

What Next After We Leave School?

School-to-Home Transition for Students with Intellectual Disabilities



**A Practical Handbook for Teachers, Support Staff,
Parents / Guardians and Students**

Advantage Africa 
pathways out of poverty



About this handbook

This handbook is for anybody who is involved in the special education, vocational training and social welfare of students with intellectual disabilities. It will be particularly useful for head-teachers, teachers and support staff working in special units or schools for pupils with intellectual disabilities, especially those considering setting up, or wanting to develop a transition programme. Parents, guardians, siblings and other family members of students with intellectual disabilities can also use this handbook to assist them in planning and undertaking a smooth transition from school to home for their children. Many of the principles are also relevant to people working with students with physical disabilities, or those who are deaf or blind.

“Parents, guardians, siblings and other family members of students with intellectual disabilities can also use this handbook to assist them in planning and undertaking a smooth transition from school to home for their children.”

The handbook offers practical advice and guidance for initiating and running a transition programme. Where possible, it should be used in conjunction with the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development documents and guidance from the Kenya Institute of Special Education. Although the handbook recommends practical vocational training for learners with intellectual disabilities it is not a vocational training curriculum or teaching guide. Such resources are available in the form of The Vocational Curriculum for Learners who are Mentally Handicapped series (KICD 2013).

The content of this handbook has been developed from contributions by practitioners with many years of practical field experience in school-to-home transition for students with intellectual disabilities. It particularly draws upon experiences of former staff of St. Catherine’s Special School for the Mentally Handicapped in Butula, Busia County. It also includes experiences and knowledge gained from ground-breaking transition programmes conducted at special units within Mitaboni Primary School and Thinu Primary School in Machakos County. Further content resulted from a consultation workshop attended by representatives from Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE), Ministry of Education officials, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), head-teachers, teachers, parents, guardians, social workers and school leavers with disabilities who spoke about their own personal experiences of transition.

A word on language

Throughout this handbook, we have used the terms intellectual disability and intellectual disabilities to describe the students that are the subject of this text. We appreciate that various alternative terms are in use in Kenya and these include learning disabilities, special educational needs (SEN) and mentally disabled. We understand that opinions vary concerning the most appropriate and clear use of language.

Acknowledgments

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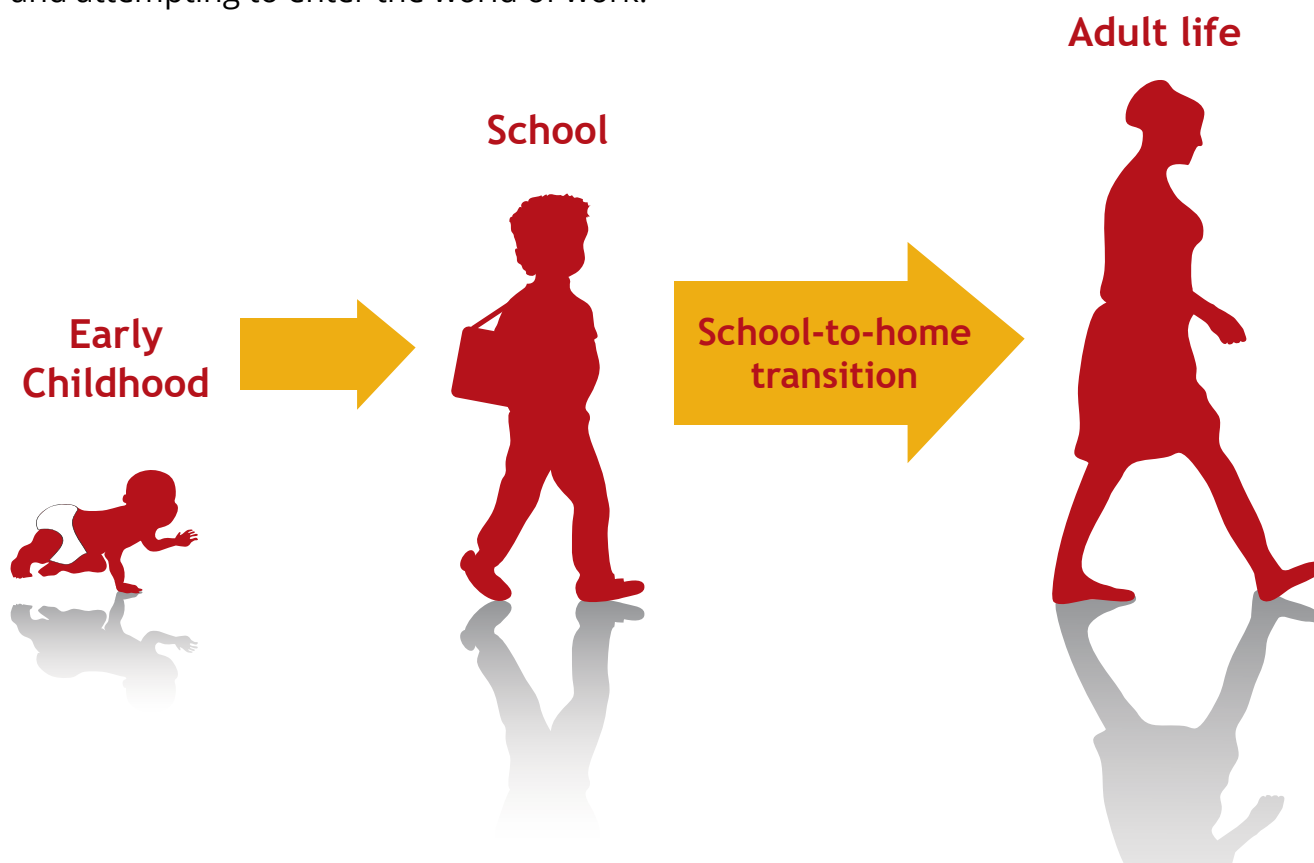
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1. The Principles of Transition

1.1 What is school-to-home / community transition?

As a student reaches the end of their time at school they are approaching a critical period in their life, which is known as 'transition'. This is the time when they progress into adulthood, perhaps moving into further education, or taking their place in community life and attempting to enter the world of work.



The period of school-to-home transition is a time of uncertainty and change not only for the school leaver, but also for their family members. The process can create strong emotions for everyone involved including excitement, apprehension and anxiety. The transition period is particularly critical and challenging for school leavers with intellectual disabilities because their future opportunities may be limited by barriers of social stigma, discrimination and limited availability of suitable employment. Despite these constraints it is important that school leavers look to the future with a sense of purpose and that their own ideas and aspirations are central in planning their progression into adult life.

1.2 When should children with intellectual disabilities finish school?

Many families that have a child with an intellectual disability are uncertain about when the child is expected to finish school. This is often because special units and other special schools do not always have a clear system of pupil progression through the classes. Sometimes pupils become 'stuck' in school, repeating their classes because their academic achievements do not indicate advancement. Special education teachers should be alert to this possibility and put systems in place to ensure that students can progress through the classes as they get older. Teachers and school administrators should also

be aware that students with disabilities can have a young appearance or be physically small. When combined with an intellectual disability this can lead to teachers underestimating their students' real ages. For example, a child that is assumed to be 15 or 16 years old due to their appearance and behaviour, may in fact be in their early 20s when the date of birth records are checked.

