

Self Advocacy Project in Africa

Inclusion international concludes self advocacy workshops in Africa. The project started in January 2008. The last workshop was held in Malawi and was hosted by a national parent organization known as Parent of Disabled Children Association in Malawi.



The self advocate graduates display certificates shortly after the workshop ended. Quincy Mwiya, (standing at the middle back of the participants in the photo) Self advocacy Board member of Inclusion International, assures the participants for more activities coming to Malawi. “But that could only happen if self advocates show keen interest in advocating for their rights” self advocates were told.

Work done in Africa

Inclusion International combined effort with Norwegian parent organization known as NFU. For implementation of this project, Africa Network for Developmental disabilities was used as vehicle to Identify and form self advocacy groups in each respective ANDD member country at National level.

The rationale of the workshops was as follows:

- To know about Self Advocacy,
- To empower Self Advocates with knowledge that shall enable them to speak for themselves on issues that affect their lives
- To gather more information on the needs of Self Advocacy in Africa
- The expectation of this initiative is to contribute to the development of training Material for Self Advocacy (as was discussed in Victoria Fall during the 5th ANDD Conference)
- To orient persons with Intellectual disabilities in self advocacy work and to also train their support persons on how best they could help the Self Advocates achieve their goals
- To support the development of Self Advocacy groups
- To learn about UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

At the moment, Inclusion International with its cooperating partners who are mentioned above have trained self advocates at national level in Inclusion International/ANDD member countries as follows:

Country	Organization hosting (parent org.)	Number of self advocates trained
Uganda	Uganda Association for Mentally Handicapped	10
Namibia	Namibian Association for Children with Disabilities	15
Swaziland	Parent for Children with Disabilities in Swaziland	9
South Africa	Disabled Children's Action Group	15
Kenya	Kenya Association for Intellectually Handicapped	10
Zanzibar	Zanzibar Association for the People with Developmental Disabilities	9
Tanzania	Tanzania Association for Mentally Handicapped	9
Malawi	Parent of Disabled Children Association in Malawi	9

Most of the workshops were conducted from the Month of January 2008 to July 2008, eight successful self advocacy workshops were held in eight different African countries (*as stated above*). An aggregate of 85 persons with intellectual disabilities in the region where oriented. The target according to the project proposal, only 72 self advocates where to be trained. However, due to high demand in certain countries the facilitators allowed one to five more participants depending on the circumstances. However, that was done within financial means available at that particular time.

Main outcome from the workshop

(A) Independent Living

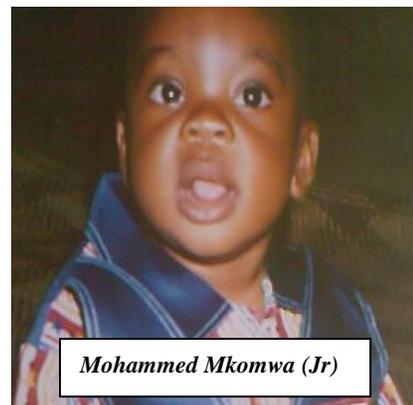
In Tanzania, a self advocate challenges his fellow graduates that “we also have rights to leave Independent; get married and have children like anyone else”

Mr. Mkhomwa Mohammed is 32 years old and a person with an Intellectual disability. He lives in Mbagala Temere District in Dar-es-salaam, Tanzania. He is married to a lady called Mrs. Hadija Mohammed and have handsome baby boy who he has named as Mohammed Mkomwa. Mkomwa stays happily with his family independently.

When Mkomwa gained courage to tell his parents that he wanted to get married, the parents totally refused and told him to forget about marriage. But Mkomwa was so determined that he kept on reminding his parents about his wish. As the result of his determination and persistence, the parents and other elderly family members met to discuss his situation and resolved that Mkomwa

The mother testified on how his son struggle over his right of getting married and living independently in the community. The testimony of Mkomwa motivated most of the self advocates who were in attendance during this workshop. It gave a sense of hope to a number of self advocates because their shattered dream of talking about married was given a bust by the testimony of their fellow friend who is happily married. The above picture is a son to Mr. Mkomwa Mohammed, the self advocate from Mbagala Temere District, Dar-es-salaam.

should also be given an opportunity marry and live independently.



(B) Education

Self advocates in Zanzibar are aware of their rights in as far as inclusive education is concern but the fruits of inclusive education have not been tested by persons with developmental disabilities as yet. They wish all school could be accessible to persons with developmental disabilities.

