

**TEACHERS SUPPORT AND THE CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS
WHO HANDLE THE INTELLECTUALLY CHALLENGED
IN WEST TIGANIA, KENYA**

**A Research Final Presented to the Institute
of Continuing and Distance Studies
Kampala International University**



**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree Bachelor of Education in
Special Needs Education**

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DECLARATION

I the undersigned hereby declare that this research is my original work. No other known to me has been submitted either in part or full to any academic institution known to me on this topic for academic requirements or public thereof. Theories, ideas and inspirations obtained from existing literature and other sources have been duly acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this study paper to my husband, my daughters, Sylviah and Brenda and my son Godwin for their encouragement, tolerance and moral support as I was doing this research.

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ABSTRACT

Teachers are faced by challenges as they handle the intellectually challenged. Some of the challenges include lack of curriculum guidelines, teaching instruments, lack of references, inadequate personnel as well as undefined curriculum.

They also need support from parents, stakeholders and also the community. Support may be financial as well as the moral support.

The researcher used the questionnaire method and with permission she distributed all the questionnaires to different units in the division.

The researcher found out that there is need to create awareness to parents of the intellectually challenged which should be done by teachers who handle them. Parents can as well be advised to form or join association from which the share others experiences.

There is also need to in service special needs educators which can only be applicable through lecturers, films and conferences in which teachers discuss with experts the challenges they face as they carry on with their duties. Seminars and workshops can be held so as to come out with practical solutions to immediate problems. Exhibitions are also necessary so that

teachers can get in touch with new equipments teaching materials as well as textbooks.

Teachers handling intellectually challenged should seek specialist help so as to stand a better chance as they handle these pupils. Teaching skills alone are not enough, there is need to know about children's growth and development so as to recognize characteristics that are of significance in helping each child to learn the best way possible.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Support for teachers who handle pupils with special needs has not been sufficient for the last many years, as concerns teachers support in the area of the intellectually challenged, it has not been possible. As from 1993 no units were established meaning that the needs of the intellectually challenged were not catered for. By then no one would have liked to be associated with children with special needs either the physically handicapped, visually impaired as well as the deaf and also those with multiples of handicaps

The years which followed a few teachers who were trained at the Kenya institute of special education realized that there was need to sensitize the community in the area of special needs education. The sensitization was successful on the side of teachers but still teacher lacked support from parent and the general community.

Teachers themselves started to work with professionals in these areas. The ministry of education science and technology established education and assessment resource centers (EARS) at district levels which started offering services to the unit and also special schools. Though the support needed was not given, teachers started organizing fun days at division level for sensitizing parents who were invited to attend the fun days. This brought about changes in the lives of individual parents who in turn stopped hiding children with

special needs; they took them to school and units as pertains the needs of individual child.

1.1 Rationale of the Study

Teachers of the intellectually challenged face various challenges. The need support from head teachers, parents and the community so as to offer services effectively. In the division there are limited financial resources which are not evenly distributed especially in the special units. Teachers support services are inadequate on their initial teacher training, in times of rapid educational change and expansion such as the present, this is unsatisfactory and the quality of teaching inevitably suffers.

In servicing of special needs educators is necessary. This can be done usually through lectures, films and conferences in which teachers discuss with experts the problems that face them in their work. Seminars and workshops can be held in which practical solutions to current difficulties are hammered out and materials for implementing these solutions are devised and produced. Exhibitions are also necessary as teachers will be introduced to new textbooks, teaching materials and equipments to help them in their work. There is need to display children's work in neighboring units to give teachers an idea of the standards being achieved. Workshop facilities needs to be provided to enable teachers to produce their own teaching materials using

duplicating and other reprographic equipment, photographic and other audio visual equipment, art and craft materials.

It is important for unit teachers to work together with other professionals or specialists in the division and enhance their working relationships. Learners who are intellectually challenged can never be independent in their intellectual activities of the brain, they cannot learn from experience nor can they plan their future activities. Communication is almost impossible for them to achieve. This call for specialists such as speech therapists and physiotherapists teachers with little or no training tend to use authoritarian and inefficient methods that make learners see school as a repressive place with little to enjoy.

In the absence of specialist help, patience, firmness and caring, concern may be the only tool that the teachers can use for the benefits of the intellectually challenged.

Poor schooling is often overlooked as contributing factor to backwardness, but unsuitable buildings, inappropriate equipment and facilities, inadequate materials for learning and teaching and inefficient teachers can have just as serious effects as physical mental and emotional causes. Moreover, there are occasional clashes of personality that make a pupils and his/her teacher unable to enjoy good returns. If prolonged, this can have a damaging effect

on the pupil's progress. The intellectually challenged needs an environment suitable for their learning needs and give them an opportunity to develop in all possible ways.

A child who suffers from a handicap is doubly disadvantaged because he/she has not only to bear his handicap but also the prejudices that most societies express towards those who are different. This can be acutely painful for the child, and can lead to complicated feelings of loneliness, rejection and frustration.

In some cases mental handicap may be so severe that normal education is impossible, but in many they are so slight that they go undetected. This might be taken to mean that such cases are not important. On the contrary, they represent children whose performance is being hindered by factors that with only a little knowledge on the part of the teacher, could be largely overcome. For lack of this, such children are denied the special help they need, or worse, are blamed for things over which they have no control.

Many handicapped children suffer from conditions that cannot be cured, but they can still enjoy education in normal school. In some cases, special teaching materials may be advisable, in others, special methods of teaching, but handicapped children can only be helped by teachers who are alert to

needs of individual children and are willing to take time and trouble to assist each child to enjoy a better life.

A learner who is intellectually challenged is always disadvantaged. This is because almost everything we do, whether consciously or unconsciously, is the result of the activity of the mind channeled to the movable parts of our bodies through the nervous system. The intellectually challenged have problems in co-ordination for example eye hand co-ordination is difficult to some of them. They are unable to retain and recall information. This means that their retaining capacity is very low and also they have short attention span. The researcher realized that memory is very important to the learning process and learning depends on our ability to retain and recall information that we receive. If we are not able to grasp & keep hold of what we learned, it would be like trying to fill a bottomless bucket.

