

ABSTRACT

Access to vocational rehabilitation and job placement are the most promising paths for individuals with intellectual disabilities to realize more productive lives. Despite the crucial role played by vocational rehabilitation for the realization of Vision 2030 and expanding access to education and jobs in the mainstream, learners with intellectual disabilities still have difficulties in exercising the right to vocational rehabilitation. Out of 1.7 million persons with disabilities in Kenya, Nyanza had the highest number of persons with disabilities at 342,412 persons (20.14%) of which 6,849(2%) constituted persons with intellectual disabilities. Western region had 15,840 (3%) persons with intellectual disabilities. Out of 3,278(0.96%) employed persons with disabilities in Nyanza only 66(2%) of persons with intellectual disabilities are in paid employment. The purpose of this study was to establish factors affecting provision of vocational rehabilitation and job placement services for learners with intellectual disabilities in Nyanza region. Objectives of the study were to; establish the relevance of the curriculum, establish the appropriateness of vocational rehabilitation facilities and resources, examine perceptions of parents on the influence of expenditure on provision of vocational rehabilitation services and establish the competence of graduates in vocational skills. The study was guided by a conceptual framework showing input-output relationships. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The study covered 4 Special Schools, 6 Special Units, 30 Teachers, 150 Students, 10 Head teachers and 300 Parents. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 15 teachers, 6 Head teachers and simple random sampling was used to select 160 parents for the sample. Purposive sampling was also used to select 80 Students. Data was collected using questionnaires for head teachers and structured interview for teachers, Interview schedule for parents and behaviour checklist for students. A pilot study was conducted in 4 special schools. Purposive sampling was used to select 4 head teachers' and 15 teachers. The reliability index for head teachers' questionnaire was 0.78. Face validity was established by experts from the Department of Special Needs Education. Quantitative data from structured questionnaires were analyzed through descriptive statistics while qualitative data from interviews were transcribed and systematically organized into emerging themes then reported. The findings of the study indicated that the curriculum for vocational rehabilitation in the special units and special schools was not relevant for the labour- market. The study revealed that the assistive devices used in the special units and special schools were old and not appropriate and trained teachers lack practical vocational skills. Learners with intellectual disabilities were perceived as incapable, deprived of economic and social opportunities to participate fully in community undertakings. The learners were incompetent to compete effectively in the competitive job market. The study recommended that curriculum for learners with intellectual disabilities should be reviewed in terms of its relevance to the job market demand. The government should provide appropriate facilities and adequate teachers who are skilled in theory and practical skills of teaching learners with intellectual disabilities. Community based programs should be enhanced to create awareness on the misconceptions about the potentials and abilities of learners with intellectual disabilities. The study is significant because it provides education stakeholders with information on potential barriers to effective and efficient provision of vocational rehabilitation and job placement services for graduates with intellectual disabilities.