

## **Effectiveness of empowerment program on deaf youth social integration: case of Nairobi and Kisii counties**

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to understand why disabled people specifically deaf youth who have been in training programs could not have access to job opportunities like others. This study investigated the effectiveness of Deaf Aid empowerment programs in Nairobi and Kisii counties. A case study design was used to obtain data from a clearly defined population that comprises deaf people who were in the program, and some stakeholders and supervisors of the deaf youth in their workplaces. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used and data collected using questionnaire and semi-structured interviews that addressed key research objectives. The study used a sample of 86 deaf youth who were selected through a

simple random sampling and 5 stakeholders of the deaf youth selected purposively. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 20) was used for the statistical analysis while qualitative data were analysed thematically according the objectives of the research. The respondents' results showed that the training offered by Deaf Aid is effective enough in nature for their economic empowerment. From the respondents (77), majority of those who were in the training reported to be employed or self-employed due to the training (79.4 %) as compared to those who were employed or self-employed independently from the training (20.6 %). Among other results from the participants, the study found that the main barriers to deaf youth

access to employment are discrimination, lack of communication skills and the respect of the rights of deaf people in the society. The results of the study brought out the areas of improvement and how the program could be redesigned in order to align it to the demand of the job market. Access to employment transformed the vulnerability of many beneficiaries and they felt economically empowered and self-reliant in the society. More research is needed on how to involve families in the economic empowerment of their deaf children and the government of Kenya must create and facilitate empowerment programs for disable people.

**Key terms:** Empowerment, Deaf, Deaf aid, Youth social integration

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## INTRODUCTION

Major reforms have been adopted by the Kenya government and by the new constitution in order to improve the socio-economic condition of the population and much focus was on the improvement of the condition of young people in the society. Peterson, Wellman and Liu (2005) state that issues facing deaf people in the first world, with highly developed welfare provision, are indeed different from those in the developing world. In areas of civil, political and social citizenship, Deaf/deaf people believe that their experience of engaging in society is far from being positive and in

areas of social citizenship, most particularly education, they feel they are denied basic and fundamental rights (Emery, 2009). Countries around the world came up with different initiatives and reformed policies that foster the social integration of deaf people.

Looking at empowerment strategies of deaf people designed by the United Nations, Hamill and Stein (2011) examined weblogs maintained by deaf people online. They found that the American Deaf culture places on American Sign Language a great value and the treatment of deaf and hearing people in the same manner with the same opportunities. However in Sweden, Rydberg, Gellerstedt and Danermark (2011) state that when one consider the employment rate of deaf people compared to hearing people, the first are less employed when the level of education is taken into account. This is because employers are not certain about the competence of deaf people, including their social competence.

A country's development encompasses contributions from every individual be they children, youth and adults, disabled and healthy people. Development is both a physical reality and a state of mind in which society has, through some combination of social, economic and institutional processes, secured the means of obtaining a better life. In Cameroon for

instance, deaf education is difficult due to the expensive cost of the schools that are all private (De Clerck, 2011). Professional sign language interpreters lack as the government does not provide services for teaching the Cameroonian Sign Language (CSL).

The contribution of every person to the development of the society can be seen from different perspectives. However for at-risk young people to participate in the society's development, empowerment programs should be established for them to be mentored and empowered economically. The economic empowerment reduces their vulnerability and would help them become self-reliance. They can therefore participate in the society. In a global context, most disabled people encounter both disabling barriers and barriers to scarce resources (Barnes and Mercer, 2005). Deaf people's vulnerability can be observed in many developing countries including Kenya where despite initiatives in place in order to help deaf people meet their needs, their number in the streets is increasing. In 2012, around 94 deaf schools or units were present (Kenyan Association of the Deaf, 2012). Johnstone, Ojwang, Garaghty and Runnels (2012) wrote that several Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been complementing government efforts in provision of education to people with disabilities in Kenya. Many disabled and

deaf people take the streets as a solution for them to own their daily bread and to overcome the rejection of their home community. In the streets they become beggars and more exposed to the bad perpetrations of the citizens. It is by identifying these gaps that Deaf Aid came up with a practical program that enhances deaf youth to meet the real demands of the technological world.

