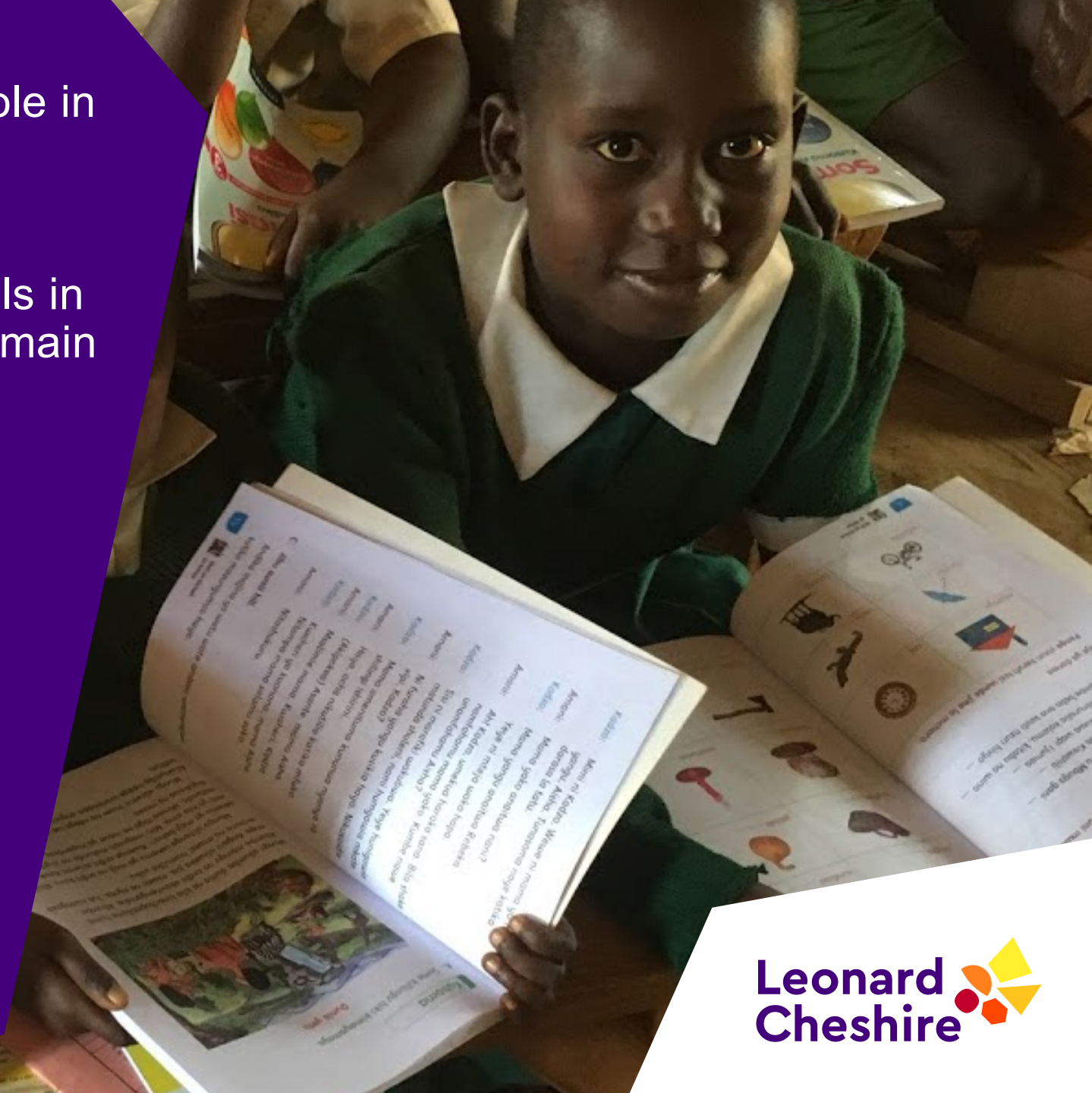


Is daar steeds 'n plek vir spesiale skole in die onderwyssektor of is inklusiewe hoofstroomskole die antwoord?/

Is there still a place for special schools in the education sector or are inclusive main stream schools the answer?

