

**VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY  
INTEGRATION OF YOUNG ADULTS WITH MENTAL  
RETARDATION IN KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA**

**BY**

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**DECLARATION**

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

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**DEDICATION**

To my beloved parents the late Mr. Zakayo Makanya and Mrs. Aurelia Wangui who devoted much of their resources to take me to school irrespective of my gender those days. Further, I dedicate it to my husband Daniel Thamaini and my children Elizabeth Wambui, Aurelia Wangui, Jane Muthoni and Anne Njambi.

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**ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

AAMR	American Association on Mental Retardation
CBI	Community-Based Instruction
DIT	Decentralized Industrial Trade Test
FPE	Free Primary Education
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Programme
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
ITP	Individualized Transitional Programme
IVT	Individualized Vocational Programme
KISE	Kenya Institute of Special Education
RoK	Republic of Kenya
SNE	Special Needs Education
TIQET	Total Integrated Quality Education and Training
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
YAWMR	Young Adults with Mental Retardation

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate how vocational education and transitional services offered in vocational institutions helped young adults with mental retardation attain full community integration. The study objectives included to; investigate the extent to which vocational education equip young adults with mental retardation with skills of community adjustment and identify different avenues through which they were integrated in the community. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative approach. Quantitative analysis was applied for the purpose of clarification, strengthening, explaining and supporting qualitative information. The research design was a descriptive case study. The target population comprised all young adults with mental retardation in Kiambu County. The sample of the study included 10 young adults with mental retardation. Other respondents were a headteacher/employer, 2 vocational teachers and 9 parents. Data collection was done by use of interview guides, note taking, audio recording and observation checklist. The actual data collection took 30 days. Data from interviews and observation text were coded and codes created according to the themes of the study. Qualitative data analysis was by use of Atlas ti software computer programme. Quantitative data analyses were manually through tallying the frequency of segmented responses. The study established that community participation of young adults with mental retardation is very minimal. Further, the findings revealed that in as much as young adults with mental retardation were offered vocational skills in the special school, what they were engaged in was not relevant to the skills they trained in. This led to some of them disliking the kind of jobs they had as avenues of community integration. It was also found that there lacked a well-specified vocational curriculum for persons with mental retardation. The societal negative attitude towards young adults with mental retardation participation was found to be the major barrier to their community integration. To address these challenges, it was recommended that special educators and trainers should be involved in policy- making so as to put in place what is needed as far as persons with mental retardation are concerned in areas of vocational training and their community integration. It was also recommended that the government through the Kenya Institute of Education should implement special education vocational curriculum in order to facilitate job market- oriented courses to these individuals with mental retardation. Finally, the researcher is of the opinion that the government should empower young adults with mental retardation with kits to start their self-reliant businesses to facilitate effective community integration.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter consists of the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations and limitations, assumptions, theoretical and conceptual framework and operational definitions of terms.

#### **1.2 Background to the Study**

According to American Association of Mental Retardation (AAMR) of 2000, Mental retardation refers to significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behaviour, and manifested during the development period. AAMR defines adaptive behaviour as the collection of conceptual, social and practical skills that have been learned by people in order to function in their everyday society (Gargiulo, 2009).

Graduates with mental retardation leave school systems each year. They are often unable to obtain employment, isolated within the community and do not usually have access to the service programmes necessary to support their participation in the community. In many cases, students leave school with virtually no meaningful opportunities and options (McDonnell, Buckner & Ferguson, 1996). The most important adjustment in life is the transition from school environment into the post-school involvement (McDonnell et al., 1996).

This transition experience is not easy for the young adults who are mentally retarded because of severity of disability or constraints placed upon them by limited curriculum and inadequate transitional services offered in vocational institutions.

Compared to their non-disabled peers, persons with mental retardation experience lower rates of participation in the community and largely depend on families and significant others. Furthermore compared to other categories of disability, persons with mental retardation characteristically lag behind on matters concerning community participation. This is mainly because they have substantial limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive skills. This means that, they have limitations in adaptive skills which may include communication, self-care, home living, socio- skills, self-direction, health and safety, functional academics, work and leisure (Gargiulo, 2009). Intellectual limitations lead to their inability to transfer the same activities into different tasks, understand what is said and follow instructions. Persons with mental retardation also fail to develop social-emotional relationships and exhibit difficulties in paying attention or focusing on an activity to its completion (Gargiulo, 2009). They, therefore, need vocational education that is functional- oriented in that the individuals would attain skills like carpentry, dress-making, pottery, basketry and metalwork among others. In addition, they need transitional services such as Individualized Transitional Plans (ITP) for their community integration, counseling, career guidance and job training services to enhance satisfactory living in the community. This was supported

by articles 19, 26, 27 and 28 of UNCRPD (2008) in USA which advocates living independently, full participation, work and employment as essential to ensure full community integration of persons with disabilities among whom are persons with mental retardation. These rights fulfillment formed important concern to the study.

In developed countries like USA, Legislation has made it unlawful to discriminate against persons with disabilities in employment. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 in USA as amended in 1974 makes it possible for the handicapped to enroll in regular vocational programmes and to receive the necessary support services to overcome barriers caused by disabilities (McDonnell et al., 1996). Global research suggest that education and community service system have made limited progress to adequately support the transition of students with mental retardation from school to community life (Taylor, 1997).

In Africa, South Africa is one of the countries where persons with disabilities are recognized to have equal rights with everyone else. Hence Naicker (1997) argue that in South Africa persons with disabilities are members of society and have the right to remain within their local communities; therefore, the reconstruction and development of society should recognize and address the developmental needs of persons with disabilities including those with mental retardation.

According to Ndurumo (1993), Special Needs Education in Kenya started at the end of the First World War. Many soldiers who were returning from the Second World War had been disabled. Hence, needed rehabilitation services such as vocational training, guidance and counseling among others. Special schools for persons with mental retardation developed from 1940s. The first school for persons with mental retardation was St. Nicholas special school (presently Jakaranda) which was established in 1948. Since then, Kenya has endeavored to offer both segregated and integrated special needs education. Integration was introduced in the mid 1970s following the global trends of educating persons with disabilities. In this regard, special units for learners with mental retardation were more than other disabilities in Kenya. Presently, special needs education for persons with mental retardation is provided in programmes such as; special schools, special units, integrated regular schools, small homes and vocational institutions. Vocational training programmes offering training to persons with mental retardation include; Jakaranda, Mathare and Variety Valley in Nairobi among others. Skills taught in those institutions include; ornament-making, poultry, leather work, agriculture, carpentry, knitting, tailoring and survival skills among others. According to the task force of 2003, the Ministry of Education through Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) has developed draft syllabuses for persons with mental retardation in areas such as language and communication, mathematics, perceptual training, activities of daily living, and pre-vocational skills to enhance the learning of persons with mental retardation (RoK, 2003). The fact

that there were pre-vocational skills, it was expected that there was curriculum for vocational skills.

Since independence in 1963, Kenya has been putting in place policies and frameworks on special education. The Ngala Mwendwa Committee (RoK, 1964) was appointed by the government to discuss care and rehabilitation of children with disabilities. The Sessional Paper No. 5 of 1968 called for the building of the first rehabilitation centre in Nairobi and the trainees were given a toolkit to start their own businesses for self-reliance (RoK, 1999). This excluded persons with mental retardation and considered only those with hearing impairment and the physically handicapped. The Total Integration Quality Education and Training (TIQET) commission calls for specialized services and programmes to effectively cope with the required academic, social and emotional needs of persons with disabilities inclusive of those with mental retardation (RoK, 1999).

Persons with Disabilities Act (RoK, 2003) call for equal opportunities in obtaining employment and participation in everyday activities within their communities. The Special Needs Education Policy (RoK, 2009) also emphasizes on participation and involvement of learners with special needs in socio-economic issues and in decision-making on matters affecting them directly or indirectly. Young adults with mental retardation were expected to fit in their environment with non-disabled counterparts. This study examined whether this is happening in Kenya.

Despite the effort above, the First Medium Term Plan 2008-2010 (RoK, 2008) and Kenya Vision 2030 (RoK, 2007) report is that the problem of integrating students with special needs has not been adequately addressed at post-school level. The plan estimated the integrated number as 28,885 out of 1.8 million school-going persons with disabilities (RoK, 2008). However, this number did not specify the data of individuals with mental retardation. The preliminary result of 2009 in Kenya projected that there were 38.6 million persons in the country, out of which 1,330,312 were persons with disabilities. Amongst them were 136,093 persons with mental retardation. Kiambu County had 5,120 persons with mental retardation. Thika East division where Maria Magdalene vocational institution is situated had a total of 702 persons with mental retardation. This included 385 male and 317 female (RoK, 2010).

Studies conducted in Kenya are limited as pertains to community integration of persons with mental retardation. They are geared towards problems faced by teachers teaching persons with mental retardation, assessment and placement (Nyakondo, 2000; Kihoro, 2010). As much as the researchers are interested in what is offered in schools, it should also be noted that what these persons do after school is most important as far as community living is concerned. The role of education is to equip young adults with mental retardation with skills that will lead to their community adjustment once they are re-integrated after school. However, the society quite often looks at the disabling conditions and fails to emphasize on the strength of personhood which should not be the case. Education offered at vocational institutions

should aim at functional vocational skills and transitional services that aim at integrating persons with mental retardation in the society where they will be engaged in productive activities. The researcher explored this in Kiambu County.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

There are numerous young adults with mental retardation who after schooling go back to the community having stayed in school for 20 years or more (Taylor, 1997). As a result, adjusting back to community life becomes difficult since they had been conditioned to an institutional life some up to decades. Despite the fact that skills of community adjustment are taught in vocational institutions, the extent to which these skills help persons with mental retardation participate in their community was unknown. Lack of these skills led to dependency on family members and caregivers. They need skills that empowers and equips them with community adjustment living. Anything short of this would make them more dependent in adulthood (Kamere, 2004).

Studies conducted on persons with mental retardation in Kenya looked at problems facing teachers teaching persons with mental retardation and assessment and placement (Nyakondo, 2000; Kihoro, 2010). However, none of the studies in Kenya examined community integration of young adults with mental retardation. Globally, a few studies had been done on community integration of young adults with mental retardation employing a quantitative approach (Kreamer & Blacher, 2001, Kweku, 2000; Odei, 2004). Kreamer and Blacher's (2001) study results revealed that; schools were providing a variety

of instruction in the area of transition; parents' ideal views of vocational outcomes were not always consistent with their realistic views; for students who had exited the school system, majority (54%) were working in segregated environments and that families were very much involved in the transition programming of their sons and daughters. The researcher in this study sought to use both qualitative and quantitative approach to find out the extent to which young adults with mental retardation were integrated in the community in Kenyan situation. The major question was, do vocational education and transitional services offered in vocational institutions equip young adults with mental retardation with relevant skills for effective community living and work in Kiambu County, Kenya?

### **1.3.1 Purpose of the Study**

This study investigated the extent to which vocational education and transitional services offered in vocational institutions help young adults with mental retardation attain full community integration. By examining these variables of community integration of young adults with mental retardation, the study sought to inform policy-makers, parents, educators and the entire community to plan for transitional intervention of persons with mental retardation. It also sought to enrich the research community with a new area to venture in.

#### **1.4 Objectives**

The objectives of this study were to:

- i. Examine how teachers identified and classified persons with mental retardation in Kiambu County.
- ii. Investigate the extent to which vocational education offered in vocational institutions equip Young Adults with Mental Retardation (YAWMR) with skills of community adjustment in Kiambu County.
- iii. Investigate the effectiveness of transition services and follow-up programmes in helping YAWMR transit from vocational institutions to community integration in Kiambu County.
- iv. Identify different avenues through which YAWMR are integrated in the community for social and economic aspects in Kiambu County.
- v. Establish barriers to community integration of YAWMR in Kiambu County.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated for the study:

- (i) How do teachers identify and classify persons with mental retardation in Kiambu County.
- (ii) How has vocational education offered in vocational institutions to YAWMR helped them to adjust in the community in Kiambu County?
- (iii) How effective are transitional services and follow-up programmes in facilitating YAWMR's community integration in Kiambu County?
- (iv) What avenues are there for YAWMR community integration in Kiambu County?

- (v) What barriers hinder YAWMR community integration in Kiambu County?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Realizing that the status of persons with mental retardation in our immediate society and offering education of life is vital, the researcher anticipated that the findings of the study would assist in several ways: vocational curriculum developed for persons with mental retardation could be made community living-oriented by the curriculum developers. Parents and the entire community could be informed about persons with mental retardation and the importance of integrating them in their community. The study could inform policy-makers about persons with mental retardation and the need for their societal integration. Employers could be made aware of this group of the society and the need to offer them jobs. Local governance could also be made aware of this needy group in order to account for their self-reliance activities. The research could also benefit the research community with a new area that calls for more research.

## **1.7 Delimitations and Limitations**

### **1.7.1 Delimitations**

The study looked at both male and female young adults between 20 and 40 years who had transited from school to community integration. The study did not include other disabilities and was specifically organized for the young adults with mental retardation. Young adults were the researcher's concern

because most of them graduate from vocational institutions at the age of twenty years and above.

### **1.7.2 Limitations**

The researcher experienced several limitations along the study process: Negative attitudes towards disability hindered most respondents' participation. For example, parents feeling that their children are meant for lifetime dependency. Snowballing of respondents was problematic in that most persons with mental retardation lacked expressive skills and could not know the whereabouts of their colleagues after school. The researcher therefore relied on parents and the vocational teachers for more information on this matter.

### **1.8 Assumptions of the Study**

The researcher assumed that young adults with mental retardation received education for community adjustment in vocational institutions before they transited to community life. Another assumption was that the headteacher and teachers were willing to give the number of graduates who may have graduated from the institution for the last five years. Further assumption was that parents were willing to give information about their children who were mentally retarded even if the disability stigma surrounded them. Finally, the researcher assumed that employers could allow for observation schedules in their place of work as the workers continue their daily activities including persons with mental retardation.

## **1.9 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

### **1.9.1 Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by Halpern's model (1985) of transition services. This model emphasizes that different aspects of a student's transition to secondary life must include: Education programmes designed to prepare students to live and work in the community. Post-school services that could allow each individual to develop and achieve a lifestyle that reflects his or her own needs and preferences and, a coordinated system of planning that could allow educational and community service agencies to work collaboratively to achieve the post-school goals of each student. Without each of these components in place, students and their families can face uncertain outcomes after schooling (McDonnell et al., 1996).

The first important components of Halpern's model are the areas of adult life that are critical to community adjustments. These areas include employment, a residential environment, social and interpersonal relationship. Halpern's argument is that schools must comprehensively address all the areas if they were going to succeed in supporting students' transition to community life. Consequently, transitional services must be designed to address all areas of community adjustment. The school programme provides the foundation for successful transition to community life. The school's role was to provide the training and support necessary to allow the students and their families to achieve their own post- school goals and objectives (McDonnell et al., 1996).

The second component of Halpern's model is the type of support (or services) that is necessary for a student to move smoothly and successfully from school into community life. He perceives of three possible avenues: Students can enter community life with assistance and support from the generic services available to all persons. This includes counseling and advisory services provided by the school or community service programmes available to individuals without disabilities (for example, job services). It also includes the support that students receive from friends and family.

Further, students can enter community life with time-limited support. In this situation, a community agency may provide temporary support for the students. Such services include post-school vocational training programmes designed to place the individual in an entry level job or temporary support to assist the individual to get his or her apartment. They also can make transition into community with ongoing support. In this situation, students receive 'life-long' support in facilitating their adjustment to community life. The intensity of this support will significantly vary based on the needs and desires of a particular student. It is important to understand that these three avenues are not only often mutually exclusive; students must tap levels of service and support to make a successful transition to community life. In this study, job training and follow-up programmes for persons with mental retardation were an example of ongoing support.

