

REPORT ON NAMACO WORKSHOP HELD ON 05 AUGUST 2014

Deaf Zimbabwe Trust (DZT) was invited to attend a workshop organised by National Manpower Advisory Council (NAMACO). DZT presented a paper identifying the manpower development and training needs for people with disabilities. This report summarises what transpired during the workshop. The workshop started at 1000 hours, being chaired by Councillor P. Moyo Matamisa. Organisations representing different sectors of disability were invited to make presentations to the NAMACO Committee. Only three organisations managed to present.

Presentations:

Presenter 1: MR NYATHI – ZIMBABWE ALBINO ASSOCIATION

Mr Nyathi of Zimbabwe Albino Association from Bulawayo explained what albinism is and the challenges being faced by people with albinism. He explained that albinism is a common genetic condition. 1 in 4 000 has albinism. They did a survey in 1987 as an Association and results showed that there are 10 000 people living with albinism in Zimbabwe. His emphasis was on tertiary students with albinism and those who are already in the world of work, stating that they are the least skilled. He explained that people with albinism don't need to be confined to special institutions because it is not a disease. By doing so it ends up being stigmatisation. He indicated that people with albinism also need opportunities to work especially indoors. He emphasised on educational needs of Tertiary students, especially extra time when writing exams because they have poor eyesight.

Recommendations:

- ❖ Employers should absorb more people with albinism as they can work any jobs indoors, except under sunny conditions.
- ❖ Students should be taught of their rights when being enrolled in tertiary colleges to avoid incidents like being penalised in exam for exceeding the time.
- ❖ Cancer screening should be made free to people with albinism

Plenary:

QUESTION	RESPONSE
1. Which jobs are fit for people with albinism?	We fit anywhere except in the army where one will be sent to the warfront. But still there are other jobs in the army where one can work from indoors e.g clerical work or lectureship.
2. You have mentioned that there are 10 000 people with albinism in Zimbabwe. Is sunscreen available to everyone in Zimbabwe?	It's not available to everyone as we don't get any assistance from the government. As an organisation we have limited resources for us to cater for each and every person with albinism in Zimbabwe.
3. Do you go for cancer screening regularly?	As an organisation we have limited resources but we have been lobbying to the government to provide these services for free as they are very expensive. Only 2 centres can screen for cancer, i.e Bulawayo and Parirenyatwa Harare.
4. What is the average life span for a	It is 30 years. This is because people with

person with albinism and why?	albinism mostly succumb to cancer especially skin cancer.
5. Are there any researches being done in the area of skin cancer or other cancers affecting people with albinism?	Nothing much is being done. Universities should research more on these skin cancers.
6. Do contact lenses work to improve eyesight?	They do work but it's expensive because they need to be changed every now and then.

Presenter 2: MRS S. MAZULA – ZIMBABWE DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

Mrs Mazula made a presentation on people living with Down Syndrome in Zimbabwe. She explained what Down Syndrome is and explained what happens for one to have Down syndrome. She mentioned that vast majority cases of Down syndrome are not inherited but in the case where one parent is a carrier with 45 chromosomes instead of 46 one can have a child with Down Syndrome. She went on to elaborate that there are high levels of discrimination in schools from both teachers and fellow pupils. In schools, children with Down syndrome face challenges especially when it comes to care. In one case a child died whilst playing with others at a merry-go-round. The other kids continued spinning the wheel without knowing the condition of their colleague. This happened because the teacher was not in attendance to monitor them. Most people do not understand people with Down syndrome and think that they cannot do anything. In fact they can work as well as show different skills in jobs or artwork.

Recommendations:

- ❖ Teachers should be trained how to deal with children with Down Syndrome
- ❖ Teaching assistants should be available for classes with children with Down Syndrome.
- ❖ The education system should be changed so that it accommodates children with disabilities.
- ❖ Resources should be available for people with Down Syndrome to do their own projects.

