

THE DEAF BULLETIN



Restoring Dignity to the Deaf and Hard of hearing!

COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON

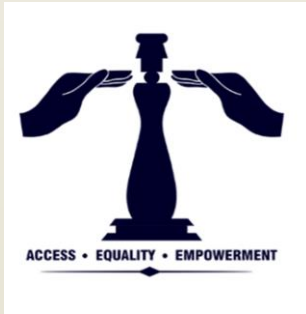
The year 2016 was an eventful one for us at Deaf Zimbabwe Trust and we are looking forward to an even more prosperous 2017 with your continued support. In this issue, we take a look back at some of our most significant highlights from 2016 and our activities in January 2017.

Disability Inclusion in VMMC, Family Planning and HIV testing Campaign

DZT in partnership with Disability HIV/AIDS Trust (DHAT) with support from Progressio, conducted a disability inclusion campaign in male circumcision, HIV testing and family planning. The campaign was held at Harare Gardens attracting over 500 people with disabilities (PWDs). The occasion was graced by UNAIDS who commended such events stating that this will increase SRH awareness among PWDS. Population Services Zimbabwe and Harare City Wilkins Hospital were on sight offering family planning services and HIV testing respectively. 98 women accessed family planning services whilst 110 people were tested for HIV. Population Services International was unable to offer on sight male circumcision services at the event. However DZT made an arrangement to refer Deaf people who want to be circumcised to PSI and to assist with interpretation services.



Disability Rights Law Centre



"A right delayed is a right denied." – Martin Luther King, Jr

Zimbabwe has a progressive constitution which protects and promotes the rights of persons with disabilities. However as long as the enjoyment of these rights is delayed owing to a number of reasons including the popular "lack of resources" "we are looking into it" "it is not yet the right time", a right delayed is a right denied. In 2016 Deaf Zimbabwe Trust received a number of issues from persons with disabilities whose problems needed legal interventions to ensure access, fairness and empowerment. There is a realization that access issues remain a major challenge for people with disabilities and while the constitution provides for these rights, they will not be realized unless action is taken. It was the demand for legal services and advocates that led to the birth of the Disability Rights Law Centre (DRLC). The Centre seeks to ensure access, equality and empowerment for people with disabilities in Zimbabwe. While housed within DZT this Centre provides support to all people with disabilities who need an advocate or legal support in matters related to their human rights. Since the Centre opened in January 2017, the DRLC has served a number of people including:

- Intervening to ensure electricity restoration for a man who uses an electric chair who had a ZESA fault unresolved for 2 weeks and had not been able to get out of the house. As a result of the intervention, electricity was restored.
- Unfair labor practices where Deaf people are employed but are not paid for the services they provide
- DRLC provided support to a young lady who is Deaf who worked as a domestic worker and was raped by the husband of her employer

The Centre will be the voice for persons with disabilities ensuring that the promises in the constitution become a reality for the persons with disabilities in Zimbabwe.

INCLUSION IS AN ATTITUDE

Barbra Nyangairi

During my 2016 Eisenhower fellowship in the USA, I met with President Obama's receptionist who is



Leah Katz-Hernandez: White House receptionist: picture from www.today.com

Deaf. As I spoke to her, I realized that inclusion is an attitude and exclusion is an attitude. I have engaged with numerous people regarding inclusion of the Deaf community in various spheres and the barriers I have encountered were attitudes, "can a deaf person do that?", "how will they teach?", "how will they do that?".... All these questions were not to seek further clarification...mental barriers had already been erected and these are the most difficult to destroy. Negative attitudes have fostered the belief that Deaf people cannot study and be successful hence their exclusion from STEM subjects. Many have been forced to take vocational subjects. Not that vocational are inferior but that they are not given the same opportunity as hearing peers to write their o level and fail and try again until they make it.

This made me realize that bad attitudes were the greatest barrier to the ability of the Deaf to fulfill their potential. I saw Leah and met her at work with her interpreter who provides communication access for hearing people to communicate with her. She is the one that greets all visitors with appointments with the President, manages the President's guest book and other such duties as needed in her office. As I left her, my heart was heavy, burdened by the thought of the Deaf young people in Zimbabwe and the desperate conditions they are in. There could have been excuses to hiring her such as how will she communicate with people who come through...how ... what will people think when they first see a Deaf person before meeting the President, many excuses could have been made.... But inclusion is an attitude that unfortunately most of people in Zimbabwe seem to lack thus we make excuses for not employing people with disabilities. Take a moment and reflect, what is your Attitude to inclusion...what excuses do you make to justify exclusion....Food for thought.

Personal Safety Training for People with disabilities



Disabled Women Support Organization in partnership with Deaf Zimbabwe Trust hosted a 2 day Personal Safety Training for women with disabilities in conflict

situations. The training was motivated by the risks and human rights violations that women with disabilities faced when there was civil unrest in the urban centres due to demonstrations and riots last year. Experiences shared by participants pointed to the vulnerability of people and women with disabilities in such situations. Women with physical disabilities reported that mobility problems were a major challenge as they could not run as fast as others to escape. Deaf women indicated that they could not hear signals of danger and instructions from the police. The objectives of the training were

- To strengthen the capacity of women with disabilities to demand respect and dignity in conflict situation
- To empower women with disabilities to protect themselves in conflict situations
- To provide service providers with the knowledge of the risks faced by women with disabilities and provide appropriate services

The workshop enhanced the abilities of women with disabilities to respond to conflict situations. Participants were equipped with skills to deal with riot control agents and how to deal with the police. Disabled Women Support Organization and Deaf Zimbabwe Trust collaborated on this project through support from Urgent Action Fund for Africa.

Tips for PWDs to deal with the police during riots

- Quickly let them know that you have a disability and what disability it is
- Avoid any sudden movements.
- Do not run from police
- Do not touch, hit, or otherwise assault a police officer.
- Keep your hands visible.
- Remain calm.
- Be respectful
- Avoid being hit by riot control chemicals or weapons