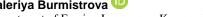# Funding inclusive education for equity and social justice in South African schools

Tsediso Michael Makoelle (iD)
Graduate School of Education, Nazarbayev University, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan
tsediso.makoelle@nu.edu.kz

Valeriya Burmistrova (iD)
Department of Foreign Languages, Karaganda Medical University, Karaganda, Kazakhstan

The implementation of inclusive education in South African schools has resulted in more demands being placed on them to make provision for the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms. This has brought about substantial changes regarding school financing in order to cater for a diverse learner population. This generic qualitative study conducted through interviews with 9 secondary school principals from formerly disadvantaged and advantaged schools, as well as policy document analysis, investigated the current school financing practices for inclusive education in schools aimed at attaining equity and social justice. During this study data were analysed using inductive content analysis. The findings of the study suggest that although provision has been made in terms of the National Norms and Standards for School Funding policy, schools, especially those in previously disadvantaged communities, are not adequately and suitably resourced to implement inclusive education fully.

Keywords: equity; inclusion; inclusive education; school financing; social justice

Introduction
After 1994, the newly elected democratic South African government of national unity, led by the African National Congress, had a huge task and responsibility to redress, transform and integrate several departments of education that were established as a result of the apartheid system into a single department. The establishment of a national department of education had several implications, which included among others the remodelling of school funding, as the funding system at the time differentiated school funding on the basis of race, whereby white learners were financed and resourced four times more than their black counterparts (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2017). The advent of a new educational dispensation was characterised by attempts by the newly established Department of Education to equalise spending and financing across all schools, both in terms of spending on learners as well as on teachers' salaries. The funding model was such that National Treasury would disburse funds to provincial governments according to a method that took into account various socioeconomic factors, which in turn perpetuated disparities in spending between the rich and the poor provinces. On the same note, provinces began distributing more funds to previously disadvantaged schools and as a consequence of decreased funding, formerly advantaged schools began charging school fees to make up the shortfall (Hindle, 2007).

Several efforts to develop a funding model that could redress the past imbalances can be traced back to 1998. Schools were ranked according to the socioeconomic status of the surrounding community, the physical conditions at the school and the population census of the area served by the school (Ogbonnaya & Awuah, 2019). The process of redressing school funding and ensuring equity in schools took place on various levels, for example national norms for the learner–teacher ratio were set to ensure balanced and equitable distribution of teacher resources across schools. Around 2000, the Department sought to analyse equity in the quality of education provided to different schools. International programmes, such as Monitoring Learning Achievements, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study and the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality were applied in conjunction with the South African internal systemic evaluation (standardised testing). These revealed inadequacies regarding numeracy and reading skills among most learners. As a result, in 2003 the national Department of Education concluded that the non-capital (NC) funding needed for textbooks, stationery and other supplies was inadequate. This led to more school quintiles being added to account for different poverty levels in various provinces (Mestry, 2014). The fee exemption model was introduced in 2006 to ensure that poor learners would have free access to schooling. The rural financial incentives scheme for teachers was introduced to encourage teachers to work in rural schools (Hindle, 2007). However, 26 years after the advent of the new educational dispensation the question that remains is: To what extent has the South African education funding model been able to promote equity and social justice in the provision of quality inclusive education?

Context of the Study
The adoption of White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) was the first step by the national Department of Education to introduce inclusive education. As a consequence, schools were classified into three categories, namely, full-service schools, special schools or resource centres and mainstream schools, which informed the funding approach to inclusive education. The different types of schools required different measures for ensuring the inclusion of learners with diverse abilities and needs, including those with special educational needs. For

instance, there are about 715 full-service schools that are expected to support diverse learners with a range of needs. The mainstream schools are to provide support for learners with mild learning barriers, while 464 special schools are to support learners with severe learning barriers. Lately, special schools have been mandated to establish units for autism and profound intellectual disabilities through conditional grants. This is an indication that schools are indeed expected to adapt to the new realities of a diverse learner population. It is therefore important to understand the funding of schools and the extent to which this funding ensures that schools are ready for the eventuality of inclusive education as promulgated in White Paper 6.