The third Halpern's component argues that to effectively prepare students for community life, schools must use the Individualized Education Programme

(IEP) as a means to develop educational experiences that could meet each student's post-school needs and a mechanism to promote collaboration between educational and community service programmes. IDEA of 1990 through PL 101-476-in the Education of Handicapped Children Act Amendments provides details about expectations of programmes that serve adolescents and young adults with disabilities through age 21 who are in school or have recently left school. It stresses the importance of vocational and life skills for these individuals and emphasizes that transitional services be provided throughout the school years. Thus, an Individualized Transitional Programme (ITP) is a facet of the IEP (Smith, Davis, Clarke & Mims, 2000). In most cases, the ITP supplemented and complemented the school-based IEP.

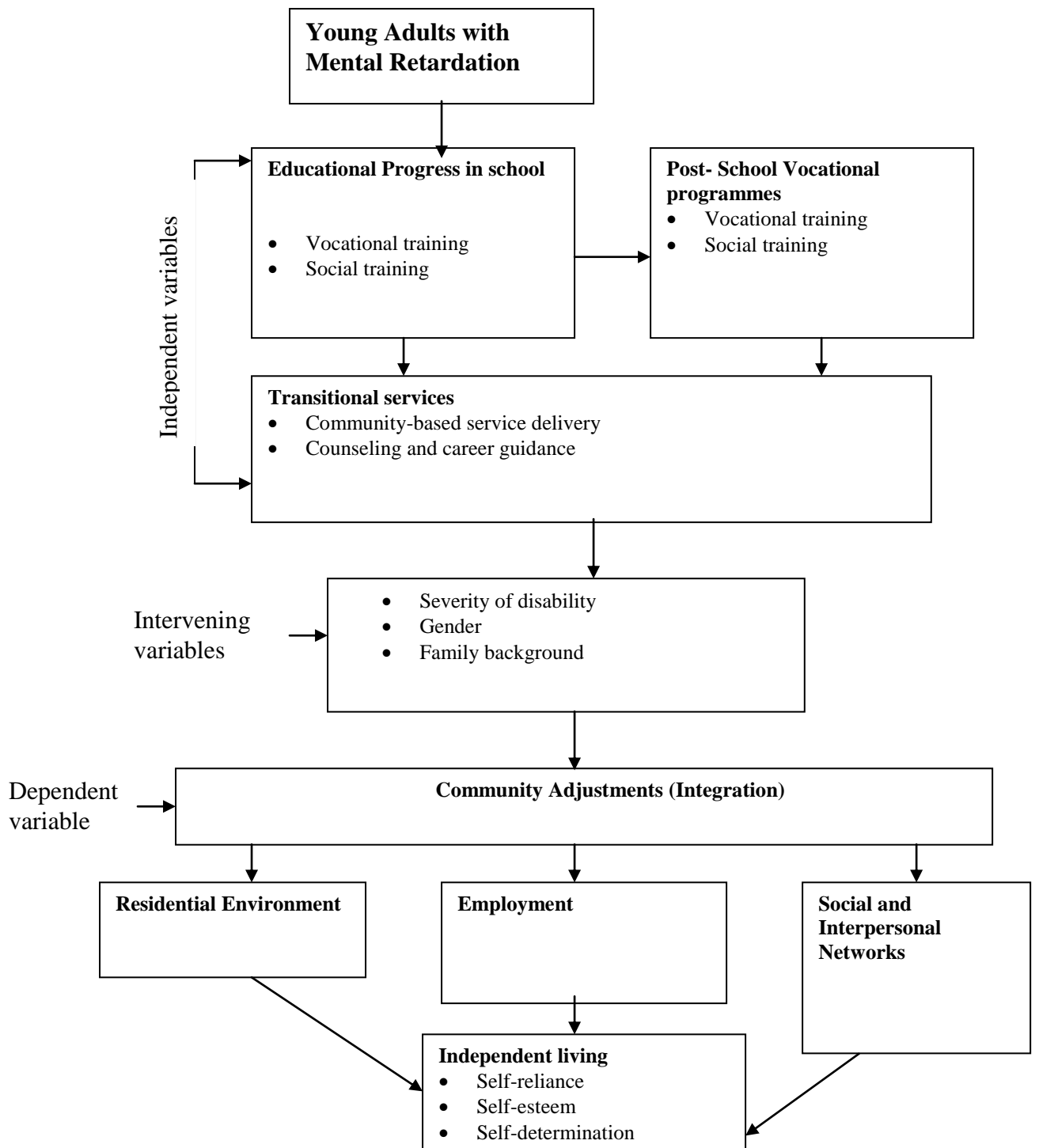
According to Smith et al., (2000), while the IEP describes the educational goals and objectives that a student should achieve during a school year, the ITP addresses the skills and the supportive services required in the future (e.g. being able to shop, create leisure time, choices and co-operate with co-workers). An ITP should reflect the goals and objects that ensure that the individual can function on the job, at home and in the community. The outcomes of ITP are integrated employment, community living, citizenship, involvement, personal autonomy and life satisfaction (Smith *et al.*, 2000). Since ITP is the last educational opportunity a person with mental retardation receives before assuming responsibility of adulthood, educators should consider carefully when designing a student's ITP.

On the other hand, students who go through the post-school vocational programmes should be prepared in the same manner through Individualized Vocational Programmes (IVP). IVPs curriculum should cover money management, independent travel from home to work as well as social interactions. In all those programmes involving family members is very vital. The decision that the students and their families make in the transition process includes not only where the student work and live but how the student is supported in achieving these outcomes. According to Halpern, school programmes should comprehensively address the community adjustment needs of the students. This model is very applicable to persons with mental retardation whose education is basically functional curriculum, vocational skills, and transition guidance services. The model reflects community adjustment needs of the students such as residential environment, employment and social interpersonal networking. These needs fulfillment would facilitate to community livelihood of young adults with mental retardation in the community.

## **1.9.2 Conceptual Framework for Transition and Community**

### **Integration Services**

Education process and transition enhancing processes are both needed to ensure better outcomes in the lives of persons with mental retardation. As the model suggest, the quality of our lives is multidimensional. Implementing the concept would require a deep commitment and a sustained effort on the part of all parties involved in the transition and integration processes as shown in Figure 1.1.



**Figure 1.1: Halpern's model of transition services (1985) modified for the study**

This conceptual framework is based on Halpern's model of transitional services. The researcher however adapted it to accommodate education

progress of persons with mental retardation. The conceptual framework shows that for a student to be integrated fully in his or her community, the kind of education received in schools must address the community adjustment needs. The study used 3 Halpern's avenues of community integration: generic services which in the framework are referred to as education progress, time-limited support indicated as post-school vocational programmes and ongoing support being referred to as Transitional Services.

There has to be a procedure for a person with mental retardation in vocational institutions to attain a level of independent living. A student needs to receive vocational skills and transitional services which are vital for community adjustment. When formal academics of persons with mental retardation are over, prevocational skills precede vocational skills. An IEP is developed for each learner. In preparation of community adjustment, transitional services are offered such as career guidance and counseling. On the other hand, a student may fail to gain the necessary skills in school. Such a person would need further training in a post-school programme; vocational training, social training and individualized vocational plan are emphasized.

Further, transitional services would be required and the person may adjust to community life in terms of supported employment, full employment, or self-employment and other social activities. Likewise, a student may have acquired just daily living skills and live with the family after school. He or she may live independently through owning properties. Interpersonal interaction adds to the value of self-esteem. This is fulfillment of learners' needs in accessing

interest, transport facilities, civil rights, e.g. rights to inheritance and legal justice among others. All this lead to community integration of YAWMR hence, the relevance of the model to this study.

However, intervening variables have to be dealt with first to allow smooth transition. Such intervening variables include disability severity, gender, and family background among others. Where the disability is severe, the inability to perform is high. Male and female course perception may prevent a person from joining the appropriate course trade. For instance, a female may be perceived abnormal in masonry by the society or a male may look odd in saloons attending to women hair styles. Poor families are surrounded by disability stigma and are isolated in the society. They therefore withdraw from trying anything for their children including failing to educate them even when there is free primary education (Kamere, 2004).

### **1.10 Operational Definition of Terms**

**Adaptive behaviour scale:** This is the tool used to measure typical performance of individuals with mental retardation in meeting the expectations of their various environments including vocational skills.

**Community integration:** Involving persons with mental retardation in all the community activities, depending on individual's capability.

**Functional curriculum:** Is a curriculum that instructs learners with mental retardation in the life skills they require for successful daily living and prepares for those situations and environments they will encounter upon leaving school.

**Graduates:** In this study, referred to young adults with mental retardation who have exited from school to community integration. After basic academics in special schools and units for persons with mental retardation, they move to pre-vocational level, vocational level and finally job placement or self-reliant life.

**Independent living:** When a young adult with mental retardation is able to support one-self without depending on family members.

**Secondary life:** In this study, secondary life meant life after school- based or post-school vocational training.

**Self-determination:** This is the ability of individuals with mental retardation to live their lives as they chose, consistent with their own values, preferences and abilities.

**Transition services:** Focus on planning educational services and supports for individuals with mental retardation who were moving from one level of education to another, such as from vocational institutions to community integration.

**Vocational training:** These are practical skills offered to individuals with mental retardation to prepare them for community living. Such included; carpentry, weaving, basketry, crafting and metalwork, among others.

**Workshop:** In this study, workshop refers to physical rooms set aside for manual vocational skills, including; carpentry, masonry, weaving and dress-making, among others.

### **1.11 Summary**

This chapter entailed; background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, significance of the study, delimitation and limitation of the study, assumptions of the study, theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study. This laid an extensive basis for literature review in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviewed related literature on the following sub-headings: Identification and classification of mental retardation, curriculum for persons with mental retardation, transitional services, community integration avenues and barriers to community integration.

#### 2.2 Identification and classification of Mental Retardation

In traditional classification systems, individuals with mental retardation are grouped based on the extent of their cognitive impairment as follows: Mild mental retardation IQ = 55 – 69; moderate mental retardation IQ = 40-54; severe mental retardation IQ = 25 – 39; profound mental retardation IQ = below 25. The most recent varied test to measure IQ is WISC-IV Wechsler of 2003 that comprises a full- scale of IQ as well as four composite scores; verbal comprehension, perceptual, reasoning, working memory and processing speed (Hallahan, Kauffman & Pullen, 2009).

AAMR adaptive behaviour scale-school (Lambert, Nihira & Leland, 1993 in Heward, 2006)) assesses independent functioning and daily living skills while AAMR adaptive behaviour scale-residential and community by the same people measure persons with mental retardation residential and community integration. However, Gargiulo (2009) argues that it is not always easy to assess adaptive behaviour but it is usually measured by direct observation, structured interviews or standardized scales.

A student is identified as having mental retardation if his/her IQ scores places him at approximately 2 standard deviations or more below the mean or average score of 100. Gargiulo (2009) emphasizes that an IQ score is not the sole indicator of an individual's ability, nor is it the measure of the person's worth. However, the AAMR of 2002 proposes an alternative classification system based on the levels of support individuals with mental retardation may need (Gargiulo, 2009). These include;

**Intermittent support:** The person does not always need the support but rather needs short-term support especially during lifespan transitions like job loss or acute medical crises.

**Limited support:** The person's intensity of support characterized by consistency over time and may require fewer staff members and cost less. Such levels of support are time-limited employment, training or transitional support during the school to adult life period.

**Extensive support:** These are characterized by regular involvement (e.g. daily). In at least some environment such as work or home or may be long-term home living support.

**Pervasive support:** This typically involves more staff members to provide a potential life-sustaining nature. However, the above systems are used by very few states in America (Gargiulo, 2009). The researcher's question is what tools are vocational teachers using to determine readiness for transition to community integration of young adults with mental retardation?

### **2.3 Curriculum for Persons with Mental Retardation**

According to Heward (2006), several approaches should be used to enable a person with mental retardation acquire the necessary education. These approaches include: Curriculum goals, functional curriculum, and community living skills. Identifying functional curriculum goals for students with mental retardation has become a major priority for special educators (Heward, 2006). Community living skills are also important in preparing persons with mental retardation to acquire such skills as; development and maintenance, home-making and community life, vocational, leisure, travel, job placement and self-determination. Gargiulo (2006) further emphasizes that education provided to learners with mental retardation must be functional and preparing them with skills to live and work in their immediate communities. Sifuna and Sawamura (2008) posit that strengthened development of communities should be based on the qualitative growth of individuals for the community where persons with mental retardation are included rather than quantitative expansion of education. Further, Friend (2008) emphasizes that students with mental retardation should access the same sets of services in the same settings as other students without disabilities. Friend emphasizes full integration to community life.

TIQET (RoK, 1999) recommends that: The curriculum for children who are mentally retarded needs to emphasize some academic subjects, self-help skills, community living, and vocational skills. The commission further state that persons with mental retardation should be fully integrated in their communities. Republic of Kenya (2003) on Special Needs Education (SNE)

Task Force reports that very few special schools offered vocational training programmes.

A study by Nyakondo (2000) on problems faced by teachers teaching persons with mental retardation doubts the curriculum for social skills as far as promoting integration of persons with mental retardation into the community in which they find themselves is concerned. He further emphasizes that persons with mental retardation should be given a chance to overcome their handicaps in order to facilitate their integration into the rest of society. According to Nyakondo, vocational rehabilitation is vital for all persons with disabilities including those with mental retardation. However, he cites that many vocational institutions cater for other disabilities overlooking those with mental retardation, thus limiting their community integration.

#### **2.4 Transitional Services**

Transition services are planned educational and support services for individuals with special needs who are moving from one level of education to another such as from vocational institutions to community integration. Transitional services include transition assessment process, job training and follow-up and job retention. Kirk, Gallagher and Anastasious (2003) argue that, due to vocational problems experienced by learners with mental retardation, educational interventions should target the demands of adulthood, adaptation to adult roles and especially work. This includes; community-based instructions that involve teaching students transition-related skills in the actual

community settings in which they are used (Turnbull, Turnbull & Wehmeyer, 2007).

Attempting to anticipate where the field of mental retardation is going, Gargiulo (2009) cites that the global vision is to include more community-based activities that are available across several domains, including employment, education and residential options. This should only be by improving both the quality and quantity of programmes and services for persons who are mentally retarded. Greater attention should be paid across all age groups to fostering self-advocacy and self-determination, as persons with mental retardation seek greater control over their lives and fuller participation in all aspects of the society (Gargiulo, 2009).

Kraemer and Blacher, (2001) in their study on transition for young adults with severe mental retardation from 52 families highlight that little is known regarding the extent to which schools are implementing transition programmes for students with severe mental retardation and other related issues. Such issues include; parental expectation of transition outcomes, post-school vocational outcomes, and parental involvement in the transition process. Kraemer and Blacher also found that majority (54%) students who exited the school systems were working in segregated environments. In yet another study, 188 young adults with moderate or severe mental retardation were examined. A Quality of Life Questionnaire (QOL-Q) was used as the primary outcome measure. Young adults who had exited schools had significantly higher overall quality of life scores than did those who were still attending

school. Those that had jobs in the community also had significant higher levels of quality life (Kreamer, McIntрге & Blacher, 2002).