The reduced capacity of the mentally retarded to retain and recall information both in the short term and in the long term memory is pronounced, especially with regard to abstract material. The intellectually challenged learn slowly, hence they have significant educational problems. The researcher also found out that the intellectually challenged have behaviour and social adjustment problems behavioral adequacy is a way of designating a child as mentally retarded. Their low frustration tolerance makes them give up task easily/ Low frustration tolerance and short attention

span also causes the child to have not only educational problems but also personality and social development problems. They manifest temper tantrums as a result of perceiving themselves as being forced to do impossible tasks. The intellectually challenged find little pleasure in engaging themselves in non-rewarding activities. They need to be encouraged in all activities.

Teaching skills alone are not sufficient. The teacher must know about children and how they develop. He/she must be able to recognize those characteristics that are of significance in helping each child to learn more effectively.

The researcher feels that anyone who knows anything about children should be aware that growing up is more than growing bigger. Children are not little adults nor are adults big babies. It is essential, therefore, that teachers who are closely concerned with children during that period in the life when some of the most important developments take place should know as much as possible about the process of growing and developing and be able to identify the intellectually challenged.

1.2 Theory

This study is based on theory of Piaget which states that cognitive development is the most popular of the theories on the child's mental maturation process. It has also become the cornerstone in understanding the child's reasoning. The theory is divided into stages which aid educators, researchers and other professionals in determining the level at which the child is reasoning. The theory also assists professionals in determining the necessary instructional materials according to the child's intellectual levels. However, these are levels and flexible and not definite. They are approximations. Piaget believes that all children follow these stages. Therefore, when the child significantly deviates from the pattern of intellectual development, professionals become concerned.

In order to assist people to understand the theory Piaget precedes it by introducing two terms, namely:- organization and adaptation which are part and parcel of cognitive development because without them, learning would be absent. Organization and adaptation are also a part of the survival of man. Had the frog organized its functional mental processes and learned that the environment had become hostile, it would have adapted to the new situation and survived.

Piaget's concept of adaptation is the most widely discussed. It is broken down into assimilation and accommodation because of their concern with adaptive functions of an organism. The functions of assimilation and accommodation

change with the enlargement of what Piaget calls schema, or what an individual already knows about an object. When a child has no knowledge of an existing object, and is presented with one, or comes to know of one through exploration, he is said to have assimilated the object. If the child is presented with another object which is different from the one assimilated, he accommodates the characteristics of the object by way of modifying the existing schema or knowledge.

Grasping an object is an example of assimilation and accommodation since the child modifies the schema is determined by the size of the object.

The stages of cognitive development consist of the sensorimotor period; the pre-operational period, the period of concrete operations, and the period of formal operations under each stage are the activities that take place in the mental processes of the child.

Sensorimotor period is characterized by the child's reflex activity where he child is involved in systematic natural reflex activities to assist him in learning environment. The environment is mainly material nipples in the first month of birth. Between one and four months, the child is involved in circular reactions, a form of self exploration which is aimed at assisting him adapt to the environment.

One major observation during the sensorimotor stage is that the child's concept of object permanence is non-existent in the early stages of development. However, in the fourth stage of the sensorimotor period which occurs between 8 and 12 months, goal directed activities enable the child to develop a sense of object permanence. Object permanence is the belief that an object exists or is present at the place it was previously seen even if it is invisible to the child. For instance, if the child is shown a ball and then paper or cardboard is placed between him and the ball, he believes that the ball is still there even if he cannot see it. In the sixth stage of the sensorimotor period (age 18-24 months), the child has developed a full sense of object permanence. This is a result of internalizing new experience in the schema through tertiary circular reactions and problem solving.

The pre-operational period (2-7 years) is so called because at this stage the child has not developed logical thinking or operations although his language has developed rapidly and extensively. The stage is divided into pre-conceptual stage (2-4 years) and intuitive stage (4-7 years).

One important characteristic of the pre-concepted stage is animistic thinking where inanimate objects are perceived by the child as alive and possessing human characteristics.

In the intuitive stage, two characteristics emerge the child's inability to know the rules of conservation and reversibility. In conservation a child is represented with two glasses of milk and is told that both of them contain the same amount. The milk from one glass is poured into a plate and the child is asked to indicate which object contains more milk. This task is to test the child's ability to understand that the amount remains constant even if poured into another object. In this example, the child states that the glass contains more milk because it is taller than the plate.

Reversibility is another area where the child at the intuitive stage of the pre-conceptual period has difficulty. If the amount poured into the plate is poured into the glass and the child is asked whether the milk from the plate and in the glass is the same, the child would probably say "No" since it came from a hollow object.

During the period of concrete operation (7-11 years), children are able to apply the rules of reversibility, conservation, number concepts, serialization, and classification although at a concrete level they cannot generalize beyond what they see to a more hypothetical level.

As the mental processes of the children advance they are able to do more difficult assignments children at this stage are also able to sub-classify items from a given classification. The ability to classify and sub-classify assists in



distinguishing children in sensorimotor and pre-operational stages from children in the operational stages because with children in the first two groups schemas are the guiding factor in learning, whereas with children in the operational stage, operational structures are the guiding factor.

The formal operational stage (11 + years) is the highest and final level of cognitive development. In this stage, adolescents and adults are able to hypothesize beyond the level of children in the concrete operation period. They are also able to apply logical rules to situations that violate principles of reality... Make complex deductions, analyze ways or reasoning and solve problems by systematically testing hypothetical solutions” The level and breadth at which the individual may reason depends on many factors, including the technological development of the locality or country, infrastructure, exposure to other cultures through visits, television and magazines, and indeed the level of education. But basically, at the formal operations stage, hypothesizing and problem solving mentally exist in all individuals who have no intellectual impairment.

1.3 Significance of the Study

After conducting the study, the researcher hopes that teachers in special units, stakeholders, parents, administrators will be equipped with the knowledge based on how to conquer the problems they encounter when teaching in the units. The study will also guide the head teachers on how to

handle the unit teachers without interfering with the smooth running of the units.

This research report may assist in overcoming some of the problems encountered by teachers when teaching the intellectually challenged and also focus on parental, family and community involve.

1.4 Objectives

General: This study seeks to:-

1. Enlighten teachers on how they can conquer the problems, which they might encounter when implementing curriculum for the intellectually challenged children.
- 1.1 To create awareness to parents so that they form or join association from which they can get information, share challenges and learn from other's experiences.