Schools are funded according to the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF) policy (Department of Education, 1998, 2008). According to Mestry (2014), this policy was intended to redress the funding flaws of the past education dispensation as well as to equalise funding between previously disadvantaged and advantaged schools and to narrow the gap between rural and urban inequities. Mestry states that there is a general move by different countries to abolish school fees in an effort to make education accessible to children in poor communities. The establishment of no-fee-paying schools was one of the ideals of the NNSSF policy. However, Mestry (2014) cautions that the abolishment of school fees does not necessarily translate into automatic benefits in terms of quality learner performance, school effectiveness, efficiency and so on, considered against factors such as class size and the like. In analysing the impact of the NNSSF policy, Mestry contends that the implementation of this policy has not necessarily resulted in the attainment of social justice and equity in the South African schooling context.

Problem Statement

Funding in previously advantaged schools, despite efforts to increase it, has not been able to address the key challenges that these schools are facing. Therefore, given the renewed mandate of inclusive education as a vehicle to ensure equitable and just provision of education, it is important to understand the impact the funding of schools has on the achievement of this noble idea. In order to explore this issue, the following research question became the guiding compass for the study: Does the current school funding model enable schools to implement and practise inclusive education in order to promote equity and social justice in the provision of quality education?

Therefore, this study makes a valuable theoretical contribution to the conceptual analysis and an understanding of the school funding processes for inclusive education within the South African educational context, and using South Africa as a case, the study furthermore makes theoretical contributions to a body of knowledge about funding schools for inclusive education internationally. In this study, it is argued that the South African model of school funding for inclusive education has not achieved the ideals of inclusion. The model is still heavily need-based and therefore a need arises to transition the school funding model towards a right-based model of funding for inclusive education.

Literature Review
Understanding social justice and inclusion

The concept of social justice is considered from a diversity of perspectives, revealing several studies on social justice reported in the literature. For instance, Bell (1997) emphasises social justice as a process and a goal to ensure equal participation of different groups in society. On the other hand, Murrell (2006) sees social justice as a political process to remove all the barriers and impediments related to the oppression and subjugation of people in society. In defining social justice, Nieuwenhuis (2011:191), quoting the Rawlsian notion of distributive justice, asserts that social justice is regarded as "providing in the first instance a standard whereby the distributive aspects of the basic structure of the society are to be assessed." The notion of social justice could therefore be interpreted as ensuring that all members of a society have equal and fair access to opportunities of livelihood, regardless of their background. Social justice is pursued in many areas, including education, hence the notion of social justice education.

The concept of social justice education is described by Hackman (2005) as education that enables learners to participate fully and be involved in decisions about teaching and learning. Similarly, Carlisle, Jackson and George (2006:57) define "Social Justice Education as the conscious and reflexive blend of content and process intended to enhance equity across multiple social identity groups (e.g. race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability), foster critical perspectives, and promote social action." The intersectionality between social justice and inclusion is the fact that both seek to ensure equity between learners of different backgrounds, including those who would otherwise have been excluded from education.

Therefore, understanding social justice in inclusion is critical. While there are other ways in which social justice is framed for inclusive education, in this study the work of Artiles, Harris-Murri and Rostenberg (2006) seems helpful in illuminating the intersectionality of social justice and inclusion. According to Artiles et al. (2006), inclusion entails the transformation of educational systems to ensure equitable access to education by

all learners. The notion of social justice is disentangled from discourses. Artiles et al. (2006, quoting Dyson, 1999) talk about the discourse of justification and implementation.

The discourse of justification assumes two arguments. Firstly, the discourse of right and ethics analyses the role of the school in reproducing inequalities. It is argued that dual education with special education as a separate component of education prejudices those who are different and elevates the professionals (psychologists and special educators). Secondly, the efficacy discourse critiques the segregated model of special education, holding the position that learners with special educational needs perform better in a non-segregated, less restrictive educative environment.

