



END OF PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT

DEAF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS PROJECT



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Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
ACRONYMS	ii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1.0 THE PROJECT AND OBJECTIVES OF END OF PROGRAMME EVALUATION .	7
1.1 OBJECTIVE OF END OF PROJECT EVALUATION	7
2.0 METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION	9
2.1 Participatory Video Methodology	9
2.2 Participatory video training	9
2.3 Filming of Deaf Young People experiences	10
2.4 Core group meetings	10
2.5 Editing of video footages	10
2.6 Screening Events and Focus Group Discussions	10
2.7 Document Review	10
3.0 EVALUATION RESULTS	11
3.1 Participatory Video	11
3.2 Findings from the Screening Events	13
3.3 Relevance:	18
3.4 Effectiveness:	19
4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS	24
4.1 Deaf Youth	24
4.2. Deaf Empowerment Kenya	24
4.3 Employers	25
4.4 Vocational Training Institutions	26
4.5 National and County government	26
CONCLUSION	26
ANNEXURES	27

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ACRONYMS

CBO	Community Based Organization
DEK	Deaf Empowerment of Kenya
DCW	Deaf Child Worldwide
DYP	Deaf Young People
EPZ	Exporting Process Zone
FKE	Federation of Kenya Employers
IDAW	International Deaf Awareness Week
ILO	International Labour Organization
KCA	Kenya College of Accountancy
KIM	Kenya Institute of Management
KSL	Kenya Sign Language
NCPWD	National Council for Persons with Disabilities
PV	Participatory Video
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overall objective of the evaluation was to assess, analyze and report on the impact that the Deaf Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Livelihood project has had on the lives of deaf young people after three years of implementation. The evaluation process deployed a participatory video (PV) methodology in its data collection exercise. It also carried out a document review, as well as screening events using the developed video footage to generate discussions about the issues and themes in the video and what needs be done to further support deaf young people (DYP). Capacity building of 10 selected DYPs and members of core group was also conducted to appreciate the meaning and process of the participatory video as a tool for evaluation. The PV training also covered the aspect of basic videography skill with the aim of ensuring quality production of video footages by DYP themselves. More significantly, it is imperative to appreciate that this evaluation does not primarily focus on what was done by the project or particularly on the activities delivered and by what percentage but the extent to which the project has impacted on the lives of DYPs, according to them.

The findings of the evaluation are gathered from the video footage, screening events and discussions with DYPs during the film making exercise. The evaluation process observed that there is direct impact by the project on skills of 161 DYPs, resulting in their increased chances to obtain formal employment as well as self-employment. Some DYPs who are working in Coca-Cola Beverages Africa-Kenya and EPZ revealed that they are finding an enabling environment in which they are able to fully and effectively participate on an equal basis with others. For example, Coca-Cola Beverages Africa-Kenya has introduced strobe lights to let deaf employees know when there is an emergency. At EPZ three management staff have enrolled in Kenyan Sign Language (KSL) classes and introduced monthly meetings between the deaf people employed in the company and the management so that communication is enhanced. Furthermore, they have recruited the service of KSL interpretation to facilitate effective communication with deaf employees. KIM college has been strategic in unveiling the potential of DYPs in gaining skills in more advanced courses away from the conventional ones in tailoring, carpentry, beauty and others. Now they are taking courses in business management.

The evaluation shows that the project has made it possible for some DYPs to build strong communication and interpersonal skills as a result of life skills training conducted. Consequently, the level of their self-awareness and confidence has dramatically improved as explained in the video footage. They recognized their individual weaknesses and strengths and moreover which jobs they can apply or not. Participants of the PV process revealed that they are able to meet their essential

needs, like being able to pay their house rent, clothes balance diet unlike before the project. Recognition and positive contribution of DYPs by their families and communities were also registered in the production of the film and during the screening events. The innovation further impacts positively on the perspective and attitude of employers towards deaf persons/employees. In respect to vocational training institutions, some progress was made in helping these institutions address the learning needs of deaf students, however it has not been without challenges. The evaluation noted that there remains the biggest challenge in the provision of KSL interpretation to deaf students. The evaluation process also observed that the engagement with the vocational training institutions was not systematic and lacked coherent and comprehensive approaches.

Essentially, the evaluation process obtained the following learnings;

- a. Pairing DYP with non-disabled experts despite communication barriers has helped in sharpening the skills of deaf young people and promoted better learning experience
- b. A strong and formal partnership with county governments and key institutions is important for building synergies and sustainability of the program targeting DYPs
- c. Continuous sensitization sessions with employers and vocational training institutions are paramount in changing perception and attitude about the potential and capability of deaf youth
- d. Deaf peer-led support groups are more effective learning method as skills transfer is conducted in a more deaf friendly atmosphere. There is need to strengthen activities of support groups.
- e. Future PV process should ensure that the selection of participants be done by the core group together with the consultants to ensure the objective of the PV is well achieved. This helps to address impartiality, objectivity, minimize repetition and overlapping as well as to manage participant expectations effectively.
- f. More practice is essential before actual story shooting to allow DYPs to prepare themselves effectively as well as to address or clarify any unclear issues.
- g. Familiarization of the project objectives to the beneficiaries and other stakeholders targeted by the project is key in leveling and managing expectations of the beneficiaries. For instance, there were youth who thought that after all the trainings in business skills and management they will get grants to start businesses.

