

TOWARDS EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY



**A National Seminar for Women with Disabilities on
Political, Social and Economic Challenges
June 25 - 26, 1998, NAIROBI.**

TOWARDS EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

**Presentations and Recommendations of the National Seminar for
Women with Disabilities on political, social and economic
challenges held on June 25-26, 1998 at YMCA Central, Nairobi**

THEME: CHALLENGES FACING WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

Compiled by :

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*The Seminar was made possible through assistance from Embassy
of Sweden in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Kenya*

PROGRAMME

JUNE 25

8.00 - 8.30 a.m	Registration
8.30 - 9.00 a.m	Welcome and Introductory remarks by Mrs Grace Ogot former Gem Member of Parliament
9.00 - 9.30 a.m	Opening Remarks by the Co-ordinator of St. Jude's Counselling Centre Ms Lena Omondi
9.30 - 10.00 a.m	Opening Ceremony by the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs and National Heritage Mrs. Margaret Githinji
10.00 - 10.30 a.m	TEA BREAK
10.30 -11.00 a.m	PAPER: Architectural and other planning considerations for persons with disabilities by the Chairman, Kenya Architecture Association Mr. Lee Karuri
11.00 - 11.30 p.m	Reaction from participants
11.30-12.00 p.m	PAPER: Women, Disability and Development by Mr Raphael Owako from Ministry of Health Div. of primary health care.
12.00 - 12.30 p.m	Reaction from Participants
1.00 - 2.00 p.m	LUNCH BREAK
2.00 - 2.30 p.m	PAPER: Appraisal of Special Education Needs and Programmes by Mrs J. D. O. Ganira from Ministry of Education
2.30 - 3.00 p.m	Reaction from participants
3.00 - 3.30 p.m	PAPER: Small loan facilities for Women with Disabilities by the Managing Director, Kenya Women Finance Trust, Dr J. Riria

3.30 - 4.00 p.m	Reaction from participants
4.00 - 4.30p.m	Group Discussions
4.30 - 5.00 p.m	Recommendations and Resolutions from the day's discussions

JUNE 26

8.00 - 8.30 a.m	Registration
8.30 - 9.00 a.m	PAPER: Disability in adulthood: personal account by Mrs Esther Owuor
9.00 - 9.30 a.m	Reaction from participants
9.30 - 10.00 a.m	PAPER: Disability Management by the Co-ordinator of St. Jude's Counselling Centre Ms Lena Omondi
10.00 - 10.30 a.m	Reaction from participants
10.30 - 11.00 a.m	TEA BREAK
11.00 - 11.30 a.m	PAPER: Are there equalities of opportunities for Disabled Persons by Justice Aganyanya
11.30 - 12.00 p.m	Reaction from participants
12.00 - 12.30 p.m	Group Discussions
12.30 - 1.00 p.m	Group's Report
1.00 - 2.00 p.m	LUNCH BREAK
2.00 -2.30 p.m	PAPER: Is the Media helpful in crusading for the case of Women with Disabilities by Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) manager Mrs Eulalia Namai
2.30 - 3.00 p.m	Reaction from participants
3.00 - 3.30 p.m.	Recommendations and Resolutions from the days discussions chaired by Mrs Grace Ogot

3.30 - 4.00 p.m

Closing Ceremony by Zambian High
Commissioner Ms W. W. Sinkala

DEPARTURE

FORWARD



*Lena Omondi
Co-ordinator*

The issues relating to disabilities have been down played ... and with grave consequences. Yet there are persons with disabilities in all parts of the world and at all levels in every society. As it is the number is large and growing.

The causes of disability vary throughout the world. But of serious concern is when they are caused by neglect and carelessness. Further, the consequences of disability vary from one circumstance to the other.

In recent past, the severity of the situation has been brought to the fore mainly by the concerned section of persons with disabilities and other members of the society who are sensitive to their plight. This has culminated in the present disability policy.

Following a series of Civic Education seminars for persons with disabilities organized by St.Jude's Counselling Centre prior to 1997 General Election, it emerged that the crusade to satiate the needs of persons with disabilities was far from target.

During these seminars (and including the National Seminar whose deliberations form the basis for this booklet), it was agreed that political leaders were not adequately sensitive on matters regarding persons with disabilities. Instead, the leaders were preoccupied with scoring political mileage and making dubious promises about future prosperity. As it is, initiatives, political organizations and social undertakings.

Empowering persons with disabilities through political literacy and Civic Education is a significant premise towards understanding the country's political and persons with disabilities need information regarding their environment.

It is not sympathy that they seek but, rather, equality of opportunities in all national endeavours. They seek to participate actively in economic education system.

It further assists them to articulate their interests as a special component of civil society and guarantee the effective participation in the political process.

Women with disabilities suffer double handicap. They have to grapple with gender biases as well as the consequences of disability.

Their experiences form the epitome of human insensitivity and cruelty. In many instances, women with disabilities are considered to be unhelpful both to the religious and lay communities.

In the church, for example, they are denied membership of the parish council. Many men have abandoned their wives because they are handicapped. Further, women with disabilities are often relegated to lesser roles during significant festive occasions such as weddings. The marginalisation is unending.

It is against this background that women with disabilities are seeking to be heard. Their individual predicament may vary because of different socio-economic circumstances. But their destiny is the same. However as members of the human race, they must be heard. Thank you.



Lena Omondi,
Co-ordinator

ST. JUDE'S COUNSELLING CENTRE

St. Jude's Counselling Centre is a charitable Organization registered under the Societies Act of the Laws of Kenya. St. Jude, from whom the name is drawn, was a Saint of the disadvantaged members of the society, hence the charity work the organization has chosen to pursue.

The people behind the programme have been involved in several projects dealing with Disabled Persons in Kenya. For example, the Coordinator of the programme, Ms. Lena Omondi, was instrumental in popularizing Jaipur Foot Project as its Director.

St. Jude's Counselling Centre is currently involved in three major programmes that respond to particular needs and problems of women and children. These include Rehabilitation of Ex-Women prisoners, AIDS Orphans and Civic Education for the Disabled Persons. Its projects on the Rehabilitation of Ex-Women prisoners have benefited from the kind assistance of the Vraag Aanmond International, Tilbug.

St. Jude's Counselling centre was the only Organization that organized seminars for Civic Education for the Disabled Persons in the period prior to the 1997 General Election.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SEMINAR

The seminar sought to create a forum through which community leaders and women with disabilities would identify and understand the challenges facing the latter in the society.

- Presenting an opportunity to involve the representatives of women with disabilities in policy formulation and decision-making in matters regarding them.
- Re-evaluating the place of the place of women with disabilities in the country and their contributions to society.
- Examining the legal, social, economic and political challenges facing women with disabilities and discuss how existing biases can be overcome.

- Addressing the existing inequalities especially as they relate to disbursement of the funds by the government and religious organizations.
- Considering how to involve and highlight the predicament of women with disabilities during significant festivities such as Women's Day (every March 8). Tracing the root of gender-based abuses and complexes; and evaluate how they negate the prosperity of women with disabilities.