The discourse of implementation assumes that the transition from a special segregated schooling system to an inclusive one is a political process that may result in a total overhaul of the system. Within an implementation discourse is a pragmatic discourse departing from the premise that the whole school structure needs to undergo organisational reform, i.e. governance structures, school climate, curriculum, pedagogical practices and professional development.

Social justice is viewed in terms of three dichotomous dimensions. The first is individualistic, which is based on the discourse of rights and ethics that pursues a distributive approach. Next is the discourse of libertarianism, based on the view of individual merit. Schools are forced to select learners on the basis of their individual performance. Lastly, the communitarian discourse is derived from the implementation discourse; it departs from an embodiment of the principles of social cohesion as reflected in the values and beliefs held in high esteem by members of the community. In their critique of these discourses, Artiles et al. (2006) propose that if social justice is to be attained through inclusion, the focus should be on reforming and overhauling the entire schooling system.

In this study, it was important to understand various discourses of social justice premised on inclusion because the interpretation of the social justice model has an impact on the model of financing aimed at attaining social justice and inclusion. Various models for financing inclusion exist; it is therefore important to understand the differences and similarities of such models and to locate and make a comparative analysis with the South African approach to financing inclusion.

Models and approaches to financing inclusion
According to Fazekas (2012), across the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries, four main groups of factors are used to determine formulae for inclusive education funding, namely, the number of students

and their grade level, curriculum and educational programme specifications and school characteristics. On the other hand, in their work Banicki and Murphy (2014:3) describe the model of school funding in the United States as pursuing a discourse of "*fairness.*" In elaborating on the notion they refer to as adequacy funding, they postulate that this model is primarily based on four tenets: firstly, economic cost, which means paying attention to the amount of money required for learners and teachers to achieve required targets; secondly, the successful school model, which presupposes that the schools that are meeting the required state performance targets should be financed better; thirdly, the professional judgement model, whereby the decision to fund is based on the opinion of experts who determine the resources needed to support learner achievements; and finally, the effective school model, which is based on the notion of school improvement initiatives or interventions required to support the school in the quest to enhance student learning. This model is grounded in research about pedagogical practices that could advance learner achievements.

On the other hand, according to the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2016:11), the funding of inclusive education has shifted the paradigm from that of "*need-based*" to that of "*right-based.*" The paradigm shift means that need-based funding models tend to focus on the individual rather than the individual in a particular context and in relation to other learners, whereas the right-based model focuses of how the context could protect and nurture an individual learner while maintaining his or her dignity. Ebersold and Meijer (2016) contend that the financing of inclusive education should not be equated only to more funds, as this does not guarantee or automatically mean successful inclusion. They go further to assert that the need-based model of funding is problematic, as it could perpetuate the status quo about segregation and the labelling of learners. They are strongly of the view that a funding model should support the success of inclusion and not constrain it. Ebersold and Meijer (2016, quoting Ebersold, 2008) posit that in South Africa, for example, the development of inclusive education is hindered by public spending on special education (which is 11%) rather than on inclusive education (which is 9%). In his analysis of funding of inclusive education in developing countries, Sibanda (2018) avers that the traditional model of funding whereby special education is funded separately from mainstream education seems to be more expensive than inclusive education.

South African approach to funding inclusion in schools
In South Africa, sections 36 and 43 of the South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa,

1996) give the school governing body (SGB) full control over school finances. SGBs are constituted mainly by parents and the principal and teachers form part of these committees (Makoelle, 2011). The SGB is responsible for developing the school finance policy and leading the process of budgeting and monitoring income and expenses. However, schools are divided into section 21 schools (which have financial autonomy, with a state subsidy being deposited into the school account) and non-section 21 schools (which may only procure a budget from the district and funds are managed at that level). Full-service schools that accommodate learners with a variety of low to moderate barriers to learning and special schools that accommodate learners with severe or high-need barriers receive non-personnel, non-capital (NPNC) funding. The difference in funding between full-service schools and ordinary schools is 10% of their allocation.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE), Republic of South Africa has published draft Guidelines for Resourcing an Inclusive Education System (2018). According to these guidelines, resourcing means the provision of resources to district-based support teams, special schools, full-service schools and ordinary schools on an equitable basis. The guidelines are meant to provide guidance on equitable and efficient distribution and use of infrastructure, NPNC funding according to the provisions of the NNSSF, and national norms for post provisioning and school infrastructure (including learner transport). The guidelines are regarded as a step towards integrating funding between special and ordinary schools. This approach proposes a district centralised service approach whereby the district provides services to schools rather than schools referring learners. The focus of funding is on the level of support needed rather than on the learner's deficiency or disability category. The aim is to have learners supported in the immediately accessible schools in communities rather than being placed elsewhere. The levels of support are differentiated at different types of schools, i.e.

