

**ASSESSMENT OF EVOLUTION OF PERSONS LIVING WITH
DISABILITIES' ENVIRONMENT: A CASE OF DEAF COMMUNITY IN
NAIROBI**

BY

DESIREE L.M. ONGBETOND

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ESAMI BUSINESS SCHOOL

P. O. BOX 3030

Arusha

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ABSTRACT

Persons with disabilities including Deaf are known to be experiencing marginalization in their living environment. This study explores Deaf enabled living environment. The choice of this study and its location, Nairobi, was motivated by the fact that Kenya is among the few countries in the world, particularly in Africa (Uganda, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya) which made a significant step, implementing a legalized sign language and the policies for the inclusion of Deaf.

This study focused on the assessment of the living environment of Deaf and of the main policies implemented by the Constitution of Kenya in 2010, Deaf access to opportunities, financial supports and policies implemented for them, and the challenges experienced to access the available opportunities. As a small and specific group for a specific time, the methodology used the cross-sectional survey and emphasized more on a qualitative evaluation of policies and the effectiveness of their implementation. 141 respondents were selected including students of secondary schools, of college, and of university, parents, workers and non-workers regardless of gender. The sampling approach was the non-probability one, the data collection procedure targeted Deaf gathering places and the tools were questionnaires, interviews and observation.

The major findings revealed that the Deaf community had considerably been empowered from the Constitution of Kenya in 2010, and that the enabled environment for Deaf community has made progress compared to a decade ago in the various main fields of new policies which are: education, employment, communication, respect of Deaf dignity and rights, at a more or less extend. The key policy of this progressive success is the legalized sign language. Some challenges also resulted from the findings. In conclusion most of Deaf have access to opportunities and enjoy a pleasant living environment, but about half of them, 44% still face challenges for the expected quality of life. Recommendations have been made to help reaching the full inclusion goal and the environment targeted. The main recommendations emphasize in strategies to have more deaf post graduates, more effective employees on the fields, the involvement of Media and technology, and of non-deaf as well in the process.