SAOU Symposium/Symposium  
Presentation by Marie Schoeman  
Leonard Cheshire International  
October 2021



# Content of presentation

Situation of children with disabilities globally and in South Africa in 2022

Global directives and trends in 'special education' vs inclusive education and benefits of the latter

Current status of special school provision in South Africa

Policy and systems levers that promote inclusive education in South Africa

Realising a new role for special schools

Implications for special school teachers within a new and exciting future

Curriculum and teacher training

# Situation of Children with Disabilities in South Africa and Globally

- Children with disabilities are **2.5 times more likely to never go to school** than their peers (UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report, 2020)
- During COVID-19 **40% of poor countries did not target learners at risk** in their education response
- In middle to low-income countries more than a third of children with disabilities are **often out of school** (South Africa 500 000, Kenya 400 000, etc.)
- For children with **intellectual disabilities situation is worse** (UNESCO Institute for Statistics & UNICEF, 2015).
- **68%** of countries now have a definition of inclusive education and have introduced policy, in Africa **South Sudan** is the latest to introduce an Inclusive Education Policy.
- **In Europe** Cyprus, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, and Portugal educate more than 80 percent of students with disabilities in inclusive settings.

# Paradigm Shift

## Special Education Model VS Inclusive Education Model

### Special Education Model

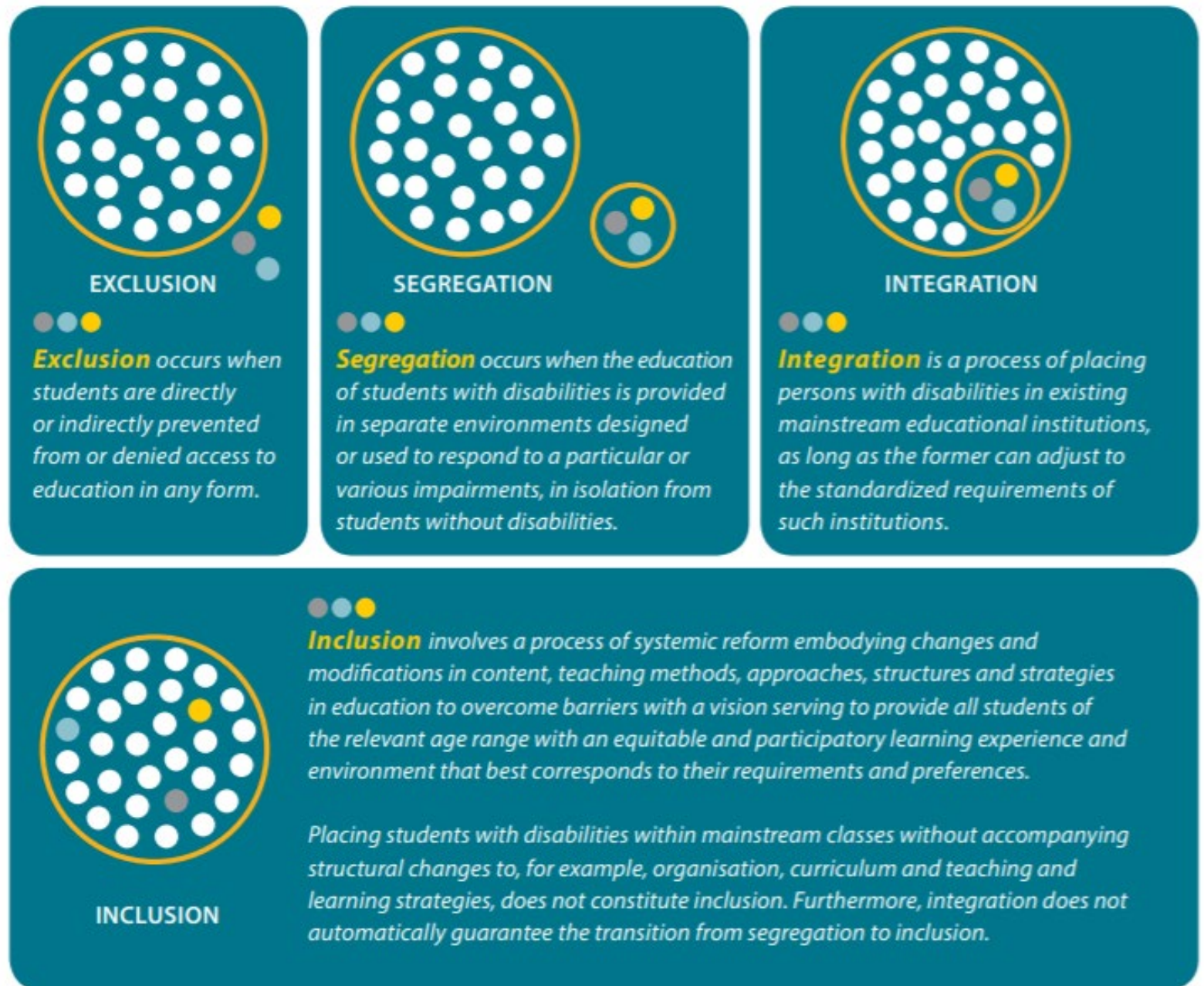
- ❖ Focus on Disability
- ❖ Identify/ diagnose, deficit and disorder ( use of medical language)
- ❖ Focus on treatment
- ❖ Often segregated placement
- ❖ Exclusion and marginalization