A study by Kamere (2004) on development of special education for children with physical handicap in Kenya suggests that transition services in Kenyan vocational institutions should aim at integrating the mentally retarded person in the society, taking into account the individual student needs, reference and interest. Such programmes should include functional curriculum, vocational education, acquisition of daily living skills transitional services and community adjustment skills. However, Kamere argues that society views the special needs individuals as less able and incapable. They are also viewed as lesser or non productive citizens, who cannot contribute much to the development of a country. They are, therefore, stereotyped as those incapable of performing. As a result, the education given to them is one which is inexpensive, employing little skilled manpower and one which is attained in the shortest time possible. In this case, it is geared towards manual training and acquisition of basic skills for survival. Training towards industry and business fields is rarely availed to these persons (Kamere, 2004).

Kamere suggests that there is need to carry out a study showing different vocational training programmes available for the different groups of individuals with special needs, their viability, and their appropriateness in meeting the needs of a modern economy. She also suggests that there is need to carry out specific studies on other special needs groups including those who are mentally retarded, visually impaired, hearing impaired or multiply

handicapped individuals prompting the researcher to establish the vocational education and community integration of young adults with mental retardation in Kiambu County.

#### **2.4.1 Individualized Transitional Programme Team Members and Their Responsibilities**

The roles and responsibilities of all individuals involved in transition need to be established and appropriate training is needed to enable team members to perform their functions effectively. Working linkages need to be developed between parents, the school and community agents to ensure a continuum of non-duplicated services for special needs learners. According to (Taylor, 1997), Transitional team members include:

##### **Vocational administrators**

Their responsibilities include; keeping all teachers and school staff informed and involved concerning the purpose, goals and activities of the programmes; establishing advisory committee to ensure placement; initiating and maintaining contact with employers who have special needs students; involving community leaders and special needs advocacy groups e.g. non-governmental organizations; informing all school staff of their responsibilities and duties in the placement/follow-up process and using placement and follow-up data to make appropriate changes in the vocational institutions total programmes.

**Vocational specialized counselors**

These should; provide information to special needs students, regarding the assistance they can receive from the school and community agencies to help them prepare for and obtain jobs.

**Vocational teachers**

They should provide work adjustment skills; arrange field trips to various industries and business to provide students with first-hand information.

**Work study coordinators**

These spend half of their time with the employers and should; assist special needs persons enrolled in their programmes in finding work study placement; assist job placement staff in promoting public relations for the placement programmes.

**Job placement and follow-up staff**

They co-ordinate the entire placement and follow-up effort and gain the assistance of all involved as well as maintaining records of all activities.

**Special needs students**

These should participate fully in all activities organized by; advisory committee, rehabilitation agencies and special needs advocacy groups.

All these provide suggestions for helping special needs students attain effective transitional skills to aid full community integration.

**2.4.2 Transition Assessment Process**

Transition planning occurs for students aged 16 years and above according to IDEA, of 1990 where content must address a minimum instruction, community experiences, and developmental of adult living objectives and if

appropriate, daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation (Taylor, 2000). Transition from school to adult life is essential. Transition assessment, planning, education and transition assessment resources or use in secondary settings are necessary to ensure effective community integration (Mclouglin & Lewis, 2005). How these have been practiced in Kenya and particularly in Kiambu County was the researcher's concern.

Kweku (2000) in Ghana on evaluation of vocational programmes of special schools for children with mental retardation argues that trainees are not selected by the use of formal vocational assessment tools, neither are they offered the opportunity to practice in real workshops in integrated settings. Further, a study by Odei (2004) on evaluation of social skills development among children with mental retardation also cites a big problem in Ghana where children in school are not reassessed annually in social skills competence by a multi-disciplinary team. Dereje (2001) in Ethiopia on a comparative study of intervention for children with mental retardation cites that children in the integrated setting show a better functioning level on social skills and communication skills which are basic for every activity of life. Kenyan scene is yet to be established.

A study by Kihoro (2010) on factors affecting assessment and placement of young children in Kenyan schools emphasizes that the most crucial aspect of special needs education is the assessment process since it is the point at which some children are judged differently from others. This necessitates their removal from the normal education programme offered to the majority of

children in schools. However, it should also be practiced in transitional assessment for community integration. This research explored how persons with mental retardation are assessed for transitional placement in Kiambu vocational institutions. All the above studies however, did not include those who completed schooling, hence prompted a gap that this research sought to fill.

### **2.4.3 Job Training, Follow-Up and Job Retention**

Heward (2006) cites work skills, including job search skills, and the need to improve initial training, vocational guidance and access to employment for those threatened with social exclusion as the most important aspects in the life of persons with disabilities including those with mental retardation. Friend (2008) further emphasizes that supported employment is the practice of assisting adults with disabilities to obtain jobs in the competitive market and providing them with the necessary physical, instructional and social support to ensure success for the employee and satisfaction for the employer. This is not easy for a person with mental retardation. Hallahan et al., (2009) argue that adults with mental retardation have high rates of unemployment but with appropriate training individuals with mental retardation can hold down jobs with success, measured by such things as attendance, employer satisfaction, and length of employment.

In Kenya, the available job facilities to young adults with mental retardation are limited. These include; carpentry, masonry, poultry, ornament-making, tailoring and metal work, among others. However, very few individuals with

mental retardation are offered such job opportunities. They live a life of dependency on families and significant others due to negative societal perception that disability is inability which should not be the case. The study findings have disapproved this belief since there was evidence of a few YAWMR already engaged in the community participation.

### **2.5 Community Integration Avenues**

Florian (1998) in McLaughlin and Byer (2001) cites that full integration refers to the opportunity for persons with disabilities to participate fully in all of the educational, employment and consumer, recreational, community and domestic activities that typify everyday society. He emphasizes that increasing participation of young adults in and reducing their exclusion from the cultures, curricular and the entire community activities is the key issue of full integration into the society. Kombo (2005) also emphasizes that integration contributes to the development, growth and wellbeing of all societal members. The researcher sought to identify different avenues through which young adults with mental retardation are integrated in their community.

### **2.6 Barriers to Community Integration**

Persons with disabilities may need to be integrated socially in personal relationship with their family, community and places of work. Fernandez, Kovari, Vulterini and Williams (2002) cite that people with delayed development need to keep pace with the changing technology and political changes otherwise they can prove to be barriers, rather than supports to their full integration in society. However, Hallahan et al., (2009) argue that there is

no integration of workers who are mentally retarded with those that are non-disabled. They highlight that the restriction of sheltered workshops makes it difficult to prepare workers who are mentally retarded for working side by side with non-disabled workers in the competitive workforce.

A study done by Kweku (2000) in Ghana notes that only 5 out of 300 enrolled trainees with mental retardation of vocational programmes graduated in between 1992– 1996. Kweku further informs that trainees were however restricted to very few trades and spent unspecified periods of training and did not have opportunity to learn in integrated environments. Considering that Ghana could be having similar characteristics like Kenya, the researcher wished to establish whether such problems exist in Kenya.

A conference report by Mugo and Sore (2008) in Kenya argues that persons with disabilities are lonely in the society which could be translated as a social barrier. Persons with mental retardation may be even in a worse situation than other persons with disabilities because of their limited cognitive capability. Other barriers included; negative attitude towards serving special needs learners; lack of standardized and organized procedures and policies to manage the transition process ; absence of role definition among the many different educators, schools and community support personnel involved in the transitional process; lack of parental involvement in the transition activities for their children and lack of tested models to guide the delivery of transition services for special needs learners, among others.

### **2.6.1 How to Overcome Transition Barriers**

To overcome transition barriers, solutions have to be sought. Such solutions include; forming advocacy groups or groups made up of parents, vocational and special education teachers, rehabilitation counselors, employers and interested community agency representatives to identify barriers to effective transition and to form interagency linkages that would ensure a continuum of unduplicated services for special needs learners (Tindall & Gugerty, 1985 in Taylor, 1997).

Plan and conduct workshops for participants involved in the transition process in each vocational institution service area. These workshops should be designed to help participants involved identify their roles and responsibilities in transition process and to identify the barriers to transition and explore possible solutions. Workshop participants should include the following individuals and groups either as presenters, resource persons, or active listeners: post-school vocational teachers, support personnel, parents of trainees with special needs, interested special needs trainers, sheltered rehabilitation centre personnel, private industry council members charged with the responsibility for special needs students training and services, members of community groups, staff from county and state-funded agencies which serve special needs learners and employers who are interested in working with learners with special needs or who are presently working with them (Taylor, 1997).

Collect and disseminate information about the many vocational training and employment opportunities available to trainees with mental retardation. These

opportunities include: community vocational institutions, vocational schools, special stations in business and industry, sheltered rehabilitation centers and government agencies (Schloss, 1985 in Taylor, 1997).

Develop and implement post-school transition models that test and refine transition policies, practices and activities. These models should address transition barriers and provide viable solutions which ensure smooth transitions of individuals into and through vocational education to rewarding employment (Taylor, 1997).

## **2.7 Summary**

From literature review, policy and societal perception on disability were questionable as far as community integration of young adults with mental retardation was concerned. Global related literature cites that little is known regarding the extent to which schools were implementing transition programmes for students with mental retardation in America (Kraemer & Blacher, 2001). In Africa studies conducted looked at efforts made in schools, employment of vocational programme graduates and annual re-assessment in social skills competence of young children with mental retardation (Kweku, 2000; Odei, 2004). In Kenya, few studies conducted on persons with mental retardation geared towards problems faced by teachers teaching them and assessment and placement of young children (Nyakondo, 2000; Kihoro, 2010). This study aimed at taking the debate beyond the school to establish how skills learnt in school are applied to community integration of young adults with mental retardation.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the methods that were employed in the achievement of research objectives. It covers research design, variables, and location of the study, target population, sampling techniques and sample size, research instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis. Logistical and ethical considerations were also taken into account in the study.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

A descriptive case study design was employed. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative approach was chosen because the researcher wanted to understand the phenomenon by studying individuals and site in their natural setting (Creswell, 2003). Qualitative approach provided a comprehensive analysis or an intensive investigation of vocational training, social training and transitional services that aided young adults with mental retardations' community integration. It also enabled the researcher to personally interact with the respondents in the study. This gave first-hand information from the respondents, thus advocating a more serious focus on integrating persons with mental retardation in the community. Quantitative data strengthened the qualitative information for more clarity.

##### **3.2.1 Study Variables**

Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) explain that a variable as a concept stands for variation within a class of objects. They further explain that independent

variables are those that the researcher chooses to study in order to assess their possible effect(s) on one or more other variables. The independent variable is assumed to affect a dependent variable. This study looked at independent and dependent variables in reference to YAWMR's community integration and vocational education.

### **3.2.2 Independent Variables**

In this study, independent variables were; vocational training, social training and transitional services which hindered persons with mental retardation community integration if not well-established.

### **3.2.3 Dependent Variables**

In this study, dependent variable was community integration of young adults with mental retardation. Community integration of YAWMR was subject to other influences like vocational training, social training and transitional services.

## **3.3 Location of the Study**

The study was carried out in Kiambu County. Kiambu is approximately 20 kilometers from Nairobi city. It has an area of 736.3 square kilometers with a population of 1,623,282 (802,609 male and 820,673 female). It borders Murang'a at the North, Nairobi at the South, Machakos at the East and Kajiado at the West. It is an agricultural area where cash crops like coffee, pyrethrum and tea are grown. It has business premises in its major and minor towns. Kiambu which is both rural and urban was purposively selected because there were vocational institutions of persons with mental retardation.

Studies conducted pertaining to vocational training has been in Nairobi neglecting the rural setup. None has looked at the extent of community integration after school for individuals with mental retardation. It was the researcher's feeling that vocational education was not only offered in urban areas since this rural setup was equally important.

### **3.4 Target Population**

Kiambu County has four vocational institutions with a population of about 300 trainees in total. Maria Magdalene being the largest had a population of 100 trainees. The target population of this study comprised all young adults with mental retardation aged between 20 and 40 years, who had graduated from Maria Magdalene vocational institution between 2005 and 2010. Young adults were found suitable for the study because vocational education and transitional services received from school were fresh in their minds. The researcher found that only 16 YAWMR had graduated from 2005-2010. Out of these, only 10 were known their whereabouts' after graduation.

### **3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size**

This section presents sampling techniques and the sample size the researcher used to carry out the study.

#### **3.5.1 Sampling Techniques**

In this study, purposive and snowballing sampling techniques were used.

##### **3.5.1.1 Purposive Sampling**

Purposive sampling was used to select Maria Magdalene institution because it was the largest vocational institution for persons with mental retardation in

Kiambu County. Therefore, it was hoped that it would give the sample of graduate respondents needed for the study. However, the headteacher and vocational teachers were also purposively sampled.

### 3.5.1.2 Snowballing Sampling

After identifying a small number of individuals who had the required characteristics, the researcher used parents as informants to identify others who qualified for inclusion in the study. Young adults with mental retardation helped to locate other persons of their kind with or without employment. Parents gave information of other parents with young adults with mental retardation.

### 3.5.2 Sample Size

**Table 3.1: Sample Size**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Headteacher	1
Vocational teachers	2
Young adults with mental retardation	10
Parents	9
Employers	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>

Creswell (2005) cites that for the qualitative inquiry, the intent is not to generalize to a population but to develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon hence the researcher's decision to use a small sample of the target population. The sample for the study ought to have comprised 1 headteacher, 2 vocational teachers, 10 employers, 10 parents and 10 young adults with mental retardation; 3 female and 7 male. The sample size of both parents and employers was to be dictated by the number of YAWMR who had

graduated from Maria Magdalene. From 2005-2010, the graduates were just 16. All the respondents were from Kiambu County. In total, the respondents were supposed to be 33 in number. However, the employers reduced from 10 to 1 since most of the graduates were just absorbed in Maria Magdalene Institution. Parents also reduced to 9 since one of the parents never agreed to be interviewed and claimed all the information could be sourced from the son whom she said was a grown-up. The sample size therefore reduced to 23 respondents.

### **3.6 Research Instrument**

To achieve the objectives of the study, primary data were collected using the following instruments; interview guides for the headteacher, vocational teachers, parents, YAWMR and employers and observation schedules were used on YAWMR working.

#### **3.6.1 Interview Guides**

Direct personal investigation involves collecting information personally from the respondents concerned. This method is particularly suitable for intensive investigations (Kothari, 2003). Thus, more information in greater depth was obtained from the study. Interview guides for the headteachers, vocational teachers, employers, YAWMR, and for parents all comprised 6 items that helped further probing. These comprised general information, identification and classification of YAWMR, vocational education, transitional services, community integration avenues and barriers to community integration of YAWMR.

### **3.6.2 Observation Schedule**

Under the observation method, the information was sought by way of investigator's own direct observation without consulting the respondents. The information obtained under this method related to what was currently happening and it was not complicated by either the past behaviour or future intentions or attitudes. Most persons with mental retardation lack expressive language skills hence the relevance of observation instrument. Further, the instrument gathered first-hand information. The researcher employed a non-participant observation to gather information on persons with mental retardation behaviour as they work. The researcher collected information by use of both descriptive and reflective field notes. Descriptive field notes recorded a description of the events, activities and people (e.g. what was happening) while reflective field notes recorded personal thoughts that the researcher had that related to her insights, or themes that emerged during the observation. Observation schedule comprised 7 items for YAWMR working.

### **3.7 Pilot Study**

Pilot study was done in Mathare Vocational Training centre in Kasarani Division in Nairobi County which neighbors Kiambu County. Kasarani was selected because it had a vocational institution for persons with mental retardation. Graduates from Mathare Vocational Institution were targeted. Sample of the pilot study comprised 1 headteacher, 1 vocational teacher, 4 young adults with mental retardation, 4 parents and 2 employers. The total pilot sample respondents were 12 in number. The objective was to establish validity and reliability of the research instruments in measuring community

integration of YAWMR. The institution and individuals sampled for pilot study were not included in the main study. Pilot study helped to rectify mistakes in the study instrument which were corrected before the main study. After piloting, all corrections and alterations on the instruments were discussed with the researcher's supervisors and were approved. It was during piloting that the researcher felt there was need for more probing and some questions proved to be probes for the main questions. Other questions didn't give the expected responses and were deleted. For example, question 3 of theme 1 was not clearly spelt and so deleted. Main question for theme 2 was modified for clarity. In appendix C question 2 of theme 2 was irrelevant which led to avoiding it. Question 2 of theme 3 was modified for clarity.

