

“I Have Been Given the Power to Teach. The Children Understand Me Very Well”: a Preliminary Study of the Social and Academic Impact of Deaf Teacher Training in Kenya

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Abstract

Kenya has 41 Deaf schools that serve children from Class 1 through secondary school. These schools are all characterized by the fact that they have very few teachers who are fluent in Kenyan sign language. In order to meet the needs of schools and to provide employment opportunities for Deaf Kenyan adults, a small non-governmental organization identified Deaf secondary school students for training. They received two years of teacher training free of charge. Most have since been awarded teaching contracts by the Kenyan Teacher Service Commission or local school boards. This article reports on results from a preliminary study of the social and academic impacts of this innovation. Results indicate that Deaf teachers are inspirational in the classroom, represent a significant resource for their school communities and are preferred by Deaf students. A follow-up study on the relative learning gains of Deaf students when taught by Deaf teachers is planned once relevant data are available.

Keywords: Teacher training, secondary school, Kenya, Kenya teacher service commission, local school boards, deaf teacher, deaf students.

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