

**ASHESI UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

**Special Needs Children's Educational Experience in Ghana: Investigating Key Factors in Their Academic Success at the Primary School Level**

**BY**

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**Declaration Page**

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

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*I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by Ashesi University College.*

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## **Abstract**

This research paper was conducted with the aim of investigating the different ways teachers; school administrators and parents contribute to a special needs child's experience and success at school. This paper provides an insight as to the various roles each stakeholder (teachers, parents and school administrators) play. A quantitative design was used to gather data, through the use of a combination of structured, open-ended questionnaires and interviews. The research sought to determine the key factors that influence the special needs child's experience and success at school, whilst establishing that factors proposed by the study's cognitive map were of some influence.

**Key Concepts:** *Quality, Special Needs*

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

#### 1.1 History of formal education in Ghana

As was the case in many colonies during the early colonial period, the main goal of formal education was for the Danish, Dutch and English Merchants who set up schools in their forts (Christiansburg Castle-British-Danish, Elmina Castle-Portuguese then Dutch and Cape Coast Castle-British) to educate their children. Also linked to the establishment of formal education in Ghana were the Christian Missionaries who realized that in order to spread the word of God they needed well-educated local assistants. Approached by one of the Danish Governors to Ghana, Basel Mission Society of Switzerland in 1828, representatives of this organization were able to convince the chiefs of Ghana in 1832 to send their children to school. This single event facilitated the acceptance of formal education. Besides reading, writing and arithmetic, workshops were organized for students to acquire practical skills. Carpentry, masonry, blacksmithing, shoemaking and sewing for girls were taught, as well as practical agriculture and medical and health education. (A brief history of the Ghanaian educational system)

By 1881 there were 139 schools in Ghana, however the education systems used varied widely as there was not yet an established unified education system. This variation in the education structure prompted the government to draw up its first plans in 1882 to guide the development of education. The British laid a solid foundation for the formal education system in Ghana, although only a small group had access to it. Following Ghana's independence, the 1961 Act, (Act 87) initiated by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah was aimed at achieving Free Universal Primary Education and it made education compulsory and free. (A brief history of the Ghanaian educational system)

Ghana presently uses the six (6)-three (3)-three (3)-four (4) education system, where the child has to have had six (6) years of primary education, three (3) years of junior secondary education, three years of senior secondary education and finally four years in any tertiary institution.



All children are expected to go through a minimum of nine years of education, i.e. six (6) years of primary and three (3) years of junior secondary education after which they can either enter the world of work or continue to the senior secondary and tertiary levels (Oduro, 2000). The public sector is the main provider of education at the primary and tertiary level. At the secondary level, although most of the senior secondary schools are public schools, the vocational schools sub-sector is dominated by the private sector (Oduro, 2000).

## **1.2 History of Special Education in Ghana**

The foundation for special schools can be traced back to the mid-1940s when the Basel missionaries established a school for students with visual impairment in Begoro and Akropong-Akwapim. These schools were later followed by the emergence of special schools for other disability categories (M. K. Avoke & Avoke, 2004; Torto, 2000). According to Abosi (2007) (as cited Schedule of Events for the Twelfth Biennial Conference in Windhoek, Namibia, 2011), the efforts by the early missionaries focused on disabilities whose effects were noticeable such as visual impairment, mental retardation and hearing impairment. On the other hand invisible disability categories that affected learning and/or behavior were either not recognized by the missionaries or given any special consideration.

According to Anson-Yevu (1988) before the introduction of Western education, students with disabilities in Ghana were completely excluded from all formal educational programs. The care of both able bodied, the disabled, the sick, the aged and orphans had always been the responsibility of the family in Ghana (both nuclear and extended) as well as the care of those who were able-bodied (Anson-Yevu, 1988). Whereas the family's disabled sibling and relatives followed the same pattern for the less handicapped, the more severely handicapped ones were kept in the compound of the extended family, fed, and given all necessary care, excluding formal education.

The missionary schools were the only schools that catered for these needs up until 1957 when the Government of Ghana assumed educational responsibility of handicapped children. This change was officially formalized with the first Act of Parliament, which incorporated special education into the general education system. After passing this act, the government assumed full responsibility for the training and rehabilitation of the disabled in Ghana. This new government

responsibility freed the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of their previous duties concerning who took care of the special needs children. (Anson-Yevu, 1988). This can be seen in table 1.1 below, where the major contributor to the special education sector is the state education system who contribute about 85% of the total amount available, as compared to the other government departments and voluntary organizations who contribute 10% and 5% respectively.

*Table 1.1: Percentage provision towards special education by stakeholders*  
Provision

State education system	85%
Other governments departments	10%
Voluntary agencies	5%

*Table 1.1* above shows the percentage provision of the different stakeholders in the special education department and the government plays a major part following their policy implementation regarding handicapped children and youth.

According to M. K. Avoke (as cited in Adera & Asimeng-Boahene, 2011) by the first half of the 19th century, Christian missionaries undertook education as a major part of their missionary endeavors, leading to the establishment of missionary schools. These schools were mainly aligned with the Western educational system with an emphasis on memorization of facts, moral education, aversion to indigenous culture and high regard for western culture (Adera & Asimeng-Boahene, 2011).

The education of Ghanaian children emerged from the family compound and became part of the school system. Following the colonization of the Ghanaian society by the British in the mid

1940's also came with the introduction of formal education, whose basic education structure has continued up to contemporary times. (Akyeampong, Djangmah, Oduro, Seidu, & Hunt, 2007) The establishment of the unit of special education in 1970 thus underscored the importance with which the government of Ghana attached to education of handicapped children. At the same time, it helped to shape the structure, content and administration of special education in Ghana.

### **1.3 Background**

A child with special needs as identified by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) portrays either one of these groups of disabilities in different magnitudes depending on its severity: (1) disabilities for which there is substantive normative agreement (for example blindness, deafness, and severe intellectual impairment); (2) disabilities that are manifested as difficulties learning; and (3) disabilities that are the result of socio-economic, cultural, and linguistic disadvantages (Jill & Kenneth, 2006). Identifying and addressing the different categories of disabilities is very important as if they are identified early the more effective the intervention and the less severe the effect of the disability on the child's development.

Learning does not begin when children walk through the school doors nor does it end when they exit for the day. It takes place all the time and everywhere, throughout their everyday lives. There is an academic dimension to the links between schools and homes and localities. Children bring to school their family and community beliefs, practices, knowledge, expectations and behaviours. Similarly, when they return from school they bring back to their homes and communities new forms of knowledge, practices, behaviours, attitudes and skills. Children are engaged in a continuous, dynamic process of bridging the world of school and the world of home and community. They learn from both worlds, facilitated by teachers, family members, neighbors and others. ( United Nations Children's Fund, 2009)

According to a study by Wilson, Cordry, Notar and Friery (2004), teachers concur that they cannot do it alone and for effective educational processes to occur in classrooms, parental help in partnership with educators is needed. Epstein and Salinas (2004) stated that a school learning community includes educators, students, parents and community partners who work together to improve the school and enhance students' learning opportunities. (Donkor, 2010). Research

findings concerning the main contributors to a child's education, indicate that when parents are involved in the education of their children, student achievement, attendance, health and discipline show marked improvement (Boal, 2004). Whereas on the other hand, a schools heads' leadership determines whether a school takes a child-friendly path, cultivates a sense of community within child-friendly schools or not. Teachers are also an important factor in a child's educational experience, as they are important to effective and efficient learning. They are vital, along with the school head, to promoting a sense of community within the school and to building links to the wider community. ( United Nations Children's Fund, 2009).

The learning skills and reading ability of a special needs children are is associated with the reading environment around them and there is evidence that parental involvement with school has been noted as a main contributor to the child's academic performance. Social competence as a result of parental warmth, lack of conflict, control and monitoring appear to play an important role in developing children's social skills. (O' Connor & Scott, 2007)

From the above, it is clear that if these three groups of individuals (school heads, teachers and parents) work hand in hand, such 'cooperation' greatly contributes to the overall educational experience and advancement of any child. Schools heads and teachers assume the critical role in building school-community links by reaching out to the community and drawing it in. parents who feel positive about school and are involved in its life are likely to be the best advocates for the school's values, policies and practices at home, whether by encouraging homework, promoting anti-harassment or supporting cooperation with others. Where there is no contact between home and school, problems in the child's life may go unrecognized by the school and will not be properly addressed. Even in underprivileged families, high levels of parental support and a positive school climate foster self-confidence and self-esteem. ( United Nations Children's Fund, 2009)

#### **1.4 Problem Statement**

Access to education globally is a major obstacle in achieving effective literacy instruction for children with special needs. Around the world there are an estimated 115 million children who do not attend school and 40 million of them are believed to have disabilities (World Bank, 2003). Ghana with a population of around twenty million has a disabled population of

between 2 to 2.4 million. Based on the 2000 census which puts the total school age population (from pre-school to senior secondary school) at 6.7 million, children with disabilities of the same age is calculated at 679,000- 804,000. This number is against the current enrollment of 4109 children in both segregated/integrated schools. This number indicates that 0.6% of the population of children with disabilities receive any form of education. Despite the fact that the Special Education Division of Ghana Education Service (GES) is mandated to carry out policies that will ensure the social inclusion and quality education for those with special needs. (Service, 2004)

Access to education is only the first stage in overcoming the exclusion of persons with disabilities from the mainstream education (Booth, 2000). The concept of inclusion of disabled persons into mainstream education has been misinterpreted and is not fully understood by many in the society. Inclusive education is not about placing students in mainstream classes to save money, but rather about optimizing learning environments by providing opportunities for all learners to be successful.

Separating children from their peers, mainstream curricula and educational practices, compromises their right and potentially discriminates against such persons. A World Bank study identified a growing body of research indicating that inclusive education is not only cost-efficient but also cost-effective (Petr, 2003).

According to a UNESCO report regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society, and achieving an education for all (UNESCO, 1994). Segregated education is viewed as potentially violating the students' rights to appropriate inclusive education in their own local area. It may also limit their capacity to benefit from educational opportunities in the future.

The lack of accurate prevalence statistics concerning children with special needs, has been attributed to unclear guidelines, lack of appropriate assessment procedures for disability determination, and lack of appropriate criteria and/or standard policies for determination of special education eligibility (Agbenyaga, Asamani, & Avoke, 2002). This non existence of accurate prevalence statistics poses a major problem in educational planning for children with disabilities in Ghana given, that determination of whether an individual has a disability or not is attributed to

factors within their situational context (Avoke, 2001). For this reason, current educational research using prevalence statistics available through government agencies in Ghana may not depict a clear picture or the contextual reality of prevalence of different disability conditions.

In spite of the positive development including policy initiatives that have been enacted to safeguard the education of students with disabilities in Ghana, several aspects of the current educational system and schools present major obstacles to the provision of inclusive education. This research project will highlight the various factors, which influence the special needs child's educational experience in Ghana from the perspectives of the major stakeholders (the government, school administrators and their teachers and parents and the children themselves).

### **1.5 Research Question**

The research question that guides this project is: *"In what ways do teachers, school administrators and parents contribute to a special needs child's experience and success at school?"*

In answering this question, this project seeks to identify and analyze the various factors, which contribute to the experience and success of special needs children at the primary school level.

