

The integration of special needs for people living with disabilities into Tanzania's LIS curriculum

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Received: 1 August 2019

Accepted: 18 May 2020

This paper presents the findings of a study that examined the integration of special needs into the Library and Information Science (LIS) curriculum by Tanzania's library schools. The social model of disability by Oliver (1990) underpinned the study, which deployed both quantitative and qualitative research approaches in a survey research design. A questionnaire, an interview and content analysis were used in data gathering. The study found that special needs in the LIS programme are integrated at one university as an elective but not covered as a core subject. The study found that the integration of special needs into the LIS curriculum is important in improving library services. Furthermore, it was established in this study that the integration of special needs into the LIS curriculum faced the challenge of relying on library staff who lacked training in special needs in addition to lacking assistive equipment. In addition, inadequate funding, lack of appropriate information resources, and lack of sensitisation and awareness of universities and government decision-makers were other challenges the study identified. The study recommends that courses for meeting special needs are compulsory for undergraduates as well as postgraduates in LIS, but also in disciplines such as engineering and information technology, so that universally accessible buildings that integrate the needs of people with disabilities are built, so that websites suitable for people with disabilities are designed, and so that librarians select and acquire information resources and assistive equipment related to people with disabilities. The government should supply adequate funds to all universities to support people living with special needs.

Keywords: Curriculum, hearing impairments, special needs, physical impairments, visual impairments, Tanzania