Specific:

This study was be guided by the following specific objectives

1. To determine the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - o Age
 - o Gender

2. determine the degree of teacher support in terms of:

2.1 teachers' attitude

2.2 availability of teachers

2.3 culture

2.4 policies

2.5 availability of resources

2.6 training

3. determine the level of academic performance as to:

3.1 attitude

3.2 availability of teachers

3.3 culture

3.4 availability of resources

4. Determine if there is significant relationship between degree of Teachers support and the level of academic performance of the intellectually challenged pupils in West Tigania division primary schools, Kenya.

1.5 Statement of null hypothesis

There are problems in implementing the curriculum of the intellectually challenged due to lack of trained special needs educators in the division. Also the work load for unit teachers hinders them from home visits and homebound programmes, on the other hand the special unit teachers lack support from parents as well as the community this makes them uncomfortable as they handle the intellectually challenged. Teaching materials are also inadequate making teachers ineffective as they carry on with their teaching in the units.

1.6 Definition of Terms

For the purpose of the study the following terms are defined operationally:-

Adjustment: A change in something that makes it better, more accurate or more effective.

Audiologists: A person who is technically trained to carry out hearing screening.

Co-ordination: This is the ability to control the movements of different parts of the body so that they work well together.

Handicap: It is a disadvantage or restriction of activity, which has come about as a result of society's attitude towards disability:

Integration: It is the complete assimilation of children with special educational needs into the ordinary school system.

Intelligence: Good at thinking clearly and quickly at understanding difficult ideas and subjects and at gaining.

Mental retardation: This is an interference in intellectual functioning which occurs during development.

Occupational therapists: Persons trained to carryout exercises in talking that are designed to help someone who cannot say words correctly.

Orientation: Information or training that one is given before starting a new activity.

Perception: The ability to notice something by seeing, hearing and smelling.

Physiotherapist: Someone who gives treatment of injuries using special physical exercises.

Psychologist: Someone who studies how people's minds work and how this affect their behaviour.

Rehabilitation: To help someone to be independent and useful in life.

Retardation: It is a delay or slowness in a child's mental development.

Social worker: Someone who is trained to give help and advice to people who have severe social problems.

Speech therapists: Persons trained to carry out exercises in talking that are designed to help someone who cannot say words correctly.

Task analysis: This is the progress of breaking down a task to be learnt into smaller steps to be presented to the pupils in sequence from the easiest to the hardest.

1.7 Limitation of the study

The programmes are distributed in areas which are far apart across the division. It was during the second term and the researcher had other duties to attend to. These include teaching in the mainstream, weekly duties as well as homebound programmes.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Review of Related Literature

2.1 Definition of mental retardation

According to Werner (1996) mental retardation is a delay or slowness in a child's mental development. The child learns things more slowly than other children of his age. He may be late at the beginning to move, smile, show interest in things, sit, walk, speak and understand. Or he may develop some of these skills more quickly but be slower in others. – Werner (1996).

Better services for the mentally handicapped stated that a person who is mentally handicapped does not develop in childhood as quickly as other children nor attain the full mental capacities of a normal adult. The handicap may be slight or severe, in most severe cases; development does not progress even in adult life. (1971)

Like other physical qualities, intelligence is influenced by both heredity and environment. It is affected by our state of health and emotional balance. But the most potent factor of environment is the amount the intelligence is used. – Farant (2002)

2.2 Definition based on intelligence test scores

Definition based on intelligence test score shows that intelligence tests were specifically designed to establish children who cannot benefit from regular school curriculum. Some scholars have defined mental retardation solely in terms of performance on standardized tests (intelligence tests). That is if an individual scores below the mean score or show more than standard deviation below the mean score or normal distribution curves, he/she is mentally retarded.

2.3 Definition based on failure in social adjustments

Definition based on failure in social adjustments defines mental retardation in terms of how well the individual adjusts to the environment and culture as opposed to in terms of scores on test. "Mental deficiency is a state of incomplete mental development of such a kind and degree that the individual is incapable of adapting himself to the normal environment of his fellow in such a way as to maintain existence independently of supervision, control or external support – Tredgold (1973)

"A mentally defective person is a person who is incapable of managing himself and his affairs or being taught to do so and who requires supervision, control and care for his own welfare and the welfare of the community" – Benda (1954)

The above definitions show that the retarded person cannot be able to lead on independent life on reaching adulthood.

2.4 Factors which may cause mental retardation

There are many factors, which may cause mental retardation. The most common causes damage to the child's brain. This can happen before birth, at birth, or after birth

Infections may occur to the mother during pregnancy, it may even occur to the developing embryo and they may cause mental retardation.

Infections and intoxication cause mental retardation whether pre-natally or post-natally. Infection occurring during the first trimester of pregnancy due to German measles (rubella), produces abnormalities in 50% of developing fetuses. Ndurumo (1993)

Mental retardation resulting from trauma or physical agent is self produced or caused by factors outside the control of the mother. During childbirth complications such as difficult delivery, breach delivery, the use of forceps to bring the head out of the birth canal, or the wrapping of the umbilical cord round the baby's neck may occur. Ndurumo (1993) Trauma refers to accidents or injuries that may occur during prenatal, preinatal and postnatal periods and may cause mental retardation. Injuries may occur due to physical punishment instilled by parents, caregivers, ranging from battering, burning, and even to an extent of bone breaking.

Intoxication may cause disorders when they enter into the system of the foetus. This may be during prenatal or postnatal period. These foreign substances may be nicotine, alcohol, carbon monoxide, drugs, mercury and lead. Which may bring about mental retardation depending on the amount of intoxicant introduced into the body system.

Mental retardation can also result from metabolic, nutritional, endocrine or growth dysfunction specifically, they include neuronal lipid storage diseases like: Tay-sach's disease, carbohydrate disorders which interfere with brain metabolism, amino acid disorders such as phenylketonuria. Ndurumo (1993).

Chromosomal abnormalities may also cause mental retardation. The trait and personality of an individual is determined by genes that are contained in the chromosomes. Chromosomes are found in the cells of human beings, each contains 46 chromosomes. The 46 chromosomes can be divided into 23 pairs of 23; each pair contains autosomes and sex chromosomes. Autosomes contain the genes that determine development trait and personality of human beings apart from sex, and sex traits of human, which is determined by genes in sex chromosomes.

From the human point of view, it is mathematical chance that determines the arrangement of genes on the 23 chromosomes of the future reproductive cells.

Some causes of mental retardation may be due to gestational disorders which include: prematurely, low birth weight and post maturity.