“Students should not become ‘stuck’ in school. There should be a plan for their progression into adulthood”

1.3 The importance of parental involvement



A teacher at Mitaboni Special Unit with a 19 year old student who appears much younger.

The attitude and awareness of parents or guardians can prolong a student's stay in school beyond the norm. Although some families are keen to see their children with intellectual disabilities grow up, leave school and take their place in adult life, others are not. Unfortunately some parents and guardians have negative attitudes to their children with disabilities and see the school as an opportunity to hand over the 'burden' of caring for their child. These families often try to keep their children in school for as long as possible and are reluctant to discuss transition. Such parents will need more assistance from teachers to understand that the education of their child cannot go on forever. They should be helped to identify and work towards a time for transition, even if it is several years in the future.

My daughter is a burden to me when she is at home. I want her to stay in school as long as possible.

I understand, but she is becoming too old to stay in school. Don't worry, we will plan together to prepare for her transition.



1.4 Planning for transition

It is essential that schools and parents are fully aware of the challenges and opportunities that exist for school leavers with intellectual disabilities. Time and energy should be put into planning a smooth and effective process of transition, well ahead of the actual graduation day.

“Plans for transition should start early, well in advance of the pupil’s graduation day”



A student with Down's Syndrome with his mother on graduation day.

These plans need to be personalised to suit each individual family's situation and the cultural, social and economic context in which they live. It is worth noting that successful transition is not only good for the school leaver with intellectual disabilities and their family; it is also good for the wider community. Such young people who are well integrated within society and contribute to local social and economic life will be instrumental in creating a stronger, more cohesive and inclusive community.

I used to think that disabled girl was useless but now she has become very active.



Summary Points

- ✓ Estimate students' ages carefully.
- ✓ Ensure pupils' progress through classes at school.
- ✓ Assist parents to understand the importance of transition.
- ✓ Understand transition is good for everyone.
- ✓ Plan ahead!

2. Preparing Students and Families for Transition

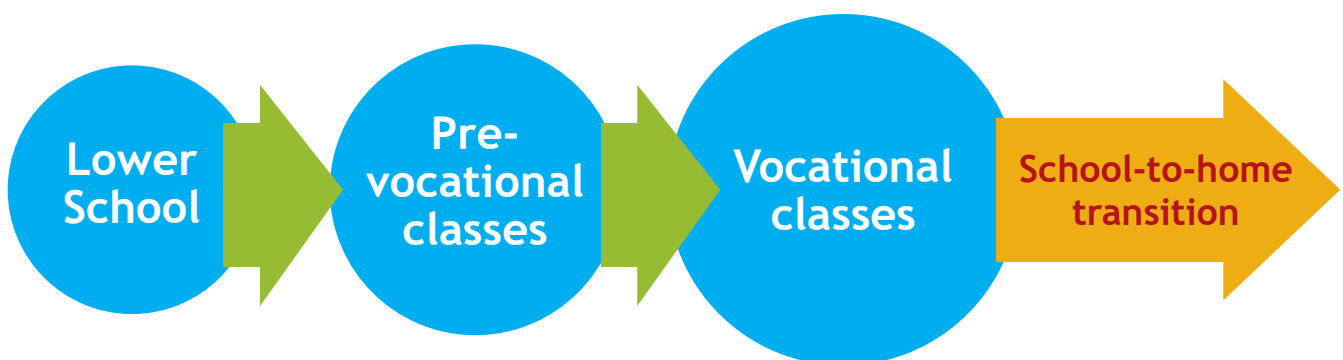
2.1 How long for vocational training and transition?

The period of time needed to prepare a student for transition is not fixed. It will vary from one individual to another depending upon such factors as the age and ability of the student, school facilities, resources and the family support and home situation. The teachers and parents should devise an appropriate individual time-plan, but this should remain flexible to allow for changes as necessary.

Pupils with intellectual disabilities will often reach their academic potential after completing lower classes and are usually happy to progress to learning more practical vocational skills which many will have an aptitude for and tend to enjoy more. At this stage students will typically move into pre-vocational class where they are introduced to a more

“Students are often happier when learning practical vocational skills”

practical curriculum and begin ‘learning by doing’. The time spent in pre-vocational class will vary according to an individual’s pace of learning and the structure of the particular educational establishment’s syllabus, will typically span 1 or 2 years. The student will then progress to vocational classes where they further develop their vocational skills whilst also continuing to practice activities of daily living and independence skills. Vocational training will last for anything between 2 and 4 years depending upon the syllabus of the vocational training centre or school and the progress of the individual student. Where flexibility is possible, sufficient time should be allowed for each student to reach their full potential and attainment should be continually monitored by the teachers. The vocational classes should be viewed as an integral part of planning for transition and older students should not be kept in school unless they are continuing to genuinely learn and develop useful skills.



2.2 Involving parents and guardians

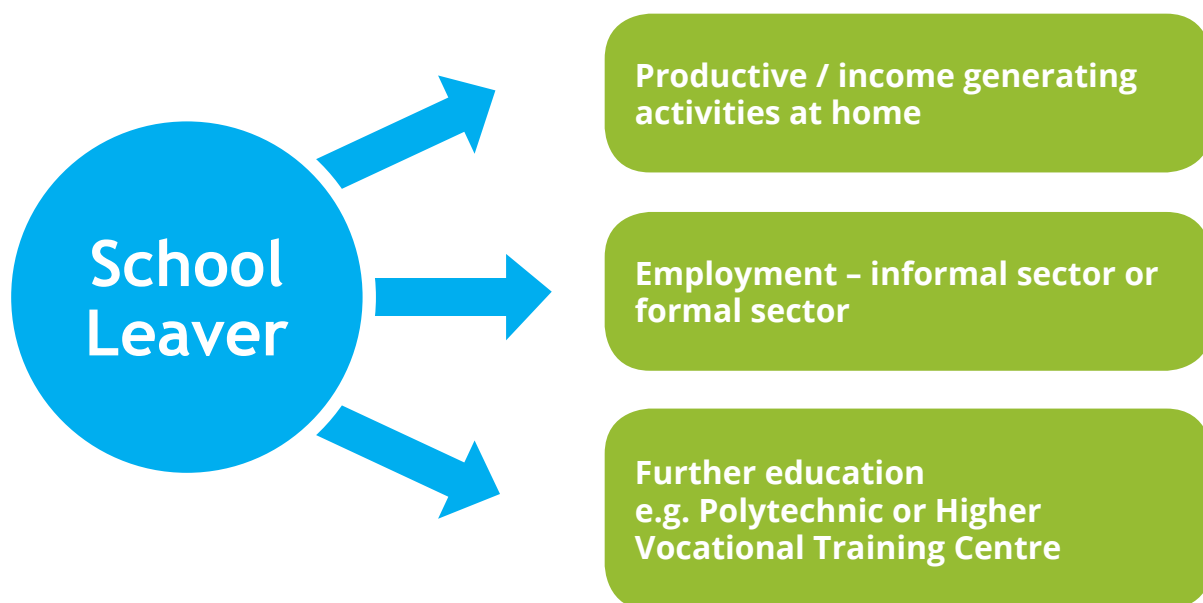
A good time to introduce the topic of transition to parents and guardians is at the start of a new school year when parents bring their children to the school for enrolment, or perhaps at the end of term when they collect their children. Teachers can take such opportunities to involve the student and their family in starting to make plans towards the eventual date when the student will finish school.

