

# Influence of Education Assessment and Research Centres on Functional and Educational Assessment in Implementation of Inclusive Education in Public Primary Schools in Kisumu County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the study was to explore influence of Education Assessment and Research Centres (EARC) on Functional and Educational Assessment in Implementation of inclusive education in Public Primary Schools in Kisumu County. Objectives were to explore policy issues guiding EARC on functional and educational assessment in the devolved system, determine EARC staff ability to undertake functional and educational assessment to all categories of learners, establish EARC perception on field officers in implementation of functional and educational assessment and inclusive education and establish the strategies employed by EARC staff, teachers and parents in implementing inclusive Education in public schools in Kisumu county. A descriptive research design was adopted in the study. The study used atheoretical and conceptual framework. The study population composed of 4 EARC, 64 head teachers, 128 contact teachers, 35 curriculum support officers (CSOs), 7 Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASO), 128 parents or guardians and 192 learners. The sample consisted of 20 head teachers, 20 contact teachers, 39 parents or guardians and 60 learners, 4 EARCs, 35 CSOs and 7 QASOs were identified. The tools of data collection were questionnaires, observation check list, interviews and focus group discussion. Validity was addressed by expert judgement of supervisors while reliability was addressed using Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. The study found out that SNE policy (2009) was very significant in this respect. EARCs ability in functional and educational assessment was average as some had no training. EARCs perception on field officers was negative and resulted to lack of team work. IEP was found to be the major instructional method for learners with special needs and disabilities in the county. The study recommended inductions for EARC officers on existing policy issues, training of all EARC officers on functional and educational assessment, sensitization of field officers on EARC duties and use of both IEP and differentiated instructional models in inclusive classrooms. A comparative study between IEP and Differentiated instructional methods as strategies of implementing inclusive education on academic performance in primary schools would expound the understanding of the study.

**Keywords:** Educational Assessment and Research Centre, Functional and Educational Assessment, Inclusive education, Public Primary Schools.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Functional assessment in education and medical rehabilitation is the objective measurement of the levels of a person's functional abilities in performing activities of daily living, including relevant psychosocial aspects. Assessment leads to appropriate interventions, so that a person can achieve the maximum possible functionality, toward a better quality of life. (Tesio, 2007). Tesoi further posits that the shift from general assessment to functional and educational assessment has necessitated new concepts in assessment where functional abilities help understand an individual's behaviour of concern hence identification of appropriate intervention strategies. This therefore informs the various interventions to support the individual in achieving the quality of life they desire. Functional and educational assessment is a helpful undertaking of the overall planning process to ensure the client has the appropriate resources and support to achieve the planned educational activities.

Functional assessment complements educational assessment as both enhances the learner's ability to perform activities. While functional assessment focuses on the abilities of the client and builds on them, educational assessment defines the client's educational needs. (Colin 2004). In essence functional assessment defines educational assessment. The client's functional abilities must be ascertained in order to put in place the best educational intervention. Like a child with visual impairment, the visual functionality should be ascertained for one to decide on the use of print font or use of Braille.

In America the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) forms the basis for drawing the road map to functional and educational assessment and various interventions necessary for learners with special needs and disabilities. The goal of IDEA is to provide children with disabilities the same opportunity for quality and appropriate education as those students who do not have a disability. In essence IDEA focuses on information collected from several sources during the first instance of functional and educational assessment. The sources of information include, teachers, parents, peers, social workers and the child him/herself. Further IDEA outlines six pillars guiding the implementation of the act. The pillars each espouse support for learners with special needs and disabilities and are designed to meet their individual unique needs. IDEA therefore anchors its functionality on the six pillars of, Individualized Education Program (IEP), Free Appropriate Public Education, Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Appropriate Evaluation, Parent and Teacher Participation and Procedural Safeguards. The pillars are crafted to enhance educational and social services provided to learners with special needs and disabilities in their immediate environments to enhance inclusive education.

World Health Organization (WHO) (2003) came up with the International Classification of Functioning (ICF). The check list compares the abilities of learners with special needs and disabilities against standardized performances by peers. It captures the Demographic Data, Impairments of Body Functioning, Impairments of Body Structure, Activity Limitations and Participation Restriction, Environmental Factors and Other Contextual Information. The tool breaks the main areas of assessment into other simpler observable abilities to enhance decision making and planning for more precise intervention. The intervention strategies focus on the holistic assessment of the client's physically, cognitively and socially functioning.

European agency for special needs and inclusive education (2015) through the briefs on policy contents portends that there is increasing acceptance among all countries, supported by Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The policy asserts that inclusive education offers the best educational opportunities for learners with disabilities. The agency aligned Conceptual policy framework to guide inclusive education giving prominence to legislation and policy that recognises the synergy between the UNCRPD, systemic view, inclusive accountability, strong, shared leadership to effectively manage change, teacher education and continuing professional development, clear role for school organisation, teaching approaches, curriculum and assessment that support equivalent learning opportunities for all. The document therefore gives guidance of implementing inclusive education ranging from policy where governments put in the legal framework for holistic approach to inclusive education from functional and educational assessment to teacher training and classroom intervention.

UNESCO EFA Report (2008) on reaching the marginalized as an essential document for Universal Primary Education observes that, The Dakar Framework stated that 'the inclusion of children with special needs, from disadvantaged ethnic minorities and migrant populations, from remote and isolated communities and from urban slums, and others excluded from education, must be an integral part of strategies to achieve UPE by 2015. The report indicates that this however is not the case due to poverty and lack of inclusion. Further the report posits that in the past 15 years, several countries,

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including Nicaragua, Thailand and Uganda, have adopted a child-friendly school model. The model draws its authority from the Convention on the Rights of the Child and emphasizes school as a place that provides learning opportunities relevant to life and livelihood. Further the report indicates that a healthy, safe environment that is inclusive and protective is sensitive to gender equity and equality and involves the participation of students, families and communities (UNICEF, 2009a) To realize inclusion in the community all stake holders must focus on quality and equity of services provided to learners with special needs and disabilities. However this cannot be achieved without quality functional and educational assessment to meet the needs and interests of the learners.

Evaluation of child-friendly schools conducted based on site visits in several countries revealed that poor school infrastructure and lack of maintenance are major problems and fewer could serve children with physical disabilities, and that in less than one-third of schools have teachers trained to work with students with learning and physical disabilities and special needs. Moreover, school heads and teachers found the shift to child-centred pedagogical approaches demanding due to a lack of training (UNICEF, 2009b). In essence functional and educational assessors have the core duty to ascertain usability of adapted infrastructure in schools. Inclusive education will only thrive in an environment where adaptations are done to accommodate the learner with special needs and disabilities. Adaptations also include modifying the methods of instruction to cater for all learners.

The UNESCO (2009) report therefore gave basis for Sustainable Development goals (2015) goal 4 on Education which focuses on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all. Target 4.5 and 4a commits to eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations and also build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments by 2030.

Regionally Botswana started educating learners with special needs and disabilities in special schools. With the current the global movement of inclusive education being implemented, the education scenario in Botswana has changed where Teacher Preparation Programme has been focused and is championed by the University of Botswana. Shanyisa (2014) affirms Inclusive education demands that the regular education teachers should have basic knowledge and skills in managing students with disabilities and have positive attitude towards people with disabilities. However, quality education for learners with special needs and disabilities depend on what functional and educational assessment reveal and used to plan for the learners. Shanyisa (2014) further portends that Botswana teacher's in-service programme should cater for the needs of an increasing range of diverse learners. This is to prepare teachers for inclusive classrooms, through changing their attitudes, beliefs, expectations and acceptance of people with diverse needs. The University of Botswana should also consider Teacher education programmes to ensure that pre-service teachers acquire the skills. Teachers therefore will develop favourable attitude towards students with special needs and disabilities before they get to the real classroom. To prepare teachers to educate learners with special needs and disabilities, Botswana developed a two track model. Teachers are prepared for educating learners with disabilities and at the same time as regular educators. The model however does not equip teachers with the requisite skills to undertake functional and educational assessment so as to plan appropriate interventions.

Uganda being a signatory to the International Agreements/Commitments that provide for Learners with Special Needs embedded the commitments in the Government Constitution (1995). Further Uganda has put in place The Persons with Disability Act (2006). To meet the commitments, the Ministry of Education & Sports put in place a Department responsible for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. The Department is guided by vision/mission statements which underpin the operations in the departments. The broad vision statement that learners with special needs accessing quality education services equitably is supported by a mission statement that seeks to coordinate and support the provision of Special Needs & Inclusive Education Services to meet the educational needs and rights of learners with special learning needs. .

The vision and mission statements have guided Uganda special needs education department to formulate General objective and specific objectives like, increased enrolment, enhanced participation, promotion of sports to learners with special needs and disabilities. These generated departmental responsibilities to operationalize the objectives. The guiding

statements do not however suggest any formal establishment of functional and educational assessment (Republic of Uganda 2006).

Kenya has had several legal documents supporting education for learners with special needs and disabilities and functional and educational assessment. The Special Needs Education policy (2009) outlines several assessment and inclusive education strategies. Apart from committing to establish operational Assessment centres in all sub counties in the country, the policy document also outlines strategies to ensure improved service delivery in the centres. These include commitment to develop and continually review curriculum in assessment of learners with special needs, develop training manuals and guidelines in assessment of learners with special needs, conduct regular in-service and professional development courses for teacher deployed to work as assessment teachers in the EARC, put in place mechanisms for engaging partners, professionals and other ministries in the assessment and rehabilitation procedures.

The Special needs education policy (2009) further tasks the MoE to establish and enhance linkages with the Ministry of Health and other relevant ministries for appropriate assessment, intervention, and referral and follow up of learners with special needs. Further MoE in collaboration with other stakeholders is directed to develop and strengthen home based programs and ECDE for learners with Special Needs and disabilities. On inclusive education Special Needs education policy (2009) affirms that more emphasis should be put on establishment of inclusive education in regular schools as opposed to special schools. Further the document identifies issues and constraints, objectives, pronounces policy statements and outlines strategies for implementation of inclusive education. This implies that learners in inclusive settings have guiding policies for service provision. Despite these the quality and effectiveness of functional and educational has not been established for enhancement of inclusive education.

The Constitution of Kenya (2010) donates freedoms and rights to persons with disabilities including access to educational institutions for persons with disabilities that are integrated into the society to the extent compatible with the interest of the person. The constitution likewise declared education as a right to all. To operationalize the constitution MOEST formed a task force which culminated into the development of the Policy Framework on Education and Training-sessional Paper No.14 (2012) and further enriched by the suspended Basic education regulations, (2013). The paper declares that whenever it is necessary or appropriate to do so, a learner shall be assessed for placement and continuous support in an institution of basic education and training at the County Education Assessment and Research Centre set up at County level. The document further posits that, assessment shall be carried out with the consent of the learner's parent or guardian at the centres referred to in that regulation by qualified personnel, including, but not limited to medical staff, educationists, special needs experts, at the request of such parent or guardian or on the initiative of the institution. Other sections affirm that learners with special needs who have been assessed shall be placed in facilities including regular institutions of basic education and training.

The basic education act further in section 39 compels the National Government to provide free and compulsory basic education to every child and this in essence legitimizing education for learners with special needs and disabilities. (Basic Education Act Regulations, 2015). Kenya government (2005) through Kenya Education Sector support Programme ( KESSP) had earlier made a commitment under the special needs education investment where the government undertook to put in place a 5 year special education investment programme comprising of National survey and equipment, Teacher training, Equipment to resource centres, Advocacy and awareness creation, Provision of equipment and teaching learning materials, Provision of equipment to regular schools (Education Sector Report, 2012), grants to schools and running costs for resource centres. It is in the light of these provisions and deliberate castigations of diligent guidelines for implementation and operationalization of functional and educational assessment that inclusive education practices can be realised for better quality of life to learners with special needs and disabilities.