### **3.7.1 Validity**

In this study, tools were validated during pilot study which took place in Mathare vocational institution in Kasarani Division, Nairobi County. Tools were constructed by the researcher as per the requirements of the study themes. They were tested on YAWMR by the researcher during piloting. This enabled the researcher to find out whether the tools measured what they were supposed to measure. Lecturers in the area of special needs were consulted where they went through the instruments and objectives of the study to determine their validity. Validity of the research instruments was also determined by the two supervisors from Kenyatta University.

### **3.7.2 Reliability**

This was established through comparison of consistency in the developed themes. Similar questions were posed to different respondents and the consistency of the responses determined whether results were similar. The researcher stayed for 10 days from Monday to Friday at the research site to ensure extensive collection of information.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection took 30 days on week days from Monday to Friday that allowed ample time for gathering information. The researcher started by delivering copies of permit and letters of introduction to inform about the purpose of the study to the head of institution, parents and employer. The researcher collected data through face-to-face interview using the interview guides which were in two languages (Kiswahili and English). The interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions. Field notes were taken with the help of two research assistants for comparison of the gathered information. Audio recording was also done but a few respondents were not comfortable with it. Therefore, the researcher just audio recorded those that were willing and decided to use 2 research assistants which were very costly. This allowed the researcher to devote her full attention to listening to the interviewee and probing in-depth. This technique is supported by Ritchie and Lewis (2003). Observation was taken through descriptive and reflective field notes. The researcher duplicated copies of all forms of data for safety purposes.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

Data were coded and created according to the themes of the study. Translating from English to Kiswahili was employed. The researcher developed themes from respondents in groups about YAWMR's identification and classification, vocational education, transitional services, community integration avenues and barriers to community integration. Text from interviews and observation analysis was by use of a computer programme Atlas ti. Atlas ti helped the researcher to organize text and compare segments of information. Again, it was easier to search, retrieve and browse all data segments and notes relevant to an idea. However, qualitative data analyses were manually through tallying the frequency of segmented responses. The researcher summarized those themes and wrote down how they reflected to experiences reported by other researchers in the literature.

### **3.10 Logistical and Ethical Considerations**

The researcher got authorization to carry out the research from the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology and National Council for Science and Technology through Graduate School, Kenyatta University. The researcher contacted the 'gatekeepers' at the research site and informed them of the need to collect data in the area. Dates for data collection were set and communicated. Before data collection, the researcher explained to the respondents the purpose of the research. The researcher also got permission from the respondents; the head/employer of the institution and parents. The researcher established a rapport before commencing interviews and also sought consent from the respondents to audio record and take notes during the

interview. The researcher also assured the respondents that the information they gave was to be kept confidential and was only to be used for the purpose of the study.

### **3.11 Summary**

The research design and the research instruments employed in this chapter generated the type of data presentation analysis, interpretation and discussions in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter contains data presentation, analysis and discussions from interview and observation schedules from 23 respondents concerning YAWMR graduates from Maria Magdalene Special School. The return rate of YAWMR who were interviewed was 100%. The analysis is presented in frequency tables, figures and percentages followed by an interpretation and discussions of the findings. The chapter starts with presentation of the general information of the respondents including the bio-data of YAWMR, experience of respondents with YAWMR and parental level of education. Thereafter, 5 major objectives in chapter one were discussed in line with the findings to answer the research questions. The data analysis was presented as follows:

- i. General information.
- ii. Identification and classification of persons with mental retardation.
- iii. Vocational education offered in vocational institutions to help YAWMR adjust into the community.
- iv. Transitional services and follow-up programmes that facilitate YAWMR community integration.
- v. Community integration avenues through which YAWMR are involved in the community.
- vi. Barriers hindering community integration of YAWMR.

## 4.2 Data Analysis, Results and Discussion

### 4.2.1 General Information of Respondents

The sampled population consisted of YAWMRs bio-data, respondents' experience with YAWMR and parental level of education. Young adults with mental retardation's age ranges from 24 years to 35. The sample comprised of 10 YAWMR out of which 3(30%) were females and 7(70%) were males. The Bio-data distribution is summarized in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Bio-data of the Sampled YAWMR**

Age	Gender		Frequency	Percentage
	Male	Female		
20-25	1	1	2	20
26-30	4	2	6	60
31-35	2	0	2	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

The findings show that there is no gender balance in Maria Magdalene Vocational Institution. This is an issue that should be looked at to empower females with mental retardation as far as vocational training is concerned to enable them to be self-reliant. It is evident from the findings that young adults with mental retardation are placed in the vocational institution. However, many are males since you get courses like carpentry and masonry being male-domain skills. These skills are mostly taken by male persons with mental retardation and could be the reason why female graduates were few.

The researcher wished to seek respondents' experience with YAWMR. This information was gathered from the headteacher of Maria Magdalene who also

turned out to be the only employer of YAWMR and vocational teachers. From the findings, it was noted that the headteacher had the longest experience of 20 years with YAWMR. The second respondent was one of the vocational teachers for 13 years and the other vocational teacher had only 3 years experience. The results showed that the headteacher and one of the vocational teachers had enough experience and knowledge of 20 and 13 years respectfully in teaching persons with mental retardation. Therefore, their graduates must have gained skills required to adjust to community living. The many years of experience make teachers experts in the area, thus able to modify curriculum to be community integration-oriented.

The researcher also sought to know the employers' experience with YAWMR. The researcher targeted 10 employers but it was found that YAWMR were not employed in many other places apart from their own institutions where they graduated from. In this case, the headteacher of Maria Magdalene turned out to be the only employer of her graduates. The results showed a need to advocate for these youths employment in the entire society. This is significant in that employers either don't know about these individuals or these individuals do not seek employment. Hallahan et al., (2009) support this when they say adults with mental retardation have high rates of unemployment.

The researcher needed to find out if parents of YAWMR were literate. The results are presented in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Parental Level of Education and Frequency**

<b>Education level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Std 7	2	22.2 %
Form 4	6	66.7 %
Higher Diploma	1	11.1 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Parents of YAWMR interviewed gave their level of education. However, 10 parents were targeted but the researcher was able to interview 9. Parental level of literacy is important since parents see the need of educating their children. Able parents also provide for their education. One YAWMR was an orphan and had no guardian; therefore, the respondents' information was given by the headteacher who said she only came to know the person when well-wishers brought him to school. From Table 4.2 results, 1(11.1%) of the parents attained a higher diploma, 6(66.7%) of the parents were majority with a form 4 certificate and the lowest education level was attained by 2(22.2%) of the parents with only a standard seven certificate of the earlier education systems. This was the Kenyan education system of 7-4-2-3 which was before the current 8-4-4 system. The results show that all the parents were literate and therefore, saw the need to take their children to school despite the disability.

### **4.3 Identification and Classification of Persons with Mental Retardation**

#### **4.3.1 Identification of YAWMR**

The study sought to examine how persons with mental retardation were identified for right placement in special schools and further to vocational institutions. When persons with mental retardation are identified and classified earlier for vocational placement, they attain skills of community adjustment and expertise on them such that when they get into the community, they are able to fit in the society as active members. Questions were asked regarding how headteachers and teachers identified persons in special schools and further to vocational institutions for the right placement. From the responses given, the headteacher and one vocational teacher said they requested parents and their sons and daughters to go to assessment centers. One respondent had the following to say:

We request parents to take their sons and daughters to assessment centers who later come with referral forms from Education Resource Centers (Male vocational teacher no. 2, 2011).

The study also established that some of the YAWMR were assessed internally in the institution where a teacher asked how they classified them said:

We classify them as mild, moderate, severe and profound (in other words educable, trainable and custodian (Male vocational teacher no. 2, 2011).

This means those that are able to read and write though not to standard are termed as mild, those that can only do manual work are termed as moderate and they also lag behind in daily living skills like grooming. Those that are not able to do anything by themselves are custodians meaning somebody must be

present for them to survive. They are fed, bathed and clothed and need full-time attendance either by house mothers or parents or guardians. This explains that persons with mental retardation have different disability levels and the severe the condition the more limitation of community integration.

Asked how they realized their children needed special education, 6 of the parents said they only realized about their children's problem when teachers informed them and advised them to take their children to assessment centers which emphasizes the role of teachers in identification of persons with mental retardation. However, 2 of the parents said it was due to sickness on and of that doctors informed them about their children being mentally retarded. One of them said a friend observed her child's behaviour and advised her to take the child to assessment center. Another guardian who is a special education teacher observed her brother's child characteristics and advised the parent to take the child to the assessment center where she received a very challenging opposition and finally she was left with the child to care for. This shows early intervention measures towards these children have not been taken seriously and majority of the parents are unaware of the problem. It has taken a struggle for a parent to realize her child's mental state as one of the respondent reported:

I took the child to hospital and of course many hospitals but all was in vain. I underwent so much trauma and denial which was only done away by assessors at Thika where they gave me hope and more counseling. I was shocked to see people who could appreciate my child since at home family members had started segregating me. Others said I tried to abort that is why she got meningitis after a few months (Female parent no. 1, 2011).

This indicated the pain parents go through and the stigma they experience at sometimes.

Table 4.3 shows parental report on who identified their young adults with mental retardation.

**Table 4.3: Parental Report on Identification of YAWMR**

<b>Identification of YAWMR and Places</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Hospital	2	20
School	6	60
Friends	1	10
Relative	1	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

The researcher sought to know how parents came to know their children had mental retardation. They reported different people and places as indicated in Table 4.3. It was noted that majority 6(60%) of persons with mental retardation were identified in schools by teachers and only 2(20%) were identified in the hospital when a child is frequently taken there. Very few of the community members were aware of the disability as shown in the table since only 1(10%) of friends and 1(10%) of the relatives were reported as having identified a child who is mentally retarded.

The study found that although parents, friends and hospitals identified cases of mental retardation, the highest numbers were identified by teachers in schools.

This showed very few of the community members are aware of the disability. This argument is supported by Hallakhan, Kaufman and Pullen (2009) citing that children are tested in four composite scores, namely; verbal comprehension, perceptual reasoning, working memory and processing speed which are only done in schools. It was evident that majority of the parents didn't realize their children's condition until when they took them to school. It is true that no parent expects to give birth to a person who is disabled and when the child is born, most parents live in denial which could have taken long until the child is in school. Others don't know what or where to go due to lack of awareness and they live with their problems until someone comes around as relatives or friends. Other parents take into a medical model direction and take their children to hospital for treatment in the hope that these conditions are treatable. It's after many hospital visits that they agree their children have mental retardation, and begin to seek alternative options mainly focused on supporting them to gain life skills so as to live effectively in the society.

#### **4.3.2 Assessment at the Institution Centers**

After a person with mental retardation is identified, the next step that needs be done in order to make the right decision for his or her right placement in school or vocational institution is assessment. Assessment screening is done where one is tested and diagnosed in case of a disease. This confirms whether what was thought to be a disability is really so. Assessment is, therefore, very crucial when placing YAWMR in vocational institutions as well as community integrating them.

Concerning assessment of persons with mental retardation, the respondents revealed that through the teacher's assistant most of YAWMR were taken to assessment centers which later referred them to their respective schools. Educators reported that they also had vocational assessment tool to classify students for vocational readiness. Asked how they classified students for vocational readiness, the headteacher stated as follows:

First we introduce all the admitted trainees to all vocational courses. We observe them as they perform the skills where we decide on the specific area of skill strength. We then advice the skill trainee on what course is fit for him or her. After directing the trainee on what to do continually we do the vocational assessment as well as social skills assessment (Female headteacher, 2011).

Further, vocational teachers were asked how they conducted transition assessment in the institution when a trainee was ready to graduate and one of them had the following to say:

We have a process called transition assessment process where we do observation as certain skills are performed and gauge them as perfected or still need to be improved. Again, we assess the completed work and see whether it is okay. In carpentry we assess the furniture made and check for firmness, smoothness and its beauty. For tailoring, we assess dresses and shirts made to see whether they are made well. For beadwork, we assess the necklaces joining, beauty and color mixture (Male vocational teacher no. 2, 2011).

Interviews held with parents concerning assessment revealed that most 6(67%) of the assessment was done in educational assessment center. Two (22%) of the children were assessed by assessors who were invited by a Catholic priest in a church and were placed in the school where the church sponsored them to. One (11%) of the children was said to have been assessed in the hospital. Table 4.4 shows institutions of assessments mentioned by respondents.

**Table 4.4: Institutions of Assessment and Frequency of YAWMR**

<b>Institution of Assessment</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Education Assessment and Resource Center	6	67
Hospital	1	11
Church	2	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100</b>

The findings showed that education assessment and resource centers are more efficient in assessment 6 (67%) than the hospital and church. This could be because most of the identification is done in school where teachers refer them to assessment centers for right placement (60%) as reported in Table 4.3, p.51.

The study found that after identification, these persons were taken for assessment in various institutions and that most of them were assessed in Education Assessment and Resource Centers whilst others were assessed in church and hospitals. In school, vocational assessment is done through observation of the skill performance to determine their perfection in vocational training ready to be community integrated.

The above findings are in line with Gargiulo (2009) who argues that it is not easy to assess adaptive behaviour but it is usually measured by direct observation. This shows how disability awareness is not the first priority of diagnosis in hospitals and it's after treatment failures that children are diagnosed as having disability. Hence, the confounding question is whether all

the medication prescribed to children with mental retardation was genuine or could it have worsened the condition of retardation.

#### **4.3.3 Placement in School of YAWMR**

Placement in school is crucial since it determines how children will be introduced to their kind of learning. If placement is not rightly done, persons with mental retardation may never make it in the community since they will always appear a misfit in the society. It is, therefore, very important to consider whether learners with mental retardation are placed in regular schools and are given proper modification of the learning instructions. These placements need to be done by educators, parents, assessors, medical personnel and other stakeholders. The researcher sought to find out who determined placement of children with mental retardation to schools. The responses were as indicated in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: Who Determined the YAWMR Placement in School and Frequency?**

<b>Who determined YAWMR placement</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Assessment Team	4	40
Parent	4	40
Both parents and assessment team	2	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

From the above information in Table 4.5, it was revealed that those children whose placement was decided by the assessment team and parents was the

same each 4(40%) and only 2(20%) was as a result of both assessment team and the parent. This does not agree with the principle of assessment and placement as a multi-disciplinary team. No respondent mentioned any other stakeholder in assessment and placement apart from assessors and parents. A parent asked who decided her child's placement highlighted:

It is KISE team who placed her at Maria Magdalene special (parent no. 6).

Another parent said:

The assessment members of St. Anne Assessment team decided that I take the boy to Maria Magdalene vocational since there was a school for persons with mental retardation (Female parent no. 8, 2011).

One other parent said; St. Anne's assessors asked her whether she would want him to be taken to Maria Magdalene special school and she agreed.

It was observed from the analysis that placement to school of children with mental retardation was basically done by assessment officers and to a lesser extent both the parents and assessment officers were asked to make the decision together.

This is strengthened by Heward (2006) report that identifying functional curriculum goals for learners with mental retardation has become a major priority of special educators. The findings further showed that assessment and placement of persons with mental retardation was not done by a multi-disciplinary team as Odei (2004) recommends. Therefore, decisions made by few people might have meant wrong placement which might have hindered

proper learning of vocational skills right from the first year of school in order to facilitate YAWMR's community integration.