The evaluation process consequently among others, recommends the following:

1. A clear effort and monitoring should be made to link and support Deaf Youth entrepreneurs to a wide spectrum of national and county government youth empowerment initiatives to access existing job opportunities including soft seed capital. These initiatives include; National Employment Authority, Access to Government Procurement Opportunities, County Youth Economic Empowerments, Uwezo and the Youth Council Initiatives. It is also essential that County governments representatives for the initiatives be capacitated to be more pro-active in engaging DYPs in awareness and application of these initiatives.
2. There is a need to shift away from the perspective that deaf youth can only perform traditional vocational jobs in factories as reported by DYPs and TVETs as well as employers. It is recommended that the future project explores new areas of technology, science, engineering and media that can be useful to deaf youth in advancing their career of choice. This is also in order to bridge the gaps of inadequate skills and competencies among DYPs.
3. It would be desirable that the future program for employers explore tax incentives comprehensively for companies which employ deaf persons in order to encourage more companies to hire more deaf youth including other PWDs. This is in line with the Persons with disabilities Act 2003.
4. Review of policy frameworks for both new and piloting companies is essential especially after conducting comprehensive deaf awareness training. This will ensure positive and sustainable commitment of the companies to disability inclusive employment in the long term.
5. It is recommended that a more coherent and systematic approach to addressing the issues of KSL interpreters at the workplace is needed. DEK should gather and share various global best practices and options for working with interpreters with respective employers.
6. A comprehensive and well-coordinated engagement as well as proper follow ups with vocational institutions is recommended to ensure inclusive and accessible learning programs to deaf students. In house training on deafness and reasonable accommodation (interpreters and friendly training program) should also target the senior management of these institutions.
7. Building collaboration with Kenyan Sign Language Interpreters Association is recommended to find quick and cheap solutions towards the problem of interpreters for employers/vocational institutions by using new interpreters. Engagement with the National Council for Persons with Disabilities may help to find a long-term solution to the problem of interpreters

8. Working with county youth polytechnics is encouraged to increase access to marketable courses for deaf students under available sponsorship programs.
9. Policy based advocacy targeting Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority is necessary for a long-term vocational program for deaf learners.
10. Given the fact that DEK is a CBO, the need to build robust network and collaboration with other deaf organizations is essential in meeting national wide needs of DYPs as recommended by PV participants.
11. Future projects may consider expanding age limit of beneficiaries from 25 to 35 years old as per local legislation. This is because most deaf youth began schooling life late due to social and attitudinal barriers in their communities. Alternatively, DEK can establish strong linkages where they can refer deaf youth above 25 years.
12. There is need for concerted and systematic efforts to follow up with DYP, especially those placed in external organisations or companies, to provide proper support in terms of sign language interpreters, work place challenges and what they need to do their job better and mentorship support.
13. Future projects should ensure a robust and full participation of deaf young people in the implementation, reporting and evaluation of the project with explicit roles such as a facilitator and role model to other new DYPs. Establish accessible feedback mechanisms for the project which will help in ensuring a wide range of ideas to better project delivery.
14. The future sensitization sessions for employers and vocational training institutions should enrich its content with global emerging trends with regards to deafness/disability inclusion. Some practices for example where deaf employees are issued with different work uniform may encourage positive discrimination, though the intention and purpose were good.
15. While capacity of the DEK has been enhanced, much more is needed to strengthen its competency on implementing and monitoring the project activities in line with the baseline, beneficiary management by ensuring that they are involved in the project implementation as a facilitator and role model to other DYPs, there is need for robust co-ordination and stakeholders engagement. DEK also needs to enhance its internal and external communication channels.

1.0 THE PROJECT AND OBJECTIVES OF END OF PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Deaf Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Livelihoods Project was implemented by Deaf Empowerment Kenya with technical and financial support from the Deaf Child Worldwide. It was delivered in 13 Sub Counties of Nairobi. The innovation was a 3-year program aimed at providing sustainable marketable skills and confidence to 150 young deaf people in order to live independently. Furthermore the project also offered sensitization training to the community with a particular focus on employers and vocational institutions to enable them to provide an all-inclusive work place environment and training opportunities that recognizes and rewards Deaf Youths' contribution to economic growth. The three principal outcomes of the innovation include;

Outcome 1: Deaf young people develop their soft and hard skills to obtain and sustain employment and business opportunities

Outcome 2: Increased awareness, willingness, and preparedness in employers to hire deaf young people and to provide the required resources to accommodate their needs

Outcome 3: Vocational institutions within the local community are prepared to provide adequate support to deaf young people

1.1 OBJECTIVE OF END OF PROJECT EVALUATION

The end of project evaluation for the Deaf Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Livelihood was done in the months of June to August 2021. The overall and specific objectives of the evaluation are presented below. A full Terms of Reference for the assignment is presented in Annex 1:

1.1.1 Overall Objective

The overall objective of the evaluation was to assess, analyze and report on the impact the project has had on the lives of the beneficiaries after three years of implementation. The evaluation does not generally assess how key inputs or activities were implemented but specifically analyze whether there was significant impact on the lives of primary beneficiaries.

1.1.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives were to:

- a) Understand the extent to which the project intervention has achieved its outcomes, and whether there were any unintended results, from the perspective of deaf young people;
- b) Assess the sustainability of the project's benefits and strategies;
- c) Identify gaps to inform a new project, and to generate learning to inform DEK's future advocacy for the deaf in the education and employment industry, as well as to document what works when engaging and managing partnerships in the private sector
- d) To develop findings and materials that are engaging for deaf young people, employers and vocational institutions.

2.0 METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION

The main approach deployed in this evaluation is Participatory Video. A Document Review was also conducted to generate further data. Capacity building of DYPs and members of core group was also conducted to appreciate the meaning and process of the PV. The training also covered the aspect of basic videography skill with the aim of ensuring quality production of video footages by DYP themselves. More significantly, it is important to note that the evaluation does not primarily focus on what was done by the project but the extent to which the project has impacted on the lives of DYPs.