high/intensive level support at special schools/resource centres, moderate support at full-service schools and low support at ordinary schools. The funding at full-service schools will focus on extra personnel, infrastructure and NPNC, including learner transport, while at ordinary schools the focus will be on curriculum differentiation and assistive technology.

In these guidelines it is postulated that the budget will focus on the range, nature and level of support programme services, personnel and resources rather than on individual learners. Special schools will be funded according to the domain of specialisation (at least three should be chosen from a list of 10 domains, i.e. vision, hearing, motor, communication, learning and cognition, neurological and neurodevelopmental impairments, health, behaviour and social skills, skills and vocational education and training, as well as multiple and complex needs).

Methods
Research Approach and Design
This study adopted a qualitative research approach, as the researcher wanted to understand the phenomenon under study from the perspective of the selected participants (White, 2005).

Selection of Participants and Sites
The study took place in nine schools in one of the nine provinces of South Africa. The nine schools were purposefully selected in order to have representation of all categories of schools in the sample. The purpose was to select information-rich cases that could yield in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study (Babbie, 2013). The participants were selected according to the categories of schools they led, i.e. the nine principals who led the nine selected schools were asked to take part in the study. Table 1 presents a summary of details about the number of participants and the financial profiles of the schools.

Table 1 Participants and types of schools

School principal	Category of school	Funding status	Historical status	School fees status
A	Mainstream	Non-section 21	Disadvantaged	Quintile 1 (no fee)
B	Mainstream	Section 21	Disadvantaged	Quintile 3 (no fee)
C	Mainstream	Section 21	Advantaged	Quintile 2
D	Full service	Section 21	Disadvantaged	Quintile 4
E	Full service	Section 21	Disadvantaged	Quintile 4
F	Full service	Section 21	Disadvantaged	Quintile 4
G	Special	Section 21	Disadvantaged	Quintile 4
H	Special	Section 21	Disadvantaged	Quintile 4
I	Special	Section 21	Disadvantaged	Quintile 4

Data Collection
Data were collected through qualitative one-on-one interviews with the participants. According to Babbie (2013:317), a qualitative interview "is an

interaction between an interviewer and a respondent in which the interviewer has [a] general plan of enquiry including the topic to be covered." A semi-structured interview schedule with open-

ended questions was applied. The research questions asked included the following: How would you describe the impact of your school's funding on your school's ability to implement inclusive education? How are you as a school principal and your co-managers and governors involved in determining the funding of your school's needs regarding the implementation of inclusive education? To what extent does the current funding affect the following: provision of curriculum, infrastructure changes, provision of in-service teacher and staff preparation for inclusive education, accumulation of the necessary assistive devices and technological equipment, as well as ensuring inclusion of diverse learners in extracurricular and co-curricular activities? While the respondents were answering and in between the scheduled questions, follow-up questions and questions seeking clarity were asked. The interviews took place according to pre-planned appointments in the offices of the participants after school hours as a strategy to avoid interruptions and disturbances. All interviews were tape-recorded with the permission of participants. The researcher made additional notes regarding non-verbal clues.

Data Analysis
In this study inductive thematic content analysis was adopted to analyse the data. This was thematic in the sense that topics, ideas and patterns of meaning were determined in order to derive themes emerging from data (Babbie, 2013). The data were transcribed and the researcher read and re-read the data to become familiar with them. The analysis started by open coding where the concepts and labels were determined by the researcher (Babbie, 2013). In order to identify the main concepts in the study from the results of open coding, axial coding was applied, i.e. finding connections between open codes to form themes. Themes were then derived from the identified codes.