#### **4.4 Vocational Education Offered in Institutions for Persons with Mental Retardation**

The main objective of vocational institutions for persons with mental retardation is to make these individuals gain skills that could lead to community integration in terms of employment and societal participation. This would enable them to be self-reliant and contribute to the development of the societal engagements. This would also enable them to be productive in the society at large. Gargiulo (2006) emphasizes that education provided to learners with mental retardation must be functional in preparing them with skills to live and work in their immediate communities. Sifuna (2008) further emphasizes that development of communities should be based on the qualitative growth of individuals for the community where persons with mental retardation are included rather than quantitative expansion of education.

Interviews held with the respondents concerning vocational education offered to the trainees of Maria Magdalene special school revealed that those trainees were trained on a number of skills. These included among others, vocational training, activities of daily living and social skills.

##### **4.4.1 Vocational Skills Offered in the Vocational Institutions**

In this section, the researcher sought to know the vocational skills offered to persons with mental retardation and how relevant the skills were in their

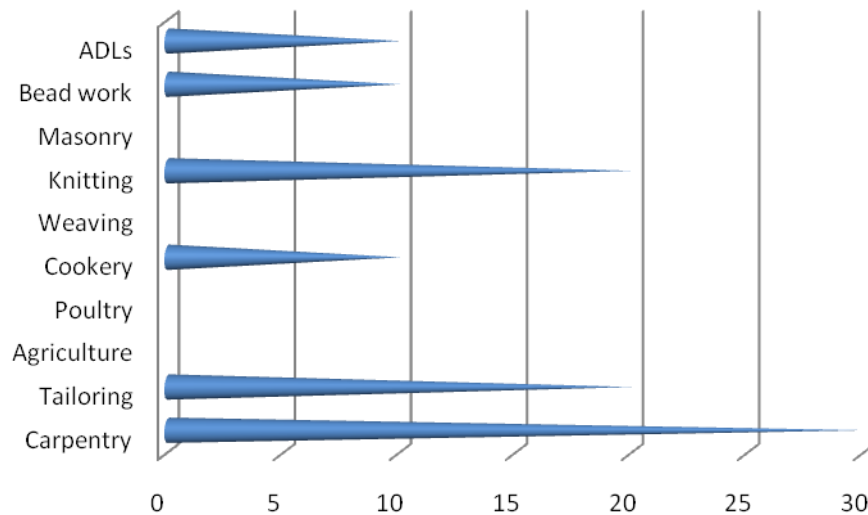
community integration. Further, the researcher was interested in knowing the likes and dislikes of the skills the YAWMR trained in.

Interviews with respondents revealed that trainees were exposed to skills such as carpentry, tailoring, masonry, welding, agriculture, jewelry and ornament making. This was given by educators (trainers) as what they offer in the vocational classes. One of the trainers said:

We have several skills that are vocational skills and they include; carpentry, tailoring, masonry, welding, agriculture, jewelry and ornaments (Female headteacher, 2011).

Graduates interviewees were also asked to say what they took as vocational course and their responses were as in Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1: Courses offered in Maria Magdalene Vocational Institution**



Parents also gave the same responses since all were referring to all the courses taught. It was not evident whether there was specification of the course to YAWMR as the administrator had said. However, Figure 4.1 above shows that

3(30%) of the graduates reported to have done carpentry, 2(20%) tailoring, 2(20%) knitting, 1(10%) cookery, 1(10%) beadwork and 1(10%) had only acquired activities of daily living. Skills like masonry, weaving, poultry and agriculture were not reflected in the reports given by the graduates meaning they were not trained or none of the graduates was interested in them contrary to what was reported by the administration that they did all those courses. This motivated the researcher to ascertain whether YAWMR were comfortable with the courses they took. YAWMR were asked whether they liked or disliked them and the results were as in Figure 4.2.

**Figure 4.2: YAWMR Graduates likes and dislikes of the courses they took**

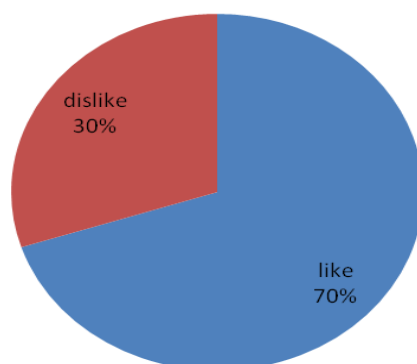


Figure 4.2 shows that for both gender, most of the respondents liked whatever course they were trained in. Seven (70%) out of the 10 graduates reported that they liked the courses they took while 3(30%) of them reported to have liked something else. However, the researcher observed and asked what work they were doing at the moment and it appeared again what most of them did was ordinary manual work like being a groundsman, teacher aide, watchman and others that did not reflect the course that they took in vocational institution.

They just got absorbed in school after graduation and very few did what they trained in. Basically, what they did was daily living activities like cleaning the compound and the like. Similarly, the researcher asked on the course relevance. Most respondents said the courses were relevant as in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: Course Relevance to YAWMR's Community Integration**

<b>Course relevance</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	16	69.6
No	7	30.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>

Despite the observation made by the researcher, majority claimed that whatever training they received in school was helpful, especially when one was able to manage himself instead of the family members or caregivers. From Table 4.6, 16 (69.6%) of the 23 respondents said the courses were relevant while 7(30.4%) said they were not. Some respondents felt that the skills would motivate self-employment initiatives such as soap making. One of the respondents confirmed this when she said:

Mother sells it and buys things for us in the family, for example you can see am smart, mum bought this dress for me and am putting it on today (Female YAWMR no. 5, 2011).

On the other hand, their parents supported that whatever they did in school was useful to them as far as their daily living was concerned. One parent had the following to say:

Her education was good because she was able to know many things like washing utensils, cleaning the house, washing clothes and making pullovers and she joins other youths in youth and church groups where they do the activities together. She is also able to go to church and give testimonies (Female parent no.6, 2011).

Yet another parent asked how she would comment on the kind of education her daughter received in relation to her community living, her response was:

She is able to earn a living through soap making and people come to buy her soap and even Maria Magdalene school (Female parent no. 4, 2011).

This was confirmed by one of the vocational teachers when she was asked whether they had any graduate who is self-employed. She had the following to say:

Yes, one of our girls is making soap so we buy chemicals for her when the finances are there to boost her business (Female vocational teacher no. 1, 2011).

The study established that trainees were being trained on skills such as carpentry, tailoring, masonry, welding, agriculture, jewelry and ornaments as reported by educators (trainers). From the above observations, it was evident that Maria Magdalene Vocational Institution had impacted on skills that would have led to their community integration in carpentry, building, dressmaking, cookery and agriculture among others. However, the findings in Table 4.10, P.73, revealed that these graduates were working in different areas that they never trained in, for example, many were engaged as groundsmen, watchmen and teacher aide. Skills like soap making were not reflected in the courses offered but was being practiced by one of the graduates. The above findings have been confirmed by Kamere (2004) when she argues that society view the special needs individuals as less able and incapable and as a result, the education given to them is one which is inexpensive employing little skilled manpower and one which is attained in the shortest time possible. In this case,

their education is geared towards manual training and acquisition of skills for survival and therefore, training towards industry and business fields is rarely availed to these persons. Therefore, teachers need to employ skills which match these learners' community living depending on what is being practiced in the community. Again, there is need for clarification as far as vocational curriculum is involved. That is what the need assessment of the catchment area is. If it is agriculture, then agriculture skills need to be emphasized on these YAWMR since they rarely move out of their community and thus resources in the community should be utilized to help them be active members through community integration. However, Heward (2006) confirms that these individuals are threatened with social exclusion and that assisting adults with disabilities to obtain jobs in the competitive market is not easy for persons with mental retardation. Therefore, communities need to engage in helping not to leave everything to teachers and trainers. Hallahan et al., (2009) confirm the above arguments when they cite that individuals with mental retardation can hold jobs successfully with appropriate training. Florian (1998) in McLaughlin and Byer (2001) supports full integration where persons with disabilities are made to participate fully in all of the educational, employment and consumer, recreational, community and domestic activities that typify everyday society which is not the case in these findings. What is needed is to offer persons with mental retardation appropriate vocational training where every member of the community including parents, teachers, trainers, government and NGOs among others are involved fully for their community integration.

#### **4.4.2 Challenges faced by Teachers Offering Vocational Skills to YAWMR**

The study sought to establish challenges teachers are facing while offering vocational skills to persons with mental retardation. On this item, the respondents gave challenges as follows:

Due to different levels of severity some students require supervision always. The severe or moderate cases need to be guided and they consume a lot of time and almost become life members of the institution. For example, some stay in the institution for 20 years or more. We don't have enough funding from the government to cater for every need in terms of skill training and other necessities (Female headteacher, 2011).

The respondents continued to argue that trainees with mental retardation may like a course that does not suit their capability and refuse to do as per the trainer's advice. This was confirmed by one of the respondent with the following words:

For example one boy claimed to know computer and refused to do anything else and even for computer manipulation was hard due to his disability severity. Other trainees refuse to go for internship due to institutional conditioning. Some parents also refuse what trainers recommend for their sons and daughters. Again some of these persons take too long to master a skill and this hinders trainees from getting integrated into the community. Lack of vocational teachers is also a great problem and there is no technical special course. Another problem is gender stereotyped courses whereby some courses are perceived to be male and female oriented (Female headteacher, 2011).

Another respondent educator had this to say:

In some tribes some activities like carpentry belongs to male and dress making belongs to female (Female vocational teacher no. 1, 2011).

This was an indication that most courses were gender stereotype favoring males than females.

#### 4.4.3 Graduation and Accreditation of YAWMR Graduates from 2005-2010

Educators were asked to give the number of graduates who had graduated from 2005-2010. Their responses were as per Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7: Number of Graduates from 2005-2010**

Year	Female	Male	Frequency	Parentage
2005	-	-	-	-
2006	3	7	10	62.5
2007	-	-	-	-
2008	-	4	4	25
2009	-	-	-	-
2010	-	2	2	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.7 results indicated that majority of the trainees 10(62.5%) graduated in 2006 while none graduated in 2007, 4(25%) graduated in 2008 while again none graduated in 2009. The least number that graduated was 2(12.5%) in 2010. These results imply that graduation of YAWMR was not regular and even when they graduated, they were very few. The table also shows a higher male graduates 13(81.25%) out of 16 and 3(18.75%) female graduates. All Females graduated in 2006. The implication is that not many females reach graduation. Another implication is that either the females drop out of school before they reach vocational classes or parents fail to take them to school-due to fear of their safety. Female trainees are prone to sexual abuse as one of the parent stated:

She says they force her to have sex but we have never witnessed and at one time we thought she is becoming mad until the headteacher said she is not going to work again(Female parent no 2,2011).

Generally, vocational class graduation seemed to reflect individual completion of a course as per the vocational assessment process. One of the vocational teachers when asked how they knew YAWMR was ready for graduation said:

We have a process called transition assessment process where we do observation as certain skills are performed and gauge them as perfected or still need to be improved. Again, we assess the completed work and see whether it is okay (Female vocational teacher no. 1, 2011).

Graduation from vocational institution is very vital since these persons will have gained skills of community adjustment. Integration on the positive side gives YAWMR a sense of belonging by making them feel part of the society. It builds their self-confidence when they work together with persons without disability. This also sensitizes the society to appreciate their ability. However, although integration stands out as being the preferred practice, it needs to be planned from inception of skill training to graduation so that it caters for the needs of YAWMR.

Having known the number of graduates from 2005-2010, the researcher sought to know how YAWMR were accredited after they completed the courses and the results were as presented in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8: Accreditation of YAWMR**

Accreditation	Gender		Frequency	Percentage
	Female	Male		
Employed without certificates	2	7	9	90
Not Employed but with certificate (DIT)	1	-	1	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

From the above analysis, it is only 1(10%) female who had DIT certificates with grade tests III, II, I. The rest 2(20%) female and 7(70%) male graduates did not have any certificate to show that they completed vocational training. At the same time, the one with the certificate was not currently employed. It is evident that most of the graduates with mental retardation were not accredited after vocational training.

The study findings revealed that only one of the graduates had some form of accreditation of DIT trade tests. Others were not accredited. They had no certificate to show that they completed vocational training. It was also noted that all the employed YAWMR did not have any certificate to show that they are employed having completed vocational training. This resulted from what Kweku (2000) complained as trainees not being selected by the use of formal vocational assessment tools and not being offered the opportunity to practice in real workshops in integrated settings. The only trainee with grade tests certificate was a class eight leaver who joined vocational school just for the course. However, she had no employment. From this result, it shows there is a need to advocate the vocational training of females and more so advocate for their employment so as to balance their male counterpart. Vocational trainers and parents require seminars to enlighten them on the need to cater for the female trainees to facilitate their community integration not only in employment but even in other forms of community participation.

#### **4.5 Effectiveness of Transition Services**

Respondents were asked to mention transitional services that were offered in vocational institutions as preparation upon community integration of YAWMR. One transition service mentioned by majority of the respondents was guidance and counseling. Most of the YAWMR said they were given advice by the teachers on how to look for jobs and manage themselves.

Interview with the headteacher revealed that there were several transitional services offered to YAWMR before being integrated into the community such as follows:

These trainees are offered individualized transitional programme where one is supported to make choices of the skills to take as well as the kind of job they should choose. They are also offered guidance and counseling and self-management skills e.g. cooking, grooming. Parents meeting to guide on their sons or daughters career choices are held. We normally look for internship for them for 6 months and later they come back for graduation and we also give an exit package, e.g. we may buy a machine, roll of clothe and others to help them start a self-reliance life by starting small business (Female headteacher,2011).

While these should be the ideal transitional services offered to YAWMR before graduation, the headteacher emphasizes that it has not always been possible due to funds problem and also the issue of qualified personnel as technical special education teachers. She said curriculum had also been a problem since there was no vocational curriculum for learners with mental retardation. She continued to say they adapted the regular vocational curriculum to suit all vocational training individuals depending on their level of ability and acquisition of the skill. A vocational teacher who is also a parent

of YAWMR also argued that these transitional services have not always been effective due to time factor. This is what she said:

Very little services are offered because of time factor. Vocational trainers do not have enough time to cater for the trainees I being one and I have done the rest at home (Female vocational teacher no. 1, 2011).

In terms of effectiveness of transitional services the study found that trainees were offered services such as individualized transitional programmes where one was supported to make choices of skills he/she would train in and thereafter look for jobs related to what they trained in. Other services included guidance and counseling, internships and exit packages to start self-reliance business. This agrees with Taylor (1997), that information to special needs students, regarding the assistance they can receive from the school and community agencies to help them prepare for and obtain jobs should be provided by the vocational specialized counselors. He further supports that work study coordinators should spend half of their time with the employers and should help special needs persons enrolled in their programmes in finding work study placement through internships. However, the issue of curriculum, funds and qualified personnel was found to hinder effective transitional services. Most of the graduates were found to be employed in jobs not related to what they trained in. For example, majority of the young adult men were groundsmen while they trained in carpentry and masonry. Others are not working showing a deficiency in the curriculum, lack of funds to start carpentry sheds for them as well as lack of qualified special education vocational personnel.

#### 4.6 Community Integration Avenues

The study sought to find out how graduates with mental retardation were integrated into the community after having received vocational education. This was mainly focused on employment and any other participation in the community. The findings in Table 4.9 showed that these graduates received skills from vocational institutions and some of them have some kind of employment. Seven (70%) out of 10 had employment of a kind while 3 (30%) were not employed but had participation in the society in one way or another. Interview about YAWMR on other aspects of community integration apart from employment revealed that a few were involved actively in the churches, community development youth groups and marriages, among others.