2.1 Participatory Video Methodology

The process was driven by 10 Deaf Youth with the guidance and support of 9 members of the core group and consultancy team. The core group comprises 2 DYPs, 2 neutral observers, 2 DEK team and one representative from DCW and the consultant. The roles of the core members in the evaluation process include;

1. Provide guidance and direction on training schedules and plans.
2. Review the criteria for the selection of the 10 deaf youths;
3. Review the consent form and translate the form in Kenyan Sign Language
4. Advise and guide on the development of the participatory video materials and interview questions.
5. Review and provide feedback on the standard and quality of the raw and final film footages.
6. Advise the consultancy team on the matters of monitoring and evaluation.
7. Liaise with DYPs on any logistical issue relating the project evaluation.
8. Ensure adherence to safeguarding policy in the evaluation

2.2 Participatory video training

Training of deaf young people was necessary to better understand the design and implementation of the participatory video process. The outcome of the training has ensured beneficiaries being able to share their perspectives on what impact the project has had on their lives. In addition, they also proposed what should be done to facilitate effective participation of deaf youth in formal and informal employment. Essentially, the focus of the training was on;

- ❖ Understand what participatory video is and its usage as a tool for project evaluation
- ❖ Discuss the step by step process of participatory video making
- ❖ Highlight interview skills and develop interview questions for creating individual stories
- ❖ Describe 5 essential parts of a video camera and corresponding uses of such parts

- ❖ Practice filming and develop action plan for actual filming

2.3 Filming of Deaf Young People experiences

As part of the participatory video process, the evaluation documented 10 stories from deaf young people on their real experience in business environments, formal employment/workplace, vocational training program as well as those who did not participate in any employment or training activity. The results of the filming experience are described under the result section as well as in the final video footage.

2.4 Core group meetings

The Core group held a total of 5 meetings to review participatory video training resources, discuss the consent form, review guiding questions for participatory video, discuss individual filming action plans, review raw footage and review the final film footage. The Core group members also participated in the screening event of the second draft of the video footage with employers and other deaf youth.

2.5 Editing of video footages

Three video editing sessions were held to edit the raw video footages by deaf young people and members of the Core Group. The editing process was facilitated by the consultancy team. It is important to note that consensus method of decision was applied to decide which parts of the story to remove or keep. The final footage was also reviewed and accepted by all members of the participatory video process.

2.6 Screening Events and Focus Group Discussions

Three screening events specifically for 6 Deaf Young People, 4 Employers and 2 Vocational Institutions were organized using the second draft video footage. The aim was to generate discussions, validate key issues, discuss any emerging concerns in the video and collect feedback from other deaf young people, employers and vocational institutions. The engagement for employers and vocational training institutions were conducted virtually except for deaf youth. Various recommendations made from the screening event are also presented under recommendation section.

2.7 Document Review

In depth desk review of baseline survey data, project progress reports, mid-term evaluation report and other relevant documents was carried out to build a better understanding of the innovation implemented. This will further support to assess the impact of this innovative project effectively.

3.0 EVALUATION RESULTS

3.1 Participatory Video

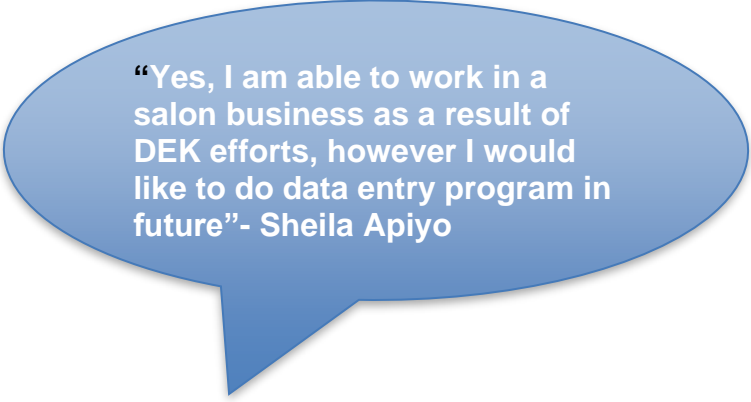
List of participatory video participants

	Name	Age	Nature of benefits in the project
1.	George Ocholla	23	Participated in life skill training and enrolled in a college and established a business
2	Priscilla Mumbi	24	Undertook life skill training and currently in basic English class
3	Sheila Apiyo	22	Acquired employment at Beauty and cosmetic shop and attended life skill program
4	Benjamin Amonyi	23	Supported to obtain employment at Coca-Cola Beverages Africa-Kenya as electrical technician and participated in life skill program
5	Geofrey Mukabi	24	Participated in life skill training and supported to work at Carpentry joint
6	Berly Atieno	23	Obtained employment at Pallett Café and life skill training
7	Nixon Okello	23	Obtained employment at EPZ and benefited life skill training
8	Philes Maweu	22	Joined vocational training institution and attended life skill training
9	Teresia Wambui	23	Supported to obtain employment at Coca-Cola Beverages Africa-Kenya Company
10	David Wamira	24	Participated in life skill training and currently working at Coco-Cola Beverages Africa-Kenya Company