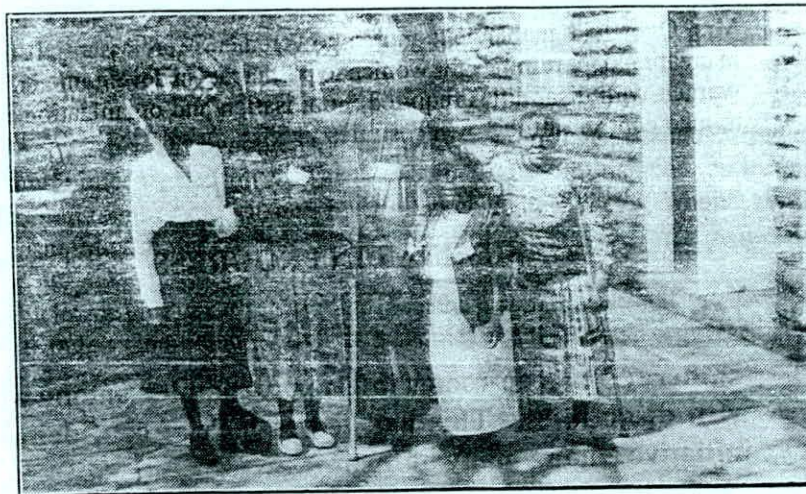
SEMINAR IN PROGRESS



ATTENTIVE: Some of the participants who attended the seminar pay attention during one of the presentations. Over 150 women with disabilities from all over Kenya attended the two-day seminar.

SUMMARY OF REMARKS

By Former Assistant Minister Mrs Grace Ogot



SOLIDARITY: Former Assistant Minister Mrs. Ogot is joined during a photographic break by some of the participants at the venue of the seminar.

Mrs Ogot, former Assistant Minister for Culture and Social Services and former Member of Parliament for Gem, presided over the proceedings of the opening day of the Seminar.

Mrs. Ogot noted that women with disabilities suffered double discrimination - all based on disability and gender thus making them more disadvantaged than other women or men with disabilities.

She also pointed out that women with disabilities were not accorded equal opportunities in education, training, health, employment. As a result, she added, they thus represented the poorest of the poor.

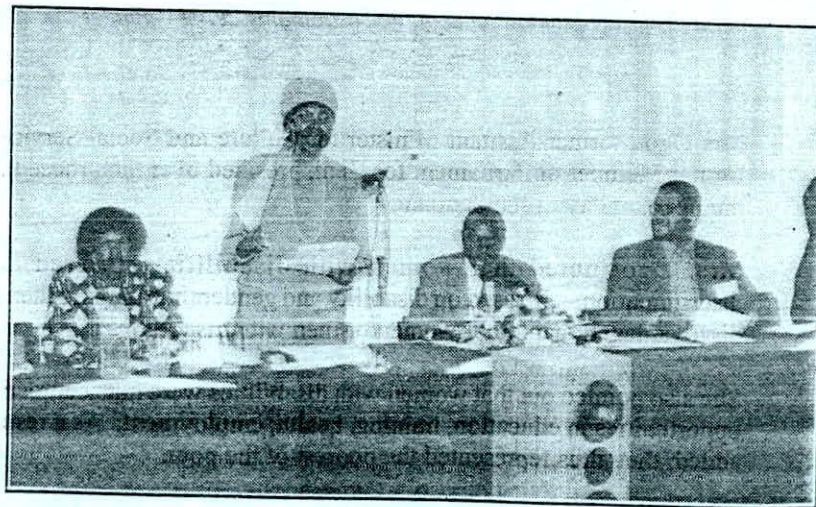
Mrs. Ogot said there was a deep-rooted inferiority complex among women with disabilities. This had led to lack of confidence and initiative among many of them.

Was there any hope for women with disabilities? Yes, Mrs. Ogot said. They needed to be empowered to overwhelm all forms of oppression. A lot of work on sensitisation and organization of crusading groups needed to be done to develop their capacity for action.

Mrs. Ogot said enablement and empowerment were essential strategies in creating opportunities for women to participate in development. Indeed, women with disabilities required mobilisation and organization in order to take control of their own destinies.

SEMINAR IN PROGRESS

“...there (is) a deep-rooted inferiority complex among women with disabilities. This had led to lack of confidence and initiative among many of them.”



DOWN TO BUSINESS: Mrs. Ogot gives her opening address. Also in attendance are (from left) Ms. Omondi, Mr. Francis Ogesagwa - Senior Technical Training Officer and Mr. Karuri.

OPENING REMARKS

By the Co-ordinator of St. Jude's Counselling Centre Ms Lena Omondi

The Guest of Honour, distinguished guests and all participants, it is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to this National Seminar for Women with Disabilities.

We are especially honoured by your immediate response despite the rather short notice we had given. This is enough demonstration of our collective commitment to discuss and review the challenges facing Women with Disabilities in our country.

But let me give you a brief outline of the host organization and its activities. St. Jude's Counselling Centre is a charitable organization registered here in Kenya. St. Jude, from whom the name is drawn, was a Saint of the disadvantaged members of the society hence the charity work the organization has chosen to pursue.

So far the Centre has undertaken three major programmes that respond to the particular needs and problems of women and children.

These include the Rehabilitation of ex-women prisoners, AIDS orphans and Civic Education for Persons with Disabilities. The Rehabilitation of ex-women prisoners project was kindly assisted by the Dutch organization, Vraag Aanmond International Tilbug.

I am delighted to announce that St. Jude's was the only organization that set up seminars for Civic Education for Persons with Disabilities in the period prior to 1997 General Election.

The seminar, therefore, is part of our continuing series on women issues. And it has been made possible by the kind assistance of the Embassy of Sweden in collaboration with the Ministry of Health.

The theme of the seminar gives us a wide choice of issues to discuss. We shall review the political, social and economic challenges facing Women with Disabilities.

And the objectives of the seminar are:

- with disabilities would identify and understand the problems the latter face in the society. This would sensitize leaders on the plight of women with disabilities
- To involve representatives of women with disabilities in policy formation and decision-making in matters concerning them
- To re-evaluate the place of women with disabilities in the country and their contributions to the society
- To examine the legal, social, economic and political challenges facing women with disabilities and discuss how existing biases can be overcome
- To address the existing inequalities specially as they relate to disbursement of funds by the government and religious organizations
- To consider how to involve and highlight the predicament of women with disabilities during celebrations such as Women's Day (March 8th)
- To trace the root of gender-based abuses and complexes; and evaluate how they hamper the prosperity of women with disabilities.

In the end we hope to evaluate what we have discussed and draw up a plan of action. It is our hope that the discussions will be cordial, frank, progressive and helpful to the cause of Women with Disabilities.

Once again, let me thank you all for coming over to join us in these discussions. Thank You.

OFFICIAL OPENING

By the Commissioner for Social Services Ms F. R. B. Oeri

Distinguished guests, seminar participants, ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to be invited to preside over this function. It is a pleasure to be with persons whom the Government concerns is within my portfolio. Issues regarding people with disability and women in general are main concerns of the department of social services. Of course, these issues cannot be addressed by any single agency hence the involvement of other government departments agencies, NGOs and Charitable organization like the Jude Counseling Centre which has organized this seminar.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to let you know the role of the department of social services, as regards issues on women in general. The Kenya Government in 1976 established the womens bureau, an institution that would integrate women issues into ational Development ... The women bureau major responsibility include formulating, implementing and evaluating women policies, Co-ordinating all Government initiatives and programs for women, collecting and analyzing data required for the design, monitoring and evaluation of projects for women, providing financial, training and technical support in liaison with Non-governmental organizations and women organizations (e.g. MYWO).

The other important role of the bureau is to encourage women to form groups. The structure provide viable channel for outreach by Government and other development agencies while at the same time providing a mutually, superlative environment for women's education and awareness creation.