Historically, deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) people were considered outcasts in the society (Von Thomas, 2014). Mislabeled as "deaf-mutes" or, even worse, "deaf and dumb," they were often institutionalized and experimented upon, denied freedom, education, employment, and citizenship (Brueggemann, 2009). This aspect nowadays has taken upon a discriminatory attitude towards the deaf people when it comes to job opportunities and insertion in the society Macha (2007). In developing countries, few programs that are offered to them, remains at the basic level helping them to communicate with their community; or if given an opportunity to do further training, curriculum that are offered do not really put them at a competitive level. Consequently, their personal initiatives are unable to sustain their living and to some extent, not accepted by the local community. This is because of the stigma attached to them. Many deaf and other disabled people consider that life is

easier while on the streets receiving help from a good Samaritan instead of making use of the practical skills that they may have. They therefore feel earning their daily lives in the streets from people instead of spending their times in a training program for their empowerment. This implies that training should go together with empowerment if one wants to build the whole person. It is through empowerment that the trainee becomes more aware of his/her capacity to achieve great things in life. Although investing in the education of deaf people, very few organizations working with deaf people address the gap between the education system and professional employment and how to help deaf people bridge this gap.

Deaf youth for example, receive less or no attention in quality education especially in tertiary skills. Accessibility to higher learning institution is limited with ever rising intake grades year after year. The main reasons are undoubtedly lack of awareness and inadequate qualification of different stakeholders and service providers at every stage of the society to deal with different impairments. Irrelevant curriculum in training, limited access to education for the deaf youth and lack of quality training adapted to their needs are some of the challenges facing the deaf youth in the job market. These result to unemployment, poor access to financial

support and social exclusion. This study therefore accessed the effectiveness of Deaf Youth Empowerment Program on the livelihood of deaf youth in Nairobi and Kisii counties.

### **Research Aim and Objectives**

The general objective of this research was to assess the effectiveness of Deaf Youth Empowerment Programs in achieving economic self-reliance and the social integration of deaf youth in Nairobi and Kisii counties.

Specific objectives are:

- i. To assess the attitudes of the deaf youth towards the significance of Deaf Youth Empowerment Program in Nairobi and Kisii counties.
- ii. To establish the extent to which the deaf youth have realised economic empowerment through the Deaf Youth Empowerment Program in Nairobi and Kisii counties.
- iii. To investigate the influence of Deaf Youth Empowerment Program towards the social integration of deaf youth in Nairobi and Kisii counties.
- iv. To assess the contribution of Deaf Youth Empowerment Program towards the deaf youth self-reliance in Nairobi and Kisii counties.

### **Materials and Methods**

The study used a case study design that described and analysed the unit of DYEP within the Deaf Aid. This study adopted a case study design in line with the study objective which comprises in-depth analysis of deaf youth and interview in order to assess the effectiveness of Deaf Youth Empowerment Program in achieving economic self-reliance of deaf youth and their insertion in the society. The population of interest was heterogeneous from Nairobi and Kisii counties and composed of 150 deaf youth who were beneficiaries of the program and the 41 staff members of Deaf Aid. Therefore, the total population of the study was 206 men and women hearing and deaf people. Data was collected from a subset of individuals and used to make inferences about the entire population. Various sampling methods were involved in this research to get a final proposed sample of 91 respondents for the study. This was because apart from the deaf youth themselves, the researcher intended to get some respondents from the stakeholders and supervisors of the deaf youth. A simple random sampling was used for the selection of deaf youth from the population where individuals of the targeted population were given equal chances of selection. Therefore the researcher made use of the formula of Yamane (1967) (see Equation 1 below) with a 95 per cent confidence level to get the sample size of the deaf youth respondents.

Under the umbrella of the deaf youth from the program, due to the number of beneficiaries recorded in Nairobi and Kisii, proportionate sampling method was used to get deaf youth respondents (125/150 thus 83 per cent from Nairobi and 25/150 thus 17 per cent from Kisii). The Equations below show the numbers received from the proportions respectively for Nairobi and Kisii. As it is the effectiveness of the program being studied, only those who have already passed through the program were contacted.

Among the stakeholders and supervisors, purposive sampling method was used for the selection of the 5 respondents, as they are not directly connected with the program under study (this is to avoid bias from those directly involved in the program).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} = \frac{150}{1 + 150 \times (0.07)^2} = 86$$

Equation 1 (total size of deaf youth respondents)

With: n - the sample size; N - the population size; and e = 7% level of precision

$$n1 = \frac{83}{100} \times 86 = 71$$

Equation 2 (deaf youth respondents from Nairobi)

$$n_2 = \frac{17}{100} \times 86 = 15$$

Equation 3 (deaf youth respondents from Kisii)

Together with the 5 stakeholders and supervisors, the sample size of the study is therefore 91.