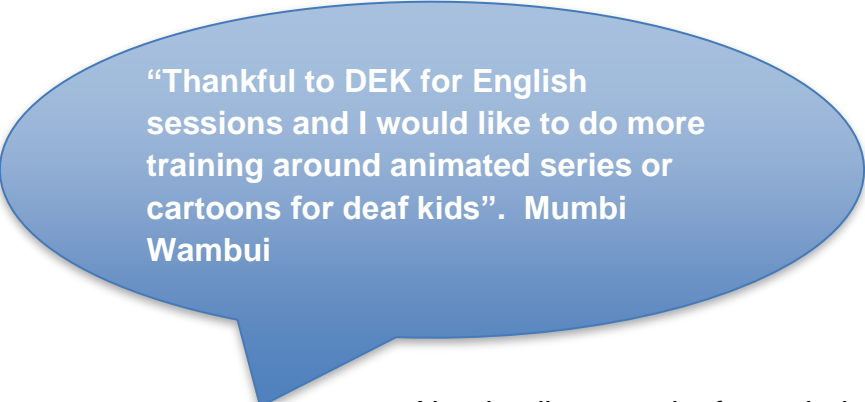
Based on testimonies by the 10 participants of the PV process, it was evident that there are significant changes on the lives of young deaf people as a result of the Deaf Empowerment for Sustainable Livelihood Project. Deaf young people shared their transformation stories with a lot of confidence and enthusiasm as produced in the final video footage. A good example in the video is where one participant was able to interact freely with various members of his community as he walked to his place of work. The changes are also manifested in their ability to be able to open and sustain their own business. Some participants were facilitated and supported to secure employment in Coca-Cola Beverages Africa-Kenya, EPZ, Palette café, Petco, Supa Loaf, among other companies. Respondents also expressed that these job opportunities have made it possible for them to challenge

negative prejudice towards deaf people. For instance, one Deaf Youth working in Coca-Cola Beverages Africa-Kenya Company as an engineer demonstrated how his story is challenging negative perception about deaf people by his colleagues and society at large. His colleagues were impressed by his ability and passion to discharge responsibilities effectively just like any other engineer in the Department. He was wildly enthusiastic about how he has been able to obtain more practical knowledge and experience than in his classroom training. More transformation stories are also recorded where some DYPs painted impactful experiences from their small-scale enterprises such as carpentry, Kiosk shop and salon. These enterprises have increased individual income to meet their day to day expenses. The evaluation agrees that most of the beneficiaries are on their way to live independently unlike the situation they were under before the implementation of the project. PV participants also shared their struggle to find employment prior to project implementation and how acquired skills, such as CV writing, and interview skills from DEK have eased their efforts to find employment in respective companies.

Equally, some DYPs engaged during the participatory video process also revealed that despite considerable efforts by the project, they still feel they are in employment or business outside their areas of interest or passion. In other words, they are doing what does not match with what they had indicated in the baseline report, or that their aspirations have since changed. This they attributed to the fact that there are limited available opportunities to match their relevant skills and interests.



“Yes, I am able to work in a salon business as a result of DEK efforts, however I would like to do data entry program in future”- Sheila Apiyo



“Thankful to DEK for English sessions and I would like to do more training around animated series or cartoons for deaf kids”. Mumbi Wambui

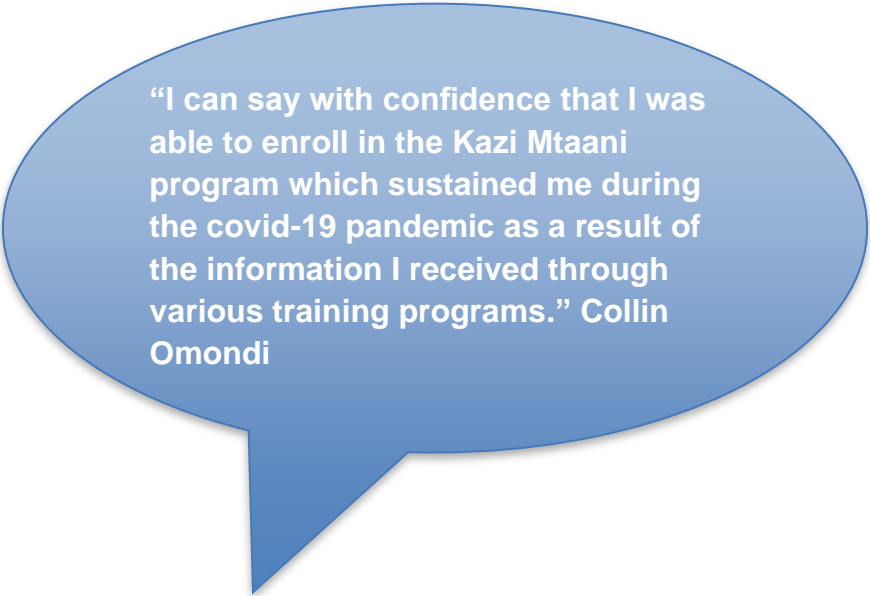
Nearly all young deaf people interviewed in the Participatory Video process are in agreement that attitudinal barriers compounded by communication challenge remains the biggest obstacle to their full and effective participation in employment and vocational training institutions. One DYP expressed that some of the customers are afraid to visit his shop mainly due to common myths such as that deaf persons are emotional and can be very violent should something bad happen. This statement was echoed by the owner of a Salon where a deaf Youth is working.

3.2 Findings from the Screening Events

As described above, three screening events were organized for employers, vocational training institutions and other deaf young people.