On disability issues, the department of social services division of vocational rehabilitation, is charged with the responsibility of identifying, training, and resettling women and men with disabilities between the ages of 16-45 years; in both wage and self employment so that they may be economically independent and be able to contribute to the development of the country. The V.R. division also liaise with all Organization for and of people with disability in their attempt to address disability issues.

Back to the women issues - I know some of you could be wondering how the above outlined government initiatives concern you. It is an acknowledged fact as women with disabilities, you have double disadvantage, first as a woman and second as one with a disability.

The problems affecting all women in general are outlined in the platform for action which has drawn from the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

The Beijing platform for action recognizes that women face barriers to full equality and advancement because of factors as their race age, language ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability.

In Kenya, issues on poverty, health, economy education, training the girl child environment and women in power and decision making are critical. If we looked at a few issues that affect women as compared to men, we see how they affect the disabled persons and particularly a disabled woman.

Education

Women are more disadvantaged because of the rate of dropout is more in women due to pregnancy, parents preference of educating boys than girls to educate a girl with disability is even more difficult. Hence the nationality literacy among women with disability is high.

Education is not only a means to employment and income, it is also an essential factor in changing attitudes and enabling members to adopt workable strategies to improve their life style and reduce their burden on others

Water

Women have traditionally been responsible for collecting water for families. Women with disability are not exempted from this role, they have to fetch water or depend on others depending on the nature of their disability.

Agriculture

Women with disability are expected to work in the farm like any other to feed family. Despite their contribution to Agricultural production they still have limited access to control over productive resource e.g. land.

Many examples can be given in areas of employment, environment, self-employment (especially hawking) and in all these women are more affected than men.

My challenge to the youth is that you should join hands with the rest of the Kenyan women in identifying the many obstacles to our effective participation in social economic political affairs of this country.

It is also my wish that you join women's organizations, feminist groups and other non-government organizations to advocate for and support the implementation of platform for action.

And remember according to 1989 National census the women population is 50.4% as compared to 49.6% for men. This is a great force in our country's development.

On the same note according to world health organization estimate, 10% of any population is made of persons with disability. By the token of 50.4% of women, the population of women with disability are more than those of men with disability.

With these remarks, it is now my very humble pleasure to declare this seminar officially opened.

AS WE WERE...



***DELIGHTED:** The intense two-day programme was nonetheless exciting as it shows on the faces of these participants. The sessions were later open to contributions from the floor.*

ARCHITECTURAL AND OTHER PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

*By the Chairman of the Architectural Association of Kenya
Mr. Lee Gituto Karuri*

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to briefly introduce the Association that I represent this morning. The Architectural Association of Kenya is a professional body founded in 1967 that is constituted by building consultants who include architects, engineers, quantity surveyors, landscape architects and physical planners drawn from throughout Kenya. As an association, over and above addressing the needs of our various professions, we are key partners amongst all those organizations and people who take interest in the nature of comfort and standards provided to the end user be it offices, residential or other facilities within the indoor and outdoor environment.

It is in this light that I find that the theme on challenges facing women with disabilities in Kenya is definitely an appropriate one for me to discuss. Over the years, building consultants have often preoccupied themselves in delivering buildings which only meet what we could term as standard requirements for an able user. But today we know that several of our brothers, sisters and children suffer from either temporary or permanent physical disabilities through disease, accidents, birth or many other reasons. It has therefore become necessary that design provisions must be made in building to facilitate comfortable living for disabled persons. I know that I should confine my topic to women with disabilities but allow me to talk on disabled persons.

The following are some of the key areas that I have identified that are really lacking in terms of our overall design towards comfortable buildings and environment in both urban and rural areas in Kenya in view of needs of disabled persons.

Roads

- Very few roads have proper pedestrian way leaves where someone may either use a wheelchair freely or walk on crutches without danger.
- Very poor maintenance of our roads and their adjacent shoulder areas provide no free and easy movement due to potholes e.t.c.
- Proper ramps to facilitate road crossings particularly on wheelchair are either too few and infact along many roads non-existent.

- Protective guardrails do not exist along key pedestrian routes which would protect some one in case of crowding.

Commercial Centres

- Several of our shopping centres or malls, supermarkets and large shops only provide ordinary staircases for movement between various shopping floors with no ramps or lifts for disabled persons.
- In almost all instances, toilet facilities are fitted with the standard toilets whose seats are too high and no space even to turn a wheel chair.
- The fire escape doors are sometimes too far and usually do not exist. Therefore in case of a fire, only persons able would run to safety.
- Proper signage for directions towards several facilities are not in place forcing disabled persons to waste useful time locating their destinations and even not getting the way around.
- The location of primary facilities such as supermarkets, grocery shops and hair saloons on upper floors in shopping buildings obviously make it difficult to access leading to loss the benefit to enjoy the provisions of those outlets.

Residential Houses and Apartment Blocks

- In very many instances, several of our residential houses in urban areas are maisonettes occupying ground and first floors with normally a not generous staircase linking them. This makes living very difficult within the houses. Unfortunately, nowadays, you find that bungalow houses are getting fewer each day due to cost of land while they provide best comfort for a disabled dweller.
- The apartment blocks that have been developed over the last fifteen years rise up higher than ever before sometimes upto five floors without lifts particularly in lower income residential areas such as Dandora, Mathare North, Kayole and Umoja in Nairobi. Even estates like Nyayo High Rise fall into the same category in terms of difficulty of usage by disabled persons who cannot scale those height without lifts or ramps.
- In all the above building all toilets and other utilities do not accommodate disabled persons.

Institutions

- The majority of our public and private institutions throughout Kenya including universities, polytechnics, colleges and schools have not been designed to cater for the interest and comfort of disabled students making learning much more difficult. Only hospitals for obvious reasons have been properly designed to make life much easier.

As building consultants, we largely take the blame for several omissions in sensitivity during the design of buildings leading to the situation that I have just described. However, I would like to report that our association and most of our consulting professional firms in building services have over the last few years started gaining sensitivity and provided buildings which are friendly to the needs of disabled users. This includes new office buildings in urban centres and institutions.

However, as all of us will realize, the problem facing disabled persons in Kenya as far as the built environment is concerned are two fold.

- One is what steps should be taken to improve and rectify the shortcomings of all existing buildings.
- This is a very important one and I challenge our association and all local municipalities to lobby and enact a building by-law that requires all existing public buildings to be amended to meet specified minimum standards for the safety and comfortable use by disabled persons. Since such changes to a building could be achieved at minimum cost, our Association and others to whom the matters we are discussing today fall, should jointly take up a public awareness campaign to enforce implementation.
- The second matter involves what should be to provide minimum standards in new buildings.
- As you may not be aware, most of our well informed clients and developers today insist that consideration for disabled persons is a fundamental requirement during the development of the terms of reference or brief upon which the design shall be based for their buildings. As an association, we have been sensitizing prospective clients but from now on, we shall make it our business to be part and parcel of your public awareness forums to influence the majority who are least informed. At the same time we shall lobby with the local authorities to enforce in their building bylaws provisions requiring that all new buildings must meet certain minimum standards as I have just mentioned.

Let us look at the way forward

Having stated the problems facing us in a developing society and bearing in mind the shortcomings the each of one of your experiences in our environment day to day, I would like to look at this as a practical challenge and as a starting point towards realistic solutions to be pursued by all of us together.

