget for VETA to run activities related to skill development for teachers for learners with disabilities and purchase materials in their main budget plan. VETA should initiate the process of budget allocation by starting with the current budget it has to support individuals with disabilities who are at the college at the moment. VETA should mobilize enough resources for dissemination and implementation of the Manual designed to equip Vocational Trainers with pedagogical skills to improve their ability on curriculum adaptation through planning, preparation and facilitation of learning to trainees with disabilities. MVTTC should be empowered to mainstream the Pedagogical Manual for Trainer's on Special and Inclusive Vocational Education and Trainings that the manual shall be effectively implemented at all levels in order to prepare vocational trainers with competent skills to accommodate the basic needs of trainees with disabilities.

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