### **1.1. Statement of the problem:**

The Special Needs Education Policy (2009) gives practical roadmaps to the implementation of inclusion. Further the policy outlines functional and educational assessment strategies to support inclusion. Stakeholders including teachers, parents and the society have been working for learners with special needs and disabilities in regular classes giving various levels of support and making adaptations. This however has not been replicated in all schools due to minimal support from EARC. The need for various intervention measures put in place at the classroom level to support learner achieve a raft of educational, psychological and social milestones is therefore immense. Despite the age long support through

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provision of education to learners with special needs and disabilities in the regular schools, the entire concepts of functional and educational assessment and inclusion have not been operationalized. Functional and educational assessment as an implementation strategy to inclusion has systemic, pedagogical and resource gaps hampering practical inclusion of learners with special needs and disabilities in public schools. This had prompted the proposed study.

### 1.2. Purpose of the study:

The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of education assessment and research centres on functional and educational assessment as an implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools, Kisumu County, Kenya.

### 1.3. Objectives of the study:

The study was guided by the following objectives

- a) To explore policy issues guiding EARCs on Functional and Educational Assessment in the devolved system in Kisumu County.
- b) To determine EARC staff ability to undertake Functional and Educational Assessment to all categories of learners in Kisumu County.
- c) To establish the EARCs perception of field officers in implementation of Functional and Educational Assessment and inclusive education in Public Primary schools in Kisumu County
- d) To establish the strategies employed by the EARC staff, teachers and parents in implementing Inclusive education in Public Primary schools in Kisumu County.

### 1.4. Research questions:

The study therefore answered the following questions,

- a) What are the policy issues guiding EARCs on Functional and Educational Assessment in the devolved system in Kisumu County.
- b) How are EARC staff members able to undertake Functional and Educational Assessment to all categories of learners in Kisumu County?
- c) How is the EARCs perception of field officers in implementation of Functional and Educational Assessment and inclusive education in Public Primary schools in Kisumu County
- d) Which strategies do EARC staff, teachers and parents employ when implementing Inclusive education in Public Primary schools in Kisumu County

### 1.5. Significance of the study:

The study demystified functional and educational assessment and inclusive education concept hence created ground for in-depth understanding by the stake holders. To the learners with special needs and disabilities the study enhanced participation in deciding on IEP development for their appropriate and quality education. The study again enhanced the role of peers support through child to child programmes to learners with special needs and disabilities both in school and at home. Contact teachers likewise were enlightened on the need to modify their pedagogy for improved lesson delivery in inclusive classrooms. The school administrators and education field officers were able to realise their roles in functional and educational assessment in relation to implementation of inclusive education. The study provided EARC staff with opportunity for deeper understanding in undertaking assessment to learners with special needs and disabilities. Ultimately the study made recommendations to, improve service delivery, explore training needs for functional and educational assessment and expose further areas of research needs.

### 1.6 Limitations of the study:

Respondents like QASOs and CSOs were groups of busy officers as mostly they were in the field monitoring education programmes. There was need to arrange earlier prior to presentation of the questionnaires. Data collection was carried out when national examinations were on hence time was sort from the officers and the questionnaires collected immediately.

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Learners with special needs and disabilities participation in the focus group discussion was a challenge due to fear and unfamiliarity. The research assistants were inducted on skills to create good rapport with the learners before presenting the discussion questions. A lot of prompts and spread of answers were used to ensure that all participate. Parent's time likewise was limited and this was delimited by arranging for the meetings at their convenience.

### 1.7 Assumptions of the study:

The study was based on the following assumptions:-

- a) There were policies guiding EARCs on Functional and Educational Assessment in the devolved system in Kisumu County.
- b) EARC staffs were able to undertake Functional and Educational Assessment to all categories of learners in Kisumu County.
- c) EARCs and field officers supported each other in implementation of Functional and Educational Assessment and inclusive education in Public Primary schools in Kisumu County
- d) EARCs used current strategies when implementing Inclusive education in Public Primary schools in Kisumu County

### 1.8 .Scope of the study:

The study was conducted in 64 primary schools of Kisumu County Kenya. The study employed in-depth Key Informant Interview (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with the principle respondents. Observation checklists and questionnaire schedules were also be used to gather more information from the respondents.

The respondents included, contact teachers, head teachers, learners with disabilities, regular learners, parents of the learners with disabilities and those without disabilities, MOE and TSC field officers and EARC staff at the sub counties.

### 1.9 Theoretical framework:

The study was based on Vygotsky's theory of inclusion. The theory is founded on social constructionism where, medication, social situation of development, zone of proximal development, age-related psychological formations, cultural introduction, primary and secondary disabilities, developmental delay are parameters for determining educational referrals and interventions. (Flick 2006). Vygotsky, posits that higher mental functions are not independently constructed by child growth but rather development of mental process nurtured by adults in the context of social interactions with child (Karpov 2005). This informs the effect of adult influence on the intellectual development of learners.

Vygotsky, tend to promote inclusive education by diminishing the distinction between ordinary and special education. The theory therefore portends that social interaction between learners leads to higher mental functioning which is highly important in the practice of inclusive education. The theory supports the argument that disability is a social construct. This in essence implies that persons with disabilities are made unable to participate in the community activities not because they are unable but the society feels that they should not participate. The disadvantages mated on learners' with disabilities in various learning institutions make them more incapacitated hence social exclusion. The process of functional assessment entails interaction with the environment for both the assessor and the client. This being a social process where the client is observed in the natural environment and abilities identified for intervention and to enhance further interactions with the environment. Education being a social process, educational assessment brings forth the cognitive interaction with the environment to elicit attitudinal change. Teachers as implementers of inclusive education have to ascertain proper placement in classroom and adapt both the environment and instructional methods like sign language. Follow up by EARC likewise enhances teacher's better service delivery to improve social acceptance. Being part of the multidisciplinary team, teachers are key for attitude change towards special needs and disabilities hence constructing positivity and demystifying its effects. The assessor gathers information on the client's cognitive abilities for educational intervention. It is therefore proper to state through functional and educational assessment that clients are able to interact with the environment at their levels hence social inclusion.

The study was guided by a mathematical framework shown.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{EARC} &= sp + \left[ \frac{P + T + p + As}{1 + 1 + 1 + 1} \right] = \text{IE} \\ \text{EARC} &= 1 + \left[ \frac{2 + 2 + 1 + 4}{1 + 1 + 1 + 1} \right] = \text{IE} \\ \text{EARC} &= 1 + \frac{9}{4} = \text{IE} \\ \text{EARC} &= 1 + 2\frac{1}{4} = \text{E} \\ \text{EARC} &= 3\frac{1}{4} = \text{IE} \end{aligned}$$

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The study variables were arranged in an equation where the dependent variable was influenced by the intervening variables to a scale from independent variable

The independent variable was EARC denoted as EARC in the equation. The intervening variables included Supporting policies (Sp), the parent (P), the Peers (p), the Teacher (T), and the Assessors (As). The dependent variable was Inclusive Education, (IE). The variables were given values as, Sp =1, P =2, T=2 p =1, As =4. The variable values were informed by the various activities undertaken. The study awarded 1 for legal instruments (Sp) because the instruments were constant and guided the interventions in the subsequent variables. Parents involvement was gauged on identification of the problem of the child and referral to the EARC hence 2 marks. Teacher's values were bench marked on attitude and pedagogy employed to support the child in class gaining 2 marks. Peers were awarded 1 on the ground of social support and awareness campaigns. The highest award went to the EARC. This emanated from assessment, referral, placement and intervention measures put in place.

The intervening variables excluding the legal instruments were cumulated against a constant of one denoting the four variables. The intervening variables value was at a maximum of 3 ¼ being a strong inclusive programme. 3 and 2 ½ was gauged as a good programme though with more challenges. Any value less than 2 was a weak programme and will require re-planning.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### 2.1 Policies guiding EARCs on Functional and Educational Assessment in the devolved system:

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, (2009) during the expert group meeting to mainstream disability in Millennium Development Goals (MDG)s observed that Human rights standards and principles should guide development programming at all stages from assessment through evaluation and monitoring. Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) was therefore mooted to suffice for development. Key requirements aligned include harmonising MDG targets and indicators with human rights standards, including mainstreaming gender equality; adopting a human right-based approach to empowerment and participation; making policy choices and resource allocation within a human rights framework; and ensuring enforceable rights, accountability mechanisms and sustainable strategies. This brings to light member countries to ensure that functional and educational assessment is anchored in supportive policies for inclusive education leading to an inclusive society. It's imperative to establish the milestones our government has covered to ascertain inclusion from primary schools through functional and educational assessment.

UNESCO Prospects Quarter review of comparative education (1995) outlines the various legislative commitments by member countries in instituting the respective legal provisions to institute special needs education. The assertion that right to education is a fundamental one for every human being has led to many counties drafting laws and policies to conform with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Right. This has since made education to acquire a compulsory status as proclaimed in the Kenyan constitution. The above review did not include policy issues that should guide implementation of inclusive education which the present study focused on. United Nations proclaimed 1981 as The International Year of Disabled Persons this made many countries enact laws or provisions which aim to give a practical dimension to the

principle of full participation and equality. The policies and laws did not however explicitly capture functional and educational assessment in them to drive their implementation. UN resolution on 'The Standard Rule on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities' was adopted in 1993 where the issues of legislation pertaining to the education of disabled persons deserving special consideration; particular measures were required in order to respond to the needs of disabled people and to ensure that they have equal opportunities and equal rights which formed the basis of all legal provisions in many countries.

The UNESCO Prospect Report (2009) indicate that in Belgium specific directives relate to issues such as organization, identification procedures, accessibility, financing and curricular content have been legislated. In essence Belgium has a legislative provision where learners with special needs and disabilities are diagnosed through a procedure and an appropriate intervention measure is taken (Schittekatte, Bos, Spruyt, Germeijs and Stinissen 2003). This has led to proper placement and quality education to learners with special needs and disabilities in the country. Early identification is stressed in the assessment policy. The policy also compels the assessment team to include health professionals, psychologists and educational professionals (EADSNE, 2003). It's on this avail that Belgium has had reforms which intend to give incentives to a more inclusive approach. Belgium is seen as having better functional and educational team who make decision on learner's intervention strategies. The policy however did not establish the effectiveness of inclusive education which is the focus of the present study.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as amended in 2004, mandates each student suspected of having a disability be assessed in all relevant areas. The areas may include health, vision, hearing, social, emotional, general intelligence, academic status, adaptive behaviour, communication and motor skills. If a student is determined to be eligible for special education services, a team (Multidisciplinary Team) identifies his or her strengths and needs, writes an individual education plan (IEP), develops specially designed instruction, and establishes benchmarks to measure the student's academic and behavioural progress (National Council on Disability, 1996). Intervention decisions are therefore made based on specific educational needs and performance on multiple measures. The Act did not specify how it would strengthen the implementation of inclusive education. This is what the current study tried to establish.