### **1.6 Research Objective**

The objective of this study is:

Research objective:

- To explore the ways teachers, school administrators and parents contribute to a special needs child's experience and success at the primary school level

In exploring this objective my ultimate goal is to make available what these factors are, so that parents with children with special needs as well as special education professionals can benefit from such insights related to their child's disability. Ultimately such knowledge leads to giving such children the best education options despite their disability.

### 1.7 Theoretical/ Conceptual Framework

For the research study, I utilized Maslow's Hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1970) benchmarks children with special needs and their need to belong, with factors (variables) that motivate learning and eventually their acceptance into the society.

This theoretical framework proposed highlights the view that in the hierarchy of human needs 'belonging' is an essential and prerequisite element that should be met before one could ever achieve a sense a self-worth. This framework highlights five levels (in ascending order): Physiological, Safety/Security, Belonging/Social Affiliation, Self-Esteem and Self- Actualization, as the five levels that determine an individual's level of belonging in the society. The framework shows the priority needs that all have to be satisfied; in ascending order before an individual feels like they belong. This framework was adapted in this work to show how the different levels proposed by (Maslow, 1970) helps us to further understand the level of inclusion for children with special needs in Ghana. Fig 1.1 is the diagram of the theoretical framework:



Figure 1: Maslow's hierarchy of human needs. (Adapted from Maslow, A. (1970).

Based on the theoretical framework proposed by (Abraham Maslow, 1970) the following variables were extracted from Maslow’s Hierarchy to create the cognitive map design for the research paper.

### 1.7.1 Key Variables

- Safety Needs
- Emotional Needs
- Self –Esteem Needs

The research study will use these variables as the foundation factors to determine the external factors that define the level of high quality education each child receives. The cognitive map portrays each variable as a key factor that can influence an individual with special needs’ sense of belonging (inclusion), how they are perceived in the society and ultimately their willingness to want to learn effectively. Below is the diagram of this relationship:

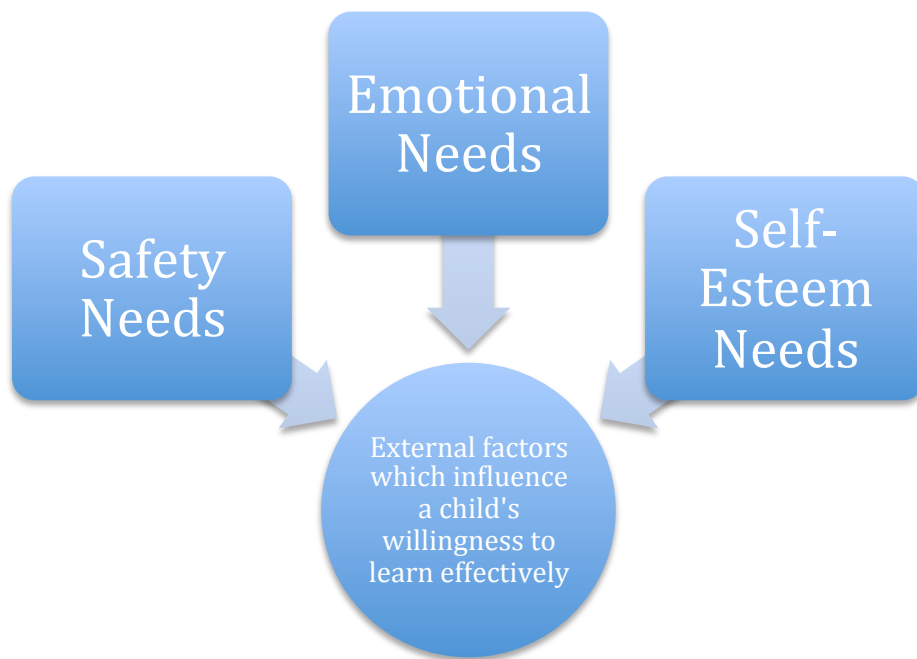


Fig 1.1 Cognitive Map Diagram (Visual Map of factors said to motivate ones willingness to learn more effectively)



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Apart from mainstream education, special needs education is one of the two sectors of the education sector. Children with special needs were initially always excluded from any form of mainstream education but are gradually being recognized and included in very few mainstream schools. Despite this progress a significant number of children with special needs in Ghana are either excluded or given a lower quality education than their peers in mainstream schools.

#### **2.1 Special Education in Ghana**

In the Education Act 2008 (Act 778) Article 5 captures 'Inclusive Education' and states that design' and 'infrastructure' of schools need to be disability friendly. Parents should take a child with a disability to school. And the last provision is a definition of 'Inclusive Education', which speaks of a value system, which holds that all persons who attend an educational facility should have equal access to learning, which transcends the idea of physical location but promotes participation, friendship and interaction. (Project, 2011)

Ghana Education Service (GES) reported a total enrolment in all special education schools of only 5,654 for the 2007-2008 academic years, less than 1% of those estimated to need services. There may also be over a million students currently enrolled in basic schools across Ghana who have unidentified learning difficulties (Anthony & Kwadade, 2006). Special educational services offered through GES take three main forms: Segregated 'special schools,' Segregated 'units' contained onsite with mainstream schools and Inclusive education. Government Special Education Needs (SEN) services are largely concentrated on basic years education (Anthony & Kwadade, 2006), in the South (MoESS, 2008) and urban areas (Avoke, 2001). Like other developing countries

such as Nigeria the role of parents in Ghana cannot be overemphasized in terms of giving their consent for that child with special needs to be included in the special education system.

## **2.2 Criticisms of the current state of the Ghanaian Special Education Provision**

The obligation of the education system as described in the Education Act 2008 (Act 778) Article 5 appears to be restricted to just physical infrastructure and are not specified in terms of learning support that should be provided in order to achieve 'equal access to learning'. Though 'screening of all children on admission' is stated as a duty of the education service, it does not specify what children are to be screened for. It is very unclear whether this includes learning disabilities. (Project, 2011)

Despite the efforts of the Ghanaian Government to provide equal facilities for children with special needs as those in mainstream schools, the system has been criticized on the grounds that it is more expensive relative to the resources of the country and that it limits the facilities to a comparatively few handicapped children. (Anson-Yevu, 1988) The present special school intake represents approximately 1 per cent of the total number of all children in school. (Anson-Yevu, 1988). Also the system is seen as alienating the handicapped child from their community and thus perpetuating the traditional prejudices against the handicapped. Such negative biases include the perception that these children are incompetent and therefore the need for them to be isolated. This problem initiated the adoption of an integrated system to supplement special schools by a few mainstream schools (Anson-Yevu, 1988).

A large amount of literature concerning the positive effect of inclusion, has shown that there are positive outcomes for children with special needs who have been placed in settings with their typically developing peers, (As cited by Brown et al. 2005 in Willis, 2006). Also, children with special needs who receive related services (special education, speech/language therapy, occupational therapy) benefit more when those services are provided in the natural environment with their peers (Allen & Cowdery, 2005). Research shows that including instruction and therapeutic services within the framework of natural environments is both beneficial to the child and cost effective for the setting (Bailey & McWilliam, 1990; Bricker & Cripe, 1992; Noonan & McCormick, 2000). A report by

the division of early childhood (DEC) (date and year), states that inclusion is “a value that supports the rights of all children, regardless of their diverse abilities, to participate actively in natural settings within their communities”. Inclusion encourages the belief that children with disabilities learn best in mainstream settings with peers as it has long term effects on all the children in such a classroom.

According to Kolawole (1989) and Adegoke (2004) some educational psychologists list five fundamental needs of children as: need for status, need for security, need for affection, need for independence and the need for competence. (Oniye & Durosaro, 2009). Many children come to school eager to learn, but when they get there their basic needs as highlighted by Abraham Maslow are not met. They do not experience any emotional support required for learning, the kind of stimulation needed for their brains to develop, or the opportunities to interact socially. (Preschool)

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs would explain how the exclusion of children with special needs from mainstream schools would mean they would get a lower quality of education as compared to those in mainstream schools. According to Abraham Maslow, the hierarchy of needs can be divided into two parts namely basic needs which constitute: physiological and safety needs and growth needs which constitute: love and belonging, esteem needs and self-actualization. He asserts that the satisfaction of these needs should not be reserved as the responsibility of an individual’s family or society but also extends to the school system. The hierarchy demonstrates that basic needs such as the need for food, water, safety and the like must be met before children are able to focus on learning. (Preschool)

The need to belong is one thing that all humans share, regardless of our interests or abilities. As noted by Abraham Maslow (1970), a sense of belonging to one’s society or environment (inclusion in the case of children with special needs) is very important, because it allows the individual to have a sense of value. Such inclusion does not make the fact that they are different be so obvious to them as well as those around them.

Based on what critics such as Wahba and Bridgewell who found little or no evidence justifying the ranking of needs Maslow described or even the need for a hierarchy at all, I decided to narrow down the needs I would focus on, as such needs may occur at the same time and not all people are motivated by the same need satisfied. For the purpose of this research, the research will

concentrate on just three of the five needs in Maslow's Hierarchy namely: Safety, Belonging and Self Esteem needs.

## **2.3 Abraham Maslow's Needs of Hierarchy**

### **2.3.1 Psychological needs**

According to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the first level in this pyramid is the psychological stage. This stage consists of needs such as food, water, shelter and warmth; individuals do not seek the satisfaction of a need at one level until the previous level of need has been satisfied/met. At this stage the child is still very dependent on their parents as well as the society in general for the provision of the basic everyday necessities. Regarding children with special needs this dependency is relatively higher compared with those without special needs.

Not all disabilities are easy to recognize most especially learning disabilities as children with this disability often have average or above average intelligence. Learning disabilities, in particular, may be difficult to identify, for example children with dyslexia, a learning disability involving difficulties in acquiring and processing language that is typically manifested by a lack of proficiency in reading, spelling and writing. So like any other child without disabilities they need and deserve the basic necessities such as food, water, shelter and warmth.

At this stage the child is still developing and is still finding out who they are, hence the need for some form of reassurance from parents and others in the society that despite the fact that they are different they do not need to be "repaired" or "fixed" before they can be included with their peers. (Willis, 2006)

### **2.3.2 Safety Needs**

This is the second stage in Abraham Maslow's pyramid of needs. After the psychological needs have been duly satisfied, the child in question moves to the next stage. Here needs such, as freedom from danger and absence of threat has to be provided or ensured for the child. Here the individual has the need to feel safe in his/her environment, be able to express him or herself freely without being judged unfairly or discriminated against.

For younger children this sense of security is, satisfied in the form of their parents or guardians, while an older person could have security in terms of a job, a house in a safe area. For children with special needs the provision of their safety concerns is very important because if they feel they are in a secure area, such as their classroom they would tend to respond better to what they are taught and how well they relate with their peers and teachers.

In Ghana most special schools are usually situated away from the cities as well as mainstream school. This is due to the fact that these special schools have been portrayed as “safe havens” where persons with disabilities are protected from exposure to the hazards associated with inclusion in mainstream society (Artkinson, Jackson, & Walmsky, 1997; M. Avoke, 2001) (Schedule of Events for the Twelfth Biennial Conference Windhock, Namibia, 2011).