**Professor Suzanne Carrington**  
Faculty of Education (Queensland University of Technology, Australia)

### Inclusive Education Model

- ❖ Focus on Diversity
- ❖ Identify learning and social needs
- ❖ Flexible Curriculum and pedagogy to meet all student's needs
- ❖ High expectation for all students
- ❖ Focus on support for learning
- ❖ Fair Assessment

# Where do we stand on the inclusion trajectory?



# Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ratified by SA in 2007)

South African Schools Act (1996) and other critical legislation reinforces the right for children with disabilities to attend their local neighbourhood schools and receive the necessary support

Must have reasonable accommodation as well as individualised support in the general education system.

## **General Comment 4 of 2016**

“No child may be refused admission to an ordinary school on the basis of the severity of disability or the undue hardship that may be caused.”

# Response by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

But in 2018 The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities raised the following concern in their concluding remarks on how we as a country have performed:

- a) The high number of students with disabilities, including girls with disabilities, those with intellectual disabilities or autism and those who are deaf or hard of hearing, who still remain largely outside the school system, the continuing growth in special education schools as opposed to inclusive education, and the lack of safety in school hostels;
- b) Barriers against students with disabilities to access mainstream schools, including discrimination in admissions to school, long distances, poor transportation, a lack of teachers trained in inclusive education, sign language, Braille and Easy Read, a lack of accessible curricula, and negative societal attitudes against the attendance of children with disabilities at regular and inclusive schools;
- c) The lack of information on budgetary allocations for the promotion of inclusive education, and the absence of systematic data collection, disaggregated by sex and type of impairment, on the number of children with disabilities mainstreamed into regular and inclusive school environments and the enrolment and dropout rates of children with disabilities in both mainstream and special schools;
- d) The absence of effective measures to provide reasonable accommodation in the education system, including the absence of sufficient learning materials, especially in remote and rural areas, and of a reporting mechanism for parents and children with disabilities who are denied access to education or reasonable accommodation to ensure accountability.