Trustworthiness
To ensure the credibility of the study, member checking was done with the participants to confirm that the transcripts represented true reflections of their responses. To ensure transferability, the researcher ensured that the sites selected were representative of all categories of public schools in South Africa. The researcher coded and re-coded data several times to ensure the dependability of the study. The confirmability of the study was ensured by reflexivity in part of the research by means of a reflection audit (Krefting, 1994).

Ethical Considerations
In this study, in order to ensure acceptable ethical standards, the participants were informed about the purpose and methods of study and that they had a right to withdraw from the study at any given stage.

All the participants signed the consent forms. The researcher gave participants the assurance that the data collected would be kept confidential and would only be used for the study, hence would not be shared with anyone. Data were stored in a password-protected computer. The names of participants and those of their schools were anonymised in the final presentation of the results of the study.

Findings
Current Funding Model
The analysis from the study suggests that across all categories of schools, despite DBE efforts to ensure funding to all schools, especially disadvantaged schools, none of the principals who participated in the study thought funding was adequate to make a significant impact on inclusive education. A principal of a mainstream section 21 (previously disadvantaged) school said: "*The school was in the first place not built with universal design for learning in mind, therefore a lot of funding is required for restructuring to ensure the environment is less restrictive.*" These sentiments were echoed by the principal of a full-service school from a previously advantaged context when he stated: "*When schools were converted into full-service schools, the department provided funding by basic minimum infrastructure needed but we have since enrolled additional learners and the needs are just more than the funds available.*" On the other hand, one of the principals of the special schools indicated that their school funding was adequate but the fact that the schools have to act as resource centres meant that they have to incur unforeseen expenditure, which may have a negative impact on the quest to support surrounding schools. Therefore, the services provided by resource centres seem to be thinly stretched.

Involvement of Schools in Determining Funding
While schools are included and involved in budgeting for their allocated funds, principals of all categories of schools indicated that the involvement of schools in the distribution of funds by the provincial department of education could be used to more advantage in the process of financing and distributing funds to schools. Asked about the role they played in determining the funding of schools, one of the principals of a full-service, section 21 school said: "*While we are involved with budgeting the funds that are allocated to our schools, we are hardly involved as far as provincial budget in school funding is concerned.*" This concern relating to the lack of involvement of school representatives in the provincial school funding exercise was supported by a principal of a mainstream, non-section 21 school, who averred:

> *The fact that we do own budget is immaterial given the fact that the amount of money allocated to the school has already been pre-determined at a*

higher level of management, therefore the school has to draw a budget based on the allocation.

The implication here is that there is a need for a participatory process regarding school financing at the provincial level of governance.

School Funding and Provision of Curriculum

The study indicates that while principals from all categories of schools are optimistic about the ability of their schools to deliver an inclusive curriculum, more funding may be required to ensure that the curriculum is more accessible. Asked about the impact of funding on curriculum delivery, one of the principals of a full-service school said: "*The provision of quality inclusive curriculum will require enough assistant teachers (tutors) and exploration of alternative modes of teaching other than traditional classroom teaching, e.g. in some instances the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs).*"

This resonated with a response from a principal of a mainstream, section 21 school who stated: "*What makes inclusion successful is when the school has enough support staff because in the delivery of an inclusive curriculum, collaboration is critically important in order to ensure that workload is fairly and equally disturbed to all.*" The implication here is that schools have curriculum-related expenses that are very often not captured because of budgetary constraints.

