

# **EMERGING ISSUES DURING DISSEMINATION OF LITERACY AND NUMERACY REPORT TO SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION TEACHERS FROM WWW PROJECT SCHOOLS**

24 – 25 September 2020

## **Introduction**

Education Development Trust (EDT) and KISE are involved in midterm review of Wasichana Wote Wafaulu (WWW) program as consultants in the area of special needs. Towards achieving this goal, the consultant adapted the tests, administered to learners in the 6 WWW project schools in the coastal region of Kenya. The data achievement scores were then analysed and the report prepared. The literacy and numeracy report were shared with teachers and EDT team for 2 days; on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020. The literacy and numeracy outcomes for learners with physical disabilities and visual impairments were shared on the first day in Mombasa county while those for learners with hearing impairments were shared on the second day in Kilifi county.

Before sharing the outcomes, teachers were asked to take note of any peculiarities in the results, ask questions, seek for clarifications and also provide insights on what could be the plausible reasons for some of the outcomes observed. After the presentations, teachers, the EDT team and other education stakeholders asked questions for clarification. Teachers were asked to discuss in groups as per their area of specialization (PH and VI) and provide insights on the issues that could be contributing to the patterns in numeracy and literacy score for learners with different disabilities. This report highlights key emerging issues as raised by SNE teachers for learners with visual impairments, physical disabilities and hearing impairments respectively.

### **Emerging issues from teachers of learners with visual impairments**

Dissemination was done on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020 in Central Girls Primary school in Tononoka, Mombasa. The workshop was attended by 27 stakeholders among them being teachers, KISE technical team, EDT team and officials from the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Teachers Service Commission (TSC). It was observed that literacy and numeracy outcomes for learners with visual impairments was low for all the grades. Teachers of learners of visual impairments discussed and made a presentation. Teachers raised the following issues with regard of these outcomes;

1. Teachers lamented about lack of motivation. This was made mainly in reference to denial of special allowances that was withdrawn from teachers of learners of special educational needs
2. Policy issues; Teachers raised issues about the policy regarding inclusive education in Kenya. Teachers said that there are lack of formulation of policies and procedures. They reported that inclusive education is mentioned in some of the policy documents but they do not state how inclusive education should be put into practice.
3. Teachers also mentioned that there is lack of teaching and learning materials that are required for the students with visual impairments
4. There is a lack of material in the area of second language acquisition for visually impaired learners. Issues that emerged here included the challenges of using Braille Machines
5. In visually impaired learners, the knowledge regarding various concepts and areas is usually limited. Due to lack of knowledge, they experience problems and difficulties in improving their performance in literacy and numeracy. Lack of adequate knowledge is one of the major challenges that these students experience in education

6. Lack of resources and poor participation of parents – The visually impaired learners, from poor backgrounds are not able to make provision of resources and materials for themselves.

### **Emerging issues from teachers of learners with physical disabilities**

Dissemination was done on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020 in Central Girls Primary school in Tononoka, Mombasa at the same time as those of learners with visual impairments. Similarly, therefore, the workshop was attended by 27 stakeholders among them being teachers, KISE technical team, EDT team and officials from the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Teachers Service Commission (TSC). It was observed that literacy and numeracy outcomes for learners with physical disabilities was low for all the grades. Teachers of learners of physical disabilities discussed and made a presentation. Teachers raised the following issues with regard of these outcomes;

1. Most schools do not have adequate physical facilities thus disadvantaging a number of children with physical disabilities. Teachers reported that infrastructure conditions especially those which learners with physical disabilities spend much of their time such as toilets and bath rooms were very poor in most schools and unattractive due to little care and consideration to learners with physical disabilities
2. It was reported that teaching and learning methods/approaches used by teachers are not inclusive to learners with physical disabilities. Majority of the teachers in primary schools in those schools were not trained in SNE thus used trial and error method while teaching children with disabilities.
3. The teachers agreed that the current national curriculum in primary schools did not cater for the SNE learners effectively