There is no evidence of organic or biological disorder in the child, then adverse environmental influences may be the cause of mental retardation. Environmental influences are classified as psychosocial disadvantages and sensory deprivation. The psychosocial disadvantage category was previously described as cultural familial mental retardation. For a child's retardation to fit into the environmental category, one of the parent's should have subnormal intellectual functioning. Another environmental influence is sensory deprivation. Where children are deprived of stimulation by their parents' particularly mental deprivation, they lack opportunity to interact, play, talk or laugh with their mothers. Even worse is prolonged separation from other human during critical years. Separation at this stage not only causes mental retardation, but also severe emotional disorders because interaction with other people is one of the cardinal requirements for emotional growth and development. Ndurumo (1993)

Downs syndrome is another cause of mental retardation.

The most widely used classification of mental retardation is the one provided by the American Association of Mental Deficiency of 1973. The classification delineates four levels of retardation namely: mild, moderate, severe and profound. The classification takes into consideration the results of measured intelligence using intelligence tests. The intelligence test may be that of standard Binet scale or Wechsler Scale.

According to David Werner (1997) mental retardation in children can be mild, moderate or severe. Some children never learn to speak, others to talk (and often love talk). Many can learn to read and write. Most of these boys and girls are very friendly and affectionate and behave well with people who treat them well. Even those who are more severely retarded, with the help of good teaching usually learn to take care of their basic needs, and to help out with simple work. They can live fairly normally with their families and communities.

2.5 Classification of mental retardation

Educationally, mentally retarded children are classified into three categories. These are educable mentally retarded, trainable mentally retarded, severely / profoundly retarded.

Children with mental handicap have sub-average general intellectually functioning. Such children score below average in class work and they also fail to meet standards of independence and social responsibility expected of their age. Mentally handicapped children are classified into three categories namely; children with mild mental handicap, children with moderate mental handicap

And children with severe and profound mental handicap.

Children who are mildly handicapped have delayed mental development. These children can benefit from academic work and can socially adjust to the point at which they can eventually become independent in the community. It is difficult to identify these children before they are in school, but when these learning ability becomes an important part of social expectations the condition is then noted. In most instances there are no obvious conditions to account for the mild retardation.

Sometimes you may find a child who has a mental handicap but is able to learn academic skills for functional purposes and achieve some degree of social responsibility. The child may also attain partial vocational adjustments with assistance. Such children are said to have a moderate mental handicap.

There are other mentally handicapped children whose mental handicap is severe and who also have other physical conditions such as cerebral palsy. It is difficult to cater for children with severe mental handicap in ordinary schools. The best placement for them is in special schools.

A child who suffers from a handicap is doubly disadvantaged because he/she has not only to bear his handicap but also the prejudices that most societies express towards those who are different. This can be acutely painful for the child and can lead to complicated feelings of loneliness, rejection and frustration. Farrant (2002).

Many handicapped children suffer from conditions that cannot be cured but they can still enjoy education in a normal school. In some cases, special teaching materials may be advisable, in others, special methods of teaching. But handicapped children can only be helped by teachers who are alert to needs of individual children and are willing to take time and trouble to assist each child to enjoy a better life. Farrant (2002)

A child who is mentally handicapped does not develop in childhood as quickly as other children nor attain the full mental capacities of a normal adult. The handicap may be slight or severe. In most severe cases development does not progress even in adult life beyond the mental capacity of a young child. Such severe handicap is much less common than milder degrees of handicap covering a wide spectrum ranging upto and merging into the "normal".

Mentally handicapped individuals have difficulty in understanding and in adapting themselves to new situations. They may find it difficult to communicate or establish relationships with more than a few people, but they are generally affectionate and respond to affectionate treatment as children do. Many of these with severe mental handicap have physical handicaps as well, which are often severe; they find it more difficult than other people to compensate for even a minor physical handicap. Some of the mentally handicapped also suffer from mental illness or personality disorders. But

often-mental handicap entails no more than slow and restricted development uncomplicated by any other serious disability.

Mentally retarded individuals displays a wide range of characteristics, which are tailored around intellectual. Functioning, physical development and in adaptive behaviour. Therefore some will have unusual physical appearance like Down syndrome who has the following traits. Specking of Iris thickened and furrowed tongue, wide space between second toe, stubby fingers, thick eyelids and flat bread face and nose. Ndurumo (1993).

2.6 What teachers of the intellectually challenged should understand

What teachers of the intellectually challenged should understand is that in addition to the general guidance offered by the total education [process, each teacher however must be ready to accept a more direct and personal role as both guide and counselor using the term guidance to cover the activities designed to direct and promote development progress in a general way and counseling to cover activities which offer more personal help to individuals and their parents.

Although all teachers of children at all ages have the guidance and counseling responsibility, the circumstances and emphasis may vary at different levels. In the early school years, their main concern is likely to be with difficulties of

social and emotional adjustment to school and to other children which some of their pupils have. After the initial anxiety that most children feel at going to school for the first time, most settle down happily. Some however find it difficult and their teacher must be on the look out not only for the shy, fearful and lonely individuals, but also for the one who shows his lack of social skills by bullying and aggressive behavior. Hendrikz (1986)

The teachers' role is both that of guide and counselor, by arranging the class activities so that everyone is involved and has a chance to practice good group and co-operative behaviour and by quietly drawing the reluctant ones in, while restraining the aggressors. Hendrikz (1986).

A teacher needs to have a sound knowledge of how his pupils intellectual, or cognitive process work in order to be able to use them to the best advantage. Firstly he needs to know those intellectual skills to expect his pupils to have and how they are likely to change and mature as they grow older and gain more experience of school and their own environment. Secondly he needs to know in what ways the intellectual abilities of his pupils are likely to differ from each others. With this knowledge he will be better able to cater for individual differences ensuring that each learner has the best opportunity to succeed in his learning. Thirdly he needs to know as much as possible about the outside influences, environmental experiences and learning activities which can affect the development of efficient cognitive process. Fourthly, he

needs to know whether it is possible to measure the intellectual ability that his pupil passes and if it is how to do it and how far he can rely on the results. Sound knowledge in these areas will have an important influence on how he approaches his work as a teacher.

Heandrikz (1986),

The best teacher in the world cannot create a genius from a child of low intelligence, but he can provide the learning condition in which the child gains confidence and the learning experiences needed for progress. Wilkins (1975).