Plenary:

QUESTION	RESPONSE
1. Are there different types of Down Syndrome?	There are 3 types of down syndrome, which are standard Trisomy 21, Translocation and Mosaicism.
2. Can people with Down syndrome work?	Yes they can work. All you need to do is give them instructions which they can follow easily. I have a daughter with down syndrome who is 29 and is interested in working in supermarkets.

Presenter 3: MS R. MUNDHLULI – DEAF ZIMBABWE TRUST

DZT was last to present on issues affecting the Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in Zimbabwe. The team first did a short skit for the committee to really understand what happens in a life of someone who is deaf. The presenter then took the audience through the work being done by DZT, defining deafness and challenges being faced by both adults and children in their day to day lives i.e. in the world of work and education spheres. She outlined the reasons of why one should work and the

need for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people to be trained so that they fit in the world of work. She emphasized on the need of sign language being taught from an early age like preschool so as to eradicate communication barriers in later stages of life.

Recommendations

- ❖ The development of sign language as a language of instruction at all levels from primary school to higher education institutions
- ❖ Affirmative action for Deaf people to be admitted in colleges
- ❖ Adoption of sign language in colleges to enhance communication for the Deaf in colleges
- ❖ A targeted approach to include the Deaf in higher education
- ❖ Training needs analysis to identify skills gap should be done within the Deaf community
- ❖ Employer organisations should buy into on the job training especially those jobs which do not need specialised training. e.g. cleaning, mail deliveries, data capturing etc.
- ❖ We need to develop new vocations for the Deaf in addition to the usual, carpentry, sewing or welding.
- ❖ Venturing into new vocations such as agriculture, business entrepreneurship and in each case appropriate accommodations must be provided such as visual aids, sign language interpreters. This will enhance workplace productivity especially through better communications.

Plenary:

Its QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
1. Is sign language different in provinces and other countries as a whole?	It is different. Someone from Masvingo can sign differently from someone in Harare. For example in UK they have their own alphabet which is different from Zimbabwe. But when it comes to the Deaf community they can sign and understand each other because they have some common signs which are usually used. But as DZT we are saying lets normalise sign language as a nation so that we speak one language in terms of sign language.
2. Looking at the situation we have at the moment, which age do you think is appropriate to learn sign language?	As DZT, we are saying sign language should be taught from ECD level such that communication becomes easy and life bearable for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people.
3. Can young children especially at kindergarten understand sign language easily?	It is so easy for young children to understand and learn sign language quickly than adults. For example you can see children from different races, who are neighbours playing together easily but without understanding each other's language.
4. Can we teach young children not to name call or discriminate people with Disabilities?	Young children can be taught not to discriminate as they are easily controlled than adults. If you tell a child "Don't do this", you will see that s/he listens. The problem will be at home where culture and discriminatory adult behaviour is

	involved.
5. Can any teacher study a degree in Special Education?	One cannot study such a degree without getting training from teachers college training. It will be difficult for one to understand all the concepts. That is why we are saying let us start from the grassroots, sign language should be taught at teachers college trainings and at preschool as well.

NAMACO CONGRESS 12 – 14 NOVEMBER 2014 CONTRIBUTIONS

Madam Chair later on asked the 3 organisations which had presented to give their contributions on what they want to be discussed at the congress. The following are the contributions made:

1. To have more awareness campaigns which include all sectors of disability with the help of the government
2. People with disabilities should be included in Nation building. We need to work across all the networks as a nation. e.g Social welfare sector where people with disabilities are the main clients.
3. To have an interpreter during the Congress if Deaf and Hard of Hearing people going to attend. If not when broadcasting the interpreter should be present on TV.
4. NAMACO should push for braille and Sign language to be taught from a tender age.
5. NAMACO should help organise a workshop for Parliamentarians as they first come into office so that they help the organisations in information dissemination at National level.

Before the end of the workshop, Madam Chair indicated that there is need for a Disability Committee to be formed which will represent all organisations at the NAMACO Congress. She said she will talk to Mrs Mazula to work on that. She applauded the organisations for their presentations stating that they were really an eye opener.

The workshop ended at 12:45

REPORT BY: ROSEMARY MUNDHLULI