The purpose of these meetings is to make everybody involved aware of the proposed transition process and activities that will take place before graduation. These will include:

- Explaining to the student that they are growing up into adulthood and they are therefore approaching the end of their time at school.
- Discussing the talents and interests of the student and starting to identify occupational options for the student after graduating from school.
- Discussing the family situation and means of income, and considering how the student will integrate and contribute to family and community life after finishing school.
- Identifying what areas of the student's knowledge and skills can be developed by the teachers in preparation for transition.
- Introducing the idea of home visits as a part of the transition programme.

2.3 Transition options

The simple diagram below can help students and parents consider the options available for school leavers. The pathway chosen will depend largely upon the intellectual ability and interests of the individual student concerned and the opportunities that their family and friends can offer.



“Most successful transitions result in school leavers undertaking productive activities at home”

Experience suggests that most successful school leavers with intellectual disabilities will take up productive activities at home or in the local community, preferably generating some income for themselves and the family. The nature of the productive activity will vary according to the activities that the family is already engaged in and the level of support that they can offer the school leaver.

Finding formal employment for school leavers with intellectual disabilities is very difficult because of the competitive nature of the job market. However, jobs within the informal sector are sometimes a possibility. Families who run their own enterprises can try to include school leavers in their businesses, or perhaps find job placements with local enterprises that have informal employment opportunities suitable for young people with intellectual disabilities.

Polytechnic courses or dedicated vocational training centres may be a good option for students to develop their vocational skills and knowledge if they have the learning capacity to benefit from higher level training. Polytechnic courses usually have an academic component that some students might find too demanding, although it may be worth discussing special arrangements with the polytechnic admissions staff.

Summary Points

- ✓ Prepare for transition early.
- ✓ Introduce parents to transition at the start of the school year.
- ✓ Build on students' existing talents.
- ✓ Consider all the available post-school options.

3. Home Visits and Parent-to-school Visits

3.1 Home visits

Home visits are a very important element of a transition programme and the first visit should be arranged early in the process. At least two home visits should take place for each student during the transition period, but more visits are desirable if time and resources allow. The main purpose of a home visit is to identify the main work or productive activities that the school leaver could do when he or she finishes school and returns to their home community. These opportunities will vary depending on the family situation. During the home visit, teaching staff should take note of the social and cultural context of the family and also note how they secure an income. These observations, along with the student's interests and abilities, will help the teachers and family to design an 'Individual Transition Plan' for the student. This will include the appropriate vocational skills that the student will need to learn at school before he or she graduates.

“During a home visit, teaching staff should take note of the economic, social and cultural context of the family”

For many households, especially in rural settings, subsistence farming is likely to be the main livelihood activity, perhaps supported by some form of informal employment outside the shamba. In this situation, the most appropriate means of including the school leaver with an intellectual disability is to identify which aspects of the family's farming they can participate in, and even take responsibility for. This could include activities such as: digging, planting, watering, weeding, harvesting, grazing or collecting fodder for livestock and cleaning animal pens.

In urban areas where farmland is not available, the home visit team and parents / guardians must consider what opportunities for suitable work exist in the immediate community. This is a challenging task, as the competition for jobs is high and a school



A student's mother (centre) shows teachers around her compound during a home visit.



A teacher and mother discuss income generation options during a home visit.

leaver with an intellectual disability will find it very difficult to compete on the open job market. The transition team should therefore pursue contacts and links within the extended family and amongst any local well-wishers or organisations such as disabled persons' organisations. If the family has an enterprise such as a shop, posho mill or hotel then the home visit team should discuss with the owners how the school leaver might contribute to the business on a daily basis after graduating from school.

***See Appendix 1:
Income Generating Activities.***

Another task for the home visit team is to gauge the family's general attitude towards their child with an intellectual disability. Do they appear to be committed to the welfare of the child and are they positive about the proposed individual transition plan and home-based activities? Who is the person in the family who will be the principle mentor / carer for the school leaver and do they have the support of the head of the household? If the family members seem to be reluctant to take their child back from school, are negative or in disagreement about the transition plan, then the teachers should address their concerns and perhaps allow a longer period for the family to prepare for their child's transition.

During a home visit it is also a good idea for school staff to meet with people independent from the family, but with an interest in their welfare. This could be somebody like the village elder or another responsible member of the local community. These people should

be made aware of the planned transition, and asked to act as objective supporters of the process. After the transition they can continue to help the family with any problems, monitor the longer term situation and give feedback to the school.

It is interesting to note that as a result of home visits, teachers often become more engaged with preparing their students for transition as they see the practical purpose and relevance of their vocational teaching. Because the teachers have seen the home situations they tend to view their students as individuals with unique characters, and teachers' morale and confidence can increase as they prepare their students for a successful adult life after education.

“The home visit team should gauge the family's attitude towards their child with an intellectual disability and the level of support and commitment they are prepared to offer ”

See Appendix 2: Check List for Home Visits



I never knew Mary came from such a disadvantaged home. We must do all we can in school to give her the skills she needs for her future.



3.2 Parent-to-school visits

In addition to home visits it is also useful to consider inviting parents / guardians to visit the school on a normal pre-vocational or vocational training day, so that they can see how their child is learning in the school environment. They can see their child engaged in the daily independence activities, and also learning the skills and knowledge specified in the individual transition plan. These visits can be especially useful for family members who lack knowledge about intellectual disability and do not know the best ways to support and encourage their child's learning.

Sometimes parents will drastically underestimate the potential of their children. Parents may know that the academic attainment of their child with an intellectual disability is low, and might therefore assume that they are unable to learn anything productive. Parents / guardians may have also been told by other people that their child is 'useless' and may have therefore reduced their aspirations for their child's future development. However when they visit the school, parents will see for themselves how their child interacts with other students, and witness the teaching methods and strategies that special education

"Some parents may have been told that their child is 'useless' and may therefore have low aspirations for their child's development"

teachers employ. They can be given proper advice on their child's realistic learning potential. It is often only when they see how independent and able their child is in the school setting, that they begin to recognise the possibilities for their child's development. Teachers can talk to the parents about the best techniques for managing and supporting the student, and this can sometimes result in the parent adopting a more positive attitude, and contributing more to helping their child reach their potential whilst at home.

3.3 Parent support groups

It may be useful to encourage parents to get to know one each other and to share the common experiences and concerns that they have as guardians of children with intellectual disabilities. This type of peer support can extend beyond the school and into the community, where parent support groups can become established. Members will feel less isolated, they can share emotional and practical support from each other and gain confidence from knowing that they are not the only person with a young family member who has an intellectual disability.

Summary Points

- ✓ Make home visits. They're a vital part of the transition process.
- ✓ Choose home-based / community based enterprises carefully according to students' abilities.
- ✓ Help parents to gain a positive vision for their child's future through school visits.
- ✓ Start peer support groups to encourage parents.