Australian Association of Special Education (AASE)'s position is informed by the Disability Standards for Education (2005) policy which require that students with disabilities are treated on the same basis as other students in regards to enrolment and participation in education. This however is mandated by a process of assessment for identification, diagnosis and intervention in terms of medication and appropriate school placement (Wolffe, 2010). The policy aligns the respective activities to support learners with special needs and disabilities access quality education in a least restrictive and disability friendly environment hence actualising inclusive education. The policy did not focus on the nature of functional and educational assessment which the current study tried to establish.

The South African Department of Basic Education has indicated thought the Department's Inclusive Education a policy paper (Education White Paper 6) was set with the provision of instituting schooling for children with disabilities in mainstream schools for moderately disabled learners, full-service schools, specially adapted mainstream schools and special schools exclusively for learners with severe disabilities. The policies have however encountered numerous systemic challenges which necessitated development of Section 27 focusing on public interest law centre with a national and international reputation for defending and advancing human rights in South Africa (Rosen, 2006). Rosen further posits that the section projects to address the systematic failure of the South African government to provide for the right to basic education as envisaged in the Constitution for many children with disabilities. The systemic failures like the struggle to access basic education for many children with a range of physical and intellectual disabilities living in Manguzi, a deeply rural, poor community in far north of the province of Kwazulu-Natal sandwiched between South Africa's borders with Swaziland and Mozambique are focused with the deliberate provision of the section. This is actualized by emphasising the principles of non-discrimination and also requires state parties to realise the right on the basis of equal opportunity to learners with special needs and disabilities. it was imperative to establish whether the government apply functional and educational assessment in Kisumu county for effective implementation of inclusive education.

Since independence, Kenya has had a number of policy documents geared towards streamlining special needs education. Shortly after declaration of self-rule in 1964 Ngala was mandated to assess the number and types of PWDs and the existing facilities for education, training, settlement and employment( Republic of Kenya, 1976). The commission

identified priority areas for apprenticeship training and this led to the current jinks that people with blindness can only operate phones while most people with physical disabilities were trained as cobblers. It was followed by Ominde commission in the same year which recommended that Children with Disabilities with mild impairment to learn in schools within the neighbourhood. It became apparent with the recommendations of this commission that education could be offered to people with disabilities in the neighbourhood. Gachathi (1979) was again sanctioned to review special needs education. The report stressed on Early identification of CWDs, creation of awareness on causes of disabilities and establishment of preschool in special schools for early intervention which informed one of the core duties in EARC. Collection of data on CWDs the report resulted in the establishment of EARC by DANIDA. In 1988 Kamunge led another commission which recommended a National survey to collect data on various types of disabilities and development of appropriate curriculum for CWD. Koech (1999) undertook yet another review and recommended a totally integrated quality education and training, Expansion of all institutions and services for children with special needs and disabilities and lifelong learning process in which PWDs are encouraged to explore avenues for life whatever the level of academic achievements or their career orientation. Recommendations for EARC to be strengthened through good staffing with appropriate multidisciplinary team were also included. There was need for a study which focuses on the effective implementation of inclusive education following functional and educational assessment of children with special needs and disabilities ( Republic of Kenya, 1964, 1976, 1999).

Children's Act 2001 through the ministry of Gender, Culture and Social Services likewise was enacted and the principles of non-discrimination, participation, survival and development and the best interest formed the basis for child care and protection to all children further the act establishes, promotes and coordinates services and facilities within the community designed to advance the well-being of the children with special needs in education. And of great importance the act revoke practices that intend to label the child and exclude him/her from the natural environment and gives lifelong parental responsibility to children with disabilities as advised by respective professionals. This act gives the background for inclusion of children with special needs and disabilities both in learning institutions and communities. Members will safe guard learners right and focus on services offered in friendly environments. By revoking the exclusive practices, the act put in place ground for doing away with stigma which is the main barrier to inclusive education. The Act focused on rights and services but did not specify which services (Republic of Kenya 2003).The current study would determine how functional and educational assessment enhances inclusive education.

In the 2003 the president (Kenya) declared Free Primary education. This in essence gave all children the opportunity to attend primary school. The policy advocated for education to be free and available to all children in Kenya regardless of creed and disability. The same year Persons with Disability Act (2003) was enacted and it provides for the right and rehabilitation of PWDs to achieve equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities which forms the rationale for inclusive education. Equalization therefore implies that learners with special needs and disabilities be accorded opportunities like the rest hence inclusion. This pronouncement did not consider the role of functional and educational assessment as the process of providing appropriate education opportunities for children with special needs and disabilities in inclusive setting.

In 2005 the ministry of education science and technology developed Sessional Paper No. 1 which stressed on the increase of access and improvement on quality education to all. This gave rise to sharp increase of enrolment to schools including special and schools with units and other programmes for special needs and disabilities. The paper (Government of Kenya 2005) gave rise to the basic education Act 2005 which further in section 39 compels the National Government to provide free and compulsory basic education to every child. It therefore followed that all learners regardless of special needs and disabilities accessed schools hence rise in inclusive programmes. This gave rise to the Special Needs Education policy document of 2009. The policy emphasizes on inclusive education and assessments of learners with special needs and disabilities. It is important to analyse how the assessment reinforces inclusive education in the public primary schools in Kisumu County.

In 2010 Kenya promulgated a new constitution of Kenya where educationist captured on Inclusive education and stressed on it as the right trend of educating CWDs. To put this in practice the Ministry developed the Basic education regulations 2015 where section C focuses on learners with Special Education Needs. Clause 22 declares that whenever it is necessary or appropriate to do so, a learner shall be assessed for placement and continuous support in an institution of basic education and training at the County Education Assessment and Research Centre set up at County level under section 46

of the Act. The document further proposes that learners with special needs who have been assessed shall be placed in regular institutions of basic education and training, special needs institutions of basic education and training, regular institutions of basic education and training with special needs units, talent academies for gifted and talented learners, vocational institution and hospital schools and home-based schooling. These regulations therefore put emphasis on educating learners with special needs and disabilities in regular schools for all learners and stresses on friendly schools. Further it gives EARC a new reference of research. It is imperative to ascertain how the government is involved in management of functional and educational assessment to enhance inclusive education. (Republic of Kenya 2015)

Many community agencies and systems influence the lives and psychological well-being of individuals with disabilities and their families (Heinemann, 2005). It's then apparent that the community must develop working systems to support education for learners with special needs and disabilities. The systems should start with identification, functional assessment and end with interventions including educational intervention, which the current focused on. The systems should be anchored in proper legal instruments so that services provided have legal backing. Hidalgo, and Rosen, (2006) portends that psychologist who works with organizations that serve individuals with special needs and disabilities should focus to promote inclusive environments and supports clients with disabilities by consulting with individuals and groups, working with collaborative teams, and creating beneficial adaptations, accommodations as well as enabling environments. This assertion captures on the principle of service delivery in inclusive focusing away from the learner rather services and environment.

## **2.2 Ability of EARC staff to undertake Functional and Educational Assessment to all categories of learners:**

According to Stichter, and Fox, (2001), Functional and Behaviour Assessment (FBA) has been a familiar term to those in special education since mid-1970s and its formal inclusion into special education is relatively recent (1997). Still, even though legislated, there is no statutory or generally agreed upon standard definition of the processes or procedures that constitute functional and behavioural assessment (Sasso, Conroy, Peck- Scott, Meers, and Nelson, 2000). Miltenberger's (1997) however defines FBA as a systematic method of "generating information on the events preceding and following behaviour in an attempt to determine which antecedents and consequences are reliably associated with the occurrence of the behaviour.

Scott (2004) contends that contextual considerations connote equally important questions regarding educators' willingness and ability to engage in the process and that the best possible technology will have no effect if not implemented. This denoted that technology without requisite training and attitude is as impractical as not being able to use the equipment hence being unable to undertake assessment. Functional assessment screening equipment in essence are helpful with requisite training on their use. This study sought to establish the ability of the assessors to appropriately use the screening and diagnostic equipment gets accurate results on functional and educational assessment.

In USA FBA technology can respond to the majority of problem behaviours observed by teachers on a daily basis, and serve the larger middle ground of students as the first line of prevention. (Sasso, Conroy, Peck- Scott, Meers, and Nelson, 2000). In essence this will lead to an FBA format that combines effectiveness and efficiency, reducing the number of students that ultimately receive more intensive FBA and intervention. Further Sasso et al (2000) posits that an important contemporary issue for the use of FBA involves students whose identified problems put them at risk for longer term and more intense failures in their neighbourhood schools. These students represent a wide sample of the school population, and many will not be identified as eligible for special education services as their behaviours could be considered mild in terms of intensity but likely occur with high frequency. There was need to examine the evidence demonstrating that FBA can be effective in the complex social environment typical of the school or inclusive classroom setting. The functional behaviour assessment focuses on behaviour and does not focus on functional and educational assessment which the current study explored.

Sesso (2000) outlines intervention and decision making process by ascertaining that an understanding must be reached to assess whether function matters in the cases, or, at minimum, if function-based intervention is more effective or efficient than randomly applied intervention. The need to examine and understand what is reasonable to ask of school personnel as FBA becomes part of the typical systemic process for these students. Scott (2004) however recommends research which must identify the intersection of necessity and sufficiency and further articulate and continue to provide data-based studies of FBA procedures within school settings that address the tertiary cases, addressing similar concerns (i.e., training for

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school staff, contextual fit of FBA procedures, standardizing the FBA technology in school settings, and linking FBA assessment to intervention). The study however focused on the capacity of personnel at EARC to undertake functional and educational assessment to all categories of learners for proper intervention.

Scotts (2004) therefore concludes that the overview and discussion should consider (a) how we use FBA to understand the complex school environment; (b) how we improve the ecological validity of FBA by including school staff in the process; (c) advances in FBA and structural analysis to address academic target behaviours; (d) the connection between intervention and function; (e) methods of assessment and analysis as part of the FBA; and (f) fidelity of implementation. Scotts however does not address the competencies of the professionals which is key to quality service. Heckaman, Conroy, Fox, and Chait (2000) ascertain that functional assessment-based intervention research, the most salient issue with respect to generality may not be generality of student behaviour but generality of teacher behaviour and interventions. In other words, can teachers select and implement interventions across other students, behaviours, and tasks/materials in accordance with their identified functional relationships?

This brings to light the arguments that are assessors able to undertake functional assessment to all categories of learners and map out intervention measures beneficial to the different categories? A question the current study intend to establish.

Deena (2015) has defined Functional assessment Qualified Person with respect to behavioural supports as: A staff member, service provider, or caregiver who develops, implements, and/or reviews the use of planned positive procedures and/or restrictive procedures must be qualified to do so. A qualified person may be a psychologist with relevant training and experience in behavioural management, or a person with at least two years of relevant training that includes behavioural supports and a minimum of three years of practical experience in behavioural supports (including planned positive procedures and restrictive procedures), a qualified person would also be responsible for supervising interventions that use planned positive procedures and restrictive procedures and note: a person with the above training and experience would also be limited in the kind of restrictive procedures they are allowed to approve, implement, and supervise. For instance, a psychologist could be consulted for anything involving psychotropic medications and for the supervision of individuals who require more complex behavioural procedures (e.g., aversive conditioning); however, a psychiatrist or physician would be required to prescribe any medications. This study left out competencies of functional and educational assessment for all categories of learners for placement in inclusive setting but focused on behavioural difficulties. The proposed study determined the competencies of the staff in the EARCs in carrying out functional and educational assessment of learners with special needs and disabilities for placement in inclusive settings.