4. Teachers also reported that only government and parents (family) financially supported learners with physical disabilities. Non-government organizations, financial institutions and private people showed little support for learners with physical disabilities

### **Emerging issues from teachers of learners with hearing impairments**

Dissemination of literacy and numeracy outcomes for learners with hearing impairment was done on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020 in Titani Hotel, Kilifi county. The workshop was also attended by 27 stakeholders from KISE, EDT teachers from different schools for the hearing impairments, the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Teachers Service Commission (TSC). After the presentations, teachers went into groups for discussions about the performance of children with hearing impairments in literacy and numeracy. The following are some of the issues raised by teachers concerning performance of learners with hearing impairments;

1. Teachers reported that they face difficulties when explaining abstract concepts to learning with hearing impairments. This affects their comprehension especially of word problems in numeracy to poor performance
2. There are generally communication barriers between teachers and the learners
3. Lack of learning resources
4. Lack of hearing Aids
5. Work Load too big
6. It was also reported that there were teachers in schools for the hearing impaired who were not conversant with sign language

Based on the above-described emerging issues and the actual outcomes of literacy and numeracy scores of learners with different disabilities, triangulation analysis was conducted and the following key observations were made.

## **Key observations from FGDs**

### **Literacy Gaps among Learners with Special Needs in Education**

- The study revealed that learners were able to read invented words than familiar words, from the discussions, it emerged that, among the learners with HI, invented words required only the skill of decoding and finger-spelling letters of the alphabet. It was observed that the challenge with familiar words was due to lack of equivalent signs or failure to comprehend the meaning of the word.
- Nearly half of learners across all the classes in PH were not able to read invented words, familiar words and oral passages. From the discussion it emerged that most of these learners have severe neurological impairment with additional disabilities affecting their ability to read.
- The study revealed that the number of words read improved when reading untimed oral passage compared to timed oral passage. It emerged that learners with disabilities perform better in reading when it happens in a tension free environment
- It was observed that there are extremely wide variations in performance among learners within the same class, for example you could find one or two scoring above 80 percent in a particular question while the rest of the class fail. This was attributed to learner's difference in abilities and availability of learning resources. The teachers reported that the wide teacher/learner ratio and the performance demands by the school administration sometimes forces the teacher to move on with those who are able to grasp the concepts faster.
- The study also showed that learner's performance in comprehension questions was quite low; this was attributed to challenges in conceptualising the content due to limited exposure to reading materials.

- As learners progress from form one to form four they encounter variety of subject area with different learning methodologies and sign language variations/braille from different teachers some of whom come from universities without any prior exposure to sign language or braille leading to wide communication barrier between the learner and the teacher hence the low performance levels among learners with sensory disabilities.

### **Numeracy Gaps Among Learners with Special Needs Education**

The following observations were made;

- Learners across all disabilities registered low achievement levels in numeracy skills.
- Teachers generally felt that learners had problems in reading and comprehension in mathematical word problems.
- The PH and HI performance in standard 7 was below 20 percent in all the subtasks except for subtask 3 item 3 which registered some rise while in all the other subtasks they registered a 0 score. It emerged that the learners had serious challenges in conceptualizing mathematical language and to some learners the test items were too heavy and advanced for their grade.
- Tasks requiring ratio registered low performance across all the disabilities.
- From the discussion it emerged that the concept of ratio is never covered as it is learnt at the end of the syllabus which is never completed due to their slow learning pace.
- For learners with visual impairments, it emerged that since most of the teachers in secondary schools have not had significant training in braille; learners tend to perform considerably below expectation because there is limited written communication in numeracy between the teacher and the learner. The teachers only dictate questions to the learners and teach them only how to do calculations orally

- Learners with Hearing Impairment performed significantly below average because they lacked mathematical vocabulary as used in mathematics. They were not able to relate mathematical concepts to situations in real life.
- Word problems were performed much below expectations across all levels. It emerged that they also lacked comprehension and analytical skills required in mathematics hence had problems attaching meaning to the words used in the mathematical sentences.