4. Skills Based Learning

4.1 Learning by doing

It is beyond the scope of this handbook to provide comprehensive advice on the provision of pre-vocational and vocational training in special schools. However, it is important for each school to develop a curriculum which encourages 'learning by doing' for students with intellectual disabilities and teaches activities of daily living and independence as well as vocational skills.

Students with physical disabilities, visual impairments, deafness, deaf-blindness or albinism can attain high academic achievements, but the nature of intellectual disabilities



Students learning the practical skill of braiding hair.



Students learning to wash dishes and cutlery.

means that academic outcomes for these students are usually expected to be significantly lower than average, and depending upon the severity of the intellectual disability, academic levels of attainment may be very low.

Therefore a curriculum that prioritises the teaching of skills of daily living and practical vocational skills is often much better suited to students with learning disabilities rather than continuing to repeat classes in literacy, numeracy and other academic subjects. Students and teachers alike will find a vocational skills-based curriculum more relevant to the needs of the learners and the motivation and commitment of both students and teachers is likely to be enhanced. Activities of daily living should include self-feeding, bathing, dressing and toileting as well as washing clothes, cooking and other skills for independent living. Instruction in communication and social skills is also important as well as education concerning health, hygiene, HIV, sex and relationships.

Vocational skills include crop and animal husbandry, garment-making, handicrafts, hairdressing, carpentry and building. When developing a vocational training curriculum reference should be made to specific syllabuses for learners with 'mental handicap' published by Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) and itemised in Appendix 3.

4.2 Involving local practitioners

The teaching of vocational skills can be enhanced by inviting local practitioners from the community into schools. For example, a local artisan or agricultural expert may be asked to come to give some training to teachers, or to directly instruct the students and even parents.



An expert basket weaver shows her products at the market place close to Mitaboni Special Unit.


Summary Points

- ✓ Emphasise practical vocational skills, rather than academic excellence.
- ✓ Bring in relevant expertise to ensure teaching is effective and interesting.

5. Developing an ‘Individual Transition Plan’

5.1 The importance of an Individual Transition Plan

Students with intellectual disabilities over the age of 16 years should be included in the school’s transition programme. Each student should also have an Individual Transition Plan designed specifically for their needs. This should be devised collaboratively with inputs from the student, their family and the school teachers and vocational training staff that know them best. When appropriate, other relevant people in the community can be consulted or included in the programme. These might include EARC Officers, county government officials responsible for social services, job placement officers and village elders, sub-chiefs, religious leaders and local artisans.



“Each student should also have an Individual Transition Plan designed specifically for their needs”

The Individual Transition Plan should include the following sections:

- o Timetable
- o Social and independence skills
- o Vocational skills
- o Resources required for transition

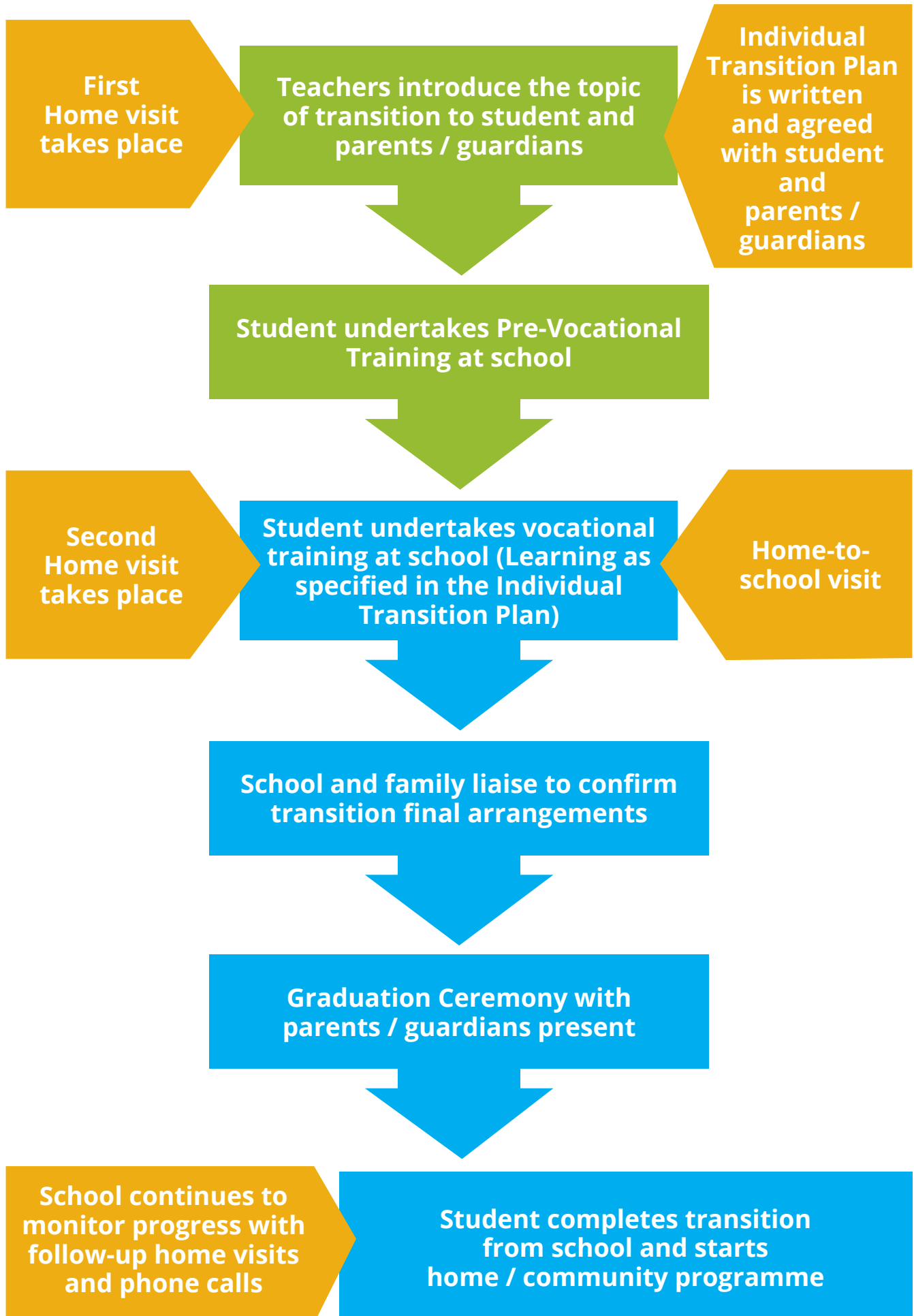
See Appendix 4: Sample Individual Transition Plan.

5.2 The timetable

The transition timetable should estimate the overall time a student is likely to require in the whole transition process. It should include milestones such as moving from pre-vocational to vocational class, and identify a graduation date and the date of final transition. Where possible the timetable should also include specifics such as agreed dates for home visits and parent-to-school visits. The timetable should be tailored to the student’s abilities and situation. If possible, schools and vocational centres should allow some students to progress faster through vocational classes if they gain the required skills quickly and their family is ready for them to integrate smoothly back home. On the other hand, if a student needs more time to learn the vocational skills they need, or if the family is not ready to integrate their child back home on a permanent basis, then a longer transition period may need to be agreed. However, it is useful to remember that the purpose of the timetable is to ensure that students are not remaining in school too long and that they have a clear plan for their future transition.