A backward child finds it difficult in acquiring skills and grasping concepts. His mental perception is normal but his ability to comprehend what he perceives i.e. cognitive may be weak. If this is so, he won't establish strong memory traces and will quickly forget.

In every school there are children who are slow, backward, dull or for some reason, seem unable to keep up with the rest of the class. There are many reasons for learning slowness. The most common one is low intelligence. However one should investigate other possible reasons when dealing with a slow learner e.g. physical deficiencies, health and home conditions. A mentally slow child cannot keep up with the rest of the class they need more individual tuition.

In rare cases, a child may be born with a hereditary disease preventing the normal growth and functioning of the brain. Brain damage can occur from disease or accident. Individuals with brain deficiencies are extremely limited in their learning ability and require treatment, care and attention which can only be given in special institutions. Wilkins(1975).

Teachers should have patience and do not expect immediate results since children who are intellectually challenged learn slowly.

It is not easy to recognize children with special needs sometimes the diagnosis is very obvious and clear at or just after birth. For some children and their families it may be many months or even years before a diagnosis can be made. When a special need is recognized in a child the parents inevitably need time to understand, adapt and accept. They need time to adjust and learn about their child as an individual with her own personality and potential often, the only information parents have about certain conditions is affected by the prejudice of society. Their own experience may be very limited. Dare Etal (1997)

Many parents will go through different emotional stages associated with bereavement- grieving for their apparently 'lost' child- before they are able to accept, adjust and take pleasure in her, such reactions are seen across all cultures and social classes. Typically parents experience the following:

Shock, grief, numbness and confusion, inability to come to terms or fully comprehend and take in what has happened., denial of any long term disability condition feeling their child 'will of it' or 'catch up later' of an older child they may say she's 'just lazy' or 'shy', feeling of guilt and apportioning blame, particularly if the child has an inherited condition or the mother smoked or drank heavily during pregnancy. Anger and blame may be directed at the doctor for not recognizing or preventing the special need parentally or at birth. Parents may blame themselves or each other if their child is disabled following an accident or serious illness, gradual orientation, acceptance and adjustment. Parents become able to relate to their child as an individual with her own personality and potential., there is no time limit to this process of acceptance and adjustment; it may take up to several years. Parents work through the stages in their own time. Dare etal (1997)

In spite of the sadness and the stress they feel, most parents learn to love their child and are aware of the greater degree of dependency and responsibility there is always going to be. Their protective instincts are usually heightened sometimes to the point of over protection. Adjusting to the implications that their child will not get better and striving to provide the care, opportunity and stimulation required by the child (Often despite the attitudes of society) can be a challenging process.



Some parents find it difficult to cope and may never reach this stage of adjustment. They may be reluctant to share their anxieties either with family or a professional carer.

While family and friends may be attentive and caring, it is important that sensitive professional counseling and support is available. Parents needs to be listened to and helped to recognize and express their feelings.

On the other hand the needs of parents should be recognized and supported to minimize stress and anxiety within the family, often reducing the length of time towards acceptance and adjustment. Dare etal (1997),

The following are some specialists who are likely to be involved when educating the intellectually challenged Psychologists, Audiologist, Physiotherapist, Speech therapist, Occupational therapist, Social worker.

According to the researcher, there is a scarcity of the above specialists in Kenya and they are very much needed so as to render assistance to the children who are intellectually challenged. This is because parent and teacher who handle these children needs technical advice from the specialists named above. The parents especially may not know that learning and developmental processes represent a continuous flow of change and the process of a child's

development occurs through the integration of experiences of enrichment and the child's biological maturation.

On the other hand support services are necessary to parents and schools in helping children with special needs in education to adjust the environment and activities in order to overcome barriers to learning and development. These assistance can be done through guidance and counseling. In the context of special needs education, guidance and counseling refers to the process of helping a parent / caregiver to find solutions in order to help a child with special needs in education. Counseling is a service designed to help an individual to understand the situation and find solutions in co-operation with the counselor.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Design

I asked for permission to carry out the research whereby I presented the questionnaires containing questions to unit teachers as well as those for head teachers where these units have been distributed in the division.

3.2 Environment

This was carried out In West Tigania Division, half of it is semi-arid. Majority of people living there have to work hard for their survival. Their physical environment is full of rocks; this makes most of them to hire farming land elsewhere for self-sustenance

Most of the rivers in this region are seasonal which means that they only flow during the rainy season. There are a few hills, other parts are generally flat. During the months of April, May and June, people living in this division experiences a period of strong winds which makes trees to fall down unexpectedly and breaking of branches. In the month of July its cold and windy giving way to a dry spell, which lasts for two months and rain, falls shortly.

Although the environment is somehow hostile, people in this are of the country work very hard in order to conserve the environment in the best way possible.

3.3 Subjects

This study included five head teachers in Tigania West Division and the unit teachers in those schools.

The population sample represents the total number of teachers in special units in West Tigania division Meru North District. The researcher did the random sampling of 10 teachers from 5 units and also 5 head teachers who have this programme in their schools.

3.4 Instruments

This study utilized a researcher made instrument which was a questionnaire containing questions for teachers in the unit as well as head teachers.

The researcher could have used both interview and questionnaire methods to collect data but due to time limitation, programmes are distributed in areas, which are far apart across the division. It was during the second term whereby the researcher has other duties in the school to attend to. This concerns teaching in the mainstream, weekly duties in addition to duties assigned to her.

Due to the above reasons the researcher had to embark on questionnaire method for data collection.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 Data collection procedures

A transmittal letter was written asking for permission from the head teachers where special units are established which was submitted to the head teachers. Accompanying the transmittal letter were questionnaires which were taken to the respective units as well as introductory letter giving explanations to the purpose as to why the research is being carried out.

Some respondents did not send their questionnaires to the researcher in good time. This made the researcher to pay them visits personally. Some of the respondents were suspicious. They wanted to be explained as to why the questionnaires were not sent through the district education officer (DEO). The researcher took time to do the explanations referring them to the introductory letter.

4.1 Statistical treatment of data

The frequency and percentage method was used.

The formula being: $P = \frac{F \times 100}{N}$

N

Where:

P = Percentage

F = Frequency

N = Total number of response

This concerns the interpretation and data analysis on challenges experienced by teachers teaching the intellectually challenged as well as the head teachers where these units are established when implementing the programme.

This analysis contains two parts. The first part deals with data analysis collected from teachers in the units, whilst the second part deals with data analysis collected from head teachers where special units for intellectually challenged are established in the division.