In my view, there would be no point of reporting to my colleagues and our council that I was able to share an important forum with you but rather take up a summary of your seminar once it is through in which we shall clearly earmark our areas of responsibility towards the development of an action plan in which we have collective responsibility to deliver.

We shall report to you and others that you are associating with our progress. I would like to encourage each one of you and to remind you that so many of the disabled persons in the world today lead normal lives going through the rigor of day to day living supporting their families. And for women, it is even more challenging because you still remain the centre of family life which involves addressing several pressing matters over and above your normal work life.

On behalf of the Architectural Association of Kenya and myself, I assure you that we shall do everything possible to make your day life in buildings and outside even more comfortable through making your interests our business.

NOTE:

We are seeking outlets for the sale of handcraft made by persons with disabilities from all over Kenya. Interested buyers should contact:

ST. JUDE'S COUNSELLING CENTRE
P.O. Box 51367, NAIROBI
Tel: 254 2 442064
Fax: 254 2 442064

WOMEN, DISABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

By the National CBR Co-ordinator (Ministry of Health, Division of Primary Health Care) Mr R.O. Owako

In 1978 the WHO and UNICEF convened a meeting which was to see the emergence of PHC. This meeting was convened by the WHO governing council because of the deteriorating health conditions particularly in the Developing Countries which could be traced back to increase rates of **disease, malnutrition, child mortality and associated disabilities/impairments**. *Lack of good health is not seen as disease and infirmity but also to other causative factors like malnutrition, poverty, lack of shelter, lack of clean water and sanitation.* Indeed these are some of the indicators of deteriorating health situations in developing countries (Macdonald 1994).

So with the prevailing Health problems at hand, the Alma-Ata conference endorsed the **Primary Health Care (PHC)** strategy. *This strategy was tailored to address health not from a perspective that is predominantly disease and curative orientated but to emphasize :-*

1. **Prevention**
11. **Promotion**
111. **Removal of health risks**

The PHC strategy thus should involve planning of health services with the involvement of the community, the Government and the other sectors in development programs. This is because to achieve health goals a multisectoral approach is required (WHO 1978, WHO 1986, Macdonalds 1994) This is the only way there can be a co-ordinated way of organized socio economic development in a country.

That is why the Alma Ata targeted four main areas for meeting health requirements which were sighted as :-

- (1) **Preventive**
- (2) **Promotive**
- (3) **Curative**
- (4) **Rehabilitative**

The PHC strategy was also intended to empower the community for them to realize their own potentials. This would have realized positive promotion towards good health (WHO 1978, Taylor 1992). However due to what

has been observed in different Countries, it can be concluded that the perception of PHC has been **diverse and varied** (Macdonald 1994). That's why in certain cases it could be seen by the way the concept had been misinterpreted by the WHO member states. We can however say that PHC may not have a Universal solution to all Health problems but it did reveal some of the unexpected difficulties lying ahead (Macdonald 1994).

One of which was issues relating to persons with disabilities, *preventive and promotive care, equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities and their involvement in deciding issues which effect them as priorities towards development.* The other areas were the generally lack or inaccessible rehabilitation services to PWDs.

There seems to be four main obstacles that impede efforts to improve the situation of the PWDs in developing countries. These are :-

- (a) **Poverty**
- (b) **Ignorance**
- (c) **Misconceptions**
- (d) **Faulty priorities**

"The combination of poverty and disability has tremendous capacity to destroy the lives of persons with disability and to impose on their families burdens that are crushing to bear and accelerates the families into socio-economic deprivation". Studies (e.g. UNICEF did 10 country study) people living below poverty line, rising unemployment, (increased labour demand for more food production and income especially women - looking for water, fire wood and less time to care for the young) rising malnutrition rates and dropping school enrollment.

When structural adjustments are imposed and social subsidies cut, the weight of poverty mostly lands on women and children who also comprise the highest number of PWDs.

For one to achieve any meaningful rehabilitation for persons with disability the following areas should be targeted for equal participation :-

- **Accessibility**
- **Education**
- **Employment**
- **Income maintenance and social security**
- **Family life and integrity**
- **Culture**

APPRAISAL OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AND NEEDS

By Senior Education Officer Mr. Eliud W. Baraza

Introduction

Special Education, or Education for the handicapped was introduced in Kenya after World War II by voluntary organizations, Churches, Non-governmental organizations and individuals. Between 1945 and 1961, Kenya had one school for the visually handicapped (at Thika) one for mentally handicapped (Jacaranda), two for the hearing impaired (deaf); and one for the physically handicapped (Joy Town - Thika).

The Kenya Government got fully involved in the education for the handicapped after independence. In 1977's two sections were set up in the Ministry of Education, namely:- The Directorate/Administration and The Inspectorate.

In 1980, President Daniel Arap Moi declared it a National Year for the Disable. This helped stir up public conscience and awareness towards people with disabilities. At the moment there is a government policy and legislation on Special Education with definite aims and objectives that have been brought up through commissions set up by the Government. One such document that devoted a whole chapter on Special Education is Sessional Paper number 6 of 1988. It outlines the broad objectives of Special Education.

These are;

- To provide skills and attitudes aimed at habilitation, rehabilitation and adjustment to environment.
- To identify, assess and provide intervention for correction and rehabilitation.
- To promote awareness on the needs of the people with disability and methods of alleviating the effects of the various disabilities.
- To promote integration of the handicapped in formal education and training.
- To promote measures to prevent impairment in order to limit the incidences of disabilities.

Programmes have been developed in the following four areas of the handicapped. These are :

- the mentally handicapped
- the physically handicapped
- the Hearing impaired (HI), deaf
- the visually handicapped (VH), blind.

Programmes at Primary school level :

Handicap	No. Of programmes	Total
Mentally handicapped	262	4,727
Hearing impaired	43	2,775
Visually handicapped	38	2,994
Physically handicapped	16	2,356
Deaf/blind - multiple	1	30
Total	360	12,882

Secondary schools :

Handicap	No. Of programmes	Total
Visually handicapped	1	169
Physically handicapped	4	415
Hearing impaired	3	122
Total	8	709

(figures: from official files)

Integrated programmes :

Integrated programmes are now many but at primary school level there are more than twenty programmes with over 1030 children. They are sponsored by Sight Savers International.

At Secondary school, there are five programmes for the Visually Handicapped, six programmes for the Hearing impaired, unknown number for the physically handicapped.

Vocational/Technical

Handicap	No. Of Programs	Total
Visually impaired	1	67
Hearing impaired	1	432
Deaf/blind		-
		-
TOTAL	5	497

*(Figures extracted from official files)
(The physically handicapped - not accounted for)*

Enrolment :

The capacity of the existing Special Education Schools and Institutions is 10,300 and approximately 11,700 children have been integrated in the mainstream. In total the number of handicapped children receiving services is about 22,000.

Educational Assessment and Resource Services (EARS)

Educational Assessment and Resource Services (EARS) centres were established in 1984 by the assistance of DANIDA.

To date there are 52 District-based Centres country wide complimented by 345 sub-centres. The impact of these centres is great in that Assessment Services have been taken closer to the people. To date 80,000 children have been identified, and the existing facilities can only accommodate 22,000. Integration into the mainstream is therefor inevitable.

Community based programmes :

There are community based programs in the high density areas of Nairobi, i.e. Mathare valley and Kibera. The local people, once they realize the need to cater for the handicapped children in their locality, identify premises in social halls, churches e.t.c. The Ministry of Education gives the personnel to direct the programmes.