See Appendix 5: Sample Individual Transition Timetable.

Summary of typical transition process



5.3 Social and independence skills

It is important that students with intellectual disabilities reach their full potential in social development and independent living. The Individual Transition Plan should therefore include appropriate targets for activities of daily living, communication and social interaction with others. Good work habits such as time keeping and consistency of performance should also be included.

The Individual Transition Plan should also provide a clear means of assessing and recording the student's level of attainment in these social and independence skills.

Older students can also be given more responsibility in school as they get closer to school leaving age. For example students can be given responsibilities for helping tidy the classrooms or dormitories, or they may be put in charge of serving out tea or meals to the younger pupils.



Students learn daily routines for personal hygiene.



Students serve morning tea for the other pupils.



Students learn how to look after each other through healthy social interaction.

5.4 Vocational skills and knowledge

In addition to daily living and independence skills, each student's Individual Transition Plan should include targets for learning vocational skills to reach the desired transition outcomes. An example of an outcome could be to gain a place on a further education course (eg. at a vocational centre) or to integrate fully into the family home and contribute to the family livelihood. The plans to reach these outcomes must specify the skills and knowledge required and should be tailored to each student according to their ability, interests and the opportunities identified during home visits. For example, if they enjoy farming and the family has identified vegetable gardening as a productive activity for the school leaver at home, then the school should endeavour to teach them how to sow seeds in a nursery, mulch, transplant and water them, harvest the produce and perhaps sell in the local market.

The Individual Transition Plan should provide a clear means of assessing and recording the student's level of attainment throughout the process.

Reference can be made to KICD materials to develop a knowledge and skills plan – see Appendix 3.

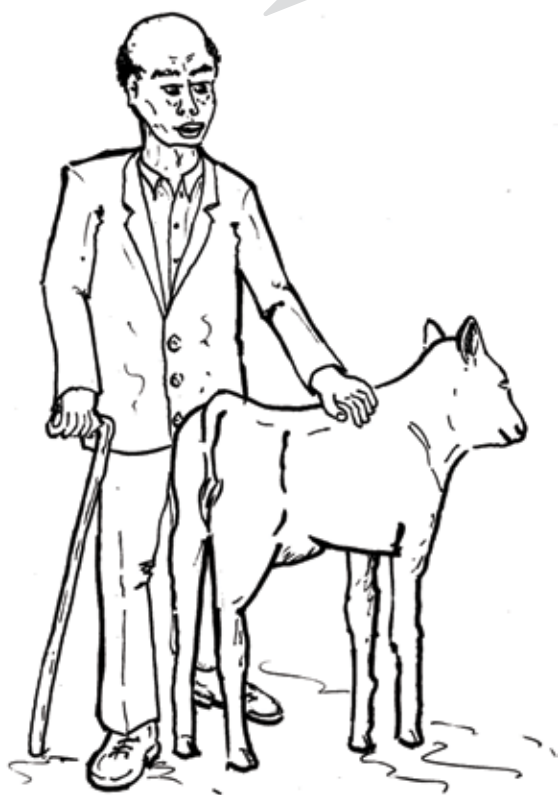


PRE-VOCATIONAL CLASS TIME-TABLE				
	8:20—9:30	9:50—11:00	11:30—12:40	2:00—3:00
MON	A CROP PRODUCTION ANIMAL PRODUCTION	B CREATIVE ACTIVITY - DRAWING - PRINTING - WEAVING	B P.E FREE INDOOR ACTIVITY	A ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING
TUE	S FAMILY LIFE L EDUCATION	R CREATIVE ACTIVITY - WEAVING - KNITTING - EMBROIDERY	R CROP PRODUCTION ANIMAL PRODUCTION	L INDEPENDENCE SKILLS
WED	M FOOD AND NUTRITION B HOME MANAGEMENT	E CREATIVE ACTIVITY - MODELLING - ORNAMENT DESIGN - KNITTING	E P.E FIRST AID	M ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING
THUR	L HOME VISITS	A HOME VISITS	A HOME VISITS	C HOME VISITS INDEPENDENCE SKILLS
FRI	Y P.P.T HOME MANAGEMENT	K CROP PRODUCTION ANIMAL PRODUCTION	K CREATIVE ACTIVITY - ORNAMENT DESIGN - WEAVING - DRAWING	K ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING

Example of a pre-vocational class time-table.



I'm keeping this calf for my daughter to look after when she finishes school.



5.5 Resources for transition

The success of the transition process will be greatly increased if resources are made available to support the school leaver's vocational activities. For example, if the Individual Transition Plan has identified the rearing of goats or a cow at home as a productive activity, then these animals must be purchased. Schools and families should work together in advance to save money and / or identify sources of funding. Family contributions should always be encouraged and it will help a great deal if the family is able to purchase the appropriate assets for their school leaver themselves.

Parents and guardians should be reminded that they will no longer be paying school fees for their child and the intended outcome is for him or her to make money from their activity. However poor the family is, it is vital that the family contribute what they can to the establishment of their child's future vocational activity as this cements their ownership of the plan and their commitment to it.

It may be helpful to set a target for savings at the start of the process and to save using a trusted organisation. This could be a local savings group or the school itself. Even with savings, many families will be unable to afford the full cost of their child's activity, in which case other sources of support should be sought. These include well-wishers in the community, faith-based organisations and business owners who can all be approached for assistance. Schools can apply for support on behalf of families through county government schemes and national and international organisations that help people with disabilities or vulnerable families. Such donors will look favourably on the commitment of families who have already saved towards their child's future and may be able to 'match fund' their efforts.

Purchases should be made with the strict understanding that the assets will become the property of the school leaver with an intellectual disability and income derived from the assets, such as milk from a cow, also belongs to the school leaver and should be used for their welfare in agreement with them. When livestock breed



The school leaver's parents understand that the donated cow is his own property and the milk produced also belongs to him.

and multiply, the offspring are also the property of the school leaver. The only exception to this is if the original agreement stipulates that offspring from a donated animal should be returned, perhaps for the benefit of another school leaver awaiting transition.

Experience shows that when assets are donated to school leavers (such as animals, farming tools or a sewing machine) there can be a risk of them being taken by other people, or simply removed and sold. Therefore when the purchase or donation of assets takes place, the school should closely supervise

and carefully document the procurement process. It may be useful to enlist a third party, such as a village elder or sub-chief, as a witness and signatory to the transaction in order to safeguard against possible future misunderstandings or ownership disputes.

The Individual Transition Plan for each student should include a simple itemised budget of the resources required to facilitate the student's proposed transition activities. As well as the assets mentioned above, this should include the cost of vocational learning resources in school and home visits to assist head teachers in authorising these from school funds.

See Appendix 6: Sample Individual Transition Budget.