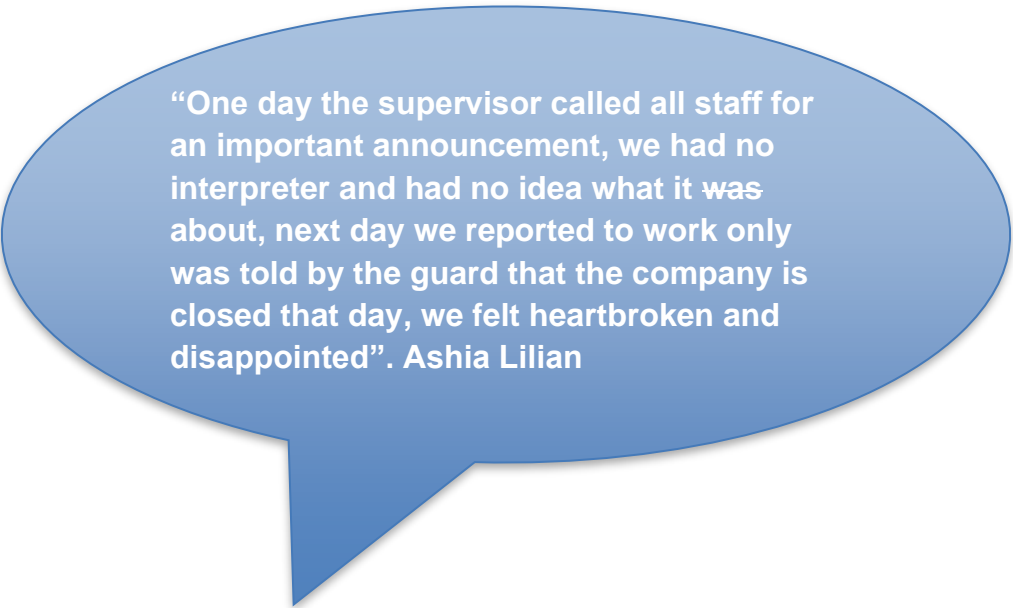
Deaf Young People

- a) Participants were all in agreement that the project has had positive impacts on the life of beneficiaries in terms of skills development and employment opportunities



“I can say with confidence that I was able to enroll in the Kazi Mtaani program which sustained me during the covid-19 pandemic as a result of the information I received through various training programs.” Collin Omondi

- b) While deaf youth recognized that progress has made by the project with regards to sensitization for employers and vocational institutions, they would not hide from the fact that stigma and discrimination remain too common, fed by a mixture of ignorance, attitudinal barriers and intolerance. There was a case where an employer hired a deaf youth and paid him only one month salary after working for three months. They agreed that more awareness raising, follow ups by DEK and continuous sensitization are recommended for companies not under the piloting project.




“One day the supervisor called all staff for an important announcement, we had no interpreter and had no idea what it was about, next day we reported to work only was told by the guard that the company is closed that day, we felt heartbroken and disappointed”. Ashia Lilian

- c) There is urgent need to build a strong advocacy strategy to ensure that

- these impactful stories are disseminated to many potential employers and policy makers for sustainable employment opportunities for deaf young people
- d) There was report that skills training on stress management, mental health and among others has also helped most DYPs to cope with the impact of the covid-19. Furthermore, some DYPs were able to use other skills even after they were laid off by employers as a result of the impact of covid on business.
 - e) Sign Language interpreters are critical for DYP's effective productivity at the workplace and mechanisms should be developed to ensure how employers can utilize such service whenever it is required. At EPZ and Coca Cola Beverage Africa-Kenya, monthly meetings between the management and deaf staff was introduced to enhance better communication.
 - f) Unequal gender representation, unfair preferential treatment in the selection of DYPs for job placement and training were among concerns repeatedly emphasized by some deaf youth. DEK may pay attention to such issues in future project.
 - g) There were proposals to ensure strategies for active participation of beneficiaries as principal players of the project rather than at the design and evaluation. DYPs suggested the need to use them as facilitator for certain project activities as well as being role model to other deaf youth.
 - h) DYPs suggested the need for training to be diverse and covers a wide range of areas including basic technology, media, engineering and science

Employers

- a) Employers and vocational training institutions agreed that the deaf youth were talented and passionate about what they were doing. Notably, it was noted that stigmatization and discrimination at the workplace posed a challenge to many companies on absorption of deaf youth.
- b) Some employers indicated that initially there were fears of how the deaf youth would work with other colleagues at the workplace without feeling segregated, but it was easier than expected for the deaf youth to blend into the workforce and show case their talents without discrimination. The employers mentioned that the deaf awareness and sensitization forums worked very well to demystify those earlier held myths about PWDs. Some senior staff in both organizations have enrolled for KSL learning classes.



“As a company, we are willing to hire more deaf young people, however, we need more support and free training on Kenyan Sign Language”. Ms. Margaret Ndei. Talent Specialist at Coca-Cola Beverages Africa-Kenya

- c) Ruaraka Business Community(RUBICOM) reported that they are at the fore-front of encouraging companies to devise measures providing reasonable accommodation to the deaf youth and discussions are underway with leadership of affiliate companies to ensure that line supervisors of the deaf youth learn sign language. There is need for DEK to work closely with this body as it works to advise its employer members on reasonable accommodation approaches.
- d) Coca-Cola Beverages Afrca-Kenya indicated that the buy in of the top management in embracing inclusion has been very supportive on their inclusion journey and the reason why they have company policies that are inclusive of Persons with Disabilities and the code of Conduct codifies human rights needs of PWDs. They also mentioned that they have a talent development and nurturing department where employees with outstanding talents are supported to fully explore their potential. For instance among the deaf young people employed at Coca Cola Beverages Africa-Kenya one who is an athlete will be supported fully to participate in World Deaf Champion.
- e) EPZ noted that the DEYI project had helped improve the self-esteem of the deaf youth and urged DEK to continue with the good work and reach the deaf youth in the grassroots
- f) Coca-Cola Beverages Africa-Kenya has joined the Kenya disability network which is an employer led initiative hosted by the Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) and supported by International Labor Organization (ILO) and works to promote inclusion of PWD's in the workplace countrywide.

Members include companies, organizations of PWD's and NGO's. So DEK can also join this network and take advantage of coca cola being an existing member to access these powerful bodies like FKE and ILO which have proved difficult to access during the project implementation.