### **2.3.3 Belong – Love Needs**

This third stage in Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, include needs such as: friends, family, spouse, lover, and membership in associations within one’s community. According Maslow at this point in any individual’s life (after the first two needs have been satisfied), one craves to belong and be accepted in the society they are in. He or she would not want to be accepted by not just family, but also be able to make friends outside one’s family such as in schools and the wider community.

In the case of a child with special needs, the need to belong is very important because the child is obviously very different from the other children so he/she should not be made to feel inferior. As a result, they may exhibit behavior that tests acceptance, or they act out, attack others, or behave in ways that show they deserve to be rejected. These children benefit from being around adults who are consistent and caring, not harsh and judgmental. (Preschool) Using Ghana as an example this is a need that is seriously lacking and caused majorly by the child’s community because according to Agbenyega (2003), the “language used to label, inscribe and construct disabilities in Ghana is premised by cultural ideology that marginalizes, silences and constructs subjectivities through the society and the school system” (Schedule of Events for the Twelfth Biennial Conference Windhock, Namibia, 2011).

#### **2.3.4 Self – Esteem Needs**

Self Esteem needs constitute the fourth stage in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Following the satisfaction of the previous stage, Abraham Maslow believed that only when do we have some form of security in community do we develop self-esteem. This need manifests in the desire to assure ourselves of our own worth as individuals can be satisfied through personal achievements in any given field, gaining respect or recognition from others. It is a very important need hence its position in the pyramid because if the individual doesn't feel accepted or appreciated although all other needs before this have been satisfied everything would have been for nothing.

It is important to note that every child enjoys being praised and acknowledged by adults and peers in his/her life, irrespective of the fact that the child has a disability or not. The child would want to feel accepted both by the teacher and their peers especially when a new skill is mastered or more control is gained over the environment. The need to be accepted and praised as well is due to the fact that with any disability it is more difficult to remember skills learnt already not to mention new ones learnt. According to Kathie Snow (2007), to separate children from others of similar age and qualification generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community. (Snow, 2007)

#### **2.3.5 Self- Actualization**

This is the final level in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow stated that after self-esteem needs have been largely met, "we will develop a new restlessness and the urge to pursue the unique gifts or talents that may be particular to that person...what a person *can* be, he or she must be. He must be true to his own nature". (Maslow's hierarchy of needs, 1943) At this point all four previous levels have been satisfied, so the individual now feels the need to develop himself up until the point where he would have a sense of accomplishment as shown by their occupation of path of choice.

Maslow stated that until the individual is free of the domination of lower needs, such as for security and esteem, the pursuit of self-actualization cannot begin as "the pursuit of higher needs is itself one index of psychological health". (university)

## **2.4 Critiques Against Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of needs**

Maslow's Hierarchy had a number of critics such as Wahba and Bridgewell (1976) who found little or no evidence justifying the ranking of needs Maslow described or even the need for a hierarchy at all (Wahba & Bridgewell, 1976). A Chilean economist and philosopher Manfred Max-Neef who also argued that human needs are universal and always remain the same supported this view. He asserted that human needs were in no hierarchical order.

The possibility of people pursuing their own interpretation of each need and different possible methods to satisfy these needs is another major critique of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Although this order of needs is not true in all cases, sometimes people would overlook certain needs over others, which could possibly be as a result of their personality or beliefs.

Maslow believed that a need once satisfied would then cease to be relevant, because the need to satisfy this need could always recur for one reason or the other. Critics such as Wahba and Bridgewell (1976) believed that Maslow's Hierarchy of needs insinuated that all people are motivated by the same basic needs regardless of culture but according to Maslow his theory was not completely generalizable to every culture, every person or every circumstance. (Maslow's hierarchy of needs, 1943) The issue of Maslow looking at the world from an individualistic point of view rather than a community view as the needs of an individual could differ from that of the society, but would usually be the same as the child had been conditioned to think like their society.

Taking into consideration the views of the above critics, their views greatly influenced my decision to choose just three of Abraham Maslow's needs as although the needs not be in any specific order, these are universal needs that every individual has.

## **2.5 Major issues affecting special education**

A major issue hindering the process of inclusion from occurring in mainstream as well as special schools is the lack of adequate facilities to absorb both regular and special needs students and this primarily due to financial constraints. As a result most mainstream schools would prefer to exclude children with special needs entirely and even if they decide to include them it would be at an extra cost as compared to what a child without special needs would be charged. Most parents still do not understand the importance of education as socialization and the part they both play in the

development of any child. As a result, these parents do not really protest if their child with special needs was excluded from school entirely or was rejected from a mainstream school.

Although presently awareness about special needs children and their needs have increased, prejudice against the disabled still exists. This undesirable attitude is prominent in the area of integration. This is a problem because if the teachers in the mainstream schools discriminate against children with special needs peers without special needs would see no reason to make them feel welcome or even interact with them. Also the Ghanaian government only trains a limited number of specialist teachers, whose numbers are insufficient to cater for the need in the society. Given the country's severe foreign exchange constraints, the exclusion of children with special needs is the least costly choice. (Anson-Yevu, 1988)

Ghana has initiated audiology, assessment, resource and braille printing services to support integration and other programs but because of lack of adequate inputs, qualified personnel and physical facilities, the development of these services and their impact on special education are below expectations. Basic school facilities such as classrooms, activity centers, playgrounds, recreational halls and gymnasiums are incapable of catering for the needs of children with special needs. (Anson-Yevu, 1988)

People with disabilities need to be fully included in society not just for their benefit but also for others around them, as their exclusion only reinforces views that they are unable to succeed in those environments. (Snow, 2007). It also indirectly tells the individual with such a disability that they will never be successful in normal environments. Finally their inclusion is of great importance as it also teaches children without special needs how to 'be around them' and not be frightened. (Snow, 2007)

## **2.6 Significance of the Research**

Existing literature on the importance and benefits of the inclusion of children with special needs in not just the mainstream education but in the community in general, specifies very little information on its importance and need for such education in developing countries such as Ghana. This prompts the need for research to be done in this area that can be of contextual relevance.



Also there is a lack of empirical information, which specifically highlights the actual number of children with special needs in Ghana. Which is why if the government or private individuals were to provide needed facilities they would be inadequate in terms of catering for the number of children with special needs. In addition there is also a lack of empirical information, which show the actual factors, which determine the level of inclusion, a child is entitled to and how such features can be beneficial to the community as a whole.

The need to belong (inclusion) is one thing that everyone desires, so no one should be exempted because of one's disability. According to Norman Kuntz Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs has now been inverted where an individual's personal worth or, worse yet their acceptance into their local community is contingent upon demonstrated skills hence the continued exclusion of individuals who are 'different.' To belong or be included in the society is totally dependent on the attainment of self-actualized goals rather than being acknowledged as a fundamental human need. Exclusion has a detrimental effect upon the children with special needs as it's usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the segregated group. A sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a child to learn. Segregation has a tendency to retard educational and mental development of such children and to deprive them of benefits they would receive in an integrated school system. (Snow, 2007)

It also provides insight as to why this inclusion and the need to belong is very important by providing comparative data in the Ghanaian context.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter documents the research procedure, instruments and data analysis method that was used in collecting data that pertains to understanding the ways in which the three stakeholders (teachers, parents and principals) contribute to a special needs child's educational needs at school.

#### 3.1 Research Question

*"In what ways do teachers, school administrators and parents contribute to a special needs child's overall educational experience at school?"*

#### 3.2 Type of Study

This research is a relational study interested in perceptions/perspectives from parents of children with special needs and school administrators (of both mainstream and special schools). The importance of these perceptions/perspectives is to determine the importance of inclusion for children with special needs in Ghana.

#### 3.3 Research Design

This research will utilize an explanatory research design for this project. As data gotten would be used to explain the different ways in which the three stakeholders contribute a child's educational experience.

#### 3.4 Operationalization

For the purpose of this study, the main concepts used are:

- Special Needs: This term refers to those children who "have or are at increased risk for chronic physical, developmental, behavioral or emotional conditions and who also require health and related services of a type or amount beyond that required by children generally". (Health, 2012)

- Education in Ghana: This term refers to the quality of education in mainstream schools and the standard of services they provide and how such quality is different from those provided to special needs children.
- Special needs education providers: This phrase refers to the schools, which cater for only the needs with special needs and the adequacy of the resources they have to provide such services.
- Level of inclusion available: The term is used to indicate the level of acceptance a child with special needs is entitled to and the culture of this inclusiveness available in mainstream education.
- The need/importance of inclusion: The term designates need for inclusion, its importance and benefit to the child with special needs.
- Quality: "...pertains to the relevance of what is taught and learned - to how well it fits the present and future needs of the particular learners in question, given their particular circumstances and prospects. It also refers to significant changes in the educational system itself, in the nature of its inputs (students, teachers, facilities, equipment and supplies); its objectives, curriculum and technologies; and its socioeconomic, cultural and political environment. (Coombs, 1985)

### **3.5 Sampling Population**

For the purpose of this study I limited my sampling population to just three schools, one inclusive school one non-inclusive school and one mainstream, which are all in the Greater Accra Region.

The sample population comprised forty-six respondents.

#### **3.5.1 Sample**

**Criterion Sampling:** this involves searching for cases or individuals who meet a certain criterion.

This type of sampling would be used to select the school administrators and parents. Also respondents would have to either have a relative with special needs or work closely with one.

(Johnson)

**Random Sampling:** which involves choosing subjects from a population through unpredicted means. This sampling method would be used to select the sample of parents, as I know they have a

child with special needs hence their relevance and random sampling to make it more objective. (What is Random Sampling?)

The schools chosen were: New Horizon Special School. The first school, which is strictly a special school, was chosen because they focus only on children with special needs. I chose Multikids Academy because it is one of the few inclusive schools and Morning Star School so I can find out why some schools would rather opt out of anything related to children with special needs.

### **3.5.2 Sample Size**

Ten (10) parents were chosen from The New Horizon Special School, ten (10) from Multikids Academy and ten (10) from Morning Star School. All the School Administrators from the three (3) schools were interviewed as part of the sample size. Four (4) teachers were chosen from each of the two specialist schools and four (4) from Morning Star School. In addition a speech therapist was also interviewed (Miss. Nana Akua Owusu).

### **3.6 Methods of Data Collection**

The data for this research paper is a collection of both primary and secondary data. The secondary data for the study consists of journals, online articles and books whilst the primary data for the study involved the use of interviews and questionnaires.

### **3.7 Research Instruments (See Appendix A, B and C)**

Questionnaires (open ended and closed ended questions) and interviews were the research instruments used for the study.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedure**

As a result of the few academic institutions the research focuses on, distributing questionnaires and conducting interviews with parents and school administrators was not that tedious. The interview was conducted after an appointment was made with each school. The questionnaires were given to the school administrators who in turn distributed them to different teachers chosen at random, as it was against school policies to do so myself.

The questionnaires were distributed over three weeks, to allow each respondent adequate time to fill them at their convenience and were collected at an agreed date. Interviews were conducted over a week's period making the data collection period four weeks.

