

Support Services and Resources in Regular Primary Schools with Hearing Impaired Learners in Kenya: A Case Study of Kakamega County

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Abstract

Information from Educational Assessment and Resource Centers (2010) in Kakamega County indicates that the number of learners with Hearing Impairment in regular primary schools increased since the inception of Free Primary Education (FPE). For example in 2003 there were 51 learners with HI, 2004 (65), 2005 (73), 2006 (90), 2007 (102), 2008 (133), 2009 (161), and in 2010 there were 206 learners with hearing impairment. There were 121 learners with HI in class three and four. The schools face a number of challenges; among them; communication barrier, negative attitude, inadequate teaching-learning materials and equipment, and inadequate personnel. The purpose of this study was to establish Support services and resources for inclusion of learners with HI in regular primary schools. Objectives of the study were to: establish support services and resources available in regular primary schools to help learners with hearing impairment cope. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population consisted of 121 learners with HI, 1584 hearing learners, 36 teachers and 18 head teachers. Simple random sampling was used to select 480 hearing learners while saturated sampling was used to select 109 learners with HI, 32 teachers and 16 head teachers. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used for data collection. A pilot study was conducted on ten percent of population to determine reliability of instruments using test-retest method, where 12 learners with HI, 144 hearing learners, 4 class teachers and 2 head teachers were selected. The reliability coefficient for hearing learners questionnaire was 0.72, learners with HI questionnaire was 0.81, teachers questionnaire was 0.74. Content validity of the instruments was ascertained by experts from both Special Needs Education and Educational Psychology departments of Maseno University. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages and mean were used to analyze quantitative data. Qualitative data was organized, put into various categories and reported in an ongoing process as themes and sub-themes emerged. The findings revealed that support services and resources used were; SNE teachers (mean of 4.1), and in-service teacher training in SNE (65.6%). It was recommended that schools to employ personnel to teach learners with Hearing Impairment, and put up resource centers. The study is significant because its findings may help teachers, learners with HI, hearing learners, school administration and other education stakeholders to understand support services and resources needed by learners with HI.

Key words: support services, resources, hearing learners, learners with Hearing Impairment (HI), regular primary schools, inclusion, resource personnel and teaching-learning materials and equipment.

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