5.6 Sex, relationships and abuse

It is known that people with disabilities are at least four times more likely to experience sexual violence against them. Although this is a sensitive topic, it is important that teachers, parents and guardians ensure that children in their care are safeguarded against possible abuse and exploitation. As students with intellectual disabilities reach adulthood, particular attention should be paid to ensuring that they receive appropriate sex and relationships education and information about sexual health. They should be taught how to recognise the difference between abusive and normal relationships, how to avoid coercion and what to do if they experience inappropriate advances or violence against them.



A student signs a formal agreement of ownership on receipt of a donated cow.

Summary Points

- ✓ Make sure each student has an Individual Transition Plan.
- ✓ Include a timetable, independence and vocational skills, and resources in every plan.
- ✓ Don't neglect sex and relationships education.

6. Final Preparations before Transition and Graduation

6.1 Preparing for adult life

Shortly before a student's graduation day, the final preparations should be made for their transition out of school and into their new adult life. The rights and welfare of the school leaver are paramount, and the family should be able to confirm that they are well-prepared and have put in place the necessary arrangements at home or in the community. The school should also be able to verify that the school leaver is psychologically prepared for transition, and as far as possible, has gained the skills and knowledge necessary for daily living and the productive activities they have planned for after school.

“The rights and welfare of the school leaver are paramount and families should be well prepared before final transition”

6.2 The graduation ceremony

The final transition should then be marked by the school organising a graduation ceremony for the students and their families. This will be a motivating and enjoyable event for students, family members and teachers alike. Additionally, if it is witnessed by younger students in the school, their own graduation will become an aspiration for them. Furthermore, graduation day will help to embed the concept of progression and transition within the school's culture.



Graduation ceremony at Mitaboni Special Unit.

Summary Point

- ✓ Hold a graduation day. It's motivating for everyone and helps embed transition into school culture.

7. Monitoring and Reunions

7.1 The importance of the first few months

The first few months after a young adult with an intellectual disability leaves school are critical for their chances of successful integration. If they develop a healthy daily routine with regular productive activities and strong and supportive relationships with family and friends, their chances of long-term success are greatly increased. However, if they start off badly, form bad habits or become idle and lack proper family support the outcomes can be poor.

7.2 Continued school involvement

For the reasons cited above, it is important that school staff maintain an active interest in the school leaver's welfare until they are convinced that they are fully settled into their new adult life. Ideally follow-up visits will be made to monitor the situation, but at least telephone calls should be made, not only to the family themselves, but also to get independent feedback from local people such as the village elders or responsible neighbours who know the family well. In many instances the school can offer ongoing advice to help families overcome minor transition problems, but if there are more significant concerns then the school should take action to help. As a last resort, the school leaver can be recalled to school and / or help can be sought from social services or local disabled persons' organisations.

“It is important that the school maintain an interest in the school leaver's welfare even after they have graduated and gone home.”

7.3 Events for former students

Some schools have introduced reunions for former students. At these events ex-students are invited back to school for an informal and fun visit over the course of a weekend, to meet up with their old classmates and to share their stories and experiences since leaving school. These reunions are supervised by teachers and support staff who also benefit from a sense of satisfaction and motivation when they witness how their former students have developed and progressed into adult life. Students who are still at school also have the opportunity to meet former school mates and are likely to contemplate their own progression towards graduation and transition.

Summary Points

- ✓ Quickly establish a healthy daily routine for young people who have left school.
- ✓ Monitor school leavers' progress closely.
- ✓ Hold reunions to aid success.

8. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Kenya

8.1 Avoiding poor transition experiences

The transition from school is an important period for any young person that should be respected by everyone around them. All individuals should be supported throughout this time to access opportunities which allow them to reach their full potential and meaningfully participate and contribute to our society as adults. Many young people with disabilities however have extremely poor post-school transition experiences because people in their communities do not accept them, often because of the ignorance and myths surrounding disability. Local faith communities and disabled persons' organisations can be a powerful resource to fight such attitudes and contribute to successful transition.

8.2 Conventions and laws surrounding disability

It may also be useful to remember that the equal rights of persons with disabilities are upheld by international and Kenyan law. Kenya is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989. These conventions contain clear standards and obligations in law regarding the rights of children and adults with disabilities, including their equal access to education and employment, which is what transition is all about.

In addition to these international conventions, the Kenya Constitution 2010 also legally safeguards against the discrimination of anyone on the grounds of disability (particularly section 54). The Persons with Disabilities Act 2003 also provides legal protection for people with disabilities.

Summary Point

- ✓ Uphold the rights of young people with disabilities. Kenyan and international law are on your side!

9. Case Studies

9.1 Mbatha Kiio

Mbatha's home is two kilometres from the nearest murram road and is accessed by walking through a steep valley. Upon arrival at her home, visitors will witness Mbatha tending her goats, three of which she was given when she completed her transition from school to home after graduation. Her goats have now increased in number to six, and as agreed when she received the original three animals, she has returned the first born goat back to the school for the benefit of a future school leaver.

Mbatha, who has Down's Syndrome, graduated from Mitaboni Special Unit in Machakos County at the age of 20 years after completing eight years of schooling. During the last two years at school she took vocational classes and was introduced to the skills involved in looking after animals. Her mother says that since she has finished school she is doing well at home. Her daily routine is to wash and dress herself and to wash some clothes and utensils. She also collects firewood, but her favourite activity is looking after her goats. Her mother, Catherine says, 'Mbatha does join in with the family's social activities like going to town and to church, but I do not like Mbatha leaving the home on her own as I fear that people might take advantage of her or abuse her. I also do not want Mbatha to get married'.



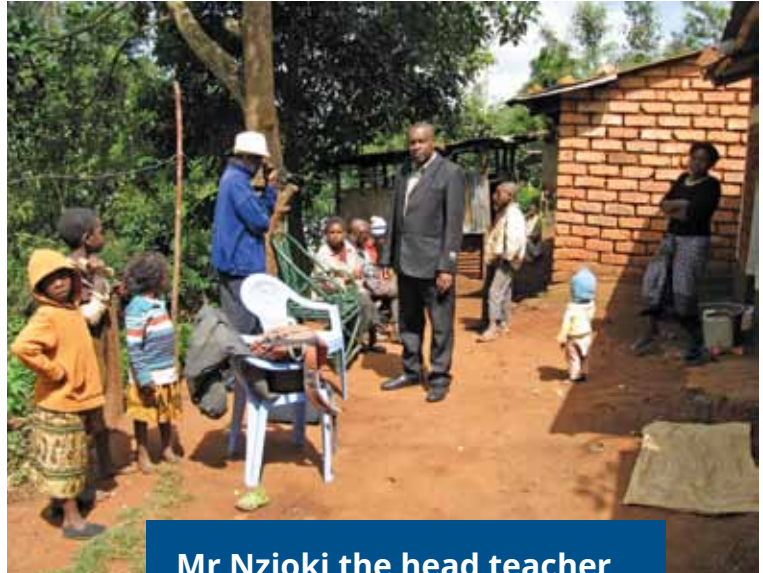
The steep path to Mbatha's home.



Mbatha with her goats at home.

