INFLUENCES OF SCHOOLING ON SOCIAL PARTICIPATION
OF YOUNG PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF IN NYERI COUNTY,
CENTRAL PROVINCE, KENYA

BY

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DECLARATION

This is my original work and it has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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ABSTRACT

Having assistive devices per se is not enough to enable young persons who are deaf to participate in mainstream programmes and social life. Devices must be considered together with access to the environment and social milieu that welcomes participation. An integrated solution is required to produce significant enhancement in social participation. No matter how accessible the physical environment is, young persons who are deaf will still be excluded from society unless there are deliberate efforts by the same society to eliminate discrimination. The aim of this study was to investigate the role played by schooling in the lives of young persons who are deaf with regard to levels of social participation. The study attempted to establish values acquired in the schooling process which enhance social participation of young persons who are deaf. The objectives were to:  
Identify the influence of schooling in facilitating access to jobs and prosperity in the job market by young persons who are deaf;  
Establish whether schooling sensitizes young persons who are deaf about social spaces available for them in communities;  
Explore the influence of schooling on young persons who are deaf in navigating social relationships and starting families;  
Explore possible strategies for enhancing educational communication and social participation for young persons who are deaf.  
The study adopted a qualitative design and used life stories captured by way of semi-structured interviews with young persons who were deaf, their significant others and important stakeholders in the community. An observation guide, visual images taken by young persons who were deaf and a focus group discussion employed during analysis of the visual images. Interview questions were open ended. Observations and triggers were used to capture non-verbal communication and additional and in depth information. The study employed purposive and snowball sampling techniques to sample three male and three female young persons who were deaf aged 14-25 years with or without schooling and five significant others. The locale of the study was an informal settlement in Nyeri urban and Nyaribo which is a rural semi-arid site of Nyeri south in Nyeri County, Kenya. Piloting of the study was done in Kiganjo location in Nyeri south. Coding of data was facilitated by Atlas.ti qualitative software package which provided tools that let the researcher locate, code, annotate findings in primary data material, weigh and evaluate their importance and visualize their complex relations. Thematic analysis was employed to interpret findings, utilizing insights from available literature and researcher reflections. The study findings revealed that:  
Social participation by young persons who are deaf is hampered by communication barrier between them and people with hearing. There are few secondary schools for the deaf and this denied young persons who are deaf the opportunity to transit from primary to secondary level. Low levels of schooling of young persons who were deaf were brought about by low parental expectations. Schooling had enhanced social participation for young persons who were deaf. There was a noticeable difference between young persons with schooling and the one who had dropped out of school in terms of personality and job access. The study recommended that young persons who are deaf should be exposed to more courses, encouraged to pursue their career interests by giving them a chance to choose courses that interest them. The government needs to implement the inclusion policy and scale up advocacy and awareness about deafness among communities.