The role of the Government in special (education) schools / institutions

The Ministry of Education provides funding and development grants to special schools/institutions/programmes. The Ministry gives recurrent grants to 37 Special Boarding Schools. These funds are used for the following:-

- Personal emoluments for B.O.G. employees
- Boarding equipment and stores
- School equipment and stores
- Local transport and traveling
- Electricity, water and conservancy
- Vehicles insurance and contingencies.

A few schools also receive development grants which are meant for the construction of classrooms, dormitories, dinning halls, kitchens, teachers houses e.t.c others are:

- Provision of teachers for Special Schools and institutions including integrated programs for the visually handicapped.
- Training and Inservicing of Special Education teachers.
- Provision of technical and professional advise on matters pertaining to management and administration of schools, curriculum development and implementation, examinations assessment and integration.
- Production of cost effective teaching/ Training materials and equipment at the Provincial workshops.
- The Ministry also co-ordinates the activities of Donors / Sponsors in Special Schools/ Institutions.
- The Ministry links up well with the Ministry of Culture and Social Services.

Although it is the wish of the Government to fully finance all aspects of Special Education, lack of adequate funding has been a major problem. The Government, therefore, encourages participation of both local and international NGOs and donors in the education of the handicapped children.

The following non-governmental (NGOs) and religious organizations have been and continue to offer support in the development of special education.

- Salvation Army
- Catholic Church
- Church of the province of Kenya (The Anglican Church)
- The Aga Khan Foundation
- Kenya Society for the Deaf Children
- Kenya Society for the Blind
- Christopher Blinder Mission of Germany (CBM)
- DANIDA
- Sight Savers International of Britain (SSI)
- Swedish Organization of the Handicapped International Aid (SHIA)
- PCEA
- Methodist Church
- Lutheran Church
- Charitable Organizations such as, Lions club, Round tables and Rotary Club.

Special Education needs

There is need for change in the *cultural attitudes* towards the handicapped. Our society has a negative cultural attitude towards children who are born with disabilities. Parents and teachers need to be educated to get to know that "disability is not inability".

An *awareness campaign* is needed for the general public, school administrators, and parents on the needs and places to take their handicapped children.

Although 80,000 children have been identified the majority have not been placed. We also know for sure that very many have not been identified or assessed because they cannot be reached. It is important to note here that there has been no gender discrimination when it comes to placement of identified children into schools. A random sample has shown this.

There are inadequate learning facilities such as class rooms, dormitories, toilet and workshops. All learning facilities for people with disability are very expensive to develop. The disabled children require very specialized resources/ equipment for mobility, hearing and sight, braille e.t.c. They are all very expensive.

The Government has tried to provide these through Kenya Institute for the Blind, and development grants. Fortunately the Government has partners - Religious organizations, NGOs and voluntary organization that have always helped. But for how long?

Four areas of the handicapped are taken care of: physically, mentally and visually handicapped, and the hearing impaired. In all the four areas, the national 8-4-4 Curriculum is strictly adhered to except for minor variations and adoptions to suit the handicap. It is required that a curriculum be developed specifically in the area of practical subjects e.g. Home science, Music, Agriculture e.t.c

Donors agencies - need to be co-ordinated. It has not been easy to know the amount of money spent by the donors on some of the programmes due to lack of information. Personnel at all levels of special education are not adequately trained in the various areas of disability.

There are no programmes nor accurate data on some children with special needs e.g.

- gifted and talented
- emotionally disturbed
- socially maladjusted
- learning disabled
- the cerebral palsy.

Future plans

The Ministry of Education intends to expand the integration programmes throughout the country. KISE will be expanded in order to increase the output of specially trained teachers and possibly up-grade it to a University campus.

Already Kenyatta University has started courses in Special Education. To increase workshops attached to EARS Centres to produce and repair equipment, and prepare teaching/learning materials required by handicapped children.

DISABILITY IN ADULTHOOD

*A personal Account by Mrs. Esther Owuor, Chairperson
Kenya Spinal Injury Association*

Disability is a challenge in life which can strike at any time without notice. It renders many people helpless. Some victims finally lose hope in life making it difficult for them to cope with its challenges. Many people involved with disability should therefore be made aware of different aspects and challenges of disability.

Causes of Disability

The causes of disability range from accidents to natural aspects. Accidents usually are a major cause of disability. It usually leads to amputees, paraplegis or any other related results. On the other hand, disability can be inherited thus becoming natural. Examples are epilepsy, blindness, etc.

Coping with Disability

As a challenge in life, the victims of disability should learn how to cope up with the situation owing to its irreversible nature in one's life. The disabled people should avoid too much dependence on their family members and should learn to be on their own by allowing freedom to prevail upon their families who might see them as a burden.

The disabled people should venture into small business activities to generate income for their self sufficiency. The relevant authorities including:-

- banks,
- parastatals,
- NGOs
- donor agencies

and the like should extend appropriate training and soft loan to the disabled to enable them to participate effectively in the development of the economy to improve the standards of their living.

The disabled should also be able to understand their conditions in relation to the society which might have negative feelings towards them and should develop optimism and hope in life.

Challenges

Public service vehicles are often designed to cater for the general public without taking into account special needs of the disabled persons. I would therefore recommend the designing of public service vehicles to cater for the special needs of the disabled, for instance, the widening of aisles and doorways to accommodate wheelchairs, and the inclusion of horizontal rails to give support while entering the vehicle.

A metal rump should also be included for wheelchairs users. This will reduce the need and cost of constantly travelling with an attendant to assist when necessary. The victims should therefore be aware of this and relevant authorities should taken appropriate action to assist in relation to the plight of the disabled.

Family and Friends

This is a great challenge which has resulted to so many victims feeling abandoned. Normally, people tend to shy away from the victims and view them as a burden in life. The disabled are viewed as people who cannot fend themselves and only depend on people for survival. This negative feeling among members of the family usually destabilises the victims, who at the end regard themselves as failures.

Wife Inheritance

Wife inheritance is a prominent challenge which has faced so many disabled women. It has resulted to so many being exploited financially only at the end being abandoned at the mercy of the harsh world. The victims should be aware of this and should not be victims of this mischevious act. They should avoid some of the outdated beliefs in our societies.

The Law and the Disabled

Often the absence of support from the law hinders independent living in the disabled. In cases where disability occurred as a result of accident, compensations at times does not depend on the levels of disability attained but on how good the lawyer is.

If compensation is not given due to perhaps the nature of the accident for instance such as a fall. The law ought to make provisions that enable the individuals to live independently to make them changing with economic state of the world.

Medical Expenses

Medication is a common expense accompanying disability. The expense which are incur are often enormous. It is difficult to cope with more medical expenses than usual especially when life has been changed in terms of mobility.

This is a challenge which can be partially overcome by encouraging employers to consider the disabled for employment to enable them earn a living and to cater for their health and insurance policies that cover most of the common illness that come disability.

Economic independence

Economic independence is something that every individual hopes to attain, more so the disabled. Relying always on one's relatives or friends leaves one feeling a burden. Employers should be encouraged to employ the disabled in the areas in which they are skilled.

For instance, before my accident I was a teacher and still continued to teach despite facing many challenges after the accident which left me as a paraplegic in 1983. This enabled me not to wholly depend on assistance from others. The disabled women should also take a challenge of indulging themselves in micro-business enterprises to provide for their needs.