**Table 4.9: Avenues of Community Integration for YAWMR**

<b>Avenues of community integration</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Employed	7	70%
Marriage	1	10%
Church activities	1	10%
Community development youth groups	1	10%
Games and sports	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>

To confirm the findings above, some of the respondents had the following to say:

Teacher did good to educate her especially to take care of herself and she is able to dress other small ones. She is also able to talk to people in youth groups unlike before when she used to hide herself (Female parent no. 2, 2011).

Another respondent said:

Teachers showed them how to cooperate with others and he is very good at this (Male parent no. 5, 2011).

Asked who receive the salary for her, a married female had the following to say:

My mother and when I got married my husband (Female YAWMR no. 2, 2011).

From this result, it can be observed that after graduation from their schools, they were integrated back into the community. However, interview with the employer showed very low incidence of being integrated into the world of work. The researcher targeted to snowball 10 employers but was able to trace only one employer who turned out to be the headteacher of the institution. This showed that advocacy for YAWMR employment has not been exhausted and more needs to be done. This could be done through looking for internships for these individuals so as to familiarize them with employers. Asked what type of community integration avenues their graduates get after training, the headteacher gave the following;

They are in carpentry, masonry, institution based employment e.g. grounds men and teacher aides as well as *jua kali* workshops (Female headteacher, 2011).

One of the vocational teacher said they involved NGOs dealing with needy people, local artisans and individuals with *jua kali* sector to integrate their graduates. They first looked for internships for some though it proved to be difficult since people still hold negative attitudes that these individuals can't make it. This keeps them withdrawn and stigmatized.

From the results, graduates with mental retardation showed to have been integrated in the community ranging from employment, marriage, churches and community development youth groups. However, employment seemed to be the most emphasized aspect with 7 of the sampled respondents. Other aspects such as marriage, church, community development had one each respectively. This agrees with Kombo, (2005) that integration contributes to the development, growth and wellbeing of all societal members including those with mental retardation. However, it disagrees with McLaughlin and Byer (2001) who emphasize that full integration refers to the opportunity for persons with disabilities to participate fully in all of the educational, employment and consumer, recreational, community and domestic activity that typify everyday society.

Increasing participation of young adults in and reducing their exclusion from the entire community activities was challenged by negative attitudes from the community that these individuals cannot make it. Therefore, the community does not fully accept them as active members as far as community participation is concerned. As it is reflected in the findings most of the YAWMR were found working and very few in other aspects of community integration like in community development youth groups, marriage, church activities, games and sports among others. It is only one female who was married and had a family. It seemed the community was more on what these adults could do in terms of earning a living other than other community participation. As much as YAWMR are offered vocational education for self-

reliance, it should be noted that other aspects of community participation are equally important to embrace their full community integration. What is being done is against the legal policies as stated in article 19, 26, 27 and 28 of UNCRPD (2008) in USA which advocates living independently, full participation, work and employment as essential to ensure full community integration of persons with disabilities among who are persons with mental retardation.

There is need for advocacy on these individuals community integration to a greater extent. Findings revealed that there were few kinds of employment opportunities open to YAWMR graduates since they were only employed in the institution they trained in and not any other places. This has been contributed by young adults with mental retardation having spent many years in vocational institutions. This segregates them from the rest of the community and as a result they are viewed as foreigners when they are re-integrated back to the community after graduation. They also lack a sense of belonging since they had been conditioned to an institution life. In the findings the headteacher revealed that even when employed somewhere else they keep on wanting to go back to those institutions that they trained in and if not given chances there, they drop out jobs. This prevents them from being integrated in other community activities freely.

#### **4.6.1 Types of Employment YAWM R were having**

The researcher asked YAWMR the type of employments they had and the result was as in Table 4.10.

**Table 4.10: Types of Employment**

<b>Employment</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No Employment	1	-	1	10
Groundsmen/Watchmen	-	6	6	60
Teacher Aide	1	-	1	10
Self-employment	1	1	2	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

The researcher sought to know the current employment status of YAWMR graduates from Maria Magdalene and the response was:

Out of the 16 graduates from 2005-2010, only 10 of them can be located where they are and most employments reflect male YAWMR while females are left out to do family chores at their homes because most courses are male oriented e.g. carpentry and masonry. In our case, we have (1) teacher aide female, (2) self-employed a male and female, (6) males working in the institution, (1) other female was once employed but not working now (Female headteacher, 2011).

From Table 4.10, 1(10%) female of the 10 sampled YAWMR was unemployed. Six (60%) males were employed as grounds men, 1(10%) female as a teacher aide while 2(20%) female and male had some kind of self-employment. The table also indicates that the few kinds of employment opportunities open to this group of graduates were basically in their own institutions with very few being self-employed. Comparing with the findings in Figure 4.1, P.58, none of the above mentioned employments reflected the courses offered to these graduates in the institution. None was a carpenter, tailor or bead worker. These findings are in line with Kweku (2000) who informed that these trainees were restricted to very few trades and spent unspecified periods of training. Kamere (2004) further supports the findings when she argues that persons with disabilities are stereotyped as those

incapable of performing and as a result, the education given to them is one which is inexpensive, employing little skilled manpower. In this case, it is geared towards manual training and acquisition of basic skills for survival and that's why activities of daily living skills lead to one being employed as a teacher aide. A teacher aide cleans the classroom and attends to the young ones who are not toilet trained.

Hallahan et al., (2009) further confirm the findings that adults with mental retardation have high rates of unemployment but with appropriate training they can hold jobs with success. Similarly, YAWMR with employment were interviewed whether they would prefer other jobs different from what they have, the results were as presented in Table 4.11:

**Table 4.11: YAWMR Employees Preferring Other Jobs**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Preferring other Jobs	5	71.4
Not Preferring other Jobs	2	28.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100</b>

From Table 4.11, 5 (71.4%) of the 7 employed YAWMR said they prefer other jobs while 2(28.6%) of them said they would not prefer other jobs. Most of these claimed to be working in areas they didn't train in. One of the respondents had the following to say:

I liked weaving but I don't do weaving because I was given other work (Female YAWMR no. 1,2011).

Women have specific traits that make them best in such skills like weaving. When the local community uses weaving products like baskets, it can be the best activity these YAWMR can do in their community to earn a living. This is the reason why the respondent above still feels she would have been well-placed if she did weaving instead of other activities.

#### 4.6.2 Challenges faced by YAWMR working/not working

On this item, the researcher came up with the following findings as shown in Table 4.12.

**Table 4.12: Challenges Faced by YAWMR Working/Not Working**

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Physical	2	20
Social	4	40
Health	2	20
No problem	2	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.12 shows that 2(20%) of YAWMR experienced physical challenges that hinder them from working or being integrated. Four (40%) on the other hand experienced social challenges and 2(20%) experienced health challenges while 2(20%) had no challenges as one stated:

I have no problem but at times work is hard and one gets very tired (Male YAWMR no. 7, 2011).

When the respondents were told to mention challenges YAWMR faced while working or not working, majority said negative attitudes towards persons with disability as the main reason for the failure of the community to integrate or employ YAWMR. This can be termed as a social barrier. This was confirmed by one of the parents who reported that:

Negative attitude of the society especially believing the person is cursed by God. For example, in my community many people would never like to associate with me and my son including some of my family members. I have struggled all alone to look for my sons schooling and other necessities. Again, the society fears them as sick, mentally ill, infectious. It is lot of stigmatization (Female parent no. 6, 2011).

Another respondent reported on physical barriers as follows:

Challenges affecting them include too much work and exploitation by other workers who take advantage over them. They get tired easily due to their weak bodies and most of them are epileptic. This means many get injuries through epileptic fits. Their health remains poor. Employers thus have little trust in them (Male vocational teacher no. 2, 2011).

Findings on the challenges faced by YAWMR both working and not working was that they faced social challenges as one respondent reported that there is societal negative attitude. Mugo and Sore (2008) confirm these findings that persons with disabilities among whom YAWMR are grouped are lonely in the society which could be translated as a social barrier. This factor is closely followed and integrated with challenges faced while integrating YAWMR that revealed community negative attitude as the biggest challenge people face while trying to integrate YAWMR.

#### **4.6.3 Challenges faced while Integrating YAWMR**

In this section, respondents were asked to say challenges faced while trying to place YAWMR in jobs. This is reflected in Table 4.13.

**Table 4.13: Challenges Faced While Integrating YAWMR**

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Disability severity	2	16.7
Parents dictate	2	16.7
Employers not there	1	8.3
High technology	1	8.3
Community negative attitude	4	33.3
Graduate refusing to be job placed	2	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>

From the results given, one of the respondents had this to say:

The biggest problem is when parents dictate the integration of the graduates. Some take their sons and daughters to places of what they were not trained in. Many employers refuse to allow even for internship and we beg them to do so. Some trainees refuse to be placed for jobs. The relevance of courses to some jobs becomes challenging since they require high technology and most of them will have acquired only a single skill e.g. smoothening or joinery. Community perception towards the weaknesses of mentally retarded is that they may never perform perfectly. They generalize all the mentally retarded and fail to support them. Some of the graduates when employed keep on wanting to go back to the institution and some drop jobs. Most mentally retarded fail to stick to a task and therefore are sent back home by employers (Female headteacher, 2011).

All this is reflected in Table 4.13 above which indicated that 2 (16.7%) respondents said that disability severity hindered YAWMR integration. Two (16.7%) said parents dictated their children's integration to wrong job placements. One (8.3%) reported employers were nowhere to be found. Another 1 (8.3%) talked of high technologies in places of work that YAWMR has no knowledge about and 2(16.7%) reported that even graduates themselves refuse to be job placed. The highest percent 4(33.3%) reported that community negative perception that these individuals are not capable of doing anything and that they think of them as mentally ill. The issue of high technologies is highlighted by Fernandez Kovari, Vulterini and Williams

(2002) that people with delayed development need to keep pace with the changing technology and political changes otherwise they can prove to be barriers, rather than supporters of their full integration in society.

#### **4.6.4 Follow- Up / Post-Institutional Support to YAWMR**

In determining the follow-ups and post-institutional support to YAWMR post-institutional life after vocational training, the findings of the study revealed that majority of the graduates had some form of community acceptance in terms of jobs though none was working in the areas they trained in. Referring to Table 4.10, P.73, only 2(20%) had self-employment and 7(70%) were in different areas of employment in the same institution they trained in and again doing different jobs from the courses they trained in. One (10%) had no employment at all. However, when administrators were asked whether they did follow-ups, one of them said:

We normally make a follow-up of where they are job placed; however, we have financial constraints because the funding by the government does not cater for the job trainer expenses. So, it's a bit hard and we get tired of using our own monies (Female headteacher, 2011).

Another respondent who was a vocational teacher also highlighted:

Normally we have not been able to do much but we contribute capital to those doing self-reliant business (Female vocational teacher no. 1, 2011).

One of the YAWMR interviewed whether anyone followed their whereabouts she said:

Nobody else, it is the teachers only (Male YAWMR no. 4, 2011).

Yet another one said:

Teachers visit me and bring me chemicals to make soap, mum has a women group that also buys threads for me and soap chemicals and I do a lot of work (Female YAWMR no. 5, 2011).

From the above comments, it seems it's only their teachers that try to follow them after graduation and teachers also complain of fund problems and that their follow-ups are not done accordingly. One of the teachers highlighted the reason for their follow-up as follows:

They are followed to be encouraged, keep in touch with the employers, check whether skills are helping in their work places and create rapport with employers (Male vocational teacher no. 2, 2011).

Parents asked over the same highlighted that teachers like to be with them to monitor and prevent their being overworked by other workers especially in the institution. YAWMR asked about who supported them in their post-institutional life. The results were as tabulated in Table 4.14.

**Table 4.14: YAWMR Report on Post-Institutional Support**

<b>Persons supportive</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Parents	2	20
Teachers	6	60
Parents and teachers	2	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

From Table 4.14, majority 6(60%) reported that it's only their teachers that supported them even to get the kind of jobs they had. Two (20% recommended their parents as the only supporters and especially those that

were not employed. Others 2(20%) reported that both parents and teachers supported them in their daily living life after graduation.

Kraemer and Blacher (2001) confirm the findings that, little is known regarding the extent to which schools are implementing transition programmes for students with severe mental retardation. It is also evident in the findings that very few employers are found. This implies that their transition is not smooth and therefore, transitional services are not effective. This should be looked into by trainers of persons with mental retardation and that this training should reflect resources available in the community including human resource. This will ensure smooth community integration of YAWMR. In addition, the study established that post-institutional support was highly offered by teachers rather than other members of the community. These findings do not concur with Friend (2008) that supported employment is the practice of assisting adults with disabilities to obtain jobs in the competitive market and providing them with necessary physical instructional and social support to ensure success for the employee and satisfaction for the employer.

#### **4.6.5 Comparison of YAWMR and other workers**

The researcher sought to establish how YAWMR compare with the “normal” workers. The only respondent asked about this was the employer who had the following to say:

The production rate is not the same since they lack human support for guidance in the community. However, with human support and guidance, they perform equally, are very obedient when it comes to following guidance and rules (Female headteacher, 2011).

She was further asked how she compared male and female training in terms of job market and she narrated:

Male courses appear to be more due to gender stereotyping that courses like carpentry, masonry and welding belong to male and tailoring and dressmaking belongs to female. You find those females are convinced not to do any other courses as well as male. Again, females are interfered with in terms of sexual harassment since they are thought to be low thinkers and ends up dropping out of employment after a short duration (Female headteacher, 2011).

#### 4.6.6 Why YAWMR Secure and Maintain Employment

The researcher further needed to know why YAWMR secure and maintain employment. The results are presented in Table 4.15.

**Table 4.15: Factors Leading to Securing and Maintaining of Employment of YAWMR**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Prior-preparation	4	17.4
Human-support	6	26.1
Employer acceptance	5	21.7
Self-employment Materials	2	8.7
Allowed to work at own pace	6	26.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>

According to Table 4.15, 6(26.1%) respondents said YAWMR secured and maintained employment as a result of having human support. This group of respondents tallied another group that said they could only secure and maintain employment if only they were allowed working at their own pace. Five (21.7%) said this would only happen if employers accepted them. Four (17.4 %) said it was only when prior-preparation was offered to them and the least response was 2(8.7%) who said it is only when self-employment materials were provided.

The findings create the impression that persons with mental retardation have so many limitations that can hinder them from securing and maintaining employment. This can be seen from the fact that majority of the respondents expressed how hard these individuals could secure and maintain employment by highlighting that it is only with human support meaning they cannot work alone independently. Therefore, the vocational trainers need to sensitize the community on the strengths of persons with mental retardation. Further internship chances should be sought for these persons so as to prove their capability to employers. This is only possible if there are job trainers in place to link the trainees and the employers.

#### **4.7 Barriers Hindering YAWMR Community Integration**

Earlier in this chapter (Table 4.10,P.73), it was reported that out of the 16 graduates who graduated from 2005-2010 in Maria Magdalene, only 10 of them were known where they were. Given this situation, it became relevant to find out barriers that hinder these YAWMR from being community integrated. All the 23 respondents were asked to state factors that hinder YAWMR community integration after graduating from vocational training at Maria Magdalene. The responses are presented in Table 4.16:

**Table 4.16: Barriers Hindering YAWMR Community Integration**

<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Society negative attitude	12	52.2
Lack of vocational curriculum	3	13
Lack of job opportunities	3	13.
Health impairments/disability severity	4	17.4
Self-employment materials	1	4.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.16 shows that majority of the respondents 12(52.2%) found societal negative attitude towards persons with mental retardation and work being the biggest barrier to their community integration. Employers thus have little trust in their working. The continued terminology as “mentally retarded” also gave them a label, which not only stigmatized them and their parents but also put the employers off. Health impairment leading to disability severity was reported second biggest barrier with 4(17.4%) respondents. Other 2 significant barriers included lack of vocational curriculum for persons with mental retardation 3(13%) and lack of job opportunities 3(13%). The least reported barrier was lack of materials for self-employment which was 1(4.4%). This could be as a result of these individuals lacking initiatives to start their own self-reliant jobs. It was only one female and one male who were said to be having self-employment out of the 16 graduates from 2005-2010 in Table 4.10, P.73.