4.2 Data Interpretation

Item 1: When was the special unit started?

Table 1

When started	Frequency	Percentage
1993 – 1996	2	40%
1997 – 2000	3	60%
Total	5	100%

According to the above data it is evidently observed that there was slow establishment of the units from 1993 to 1996 as compared to those, which were established from 1997 to 2000.

Item 2: What is the total number of pupil's enrolment?

(i) Girls

(ii) Boys

Table 2

Sex of pupils	Frequency	Responses
Boys	64	59.81%
Girls	43	40.19%
Total	107	100%

According to the above data boys who are intellectually challenged are 59.81% and girls are 40.19% meaning that the number of boys who are intellectually challenged is outweighing the number of girls is in the same category.

Item 3: How many trained teachers and untrained teachers are there in the unit?

Table 3:

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Trained	4	40%
Untrained	6	60%
Total	10	100%

According to the above data there is 40% of trained teachers as compared to 60% of untrained teachers. This shows that most of the units are being handled by unskilled teachers.

Item 4: How many classes in your school cater for children who are intellectually challenged?

Table 4

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1	1	20%
2	2	40%
3	2	40%
Total	5	100%

According to the above data analysis only one school which has 20% as compared to others which have 40% each.

Item 5: Are the classes (Tick where applicable)

(i) Permanent

(ii) Semi permanent

Table 5

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Permanent	1	20%
Semi permanent	4	80%
Total	5	100%

According to the above data 80% of the classes are semi permanent as compared to 20% which are permanent.

Item 6: As a special unit teacher, do you have other lessons in the mainstream" Yes or No. (Tick where applicable)

Table 6

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	9	90%
No	1	10%
Total	10	100%

According to the above data 90% of teachers have lessons in the mainstream and only 10% of teachers who do not have.

Item 7: Which subjects do you teach in the unit?

Table 7A

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
All	3	30%
Pre-reading, P.E. Activities of daily living (ADL)	4	40%
N/work Kiswahili, Music	3	30%
Total	10	100%

According to the above data the analysis shows that there is no uniformity in the teaching of the units. This is because 30% of the teachers teach all the subjects whilst those who teach pre-reading P.E. ADL are 40% and those who teach N/work, Kiswahili and Music are 30%.

Item 7B: Which problems do you encounter when teaching the subjects you have named? (Tick where applicable)

- (i) Undefined curriculum
- (ii) Lack of references

(iii) Lack of curriculum guidelines

(iv) Lack of teaching instruments

Responses

All teachers ticked that they experience all the above problems. This means that there is 100% shortage.

Item 8: Apart from academic part of work, what other programmes do you have? (Tick where applicable)

a) Home bound programmes

b) Home visits

c) Poultry keeping/ gardening

Table 8

Response	Frequency	Percentages
Home bound programmes	4	40%
Home visits	4	40%
Poultry Keeping/Gardening	2	20%
Total	10	100%

In the above data 40% have home bound programmes, 40% have home visits and only 20% keep poultry and practice gardening.

Item 9

(a) Do you work in collaboration with other professionals in order to assist children with special needs? Yes or No (Tick where applicable)

(b) If yes who are they? (Tick where applicable)

- 1. Occupational therapist
- 2. Social worker
- 3. Psychologist
- 4. Physiotherapist
- 5. Audiologist
- 6. Speech therapists

Table 9

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Psychologists physiotherapist, Audiologist	4	40%
Social worker	3	30%
None	3	30%
Total	100	100%

According to the above data 40% work with psychologist. Physiotherapist and audiologist 30% work with social worker and 30% do not work in collaboration with other professionals.

Item 10. As a special needs education teacher what other challenges do you experience when carrying out your duties? (Tick where applicable)

- i) Lack of support from parents
- ii) Lack of support from head teachers
- iii) Lack of support from the community
- iv) Lack of support from the education office
- v) Negative attitude towards special education

Table 10

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
I	2	20%
Ii	1	10%
Iii	3	30%
Iv	2	20%
V	2	20%
Vi	2	20%
Total	10	100%

As concerns the above data 20% lack support from parents, 10% lack support from head teachers, 30% lack support from the community, 20% lack support from the education office and 20% experience negative attitude towards special needs education.

Item 11. State other challenges which you experience as you teach the intellectually challenged.

Table 11

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Absenteeism, long distance, lack of feeding programme	6	60%
Lack of learning resources, negative attitudes from parents and teachers	4	40%
Total	10	100%

According to the above data, teachers teaching the intellectually challenged faced with challenges such as absenteeism, traveling for long distances, units lacking feeding programmes are 60% and those with challenges on learning resources, negative attitudes from parents and other teachers are 40%

Data collected from head teachers where units are established

Item 1: When did the special unit start?

Table 12

Reponses	Frequency	Percentage
1993-1996	2	40%
1997-2000	3	60%
Total	5	100%

In the above data it is evidently observed that there was slow establishment of the units from 1993-1996 as compared to those, which were established from 1997-2000

Item 2: Do you have problems of structures and furniture in your school?

Yes or No (Tick where appropriate)

Table 13

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No	4	80%
Yes	1	20%
Total	5	100%

According to the above data there are no problems of structures and furniture because 80% have no problem as compared to 20% who have problems of the above

Item 3: How many trained and untrained teachers are there in the units?

Table 14

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Trained	4	40%
Untrained	6	60%
Total	10	100%

In the above data there is 40% of trained teachers as compared to 60% of untrained teachers. This shows that most of the units are being handled by teachers who are not skilled.

Item 4: How many special classes are there in the school?

Table 15

Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	1	20%
2	2	40%
3	2	40%
Total	5	100%

In the above data it is only one school, which has one class, which is 20% as compared to the others, which have 40% each.

Item 5: Where do you get financial assistance to support the programme?

Table 16

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Government grants	3	60%
Parents and Teachers	2	40%
Total	5	100%

In the above data the government is supplying 60% assistance to the units and the financial assistance got from teachers and parents is 40%

Item 6: What other duties do you assign teachers in special units apart from class work?

Table 17

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Weekly duties	2	40%
Morning prayers	1	20%
Teaching in the mainstream	2	40%
Total	5	100%

According to the above data, unit teachers are assigned duties, which shows that 40% of these teachers perform weekly duties, 20% conduct morning prayers and 40% are involved in the mainstream teaching. This shows that they do not have enough time to attend to the needs of the intellectually challenged.