Domestic workers

It is quite a problem for domestic workers to understand persons' needs. Due to this problem, there tends to be a natural friction in their working relationship.

A possible way out of this problem is the setting up of social welfare organizations for both the disabled and the domestic workers. There could be a branch of this organization that helps in recruiting and training domestic workers to fill any vacancies that may arise.

Construction industry

Generally, many houses and other buildings are designed and built without considering possible needs of the disabled.

- Independent living by the disabled can be achieved can be achieved through the modification of all buildings to enable easy access by paraplegics

Modification should involve the inclusion of elevators, rails, ramps as standard requirements. This will enable paraplegics who may be using wheelchairs, crutches or other mobility devices to access or shops easily where stairs would highly inconvenience us

- Another area is the toilet and bathroom facilities. These should be modified to allow space for a wheelchair to turn around
- The toilets ought to be modified in such a way that they may be used easily by paraplegics especially in terms of support

Public Facilities such as parking spaces, booths, etc.

With regard to parking spaces, there should be spaces provided for the paraplegics with enough space to enable them to manoeuvre the wheelchairs or other mobility devices between the cars. Government legislation would also be necessary to enforce these recommendations.

Possible remedies for the challenges

As outlined above, disability is an unexpected occurrence which is inevitable and the affected victims and the rest of the world should join hands together to respond to some of its implications.

- Improved economic independence usually uplifts and instills hope in the victims in which appropriate measures should be taken and to ensure that the plight of the disabled is catered for in all aspects of daily life ranging from private to public circles. This can be done by empowerment of the disabled to participate actively in the economy by running business and employment in various fields.
- Due to high risk of health involved, the disabled should be encouraged to participate actively in sporting activities, to eat well-balanced diets, and to be clean and presentable wherever they are. This ensures sound health coupled with physical fitness.
- The relevant authorities such as vehicles manufacturers and the government should find ways of designing public service vehicles to cater for the needs of the disabled. This should not only apply to transport but to other public and private facilities.
- Finally, the law should be harmonized to cater for the plight of the disabled by promoting their economic independence.

General Words of Advise

The general public should be made aware that disability is not a contagious for the physically handicapped. It is not a disease nor it is a punishment from God.

Those with disabilities should not be shunned or in some cases hidden when there are visitors to the home: instead they should be treated with all fairness and allowed to interact normally with others.

The disabled should also learn how to cope with their conditions. They should be courageous and optimistic in anything they do by entrusting everything to God who provides. If married, the disabled should allow for freedom to the members to their families to prevail by not imposing themselves too much as burdens to others.

Conclusion

In conclusion, all aspects of life involving transport, family affairs, traditions, constitution and economy all should apply for the welfare of the disabled but above all, economic independence and sound personal hygiene should be encouraged.

My own philosophy goes that "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me".

It is therefore my appeal that the disabled should not lose hope in life but be courageous enough to face the challenges of disability.

Thank you and may God bless you.

DISABILITY MANAGEMENT

By the Co-ordinator of St. Jude's Counselling Centre Ms Lena Omondi

Disability is a fact of life. It is an interruption of a full life. But it does not necessarily end our lives. There are persons with disabilities all over the world. And there are persons with disabilities at all levels in every society.

Why then do we play down issues relating to disability? Why are we not open and candid in accepting that many members of our society suffer from one disability or another.

Many questions regarding disability remain unanswered. Perhaps it is because the causes of disability vary throughout the world. Or it is because disability is in many cases socially unacceptable.

The causes of disability range from heritage to affliction in infancy or adulthood. Also, in many other cases, disability is caused by neglect and carelessness. This is very traumatizing to the victims and their families.

And the consequences of disability vary from one circumstance to the other. But almost always, persons with disability will tell you how heartbreaking the consequences are.

The last census, in 1989, revealed that persons with disabilities constituted six percent of the population of 28 million. That is to say that there were about 1.7 million persons with disabilities. That is a significant portion of our population.

Yet persons with disabilities are not yet adequately represented in the political process or law making organs of our country. Consequently disability is considered just a mere problem. Our legal system is not specific in matters regarding the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.

It is only recently that disability policy developed from elementary care at the institutions to education for children with disabilities and rehabilitation of persons who become disabled during adulthood.

But that it is not enough. There are still challenges in society that contribute to the relegation of persons with disabilities to lesser citizens.

These include the following:

Needs and Desires

Persons with disabilities do not need pity. All they want is acknowledgment that they have needs and desires. Some of these needs are physiological or emotional. Others include assistance to meet everyday. Challenges in society.

Behaviour

It is true that the behaviour of persons with disabilities must correspond with what they expect. If they are rude and uncooperative then they cannot expect more from others. It is likely that persons with disabilities may lose self-esteem because of discrimination. They should, however, come to terms with their predicament and pursue their ambitions in life. The community, on the other hand, ought to be sensitized enough to accommodate them..

Community responsibility.

The community must be responsible to the needs of persons with disabilities. They must be sensitized to other. They must be sensitized to other effect that. On the other hand, persons with disability must make themselves acceptable in manner and attitude to the community.

Rehabilitation, education and health

Through education and rehabilitation programs, persons with disabilities become more active and a driving force in developing a comprehensive disability policy. Health care programs are as important to persons with disabilities as they are to other members of the community.

Issues of sexuality.

In societies where adoption of children is discouraged, infertile women could be banned from the community. This is so because such disabilities are not recognized or tolerated. Yet infertile men can go over this by making discreet arrangements for other men to help.

Stigma

If disability is stigmatized, then problems surmount for persons with disabilities. For example, locking up children in the house because they suffer disability denies them many opportunities in life.

These are but some of the challenges. They ought to be attended to by persons with disabilities, their families and the respective community.

The issue of representation must be emphasised. It is through representation that challenges can be expressed and resolved. Persons with disabilities do not always get representation.

For a long time, persons with disabilities were not represented in law making organs. There may be initiatives to correct this but such initiatives are too little too late.

Perhaps the situation will improve with the adaptation of the recommendations of the Task Force on Laws for the Disabled. But then again there are many other issues, mainly dealing with politics of succession, that the requirements of persons with disabilities may not be prioritised.

Further, the constitution of the Disabled Fund remains a disturbing issue. I join the community of persons with disabilities in restating that they need representation as trustees in the Disabled Fund.

Only then will the needs and requirements of persons with disabilities will be considered. It is unlikely that the serving trustees constituting politicians would be as responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities.

It is also necessary that the government should focus on investing in programmes and other initiatives that prevent disabilities altogether.

It is not enough to focus on the existing population of persons with disabilities. It is paramount that where preventive measures are possible, suitable and action should be taken so that people cease to acquire disability through carelessness or neglect.

There is no other time to focus on the challenges facing persons with disabilities than now. This is part of the human problem. It is widely acknowledged that ignorance, neglect, superstition and fear are social factors that have throughout the history of disability isolated persons with disabilities and delayed their development.

Let us look forward and overcome these obstacles.

Thank you.

THE LEGAL POSITION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

*By Justice D. K. S. Aganyanya, Chairman,
Task Force on the Laws of the Disabled.*

In a UN Report of the International Year of the Disabled Persons in 1981 it was stated thus:- "Disabled women experience double discrimination. When discrimination based on disability combines with discrimination based on sex, women with disabilities are more likely than women or men without disabilities to be the poorest of the poor, very desperate and very oppressed, to be isolated and without family support because they are more likely to have less chances of founding a family".