The findings continue to confirm that negative societal attitude towards young adults with mental retardation is the biggest barrier to their community integration. Other barriers included lack of vocational curriculum, lack of job opportunities, health impairments/disability severity and lack of self-employment materials. Mugo and Sore (2008) confirm these findings when they highlight that negative attitude towards special needs learners contribute to their not being integrated into the society and can be translated as a social barrier.

It should be noted that these individuals given the right training and placement, they can perform as near normal as possible with other members of the community. They should, therefore, be given such opportunities. As Hallahan et al., (2009) posit, adults with mental retardation have high rates of unemployment but with appropriate training, they can maintain jobs with success measured by such things as attendance, employer satisfaction and length of employment.

#### **4.8 How to Minimize Barriers of Community Integration of YAWMR**

Asked to suggest how barriers of community integration of YAWMR could be minimized, respondents suggested various ways. Their suggestions included the following:

- Organizing parent's workshops to educate them on how to handle YAWMR at home after graduation.
- Seek internship for them and internship plans to be put in place to create awareness of their participation capacity.
- Educate the community at large through churches, chief's barazas while selling YAWMR's products.
- Create awareness to stakeholders of vocational skills and employers.
- Advocate for a special education vocational curriculum for persons with mental retardation implementation from KIE which has not been put in place.

- Parents to be encouraged to involve their sons and daughters with mental retardation in all areas of community participation including youth groups, church and many others.
- Employers should be encouraged to employ YAWMR in areas of production.

This is captured in the opinion by one of the YAWMR's response as cited below:

Employers to accept the vocational leavers for internship because I only got kitchen work in school since one workshop man refused me to work with him (Male YAWMR no. 7, 2011).

- The government to allow for inclusion of YAWMR in regular vocational institutions and special education trainers to be in- serviced so as to cater for the personal deficit. Also, job trainers to be funded by the government to make follow-ups in places of work.

The suggestions of the respondents on how barriers of community integration of YAWMR should be minimized were organizations of parents' workshops, internship plans, awareness creation, vocational curriculum implementation and inclusion of YAWMR in regular vocational institution. The viability of recommendations as given by the respective respondents is worth of reflections. For instance, having special education vocational curriculum may add value to the adaptation of regular vocational curriculum. This will help the trainees since they will be trained on what is relevant to the job market. Internship programmes are essential since the trainees will have gained full knowledge of working in the courses they trained in as we are going the inclusion way today. The suggestion that these individuals should be included

in regular vocational institution is very noble since they will feel accepted to overcome social barriers. Hallahan et al., (2009) confirm that there is no integration of workers who are mentally retarded with those that are not disabled thus the suggestion is well-placed. They further highlight that the restriction of sheltered workshops makes it difficult to prepare workers who are mentally retarded for working side by side with non-disabled workers in the competitive workforce. Therefore, including them in all aspects of community participation will gear towards their developments and for the entire community at large. Other recommendations are such as, the government funding job trainers to make follow-ups as well as funding those YAWMR with their self-reliant employment.

According to Taylor (1997), work study-co-coordinators should spend half of their time with the employers and should; assist special needs persons enrolled in their programmes in finding work study placement and assist job placement staff in promoting public relations for the placement programmes. Similarly, they should co-ordinate the entire placement and follow-up effort and gain the assistance of all involved as well as maintaining records of all activities.

#### **4.9 Observations of YAWMR at Work**

During the study, YAWMR were observed as they worked. It was observed that:

- i. Young adults with mental retardation employed were working in different areas contrary to the courses they had reported as having trained in. All the 6 male employees with mental retardation were working as

groundsmen/watchmen whereby they also did kitchen work alongside other “normal” employees. The only female employed was assisting teachers in classes as a teacher aide contrary to the dressmaking course she reported as having trained in. Now, this is contradicting the reports given by respondents that courses taken by YAWMR were relevant to their community integration.

- ii. The workers exhibited social skills and did not have problems during tasks performance and appeared confident enough in whatever activities they were engaged in. They also followed instructions apart from one in the kitchen who kept on asking what else to do. However, any activity he was guided to do, he did it perfectly.
- iii. Employees with mental retardation displayed quality work. For example, the female teacher aide was able to arrange the furniture in the classroom and also directed the young ones to their respective seats. Young children showed a lot of attachment to her. This meant they appreciated one of their kinds to assist them.
- iv. These employees displayed self-directive skills since most of them could perform without assistance. For example in the kitchen, they could chop cabbages, prepare onions, put food on fire and serve to the rest of the school in the dining hall. However, other “normal” employees worked alongside them.

Observation of working YAWMR established by the study is that young adults with mental retardation employed were working in different areas

contrary to the courses they had reported as having trained in. Six male employees trained in different areas of vocational skills but were working as groundsmen/watchmen. In addition, they exhibited social skills, had quality work, were self-directive and worked alongside other 'normal' employees. This disagreed with Hallahan et al., (2009) that restriction to sheltered workshops makes it difficult to prepare workers who are mentally retarded for working side by side with non-disabled workers in competitive workforce. However, Friend (2008) confirmed that supported employment is the practice of assisting adults with disabilities to obtain jobs in the competitive market and providing them with the necessary physical, instructional and social support to ensure success for the employee and satisfaction for the employer. It was noted that most of the YAWMR employees were socially interacting with "normal" workers. However, one of the groundsmen whose duty was to be at the gate during the week of observation seemed very quiet all the time. The researcher sought to know the reason why. The young man said he had lost his father who was to be buried and this information was confirmed to be true by the headteacher who was present during observation schedule. This showed these individuals have feelings like any other person and therefore, needed a compassionate leave from the institution.

It is, therefore, evident that persons with mental retardation given resources, training, social support and proper instructions, can be successful members in the community. Further, their integration would be easy and not taxing. Similarly, the community should be made aware by the trainers, government

and other stakeholders to consider persons with mental retardation as persons who have human normal feelings. A good example of not considering them as having normal feelings is when one of them had lost his father. The school assumed he was not aware and therefore, engaged him in working and failed to observe his moods. Therefore, this person was not integrated socially.

#### **4.10 Summary**

This chapter has analyzed vocational education and community integration of YAWMR. The summary presented in the preceding sections of this chapter is based on the data collected from Maria Magdalene Special School in Thika East, Kiambu County as summarized in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter summarizes the findings of this study. The study has exposed a number of issues relating to vocational education and community integration of young adults with mental retardation. The summary is divided into parts addressing each objectives stated in chapter one. Summary is followed by conclusions based on the same objective. Thereafter, recommendations on how vocational training for persons with mental retardation can be improved further to enhance their smooth transition from training to community integration. Lastly, the chapter makes recommendations of areas that need further research.

#### **5.2 Summary of Research Findings**

The study sought to investigate vocational education and community integration of young adults with mental retardation. The study traced graduates from Maria Magdalene between 2005 and 2010. Guided by the Harperns model of transition services, the study established how teachers identified and classified persons with mental retardation, equipped them with skills of community adjustment, the effectiveness of transition services and follow-up programmes to aid their transition from vocational institution to community integration, different avenues through which they were integrated in the community and lastly established barriers hindering community integration of young adults with mental retardation.

### **5.2.1 Identification and Classification of Persons with Mental Retardation**

The study sought to examine how young adults with mental retardation were identified and classified in Kiambu County. The study found that most of the identification as to whether one has mental retardation was established in school. Most parents reported that they only came to realize their children were retarded when teachers informed them. The second higher identification was done in hospitals after frequent visits and treatments. Others were through friends and relatives. Further, the study established that majority were referred to assessment centers after identification where they were assessed and referred to special schools for children with mental retardation. The study found that they were classified as being mild, moderate and profound by the assessors but teachers classified them as educable, trainable and custodian. Parents did not have information on classification and all that they knew was about assessment and placement and by who. They reported majority as having been assessed by EARC's officers while others by medical officers in hospitals and the church. They also reported about placement to school where they said majority of the children were placed by assessment officers and parents themselves while others by both parents and assessment team.

### **5.2.2 Vocational Skills Offered in Institutions for Persons with Mental Retardation**

From the findings, it was established that Maria Magdalene Institution concentrated on providing vocational skills in six major areas namely; tailoring, and dressmaking, cookery, knitting, beadwork and activities of daily living. However, the headteacher's report included areas like masonry,

welding, jewelry and agriculture but none of the graduates reported as having trained in these either. A few were job placed in the school garden even if they didn't report training in agriculture. It was reported that they did carpentry, tailoring, cookery, knitting, beadwork and activities of daily living. Majority of the graduates liked the courses they trained in and did not have any problem. Majority of the 23 respondents reported the courses offered as being relevant to what YAWMRs were doing while a few said they were not. Further, the study reported challenges faced by teachers while offering vocational skills. Such challenges included; different levels of disability severity, lack of funds, persons with mental retardation refusing what suited them and wanting what they did not have capability in, some parents also interfered with what their sons and daughters wanted to do and they forced them to take areas that trainers did not recommend. Further challenges revealed concerned trainees taking too long to grasp or perform a task. This kept them in school for long. Another challenge reported was lack of technical special education teachers. The study also reported a problem of gender stereotyped courses whereby some courses were perceived to belong to males e.g. carpentry and masonry while for females were domestic chores. These challenges proved to be a great hindrance to community integration of YAWMR.

### **5.2.3 Transition Services and Follow- Up Programmes**

The findings also revealed that trainees in Maria Magdalene were offered a variety of transition services in preparation for their community integration. They ranged from guidance and counseling, individualized education

programmes, internships and self- management skills. Further, the study realized that graduates lacked follow-ups to establish their well-being. The report revealed that it is only teachers that tried to make a follow-up and even then, there was no fund to facilitate their follow-up. One teacher said they also get tired and stop the exercise of following up. The teacher further reported funds as being the major problem because they lacked enough money to empower the self-employed graduates. This meant that these graduates did not receive encouragement either to continue working and most of them run away from places of work. Again, these individuals get overworked since no one monitors their working and some become conditioned to teachers since they are the only supporters they see around.

#### **5.2.4 Community Integration Avenues**

In establishing community integration avenues that these graduates were engaged in, the researcher found that almost all of the graduates were absorbed back to their institutions as employees, three others were involved in marriage, church activities, community development youth group and none was in games and sports. Six were employed as grounds men/watchmen, one as a teacher aide, two had some form of self-employment and one had no employment. This was against what they had been trained in that 3 did carpentry, 2 tailoring, 1 cookery, 2 knitting, 1 beadwork and 1 activities of daily living. Courses like carpentry, masonry or jewelry were reported as part-time activities. However, there was an indication that vocational institution equipped them with skills for economic empowerment heading to self-reliance

as it is with the two self-employed YAWMR. These skills have helped them become responsible members of their families.

The study also found that many of the graduates preferred other jobs other than the ones they were job placed in. Majority prefer other jobs while a few were comfortable with the kind of jobs they had. However, interview with the employer showed that very few employers are willing to employ graduates with mental retardation. Apart from their own institution, the researcher targeted 10 employers but established only one. It was also noted that very few kinds of employment opportunities were open to these graduates. The areas they were engaged in were not termed as job markets as far as vocation skills were concerned.

Graduates reported several challenges that they encountered in the community including; physical problems, social problems and health problems. It is evident that society had negative attitude towards YAWMRs community integration with the highest percentage. Educators and parents also experienced challenges while trying to integrate them. Two reported disability severity as a challenge since the more severe a person's disability, the lesser the chances of getting employed. Other challenges included; parents dictating where their sons and daughters should be integrated, employers not being there for them, high technology in places of work beyond their capability, society negative attitude and graduates refusing to be job-placed and wanting to remain in the institutions.

Teachers were found to be the most human support YAWMR had as far as post-institutional support is concerned. Majority of the post-institutional supporters were teachers, parents and others were supported by both parents and teachers. Factors leading to securing and maintaining of their jobs included; human support, allowed working at their own pace, employer's acceptance, prior-preparation and materials to aid self-employment.

### **5.2.5 Barriers Hindering Community Integration of YAWMR**

The study established quite a number of barriers that hindered community integration of YAWMR which included; societal negative attitude towards YAWMR, health impairment and disability severity, lack of vocational curriculum, lack of job opportunities and materials to facilitate self-employment.

#### **5.2.5.1 Minimizing Barriers of Community Integration of YAWMR**

The study established various recommendations from respondents as far as how these barriers should be minimized. They include; organizing parents' workshops, seeking internships for the graduates while still in training, create awareness to the community at large to advocate for special education, vocational curriculum implementation, a link between trainers and employers should be enhanced through the use of job trainers and further, the study recommended inclusion of YAWMR in regular vocational institutions.

### **5.3 Implications of the Research Findings**

Data gathered showed that transition of YAWMR from institutions to community integration was very low. This trend is as a result of a number of factors, among them, the fact that there were no vocational curricula to prepare for their placements and also the societal negative attitude towards YAWMR education and community participation. They are perceived as dependants and not participants. They are also perceived as slow learners and therefore, perform task slowly. Therefore, the few with vocational training skills are directed towards being employed and denied participation in other community activities which can be termed as social segregation. Moreover even in those employments, none was relevant to vocational skills that they trained in.

Further data gathered from the educators also revealed that lack of vocational curriculum does not directly tailor towards market demands. For this reason, community integration of YAWMR in employment and other participation remains very low. At the same time, the attitudes of the employers do not appear to support the working of YAWMR. Only one employer in the same institution that they trained in was found. These attitudes are mainly based on the YAWMR health impairments and slow in performing task.

Given this kind of situation, the respondents felt that certain initiatives need to be considered. First, special vocational curriculum for persons with mental retardation should be formulated and implemented to ensure job market competence. Creation of awareness to the entire community should be done effectively to avoid stigmatization and social segregation. Parents also needed

education as far as their sons and daughters are concerned to create an acceptance attitude in them. The government should also show more commitment to the whole vocational training, to both regular and special individuals and enhance inclusive vocational training. The findings have negatively affected community integration of YAWMR and indicated a great hindrance to any form of their transition from training to community integration.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

In line with the above findings, the researcher had the following conclusions:

- i. Identification and classification of persons with mental retardation was not done by a multi-disciplinary team as the principle of assessment dictates. Majority were identified by teachers alone and placed by education assessment officers who initially were still teachers.
- ii. Courses offered in vocational institutions do not reflect in their current jobs. It was evident that what these individuals were employed to do is not what they trained in thus some of them disliked what they were employed to do.
- iii. There are no well-established transitional programmes to make follow-up of the graduates and this becomes a great hindrance to their community integration. Transition of YAWMR from vocational institutions has not been very smooth from school to community integration. Many young adults with mental retardation reported not

being engaged in other aspects of community integration apart from employment.

- iv. The issue of integrating YAWMR was a big challenge due to societal negative attitude towards persons with mental retardation.
- v. There has not been special vocational curriculum for persons with mental retardation. The report from vocational teachers and the headteacher is that they modify the regular curriculum to fit persons with mental retardation.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

### **5.5.1 Recommendations to Maria Magdalene Special School**

- i. The school should separate vocational classes with others so as to appear a post- school institution.
- ii. The school should come up with jobs reflecting the courses/skills they are offering for instance, those doing carpentry should join the carpentry workshop instead of becoming a watchman and so on.
- iii. The school should come up with its own strategies on matters concerning their graduate's community integration and follow-ups.
- iv. The school should guide parents on different ways of integrating persons with mental retardation.
- v. The school should also create awareness to the entire community by selling these individuals' products as well as advocating their capability in order to minimize barriers to community integration.