Deena (2015) further notes that in addition to the academic credentials, training, and experience, it is also important to be aware of the professional's preferred theoretical framework and that family and/or staff members as well as the qualified person may have different ways of making sense of an individual's behaviour. It is therefore important to choose a professional that will listen to the perspective of the individual with the challenging behaviour along with family members and key service providers. Effective communication is also noted as being the essence of a functional assessment and how the results of assessment are communicated to the parents and guardians of the children with special needs and disabilities.

Denison (2015) portends that Uganda is home to a number of noteworthy events in the context of education rights and provision over the past two decades. These advancements include rights proclaimed in the Uganda Constitution and the establishment of Universal Primary Education and Secondary Education. The right to education is also enshrined in international instruments that have been ratified in Uganda. The 1995 Constitution of Uganda establishes certain rights with respect to education. Article 30 of the Constitution provides that persons have a right to education. Article 34 provides that a child is entitled to basic education which shall be the responsibility of the State and the parents of the child. Objective XVIII of the Ugandan Constitution further provides that the State shall promote free and compulsory basic education. The Ugandan Parliament took a dramatic step towards effectively realizing educational rights when it passed Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997. Under UPE the Ugandan Government mandates that all primary-level students can attend a school without having to pay fees and parents and teachers association charges. The statutes do not however explore the training opportunities for functional and educational assessment training and capacity building which the study sought to establish.

In Tanzania Mary and Donnelly (2002) posits that the term severe and multiple disabilities have been referred to as a low incidence that is in the society and only few people can have it. There is no widely accepted definition of severe and

multiple disabilities as most definition include three criteria's which are test of intellectual function, developmental progress and extent of education needs. Mary Beine and Donnelly (2002). Further Beine affirms that there are levels of severity like mild mental retardation and low vision which are determined by assessment in the adaptive behaviour. Beine asserts that in Tanzania there is in clear and acceptable intelligence quotient (IQ) assessment. The assertion does not however explore the capacity and training needs of the assessors an area the current study intended to establish.

In Kenya however attempts have been made in the special needs education policy (2009). The policy stipulates training procedures to assessors and mandates Kenya Institute of special education to undertake the trainings as they prepare the curriculum together with Kenya Institute of curriculum development. Attempts have been made and the KISE currently offers one year training in functional and educational Assessment. It's apparent that the studies do not explicitly capture on training areas for functional and educational assessors.

### **2.3 Perception of EARC staff on Field officers about Functional and Educational Assessment and inclusive education:**

In Belgium assessment starts early in a child's life when development is impaired, or later when only school learning is impaired. Three domains of professionals dealing with assessment include health professionals, psychologists and educational professionals. (Muniz Evers, Boben, and Zaal, 2001). Muniz et al, further confirms that in Belgium when a developmental problem is detected, parents first go to a health-related profession and institution. However the government of Belgium focuses on early detection. This is done by well organised regional systems where all infants are monthly followed up to the age of three years by the Child & Family public institution in the institutions the infant's health, development and well-being are checked. At this level the institutions team consisting of paediatric nurses, a doctor, social workers and volunteers are involved in undertaking the check-up. The goal is prevention: they do only screening, but do not make a diagnosis. Majorly the Centres supervise good nutrition, the vaccination programme, growth curves, watching development, hearing screening test. This has led to rapid early detection of congenital hearing loss, leading now to more and more timely surgical intervention like cochlear implants Flemish (2008). In the advent that a developmental problem is detected, the child is referred to a paediatrician and if the problem is serious enough a neuro paediatrician or child psychiatrist is drawn in. This kind of assessment is focused on infancy and intervention strategies while the current study focused on school aged learners and how the assessment implicates in inclusive education.

Further the child may be referred for more extensive multidisciplinary functional evaluation to a Centre for Developmental Disturbance, (CDD) where various professions will subject it to a series of observations and standardized developmental tests, in order to evaluate the child's motor, language, social and cognitive development against the chronological development. The elaborate services are planned up to 2.5 years when the child is ready to attend school and the child is assessed by School Psychological Services. This service was formed as a merger of the preventive school health centres, the school guidance centre for special education and the guidance centres for regular education. The merged centre has a multidisciplinary team of psychologists, medical doctors, nurses, special needs educators and social workers (EADSNE, 2003). In Belgium the referral systems are streamlined from the delivery facilities including the hospitals to the monitoring institutions. Further diagnosis when required are done to a child suspected of special needs and disabilities. On reaching school going age the child is subjected to various assessment screening tests by a multidisciplinary team who make decision on educational intervention. (Rompuy, Mardulier, De Coninck, Beeumen and Exter, 2008). The system seems to institute a multidisciplinary approach where various professionals put their heads together to chat the best intervention to children with disabilities. Therefore the assessment results and placement is expected to benefit the child in the inclusive schools. It is then necessary that the current study determined<sup>3</sup> the attitudes of those professionals involved in functional and educational assessment as the EARC(s) in Kisumu County

In Botswana, Assessment Centres are diagnosing the learning needs of primary school students. The centres also undertake placement and referrals to schools, health facilities and homes. These centres get their clients from School Intervention Teams (SIT). The centres are few and understaffed (Major, 2012). This led to the centres being unable to assess all students who require assessment and that there is a long waiting time for assessments. The centre staff composed of teachers specially trained in special needs and particular disability area, health officials and social workers together support one another to make decision on the appropriate intervention measure for the client. Lack of an organised structure for assessment in Botswana rather Senior Teacher Advisors for Learning Disabilities (STALDs) are deployed to

schools to teach a class and at the same time assist other teachers who have disabled students in their classrooms they are also charged with the responsibility of networking with other government departments to support learners with special needs and disabilities in the schools. (Mukhopadhyay, 2009). The proposed study intends to establish the perception of the staff at EARC whether their work supports inclusive education.

In Kenya the Basic education Act mandates the County Education Board in consultation with the relevant county government to provide for education assessment and research centres (EARC) including a special needs service in identified clinics in the county. The act stipulate the functions of the centre as study of children with special education needs within the county, giving of advice to parents and teachers as to appropriate methods of education for such children, in suitable cases, provision for the special education needs of such children in the identified clinics and giving of advice to county education boards regarding the assessment of the needs of any child under special needs education. (The Basic Education Act, 2013) the Act does not however specifically outline the respective activities of EARC staff and other education field officers should undertake to implement inclusive education in their jurisdictions.

Special needs Education Taskforce (2003) was formed mandated to appraise the status of special education in the country and made key recommendations. The Terms of Reference (TOR) includes the need to train and in-service teachers for children with Special Needs, strengthen Educational Assessment and Resource Centres (EARCs) through increased budgetary allocation and equipping, carry out of special needs National Survey to establish population of Special Needs children in and out of school. The need to establish an inventory of assistive devices and equipment available in schools and make special Needs schools be barriers free to enhance access. The TOR excluded the practical implementation process of inclusive education. This study tries to explore ways of synchronising the roles of education field officers and EARC staff to oversee quality service provision in inclusive schools.

The report culminated to the development of Special Needs Education policy (2009) where Functional and educational assessment implementation strategies including conduct regular in-service and professional development courses for teacher deployed to work as assessor, putting in place mechanisms for engaging partners, professionals and other ministries in the assessment and rehabilitation procedures; such as Joint committees, joint planning meetings at all levels, joint implementation and pooling of resources were committed to the ministry of education. The policy document further provides the coordination roles of the EARc to the department of basic education in the ministry of education in consultation with the quality assurance and standards department and teachers service commission. The policy does not explicitly specify the implementation process undertaken by the various departments to support inclusive education, nor the perception of EARC staff undertaking functional and educational assessment for implementation of inclusive education.

Muga (2003) portends that EARC are generally involved in assessment and advice of the parents of children with disabilities with the main objective as equalizing education opportunities for children with special needs and facilitating their full integration into the school system and their community. Further Muga posits that this approach includes early identification of children with special education needs, sensitization, counselling and training of disabled children and their families, parents, teachers, local administration and others in meeting the special needs of these children. Emphasis is also put on prevention of disabling conditions, creation of public awareness on disability and handicap and early intervention and inclusion of these children in the school system. EARC is established in an existing special school or a unit for the disabled children in a regular. Muga lists the multidisciplinary team of the centre to include Specialist Teachers, various Paramedics social workers and community administrators. The glaring gap is the fact that most documents do not focus on the responsibilities and duties of other field officers in education line. The study envisages complementary approach where multidisciplinary team support in functional assessment, intervention and teacher support to monitor inclusive education implementation progress. The study focused on team work in monitoring inclusive education implementation. The reviewed studies view functional and educational assessment as predominantly for the assessors and the multidisciplinary team hence considering their perception. The other stakeholders supporting education in monitoring quality and progress are also not mentioned in any of the studies. This gap perpetuates lack of team work by the various education field officers hence hampering implementation of inclusive education.

#### **2.4 Strategies employed by Stakeholders to implement inclusive education:**

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2009) outlines the best practices in inclusive education to include, responding to learners' voices, and active participation of learners, Positive teacher attitudes, effective teacher skills, visionary school leadership and coherent school leadership service. The document underscores the needs to listen to the voices of learners and their family members in discussions about what affect their lives. Further the report suggest that the learner and the family members should provide relevant information in an appropriate format to enable partners plan for appropriate educational intervention In assessment the report indicate that learners should choose different ways of showing what they know, understand and can do, being involved in discussions about assessment information and how it can support future learning. Likewise in the learning process learners should have different ways of accessing information, making it meaningful and expressing themselves. The outlines do not however expose the specific activities by specific stakeholders to be undertaken to create the conducive environment for functional and educational assessment. The document further recommend for active participation of learners as all learners are entitled to be active participants in the life of the school and community. In essence all learners should feel part of their class/school, being valued for the individual contribution that they make to the life of the community. Learners should be consulted about any additional support needed to help them participate in the full range of activities and experiences offered. The document felt short to stipulate respective role of peer support which is key in successful implementation of inclusive education. The document directs teachers to have positive teacher attitudes and take responsibility for all learners and show understanding of the fundamental needs that they all have in common like to feel safe, to belong, to enjoy their time in school and achieve meaningful outcomes, value and show commitment to meeting a broad range of outcomes (including emotional health and well-being, social skills) and maintain high expectations for all learners, recognise when learners need support and arrange this sensitively together with the learner, without using potentially limiting labels and have knowledge of a range of resources (including ICT) and the skills to enable them to be used effectively in the classroom. The study focuses on how teachers can be supported by the EARC, CSOs, QASOs, and parents to implement inclusive education an aspect not discussed in the report.

Harrington(2011) out lines key elements of the Quality Assessment Framework and state that it require that for each decision, key issues are identified, necessary evidence is gathered and used appropriately, the law is interpreted and applied correctly, decision makers are neutral and consultative and the client is treated fairly, the key conclusions and the reasons for them are recorded. The outcome of the decision is one that is right in the circumstances. To attain success Harrington, asserts that embedding Quality Assessment Framework through audit, feedback and regular calibration exercises must be taken into consideration. Further Harrington posits that decision makers, supported by legal and medical colleagues, assess a number of cases and come to a common conclusion about condition of the client assessed. The report does not focus on the how various stake holders team up to undertake specific activities to support implementation of inclusive education which was the focus of the current study.

