



**Debate on the motion of establishment of specialized schools in the  
Kavango East and West regions**

**BY**

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MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**

**SWAPO PARTY**

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**Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members**

I rise to contribute to this very important motion tabled by Hon. Mbundu of RP on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October 2023.

The motion aims for the establishment of Specialized schools in the Kavango East and West regions to cater to the needs of people with disabilities.

The subject of people with disabilities is a sensitive and critical one, that needs all of our attention and should not be politicized or regionalized.

I concur with Hon. Hengari about doing an inclusive study on the matter. This is an issue that needs an in-depth national investigation to make an informed decision, as the findings from the Demographic Survey Report of 2016 might be outdated now.

I agree with the mover, that there are no specialized schools in the two Kavango regions to cater for children with disabilities. However, the notion that more than 18 000 residents living with disabilities are excluded from decent schooling and care because of their disabilities, is far-fetched.

**Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members,**

The creation of specialised schools would be extremely advantageous to the youths living with disability, who are not catered for by the current status quo. This initiative would essentially give all the young people who are living with disabilities a space that caters to their every need. Such a school would not only cater to the educational needs of these learners, but also their physical and mental needs.

It would include infrastructure that is disabled-friendly and allows learners to move around easily. These schools would also create an environment where learners are shielded from any prejudice that might come from others who do not understand their afflictions.

## **Special units at mainstream schools in the Kavango regions**

I am cognisant of the fact that, at the moment, the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture under the Directorate of Programmes and Quality Assurance introduced Special Units at different schools both in Kavango East and West to accommodate learners with disabilities.

- Andreas Kandjimi Primary School accommodates hearing-impaired learners from grades 1-7, and in 2020, the school introduced Basic Pre- Vocational Skills Courses such as Hair Care, Food Preparation, Fashion and Design.
- Dr. Romanus Kampungu Senior Secondary school, accommodates learners with visual impairment from grade 1-7 and the secondary phase from grade 8-11 in an inclusive setting. The school also accommodate learners with learning and intellectual difficulties.
- In the Kavango West region, Leevi Hakusembe Senior Secondary school introduced a Basic Pre-Vocational Skills course unit for learners with special education needs and disabilities catering for 103 learners.
- Kahenge Special unit, have learning support classes catering for learners with learning difficulties and intellectual impaired, just to mention a few.

### **Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members,**

Challenges faced by the schools with special units, despite the fore mentioned initiatives made by the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture under the Directorate of Programmes and Quality Assurance in introducing Special Units at different schools, I submit to you that there are more challenges that cannot be sufficiently tackled or addressed at those school level.

For example, the infrastructure of the schools and hostels are not disabled-friendly. The care takers and matrons are not trained to handle

learners with special needs, especially the visually and intellectually impaired. There is a lack of training for newly appointed teachers. There are limited or no suitable playgrounds for these children. The classrooms are not disabled-friendly. There also seems to be a lack of necessary teaching and learning materials, just to mention a few.

Another concern that was highlighted is, where do these children go after they complete a phase? How far do they go with their education? What are the success stories of these learners that we can pride ourselves with?

The research which was done by the Department of Special Education at UNAM in collaboration with the Department of Special Education at the University of Oslo, in 2000-2002 on Inclusive Education in Khorixas, Keetmanshoop, Ondangwa East and West and Windhoek. The data collected from teachers showed that they were not comfortable with inclusive education due to the following challenges:

- Lack of teacher expertise,
- lack of teaching materials,
- overcrowded classes,
- constraints on teacher time,
- Lack of hostels.

According to the study done in Khomas and Kunene on low education rates for persons living with disabilities, it was discovered that there are low tertiary qualifications among persons with disabilities. Out of the 284 persons with disabilities surveyed, only 30 persons held certificates, diplomas, degrees or PhD's. The Kunene region was found to have only 2 out of 149 individuals that had tertiary education qualifications. The collection of this data took place from October 2022 to April 2023.

It is clear that person living with disability are still disadvantaged. Achieving the right to an inclusive and quality education for learners

with disabilities remains an unfinished business in all regions, especially Kavango East and West Regions, as both regions do not yet have a fully-fledged special schools that caters for learners with physical impairments and special needs

**Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members,**

In conclusion, these specialised schools that cater for the needs of people living with disabilities are the solution to the problems being faced by children living with disabilities in our country. These schools would solve the challenges being faced by the special units present in some of the mainstream schools. This is a vital step in ensuring access to education for all. The schools would prioritise the well-being of these children and provide them with an environment suited to all their needs. It would create an environment where they are surrounded by their peers, creating an understanding community.

Therefore, Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, Disability is not Inability.

**With this few words and remarks, I thank you.**