### **3.9 Data Analysis Methods**

#### **3.9.1 Descriptive Analysis**

In analyzing the data from my research, all responses under each category of respondents were documented, analyzed and explained them in relation to my research question. After which I found certain responses reoccurring, these I assumed to be the general consensus regarding each question.

#### **3.10 Limitations of the Study**

Several respondents refused to fill the questionnaires, as they were afraid as to what the data collated would be used for even after the objective of the research was explained to them. The overindulgence of certain respondents in the re-creation of questionnaires to suit their preferences was a limitation and further disappointment from said respondents even after changes were made. Time was also a major limitation, as all three schools did not have their filled questionnaires ready on the agreed day so I had to keep going back and forth several times.

Empirical information and statistics concerning children with special needs in Ghana is almost non-existent which would be limiting. This lack of information is due to the fact that, I do not have an idea of how many special needs children are in the country and what specific facilities are available. Due to the sensitive nature of my area of research I was unable to observe the three chosen schools before administrating the interviews and questionnaires. Some respondents requested payment before they answered any questions.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter involves an in depth analysis of the data I collected through distributed questionnaires and interviews I conducted with questions I had prepared prior to the actual interview. The purpose of these questionnaires was to gather information that shows the different ways in which school administrators, teachers and parents contribute to special need's children's educational experience and success at school. The purpose of the interviews with the school principals was to find out the ways in which they all contribute to the special needs child educational experience as one of the major stakeholders.

#### **Questionnaire Analysis Procedure**

The aim of the data analysis was to answer the study's research question, *"In what ways do teachers, school administrators and parents contribute to a special needs child's experience and success at school?"* In the presented analysis below, I have categorized the responses of the questions asked according to the different respondents and their corresponding questions. On embarking on the data collection process, I realized that considering the fact that all three schools were catering for three different needs of children they had to have different questions hence my decision to do so.

#### **4.1 Questions for teachers of children with special needs (Special and Inclusive school)**

The two chosen schools were New Horizon Special School at Labone and Multikids Academy (Inclusive school) situated at East Legon. All questionnaires to be distributed were given to the school principal who gave them out, as I could not do so personally. Questions asked were centered round the three needs I am focusing on namely; safety needs, belonging needs and self-esteem needs of children with special needs and how these affect their educational experience. In answering the question as to the appropriate level of education that a special needs teacher needs to have in order to properly help with special needs children's education, all the teachers' responses

pointed to the importance of a background in education with some years of teaching experience. Specifically, they all noted that such an educational background should be a first degree in education and possibly with some training in special needs education as well as years of experience with special needs children.

With regards to the right/appropriate environment, which the special needs child should have in order to maximize his/her educational experience, the teachers pointed out one crucial factor. This major contributing factor to the child's learning experience relates to the opportunity to learn in a welcoming teaching ambience, devoid of any abuse (normally verbal) and unconstructive criticism. In trying to find out the relevance of safety needs to special needs children's successful education, I asked questions relating to things that could make a child feel uncomfortable and unsafe in the classroom. In answering these questions, all the respondents stated that noise was something children with special needs could not tolerate. As any form of noise causes children with special needs to become agitated and possibly begin to feel threatened. Another factor, which was mentioned, was such children's dislike for hot environments hence the need for air conditioners in all classrooms. The importance of a cool environment facilitated by air conditioners boots the learning process as it eases such students' comfort thus allowing them to be more focused.

Another key factor that the teachers explained as important to the learning experience of the special needs child was the teaching strategy adopted by the teacher with the aim of helping the students to get the best out of the classroom experience. In addressing each child's individual learning needs, the teachers pointed out the need for educators to identify the various levels of each student. Such a strategy allows the teachers to set realistic targets accordingly, which also allows each child to be able to work at his/her own pace. Affirming Abraham Maslow's claim that the need to belong is very important, respondents emphasized that like every other child the special needs child also wants to feel wanted and belong. Hence the need for one-on-one teaching methods and smaller class ratios as compared to mainstream school classrooms.

In answering the question about their opinions on the inclusion of children with special needs into mainstream schools, one respondent felt that such exposure would not be appropriate at the lower primary age, as mainstream children would imitate the behavior of the special need child. On the

other hand, other teachers felt that such an inclusion was very necessary at all stages as the children get exposed to the diversity in the world and also get the chance to interact and learn about their peers in mainstream schools and vice versa. In terms of handling discrimination, which is more prevalent in the inclusive school, teachers explained to the children without special needs the kind of disability the child had and how they are different from them.

On the question asked regarding the frequency of communication with parents, all respondents stated that such an interaction occurs on a daily basis mostly in the form of informal visits from parents. Feedback from teachers constituted information regarding their child's both negative and positive performance at school. In order to encourage behaviours and attitudes the special needs child exhibits, the teachers employ the use of a variety of positive feedback, such as verbal praise and non-verbal praise such as doing (high fives). This act of 'high fives' involves high fiving the special needs child whenever he does something positive to encourage such behavior. Such verbal and nonverbal positive feedback helps build students confidence and self-esteem. In such situations they want to hear more of such evaluation, so they will work hard to get more of such.

In addressing the issue of the quality of education that children with special needs get compared with their non-special counterparts, some of the teachers highlighted one important point. This factor, the teachers noted relates to how despite the lack of numerous necessary resources and facilities needed in the education of children with special needs the education of children with special needs get is better than that of a child without needs. This situation is due to the fact that the classes are less crowded and the environment is friendlier. However one teacher felt that the education of special needs children was of less quality. This situation, according to this teacher, is due to the fact that the progress of such children is slower as they receive less attention. Also when compared to mainstream schools, special needs schools do not have enough teachers trained in special needs so as such quality (as it exists in mainstream schools) cannot be provided.

In answering the question asked about signs that signify a child's exclusion in the classroom, the teachers stated that such children become withdrawn, reserved, isolated and antisocial. Also some children may leave the room and bang the door behind them just to get the attention of the teacher and their peers.



#### **4.2 Questions for teachers of students without special needs**

The mainstream school chosen was Morning Star situated at Labone. The questionnaires for the teachers were given to the school principal and distributed on my behalf. The reason for this mode of data collection stemmed from the fact that the school policy prohibited doing so myself.

Like the special and inclusive schools, all the teachers' responses regarding the required training needed to teach at a mainstream school pointed to the importance of a background in education (teacher certificate A or a diploma from a recognized training college) with some years of teaching experience. Teachers were asked what major factors in their opinion affected a child's willingness to learn and all respondents believed that the teaching ambience, the availability of relevant teaching and learning materials and finally the teaching strategy of the teacher were the major factors. Concerning the particular teaching strategy used in the classroom, the teachers stated that this was tailored to meet the varied individual learning needs of the different pupils, which they always identified prior to its implementation, as each child has their own unique learning need and strengths.

In answering the question concerning their opinions on the inclusion of children with special needs into mainstream schools, the teachers felt that this would be very beneficial. As separating them from other pupils would make them feel marginalized and stigmatized and as a result be less motivated. Unlike the special and inclusive school, not a lot of emphasis was placed on feedback to parents in the mainstream school. As although the teachers at the mainstream school acknowledged its importance, they stated that it was not something they did often. Most teachers only got the opportunity to do so during open days and at the end of the term. Although there were a few parents whom on occasion paid informal visits to their child's class teacher.

Teachers in response to the impact of their demeanor in the classroom stated that their disposition could either cause the child to either encourage or discourage the child in the classroom. It could also help the child become more interested in his/her work at school as well as make the learning process easier for the child. When asked about their views on the quality of education received by children with special needs, majority of the teachers at Morning Star believed that the quality of education children with special needs receive is higher than those without needs. This is due to the

fact that educators focus more on the latter, as they are slower learners than the child without needs.

In a bid to make lessons for both regular and special needs children more interesting and easier to relate to, teachers at Morning Star stated that they usually employed the use of storytelling, read-alouds, films, project work and research work for all levels. Also sometimes children are grouped by heterogeneous abilities as this gives the slow-learners the opportunity to learn from the bright ones. Children are also given the opportunity to help in coming out with the rules and regulations for the class, as this shows that their views are important. This manner of recognizing students' views, according to the teachers helped boost their self-esteem. Also, this strategy helps prevent certain unwanted behaviours because students know they helped come up with such rules and they would ensure that their peers do not go against them.

Teachers noted that like a special needs child, the child without needs also sometimes feels like they do not belong. This feeling accounts for the exhibition of certain behaviours such as isolating themselves and being antisocial, leaving the classroom all in a bid to attract the attention of the class teacher. The teachers emphasized the importance of including all children in the learning process despite their level of learning. When asked if they would prefer to exclusively teach children with special needs all teachers said they would but they lacked the necessary training, skills and experience.

#### **4.3 Questions for Parents of children with special needs**

Parents from New Horizon Special School and Multikids Academy were given questionnaires to solicit their views on the major contributors to their children's' educational experience. The questionnaires yet again were distributed through the school administrators. At Multikids Academy questionnaires were given to only parents with special needs children. Parents had children with disabilities such as Autism, Attention Deficit Disorder and Hyperactivity Disorder, Hearing and Speech Impairment and Down syndrome.

The choice of school for all parents was paramount in their child's education decisions. All parents chose their children respective schools as they felt that they had the best trained teachers and resources to help their children and they all stated that they were very happy with their performance. In answering the question about the importance of communication with their child's class teacher, all parents stated that they do so everyday when they pick up their child from school. This communication they emphasized was important so they could be kept abreast concerning their child's performance at school. The parents also stated that they were very involved in their child's educational experience and cited the example of them always assisting their wards with homework and projects they brought home.

When asked if they would want their children in inclusive schools, all the parents who have children in an only special school said they would rather prefer to have their child stay in an only special school as the pace in a mainstream school would be too fast for their children.

#### **4.4 Questions for Parents of children without special needs**

Parents at Morning Star (a mainstream school) were given questionnaires to fill. The questionnaires yet again were distributed through the school administrators.

Like the parents in the special and inclusive schools, the parents of children at Morning Star stated that the choice of school for their child was a very important decision. Most parents chose Morning Star because of the school's high academic standing, as well as the school's special effort to address the needs of all pupils irrespective of their different learning abilities. One parent who is also a teacher at Morning Star stated that she chose the school so that she could be closer to her son.

In answering the question about the importance of communication with their child's teacher, majority of the parents did not place a lot of importance on this. Parents stated that they only spoke to the teachers as and when necessary which was probably termly, mostly at the beginning. On the other hand one parent stated that he sees teachers as often as possible, as he believes in regular dialogue with his children's class teachers. This regular interaction keeps him abreast with his children's attitude in class, not only their academic performance but also how they behave and

relate with their colleagues in class. Parents at Morning Star also emphasized the need to discuss their child's learning style with their class teachers as such discussion made the whole learning process easier. Furthermore this dialogue allowed them to ensure their children are on the right track.

#### **4.5 Interview with Morning Star Principal (mainstream school)**

I interviewed Mrs Kwakyi, who has been the Principal at Morning Star (mainstream school) for 18 years was interviewed. This was a closed interview as I already had questions set prior to the actual interview day. Mrs Kwakyi in answering the question as to the appropriate level of education required to be principal noted that, one needs to have a solid education background and experience. In using herself as a reference point, she stated that she had an academic preparation in Bachelors in Business Administration (BA), Masters in Education Administration, education specialist with more than 10 years experience both in Ghana and in the United States.