Funding and School Infrastructural Changes

Analysis of the data shows that while full-service schools and special schools receive additional funding to implement inclusive education, in schools that were built in the past without consideration of the idea of an exclusive relevant structure, the funding usually only addresses the infrastructural backlog and is thus inadequate to address all the infrastructural needs of the school. Asked about how they were dealing with changing buildings and structures to accommodate inclusion, a principal from one of the full-service schools shed light on the matter: "*For us to be able to deal with structural changes needed more funding is required. Our schools were not built with the idea of including children with disabilities. This will require time and money.*" On the other hand, the principal of a previously disadvantaged mainstream school claimed that funding was totally insufficient, saying: "*We do not receive additional 10% on our allocation like full-service schools; as such we are unable to meet all the structural requirements for inclusive education at once.*" The implication is that when schools have an infrastructural backlog, funding is likely to be insufficient to cover the needs of the school in the implementation of inclusive education.

Provision of Teachers and Support Staff

The study has shown that the post-provisioning model for teachers and staff is not necessarily related to funding of different types of schools, but is predetermined by national norms and standards, which means the funding of teachers and staff is out of the control of schools. Therefore, different types of schools put in place their own funding mechanisms to fund additional staff and teachers from school fees and other fundraising endeavours.

Asked about how they finance the hiring of additional teachers and staff, one of the principals of a full-service school answered: "*Most additional staff and teachers are funded from the school fees that we collect from parents.*" On the other hand, a principal of a special school indicated: "*We do also receive donations from businesspeople and international organisations; these are sometimes helpful.*" While both full-service schools and special schools can hire additional teachers and staff, it seems as though mainstream schools, especially non-section 21 ones, cannot do this. For instance, a principal of one of the mainstream schools (non-section 21) highlighted that it was not possible for them because they did not charge school fees. The implication is that the funding of additional staff and teachers to make inclusive education realisable remains a challenge to schools.

Acquisition of Assistive Devices and Supportive Equipment

The study indicates that while special schools/resource centres are expected to provide the necessary support to schools in their immediate environment, it would be useful if the surrounding schools were able to acquire some of the equipment for themselves. Asked about the extent to which their schools can acquire the necessary devices and equipment to support learners with additional needs for learning, one principal of a full-service school stated: "*Yes, we do this out of the additional funding we get from the department but I think it not sufficient.*" The same sentiment was echoed by a principal of a mainstream school who posited: "*We do not have enough funds to purchase supportive equipment; yes, we do get support from district and resource centres but it would be ideal for our school to have this equipment located on site.*" Therefore, while full-service and special schools are given additional funds to purchase equipment, mainstream schools have to do this within their budget allocation. However, in both cases it is apparent that funding is not sufficient.

Funding and Extracurricular Activities

All three types of schools have diverse student bodies that should take part in extracurricular activities such as sport and cultural activities such

as music. The study suggests that while schools have made provision for their students to participate in these activities, most principals of mainstream and full-service schools indicate that the funding to purchase equipment for extracurricular activities, among others for learners with diverse needs, is insufficient. The following extracts support this assertion; for instance, one of the mainstream school principals said:

> *When we admit learners at our school, we have to make sure that they can develop intellectually, emotionally and physically. The situation is that we do not have a variety of activities to engage diverse learners because we lack special resources especially for learners with disabilities and special needs. We just don't have enough funds to purchase relevant equipment.*

This was echoed by one of the principals of a full-service school who postulated: "*We spend most of our fund allocation on teaching and learning. As for extracurricular activities, we do try to use money from school fees but we have also received donations from parents and civil society organisations.*" The implication is that while schools have made provision for learners to participate in extracurricular activities, the funding for those activities is scant and insufficient.

Discussion

Murrell (2006) regards social justice as the removal of barriers, while Nieuwenhuis (2011) regards distributive justice as key for social justice. Similarly, Artiles et al. (2006) suggest that in the removal of barriers, distributive justice intersects with inclusion, as both are at the heart of the process to ensure equity and fairness. Funding inclusive education requires that the model of funding be based on equity and social justice. Although in this study evidence has been found that efforts are being made to ensure that previously disadvantaged schools are given more support to implement inclusive education, a number of factors hinder the current funding model in achieving the ideals of social justice; hence, most participants felt that the current funding model has not led the to the attainment of this goal.