Item 7: What other problems do you experience when assigning them those duties?

Table 18

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Units teachers complaints of being overworked	3	60%
They say work in the units is tasking	2	40%
Total	5	100%

According to the above data 60% of the teachers overwork, 40% say the work in the units s tasking. This shows that unit teachers do not get ample time to attend to the intellectually challenged as it should be due to pressure work.

Item 8: List or write down problems you encounter when running the units either from teachers, parents, education officer, community and other leaders.

Table 19

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Parents being negative	2	40%
Education office not ready to advice	2	40%
Leaders in the community not being aware of the programme	1	20%
Total	5	100%

According to the above data 40% of parents and teachers have negative attitude towards the programme, 40% of the education officers are not ready to give any form of advice and 20% of the community leaders are not aware of the programme.

Item 9: Any other general comments about the programme? What are they?

Table 20

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Vocational training and creating awareness	1	20%
Lack of funds	2	40%
Team work, trained personnel	2	40%
Total	5	100%

According to the table above, 20% of the head teachers are for vocational after graduation and creating awareness, 40% lack funds for uplifting their units and 40% needs teamwork as well as training personnel.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 Results and Discussion

The teachers of the intellectually challenged lack support and encouragement in addition to materials and moral support.

They also experience challenges due to the following:-

- i) Undefined curriculum
- ii) Lack of references
- iii) Lack of curriculum guidelines
- iv) Lack of teaching instruments

On the other hand majority of the teachers in special programmes are given subjects in the mainstream and this interferes with the effectiveness of handling the units.

Also the classes and housing of the intellectually challenged are mostly semi-permanent. This shows that the intellectually challenged are not catered for and they are not valued as well.

Head teachers are complaining of feeding programmes which are not there in their schools and also the parents of the intellectually challenged do not bother to provide the schools with anything for feeding their children.

5.2 Conclusion

According to the data analysis of questionnaire one, items 1 and 2 it is evident that more special units for mentally retarded are established in Tigania West and 50% have static enrolment or declining enrolment which is a clear indication that soon or later many of those units are going to be closed down due to lack of pupils.

From the study it shows that 65% of the teachers are in special units, which is a very small number compared 35% of teacher in special schools.

Only 5% of the teachers in Tigania West who handle mentally retarded children have been trained at Kenya Institute of Special education (KISE) for a 2 year course (Diploma in special education)

Most of mentally retarded classes in West Tigania semi permanent according to the study; hence it is a problem for teachers to keep and maintain her/his teaching materials.

Most of the teachers in special programmes are given subjects in regular classes and this is a problem to them to handle regular classes and special units effectively. Teachers in special units lack material and moral support from the parents of children with special education need. In addition to that

all units in West Tigania lacks; curriculum guidelines teaching resources and learning materials.

Less 1/3 third of the parent visit the special units during school day to check on the progress of their children. Homes and work load is the main hindrance of barrier to teachers in the special units to make home visit.

The community in general does not support special units in the division according to analysis in table 15 and this has led to decline and static enrolment of students. Also there are no rehabilitation and pre-vocation programmes to cater for mentally handicapped who graduate from special schools and units.

5.3 Recommendations

The Kenya institute of education (KIE) to ensure that all the units have at least a copy of curriculum guidelines.

The Kenya Institute of Special Education to increase the intake in distance learning programmes and also increase the intake of learners who resides there.

The ministry of education science and technology to try and in service the education officers in the field on special needs education so that they can be able to inspect teachers handling the intellectually challenged.

The education assessment and resource centres to organize seminars and workshops in order to sensitize the teachers, stakeholders as well as the community on special needs education at divisional levels.

Teachers handling the units to be given only the weekly duties and be relieved other lessons in the mainstream

All the head teachers with these programmes in their schools to be given special duty allowances so that they will be motivated to work in collaboration with unit teachers

Unit teachers to go across the division creating awareness through fun days whereby parents, teachers and children as well as the entire community will be involved.

All the teachers handling the intellectually challenged should undergo training at the Kenya Institute of Special Education to acquire knowledge and skills so as to be able to handle the intellectually challenged.

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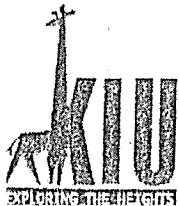
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APPENDICES

- Appendix A - Introductory letter from Kampala International
 University**
- Appendix B: Transmittal letter**
- Appendix C: Sample of questionnaires**
- Appendix D: Map of the research environment**



KAMPALA
INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY

P. O. BOX 20000
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OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

May 04, 2006

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

The bearer of this letter, MONICAH M. MATHIU Registration No.

BED/7069/51/DF, is a bona fide student of our University.

As part fulfillment of the degree programme, students are required to conduct research and submit a written dissertation based on it.

MS. MONICAH M. MATHIU has a topic titled "PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS TEACHING THE INTELLECTUALLY CHALLENGED IN TIGANIA WEST DIVISION".

The purpose of this letter is to kindly request you to allow ^{her} him conduct the research in your establishment.

We appreciate your cooperation, and duly thank you in advance.

Regards,

DEAN



Appendix B- Transmittal letter.

**TRANSMITTAL LETTER ASKING FOR PERMISSION
FROM HEADTEACHERS WHERE SPECIAL UNITS ARE ESTABLISHED**

The Head teacher

.....

P.O. Box

Meru, Kenya

10th November 2006

Monicah Mukiri Mathiu

Kampala International University,

P.O. Box 220, Kampala Uganda.

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am a student pursuing a degree in Special Needs Education in Kampala International University – Uganda.

In partial fulfillment of my degree programme, I am to carry out a research on challenges experienced by teachers teaching the intellectually challenged in Tigania West Division.

I hereby, would like to request you to permit me to collect data in your school. I hope you will consider my request favourably and provide assistance as I collect the required data.

Thank you and kind regards.