The research was qualitative and quantitative in approach and employed a combination of questionnaires and interviews. The type of data collected was primary data which implied the formulation of questionnaire as a tool for gathering the required data from the deaf youth who have passed through the program; together with semi-structured interviews to stakeholders and supervisors. In order to ensure the reliability of the study, the researchers used a third party translator of KSL who verified, the transcribed tape and video recordings. The questionnaires were given to the deaf youth who were in the program being studied. Respondents were given time to go through the questionnaire. Before setting the questionnaires for the research, a pilot study was conducted on 15 selected deaf youth. This study showed difficulties of the deaf youth in filling out the questions. Therefore, the study used administered

questionnaires by explaining the questions to the respondents with the help of KSL translator.

The interviews collected detailed personal information from individuals using oral questions translated in sign language by an interpreter. Semi-structured interviews were guided by a loose structure consisting of open-ended questions that covered the objectives of the research. Key informants of this interview were stakeholders and supervisors who were responsible of some deaf youth in their workplaces. Each interview was accompanied with tape and video recording that were transcribed later by the researcher with the help of a third party KSL translator.

## **Results and Discussions**

### **The contribution of the DYEP towards self-reliance of the deaf youth**

The study interviewed 4 out of the 5 available stakeholders. Out of them, 3 were male and 1 female. The stakeholders were the people working with the beneficiaries of the DYEP as managers and supervisors. They had worked with them for at least 5 years meaning that they had a wealth of experience on how the DYEP was contributing to the self-reliance of the deaf youth. The main contribution of the program towards the deaf youth self-reliance according to the findings of the study is the skills that they acquire during the training. On admission to the program

the deaf youth are free to choose among the below three different departments. One can choose to be trained on the skills from Cisco package training, video editing and photography, or from mobile repair training.

options (IT administration, 44; PC technician, 48; Operating system, 53) which are more marketable when it comes to technology employment. Although the percentage of the deaf youth in the other training departments is small, respondents

	<b>Cisco Training</b>	<b>video editing and photography</b>	<b>Mobile repair</b>
<b>Skills</b>	<i>IT administration</i>	<i>Video composition</i>	<i>Repair</i>
<b>Frequency</b>	44	18	19
<b>Percent</b>	57.1	23.4	24.7
<b>Skills</b>	<i>Field work technician</i>	<i>Editing video/photo</i>	<i>Customer relation</i>
<b>Frequency</b>	26	16	9
<b>Percent</b>	33.8	20.8	11.9
<b>Skills</b>	<i>PC technician</i>	<i>Computer Application</i>	<i>Phone programming</i>
<b>Frequency</b>	48	12	9
<b>Percent</b>	62.3	15.8	11.9
<b>Skills</b>	<i>Client training</i>	<i>Camera work</i>	<i>Job creation</i>
<b>Frequency</b>	21	15	6
<b>Percent</b>	27.3	19.5	7.8
<b>Skills</b>	<i>Operating system</i>	<i>Communication/writing</i>	
<b>Frequency</b>	53	11	
<b>Percent</b>	68.8	14.3	

**Reducing the vulnerability through self-reliance**

This findings presented above show the skills that the deaf youth acquired from the program in order to help them to become self-reliant in the society. It results that the majority of the deaf youth opted for the

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Yes</b>	36	46.8
<b>No</b>	19	24.9

<b>I don't think so</b>	22	28.6
<b>Total</b>	77	100.0

The findings presented above show that majority of the respondents 53.3 percent (forty one) are not of view that self-reliance would lead to the reduction of their vulnerability in the society. Only 46.8 percent of the respondents acknowledge self-reliance as a way to their belonging in the society. Form the above result it is important to consider the experience and challenges that the deaf youth are facing in the society. It is therefore clear to consider that economic empowerment, self-reliance and social integration go hand in hand. Social integration of vulnerable people implies prior economic empowerment with the respect of the rights of the minority. That is possible when the self-reliance is enjoyed as a belonging to the society.