### **5.5.2 Recommendation to the Government**

- i. There should be standardized and organized procedures in policies to manage the transition process of persons with special needs including persons with mental retardation. Special educators and trainers should be involved in policy-making so as to put in place what is needed as far as persons with mental retardation are concerned. If it is a vocational assessment tool, then it should be well-formulated and implemented in the field and not only in papers.
- ii. The government through the Kenya Institute of Education should implement special education vocational curriculum in order to facilitate for job market-oriented courses to these individuals.
- iii. The government should employ and fund job trainers for follow-up programmes so as to facilitate the performance of the graduates in their places of work.
- iv. The government should empower YAWMR with kits to start their self-reliant businesses.
- v. The government should encourage the formation of advocacy groups made by parents, vocational and special education teachers, rehabilitation counselors, employers and interested community agency representatives to identify barriers to effective transition and to form inter-agency linkages to disseminate information about vocational training and employment opportunities.

### **5.5.3 Recommendations for Further Research**

The researcher carried out the study in Maria Magdalene special school which is both a school and a vocational institution. The school is in Thika East of Kiambu County. This being a very small data area in Kenya, the researcher would like to recommend that certain areas be researched on for more understanding of vocational education and community integration of YAWMR. Such should include:

- i. Availability of formal vocational assessment tools needs to be researched on so as to place persons with mental retardation in the right courses according to their capability. It was found that there was no well-specified tool to assess trainers. It was mentioned but not well-elaborated. Again, identification of persons with mental retardation in this study seemed to be by teachers only and therefore, a study on other members of the community role should be done.
- ii. Another study on course relevance to job market should be carried out to facilitate right job placement of these individuals. It is evident in the study that persons with mental retardation were only used in very cheap laborers like grounds men and watchmen which were not the courses they trained in.
- iii. The effectiveness of vocational instructors should be studied as far as vocational skills are concerned. There is need for vocational instructors to be trained so as to perfect their training.
- iv. Since Kiambu is just one county amongst other 47, the researcher suggests that another study be carried out in another county or in many

schools since this was a case study. The researcher also suggests that a quantitative data using questionnaires be sought since this study employed qualitative data through interviews and observations.

- v. Conceptions of work among young adults with mental retardation should also be determined. If an employee likes the kind of job he or she is doing, the likelihood of perfecting it is high. It was found that some did not like the jobs they were doing.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE HEAD TEACHER

##### 1. General information

- (a) How long have you been heading this institution?
  - (b) What refresher courses have you attended for the last 3 years?
  - (c) For how long have you been heading persons with mental retardation?
2. How do you identify and classify persons with mental retardation in your institution for the right placement? (probe for intelligent quotient scale, adaptive behavior scale, levels of support, referred from assessment centre, further probe- how do you classify students for vocational readiness and what criteria is used?)
  3. (a) What skills of vocational training do you offer to enhance community integration of your graduates? Probe for vocational skills, social skills ADLS, independent skills.  
(b) What challenges does the institution face while offering vocational skills to trainees with mental retardation?
  4. What transitional services do you offer to facilitate YAWMR community participation? Probe for individualized transitional programme, guidance and counseling self management skills and career choice, probe for transitional services to maintain employment probe –How many trainees have you graduated from 2005-2010.?
  5. (a) What type of community avenues/placement did your graduates get after training? Probe - does the institution follow-up graduates to where they are integrated/not integrated in the community?  
(b) What challenges does the institution face in integrating/placing its graduates in the community?
  6. What barriers do you think hinder persons with mental retardation from being integrated in the community? Probe for physical barrier, social barrier, type of curriculum, methods of instruction, probe- what are you doing to minimize these barriers, probe- what do you recommend to enhance community integration of YAWMR? Please add any other information?

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR VOCATIONAL TEACHERS

#### 1. General information

- (a) For how long have you taught vocational education?
  - (b) What refresher courses have you attended for the last 3 years?
  - (c) For how long have you been teaching persons with mental retardation?
2. How do you classify persons with mental retardation? Probe (mild, moderate, severe) probe- how do you conduct transition assessment when a student is ready to graduate?
  3. (a) What curriculum are you using to equip persons with mental retardation with skills of community adjustment? Probe –how do trainees with different severity of mental retardation cope with training, probe- do you think the courses offered are relevant /not relevant for community adjustment of YAWMR? Why?
  - (b) What challenges do you face while training trainees with mental retardation?
  4. What transitional services do you put in place to help YAWMR'S transition from training to community life? Probe for ITP, career guidance and counseling, IVT, Transition assessment process,- probe what post-institution support do you offer to YAWMR to ensure community integration and job retention, probe further-how do you accredit your graduates to show that they trained in certain course in your institution?
  5. (a) What type of community integration avenues/placement do you direct your trainees for job market? Probe- how many graduates with mental retardation have been employed/not employed from 2005-2010? How many female/male? Are there any follow-up after placement? Why do you follow-up/ what makes it possible to secure employment?
  - (b) What challenges do you face while integrating /placing graduates with mental retardation?
  6. What barriers do you think prevent young adults with mental retardation from getting integrated in the community? Probe –what are you doing to minimize these barriers, probe- are there any other emerging issues concerning vocational education and community integration of YAWMR.

**APPENDIX C****INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS****1. General Information**

- (a) What managerial post do you hold in your industry/institution?
  - (b) For how long have you been in this industry /institution?
  - (c) Please tell about your experience with YAWMR?
2. How many graduates with mental retardation have you employed so far and for how long? Probe- how many female/male- probe further how do you tell your employee is mentally retarded probe – how do you rate YAWMR with other workers?
  3. Do you think the training offered to YAWMR is sufficient / not sufficient to help them access the job market? Probe – how do you compare male and female training in terms of job market? Probe – do you think courses offered to YAWMR are relevant / not relevant to job market? Why?
  4. How does YAWMR compare with other workers in terms of productivity? Probe- how do you rate the community integration of YAWMR in terms of social skills, self-care, and co-operation?
  5. What led to your employing YAWMR? Probe- what do you think makes it possible for them to secure employment and maintain it? Probe-what are you doing to increase more community avenues to place YAWMR?
  6. What do you think hinders the working of YAWMR? Probe- what challenges are you facing while working with persons with mental retardation? Probe-what do you think can be done to prevent segregation of persons with mental retardation in places of work? Probe-comment on other emerging issues concerning YAWMR training and productivity in your place of work.

**APPENDIX D****INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR YOUNG ADULTS WITH MENTAL  
RETARDATION****1. General Information**

- a. Age and Gender:
  - b. Grade after vocation training:
2. Why were you placed in a special school/ institution? Probe –who placed you? What class was you placed in (primary, pre-vocational, vocational e.g.)?
  3. What courses did you take in vocation institutional? Probe –why did you like/dislike the courses you took? Further probe-in what ways has the courses you took helped you to adjust to community life?
  4. What support services were you offered in vocational training to help you adjust in the community? Probe- for individualized vocational transition services, carrier guidance and counseling, probe further-what support have you received from people after completion of vocational training (teachers, parents, co-workers, employers)?
  5. Please tell us how you spend your day from waking up to sleeping? Probe – what are you doing at the moment in terms of employment / not employed? Probe –who helped you to get the kind of job you are having after graduation? Probe- what challenges are you facing while working / not working? Further probe –what other job would you have preferred?
  6. What challenges are you facing in adjusting to community life after vocational training? Probe – what do you think should be done to make it possible for you to easily adjust to community living and working?

## APPENDIX E

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS/ GUARDIANS

#### 1. General Information

- a. What level of education did you attain?
  - b. Please tell us about your son /daughters growing up, schooling, working or not working.
2. How did you tell your child needed special education? Probe – regular school, assessment centre, hospital, further probe-where did you take your child for assessment if any? Probe-who decided your Childs placement in school? Probe for-assessment team, parent, and professionals.
  3. (a) What kind of education did your child receive in school? Probe- for how long has your son / daughter been in school? – Probe- what level did he/she attain/ (primary, secondary, pre-vocation, vocational and post-vocational.  
(a) How would you comment on the kind of education your daughter /son received in relation to his/ her community living? Probe for – activities of daily living skills, social skills, and independent living skills, self-directive and self-determined.
  4. What transition service was your son / daughter offered to aid his transition to community life? Probe-how did the service help?
  5. What kind of activities is your son/daughter doing in the community? What kind of employment if any is your son/daughter having/ probe – what makes it possible for him / her to maintain employment? – What can you tell about your son/ daughter residential and property owning? Probe for responsibility, living alone, owning properties
  6. What challenges do you face while trying to seek employment for your child? Probe what do you think hinders your son / daughter from being integrated fully in the community? Probe- what are you doing to minimize barriers that hinder your son/daughter from being community integrated?

**APPENDIX F**

**OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR YAWMR WORKING**

Setting: Work places

Observer: Researcher

Role of the Researcher: Non-Participant Observer

Time: 8.00 am -12.00 pm

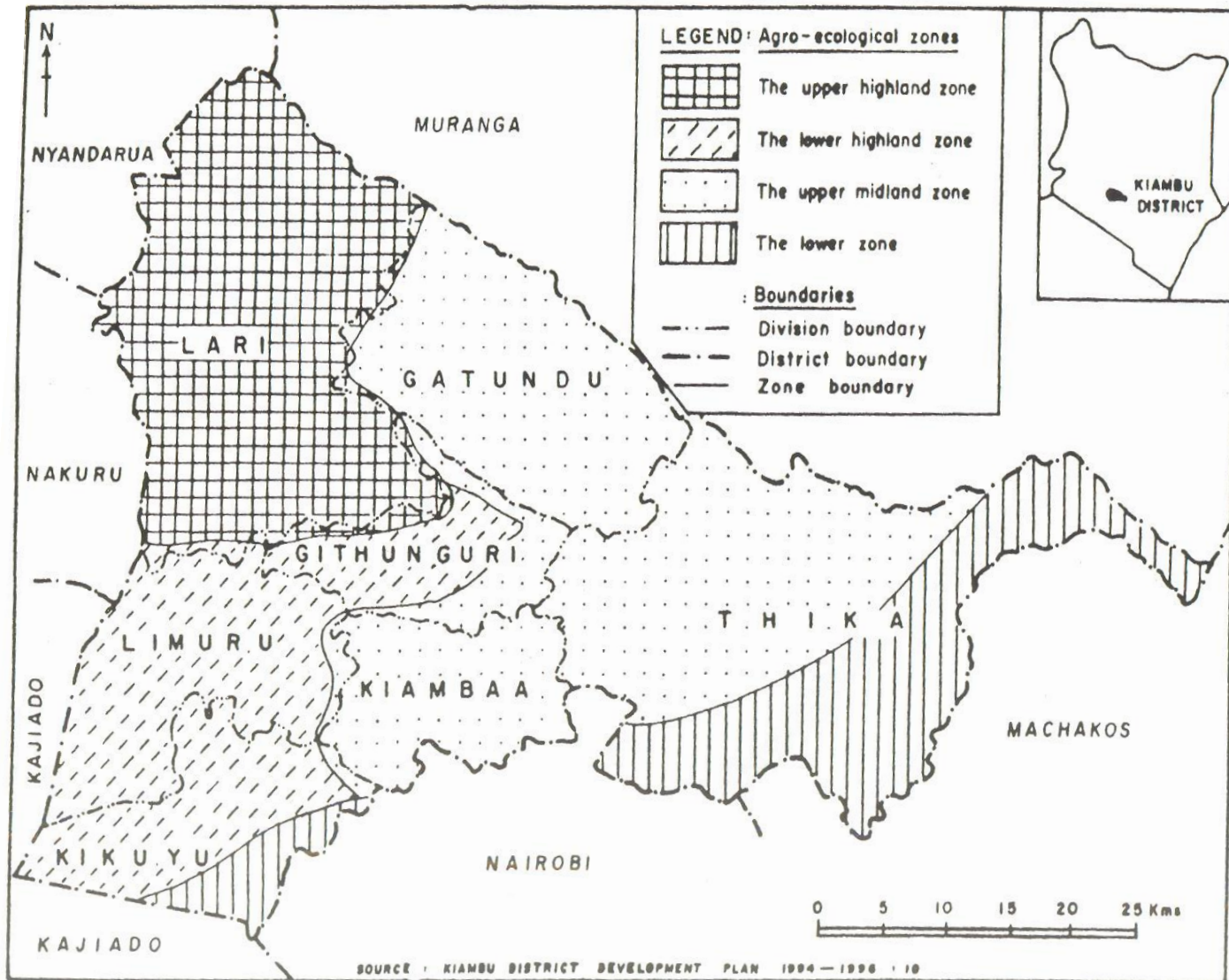
Length of Observation: 4 hours per individual

**BEHAVIOUR OF YAWMR IN PLACE OF WORK**

1. Social skills
2. Level of confidence
3. Response to Instructions.
4. Quality of work.
5. Self directive skills
6. Grooming
7. Interaction with other workers.

## APPENDIX G

### MAP OF KIAMBU COUNTY




KIAMBU COUNTY AND ITS DIVISIONS

## APPENDIX H

## RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION LETTER AND PERMIT

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Telegrams: "SCIENCETECH", Nairobi  
Telephone: 254-020-241349, 2213102  
254-020-310571, 2213123.  
Fax: 254-020-2213215, 318245, 318249  
When replying please quote

P.O. Box 30623-00100  
NAIROBI-KENYA  
Website: www.ncst.go.ke

Our Ref: **NCST/RRI/12/1/SS-011/481** Date: **28<sup>th</sup> April, 2011**

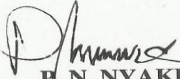
Margaret Wanjiru Makanya  
Kenyatta University  
P. O. Box 43844  
**NAIROBI**

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Following your application for authority to carry out research on **"Vocational education and community integration of young adults with mental retardation in Kiambu County, Kenya"** I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Thika East District** for a period ending **31<sup>st</sup> May, 2011**.

You are advised to report to **the District Commissioner, the District Education officer of Thika East District** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **one hard copy and one soft copy** of the research report/thesis to our office.

  
**H. N. NYAKUNDI**  
**FOR: SECRETARY/CEO**

Copy to:

The District Commissioner  
Thika East District

The District Education Officer  
Thika East District

PAGE 2

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

Prof./Dr./Mr./Mrs./Miss MARGARET WANJIRU  
MAKANYA

of (Address) KENYATTA UNIVERSITY  
BOX 43844 NAIROBI


has been permitted to conduct research in.....  
.....Location.....  
THIKA EAST District,  
CENTRAL Province,  
on the topic: "VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND  
COMMUNITY INTEGRATION OF YOUNG  
ADULTS WITH MENTAL RETARDATION  
IN KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA".

for a period ending..... 31ST MAY 2011

PAGE 3

NCST/RR/12/1/SS-011/481

Research Permit No.....  
Date of issue..... 28/4/2011  
Fee received..... KSHS.1000



*M. Wanjiru*


Applicant's  
Signature

*P. Juma*

Secretary  
National Council for  
Science and Technology

CONDITIONS

1. You must report to the District Commissioner and the District Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit
2. Government Officers will not be interviewed with-out prior appointment.
3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.
4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.
5. You are required to submit at least two(2)/four(4) bound copies of your final report for Kenyans and non-Kenyans respectively.
6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

**RESEARCH CLEARANCE PERMIT**

(CONDITIONS— see back page)

GPK6055t3mt10/2011