According to the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2016), the funding of inclusive education has to transition from a need-based to a right-based model, as need-based funding focuses on the individual, while right-based funding focuses on the context in which the individual is found. A need-based model is therefore not sustainable. In this study the analysis of data demonstrated that a need-based approach is embedded in the school funding model, as schools have been categorised according to the needs on which they focus. Funding consequently appears insufficient and unsustainable. The result of the current study confirmed the view of Ebersold and Meijer (2016), who contend that the development

of inclusive education in South Africa is hindered by public spending on special education (which is 11%) rather than on inclusive education (which is 9%).

Banicki and Murphy (2014) postulate that inclusive education must be based on the following pillars: costing must take into account funding requirements for teachers and learners to achieve targets; schools that meet these targets must be funded based on performance; school effectiveness and improvement must drive the funding criteria and a team of experts must make professional judgements about funding. The current study has shown that all these principles advocated by Banicki and Murphy (2014) were not taken into account, as the participants lamented the affordability of additional support staff and teachers, as well as the need to provide for extracurricular needs, assistive devices, supportive equipment and technology. While fundraising at schools to hire more staff in the form of teachers is commendable, this model is not sustainable, because it depends on parents' willingness to contribute. While schools have been arranged in such a way that they are supposed to help one another with equipment and assistive devices, it is clear that there are not enough assistive devices, despite district support and involvement. In addition, funding for extracurricular activities is necessary, but insufficient.

According to Mestry (2014), the principal is charged with the responsibility of managing and directing school funds. As a result, the non-involvement of principals in the determination of the funding model creates problems, as schools' needs might be overlooked. The participants in this study were in agreement that funding is predetermined, which is not a desirable state of affairs. There is consequently a need for a participatory approach and stakeholder involvement in the development of the funding model. It is evident from the study that the involvement of principals and schools in determining needs and funding priorities is crucial, as principals and schools are close to the real situation regarding the needs of learners.

Dyson (1999) cautions about the nature of a school and its components in reproducing inequalities and inequities. The fact that infrastructural backlogs are a hindrance to the full practice of inclusion shows that the current funding model falls short of achieving the goals of inclusive education. It is evident that a backlog in infrastructure requires careful planning in terms of admissions and enrolments so that the school does not admit learners who would not be sufficiently catered for in that particular school. Doing this would ensure that the funds allocated to schools can be used judiciously. Updating of infrastructure

requires careful planning when new schools are built.

Conclusion

The funding of schools in South Africa remains a challenge, as the legacy of apartheid continues to influence the current thinking about redressing past inequities and imbalances. The process of restructuring the funding of schools remains a work in progress; it will take time to undo decades of flawed school funding models based on racial discrimination. The implementation of inclusive education adds to the complications regarding school funding. While it would be too ambitious to claim that the study has given all the answers regarding financing inclusive education, it lays the basis for further discussions on the best possible approaches and principles regarding the funding of schools in a way that can promote the ideals of inclusive education.

Authors' Contributions

Professor Tsediso Michael Makoelle conceptualised the study, reviewed literature, collected data and analysed them and produced the first draft manuscript. Professor Valeriya Burmistrova assisted in data analysis, reviewed the draft manuscript, and made both language and technical editing of the final manuscript.

Note

i.   Published under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.

References

Artiles AJ, Harris-Murri N & Rostenberg D 2006. Inclusion as social justice: Critical notes on discourses, assumptions and the road ahead. *Theory into Practice*, 45(3):260–268. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4503_8

Babbie E 2013. *The practice of social research* (13th ed). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Banicki G & Murphy G 2014. Adequacy model for school funding. *Research in Higher Education Journal*, 23:1–24. Available at https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1064119.pdf. Accessed 4 November 2020.

Bell LE 1997. Theoretical foundations for social justice education. In M Adams, LA Bell & P Griffin (eds). *Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook*. London, England: Routledge.

Carlisle LR, Jackson BW & George A 2006. Principles of social justice education: The Social Justice Education in Schools Project. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 39(1):55–64. https://doi.org/10.1080/10665680500478809

Department of Basic Education, Republic of South Africa 2018. *Draft national guidelines for resourcing an inclusive education system*. Pretoria, South Africa: Author.

