An assessment of the guidance and counseling programmes In public secondary schools in Mwimbi Division, Meru South District

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Abstract:

Dynamic changes in the society have increased complexity of life Issues. Political, social and religious issues have become so complex that they have not only affected the adults but also their children. The secondary school students, who are also adolescents, are not spared either. Some of the students come from dysfunctional families, and have psychological problems. Some are refugees and others are living in fear of their lives daily. There are also economic challenges where most people in the third world countries live below the international poverty line of one dollar per day. These challenges have affected the students' academic, psychological and social performance. This study therefore sought to assess whether the current Guidance and Counseling Programmes in secondary schools were helping students to cope with their academic, psychological and vocational needs. It also sought to find out the needs of students that had not,been addressed by the current Guidance and Counseling programmes and if there were any problems facing the programmes. The study used descriptive research method to collect data. Structured and unstructured questions were personally administered to Heads of Departments for Guidance and Counseling and secondary school students in Form one to form four. A total of 500 students from 10 randomly sampled schools and 10 heads of Guidance and Counseling Department purposively sampled answered the questionnaires. The major finding of the study was that G and C programmes offered in schools were quite relevant to the students' academic, vocational and social personal needs but quite a number of constraints posed challenges to the effectiveness of the programmes. The constraints included lack of finances for facilitation of G and C activities, lack of offices for G and C, lack of ample time for G and C, student's negative attitude and lack of trained/inserviced personnel. The findings also revealed that while most issues in academics had been attended to, a lot remained to be done in vocational and social personal. The unmet needs especially in social-personal (psychological) were contributing to the students' indiscipline and poor academic performance. The researcher recommended that more time should be allocated for G and C activities in order to cover all the issues affecting the students' life. Schools should also look for ways and means of raising funds for a special vote to cater for the facilitation of G and G activities. G and C teachers should be inserviced in G and C and their teaching load reduced so that they can devote more time to handle students unmet needs. The study also recommended team work amongst all stake holders, that is; Ministry of Education, school administration, parents, teachers, students and other organizations offering Professional G and C services.