9.2 Nzula Kalungu

Kalungu is a school leaver from Thinu Primary School Special Unit in Machakos County. After completing her time at school, she went back to live at home. She has a profound intellectual disability which means she has never been able to learn skills of daily living and remains unable to wash or dress herself, or complete any domestic tasks. Unfortunately both of her parents also have mild intellectual disabilities and four of her five siblings are also intellectually disabled. The family is extremely poor and relies on the support of well-wishers to survive.



Mr Nzioki the head teacher of Thinu Primary School and Special Unit makes a follow-up visit to Kalunga's home.

Families of this kind pose huge challenges for the school's transition team and other local administrators such as the village elder and the Sub-Chief. The priority is the welfare of the school leaver and the other children, but in a family which is so vulnerable it is sometimes difficult to know how to assist.



Kalunga at home.

In this case Thinu Special Unit's transition team decided to try to improve the assets of the family by providing them with three sheep which were donated by a sponsor. Although Kalungu is not able to manage the sheep herself, her sister has taken responsibility for them, and after a few months two of the sheep had given birth, increasing the number to five.

The Head teacher of Thinu Primary School and Special Unit, Mr Nzioki explained that 'Kalungu was one of the most impaired pupils we had at the Special Unit, but even so she had reached beyond the age when she should be in school. She could not stay under our care indefinitely, so we did our best to place her back in her home setting'.

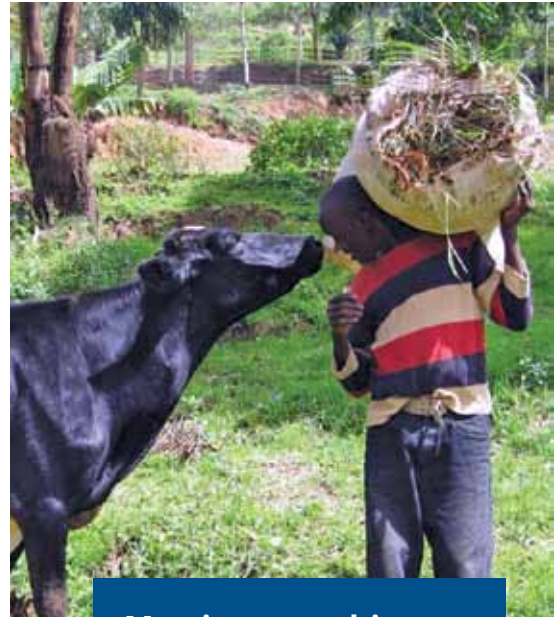
The school collaborated with the village elder who has known the family for many years, and when the sheep were donated, he acted as an official witness to the transaction so as to avoid any future ownership disputes. Although Kalunga remains dependent upon her family and neighbouring well-wishers, at least her transition home has been accompanied by the assets of the sheep. It is hoped the school will continue to visit the family from time to time and help them in whatever way they can.

9.3 Martin Muthembwa

Martin, who has mild intellectual disabilities, had been at the Special Unit at Mitaboni Primary School for several years when teaching staff recognised that, at the age of 18 years, he was ready to start preparing for transition.

Teachers started to discuss this idea with his guardian, his 67 year-old grandmother. After a home visit was made to explore opportunities, the teachers and the family agreed that the rearing of a cow would be a good income generating activity for Martin when he finished school. The school managed to secure a sponsor for this idea, and teachers wrote an Individual Transition Plan for Martin, which included learning how to look after a cow, which he practiced with the school cow as part of his vocational training.

Martin is now looking after his cow every day and he contributes milk to the whole family. Martin says, 'I love my cow, she is my best friend!'



Martin greets his cow with a sack of feeds!



Martin feeding his cow.

Appendix 1.

List of Possible Income Generating Activities (IGAs)

Animal and crop husbandry	Handicrafts	Services	Building and workshop skills
Vegetable growing	Basketry	Selling eggs	Masonry
Fruit growing	Weaving	Maize roasting	Roofing
Crop growing	Knitting	Water selling	Brick making
Tree nursery	Tailoring / garment making	Laundry services	Plastering
Dairy / beef cow	Batik	House keeping	Painting
Goat rearing	Jewellery making	Kitchen assistant	Woodwork / carpentry
Sheep rearing	Pottery	Waiter / waitress	Metalwork / welding
Poultry rearing	Candle making	Hairdresser / barber	
Pig rearing	Wood / stone carving	Shoeshine / repair	
Rabbit rearing		Bicycle / puncture repair	
Fish farming		Car washing	
		Farm assistant	
		Shop assistant	
		Groundsman	
		Gatekeeper / watchman	

Advice when choosing an income generating activity

- o Match the school leaver's skills and interests to the IGA.
- o Build on enterprises and skills already being practised by the school leaver's family or relatives.
- o Ensure there is a ready market for the product or service being planned.
- o Seek advice from those already engaged in the proposed enterprise.
- o In the case of livestock – get advice from a veterinary officer, consider indigenous disease resistant breeds, availability / costs of feeds / pesticides / vaccinations.
- o Write a simple budget for the costs of start-up and initial running costs.

Appendix 2.

Example Check List for Home Visits

Question / Observation	Example of answer
Date of visit	<i>March 5th 2017</i>
Name of School Leaver	<i>Peter Wanyama</i>
Name of principal carer / mentor	<i>Mother Mrs Walwanda – Father deceased</i>
Number of family members / siblings	<i>4 sisters and 1 brother</i> <i>Brother employed locally as a watchman.</i> <i>2 sisters married, 2 sisters in school (grades 5 and 7)</i>
Location of home (notes of how to find home for future visits)	<i>Go through Butula market, turn down small road beside polytechnic and proceed about 1 km. Homestead on left side near small river.</i>
Details of home environment and income activities.	<i>Family of subsistence farmers with 2 acres of land growing mostly maize. Have a few chickens and a few goats.</i> <i>Also grow tomatoes to sell at market and mother weaves traditional baskets to sell.</i> <i>Small mud house. Son has put up his own house on the compound.</i> <i>Water tap is 10mins walk away.</i> <i>Seasonal river nearby.</i>
What is the level of financial security of family (eg. are family members educated / employed, subsistence farmers?)	<i>This is a poor family reliant on a one acre shamba. The mother is supporting the family with a little help from her son.</i>
Are there family members with time available to directly help the school leaver?	<i>The mother (and younger sisters) can supervise Wanyama with his home based programme.</i>
	Continues on page 30...