“We have the right to equal education just like anyone else in the community”

During the self advocacy workshop in Zanzibar, majority of self advocates said that they are unable to be employed even when they become of age simply because of lack of education and disability. The Illiteracy levels among persons with developmental disabilities in Zanzibar are still very high. But what is even more painful is that for those self advocates who have struggled to in education and have obtained required skills to enable them get



employed are also discriminated against.

Jamila Makame Omar a self advocate from Zanzibar wants to become a farmer but is failing due to lack of knowledge in farming. “If even chance I am sure would make it”.

ZAPDD Commitment towards Self Advocacy in Zanzibar

- To network with all other stakeholders in Zanzibar including relevant Government Ministries
- ZAPDD to send a Self Advocacy representatives to the forthcoming ANDD Conference scheduled for October 2008
- To recruit more self advocates and support their activities especially sports which seem to be more popular for them
- Draw a program that will aim at orienting general public on UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities
- To continue sharing information and experiences with ANDD/Inclusion International member countries
- To orient all members of ZAPDD and especially parents on the outcomes of this workshop e.g. on the rights of self advocates
- To tackle other general concerns that were highlighted during the workshop such as participation, choice , respect and independence for self advocates
- To form a working group of youths (self advocates) that will act as a taskforce and should be able to spearhead its activities.
- ZAPDD to have a representative among self advocates in the NEC (Board). Currently ZAPDD policy documents do not have provision for inclusion of self advocates in the Board.

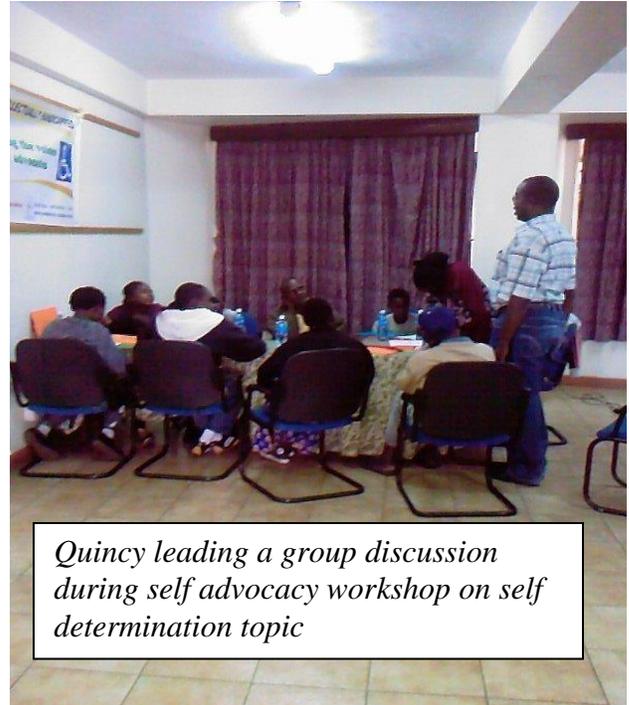
ANDD CONFERENCE October 2008

ANDD holds annual conferences around September and this year it has opted to hold its conference in October 2008. It is scheduled for Windhoek, Namibia. Last year only one self advocate representative was invited to attend. This year, Inclusion International with its cooperating partners have agreed to sponsor at least one self advocate as a representative from each respective countries where it had carried out its self advocacy activities in Africa. The pre-conference will attract at least eleven participants from the region. The rationale behind pre-conference for self advocacy is to accord self advocates to highlight their concerns to ANDD Conference so that as they plan for activities, they should put into act the concerns that will be raised during the pre-conference in October 2008.

During the pre-conference meetings, a self advocacy taskforce will be instituted and it will consist of one representative from each respective member country. The taskforce in Africa is being spearheaded by Quincy Mwiya, a Board member of Inclusion International.

Quincy proposes a network that should help in the dissemination of information in the region on self advocacy activities. He thanked Inclusion International, NFU and ANDD for inviting us to ANDD Conference which is scheduled for October 2008 and made appears to self advocates in all eleven workshops he facilitated in Africa that for those will be nominated to represent other self advocates during ANDD pre-conference they need to adequately prepare

themselves so that the concerns of self advocates in each country are taken note of.



Quincy leading a group discussion during self advocacy workshop on self determination topic

UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities

Throughout the workshops in Africa, the Coordinator of self advocacy workshops James Mung'omba reminded the participants on the importance of knowing more about UN Convention, because it spells out all the rights about persons with disabilities. Beneath, this document lays liberty and freedom for all self advocates, if you fail to sink into the document that far, you may miss you freedom and liberty the Coordinator stressed.

Read more News about self advocacy from Africa in the next Newsletter.