#### **The attitude of deaf youth on the training program**

From the findings, the majority of the respondents (81.8%) came to know about the program of Deaf Aid through the medium of their friends, while the rest (16.8%) knew about it from other sources like from parents and from the church. This shows the level of solidarity among the deaf youth to help each other reduce their vulnerability. This could be due to the lack of communication skills in the society and

even from the parents who cannot communicate with their deaf child. On a direct observation during their meetings, it was noted that when deaf people were among themselves, information easily circulated and that was how they were up-to-date on the news in the country.

#### **Deaf youth and stakeholders' attitudes towards the DYEP**

The study found out that the beneficiaries and even the stakeholders are greatly impressed by the contribution of the DYEP to the life of the deaf youth. This is portrayed by a number of beneficiaries who had their lives positively changed due to the training. The followings are the expressions of sentiments by some of them:

*"That program is of great help for our children who are deaf, because Deaf Aid has been supporting them very much".*

*"Deaf Aid is just good, doing great job and could still help our children up to university".*

*"This program is now teaching us parents in Kisii the KSL so that we can communicate with our children in the house".*

The study found that 79.2 percent of the respondents have a positive attitude on the Cisco training as a way of allowing them to



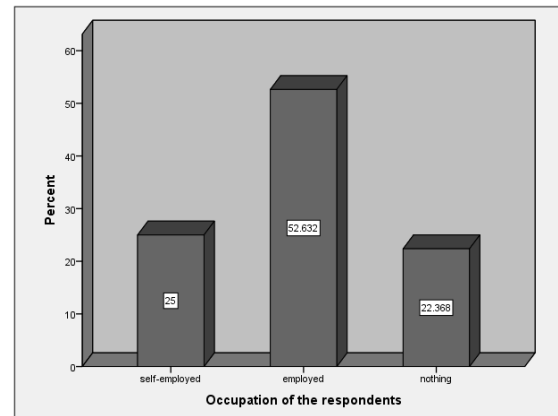
be employed in this ever growing technology world. Supervisors who were working with the deaf youth in their workplaces acknowledged the effectiveness of the training because they realised that when the deaf youth come for work,

*“At Deaf Opportunity Out Reach International we have technical machines and any deaf who comes from Deaf Aid, they have the required skills. Which helps us which are more advanced. They are all ready, well empowered, they only adjust a little”.*

**Deaf youth economic empowerment through the DYEP**

As it was observed from the contribution of the DYEP towards the deaf youth self-reliance, the study found that this self-reliance is realised through employment to the extent of economic empowerment. This was in accordance to the view of Walter and Dirmyer (2013) in the literature review that deaf people become economically empowered and therefore self-reliant, when engaged in meaningful employment. The findings indicated that majority of the respondents who took part in the research were employed; few were self-employed and others doing nothing at all after the training.

**Occupation of the respondents**



The findings presented above show that the majority of the respondents were engaged in income generating activities after the training in order to empower themselves. 77.6 percent of the respondents were working either employed or self-employed and few 22.4 percent are unemployed. This show that the different trainings achieved their goal of economic empowerment of the deaf youth in order to become self-reliant.

The study also found that the beneficiaries-deaf youth from the DYEP have realized to a great extent economic empowerment in their life. This is in form of most of them being employed mostly in the informal and the private sectors; only few in the public sector, as the table below shows.

**Occupation of the respondents related to their work place**

Occupati on of the responde nts	Working sector			Total
	Inform al	Priva te sector	Publi c sector	

<b>Self-employed</b>	11 73.3%	7 20.0%	0 0.0%	18 31.0%
<b>Employed</b>	4 26.7%	28 80.0%	8 100.0%	40 69.0%
<b>Total</b>	15 100.0%	35 100.0%	8 100.0%	58 100.0%

The respondents asserted that unemployment was one of the challenges they faced in society, confirming the problem statement of the study. It results that deaf youth access to job opportunities in the public sector remains a challenge to be addressed. From the interview to deaf supervisors, it was possible to capture that deaf youth are conscious that unemployment is a hindrance to the development of the society in consideration of the proportion of youth in general in terms of population. A good number of deaf youth met during the field research called themselves ‘*hustlers*’, to express their kind of employment.

In order to test the level of significance of the training on the economic empowerment of the beneficiaries, the study did a Chi-Square test on the two variables. The study therefore did a cross tab correlation between the training and the employment of the deaf youth beneficiaries. This is to show if the job acquisition was due to the training or

not. This allowed the study to see how significant the training was for the economic empowerment of the deaf youth.

