Abstract
There is strong evidence that socio-cultural factors largely determine what is seen as competent behaviour. Within western high income countries, driven by the values of utilitarian individualism, the construct of intellectual disability has been largely determined to meet the needs of urban, industrialised societies. In contrast, competence in non-industrialised societies may be more reflected in collaborative, interpersonal problem solving skills such as those found among Nigerian students labelled as intellectually disabled. However, people who are judged to be incompetent or obtrusive in countries deficient in support services, are often neglected and consigned to a life in poorly managed segregated institutions, as is the case in China, Russia and some countries in Eastern Europe. Non western countries that have a long history of a globalised economy, such as Taiwan and Japan also remain committed to segregated institutional provisions for people with an intellectual disability, despite a notional acceptance of inclusionary policies enunciated by the United Nations´ Declarations and Conventions. In this paper is concluded that it must be recognised that the population of people with an intellectual disability, regardless of how the condition is defined and classified, is quite heterogeneous. Their needs are also varied and not at all dissimilar to those of the general population. As developing countries adopt western style consumer-driven economies, there is an extreme danger that they, too, will follow the same trajectory of exclusion and impose the culture of otherness for a group whose contribution to that society will be devalued. Good science is futile unless it benefits all peoples.

Keywords
intellectual disability; developing countries;
challenges