- g) All the employers cited that they have more deaf young people at low cadre jobs because of their limited skills and education levels. They said that they would wish to employ deaf people in the senior levels and urged them to upgrade their education levels.

Vocational Training Institutions

- a) Kenya Institute of Management (KIM) acknowledged the grave importance of the sensitization program to staff and management in meeting learning needs of deaf students. Proposal were made that sensitization and awareness should start with the institution's top leadership for better results with TVET's and colleges. More should be organized including during the orientation day.
- b) Due to the effects of Covid-19, KCA-Technical has not been able to recruit any deaf students and requested DEK to support them in marketing their courses to interested DYPs.
- c) KIM and KCA-Technical agreed on the need to support them in the provision of Kenya Sign Language interpretation service. DEK needs to link these institutions with National Council For Persons with Disabilities(NCPWD) and other institutions which can support with KSL interpreters.
- d) Strong appeal was made to find educational support for DYPs who have approached them but could not meet academic fees.

3.3 Relevance:

Has the project adequately responded to the needs of the deaf young people involved

The evaluation found that the intervention was highly relevant to needs, priorities and context of deaf young people and stakeholders. These needs of deaf young people in Nairobi County were strengthening their soft and foundation skills in order to obtain formal and informal employment and facilitation of reasonable accommodation at the workplace. Other priorities are opening small micro-enterprise and earn their own income to support their family and thus actively participate in society. With regard to quality and design of the intervention, there is explicit evidence that deaf young people were involved in the design stage. This therefore made the intervention more sensitive and aligned with beneficiaries and stakeholders needs. Furthermore, a number of deaf young people who participated in the evaluation viewed the intervention as useful and valuable to them. However, concerns were also raised on the need for their strong participation in the project implementation to achieve better results.

The evaluation acknowledged that the objectives of the intervention were adequately defined, realistic and feasible. Deaf Young people who participated in the participatory video process revealed that their fundamental needs in terms of soft and foundation skills have been enhanced during the project lifetime. In terms of intervention's adaptation over time as a result of disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, it remains unclear how the intervention was adapted in some

instance where activities were postponed in consecutive quarters due to covid-19 protocols for example career exposure events.

3.4 Effectiveness:

Do deaf young people feel they have the adequate skills and support to obtain and sustain employment?

The assessment of effectiveness of this evaluation focuses specifically on the achievement of results relative to impact which described higher-level results of the intervention. The mid-term evaluation already highlighted the achievement of results relative to an intervention's objectives such as the outputs and outcome level. The intervention was designed to ensure deaf young people live healthily, with equal opportunities to meet their personal, economic and social needs. The Mid- Term evaluation found a high success rate of implementation, not only output indicators but also outcome indicators. A good example from the midterm evaluation include 22% of those who had never worked are now in employment or business as a result of this innovation. Furthermore 50% of those who had been in paid employment or had worked with family before the project are now also in employment in different fields other than at baseline survey.

The end line evaluation further confirmed that deaf young people in the project have been adequately equipped with employment skills and vocational training enabling them to access waged employment or start their own enterprises. Of the participants monitored under the intervention, 90% of the deaf young people reported increased knowledge and skills regarding literacy citizen's rights and employability skills achieved through life skills training initiatives, mentorship support of DEK, peer-led support groups engagement and respective vocational training. Furthermore, the evaluation observed that 20% of deaf young people had an increase in knowledge regarding business management skills, business opportunities, saving and loans. For instance, Ujoma Self Help Group (established by the intervention) was able to adapt the table banking concept and approached the Youth Enterprise Fund and received Ksh 100,000 to establish micro-enterprise which are now sustainable and changing lives of the beneficiaries. This story is also captured in the participatory video. Beside this, DYPs were also linked to Deaf Sacco to access small loan to implement individual business. However, it remains unclear whether all these who were linked to respective financial institutions were able to access funds, open and sustain their businesses. The evaluation believes that a more well-coordinated and consistent approach should be in place to assist 25 deaf young people to access micro-finance services.

It was found that while solid progress was registered in providing adequate skills to deaf young people, linking them to potential employers and supporting them to establish micro-enterprise, there were some gaps in matching with respective skills as indicated by DYPs in the baseline survey report. This is mainly due to limited available opportunities to match their skills and employers to engage them. In addition, all of the PV participants revealed that they have obtained relevant training that have assisted them in their day to day needs. For example, English program has helped some deaf young people to increase in their ability to communicate with families, community, employers and co-workers. The evaluation also registered an increase in access to incomes for considerable DYPs who accessed waged employment or were in self-employment as a result of skills acquired. This has enabled them to meet their basic needs. Some reported that they can meet hospital bills, moved out from where they were living with their friends to their own and established their own families as a result of this project, used income to advance their education at diploma course on their own. Majority of the participants engaged under the intervention agreed that recognition, respect and inclusion of deaf young people in development program of the deaf community, family and community functions have also improved.

Finally, it is the view of the assessment that the program was delivered in a cost-effective manner based on the information available. However, a detailed analysis of relevant financial reports is recommended to ascertain the extent of cost-effectiveness.

3.3.2 Do employers have increased awareness and willing to employ deaf young people and make their workplaces more accessible?