#### **Correlation between the training and the employment of the beneficiaries**

	<b>Importance of the Training</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
<b>Employed or self-employed</b>	54 79.4%	4 44.4%	58 75.3%
<b>Unemployed</b>	14 20.6%	5 55.6%	19 24.7%
<b>Total</b>	68 100.0%	9 100.0%	77 100.0%

From the table above 79.4 percent of the respondents who got a job claimed that this was due to the training they received from Deaf Aid. While 20.6 percent of the respondent got their jobs independently of the training. The study therefore concluded that there was a relationship between the training and the economic self-reliance of the deaf youth. This conclusion is below confirmed by the Chi-Square test of the two variables as shown on the table below.

**Chi-Square test on the training and self/employed****Chi-Square Tests****Working sector related to the monthly**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	5.229 <sup>a</sup>	1	.022
<b>Continuity Correction<sup>b</sup></b>	3.517	1	.061
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>	77		

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.22  
b. Computed for a 2x2 table

From the table above, among the 77 respondents, majority of those who were in the training reported to be employed or self-employed due to the training (79.4 %) as compared to those who were employed or self-employed independently from the training (20.6 %). This difference was statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 5.229$ ,  $p = .022$ ).

If  $p < 0.05$  the null hypothesis is rejected

If  $p > 0.05$  fail to reject the null hypothesis

The findings of the study showed that  $p = .022 < 0.05$ . Based on the  $p$  value, the study concluded that there was a relationship between the training and the employed self-employed of the deaf youth beneficiaries.

The table below is a crosstab on the working sector related to the monthly earning of the respondents. This allowed to see which sector offers a total self-reliance opportunity to the deaf youth who are employed.

**profit**

Monthly Income	Working sector			Total
	Informal	Private sector	Public sector	
less than 5000	4 26.7%	4 11.4%	2 25.0%	10 17.2%
5000-10000	8 53.3%	11 31.4%	0 0.0%	19 32.8%
10000-20000	3 20.0%	13 37.1%	4 50.0%	20 34.5%
more than 20000	0 0.0%	7 20.0%	2 25.0%	9 15.5%
<b>Total</b>	15	35	8	58

	100.0%	100.0	100.0	100.0
		%	%	%

The Cross tabulation above shows that 50 percent of the respondents who were employed or self-employed earned a monthly income below the national minimum wage which was Ksh. 10,940. Another 50 percent of the respondents earned more than Ksh 10,000. However, it results from the table that the private sector paid according to the national minimum wage than the public sector.

### **DYEP influence towards the social integration of the deaf youth**

According to the problem statement of this study, the deaf youth tend to become vulnerable and stigmatised because they lack the sense of belonging in the society. This paused a challenge to their growth and empowerment. These could only be addressed through social integration, through programs like the DYEP. The study confirmed this in that most of the respondents complained of having undergone cases of discrimination and lack of assistance from their “normal colleagues” (those who are not deaf). The study also found out that DYEP was committed to bring about social integration of the deaf in the society through internship after the training and advocacy for their rights.

### **Assistance from people**

#### **Assistance from hearing people**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Yes</b>	60	77.9
<b>No</b>	16	20.8
<b>Total</b>	76	98.7
<b>Missing system</b>	1	1.3
<b>Total</b>	77	100.0

The table above shows the frequency and percentages of the assistance that deaf youth received from the society around them. The majority, 78.9 percent (sixty) of the respondents acknowledged that they received different kind of assistances from the hearing people. However, they would be happy to be accepted in the society as all other persons. Some respondents clearly stated that, here I quote:

*“If all churches have an integrated worship where there is a translator for the deaf people, I would like to worship with them as one community of faith. It is because we don’t have that possibility that we find ourselves here. In fact we are more happy when we can understand each other”.*

*“Deaf Aid cannot do all, but the society in general should accept us as part of the society. We have the same rights like everybody but we don’t enjoy our rights”.*

*“We must apply the new constitution of Kenya so that we all have the same rights in this Kenya”.*

The above statements were reported from the interaction with some respondents who are Hard of Hearing who with whom the study interacted at *Immanuel Church for the Deaf*. This was a meeting place for the deaf youth every evening to interact with each other and to get some information. It therefore results that the social integration of the deaf youth is based on the recognition of their rights as members of the society. This is in fact in line with the rights-based approach adopted by the study.

The study also found that some supervisors have positive impressions on the work of DYEP program in order to make the deaf youth integrate the society and their communities.