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2009) asserts that to attain effective teacher skills it's recommended that all teachers should develop the skills to meet the diverse needs of all learners this should be attested to when teachers develop a range of approaches to assessment and pedagogy to enable them to use flexible ways to reduce barriers to learning and enable participation and achievement. In Visionary school leadership the document directs that the head of institutions are advised to value diversity among staff as well as learners, encourage collegiality and support innovation. This will ascertain effective inclusive practice required for visionary leadership at all levels that demonstrates inclusive values and develops the positive ethos and environment for learning that form the basis of quality education. The current study focused on the child friendly methods of instructions. Networking is key in any institution hence Coherent interdisciplinary services are inherent successful implementation of inclusive education. Every school should have access to the support of interdisciplinary community services. This is done by demonstrating a good working relationships and effective communication across and between different sectors or services and schools in the community. They should enable information to be shared and appropriate and timely support provided to address additional needs (such as therapies for medical needs, mental health support. Working closely with parents and learners to strengthen links between the family, school and the interdisciplinary team and working with schools to involve all stakeholders, including local special schools/settings in their support networks and seek innovative ways to share expertise to enhance support

provided to the learners in an inclusive setting. The report focuses on the school, community and family and excludes the core functions of the field officers who support inclusive education by ascertaining quality through monitoring.

Kitty Williams (2014) asserts that, although, all the educational professionals exceptionally encouraging views of inclusion in Kenya, discussing the importance and actively seeking ways and information on how to achieve this, their experiences about how their wider community understood disability were less promising. Kitty further affirms that a number of parents still held that children with disabilities were burdens, and couldn't be educated, and these parents chose not to seek vital support from the EARC or local school, keeping their children at home, uneducated and away from the prying eyes of society. This confirmed that stakeholders had no formal strategies put in place to support learners in inclusive settings.

## **2.5 Gaps Literature Review:**

### **2.5.1 Summary on policy issues guiding EARCs on Functional and Educational Assessment in the devolved system in Kisumu County:**

Education Act Regulations (2015) put emphasis on educating learners with special needs and disabilities in regular schools for all learners and stresses on friendly schools. Further the regulations give EARC a new reference of research. This establishes how the government is involved in management of functional and educational assessment to enhance inclusive education. (Republic of Kenya 2015) The regulation however do not suggest structures to implement inclusive education in regular schools

Heinemann, (2005) portends that communities must develop working systems to support education for learners with special needs and disabilities. The systems should start with identification, functional assessment and end with interventions including educational intervention, which the current focused on. The systems should be anchored in proper legal instruments so that services provided have legal backing. Hidalgo, and Rosen, (2006) further posits that psychologist who works with organizations that serve individuals with special needs and disabilities should focus to promote inclusive environments and supports clients with disabilities by consulting with individuals and groups, working with collaborative teams, and creating beneficial adaptations, accommodations as well as enabling environments. This assertion captures on the principle of service delivery in inclusive focusing away from the learner rather services and environment.

### **2.5.2. Summary related to EARC staff ability to undertake Functional and Educational Assessment to all categories of learners in Kisumu County:**

Mary and Donnelly (2002) posit that the term multiple disabilities has been referred to as a low incidence that is in the society and only few people can have it in Tanzania. There is no widely accepted definition of sever and multiple disabilities as most definition include three criteria's which are test of intellectual function, developmental progress and extent of education needs. (Mary Beine and Donnelly (2002)

In Kenya however attempts have been made in the special needs education policy (2009). The policy stipulates training procedures to assessors and mandates Kenya Institute of special education to undertake the trainings as they prepare the curriculum together with Kenya Institute of curriculum development. Attempts have been made and the KISE currently offers one year training in functional and educational Assessment. (Republic of Kenya 2009).It's apparent that the studies do not explicitly capture on training areas for functional and educational assessors and inclusive education practices.

### **2.5.3. EARCs perception of field officers in implementation of Functional and Educational Assessment and inclusive education in Public Primary schools in Kisumu County:**

Muga (2003) portends that EARC are generally involved in assessment and advice of the parents of children with disabilities with the main objective as equalizing education opportunities for children with special needs and facilitating their full integration into the school system and their community. Further Muga posits that this approach includes early identification of children with special education needs, sensitization, counselling and training of disabled children and their families, parents, teachers, local administration and others in meeting the special needs of these children. Emphasis is also put on prevention of disabling conditions, creation of public awareness on disability and handicap and early intervention and inclusion of these children in the school system. The glaring gap is the fact that most documents do not

focus on the responsibilities and duties of other field officers in education line. The study envisages complementary approach where multidisciplinary team support in functional assessment, intervention and teacher support to monitor inclusive education implementation progress. The study focused on team work in monitoring inclusive education implementation. The reviewed studies view functional and educational assessment as predominantly for the assessors and the multidisciplinary team hence considering their perception. The other stakeholders supporting education in monitoring quality and progress are also not mentioned in any of the studies. This gap perpetuates lack of team work by the various education field officers hence hampering implementation of inclusive education.

#### **2.5.4. Summary about the strategies employed by the EARC staff, teachers and parents in implementing Inclusive education in Public Primary schools in Kisumu County:**

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2009) asserts that to attain effective teacher skills, all teachers should develop the skills to meet the diverse needs of all learners. A range of approaches should be developed by teachers to support learners with special needs and disabilities in regular classes. Every school should have access to the support of interdisciplinary community services. This is done by demonstrating a good working relationships and effective communication across and between different sectors or services and schools in the community. (EADSNE 2009). The report focuses on the school, community and family and excludes the core functions of the field officers who support inclusive education by ascertaining quality through monitoring of best practices in the schools. Teachers are therefore left on their own to formulate best practices and implement them in classes. This confirmed that stakeholders had no formal strategies put in place to support learners in inclusive settings.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Research Design:**

The study mainly focused on qualitative approach for in-depth insights. However quantitative approach was also employed to depict relations in variables where applicable. It is therefore apparent that the study adopted descriptive research design. Ogula (2005) describes research design as a plan, structure and strategy of investigation to obtain answers to research questions and control variance. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), descriptive research design determines and reports the way things are. Creswell (2003) observes that a descriptive research design is used when data is collected to describe persons, organizations, settings or phenomena.

Kothari (2008) posits that, descriptive research design also provided enough protection against biasness and helped maximize reliability by being flexible in time and also leads to avoiding the pain of hunting for respondents more than once to produce high response rate. Kothari (2008) further confirms that most organizations will use descriptive research design as a method to reveal and measure the strength of a target group's opinion, attitude, or behaviour with regards to a given subject.

Descriptive design was therefore ideal in this study as the study was conducted within heterogenic settings for inclusive education and hence it was logistically easier and simpler to conduct. The study determined the way inclusive education was supported by functional and educational assessment by stakeholders in different organization.

#### **3.2. Area of study:**

The study was conducted in Kisumu County in Kenya. Kisumu County is one of the 47 Counties in the Republic of Kenya with it is headquarter at Kisumu city. It lies within longitudes 33° 20'E and 35° 20'E and latitudes 0° 20'South and 0° 50'South, with Equator crossing it to the North. The County covers a total land area of 2085.9 km<sup>2</sup> and another 567 km<sup>2</sup> covered by water of Lake Victoria. (Kisumu County Education Sector Strategic Plan 2013). The county is has seven sub counties including Nyando, Nyakach, Muhoroni, Seme, Kisumu East, Kisumu central and Kisumu West with a total human population of 1,031,855 ( Kisumu County Fact Sheet - Vital Statistics 2012). Kisumu County has 836 schools of which 620 primary schools and 216 secondary schools. There are ten special schools in the county, one public University and one National Polytechnic. (Ministry of Education County Office 2016). The county borders the counties of Siaya, Vihiga and Nandi in the West and North. In the East and south the county borders Kericho, Bomet, Nyamira and Homabay.

The county is endowed with abundant social-economic activities including fishing, cane farming, rice farming, arrow root farming, horticulture, livestock farming and sand harvesting. There are tourist sites including Kit Mikai, Impala Park and Luanda Magere stone. Kisumu City likewise is an economic hub for the East African region as it connects Tanzania and Uganda at Lake Victoria and Kisumu International Airport. It also lies on the Trans African high way road network. Kisumu county EARC is among the first centres established in 1984. This gave rise to other established EARCs where functional and educational assessment services are carried out for learners with special needs and disabilities. Leonard Cheshire Disability (LCD) has been implementing inclusive education and on this, a decision to undertake the study in Kisumu is based. The location therefore has many primary schools with inclusive education orientation. The study was carried out in the county so that the results and recommendations made are used to improve service delivery to learners with special needs and disabilities in the county.

### 3.3. Study Population:

A population refers to any group of institutions, people or objects that have common characteristics. (Ogula, 2005). The units of analysis were 64 primary schools practicing inclusive education in Kisumu County. The study population was therefore comprised of 64 Head teachers 64 contact teachers, 5 EARC officers, 7 QASOs, 35 CSOs and 128 parents or guardians. A total of 192 pupils were targeted for the study.

### 3.4. Sampling Techniques and Sample size:

Sampling is a procedure, process or technique of choosing a sub-group from a population to participate in the study (Ogula, 2005). Further Ogula portends that sampling is the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that the individuals selected represent the large group from which they were selected. Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003) however contends that a sample is subgroup carefully selected so as to be representative of the whole population with the relevant characteristics where each member or case in the sample is referred to as subject, respondent or interviewees.

The sample was comprised of 20 Head teachers 20 contact teachers, 49 learners and 39 parents or guardians. (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003). Purposive sampling is judgemental and one is allowed to choose who in his/her own opinion should be in the study Moataza (2012). Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) Learners, teachers and parents were selected by purposive sampling as this gave the researcher chance to pick any number manageable and representative to the population. 5 EARC, 7QASOs and 34 CSOs were selected through saturated random sampling because the numbers are fewer and their individual input from all the sub counties was important for the study.

### 3.5. Methods of data collection:

The study adopted the use of questionnaires, class and outdoor observation check lists key informant interviews and focus group discussion as the main data collection instruments.

#### 3.5.1. Observation Check list:

Spark and Dennis (2012) affirm that an observation check list is a pre-prepared list of things that an observer is going to look at when observing a class an individual or an activity. Observation check list was used to observe inclusive education best practices for learners with special needs and disabilities as they get support from peers in school. Observable variables included adaptations in and out of class, access and support could be captured. The check list also included usability of other facilities in the school including latrines and toilets, desks, tables and any other adapted equipment. Appropriateness of the adapted facilities and structures were also observed. Classroom and outdoor observation checklist was used to ascertain the functional level of learners in the school. The observation check list was appropriate for the study for it was meant to find inclusive education best practices.

#### 3.5.2. Questionnaires:

This study administered six questionnaires schedules to collect data. A questionnaire is a research instrument used to gather data over a large sample. (Kombo and Tromp 2006). Further Kombo and Tromp posit that it's a written list of questions that is to be filled in by a number of people with an aim of collecting information. The study targeted a large number of respondents spread over a wide geographical area hence use of questionnaires was more appropriate.

The study used head teachers questionnaires (QFH) to collect data from head teachers and this addressed the objectives aiming at defining government role in functional and educational assessment as an implementer of policies. The questionnaire was also to find out the classroom strategies used by the head teachers to support implementation of inclusive education. Questionnaires for TSC contact teachers (QFTSC TCHR) sought to address objective one and four where the main focus was the teacher's role as policy implementer and classroom strategies of inclusive education. Questionnaire for QAS (QFQAS) and for CS officers were aimed at determining the role of government in functional and educational assessment and establish how they supported implementation of inclusive education in schools and classrooms. The questionnaires had three to four different sections starting with the demographic data, then policy issues, ability of EARC staff, Perception of field offices and strategies of implementing inclusive education. The questionnaires were administered by the research assistant were collected on the same day.