With regards to some of the challenges that her organization faces, Mrs Kwakyi noted that like every institution her school also faces challenges such as the quality of parenting, the problem of finding good teachers and support administration staff, cost of capital to run the school, cost of resources used (textbooks, utilities, electricity, water, fuel) and arrears in collection of fees as sometimes parents are unable to pay on time. The main challenge she emphasized was the quality of parenting, as most parents were not as involved in their child's educational experience as they ought to be.

In answering the question about factors that could influence the willingness of the child to learn she stated that the home situation of the child is a major contributor as the child could be having problems at home, parents might be separated, the religion of their parents could cause them to be denied access to certain benefits or the teacher could teach something and the parents would be against it. The teaching environment has to be conducive enough before any form of learning can occur. Antagonism, discomfort, fear, intimidation, lack of understanding from the teacher and poor teacher/student relationship are factors she also mentioned as contributors to the child's desire to learn.

When asked about the concern of parents regarding their child's progress at school Mrs Kwakyi stated that majority of the parents at Morning Star were very involved, with those who needed to be coaxed every now and then to visit their child's class in the minority. The inclusion of children with special needs was something she personally encouraged, which is the reason why that aspect exists in their school. Currently she stated that they had three (3) special needs children with mild disabilities. She stated that the problem of discrimination was almost non-existent at Morning Star. What accounts for this absence, according to her, is how the school administration has created an environment, which is generally sensitive to those with handicaps. Furthermore they educate children without disabilities are educated about the special needs children's disabilities.

#### **4.6 Interview with New Horizon Special School Educational Coordinator**

I interviewed Mrs Jocelyn Adoboe, the Principal at New Horizon Special School (special school). Mrs Adoboe has been in this position since 1994. This was a closed interview as I already had questions set prior to the actual interview day. Mrs Adoboe in answering the question as to the appropriate level of education required to be principal and using herself as a reference point, stated that she has an academic background in education with several years of experience in special needs education.

Mrs Adoboe stated that the rationale for the focus of New Horizon Special School on just children with special needs was due to the fact that, in general there is no place for them in the Ghanaian society. She also noted that the class sizes in mainstream schools were too big and this situation creates the room for the high possibility of the special need child not being appropriately cared for. She stated some of the challenges they faced by students as the stigma attached to having a disability; that children with special needs can amount to nothing and the issue of the government making no financial provision for the special needs education sector. Maintenance of the school premises, motivation for staff as well as getting the right kind of staff at an affordable cost and the acquisition of necessary facilities and resources are all challenges they face.

In answering the question about factors that could influence the willingness of the child to learn she stated that they do not well in hot environments as they get agitated and restless and noise distracts

them. Regarding the requisite education to teach in such an institution, Mrs Adoboe highlighted basic training in education as well as some training in special education and some teaching experience as an added bonus. She also emphasized the fact that despite the various qualifications of teachers teaching at their institution, there was still the need to bring in experts in areas such as speech and language therapy.

In describing the process before teaching strategies are implemented, Mrs Adoboe stated that the school has an established assessment center used to develop a baseline of all children so teaching strategies would take into consideration every child's needs. Regarding how involved and concerned parents are with their children, she stated that there were two groups of parents. The first group constitutes those who have given up on their children already and show absolutely no concern for the educational well being of their ward. The second groups consists those parents who believe that there is hope for their children and therefore ensure that their wards get the requisite education. Ways of encouraging learning in a special needs child as highlighted by Mrs Adoboe, include the use of positive enforcement as this boosts their self-esteem, identifying what such children like and incorporating such knowledge into developing a teaching strategy.

Despite the fact that the school lacks several vital resources and facilities, Mrs Adoboe emphasized that the most important factors in a special needs child education were their parents, teachers and the head of the school.

#### **4.7 Interview with Multikids Academy Principal**

I interviewed Mrs Elorm Duah, the Principal of Multikids Academy (Inclusive school) for two and a half years. This was a closed interview as I already had questions set prior to the actual interview day. Mrs Duah in answering the question as to the appropriate level of education required to be principal and using herself as a reference point, stated that she had an academic background in special education with several years of experience in special needs education but was an artist by profession. She stated that the idea behind Multikids Academy providing an inclusive education was to afford the child with special needs the opportunity to also have an equally quality education as the child without needs. According to her the major challenge that the school faces as an inclusive

school is the problem of acceptance on the part of teachers and children without special needs. As if neither is willing to do so, the child with special needs would not be able to learn in such a hostile environment.

In answering the question as to how her administration addresses the issue of discrimination, Mrs Duah stated that children without special needs as well as teachers are educated about each child's disabilities. This awareness sensitizes the children to accept and accommodate children with special needs. According to Mrs Duah, the only factor, which could influence a child's willingness to learn, would be as a result of the lack of co-operation from their parents.

In applying for a job at Multikids, one would have to have some knowledge on special education with some experience with special needs children as an added advantage. Regarding how involved and concerned parents are, she stated that there were three groups of parents. Parents who had not given up on their kids and want them to progress, parents who have given up and do not care about their child's performance at school and parents who have not really accepted their wards' condition and so expect so much from them. Mrs Duah highlighted the preferred process currently adopted by the school to encourage learning used by Multikids Academy; the school studies the child, finds out what they like and inculcate such knowledge in the teaching strategy used and when teaching teachers opt for visual learning as this appeals to all children and makes learning faster.

#### **4.8 Interview with speech therapist**

In addition to the school principals I interviewed, I decided to also interview a speech therapist as she worked with all three schools that were the focus of this project. I interviewed Miss Nana-Akua Owusu a speech therapist. This was a closed interview as I already had questions set prior to the actual interview day. In answering the question regarding the goal for her setting up her organization, Miss Owusu cited the non-inclusion of communication disabilities/difficulties in the general category of disabilities and the lack of support/services for children and young persons with communication disabilities/difficulties as the need she hoped to address by establishing the program she runs. The policy she stated was for children who come to the program to be in a mainstream school, as this is one of the settings where the strategies they learn in therapy can be naturally

demonstrated. As they also pick up good language and social interaction models from children without disabilities.

In the answering the question concerning possible factors, which could affect the special, needs child willingness to learn Miss Owusu stated that poor expectations from the class teacher, head of school or significant others could belittle the child and lower their self esteem and eventually cause them to not want to even try and do better than what people expect. Teachers often have low expectations of the children with disabilities and that informs all their interaction with the child at school as opposed to a positive expectation and demonstration of interest in the child's capabilities. Also instead of devising innovative ways of breaking down information for children with difficulties, teachers often choose to deny the child the recommended set books for the class. Thus without individual support in class children with special needs may be denied a proper education. The availability of appropriate resources and tools for supporting learning as well as a positive environment could determine how willing special needs children will be to learn. Appropriate support and interest demonstrated by parents, caretakers and significant others are very important. All these factors according to Miss Owusu may vary from child to child depending on their family background. Regarding the kind of facilities used to aid learning, Miss Owusu indicated that their organization had air conditioners in all classrooms as they observed this was an essential facility as the children tire quickly and are unable to stay indoors when there is a power failure but are still in need of a number of needed facilities and resources. According to Miss Owusu, teaching strategies used are tailored to the needs of the child and their likes. Feedback here is usually informal during conversation with parents when they drop off or pick up their children or at a parents meeting. Miss Owusu in conclusion emphasized the need for the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream schools, where such inclusion should not mean setting up the child in question to fail, as is the case most times. She admitted that although some children with severe and profound disabilities are unable to be in mainstream schools but all efforts must be made to integrate them anyway.



## **4.9 Discrepancies**

**4.9.1 Transition to the society:** children with special needs in the special and inclusive schools when compared to children without needs in mainstream schools have no program in place which helps in their transition to the society once they leave the school.

**4.9.2 Facilities:** the mainstream and inclusive schools had more necessary facilities than the only special needs school. This according to the various respondents was due to the fact that the mainstream and inclusive schools are able to charge higher fees, while the special school charges a subsidized fee and as such they can afford to purchase the needed resources. As if the fees in the special school are made any higher many students would be unable to afford them.

**4.9.3 Parents:** parents of children with special needs as compared to those with children without needs from my data analysis were more involved in their child's educational experience. As seen in the number of times they interacted with their child's class teacher and went for parent teacher forums.

**4.9.4 Teachers:** there are more teachers trained to teach children without special needs in mainstream schools than special needs teachers in the system. Which makes the notion of inclusion almost impossible of implementation, as these teachers are incapable of handling their disabilities.

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APPENDIX A

**Sample Questionnaire for Mainstream School (Morning Star)**

This questionnaire is designed to seek your opinions on the type of quality of education children with special needs receive as compared to those in mainstream schools in Ghana. This is an academic research paper, and as such any information volunteered will be kept confidential and will be used solely for this research paper.

*(Please circle where applicable to signify your choice)*

**Background Information:**

*Children with special needs are children with either a learning, mental or physical disability.*

1. How old is your child/children?

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2. Please briefly explain why you chose this school for your child

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3. How would you describe your child's experience at this school?

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4. How often do you communicate with your child's teacher at school?

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5. How does this school compare to previous schools that your child has gone to? (If any)

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6. Have you had the opportunity to explain your child's learning style (s) to his/her teacher at this school?

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7. How would you describe the level of your satisfaction regarding your child's/children's current school?

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8. How do you identify behaviours in your child that suggests that they are being excluded in school?

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9. Has your child ever discussed any negative experience (s) in school? What was your reaction?

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10. Do you assist your child with work they bring home from school (for example homework, projects)?

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11. Do you pay for extra lessons beyond what is provided at your child's school (for example speech therapy, extra tutoring)?

a. Yes b. No  
(Please elaborate)

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12. Who is normally involved in bringing your child home after school?

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13. How do you feel about your child being in an inclusive school?

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14. Is there anything you want to share on this topic (that I failed to ask)?

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**Thank you very much for taking part in this research!**

**Questions for Teachers**

This questionnaire is designed to seek your opinions on the low quality of education children with special needs receive as compared to those in mainstream schools in Ghana. This is an academic research paper, and as such any information volunteered will be kept confidential and will be used solely for this research paper.

*(Please circle where applicable to signify your choice)*

**Background Information:**

*Children with special needs are children with either a learning, mental or physical disability.*

1. What factors in your classroom influence a child's willingness to learn? (Please elaborate)

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2. What is the level of training needed to be a teacher at this school?

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3. What teaching strategies are used to address individual learning needs?

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4. How do you cope with challenging behaviours in the classroom?

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5. Have you had successful experiences with special needs children?

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6. What are your feelings about inclusion of children with special needs?

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7. Do you have any teaching assistants?

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8. What are the necessary qualifications to be a teaching assistant?

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9. What strategies do you use to reach students at different levels?

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10. How often do you give parents feedback on their child's welfare?

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11. Does the intervention of the teacher influence the willingness of a child to want to learn more?