The stigma of disabilities and myths and fears surrounding them are more likely to increase the women with disabilities social seclusion, to be uneducated and unemployed, to have more limited access to appropriate services including health and rehabilitation, to suffer physical sexual and psychological violence and abuse.

The above enumerates despondency of the women with disabilities emanating from the circumstances that many of them have been brought up to have limited expectation of themselves and their future quality of life and to believe that they are not entitled to a voice or a place. The disadvantages that women face and have to endure on a daily basis is a well documented case and may local and international fora have attempted to deal with the negative aspect brought up by this inequality of gender.

Ignorance of the capabilities of the women with disabilities is so much embodied in national life that many government departments have either not had a policy on the persons with disabilities or important decisions made in respect of them by uniformed officials who presume they know exactly what the persons with disabilities want.

This approach has not been so good. The fact is that without full participation and active involvement of women with disabilities at all levels in society, no socio-politico-economic system can be characterized as a democracy. In view of the changed times and changed relationships between the government and the persons with disabilities, Kenyans cannot afford to shy away the problems of the women with disabilities.

The hue and cry is that the guardians of the society have continuously given a raw deal to the women with disabilities with various aspects of life. Women with disabilities always suffer double jeopardy. They are first women and secondly have disabilities.

When designing strategies to assist women, the policy makes, planners and the legislators should look into different status of women present in the society and address them within this context.

By generalizing women's needs, some women are especially those with disabilities, left out and their needs which are peculiar are not met.

There are not laws in Kenya which deal with women with disabilities per se. Yet development will only occur when these problems are addressed in relation to the rest of the community for a woman with a disability is part and parcel of the society with potential talent that can be enhanced and positively exploited.

It is imperative for us to examine for us to examine the Government's policy on women's development as laws are an integral part of the development process. To quote the former Tanzanian President Mwalimu Julius Kabarage Nyerere, "Development brings freedom provided it is development of the people.

But people cannot be developed, they can only develop themselves. A man develops himself by joining free discussions of a new nature and participating in subsequent decisions. He has not been development like an animal into a new venture"

The situation analysis of the women with disabilities in relation to the existing advanced policies and development plans reveal that these women are seldom referred to and therefore rendered invisible. It is clear that more research and writing and data statistics are needed on the experience of being a women with a disability.

Neither the feminist movement nor the disability movement has fully addressed the issues of women with disabilities in Kenya. In the disability movement, women face sexism and, in the feminist movement, disability-based concerns are neither understood nor appreciated. Current papers written about women by able bodied women with disabilities whereas working class women, single or married women, women of different sexual identity or different ages are always mentioned.

The practice is totally repugnant to the rule of the law and the administration of justice. Instead the feminist organization should accept the women with disabilities and should empower them to speak out of themselves.

There should be a dialogue with those in the society who make disability more of handicap than it actually is. In the interest of equity, the world and any individual country will never experience meaning full development if a reasonable percentage of its population is deliberately marginalised and ignored.

It is worth noting that unanimous call for participation and political participation and political representation of women has a double meaning- the assurance that women and men have equal access to decision making posts and power and above all the recognition of the needs and interest expressed by women especially the most disadvantaged group i.e. women with disabilities.

It has been murmured in some circles that labour laws of our countries does discriminate against women. Traditionally women always played fiddle to the man; parents would rather pay school fees to their son rather than their daughter.

For a woman with disabilities her gender compounded with disability, makes her chances of acquiring a good education less. Consequently, this state of affair has seen women with disabilities getting few job opening and very bad terms of employment.

When they get any jobs at all, they have such low income that they hardly sustain their needs. It should not be forgotten that a job becomes viably only if it can sustain the employee by providing a salary basic enough to cater for his or her needs.

More often than not women with disabilities have been effectively denied personal insurance cover credit and loan facilities either because they are considered a high risk group or because they cannot afford to produce the requisite securities or collateral's.

On the other hand they are perceived as poor in health, wealth and even intelligence just because of their disabilities.

I am aware of a case where a person with sight disability was refuse to open a bank account because of such disability and that's how far our society has gone.

According to the most customary laws and practices women do not own land. Hence although credit is available through the co-operative societies of the producers women who are actively engaged in agricultural production do not have access to it.

Unfortunately women with disabilities, they are not in the first place accepted in the community to enable their integration into such co-operative societies. They are greatly disadvantaged as they are ignorant even other societies to credit facilities e.g. the share certificates and life insurance policies, for those lucky to have them.

There are vast gaps between the rich and the poor, urban and the rural powerful powerless. This situation of disparities means that violence is inherent the individual both male and female exists in state of violence with the weaker either economically, culturally, socially or otherwise bearing the brunt of violence.

It follows that the women, who are always in the lowest rank in the power hierarchy, experience the greatest volume of violence. Ours is a patriarchal society and, it is only by understanding the place of women in that societal context that biased sexual violence can be explained and understood.

The Penal Code clearly provides that it is a criminal offense unlawfully assault or occasionally do bodily harm to another person. The threat to use force on another person is known as an assault, while the impact of the force on another is known as battering.

Under criminal law, a mere assault (common assault), can lead to a year in jail. Where actual bodily harm is occasions, the maximum sentence is five years imprisonment with or without corporal punishment. The victim of assault or battery can also bring a civil action of damage against the offender to be compensated in monetary terms for the loss, damage and harm suffered as a consequence of such violence.

When seeking legal redress for wife beating, Kenya women have had to use section 250 - 253 of Penal code. But they are clearly explicit provisions in Kenya's penal laws proscribing the act of violence against wife in the family.

The above statutes ignore the fact that wife beating is a crime of special nature as it falls within the armpit of the offenses that endanger life and health and therefore requires special methods of punishment and deterrence.

A case in point is widely publicized case of Piah Njoki (1983) whose husband together with two other people attacked her causing her irreparable and irreversible loss of her two eyes causing her permanent visual disability. The significance of citing this case in particular amongst others that, the reason behind incapacitation was simply because she bore her daughters.

No wonder mental illness is ground for divorce, the woman being most likely to be dumped. Wife beating is viewed as an expression of male dominance and subordination of women. With the nature of the woman with disability already ill weak in some way, battering her aggravates her disability trauma. This happens often.

In any case, even if laws existed to deal specially with wife - beating, I am not quite sure wives would take the challenge effectively take advantage thereof - (Law of Bigamy). S.171 Penal code. Going through a ceremony of marriage with another man or woman during lifetime of a legally married man or woman - sentence 5 year imprisonment.

Women with disabilities and marriage

Voluntary union of one man and one woman for life to the exclusion of all others. Agreement between couple. But in some communities in Kenya, when a girl with a disability is to be married, the whole idea is often opposed by her family and that of her fiancée. Sometimes the girl with the disability will accept married man.

She is flattered by this because she does not imagine that a man would want to marry her as a first wife. She resigns herself to jealousies, insults and even ridicule from the man's other family members just for the occasional attention he may pay to her.

A woman with a disability struggles to look after her family and is unfortunately looked on as something she must suffer for the privilege of being married.

When a girl with disability gets married, whether as a first wife or not, the first feeling that she has is ecstasy because she feels that getting a husband is proof of her femininity and that she is not a "non-person", after all.

She feels somehow less disabled and begins to realize that she is really not different from other women. This woman also feels that the usual problems that she has to face in marriage are common to all.