The intervention made significant efforts to sensitize and support 17 employers on inclusive employment regarding the need of deaf young people. As a result, nearly 71 deaf young people were directly or indirectly supported by the intervention and hired by respective companies. Cola-Coca and EPZ had 12 and 22 deaf young people respectively. Other companies which were not among the pilot group of employers, include Palette Café, Dool Company, Petco, Frigoken and Safaricom Agent. This is an indication that the project has increased deaf awareness and understanding of inclusive employment among more employers than planned. From the screening event, it was noted that most employers appreciated the value of sensitization sessions and it had challenged their attitude, perspective and willingness to hire deaf young people. For example, Coca-Cola Beverages Africa-Kenya has even hired some of DYPs who did not meet the minimum qualifications using affirmative action grounds. On the job training, mentoring and coaching are being deployed to assist those deaf employers to discharge their responsibilities

effectively. DYPs suggested the need to expand further engagement with various employers especially those not in the pilot group to increase chances for Deaf youth to access formal employment. They appreciated the fact that there is goodwill from respective employers however low awareness regarding the potential and capabilities of deaf youth among prospective employers continue to undermine their chances to be hired. While DYPs appreciate the efforts of DEK on awareness creation through sensitization they are also of the considered view that more remains to be done.

3.3.3 Are vocational schools on track to provide adequate support to deaf youth?

It is fair to say that without the project these beneficiaries wouldn't have received support they require to advance their career journey. DEK through its sensitization session and deaf awareness program reached out a wide range of vocational training institutions such as Kenya Institute of Management, Ashley Hairdressing, Kenya Institute of Social Work, Karen Technical Institute and Vera Beauty College to enroll deaf youth. As a result, some of these learning institutions made efforts to enroll deaf youth into their programs. However, this has not been without challenges. Two fundamental barriers were experienced such as the cost for provision of sign language interpreters for deaf learners and attitudinal barriers were often mentioned by several beneficiaries as the main responsible factors for undermining the delivery of this output. Although DEK has built collaboration with some vocational training institutions to ensure the availability of sign language interpreter, these efforts were not sustainable due to lack of funds or systems to support this. In addition, the evaluation recognized that engagements with the vocational training institutions were not systematic and lacked coherent and comprehensive approaches. There is need for continuous discussion with training institutions, frequent follow up support, provide temporary solutions to the problem of sign language interpreters by working with Kenya Sign Language Interpreter Association as well as the National Council for Persons with Disabilities.

The evaluation process recognized that while DEK has put significant efforts to ensure that deaf youth could access vocational training, there remain a number of challenges in terms of financial barriers. Such barrier has prevented the deaf youth from enrolling in the colleges due to lack of school fees as explained by KIM. Given the strong relationship between deafness and poverty in their households, it would be essential to ensure proper linkages with several organizations providing educational support to deaf youth. This should also be extended to national and county government educational support programs.

3.3.4 To what extent are the project strategies and emerging outcomes sustainable beyond the project itself?

Fundamentally, the project's focus was on skills development of 150 deaf young people which has been useful in supporting beneficiaries to obtain and sustain employment, open their own businesses and build better communication strategies and interaction with their families and communities. Deaf Young people have been empowered with sustainable skills and these skills are applicable to current and future employment opportunities. The evaluation confirmed that some deaf youth have been engaged on a long-term employment contract. In addition, there is strong evidence that deaf youth are more likely to maintain and sustain their small enterprises beyond the project life though they require support and guidance such as how to effectively access more funds to expand their business, networks to exchange knowledge and mentoring.

At organization level, Deaf Empowerment Kenya has built its institutional capacity over the period of the project implementation and it has seized its place in the disability movement as one of the leading deaf organization promoting the rights of deaf people. DEK continues to receive requests from various deaf individuals and organizations to enhance their livelihoods in different parts of the country. DEK has also attracted considerable new funding partners interested in financing innovations around education, livelihood, health and employment.

Sustainability of this project is also possible where employers especially Coca-Cola Beverages Africa Kenya have demonstrated commitment to review their internal policies to ensure that deaf youth and people with disabilities are hired and provided with reasonable accommodation for better performance of employers.

3.3.5 Have there been any unexpected, positive and negative outcomes or lessons learned

The intervention observed several unexpected positive and negative outcomes during its implementation period. Among unexpected outcomes, in positive terms, initially, the project was to be piloted with Coca-Cola Beverages Africa-Kenya, EPZ and Kalu works companies, however the project has worked with more than 14 new companies to secure job opportunities for deaf youth. These companies are: Boma Inn, Pallet Café, Frigoken, Petco, orange farm, Safaricom and other small businesses like carpentry shops. The project has also attracted considerable new partnerships which will be essential for its sustainability as well as in meeting other needs of the deaf young people and organization as well. These partners include Leonard Cheshire, Light of the World, Sense International, Kenya Community Development Foundation, Global Disability Innovation Hub and NO ONE OUT.

Some negative unexpected outcomes of the project are the Covid-19 pandemic which has made it difficult for the delivery of some key activities as well as utilization of acquired skills by deaf young people. Some of the activities that require physical interaction were rescheduled severally due to covid-19 protocols. In addition, the project had projected working with COTU and FKE to lobby and advocate for employment opportunities for the deaf youths among employers. However, this was a challenge due to budget limitation and project capacity to mobilize buy in from COTU and FKE.

Among critical lessons learnt from the project

- a. Deaf peer-led support groups are more effective learning method as skills transfer is conducted in a deaf friendly atmosphere
- b. Pairing deaf young people with non-disabled experts despite communication barriers has helped in sharpening the skills of deaf young people and promoted better learning experience
- c. A strong and formal partnership with county governments and key institutions is important for building synergies and sustainability of the program targeting deaf young people
- d. Working closely with umbrella organization of employers such as Kenya Federation of Employers and Rubicom eases the engagement process and better project delivery.
- e. Continuous sensitization sessions with employers and vocational training institutions are paramount in changing perception and attitude about the potential and capability of deaf youth.