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12. Why did you choose to teach at a mainstream school? (Please elaborate)

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13. Would you prefer teaching children with special needs? (Please elaborate)

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14. Do you think the quality of education received by children with special needs can be compared to those without such needs? (Please elaborate briefly)

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15. How do you identify children whose behavior suggests that they are being excluded in the classroom? (Please elaborate)

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**Thank you very much for taking part in this research!**

**School Principal**

**This Interview is designed to seek your opinions on the low quality of education children with special needs receive as compared to those in mainstream schools in Ghana. This is an academic research paper, and as such any information volunteered will be kept confidential and will be used solely for this research paper.**

**Background Information:**

*Children with special needs are children with either a learning, mental or physical disability.*

- How long have you been the school Principal?
- Why did the school decide to provide just mainstream education?
- What are the challenges faced as a mainstream school?
- How do you deal with the problem of discrimination by either peers or teachers?
- Are there any external factors, which could influence the willingness of the child to learn?
- What is the needed training required to be able to teach children at this school?
- How concerned are parents regarding their child's progress at school?
- Would you be willing to include special needs children into the system?

**APPENDIX B**

Sample Interview questions for special school (New Horizon special school)

**This interview is designed to seek your opinions on the low quality of education children with special needs receive as compared to those in mainstream schools in Ghana. This is an academic research paper, and as such any information volunteered will be kept confidential and will be used solely for this research paper.**

**Background Information:**

*Children with special needs are children with either a learning, mental or physical disability.*

1. How old is your child/children?

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2. Please specify how many special needs children you have?

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3. What disability does your child have? Please elaborate on the specific type of disability

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4. Please briefly explain why you chose the New Horizon Special School for your child

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5. How would you describe your child's experience of going to the New Horizon Special School?

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6. How often do you communicate with your child's teacher at school?

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7. Is the school aware of your child's disability?

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8. How does this school compare to previous schools that your child has gone to? (If any)

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9. Have you had the opportunity to explain your child's learning style (s) to his/her teachers at the New Horizon Special School?

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10. How would you describe the level of your satisfaction regarding your child's/children's current school?

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11. Would you want your child to be in a non-inclusive school?

a. Yes    b. No

(Briefly explain your answer)

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12. How do you identify behaviours in your child that suggests that they are being excluded in school?

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13. Has your child ever discussed any negative experience (s) in school? What was your reaction?

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14. Do you assist your child with work they bring home from school (for example homework, projects)?

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15. Do you pay for extra lessons beyond what is provided at your child's school (for example speech therapy, extra tutoring)?

a. Yes b. No  
(Please elaborate)

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16. Is there anything you want to share on this topic (that I failed to ask)?

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Thank you very much for taking part in this research!

**Questions for Teachers of children with special needs**

This questionnaire is designed to seek your opinions on the low quality of education children with special needs receive as compared to those in mainstream schools in Ghana. This is an academic research paper, and as such any information volunteered will be kept confidential and will be used solely for this research paper.

*(Please circle where applicable to signify your choice)*

**Background Information:**

*Children with special needs are children with either a learning, mental or physical disability.*

1. What factors in your classroom influence a child's willingness to learn? (Please elaborate)

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2. What is the needed training required to teach at this school?

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3. What teaching strategies do you use to address students' individual learning needs?

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4. How do you cope with challenging behaviours in the classroom?

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5. Have you had successful experiences with special needs children?

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6. What are your feelings about inclusion of children with special needs?

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7. What do inclusive schools do to make their students successful?

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8. Do you have any teaching assistants you work with in your classroom?

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9. What are the necessary qualifications to be a teaching assistant?

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10. What strategies do you use to reach students at different learning levels?

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11. What resources are available to the teachers to enable teaching children with special needs?

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12. In your opinion, what other resources could be acquired, that could help teachers make teaching more efficient?

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13. How do you help other children accept the special needs child (ren)?

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14. How often do you give parents feedback on their child's performance in school?

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15. What kind of positive feedback do you give to your students to encourage behaviours and attitudes they exhibit?

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16. What kind of negative feedback do you give to your students to discourage behaviours and attitudes they exhibit?

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17. Does positive feedback from the teacher influence the willingness of a child to want to learn more?

Please explain

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18. Why did you choose to teach at an inclusive school as opposed to a school for only special needs?

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19. What are the major challenges in teaching children with special needs? (Please explain)

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20. Would you prefer teaching children without special needs? (Please elaborate)

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21. Do you think the quality of education received by children with special needs can be compared to those without such needs? (Please elaborate briefly)

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22. How do you identify children whose behavior suggests that they are being excluded in the classroom? (Please elaborate)

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**Eduatonal Coordinator (New Horizon special school)**

**This Interview is designed to seek your opinions on the low quality of education children with special needs receive as compared to those in mainstream schools in Ghana. This is an academic research paper, and as such any information volunteered will be kept confidential and will be used solely for this research paper.**

**Background Information:**

*Children with special needs are children with either a learning, mental or physical disability.*

- How long have you been the school educational coordinator?
- How many special needs students are at this school?
- Why did the school decide to provide just special education?
- What are the challenges faced as a special school?
- How are children with special needs cared for at this school?
- How do you deal with the problem of discrimination by either peers or teachers?
- Are there any external factors, which could influence the willingness of the child to learn?
- What is the needed training required to be able to teach children with special needs?
- How concerned are parents regarding their child's progress at school?
- What measures do you implement to further encourage children with special needs to learn and contribute more in the classroom?

- How often do you visit classes with special needs children?
- Is there an age-limit regarding students with special needs that you accept?
- Are there any programs, which help in their transition into the society?
- Does the school have any external support for children with special needs?

## APPENDIX C

### Parents of children with special needs (Multikids Academy)

This questionnaire is designed to seek your opinions on the type of quality of education children with special needs receive as compared to those in mainstream schools in Ghana. This is an academic research paper, and as such any information volunteered will be kept confidential and will be used solely for this research paper.

*(Please circle where applicable to signify your choice)*

#### Background Information:

*Children with special needs are children with either a learning, mental or physical disability.*

1. How old is your child/children?

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2. Please specify how many special needs children you have?

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3. What disability does your child have? Please elaborate on the specific type of disability

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4. Please briefly explain why you chose Multikids Academy for your child

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5. How would you describe your child's experience of going to Multikids Academy?

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6. How often do you communicate with your child's teacher at school?

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7. Is the school aware of your child's disability?

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8. How does Multikids Academy compare to previous schools that your child has gone to? (If any)

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9. Have you had the opportunity to explain your child's learning style (s) to his/her teachers at Multikids Academy?

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10. How would you describe the level of your satisfaction regarding your child's/children's current school?

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11. Would you want your child to be in a non-inclusive school?

- a. Yes
- b. No

(Briefly explain your answer)

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12. How do you identify behaviours in your child that suggests that they are being excluded in school?

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13. Has your child ever discussed any negative experience (s) in school? What was your reaction?

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14. Do you assist your child with work they bring home from school (for example homework, projects)?

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15. Do you pay for extra lessons beyond what is provided at your child's school (for example speech therapy, extra tutoring)?

a. Yes b. No  
(Please elaborate)

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16. Is there anything you want to share on this topic (that I failed to ask)?

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**Thank you very much for taking part in this research!**

**Parents of children without special needs**

**This questionnaire is designed to seek your opinions on the type of quality of education children with special needs receive as compared to those in mainstream schools in Ghana. This is an academic research paper, and as such any information volunteered will be kept confidential and will be used solely for this research paper.**

***(Please circle where applicable to signify your choice)***

**Background Information:**

*Children with special needs are children with either a learning, mental or physical disability.*

1. How old is your child/children?

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2. Please briefly explain why you chose Multikids Academy for your child

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3. How would you describe your child's experience at Multikids Academy?

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4. How often do you communicate with your child's teacher at school?

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5. How does this school compare to previous schools that your child has gone to? (If any)



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6. Have you had the opportunity to explain your child's learning style (s) to his/her teacher at Multikids Academy?

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7. How would you describe the level of your satisfaction regarding your child's/children's current school?

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8. How do you identify behaviours in your child that suggests that they are being excluded in school?

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9. Has your child ever discussed any negative experience (s) in school? What was your reaction?

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10. Do you assist your child with work they bring home from school (for example homework, projects)?

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11. Do you pay for extra lessons beyond what is provided at your child's school (for example speech therapy, extra tutoring)?

a. Yes b. No

(Please elaborate)

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12. Who is normally involved in bringing your child home after school?

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13. How do you feel about your child being in an inclusive school?

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14. Is there anything you want to share on this topic (that I failed to ask)?

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**Thank you very much for taking part in this research!**

**Questions for Teachers of children with special needs**

**This questionnaire is designed to seek your opinions on the low quality of education children with special needs receive as compared to those in mainstream schools in Ghana. This is an academic research paper, and as such any information volunteered will be kept confidential and will be used solely for this research paper.**

*(Please circle where applicable to signify your choice)*

**Background Information:**

*Children with special needs are children with either a learning, mental or physical disability.*

1. What factors in your classroom influence a child's willingness to learn? (Please elaborate)

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2. What is the needed training required to teach at this school?

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3. What teaching strategies do you use to address students' individual learning needs?

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4. How do you cope with challenging behaviours in the classroom?

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5. Have you had successful experiences with special needs children?

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6. What are your feelings about inclusion of children with special needs?

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7. What do inclusive schools do to make their students successful?

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8. Do you have any teaching assistants you work with in your classroom?

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9. What are the necessary qualifications to be a teaching assistant?

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10. What strategies do you use to reach students at different learning levels?

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11. What resources are available to the teachers to enable teaching children with special needs?

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12. In your opinion, what other resources could be acquired, that could help teachers make teaching more efficient?

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13. How do you help other children accept the special needs child?

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14. How often do you give parents feedback on their child's performance in school?

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15. What kind of positive feedback do you give to your students to encourage behaviours and attitudes they exhibit?

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16. What kind of negative feedback do you give to your students to discourage behaviours and attitudes they exhibit?

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17. Does positive feedback from the teacher influence the willingness of a child to want to learn more?

Please explain

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18. Why did you choose to teach at an inclusive school as opposed to a school for only special needs?

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19. What are the major challenges in teaching children with special needs? (Please explain)

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20. Would you prefer teaching children without special needs? (Please elaborate)

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21. Do you think the quality of education received by children with special needs can be compared to those without such needs? (Please elaborate briefly)

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22. How do you identify children whose behavior suggests that they are being excluded in the classroom? (Please elaborate)

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**Thank you very much for taking part in this research!**

**School Principal**

**This Interview is designed to seek your opinions on the low quality of education children with special needs receive as compared to those in mainstream schools in Ghana. This is an academic research paper, and as such any information volunteered will be kept confidential and will be used solely for this research paper.**

**Background Information:**

*Children with special needs are children with either a learning, mental or physical disability.*

- How long have you been the school Principal?
- How many special needs students are at this school?
- Why did the school decide to provide an inclusive education?
- What are the challenges faced as an inclusive school?
- How are children with special needs cared for at this school?
- How do you deal with the problem of discrimination by either peers or teachers?
- Are there any external factors, which could influence the willingness of the child to learn?
- What is the needed training required to be able to teach children with special needs?