# **Realities of rural African schools**

## **3000 children with disabilities included in ordinary schools in Nyanza Region of Kenya**

# Research Evidence on Benefits of Inclusive Education

- Multiple longitudinal studies have clearly shown the benefits of inclusive education in:
  - 2 ½ years ahead in expressive language
  - Social skills
  - Academic skills
  - 3 year ahead in reading, writing and literacy

*Buckley, Bird, Sacks, & Archer, 2006; de Graaf & van Hove, 2015; de Graaf, van Hove, & Haveman, 2013*

# Special Olympics Unified Sports; Benefits of Inclusion

- **Benefit 1: Socially inclusive schools become more welcoming to people of all abilities, and there are higher levels of respect for diversity.**
- UCS staff felt that there is more mutual respect for individual differences (e.g., race, culture, etc.) at all levels of the school—student-student, adult-student, adult-adult—and overall norms for tolerance.
- **Benefit 2: Socially inclusive school climates reduce teasing, bullying, and the exclusion of any group of students.**
- 58% of administrators said that being a Unified Champion School reduced bullying.
- **Benefit 3: Students with intellectual disabilities are routinely included in, and feel a part of, all social activities and opportunities.**
- “Unified means coming together as one, being friends with, and including people for who they really are,” says Mark Willson, a Special Olympics Unified partner at Orono High School.
- **Benefit 4: Students who “play unified” gain patience and the ability to compromise.**
- Both young people with and without intellectual disabilities who play sports together and socially interact develop life skills that benefit them long into the future.
- **Benefit 5: Students without disabilities hold more positive attitudes toward their peers with disabilities.**
- Participants in the UCS program are more empathetic and compassionate.

# Learning and Living to Play Together

# Longitudinal evidence from New Brunswick

- All children are able **to be part of their community and develop a sense of belonging** and become better prepared for life in the community as children and adults.
- It provides **better opportunities for learning**. Children with varying abilities are often better motivated when they learn in classes surrounded by other children.
- The **expectations of all the children are higher**. Successful inclusion attempts to develop an individual's strengths and gifts.
- It allows children to work on **individual goals** while being with other students their own age.
- It **encourages the involvement of parents** in the education of their children and the activities of their local schools.
- It fosters a **culture of respect and belonging**. It also provides the opportunity to learn about and accept individual differences.
- It provides all children with **opportunities to develop friendships** with one another. Friendships provide role models and opportunities for growth.

# Current status of special education in South Africa



# Strengthening delivery in special schools

## Special schools to be resource centres

- Introduction of specialisation courses at designated universities
- Strengthening and aligning curriculum for children with severe intellectual disability
- Conditional Grant for Children with Severe to Profound Intellectual Disability and national learning programme
- Occupational curriculum standardised
- Standardisation of provision of assistive technology
- Adapted workbooks
- South African Sign Language Curriculum
- Funding system

# UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report

- **Share expertise and resources**
- The only way to transition to inclusion

Governments should:

- Encourage flexibility in use of specialist resources
- Use resource centres and itinerant teachers



Laws in **a quarter of countries** say that children with disabilities should be educated in **separated settings** – bringing about incremental change

# What is the position of persons with disabilities?

- Global recognition of the voice of persons with disabilities  
**“Nothing about us without us”**
- Role models and advocates
- Holding government and schools accountable
- Acting as resources for schools, e.g. sign language, use of technology
- **“The International Disability Alliance’s vision of inclusive education is incompatible with a system of segregated education.** Therefore, special schools and other segregated settings are to be progressively phased out, with key human resources and knowledge assets converted into support services for inclusion”. (IDA Flagship Report 2020)

# Policy and systems levers that promote inclusive education



# Progress made in inclusive education policy in South Africa

National Inclusive Education Policy since 2001 – first on the continent

Several other policies to support implementation of national policy:

- Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications and Specialisation courses at selected universities
- Norms and Standards for School Infrastructure
- Learner transport policies
- Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
- Guidelines for ICT in Schools and National Transversal Tender for Assistive Technology
- Curriculum Differentiation and National Assessment Policies which allow for differentiated assessment accommodations in exams and assessment
- National programme for children with severe to profound intellectual disability
- Three stream model

# Apply universal design

## Ensure inclusive systems fulfil each learner's potential

- All children should learn from the same flexible, relevant and accessible curriculum
- Textbooks should avoid stereotypes and omissions
- Assessment should allow students to demonstrate learning in various ways



**24%** of text/images in secondary school textbooks in **Punjab, Pakistan** were of women

# Empower the education workforce

All teachers should be prepared to teach all students

- All teacher education should teach about inclusion
- Head teachers should create an inclusive school ethos
- Ensure a diverse education workforce