Lessons learnt from the Participatory video

- a) There should be more involvement of the consultant in the selection of DYP to minimize repetitions as well as address the issue of objectivity and impartiality.
- b) Explaining consent form to Deaf Young People removes certain fears and unnecessary questions around the purposes of PV exercise. It allows proper management of expectations which in turn will ensure smooth delivery of PV. It is extremely critical to allow time for DYVs to understand the content of the consent form before they can sign it off.
- c) Availability and flexibility schedule of Deaf young people and Core group members are paramount to the success of the PV exercise
- d) Questions development; need to make the interview questions as simple and short as possible for participants. It is also critical that questions be translated into Kenyan Sign Language for proper understanding and interpretation.

- e) The role of core group was very essential to provide a wide range of understanding and interpretation of each question, clarify where there is underlying concerns from deaf youth

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation process makes the following recommendations as follow;

4.1 Deaf Youth

1. A clear effort and monitoring should be made to link and support Deaf Youth entrepreneurs to a wide spectrum of national and county government youth empowerment initiatives to access existing job opportunities including soft seed capital. These initiatives include; National Employment Authority, Access to Government Procurement Opportunities for Youth, County Youth Economic Empowerments, Uwezo, the Youth Council Initiative
2. There is a need to shift away from the perspective that deaf youth can only perform traditional vocational jobs in factories. It is recommended that the project explore new areas of technology, science, engineering and media that can be useful to deaf youth in advancing their careers of choice. KIM college has already discovered that this is possible and explained that there is need for institutions like NCPWD to support KSL interpreter costs so that deaf young people can achieve tertiary education.
3. A broader approach to bolstering livelihood and skills development for deaf young people in particular to support group activities is needed. Support group activities should consider more practical activities that are useful to support economic activities of deaf young people. There can be weekly or bi-weekly meeting where DYPs can discuss various issues affecting their livelihoods and strategies for overcoming these barriers. Successful DYPs is encouraged to facilitate these bi-weekly meeting.
4. Future project may consider expanding age limit of beneficiaries from 25 to 35 years old as per local legislation. This is because most deaf youth began schooling life late due to social and attitudinal barriers in their communities. Alternatively, DEK can establish linkages with other projects within or other organizations to refer those who are over 24 years.

4.2. Deaf Empowerment Kenya

1. There is need for concerted efforts to follow up with Deaf Young People as well as project deliverables to provide proper support and guidance about their progress and effective monitoring of the project

2. While DYPs were involved in the project, future project should ensure a robust and full participation of young people in the design, implementation reporting and evaluation of the project with explicit roles. Establish accessible feedback mechanisms for the project in DEK will help in ensuring a wide range of ideas to better project delivery.
3. There is a need to conduct media coverage to profile companies absorbing deaf youth in order to encourage more companies to do the same.
4. Future projects should ensure a more well-coordinated and consistent way of identifying, implementing and reporting activities to achieve a logical approach and sustainable results of the innovation.
5. There is need to adhere to the baseline survey report to various skills proposed by deaf young people and ensure that intervention responds directly to their needs as well as proper monitoring of progress.
6. While capacity of the DEK has been enhanced, much more is needed to strengthen its competency on implementing and monitoring the project activities in line with the baseline, beneficiary management by ensuring that they are involved in the project implementation as a facilitator or role model to other DYPs and robust co-ordination and stakeholders engagement.
7. Given the fact that DEK is a CBO, the need to build robust networks and collaboration with other deaf organizations is essential in meeting national wide needs of deaf young people.
8. It is recommended that DEK builds collaboration with other disability stakeholders and employer umbrella bodies like RUBICOM to introduce award/recognition schemes to employees that have employed more deaf people.
9. There is need for DEK to induct its targeted beneficiaries and stakeholders to the objectives and outcomes of the project during inception to level expectations.

4.3 Employers

1. It would be desirable that the future program for employers explore tax incentives comprehensively to companies which employ deaf person in

order to encourage more companies to hire more deaf youth. This is in line with the Persons with disabilities Act 2003.

2. There is clearly a need for strong commitment from companies which hired deaf youth to ensure disability inclusive employment. This can be done through the review of internal policy framework to consider reasonable accommodation for deaf employers.
3. It is recommended that a more coherent and systematic approach to addressing the issues of Kenyan sign language interpreter at the workplace is needed. DEK can share various best practices and options for working with interpreters with respective employers

4.4 Vocational Training Institutions

- 1 A comprehensive and well-coordinated engagement with vocational institutions is recommended to ensure inclusive and accessible learning programs to deaf youth learners.
- 2 Building collaboration with Kenyan Sign Language Interpreters Association and NCPWD is recommended to find quick and cheap solutions towards the problem of interpreters for employers/vocational institutions by using fresher interpreters.
- 3 Working with county youth polytechnics is encouraged to increase access to marketable course for deaf youth students under available scholarship programs
- 4 Policy based advocacy targeting Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority is necessary for long term vocational program for deaf learners. More specifically, the need to build advocacy skills among Deaf Youth is extremely paramount in ensuring and demanding accountability from these learning institutions.

4.5 National and County governments

1. A holistic approach to working with national and county government is recommended to ensure full access to existing programs and structures for deaf young people
2. Partnership with National Council for Persons with Disabilities may be critical in addressing the needs of sign language interpreters for private learning institutions as well as other educational support program for deaf youth.

CONCLUSION

The evaluation process concludes that the project has achieved high effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of expected outcomes. It confirmed that deaf young people have the adequate skills and support to obtain and sustain employment, employers have increased awareness and

willingness to employ deaf young people and some efforts were made to ensure that the workplace is more accessible. Despite these positive efforts, there is still a great need to provide support to deaf young people to advance their skills for sustainable livelihood. The future project should consider recommendations on areas that require improvement and support.

ANNEXURES

- a) Terms of Reference
- b) List of participatory video participants and screening events participants
- c) Final video footage
- d) Participatory video powerpoints presentation
- e) Interview Questions
- f) Consent forms