

Title: Social and Academic Experiences of Pupils with Low Vision in Integrated Primary Schools in Nairobi County, Kenya.

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Abstract: Low vision (LV) is a term that denotes a visual acuity of 6/18 metres in the better eye after medical correction and other intervention measures. This is interpreted to mean that what a pupil who is sighted can see at six metres, a pupil with LV will see it at eighteen metres. This condition makes performance of everyday tasks difficult or impossible. It affects central and/or peripheral(side) vision. The condition is caused by; injuries that damage the optic nerve, cataract, glaucoma and birth injuries among others. In Kenya, most learners with LV are educated in integrated programmes with most teachers not trained on how to manage nor identify them because of their unique identity. This group of students has been thought to be relatively well- integrated and socially accepted by the sighted peers and therefore, have continued to suffer amidst peers and teachers. They have continued to perform poorly academically. This study investigated the impact of social experiences on academic performance of pupils with low vision in integrated primary schools in Nairobi County. The objectives of the study were: to establish the academic performance of pupils with LV in integrated regular primary schools in Nairobi, determine the impact of social interaction with sighted peers and teachers on academic performance of learners with LV, the role of family and community in the social experiences of learners with LV, establish intervention measures by school to enhance social experiences and academic performance and to establish materials and facilities that support learners with LV by the school. This study used descriptive survey research design. Kilimani and Our Lady of Mercy, Shauri Moyo primary schools in Westlands and Makadara Districts respectively, Nairobi County were used for the study. These are resource centers for learners with LV. Purposive sampling procedure was used to select learners with low vision and teachers. The target population was learners with LV of classes 5, 6, and 7, teachers in these classes and the headteachers. A questionnaire was used to collect data from the pupils and teachers and an interview schedule for the headteachers. A check-list was used to establish available support for learners with LV in the school. Piloting of the instruments was carried out at Muthaiga Primary School which is also a resource center for learners with LV in Kasarani District to determine reliability of data. The pilot school was excluded from the study. Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study showed that the level of peer and teacher interaction at school had the highest influenced academic performance of pupils with low vision and that support given by the school for example teaching resources and friendly environment influenced academic performance the least.