### **3.5.3. Interviews:**

According to Meredith (2007), interviews consist of oral questions asked by the interviewer and oral responses by the research participants and have the advantages of being adaptable, interviewers able to follow up with a respondents answer to ask why they believe, feel, or responded accordingly.

#### **3.5.3. 1 Key Informant Interviews:**

A key informant interview was carried out to all EARC staff in the county. Being a homogenous group with same core duties key informant interviews was conducted. The interview lasted for 45 minutes to one hour. The interview focused on their mandate, ability to undertake functional and educational assessment to all learners and challenges encountered during their work. The interview likewise made inquiries on how the challenges were surmounted. The interview therefore covered all the objectives and informed the back bone of the study. Interview was conducted to EARC staff on policy issues, their ability to undertake functional assessment, their perception on field officers and strategies they use in implementing inclusive education.

Parents' were interviewed to ascertain their responsibilities in functional and educational assessment and further establish the support they offered to children in implementing inclusive education as espoused in objective one and four. A total of 45 parents were taken through an interview questionnaire that lasted for 35 minutes.

### **3.5.4. Interviews Focus Group Discussion::**

The study therefore employed focus group discussion to get more information from the respondents. The discussions focused on feelings about the services provided including teaching methods, use of instructional materials, peer support and school values promoting inclusive education. This in essence this was to establish the suitability and appropriateness of the strategies used to implement inclusive education in schools and classes. Learners being the consumers of the services a group discussion were made to share more and unearth a lot of information on implementation strategies in and out of classrooms. Learners were put in 7 groups having 7 learners in each group. The rules guiding FGD were adhered to during discussions. For further reference and in-depth understanding of the discussion a recorder was used with full knowledge and permission of the participants on few instances. The interview lasted for 30 minutes.

### **3.6. Validity of research instruments:**

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), Validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results. Uma (2003) contends that validity attests to whether an instrument measures what it is purposed to and is justified by the evidence. Validity essentially therefore details how research instruments measures the intended aspects. The instruments were subjected for in terms of face and content validity. Necessary improvements were made after sort with the support of supervisors and experts from School of Education at JaramogiOgingaOdinga University of Science and Technology. Some questions were ex punched and others reframed

### **3.7. Reliability of Research Instruments:**

Reliability refers to whether an instrument is consistent, stable and free from errors despite fluctuations in test, administration or conditions under which the test is administered. (Uma 2003). The researcher measured reliability of questionnaires to determine its consistency in testing all that they were intended to measure. This was also to determine

item efficiency, expose ambiguity and correct them appropriately. The study piloted in two of the units of analysis and test re-test technique was used to estimate the reliability of the instruments. Cronbach's alpha internal consistency table was used to ascertain good test re-test reliability between 0.7 and 0.95 being good and high respectively Davidshofer and Murphy (2005). This involved administering the same test twice to the same group of respondents who had been identified for the purpose. Analysis was done using Cronbach's Alpha SPSS statistic procedure and good test re-test reliability of 0.85 was attained in most of the instruments.

### **3.8. Procedure of collecting data:**

The researcher sought permission from Director of Post graduate studies of JaramogiOgingaOdinga University of Science and Technology. This enabled the researcher to get permit from National Commission of Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI).Further this facilitated permission from personnel in various units of analysis including Kisumu County and the seven sub counties and targeted institutions. The questionnaires were presented to the respondents and collected on the same day. The researcher then conducted a pilot study before the actual study. Data collection took three months and the interviews were arranged at the convenience of the respondents

### **3.9. Data Analysis:**

The study used both quantitative and qualitative approaches for data analysis. Quantitative data from the questionnaire were coded and entered into the computer for computation of descriptive statistics. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 22) was used to run raw data into tables, charts, with frequency distribution and percentages. The qualitative data generated from open ended questions from questionnaire, interviews, focus group discussions and observation check lists were categorized in themes in accordance with research objectives and reported in narrative form. In essence the qualitative data was used to reinforce the quantitative data.

### **3.10. Ethical Considerations in Research:**

The research was guided by universally accepted ethical guidelines to ensure that those involved in the study were protected in all aspects. (Piper and Simon, 2005). Those who gave information were not forced to do so because forcing them was unethical and could have led to unreliable data. ( Marczyk, De Matteo and Fistingner 2005). However to ensure that the principle of justice was upheld, the despondences were voluntary. This was to allow for freedom to participate and withdraw without any negative effect. This was ascertained by providing a written consent form to be completed by the adult respondents. ( Marczyk, De Matteo and Fistingner 2005). The components of the form included purpose of the study, what was expected of the respondents detailing the time benefits and supposed expected risks. The instructional information was at the educational level of particular respondents and in the language they understood best. Illiterate respondents were allowed to make a definite mark as they felt and a witness counter signed to authenticate consent. Child participation was guided by the principle of respect where children were given texts at their reading level in a sheet detailing how they were to participate. Their parents were requested to support them by signing informed consent forms on their behalf. The participating adults were contacted individually to arrange for their convenient time. Further to uphold confidentiality the participants did not indicate their names on the questionnaires rather the tools were serialised to enhance tracking, analysis and easy entry. ( HennWeinstan and Foard2006). Likewise the researcher did not reveal the identity of the respondents to ensure confidentiality.

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Policy issues guiding EARCs on Functional and Educational Assessment in the devolved system in Kisumu County:**

The first research question responded to was:

**What are the policy issues guiding EARCs on Functional and Educational Assessment in the devolved system in Kisumu County.**

The research question was responded to by EARCs, QASOs, Head Teachers, Teachers and CSOs.

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### EARC responses on policy issues guiding EARC on Functional and Educational Assessment in the devolved system in Kisumu County:

When EARC were asked to give their views of policy issues guiding EARC on functional and educational assessment in the devolved system, one of them had this to say:

*EARC policies have been in place since independence. This however was supported by the various commissions put in place to help understand education for learners with disabilities. It was until special needs education policy (2009) when EARC were given a clearer road map to their core functions and established structure to help in the implementation. The policy however is silent on inclusive education practices. Prompted further the respondent commented on other policy documents and said; 'it is not very clear which documents support inclusive education explicitly. Rather some act like the children act has provisions for mandatory education but not stating the commitment from stakeholders.*

The study realised that the EARC officer was not aware of other policy documents like basic education act regulation which tries to give light on inclusive education implementation. Further the EARC office did not mention other legal documents like children's act and disability act. These acts support inclusion and enforce best practices including non-discrimination and checks on stigmatization.

Another EARC attested that Special needs education policy (2009) does not include guidelines on how to support learners with gifted and talentedness in regular classes and does not give placement options to learners with severe disabilities.

The second EARC did not mention Basic education Act regulation which included placement options for learners with severe disabilities like home and hospital schooling. Probed further to indicate what is done to such learners, the officer depicted that such learners were sent back home and forgotten as no follow ups could be done at home. The officer was oblivious of home based education as stipulated in the act.

The third and fourth EARC impeccably said that the policies were not clear on inclusive education and that inclusive education had no legal backing in Kenya. When probed further the fourth EARC affirmed that inclusive education policy was not possible as most schools were not disability friendly. This assertion contradicted many policy documents including Public Health act which stipulates that all infrastructure both public and private should be accessible to all regardless of disability. Teachers were requested to indicate the importance of EARC in implementing inclusive education in the schools as indicated in Table 1. Teacher affirmed that EARC were very important as shown by 70.6% response confirming the same. The confirmation attest to the fact that teachers understand that EARC were a creation of some policy document which bound them to support learners with special needs and disabilities.

For QASOs availability of EARC were to be confirmed as envisaged in SNE policy (2009). The study found out that some sub counties did not have EARC hence no functional and educational assessments were carried out in those sub counties (Tables 1 and 2).

**Table 1. Importance of EARC (N=17)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very important	12	70.6	70.6	70.6
	Important	5	29.4	29.4	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

**Table 1. EARC office availability (N=5)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	3	60.0	60.0	60.0
	No	2	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	5	100.0	100.0	

#### 4.2 EARC staff members'ability to undertake Functional and Educational Assessment to all categories of learners in Kisumu County:

The question second research question responded to was:

##### **How are EARC staff members able to undertake Functional and Educational Assessment to all categories of learners in Kisumu County?**

The first EARC had this to say;

*A jack of all trades is a master of none. Functional and educational assessment is not practical. How can one be equally competent in assessing a learner with hearing impairment with equal competency in assessing one with visual impairment? It is true that before one goes for functional and educational assessment, one must specialize first. This will interfere with assessment after being trained in functional and educational assessment as one is bound to be biased to his/her area of specialization. No wonder it takes one two years to specialize in one area. How then can it take one year to be competent in more than twenty special needs and disability areas?*

The EARC officer had not been trained in functional and educational assessment. The officer justified lack of training with assertion that the training was not professional and lacked the thresh hold to make one have competencies and requisite skills for assessing all categories of learners. The arguments about biasness created by specialization maybe valid however even during the specialization training a component of multidisciplinary aspects were covered. Likewise, closing doors for assessing learners not in one's specialization area contravenes the spirit of assessment. The need to relook at the functional and educational assessment arose.

The second EARC when accosted by the same question indicated that the training was an eye opener to grey areas and had this to say;

*I was trained in visual impairments and I specialised in the same. When I went to Train in functional and educational assessment, I was keen on audiology and other technical areas like autism, cerebral palsy and intellectual disabilities. The training has helped me to support all categories of learners who come to the centre. Though the support may not be highly professional in other areas, it gives the necessary support to parents. I now have the requisite skills to undertake assessment to all learners though not very competently.*

Accepting that the training did not make the EARC officer to competently assesse all categories support the fact that there was need for further enhanced training even to those officers who had trained. This should be done by evaluating the current training curriculum and then improving it.

The last two EARCs were as divergent in their views like the first two raising the same issues with one giving a suggestion for an exclusively functional and educational assessment course.

QASOs were requested to rate EARCs on their ability to undertake functional and educational assessment and inclusive education. Only 20% indicated that EARCs were very effective on inclusive education practices as indicated in Table 3. This depicted lack of confidence in what EARCs do as functional and educational assessment. EARC training in functional and educational assessment should therefore be relooked at so that a level of competency and professionalism is seen in the assessors.

**Table 2. Effectiveness of EARC on inclusion (N=5)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very effective	1	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Effective	2	40.0	40.0	60.0
	Not effective	2	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	5	100.0	100.0	

#### 4.3 EARC's perception of field officers in implementation of Functional and Educational Assessment and inclusive education in Public Primary schools in Kisumu County:

The third question responded to was:

#### How is the EARC's perception of field officers in implementation of Functional and Educational Assessment and inclusive education in Public Primary schools in Kisumu County?

EARC 1 in response to the question said;

*The need to work as a team is there for all field officers however special needs education is a technical area that requires one to be knowledgeable in all that is in it to work well. Taking field officers to undertake duties performed by EARC's is not possible because the situation will always be that the officers will never be comfortable with learners with special needs and disabilities. In fact inductions should be done to the rest of the officers so that education for learners with disabilities is not seen as EARC only.*

EARC 2 said that he cannot involve the other field officer in assessing learners as that will be a waste of time. Further the officer indicated that there was marked negativity by most field officers about educating learners with disabilities in regular schools.

EARC 3 said that they only join the QASOs during schools assessments and this only happened in special schools

EARC 4 indicated that working together with a multidisciplinary team involving the paramedics was possible but not education field officers as at the time. However in case induction could be organized then it could be possible for attitude change.