*“The DYEP has really contributed to the social integration of my child in the sense she accepts her status not as a disability but as another culture*

*different from the culture of the majority of the society”.*

*“As my daughter now has got a job due to her training at Deaf Aid, other parents are now giving her as an example to their children”.*

*“For a total integration of the deaf youth in the society, there must be an advocacy for the deaf people. This advocacy should come from the deaf people themselves with the support of the hearing people. Hearing people cannot advocate for the deaf because they don’t know the deaf culture”.*

*“Organizations working with deaf people like Deaf Aid for example should also try to employ some of the deaf youth that they have trained. Social integration of the deaf people should start with those working with the deaf”.*

The above statements were collected during a recorded interview to

some stakeholders. The findings show that though the program contributes to the social integration of the deaf youth, still more to be done by engaging some deaf people in their workplaces.

Integration of the deaf youth in the Kenyan society remains a challenge that should be address. Respondents expressed feelings of encouragement when it comes to advocating for their rights in the society. The majority of the respondents thinks that advocating for their rights would start from recognizing them as part of the society.

*“We will feel as members of the society when every institution is committed to have a KSL translator that would make easy the communication”.*

*“I want to study together with the hearing people but we have very poor KSL translators. The government should promote KSL as Kiswahili”.*

Respondents expressed their feelings of being taught like other hearing people. This means that KSL should be thought to everyone in the society as a way of communicating with the deaf people. Communication skill becomes a barrier of deaf people to interact with the rest of the

society. This show the extent to which the hearing community is not availing itself to learn and to understand the deaf culture.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **Summary of the Findings**

The findings of the study did not contradict the assumption that deaf youth are discriminated in the society, but rather came to know more about the real living of the deaf youth in Nairobi and Kisii. However, the study found a positive leaving of the majority of the respondents when it comes to economic empowerment. It appears that number of organizations working with deaf people are shifting their focus from a mere rehabilitation towards the economic empowerment of the deaf youth. The case study of DYEP in Nairobi and Kisii showed that many strategies were based on inclusion, promotion of deaf peoples’ rights in the society and also encouraging their participation in decision makings.

The study revealed that the trainings offered to the deaf youth for their social integration had important impacts on their livings. The program strived to achieve self-reliance and social integration of the beneficiary. It showed that apart from being totally effective, the DYEP has achieved a number of its mission and goals. The trainings provided by DYEP appeared to recognise the importance of aligning the content of training curriculum with market

needs, especially an increasing focus on IT and mobile skills.

The study therefore found that the beneficiaries and the stakeholders had positive attitudes towards the training of DYEP. This is portrayed by the tables and chats above. The training helped many deaf youth to have jobs and this improved the rate of deaf youth especially for those who spent a reasonable time in the program. Therefore the DYEP has begun to address some of the criticisms that organizations working with disabled people are only focused on rehabilitation and offering training like tailoring which are not marketable.

It remains a challenge for beneficiaries to make the transition from training to work. This was expressed by respondents who suggested a good collaboration between the organization and the Kenyan government. Nevertheless, the need to develop sustainable business strategies for the future is needed. Economic empowerment of the deaf youth is realised through their insertion in different workplaces no matter how meaningful they might be and this leads to their social integration.

As per the findings of the study, respondents expressed that a lot should be than for their social integration. The research found that the DYEP contributed to their social integration by giving them

access to practical skills that would help them to be independent in the society. The empowerment program was focused not only on skill giving but also on capacity building through mentorship of the deaf youth. The study revealed that the inclusion of the deaf youth would work if their rights are respected and importance given to them as all others in the society.

In summary, the findings highlight a variety of approaches to promoting economic empowerment of deaf people in Kenya and a number of common factors regarded as important for a successful social integration. This ranged from awareness raising, adequate education and further professional training to the equality of all for employment and job acquisition. From the findings, this becomes possible through a number programs that the study identifies as key to deaf youth social integration.

### **Recommendations**

Some supervisors and stakeholders suggested that Deaf Aid incorporates in its training other options in order to have varieties of training programs. The technology market is overgrowing and it is advisable that computer training at Deaf Aid adds the Apple model training so as to help the deaf youth to be more up to date. It also came from the findings that deaf youth of Kisii county would like to have more training opportunities especially Cisco Certified Networking Academy (CCNA).

