Inclusive education for students with special educational needs across the Asia Pacific

What researchers from 10 diverse jurisdictions reported

Dr Wendi Beamish
Contexts with diverse political priorities, historical & cultural traditions, socio-demographic conditions, administrative configurations, and pedagogical differences

Chapter 12
Beamish, Hay, & Yuen (2022)
Overview

❖ Students with **Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

❖ **Policy-related documents** guiding inclusion

❖ **Implementation challenges** to inclusion

❖ **Recommendations** to advance inclusion
## Students with SEN

A broad array of disabilities, disorders, and other difficulties:

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<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Disabilities</th>
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Policy-related documents

United Nations Conventions and Declarations

❖ **Salamanca Statement** & Framework for Action on Special Needs
UNESCO, 1994
Australia, Maldives, & Singapore

❖ **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**
UN General Assembly, 1989
Australia, Maldives, & Singapore

❖ **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**
UN General Assembly, 2007
Australia, British Columbia, Maldives, Singapore, & South Korea
### Key Acts & Policies

- **Action plans?**

- **Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices scale**
  Item: confident in informing others about laws & policies
  McGarrigle, Beamish, & Hay (2023) findings

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<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Disability Rights-Based Legislation</th>
<th>Requirements for Students with Disabilities</th>
<th>Inclusive Education Policy</th>
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Implementation challenges with recommendations

Dr Wendi Beamish (Griffith University)
Implementation Challenge 1

Inadequate teacher education and training

❖ **All jurisdictions**: lack of adequate initial teacher education and ongoing professional development for practising teachers

❖ **Several jurisdictions**: stressed need for deeper teacher training in areas such as curriculum differentiation and behavioural support


❖ Australian Gov. (2023, p. 9) Priority Reform 1 - beginning teachers unprepared to teach in 5 areas including supporting diverse learners

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**Recommendation 1. Improving teacher preparation & training**

a) That initial teacher education programs commit to producing “work-ready” graduates with the essential attitude, knowledge and competencies for including and teaching students with SEN. The relevant authority in each country should monitor initial teacher education programs for effective inclusive education content.

b) That education systems afford a minimum specified amount of ongoing professional development for classroom teachers and specialist teachers to promote their understanding, efficacy, and practice in including and teaching students with SEN. Additionally, teacher registration bodies (or equivalent) in each country should monitor this ongoing professional development for their teaching workforce.
Implementation Challenge 2

Under-resourcing of mainstream schools

- **British Columbia**: diminishing government funding has led to a reduction in classroom and specialist teachers, increased numbers of students with SEN, and rising student waiting lists at schools.

- **Macao SAR & Maldives**: concerns about the inequitable distribution of resources among schools.

- **Australia**: viewed lack of support for teachers as a resourcing issue.

- Ebersold & Meijer (2016), OECD (2021)

**Recommendation 2. Increasing targeted funding**

That governments and education systems prioritise funding to mainstream schools that are supporting students with SEN and monitor the impact on student outcomes and teaching quality.
Implementation Challenge 3

Policy formulation and implementation issues

❖ Lack of system-level policies
  **Australia**: differences among states
  **South Korea**: insufficient attention to practical action plans for reform

❖ Lack of policies addressing school-level practices
  **Macao SAR**

Recommendation 3. Redressing the policy-to-practice gap

That governments develop robust rights-based policies and action plans focused on equity principles that enable students with SEN to achieve their potential in the mainstream. Additionally, governments should then authorise an independent body to monitor the implementation of these policies at the school level, to prevent policy slippage over time.
Implementation Challenge 4

**Restricted stakeholder engagement**

- **South Korea**: shared sense of responsibility between policy makers and school administrators
- **Japan**: increased collaboration between teaching professionals & associated organisations
- **Macao SAR**: called for
  - all parties involved to be accountable
  - increased parental participation in how inclusion is enacted at school level
- **Australian Gov. (2023), Subban et al. (2023)**

**Recommendation 4. Expanding stakeholder engagement**

That education systems support schools in implementing effective processes for enlisting and maintaining the engagement of all stakeholders (teachers, parents, students, peers, and potential employers) and encouraging their input into the inclusive education model for students with SEN.
Limited local research to inform practice in schools

- Reporting differences
  - **Australia** – scoping review
  - **Japan & South Korea** – published reviews
  - **Hong Kong SAR, Macao SAR, & Singapore** – academic & system level reviews

- 2 Major themes
  - **teacher attitudes, beliefs, & efficacy** regarding inclusion
  - **implementation challenges** relating to inclusive education viewed from different stakeholder perspectives

- Hummel (2018)

Recommendation 5.
Extending the inclusion research agenda

That a partnership be established between researchers and staff in local education systems and schools to establish a needs-based research agenda and enlist broad stakeholder input when undertaking agreed-upon studies. It is also essential that a mechanism be put in place that will enable details of positive approaches found to work well in some schools are disseminated to all other local schools.
Challenges summary

- **All challenges**
  - well-documented in literature
  - significant implications for this student group

- **Teacher preparation & training** is a universal obstacle which urgently needs to be addressed

- **Challenges 1, 2, & 3** Hosshan et al., 2020

- Need to gather more empirical data on **levers for change** in specific countries

## Challenges by Jurisdiction

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<tr>
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<th>Policy formation &amp; implementation issues</th>
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Conclusion

A credible barometer for examining policy formulation and implementation issues for including and educating students with SEN

Contexts with diverse political priorities, historical & cultural traditions, socio-demographic conditions, administrative configurations, and pedagogical differences
Key References


Queries & Comments

Wendi Beamish

w.beamish@griffith.edu.au

Thank you