None of the EARC officers indicated willingness to work together with other field officers. Rather they recommended inductions as a prerequisite to working together. This looked at team work from a wider perspective. An education officer getting to a school; and identifying a child with disability then making a referral to the centre is a good indicator of team work which was lacking from interviewed EARC's.

QASOs indicated that they included EARC's in activities including, schools assessments, curriculum activities and programme monitoring as indicated in Table 4

**Table 3. Support to EARC by QASO (N=5)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Monitoring	2	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Supervision	1	20.0	20.0	60.0
	No support	2	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	5	100.0	100.0	

CSOs indicated that EARC's were not working together with them to support inclusive education in their zones. Some were not aware of schools having inclusive education programmes in the zones as depicted in Table 5.

**Table 4. Presence of SNE programmes in the zone (N=26)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	15	57.7	57.7	57.7
	No	11	42.3	42.3	100.0
	Total	26	100.0	100.0	

The study found out that 15 (57.7%) indicated that Schools with special needs programmes were in their zones while 11 (42.3%) showed that such schools were not in their zones. The scenario depicts lack of awareness about SNE and disabilities.

#### 4.3.3 Strategies do EARC staff, teachers and parents employ when implementing Inclusive education in Public Primary schools in Kisumu County:

The research question responded to was;

#### Which strategies do EARC staff, teachers and parents employ when implementing Inclusive education in Public Primary schools in Kisumu County?

This research question was responded to by EARCs, Teachers and parents.

While responding to the question, EARCs listed the strategies as, Teacher inductions on trends of inclusive education, inclusive education programme monitoring, sensitization, guidance and counselling and inductions.

Teachers indicated that the most widely used method of instruction was IEP. However resources were not enough as indicated in the respective Tables from observation checklists.

Parents indicated that they supported their children by taking them for assessments, checking their daily work from school and providing them with resources, materials and assistive devices as shown in figure 1

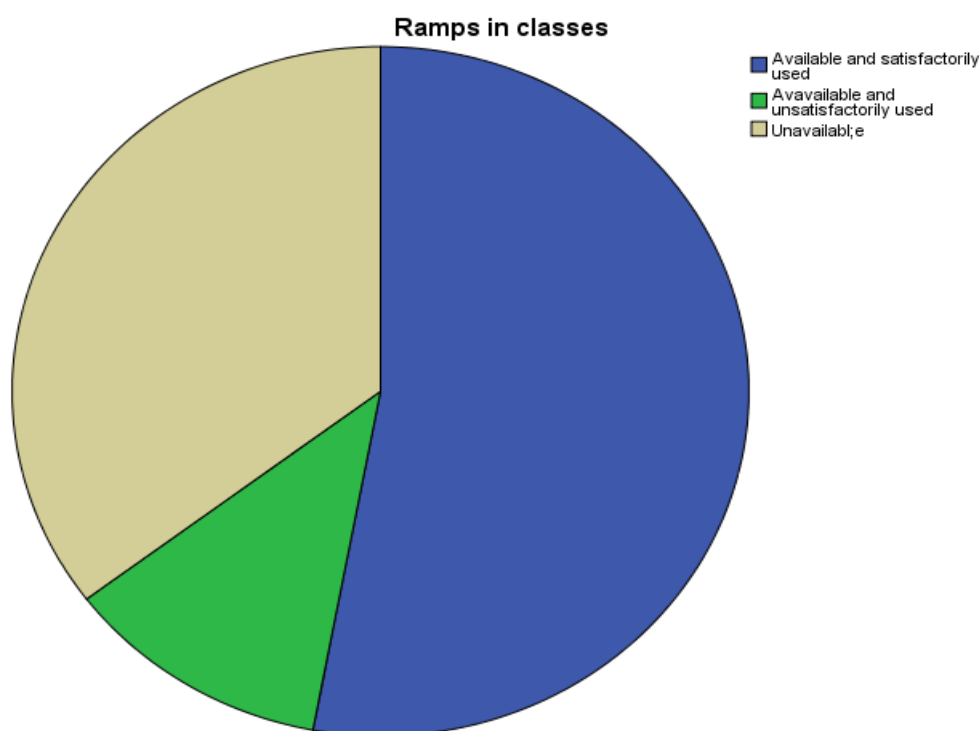


Figure 1: Ramps in Classes

Table 5. Wide doors for access

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Available and satisfactorily used	10	58.8	58.8	58.8
	Unavailable	7	41.2	41.2	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Access to physical infrastructure is a key component to inclusive education. Adapting the environment allows all learners to access buildings with least support. Ramps in buildings and wide doors that can allow wheel chair users to access facilities are important and the MOE has a friendly schools policy support implementation of the policy. It is however worrying to realise that 52.9% of the schools under study had usable ramps and 58.8% had usable wide doors.

**Table 6. Officers who monitor inclusion (N=17)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	EARC	7	41.2	41.2	41.2
	CSO	2	11.8	11.8	52.9
	Listed more than two	8	47.1	47.1	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Teachers gave EARCs the highest monitoring rating in classrooms. This showed that EARC officers were undertaking peripatetic services even if it was at 41.2%. Teachers confirmed that EARCs visit schools but not as often.

On home monitoring, the study intended to find out from parents or guardians whether EARC officers visited the homes to monitor children on home based programmes.

**Table 7. EARCs Visit homes for monitoring (N=45)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	16	35.6	35.6	35.6
	No	29	64.4	64.4	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

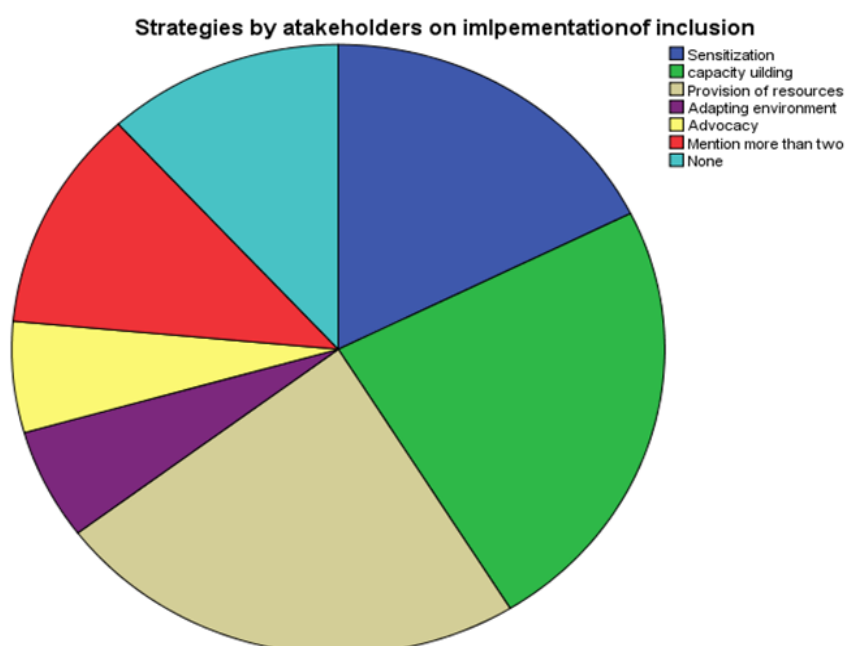
Home visits are important in the work of EARCs and it was reported by parents that the officers only visited the homes at 35.6%. This indicated that inclusion could not be understood from home rather it's a creation in schools

**Table 9. Programmes carried out together with EARCs**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	School visits	2	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Creative activities	2	40.0	40.0	80.0
	None	1	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	5	100.0	100.0	

Further QASOs only carried out School visits and creative activities together with EARC officers leaving out others like poly documents sensitization, capacity building, and networking, establishment of programmes and advocacy.

During monitoring of inclusive education implementation, 60% of QASOs indicated that they included EARCs in schools assessment to schools with special needs and disability programmes as indicated in figure 2:



**Figure 2: Strategies by stakeholders on implementation of inclusion**

EARC officers used sensitization as a strategy to implement inclusive education more than the rest of the strategies. (60%), unlike undertaking inclusive education as a right whose rating stood at 20%.

To ascertain disability friendly environment, an observation checklist was used to gather information about physical facilities, devices and services provided.

#### **4.4. Adaptations in schools:**

The study set to establish availability and usability of disability friendly environment in the schools as envisaged in Special Needs Education Policy 2009. UNICEF 1999 defines friendly school as an inclusive of children and does not exclude, discriminate, or stereotype on the basis of difference. The study established that blinder, hand rails toilet seats and white canes were not in the schools. This meant that learners who needed the support of such resources could not be included in the schools. Low percentages were noted in availability of pavements, toilet seats, adapted seats for posture and sighted guides. This implied that learners with visual challenges in the schools faced more problems and including them could not be possible. as shown in the tables below.

Better adaptations were reported in supportive seating arrangement, ventilation and classroom lighting as shown in the tables below.

The schools in the sample that were visited revealed the following; 3 (17.6%) had pavements for easy and guided movements; 2 (11.8%) had no pavements. On the use, 12 (70.9%) had unsatisfactory usage of pavements. It can therefore be concluded that pavements which are a requisite for access were unavailable in most schools. On lighting, the visited schools had 3 (17.6%) availability of adequate light in the classrooms while 2 (11.8%) were available but unsatisfactorily used. 17 (70.6%) did not have light in the classroom. It was right to conclude that the classrooms were not conducive to learners with disabilities and more so to learners with low vision who require adequate light.

On supportive seating arrangement, 10 (58.8%) were available and satisfactorily used 1 (5.9%) was available and unsatisfactorily used while 6 (35.3%) were unavailable. This showed that learners supported each other during classes hence peer support.

Most schools did not have toilet seats 13 (76.5%) a situation making it difficult for learners with physical disabilities to access education. On adapted seats only 1 (5.9%) was available and used well while 16 (94.1%) were unavailable. It showed that learners with physical disabilities could not attain good posture without the seats. The situation was the same for sighted guides in all schools visited.

The study intended to establish inclusive best practices. An observation was undertaken on children attempts were made on classroom support by peers, etiquette, individualized education programme, peer support out of class and copying mechanisms. No attempts or minimal attempts were recorded on white cane techniques, adapted field of play, sign language, activities of independent living skills and use of instructional materials. The study established that 17 (100%) of the schools either did not have or had no information about white canes. This meant that learners who were cane users were not taken care of on independent movement. On adapted fields of play, the study established that 13 (76.5%) had no attempts to adapt the fields while 1 (5.9%) attempted to adapt the fields. This implied that learners with special needs and disabilities who needed the fields could not take part in the game a situation seen to be going against inclusion. On classroom support from peers, 5 (29.4%) attempted to support learners in classrooms in various areas like pushing the wheelchair while 7 (41.2%) satisfactorily supported their peers with special needs and disabilities. This implied that learners with special needs and disabilities were supported well in the school. The support made it possible for the learners to have the sense of belonging and by extension raised self-esteem. Communication is fundamental in education and learners with deafness who cannot talk should be communicated to by sign language. The study established that 15 (88.2%) schools had no attempts to put in place sign language as a language policy. The scenario practically locked out learners with deafness from the schools hence negating inclusion. On independent living skills the study found out that 4 (23.5%) schools attempted to have learners attain independence while 5 (29.4%) were satisfactory, 2 (11.8%) were unsatisfactory and 6 (35.3%) did not attempt. Being an integral requirement for learners with special needs in an inclusive setting the findings meant that learners in the schools could not attain better levels of independence in the schools.