- Are there separate facilities for children with special needs (for example separate classes)
- How concerned are parents (of special needs children) regarding their child's progress at school?
- What measures do you implement to further encourage children with special needs to learn and contribute more in the classroom?
- How often do you visit classes with special needs children?
- Is there an age-limit regarding students with special needs that you accept?
- Are there any programs, which help in their transition into the society?
- Does the school have any external support for children with special needs?

### **Interview with speech therapist**

- When was this organization started?
- What need were you seeking to address?
- How many schools do you work with?
- What schools?
- Do you also work with individuals?
- Are there any external factors, which could influence the willingness of the child to learn?
- What is the needed training required to be able to teach children at this organization?
- How concerned are parents regarding their child's progress at school?
- What kinds of facilities are used at this organization?
- How is this organization maintained (in terms of who provides the funds and facilities)?
- Do you only work with children who have special needs?
- What strategies do you use to reach students at different levels?
- How is feedback given to parents?
- What are your feelings about inclusion of children with special needs?
- Have you had successful experiences with special needs children?
- What factors in your opinion influence a child's willingness to learn?



## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the data analysis, it was very clear that all the different reasons given by the three stakeholders are different ways of satisfying the safety, belonging or self-esteem needs of the special needs child. The main factor that all three stakeholders mentioned was the importance of the role of a parent in the educational experience of their children. Despite this not all special needs children are fortunate to have all needs satisfied in one environment as they emphasized that one or more could be lacking which in turn could possibly affect the child's willingness to want to learn. This chapter outlined some key suggestions that would benefit all in the special needs education sector as well as other relevant stakeholders.

#### **5.1 Summary of research findings**

The purpose of this research study was to determine what ways teachers; school administrators and parents contribute to a special needs child's experience and success at school in Ghana. The research study has provided explanatory results that indicated key ways in which the three stakeholders above contribute to a child's overall educational experience. These key factors are highlighted and discussed below:

##### **5.1.1 Teachers**

Teachers at Morning Star from my data analysis were less qualified in terms of being able to teach a child with special needs as compared to the teachers in Multikids Academy and New Horizon. As these teachers had just basic knowledge as to the different kinds of disabilities and possible symptoms.

Teachers identified teaching experience as a very important factor. With such experience, the teacher would then know how to respond to different scenarios and would also know what method would be best for each child as no child has a similar learning style. This strategy would also make the child feel secure as they can clearly see that the teacher is not new at this.

Positive feedback from teachers is very important, as this boosts the child's self esteem and would encourage them to repeat such an action more.

Due to their easily distracted nature, children with special needs demand more attention. Such consideration would make them more involved in the whole learning process and also give them a feeling of belonging.

In order to give the best to the child you are teaching one has to actually enjoy what they are doing which is the most important factor, as if this passion is not there they can never really give them their best.

### **5.1.2 Parents**

From my analysis I became aware that the attitude of any parent concerning their child's education influences the willingness of the child to want to learn more. Here attitudes include the parent being too lackadaisical about their child's education or the parent being very involved. Such findings tallies with the findings of Anne Henderson and Nancy Berla; who in their study stated that the most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is the extent to which that student's family is able to create a home environment that encourages learning. Secondly parents ability to express high (but not unrealistic) expectations for their children's achievement and future careers and become involved in their children's education at school and in the community. (Campbell & Glasgow, Impact of Parent Involvement on Student Achievement, 2010) . Although their findings are not directly related to the education of children with special needs their insight equally applies as was evident in this research.

Children whose parents are more involved in their educational experience tend to do better than those who are hardly there or do not know what goes on at school, as a child's learning is enhanced when schools encourage parents to stimulate their children's intellectual development. (Campbell & Glasgow, Impact of Parent Involvement on Student Achievement)

Parents also emphasized on the importance of knowing their child's learning style, as this could contribute to their educational experience. As you would know what works for your child and when they leave school you could work with that child at home and not put them off balance having to learn some other way they are not used to or dislike.

Communication with your child's teacher on a regular basis is also very important, as you are updated regularly on their improvements and ways you could contribute to their educational

experience. The involvement of the parent importantly complements what the teacher does, which cumulatively makes the student become a better pupil.

### **5.1.3 School Administrators**

The various school administrators highlighted the most important factor to positively imparting the child with special needs child, as hiring the right teachers is the first step. As the institution could have all the necessary resources and facilities but not have a teacher who can effectively use all these to the benefit of the special needs child.

Also the importance of an environment a special needs child is in cannot be overemphasized as they all pointed out. An environment where the necessary teaching and learning materials and resources are available to make their learning easier has to be provided by the school. The environment has to be conducive and comfortable as the school administrators pointed out that they are easily agitated and sidetracked, which is why for example all classes are properly ventilated or sometimes have air conditioners, as children with special needs do not do well in the heat. Finally the school administrators also emphasized the importance of the parental role in the child's educational experience.

From the discussion above, it is important to note that the importance of school administrators, parents and teachers working in unanimity cannot be overemphasized. As each one has their own part to play and needs the next party to continue from where they left off, because learning does not begin when children walk through the school doors nor does it end when they exit for the day. It takes place all the time and everywhere.

In agreement with all three stakeholders the speech therapist interviewed, who also happened to work with all three schools emphasized that emphasized the need for the right environment (safety need), which is special needs friendly and where their views would be heard as much as any other child without needs.

### **5.2 Recommendations for future research**

As this research study is a preliminary study examining the difference ways in which the three major stakeholders in a child's education contribute to their overall educational experience, this research

should serve as the foundation for future studies. That would advance the research of how teachers, parents and school administrators contribute to a special needs child's experience and success at school.

Future studies should include all special schools in and outside the Greater Accra Region, as well as other organizations that assist such schools (both public and private). Such organizations include speech and language therapists, psychotherapists, physical therapists etc. These schools should then be compared to selected mainstream schools so as to identify gaps such as the different ways children with special needs in the different environments. Additionally, future studies should employ the use of other data collection methods to verify if these results are valid within a wider region and using both private and public schools.

This research has shown that the education of any child whether with or without special needs is greatly influenced by the head of school, teachers and their parents. It also clearly shows that children with special needs are not given as much attention as compared to the child with special needs, therefore making the claim by schools who teach special needs children that they get a lower quality of education seem plausible. Although the fact that they need more attention and special schools have smaller classes, the individual child gets more one on one time with the teacher shows that despite this lack their overall educational experience is higher than that of their mainstream school counterparts.

### **5.3 Practical recommendations for a change in operations**

**5.3.1 Government should have a budget:** making funding of special education needs a priority in government financing. At this point in time no specific budget has been drawn up to cater for the needs of children with special needs. All materials, resources and teachers required in aiding the special needs child's learning is provided at a huge cost to the various schools with such children.

**5.3.2 Training more special education needs teachers by the government:** as this is very expensive and quite costly for schools to do so on their own. This way there would be a number of trained teachers to cater for the vast number of special needs children.

**5.3.3 Make specialists available:** the government should help bring in the needed specialists or train people here in Ghana so foreign specialists do not have to be brought in, thereby saving cost.

As both the special school and the inclusive school stated that sometimes they had visiting therapists whom they had to pay for their services at a high price.

**5.3.4 Parents:** parents should endeavor to be a present factor in their child's life and not expect the school to do all the work. They should give their children more positive feedback and whatever they learn in school should be practiced at home, so as to reinforce what they were taught.

**5.3.5 School Administrators:** reduce the teacher to pupil ratio, so as to make in class support for special needs children without necessarily having to get additional resources at an extra cost. Teachers in mainstream schools should be given some form of training on how to identify and handle specific learning disabilities. This is to ensure that if per chance they have a child with special needs in their class they are able to handle whatever disability the child might have.

## APPENDIX A

### **Sample Questionnaire for Mainstream School (Morning Star)**

**This questionnaire is designed to seek your opinions on the type of quality of education children with special needs receive as compared to those in mainstream schools in Ghana. This is an academic research paper, and as such any information volunteered will be kept confidential and will be used solely for this research paper.**

***(Please circle where applicable to signify your choice)***

#### **Background Information:**

*Children with special needs are children with either a learning, mental or physical disability.*

1. How old is your child/children?

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2. Please briefly explain why you chose this school for your child

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3. How would you describe your child's experience at this school?

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4. How often do you communicate with your child's teacher at school?

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5. How does this school compare to previous schools that your child has gone to? (If any)

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6. Have you had the opportunity to explain your child's learning style (s) to his/her teacher at this school?

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7. How would you describe the level of your satisfaction regarding your child's/children's current school?

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8. How do you identify behaviours in your child that suggests that they are being excluded in school?

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9. Has your child ever discussed any negative experience (s) in school? What was your reaction?

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10. Do you assist your child with work they bring home from school (for example homework, projects)?

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11. Do you pay for extra lessons beyond what is provided at your child's school (for example speech therapy, extra tutoring)?

a. Yes b. No  
(Please elaborate)

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12. Who is normally involved in bringing your child home after school?

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13. How do you feel about your child being in an inclusive school?

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14. Is there anything you want to share on this topic (that I failed to ask)?

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**Thank you very much for taking part in this research!**

**Questions for Teachers**

**This questionnaire is designed to seek your opinions on the low quality of education children with special needs receive as compared to those in mainstream schools in Ghana. This is an academic research paper, and as such any information volunteered will be kept confidential and will be used solely for this research paper.**

***(Please circle where applicable to signify your choice)***

**Background Information:**

*Children with special needs are children with either a learning, mental or physical disability.*

1. What factors in your classroom influence a child's willingness to learn? (Please elaborate)

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2. What is the level of training needed to be a teacher at this school?

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3. What teaching strategies are used to address individual learning needs?

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4. How do you cope with challenging behaviours in the classroom?

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5. Have you had successful experiences with special needs children?

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6. What are your feelings about inclusion of children with special needs?

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7. Do you have any teaching assistants?

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8. What are the necessary qualifications to be a teaching assistant?

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9. What strategies do you use to reach students at different levels?

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10. How often do you give parents feedback on their child's welfare?

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11. Does the intervention of the teacher influence the willingness of a child to want to learn more?

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12. Why did you choose to teach at a mainstream school? (Please elaborate)

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13. Would you prefer teaching children with special needs? (Please elaborate)

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14. Do you think the quality of education received by children with special needs can be compared to those without such needs? (Please elaborate briefly)

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15. How do you identify children whose behavior suggests that they are being excluded in the classroom? (Please elaborate)

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**Thank you very much for taking part in this research!**

**School Principal**

**This Interview is designed to seek your opinions on the low quality of education children with special needs receive as compared to those in mainstream schools in Ghana. This is an academic research paper, and as such any information volunteered will be kept confidential and will be used solely for this research paper.**

**Background Information:**

*Children with special needs are children with either a learning, mental or physical disability.*

- How long have you been the school Principal?
- Why did the school decide to provide just mainstream education?
- What are the challenges faced as a mainstream school?
- How do you deal with the problem of discrimination by either peers or teachers?
- Are there any external factors, which could influence the willingness of the child to learn?
- What is the needed training required to be able to teach children at this school?
- How concerned are parents regarding their child's progress at school?
- Would you be willing to include special needs children into the system?