Family's attitude towards disabled school leaver	<i>The mother used to see Wanyama as a burden, but now she has learnt that he has something to offer the family, helping around the homestead. She is however worried that when he leaves school there will be another person to feed. She is also worried about her neighbours who do not have a positive attitude to having a disabled person nearby.</i>
Does the family seem willing to support the school leaver with a home based programme	<i>Yes – the mother has accepted that it is high time Wanyama started thinking about leaving school.</i>
What ideas does the family have for activities for the school leaver?	<i>Goat keeping –The mother has observed that Wanyama is interested in animals and likes looking after the goats.</i>
Ideas for a home based programme	<i>After discussion with the family the following activities were identified:</i> <i>Rearing Goats.</i> <i>Growing vegetables – digging, planting watering etc.</i> <i>Collecting water for the family.</i> <i>(consider small tree nursery project for the future).</i>
Vocational skills to teach at school	<i>Animal husbandry – goats especially</i> <i>Growing vegetables – digging, planting, weeding watering etc</i> <i>Tree nursery skills</i>
Proposed Assistance	<i>Purchase of 4 female goats</i> <i>Jembi</i> <i>Panga</i> <i>Vegetable seeds</i> <i>Tree saplings and tubes to start nursery</i>
Other Comments	<i>The mother was advised to help Wanyama become as independent as possible. She should remind him about daily routines of bathing and dressing, and allow him to do as much as possible on his own.</i> <i>The neighbours are negative towards Wanyama. Wanyama's mother is concerned about this, and on the next home visit the teacher will offer to talk to the neighbours to try to enlighten them concerning Wanyama's special needs.</i>

Appendix 3.

List of Vocational Skills Syllabuses for Learners who are Mentally Handicapped. Published by Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD)

- o Building and Construction
- o Horticultural Farming
- o Beauty Therapy and Hairdressing
- o Garment Making (Tailoring, Dress making, Crocheting, Knitting, Embroidery)
- o Weaving
- o Carpentry and Carving
- o Leatherwork
- o Modelling and Ornament Making

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<http://www.kicd.ac.ke>

Also see Kenya Institute of Education Syllabuses for Learners with Mental Handicap.

- o Activities of Daily Living Skills
- o Pre-Vocational Skills Handbook

Appendix 4.

Sample Individual Transition Plan

Achievement levels and learning targets		
Subject	Current attainment level (date)	Learning Target (target completion date)
Self-care Bathing Cleaning Teeth Dressing Toileting Eating	<i>Mary needs little assistance with self-care, she sometimes needs reminders to bathe and clean her teeth.</i>	<i>To remember to bathe and clean teeth without reminders, and to learn how to help younger children with their self-care.</i>
Social skills Social / interactional skills Communication Appropriate behaviour	<i>Mary has good social and communication skills. She is friendly to other pupils and shows understanding of others' emotions (empathy).</i>	<i>Mary is sometimes inappropriately over affectionate. For example hugging teachers in class. Her target is to determine appropriate levels of affection in various social settings. This will also safeguard her from potential mistreatment or abuse.</i>
Activities of daily living / Independence skills Cooking Washing utensils Housework Laundry Shopping Phone calls	<i>Mary can complete basic housework such as sweeping and washing utensils. She can do her own laundry. She likes to help to cook but needs close supervision for safety reasons. She can visit the shops but has difficulty remembering what to buy and cannot count money. She cannot dial a phone, but can speak on the phone with assistance.</i>	<i>Mary needs to learn about safety in the kitchen, concerning the danger of heat and possible accidents. She should continue to practice her other skills to increase her independence and self-confidence. Practical numeracy lessons may help her develop further independence skills.</i>
Vocational skills and knowledge	<i>In lower classes Mary has shown an interest in practical lessons especially needlework and knitting. She has a limited concentration span and her skills need development and practice if she is to reach a level for income generation. Mary also enjoys looking after the school sheep and growing vegetables, including planting, watering and weeding.</i>	<i>At this stage Mary should practice all the skills on the pre-vocational curriculum, with a view to specialising when she reaches vocational class. Mary's sister is at polytechnic learning dressmaking so there is potential for Mary to be involved in this enterprise in future. She is also from a rural home where her gardening and animal husbandry skills will also be useful for the future and should be emphasised in her Pre-Vocational Training.</i>
Date of next targets up-date

Note – this sample individual transition plan is not exhaustive. It should be adapted and developed to suit the school or vocational centre in which it is to be used, and integrated with the curriculum and school assessment systems. The assessments of current attainment levels and targets can be made much more detailed and specific where appropriate. The key is to keep the Individual Transition Plans up-to-date and relevant for the student concerned. They should also be shared and agreed with parents / guardians as up-dates are made.

Appendix 5.

Sample Individual Transition Timetable

Year	Class	Planned Milestones	Summary of Progress and Comments
Year 1	Pre-Vocational Class	Meeting at school with mother to introduce principles of transition	Teachers met with Mary's mother at the end of term. Mary is 16 years and we agreed she should start pre-vocational classes next term. The date of the first home visit was set.
		First home visit	The home visit took place. Mary lives with her mother in a rural home 2 hours from the school. There is potential for Mary to rear goats, do vegetable gardening and some needlework after transition. See home visit report for details.
		Start Pre-Vocational Class	Mary joined Pre-Vocational Class and has settled in well.
		Completion of Pre-Vocational Class	Mary has progressed well in Pre-Vocational Class and will advance to Vocational Training Classes next year
Year 2	Vocational Training Class	Start vocational training	Mary began vocational training classes well and learning emphasis was put on skills appropriate to her home environment, namely; animal rearing, gardening and needlework / knitting.
		Home-to-school visit	Mary's mother attended a 'home-to-school visit' and worked with Mary and her teachers. Her mother learnt a lot about how Mary's abilities can be developed to contribute to the family in future and how she can reach her full potential.
		Complete year 1 of vocational training	Mary completed one year of vocational training successfully and will progress to her final year of school.
Year 3	Vocational Training Class	Start final year of school	Mary started her final year of school. The learning will increase in specialisation in gardening, animal rearing and needlework / knitting. (see attainment records).
Continues on page 34...			

Continues from page 33...

Year 3	Vocational Training Class	<p>Second and final home visit</p> <p>Completion of Vocational Training Class</p> <p>Graduation</p>	<p>A final home visit was made and the family were seen to be ready for Mary's transition. See home visit report for details.</p> <p>Mary completed her second year of Vocational Training Class successfully. See final attainment report.</p> <p>Mary's mother and sister attended Mary's successful graduation ceremony.</p>
Post school (year 4)	Home based programme	Phone calls and visits	<p>2 phone calls to Mary's mother and the local pastor confirm that Mary's welfare is being properly taken care of and she is occupied with income generating activities on a daily basis.</p> <p>A home visit will be made when staff are next near to the home.</p>

Appendix 6.

Sample Individual Transition Budget

Description	Cost per unit	Quantity	Total Ksh	Possible source of funds
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School inputs

Home visit 1, travel and lunch	600	2 teachers	1,200	School fund
Home visit 2, travel and lunch	600	2 teachers	1,200	School fund
Sub-total			2,200	

Assets for school leaver

Goats	5,000	3	15,000	Donation from well-wisher
Seeds	1,000	1	1,000	Family contribution
Wheelbarrow	4,000	1	4,000	Family contribution
Watering can	800	1	800	Family contribution
Jembi & other tools	1,500	1	1,500	Family contribution
Sub-total			22,300	

About This Handbook

This handbook offers practical advice and guidance for anybody who is involved in the special education, vocational training and social welfare of students with intellectual disabilities. It is particularly useful for head-teachers, teachers and support staff working in special units or schools for students with intellectual disabilities, especially those developing programmes to assist students with their transition from school into adult life. Parents, guardians, siblings and other family members of students with intellectual disabilities can also use this handbook to assist in planning and undertaking a smooth transition for their children.



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