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Learners with special needs and disabilities need to develop coping mechanisms to enhance inclusion. The study found out that 7 (41.2%) of the schools had learners who had developed good coping mechanisms and were able to go on with life normally with peers. 4 (23.5%) were satisfactorily coping while 3 (17.6%) were unsatisfactory and not attempting to cope. Those who were not coping were observed to be aggressive, withdrawn, and hostile to visitors and strangers and lacked friends.

**Table 10. Adequacy of Instructional Materials**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Adequate	5	29.4	29.4	29.4
	Inadequate	12	70.6	70.6	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

One major challenge was recorded in adequacy of instructional materials which stood at 70.6% inadequacy. Worse percentage was recorded in assistive devices and prosthetics which went up to 94.1% and 88.2% respectively. The inadequate instructional materials were an indication that inclusive education needs to be better resourced for quality work.

**Table 11. Adequacy of assistive devices**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Adequate	1	5.9	5.9	5.9
	Inadequate	16	94.1	94.1	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Assistive devices are very important to learners with disabilities as they improve functional abilities. The researcher observed that 16 (94.1%) of the schools lacked assistive devices. This was a clear indication that learners with special needs and disabilities were not supported to function at optimum levels to enhance concept formation. The situation therefore showed that inclusive education had many challenges one of which was lack of assistive devices in the schools.

**Table 12. Adequacy of prostheses**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Adequate	2	11.8	11.8	11.8
	Inadequate	15	88.2	88.2	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

The researcher observed that 15 (88.2%) of schools did not have learners fitted with prostheses. Only 2 (11.8%) were having learners fitted with prostheses. This showed that learners who needed to be fitted for mobility and/or general functioning could not undertake the functions well hence hampering inclusion in various activities.

**Table 13. Head teacher lesson monitoring strategies (N=17)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Learners Performance	5	29.4	29.4	29.4
	Checking IEP	4	23.5	23.5	52.9
	Observing some lessons	8	47.1	47.1	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Most head teachers reported that they monitor lessons by observation, learners' performance and checking IEP progress. 94% Head teacher respondents reported challenged and listed reporting to EARC as the first line of overcoming the challenges, followed by discussing with the teacher at worst ignoring them. For classroom strategies, teachers indicated that they were supporting learners with various special needs and disabilities in their classes at any time. Teachers mentioned demonstrations, use of realia or models, IEP, differentiated instructional method and peer support as the most common strategy they employ during lesson delivery. Majority of the teachers reported adequate space in class at 52.9% while inadequacy in adapted seats stood at 88.2%. For peers to support each other while in class, majority of teachers organized for a supportive seating arrangement.

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**Table 14. Classroom strategies by teacher.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Peer support	1	5.9	5.9	5.9
	more than one method	16	94.1	94.1	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

The study established that 16 (94.1%) teachers used more than one strategy in class while teaching. Only 1 (5.9%) used peer support as the only strategy in class. This showed that learners were likely to form better concept in different subject areas as the teaching strategies were varied.

**Table15. Supportive seating arrangement**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	10	58.8	58.8	58.8
	Disagree	7	41.2	41.2	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Supportive seating arrangement is important for learners with special needs and disabilities as it will enhance peer support and collaborative learning. 10 teachers representing 58.8% indicated using supportive seating arrangement while 7 (41.2%) did not use supportive seating arrangement in class.

**Table16. How parents monitor child performance**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	checking daily work	32	71.1	71.1	71.1
	Discussing with teachers	12	26.7	26.7	97.8
	Not known	1	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

32 Parents (71.1%) indicated checking of their children daily work to be the main monitoring process they undertake. (1226%) Indicated discussion with teachers to monitor performance of their children Parental involvement is important in learners' performance in education because both teachers and parents need to work together for the learner's success (Table 17 )

**Table 17. Parents reaction towards inclusion**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Negative	2	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Not known	2	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	4	100.0	100.0	

EARC officers reported that half of the parents passing through their offices were negative about inclusion. The study found out that 2 (50%) EARCS each indicated negative attitude from parents about inclusive education while another 2 (50%) showed that parents were not aware of inclusive education. The finding therefore meant that EARC officers had to sensitize parents on inclusive education for them to accept their children to access the services.

## Pupils focus group discussion:

The discussions were conducted in 7 groups of 7 learners in seven schools. The interviews were focussed on peer support in and out of class, care of resources and devices, advantages of inclusive education by both categories of learners and support strategies by parents. They were finally grouped and reported in three sections; support in and out of class, care for materials and devices and parental obligation.

On support peers reported helping learners with special needs and disabilities with repeating what they miss as teachers teach; push their wheel chairs to the latrines, avail materials advocate for them to be given same treatment like when playing and support them as they use them and play with them out of class.

On resources, peers reported using the colourful resources in class together and this was a disadvantage to all. They also reported helping them fix some resources when broken or damaged. On disadvantages some learners reported inability of some peers to play some games like football for wheelchair users. A group reported that one advantage is that they no longer fear people with disability as they used to. This captured an attitude change in children and the school fraternity. On parental obligations learners reported that their parents treat them like their other siblings and buy them uniforms like the rest. This showed that there was a high level of acceptance in parents on inclusion. Parents also were reported to be coming to school to find out the progress made by the children. On provision of the resources, learners were not sure whether the parents provided or the school. Mostly they reported well-wishers and NGOs as providing the resources and devices they were using. They also reported their mother parents as having taken them for assessment and usually came to school to discuss with teachers. On the negative side a few members reported some learners avoiding playing with them of having them in their groups in class. It was apparent that learners were interacting well amongst themselves and support for learners with disability was a concern of many in the schools visited.

## **5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1.1 Summary of findings related to policy issues guiding EARCs on Functional and Educational Assessment in the devolved system in Kisumu County:**

The study established that all EARC officers were not aware of the current policy documents supporting education for learners with disabilities in the county. The only policy document mentioned widely was SNE (2009) policy document which was under review. The research found out that EARCs were not conversant with all the policies guiding EARCs on Functional and Educational Assessment. QASOs likewise were not aware of their core duty in inclusive education as provided for in the basic education Act Regulations 2015. Some QASOs however indicated that they included EARC officers in their schools assessment visits. Majority of CSOs were not even aware of schools providing inclusive education programmes in their zones an indication of lack of the awareness on Basic Education Regulation prioritization of inclusive education.

### **5.1.2. Summary of findings related to ability EARC staff members to undertake Functional and Educational Assessment to all categories of learners in Kisumu County:**

The research findings exposed lack of professional skills to undertake functional and educational assessment by EARC officers in the county. It was also apparent that the confidence level of stake holders in education was low on EARC ability to carry out functional and educational assessment to all categories of learners. The study also found out that one EARC officer had completed training as an assessor and another undergoing the same.

### **5.1.3. Summary of findings related to EARCs perception of field officers in implementation of Functional and Educational Assessment and inclusive education in Public Primary schools in Kisumu County:**

The study established that implementation of Functional and Educational Assessment and inclusive education in Public Primary schools was the prerogative of EARCs as most field officers were not aware of the type of support they could offer for the success of Inclusive education. This prompted EARC officers' effectiveness rating to be low. Some field QASOs and some CSOs were not aware of the type of special needs education programmes in their areas of jurisdiction. Field officers rating of EARCs was low an indication of lack of team work in the county.

### **5.1.4 Summary of findings related to Strategies EARC staff, teachers and parents employ when implementing Inclusive education in Public Primary schools in Kisumu County:**

On strategies employed by the EARC staff teachers and parents in implementing Inclusive education in Public Primary schools, the study established that inclusive education best practices were not employed in implementation of the programme. The class environment was not very conducive as indicated in the survey results. Inadequate resources and insufficient funds and inclusive education implementation strategies be insufficient. Parental involvement was also low and this impacted on successful implementation of inclusive education. The study also established that most schools had teachers with basic training in special needs to take care of the learners with special needs and disabilities.

## **5.2. Conclusion of the study:**

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn;

### **5.2.1. Conclusion of the study related to policies guiding EARC's on Functional and Educational Assessment in the Kisumu County:**

EARC officers and other education field officers were not aware of all policy documents guiding EARC's on Functional and Educational Assessment in the devolved system are in place but policy implementation strategies were lacking in the county.

### **5.2.2 Conclusion of the study related to ability EARC staff members to undertake Functional and Educational Assessment to all categories of learners in Kisumu County:**

Most EARC officers were either not trained or trained but lacked skills and competencies to undertake Functional and Educational Assessment to all categories of learner in Kisumu County.

### **5.2.3 Conclusion of the study related to EARC's perception of field officers in implementation of Functional and Educational Assessment and inclusive education in Public Primary schools in Kisumu County:**

The study established presence of negative perception on both EARC's and field officers towards each other in implementation of Functional and Educational Assessment and inclusive education in Public Primary schools in Kisumu County which culminated to low rating and lack of involvement in team work.

### **5.2.4 Conclusion of the study related to strategies do EARC staff, teachers and parents employ when implementing Inclusive education in Public Primary schools in Kisumu County:**

Ineffective strategies were employed by the EARC staff teachers and parents in implementing Inclusive education in Public Primary school in the county. Further inadequate resources and lack of current best practices in inclusive education made the impact of inclusive education in the county not felt.

### **5.3 Recommendations of the study:**

The following were the recommendations made for the study in light of the findings;

#### **Recommendations in light of the findings related to policies guiding EARC's on Functional and Educational Assessment in the Kisumu County**

- a) EARC officers should be inducted on the existing policy documents supporting education of learners with special needs and disabilities. The induction should include not only educational policies but other legal documents supporting social wellness o learners with special needs and disabilities.
- b) Sensitization and awareness campaigns should be mounted to all stake holders in education and general community members.
- c) Policy implementation monitoring process should be instituted to oversee proper implementation.

#### **Recommendations in light of findings related to ability EARC staff members to undertake Functional and Educational Assessment to all categories of learners in Kisumu County**

- a) The study recommends that it be made mandatory like any other profession for EARC officers to be trained in fictional and educational assessment before they are deployed to the offices.
- b) Those who are already in the offices but lack requisite skills should be capacity built through short course in-service programmes.
- c) Those who went for the training earlier should be retrained on the current best practices.

#### **Recommendations in light of findings related to EARC's perception of field officers in implementation of Functional and Educational Assessment and inclusive education in Public Primary schools in Kisumu County**

- a) The study recommends sensitization for field officers on the basics of functional and educational assessment
- b) Further the study recommends inductions on functional and educational assessment and inclusive education to the field officers. During the inductions, field officers should be reminded of their responsibilities to all learners without discrimination as espoused in Kenyan Constitution and the children's act

### **Recommendations in light of the findings related to strategies do EARC staff, teachers and parents employ when implementing Inclusive education in Public Primary schools in Kisumu County**

- a) The study recommends that schools be funded well so that necessary resources can be availed for implementation on inclusive education by all schools.
- b) There should be periodic planned in servicing of contact teachers on inclusive education best practices.
- c) Inductions sessions should be organised to parents so that they undertake their responsibilities of providing the assistive devices to the children.
- d) The school administrators should make sure that the schools infrastructure is adapted to become friendly to all learners.

### **5.4 Suggestions for further research:**

The researcher made the following researchable topics to address the inadequacies that would expound the current study:

- 1) A comparison study between IEP and Differentiated instructional methods as strategies of implementing inclusive education on academic performance in primary schools.
- 2) Explore effectiveness of functional and educational assessment training offered to EARC at KISE.
- 3) Establish the impact of policies guiding functional and educational assessment on implementation of inclusive education in the country.

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