**APPENDIX B**

Sample Interview questions for special school (New Horizon special school)

**This interview is designed to seek your opinions on the low quality of education children with special needs receive as compared to those in mainstream schools in Ghana. This is an academic research paper, and as such any information volunteered will be kept confidential and will be used solely for this research paper.**

**Background Information:**

*Children with special needs are children with either a learning, mental or physical disability.*

1. How old is your child/children?

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2. Please specify how many special needs children you have?

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3. What disability does your child have? Please elaborate on the specific type of disability

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4. Please briefly explain why you chose the New Horizon Special School for your child

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5. How would you describe your child's experience of going to the New Horizon Special School?

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6. How often do you communicate with your child's teacher at school?

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7. Is the school aware of your child's disability?

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8. How does this school compare to previous schools that your child has gone to? (If any)

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9. Have you had the opportunity to explain your child's learning style (s) to his/her teachers at the New Horizon Special School?

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10. How would you describe the level of your satisfaction regarding your child's/children's current school?

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11. Would you want your child to be in a non-inclusive school?

a. Yes   b. No

(Briefly explain your answer)

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12. How do you identify behaviours in your child that suggests that they are being excluded in school?

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13. Has your child ever discussed any negative experience (s) in school? What was your reaction?

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14. Do you assist your child with work they bring home from school (for example homework, projects)?

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15. Do you pay for extra lessons beyond what is provided at your child's school (for example speech therapy, extra tutoring)?

a. Yes b. No

(Please elaborate)

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16. Is there anything you want to share on this topic (that I failed to ask)?

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**Thank you very much for taking part in this research!**

**Questions for Teachers of children with special needs**

**This questionnaire is designed to seek your opinions on the low quality of education children with special needs receive as compared to those in mainstream schools in Ghana.**

**This is an academic research paper, and as such any information volunteered will be kept confidential and will be used solely for this research paper.**

***(Please circle where applicable to signify your choice)***

**Background Information:**

*Children with special needs are children with either a learning, mental or physical disability.*

1. What factors in your classroom influence a child's willingness to learn? (Please elaborate)

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2. What is the needed training required to teach at this school?

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3. What teaching strategies do you use to address students' individual learning needs?

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4. How do you cope with challenging behaviours in the classroom?

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5. Have you had successful experiences with special needs children?

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6. What are your feelings about inclusion of children with special needs?

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7. What do inclusive schools do to make their students successful?

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8. Do you have any teaching assistants you work with in your classroom?

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9. What are the necessary qualifications to be a teaching assistant?

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10. What strategies do you use to reach students at different learning levels?

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11. What resources are available to the teachers to enable teaching children with special needs?

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12. In your opinion, what other resources could be acquired, that could help teachers make teaching more efficient?

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13. How do you help other children accept the special needs child (ren)?

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14. How often do you give parents feedback on their child's performance in school?

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15. What kind of positive feedback do you give to your students to encourage behaviours and attitudes they exhibit?

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16. What kind of negative feedback do you give to your students to discourage behaviours and attitudes they exhibit?

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17. Does positive feedback from the teacher influence the willingness of a child to want to learn more?

Please explain

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18. Why did you choose to teach at an inclusive school as opposed to a school for only special needs?

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19. What are the major challenges in teaching children with special needs? (Please explain)

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20. Would you prefer teaching children without special needs? (Please elaborate)

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21. Do you think the quality of education received by children with special needs can be compared to those without such needs? (Please elaborate briefly)

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22. How do you identify children whose behavior suggests that they are being excluded in the classroom? (Please elaborate)

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**Eduatonal Coordinator (New Horizon special school)**

**This Interview is designed to seek your opinions on the low quality of education children with special needs receive as compared to those in mainstream schools in Ghana. This is an academic research paper, and as such any information volunteered will be kept confidential and will be used solely for this research paper.**

**Background Information:**

*Children with special needs are children with either a learning, mental or physical disability.*

- How long have you been the school educational coordinator?
- How many special needs students are at this school?

- Why did the school decide to provide just special education?
- What are the challenges faced as a special school?
- How are children with special needs cared for at this school?
- How do you deal with the problem of discrimination by either peers or teachers?
- Are there any external factors, which could influence the willingness of the child to learn?
- What is the needed training required to be able to teach children with special needs?
- How concerned are parents regarding their child's progress at school?
- What measures do you implement to further encourage children with special needs to learn and contribute more in the classroom?
- How often do you visit classes with special needs children?
- Is there an age-limit regarding students with special needs that you accept?
- Are there any programs, which help in their transition into the society?
- Does the school have any external support for children with special needs?



## APPENDIX C

### Parents of children with special needs (Multikids Academy)

This questionnaire is designed to seek your opinions on the type of quality of education children with special needs receive as compared to those in mainstream schools in Ghana. This is an academic research paper, and as such any information volunteered will be kept confidential and will be used solely for this research paper.

*(Please circle where applicable to signify your choice)*

#### Background Information:

*Children with special needs are children with either a learning, mental or physical disability.*

1. How old is your child/children?

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2. Please specify how many special needs children you have?

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3. What disability does your child have? Please elaborate on the specific type of disability

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4. Please briefly explain why you chose Multikids Academy for your child

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5. How would you describe your child's experience of going to Multikids Academy?

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6. How often do you communicate with your child's teacher at school?

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7. Is the school aware of your child's disability?

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8. How does Multikids Academy compare to previous schools that your child has gone to? (If any)

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9. Have you had the opportunity to explain your child's learning style (s) to his/her teachers at Multikids Academy?

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10. How would you describe the level of your satisfaction regarding your child's/children's current school?

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11. Would you want your child to be in a non-inclusive school?

a. Yes   b. No

(Briefly explain your answer)

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12. How do you identify behaviours in your child that suggests that they are being excluded in school?

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13. Has your child ever discussed any negative experience (s) in school? What was your reaction?

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14. Do you assist your child with work they bring home from school (for example homework, projects)?

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15. Do you pay for extra lessons beyond what is provided at your child's school (for example speech therapy, extra tutoring)?

a. Yes b. No

(Please elaborate)

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16. Is there anything you want to share on this topic (that I failed to ask)?

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**Thank you very much for taking part in this research!**

**Parents of children without special needs**

**This questionnaire is designed to seek your opinions on the type of quality of education children with special needs receive as compared to those in mainstream schools in Ghana. This is an academic research paper, and as such any information volunteered will be kept confidential and will be used solely for this research paper.**

***(Please circle where applicable to signify your choice)***

**Background Information:**

*Children with special needs are children with either a learning, mental or physical disability.*

1. How old is your child/children?

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2. Please briefly explain why you chose Multikids Academy for your child

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3. How would you describe your child's experience at Multikids Academy?

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4. How often do you communicate with your child's teacher at school?

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5. How does this school compare to previous schools that your child has gone to? (If any)

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6. Have you had the opportunity to explain your child's learning style (s) to his/her teacher at Multikids Academy?

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7. How would you describe the level of your satisfaction regarding your child's/children's current school?

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8. How do you identify behaviours in your child that suggests that they are being excluded in school?

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9. Has your child ever discussed any negative experience (s) in school? What was your reaction?

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10. Do you assist your child with work they bring home from school (for example homework, projects)?

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11. Do you pay for extra lessons beyond what is provided at your child's school (for example speech therapy, extra tutoring)?

a. Yes b. No  
(Please elaborate)

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12. Who is normally involved in bringing your child home after school?

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13. How do you feel about your child being in an inclusive school?

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14. Is there anything you want to share on this topic (that I failed to ask)?

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**Thank you very much for taking part in this research!**

**Questions for Teachers of children with special needs**

**This questionnaire is designed to seek your opinions on the low quality of education children with special needs receive as compared to those in mainstream schools in Ghana. This is an academic research paper, and as such any information volunteered will be kept confidential and will be used solely for this research paper.**

*(Please circle where applicable to signify your choice)*

**Background Information:**

*Children with special needs are children with either a learning, mental or physical disability.*

1. What factors in your classroom influence a child's willingness to learn? (Please elaborate)

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2. What is the needed training required to teach at this school?

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3. What teaching strategies do you use to address students' individual learning needs?

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4. How do you cope with challenging behaviours in the classroom?

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5. Have you had successful experiences with special needs children?

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6. What are your feelings about inclusion of children with special needs?

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7. What do inclusive schools do to make their students successful?

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8. Do you have any teaching assistants you work with in your classroom?

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9. What are the necessary qualifications to be a teaching assistant?

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10. What strategies do you use to reach students at different learning levels?

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11. What resources are available to the teachers to enable teaching children with special needs?

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12. In your opinion, what other resources could be acquired, that could help teachers make teaching more efficient?

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13. How do you help other children accept the special needs child?

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14. How often do you give parents feedback on their child's performance in school?

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15. What kind of positive feedback do you give to your students to encourage behaviours and attitudes they exhibit?

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16. What kind of negative feedback do you give to your students to discourage behaviours and attitudes they exhibit?

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17. Does positive feedback from the teacher influence the willingness of a child to want to learn more?

Please explain

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18. Why did you choose to teach at an inclusive school as opposed to a school for only special needs?

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19. What are the major challenges in teaching children with special needs? (Please explain)

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20. Would you prefer teaching children without special needs? (Please elaborate)

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21. Do you think the quality of education received by children with special needs can be compared to those without such needs? (Please elaborate briefly)

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22. How do you identify children whose behavior suggests that they are being excluded in the classroom? (Please elaborate)

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**Thank you very much for taking part in this research!**

**School Principal**

**This Interview is designed to seek your opinions on the low quality of education children with special needs receive as compared to those in mainstream schools in Ghana. This is an academic research paper, and as such any information volunteered will be kept confidential and will be used solely for this research paper.**

**Background Information:**

*Children with special needs are children with either a learning, mental or physical disability.*

- How long have you been the school Principal?
- How many special needs students are at this school?
- Why did the school decide to provide an inclusive education?
- What are the challenges faced as an inclusive school?
- How are children with special needs cared for at this school?
- How do you deal with the problem of discrimination by either peers or teachers?
- Are there any external factors, which could influence the willingness of the child to learn?
- What is the needed training required to be able to teach children with special needs?
- Are there separate facilities for children with special needs (for example separate classes)
- How concerned are parents (of special needs children) regarding their child's progress at school?
- What measures do you implement to further encourage children with special needs to learn and contribute more in the classroom?
- How often do you visit classes with special needs children?
- Is there an age-limit regarding students with special needs that you accept?
- Are there any programs, which help in their transition into the society?
- Does the school have any external support for children with special needs?

**Interview with speech therapist**

- When was this organization started?

- What need were you seeking to address?
- How many schools do you work with?
- What schools?
- Do you also work with individuals?
- Are there any external factors, which could influence the willingness of the child to learn?
- What is the needed training required to be able to teach children at this organization?
- How concerned are parents regarding their child's progress at school?
- What kinds of facilities are used at this organization?
- How is this organization maintained (in terms of who provides the funds and facilities)?
- Do you only work with children who have special needs?
- What strategies do you use to reach students at different levels?
- How is feedback given to parents?
- What are your feelings about inclusion of children with special needs?
- Have you had successful experiences with special needs children?
- What factors in your opinion influence a child's willingness to learn?