**1/4** of teachers

reported high need for training on teaching students with special needs

# **Role of teachers in an inclusive system**



# The important role that special school teachers can play in an inclusive education system

## Curriculum Design

- Special education teachers help craft the lessons for inclusive classrooms to ensure that the needs of students with disabilities are considered.
- Teachers must examine students' strengths, weaknesses, interests, and communication methods when crafting lessons.
- Co-develop ISPs with class teacher -help the instructor understand why certain accommodations are needed and how to incorporate them.

## Classroom Instruction

- Many inclusive classrooms are based on a co-teaching model, where both teachers are present all day.
- Others use a push-in model, where special education teachers provide lessons at certain times during the day.
- Help monitor progress on Individual Support Plans and provide any special instructions or supplemental learning materials. Learners require varying levels of individual instruction and assistance, based on their unique needs.
- Teachers might also pull students out of the classroom for one-on-one lessons or sensory activities, or arrange for time with counsellors, speech therapists, dyslexia coaches, and other specialized personnel.
- General and special education teachers might break classes into smaller groups or stations to provide greater engagement opportunities.

# The important role that special school teachers can play in an inclusive education system

## Learning Assessments

- Conduct regular assessments to determine whether students are achieving academic goals. Lessons must be periodically evaluated to determine whether they are sufficiently challenging without overwhelming the students.

## Advocating for Students

- This includes ensuring that all school officials and employees understand the importance of inclusion and how to best implement inclusion in all school activities.
- Communication with parents is also essential for inclusive classroom success.

# Curriculum innovation



# Strengthening good inclusive teaching benefits all learners

In a nutshell, effective classroom practice that

- is based on inclusive pedagogy and
- combines ongoing assessment and evaluation,
- high expectations (European Agency 2003), and
- direct instruction and feedback (Faubert 2012)

significantly contributes to learner success and the realisation of inclusive classrooms.

# How to ensure optimal learning outcomes

- All children can learn
- All children attend age appropriate regular classrooms in their local schools
- All children receive appropriate educational programs
- All children receive a curriculum that is differentiated and meets their learning styles and are relevant to their needs
- All children participate in co-curricular and extracurricular activities
- All children benefit from cooperation, collaboration among home, among school, among community
- Introduce assistive technology to make learning and LTSM accessible and allows for multiple means of presentation and production

# Conclusion

**Mike Oliver said in 2000 at the famous ISEC Conference in Manchester that everyone has a choice what they want to be:**

- **Ostriches**  
Burying their head in the sand and being swept away by the tide;
- **Rubber ducks**  
Linguistic adjusters – bobbing around on the tide of history, changing their words, but not their actions;
- **Surfers**  
Riding the waves to a better place, enjoying the excitement. The incoming tide is a welcome challenge, not a threat.

**Roger Slee said at the same conference:**

- **“Inclusive schooling is a continuing movement against educational, and ultimately, social exclusion”.**

# Resources

- Hehir, T. et al. (2016) [A Summary of the Evidence on Inclusive Education](#). Harvard Graduate School of Education
- International Disability Alliance (2020) [What an Inclusive, Equitable, Quality Education Means to Us](#)
- Deghaye, N (2021) [Disability Support & Accessibility in Mainstream Schools in South Africa](#)
- New Brunswick Association for Community Living (2020) [Best Practices for Inclusion](#)
- Special Olympics (2020) [5 Benefits of Inclusive Education](#)
- Kefallinou, A, Symeonidou, S, Meijer, CJW (2020) [Understanding the value of inclusive education and its implementation: A review of the literature](#)

# New South African Specialised Courses

- UP, Advanced Diploma in Visual Impairment (Distance Education)
- UJ Post Graduate Diploma in Inclusive Education
- Teaching for All, British Council and offered at several South African Universities
- UCT, TEDI MOOCs in several specialisation areas
- All universities have under-graduate and post graduate courses in inclusive education

# Thank you

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