Sincerely yours,

**QUESTIONNAIRE TO FIND OUT CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY
TEACHERS TEACHING CHILDREN WITH MENTAL CHALLENGES IN
TIGANIA WEST DIVISION**

1. When was the special unit started ?
2. What is the total number of pupils enrolment?
 - (i) Girls
 - (ii) Boys
3. State the total number of teachers in the unit.
4. How many classes in your school catering for children who are mentally challenged?
5. Are the classes (Tick where applicable)
 - (i) Permanent
 - (ii) Semi permanent
6. As a special unit teacher, do you have other lessons in the mainstream? Yes or No (Tick where applicable)
 - (i) If yes, how many are they?
7. (a) Which subjects do you teach in the unit?
.....
.....
 - (b) Which problems do you encounter ^W then teaching the subjects you have Named? (Tick where applicable)
 - (ii) Undefined Curriculum
 - (iii) Lack of references
 - (iv) Lack of curriculum guidelines
 - (v) Lack of teaching instruments

8. Apart from academic part of work what other programmes do you have? (Tick applicable)
- a. Home bound programmes
 - b. Home visits
 - c. Poultry keeping Gardening.
9. Do you work in collaboration with other professionals in order to assist children with special needs? Yes or No. (Tick where applicable)
- (b) If yes who are they? (Tick where applicable)
- 1. Occupational therapists
 - 2. Social worker
 - 3. Psychologist
 - 4. Psysiotherapist
 - 5. Audiologists
 - 6. Speech Therapists
10. As a special needs education teacher what other challenges do you experience when doing you duties (Tick where applicable)
- (i) Lack of support from the parents
 - (ii) Lack of support from the head teacher
 - (iii) Lack of support from the community
 - (iv) Lack of support from Education office
 - (v) Negative attitude towards special Education
11. State other challenges which you experience as you teach the mentally challenged.

(a)
.....

(b)
.....

(c)
.....

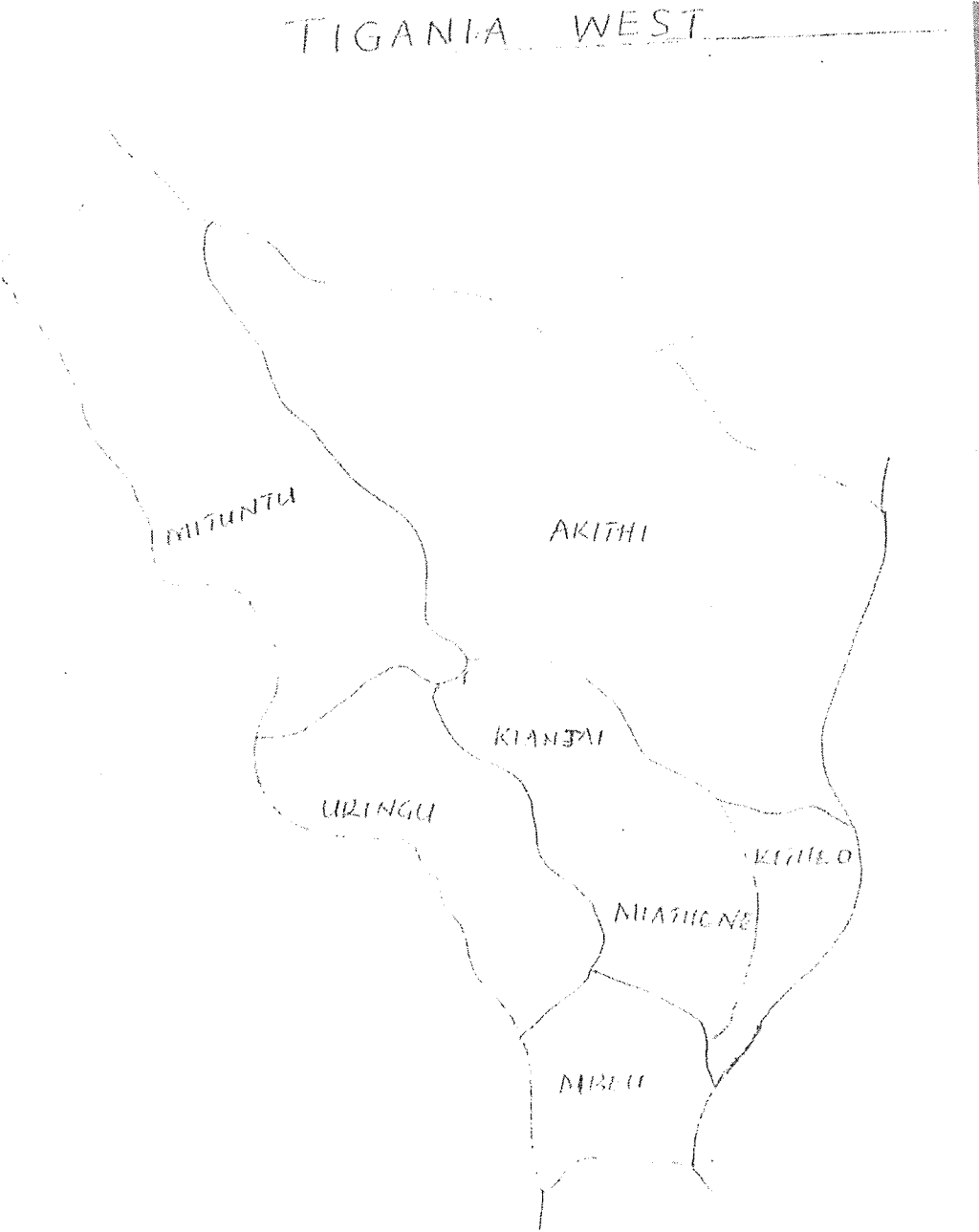
(d)
.....

(e)
.....

**QUESTIONNAIRE TO FIND OUT CHALLENGES HEADTEACHERS
EXPERIENCE IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF SPECIAL UNIT IN THEIR
SCHOOLS IN TIGANIA WEST DIVISION**

1. When did the special unit start?
2. Do you have problems of structures and furniture in your school?. Yes or No. (Tick where appropriate)
3. How many teachers are there in the special unit?
.....
4. How Many Special classes are there?
5. Where do you get financial assistance to support the programme?
.....
.....
6. What other duties do you assign teachers in the special unit apart from class work?
7. What problems do you experience when assigning them those duties?
.....
8. List or write down problems you encounter when running the unit either from teachers , parents, education officers, community other leaders?
.....
.....
.....
.....
9. Any other general comment about the programme? What are they? ..
.....
.....
.....

Appendix D: Map of the research environment



CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Name : Monicah Mukiri Mathiu
Reg. No. : BED /7069 / DF
Age : 38
Gender : Female
Civil Status : Teacher
Address : 2164, Meru, Kenya
Date of Birth : 1968

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

College : Kenya Institute of Special Education
Secondary : Maua Girls' High School
Elementary : Chugu Primary School