Department of Education 1998. National norms and standards for school funding. *Government Gazette*, 400(19347), October 12. Available at https://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?filet

icket=ZYYtOiXHTeE%3D&tabid=188&mid=498. Accessed 3 November 2020.

Department of Education 2001. *Education White Paper 6. Special needs education: Building an inclusive education and training system*. Pretoria, South Africa: Author. Available at https://www.vvob.org/files/publicaties/rsa_education_white_paper_6.pdf. Accessed 5 November 2020.

Department of Education, Republic of South Africa 2008. South African Schools Act (84/1996): National Norms and Standards for School Funding: Amended paragraphs in the National Norms and Standards for School Funding. *Government Gazette*, 520(31496), October 8.

Dyson A 1999. Inclusion and inclusions: Theories and discourses in inclusive education. In H Daniels & P Garner (eds). *World Yearbook of Education 1999: Inclusive Education*. London, England: Kogan Page.

Ebersold S & Meijer C 2016. Financing inclusive education: Policy challenges, issues and trends. In A Watkins & C Meijer (eds). *Implementing inclusive education: Issues in bridging the policy-practice gap* (Vol. 8). Bingley, England: Emerald Group Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-363620160000008004

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education 2016. *Financing of inclusive education: Background information report*. Odense, Denmark: Author. Available at https://www.european-gency.org/sites/default/files/Financing%20of%20Inclusive%20Education%20-%20Background%20Information%20Report.pdf. Accessed 5 November 2020.

Fazekas M 2012. *School funding formulas: Review of main characteristics and impacts* (OECD Education Working Papers No. 74). Paris, France: OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/5k993xw27cd3-en

Hackman HW 2005. Five essential components for social justice education. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 38(2):103–109. https://doi.org/10.1080/10665680590935034

Hindle D 2007. The funding and financing of schools in South Africa. *Commonwealth Education Partnerships*, 1:148–150. Available at http://www.cedol.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/148-150-2007.pdf. Accessed 25 May 2020.

Krefting L 1994. Rigor in qualitative research: The assessment of trustworthiness. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 45(3):214–222. https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.45.3.214

Makoelle TM 2011. Exploring practices determining the effectiveness and improvement of secondary schools in the Free State Province. PhD thesis. Pretoria, South Africa: University of South Africa. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tsediso_Makoelle/publication/262058081_EXPLORING_PRACTICES_DETERMINING_THE_EFFECTIVENESS_AND_IMPROVEMENT_OF_SECONDARY_SCHOOLS_IN_THE_FREE_STATE_PROVINCE/links/547708070cf29afed61443a6.pdf. Accessed 4 November 2020.

Mestry R 2014. A critical analysis of the National Norms and Standards for School Funding policy: Implications for social justice and equity in South Africa. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 42(6):851–867. https://doi.org/10.1177/174114321453722

Murrell PC Jr 2006. Toward social justice in urban education: A model of collaborative cultural inquiry in urban schools. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 39(1):81–90.

Nieuwenhuis J 2011. Social justice in education today. *Acta Academica*, 43(1):189–209. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/2899215 10_Social_justice_in_education_today. Accessed 4 November 2020.

Ogbonnaya UI & Awuah FK 2019. Quintile ranking of schools in South Africa and learners' achievement in probability. *Statistics Education Research Journal*, 18(1):106–119.

OECD 2017. *The funding of school education: Connecting resources and learning*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264276147-en

Republic of South Africa 1996. Act No. 84, 1996: South African Schools Act, 1996. *Government Gazette*, 377(17579), November 15.

Sibanda P 2018. The dynamics of the cost and funding of inclusive education in developing countries. *Scientific Journal of Pure and Applied Sciences*, 7(9):816–822. Available at http://www.sjournals.com/index.php/sjpas/article/v iew/233/235. Accessed 3 November 2020.

White CJ 2005. *Research: A practical guide*. Pretoria, South Africa: Ithuthuko Investments.