It was observed from the findings that in terms of employment, the public sector offered less job opportunities to qualified deaf youth. The government of Kenya should therefore increase the deaf youth involvement in the public sector through creating more employment opportunities to the deaf youth. Institutions should come up with effective programs for an adequate training of deaf young people willing to change their life. The Kenyan government should make sure through the National Council of Disabled People that every institution has qualified KSL translators at their disposition. This would encourage deaf people to have access to every building.

Respondents also expressed the inaptitude of many KSL translators on national and private media. It therefore goes that the government of Kenya together with local governments, erect an adequate council of KSL that is free from any political interest and attachment. Communities in Kenya should start seeing deaf people around them as people having same dignity like all others. It goes that local governments in collaboration with community members be aware of the rights of deaf people and promote their access to education and other structure as everybody.

**Empowerment as a right of the deaf youth**

There was a need to promote empowerment as a right of the deaf youth rather than a charitable obligation. The deaf youth had negative attitudes towards public institutions when it comes to empowerment programs. The study calls to the government of Kenya to promote deaf youth empowerment through education for all as it appears in the Constitution 2010 and access to further educations. The deaf youth cannot be economically empowered if they did not have a certain level of education. The findings showed that when it comes to education, the deaf youth were and are still left to the mercy of private institutions with high costs, difficult for the parents to afford.

Economic empowerment is based on basic education. Economic empowerment of the deaf youth implies easy access to vocational training and to other empowerment programs that would help them to build their future. It goes, as expressed by the respondents, that vocational training centres be accessible to all, not only to the hearing people. It is psychologically easier at the young age to adapt oneself to any situation. When deaf people are taught together with the hearing people with the same rights and the same access to all resources, it becomes easier for the hearing people to learn the deaf culture. Through this inclusion, all would acquire the same knowledge and skills and stand



with the same rights while accessing job opportunities.

Respondents recognised that disabled people in general need to take responsibility themselves for their own economic empowerment. It result that deafness not be considered as inability and therefore depending on the society. Deafness when accepted as a deaf hood, becomes a source of considering oneself as pertaining to the deaf culture. Organizations should promote deaf peoples' rights by encouraging their beneficiaries to participate in strategic decision making. It implies that institutions working with deaf people should employ more deaf staff and involve them in strategic decision making.

For an effective economic empowerment, there is a need of follow-up by the institutions working with deaf people. Deaf Aid is committed to the social integration of the deaf youth through their placements for internships. There was a general recognition that beneficiaries of the training be provided with an ongoing support for their full integration in the society. This is very important when one is making a transition from one world to another one. In Kenya, the failure of some vocational training schemes to provide this support was often seen as the main reason that beneficiaries were unable to put their skills and abilities to productive use (Cobley, 2011).

In the situation of helplessness and social exclusion that deaf youth find themselves, it is important to realise that young deaf people are ready to overturn their life situation and to become better citizens of the society. The improvement of this situation requires the assistance of local governments, public and private institutions to promote and facilitate an atmosphere of respect to the human rights. Empowerment process therefore refers to providing basic education, skills and knowledge to deaf youths.

#### **Capacity building of the deaf youth**

The findings, suggest that building deaf youth capacity in Nairobi and Kisii is important in order to create an enabling environment for deaf people' engagement in development and fight issues like unemployment, lack of skills and knowledge. In this, one should avoid the natural capacity and ability of the deaf youth to face the situation. Deaf youth hold the capacity of been integrated in the society and to become self-reliant but they are often overlooked as stakeholders. Benefits to involve youth include increasing their knowledge, skills, and engagement; finding a place in the community; and learning how to contribute to a community (Brennan, Barnett, & Baugh, 2007). Capacity building in this study refers to the empowerment of deaf youth either individually or in group. It also refers to leadership training that

transmits values of good governance to the deaf youth. Training should include activities of deaf youth empowerment, leadership training, vocational and professional training, and education on values of good governance. Vocational and professional training, which are supposed to provide skills and opportunities for the deaf youths and transform them into problem solvers concerning their social integration and unemployment often fail to address the needs of the deaf youth.

Deaf youth economic empowerment and social integration still need to be organised by policies in the country in order to facilitate monitoring and evaluation of their activities for development. The Right-based approach of promoting the rights of disabled people and addressing the barriers of the society was important for this study in order to facilitate long-term economic empowerment for the deaf people. There must therefore be an engagement of the local and national government authorities on the behalf of the deaf youth in attempting to raise deaf people awareness within local communities.

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