Wives with disabilities run successful homes with an underlying need to prove to all that they can do it. They may suffer a lot of strain and pain but they bear it gladly, more often than not, with an underlying fear that their husbands may leave them.

With all these efforts, however, the community will remain with its views and attitudes towards disability. The married woman with a disability becomes an item of amazement and wonder. People will often express their feelings by saying things like.

"Wow, I am amazed that someone like you can get such beautiful and normal children," or "You are so lucky that your husband saw you and married you. Aren't you lucky he is so caring?"

Finding a woman with disability sharing her problems and frustrations in marriage is not easy because negative social attitudes and such insensitive comments can serve to crush a woman's self-confidence in all that she is and all what she has achieved.

A woman with disability needs confidence in her abilities for security, independence in her feelings and social status. This state is not easy to achieve especially for the illiterate woman and one who has no exposure because of society's feelings that the disabilities are objects of pity and charity.

Absorbing and internalizing society's perception of the person with a disability is easy because the society is strong. Acceptance of the marriage of a person with a disability by the society is not easy or common because of idealized images of male and female roles which help to shape relationship between men and women even through simple things like the stories we tell our children.

In many instances, an educated woman with a disability may be married to a man who has no job. Again because of the stigma this woman has to bear, she is made to feel that she can consider herself lucky that a man could "look at her".

Many educated women with disabilities excel in many areas and sometimes outshine their spouse. This leads to conflicts in their homes. There is absolutely no need for this. A married woman with a disability needs support in order to have self confidence.

In western countries, many of the problems mentioned above are almost non-existent because of education. People understand and accept the causes of disabilities and have subsequently advanced technology and availed appliances and equipment that can be used in any area of daily living to make life as close to the accepted norms of the society.

Women in those countries are accepted in decision-making positions in all walks of life. The fact that there is legislation on disability issues make any decision made by women with disabilities be taken seriously because of the recreations of obeying the law.

The fact that in many of the western nations marriage and having children for a woman is not demanded by the society gives her somewhat less pressure than her counterpart in developing countries

Disability is not inability or infirmity. It is a handicap which affects a part of our bodies, otherwise it leaves us "whole". Let's not spend time crying over our disabilities. What we need is support information of sufficient and good education for the persons with disabilities in general and women with disabilities in particular.

The society should understand and accept the causes of disabilities and do away with customary laws and practices which down grade women with disabilities. It should have attitudinal change over disabled brothers and sisters and accept that they are part and parcel of society.

Those in authority should accept women with disabilities in decision-making positions in all walks of life and see if they can not prove their worth. And when women with disabilities are assigned any

responsibilities, let them excel, if only to prove they are not different from other so called able-bodied men and women.

I remember in "*Animal Farm*", there was a character known as Boxer who had a motto "to work harder" inspite of the tribulations the animal kingdom underwent at the instance of the pigs.

Why not borrow a leaf?

And finally always avoid being caught on the wrong side of the law. Courts deal with offenders and not individuals. The standards of proof is the same for all be it Criminal or Civil cases.

Thank you.

IS THE MEDIA HELPFUL IN CRUSADING FOR THE CASE OF WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES IN KENYA?

By Mrs. Eulalia Namai, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (K.B.C)

Ladies and gentlemen, I feel greatly honoured to have been invited by St. Jude's Counseling Centre to speak at this important seminar whose theme is "Challenges Facing Women with Disabilities in Kenya".

Perhaps before we discuss the role of the media in crusading for the case of women with disabilities we should attempt to give a definition of media.

By media we are talking about communication channels including inter-personal communication. The subject matter we all know usually refer to print and electronic media which many people call mass media. Inter-personal communication channels like "*baraza*", meetings seminars like this and counseling are also of course important especially to women whose access to the convention media is limited.

The print media channels of communication include newspapers, magazines, newsletters, posters, brochures, etc.. For women this category may not be as effective as desired because of the high rate of illiteracy amongst women.

My focus of the role of media in this presentation is therefore the electronic media which include Radio, Television, Film and Video. I shall pay particular attention to Radio and Television because of the experience I have in the field of broadcasting.

There is great concern about issues concerning women as they affect every development activity in each community. The Beijing report on "Human Rights" applies to women in particular.

It reads "promote and protects all the human rights of women rights of women through full implementation of all human rights instruments especially through the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women".

When the world looks at such a convention, the strategic objective should therefore to:

1. Ensure equality and non discrimination under the law.
2. Achieve Legal Literacy.
3. Get concerned about inequality in women's access to and participation in all communication systems especially the media.

The various channels of communication used by women with disabilities, should strive to inform, educate and entertain them just like the other members in society.

Information is power, and those who are denied it may be in a position to make appropriate choices and decisions in various aspects of their lives. The media can help women with disabilities to share their experience and become confident citizens who work along with others in the community. Their actual needs would be articulated if society could have policies and attitudes to promote a healthy environment in which women with disabilities find themselves in.

The media especially Television is meant to build a good image of those with disabilities. This is not always the case. Most of the Television Programs are foreign, and are increasingly being built around tragedies and triumphs of disabled people. It should be remember that all disabled persons are not super achievers nor are they totally destroyed by their disability. They are average individuals who reflect the social, economic and intellectual make up of our societies.

Media should therefore depict people with disabilities at home, at work, at school, at leisure and in a variety of other ordinary social and physical situations. We in the media should provide positive examples especially of women in which natural curiosity is satisfied and in which awkwardness is lessened. This is not an easy thing to. I can give you an example on my experience in 1996. I fell down in Nanyuki and broke my left hand.

I stayed in plaster for eight weeks and for another 3 months I was not able to execute my usual duties as before. I felt cut off from the mainstream of activities.

I therefore feel that there is need to include people with disabilities so as to mobilize and promote women's contribution to society. The media should be mobilized to portray women's contribution to society. It is also our responsibility to see that the women's portrayal in the media is positive.

A negative portrayal of women with disabilities makes others in the community turn away from the media, and yet in order to develop accordingly activities need to be covered by the media.

To be able to get the right content which has impact, enough research has to be done. This a weakness on some media personnel who try to get information quickly. False or distorted information may cause a big damage to the development process in the community. We are in the media should promote awareness of equality.

It is not good enough to have laws which women do not know about. Education on health services, employment opportunities and many other activities in society is very crucial. Our Radio and Television programs should increase the participation and enhance access of women expression and decision - making in and through the media and new technologies of communication.

Accessibility to the media channels is a problem especially for women who do not own Radio sets in most homes. Accessibility is also a problem because of pverty. While men are aggressive and go to watch Television programs in Social or Community Halls, women are shy and especially women with disabilities are more disadvantaged.

The new technologies of communication should ensure that all categories of people get information, education and entertainment through the electronic media. This is not so with us in Kenya. It is costly package programs specifically for the people with disabilities, but the Kenya Broadcasting corporation has to introduce sign language on Joy Bringers T. V. Program. The same was introduced for the 1997 General Election Party Programs on Television.

The media should also promote a positive balanced and non stereotyped portrayal of women in the media. In order to do this effectively, we are to ensure integration of gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programs for sustainable development.

Without clearly defined communication and media policies, News Reporters, Producers and Editors find themselves in a dilemma. What is it that makes news on Television. Do women with disabilities make news in an environment where personality is more emphasized than issues.

The bulk of the news feature on Radio and Television is more personality-oriented. Hence women with disabilities would find themselves more marginalized than the rest of people in the community. While the media is partly to be blamed for marginalising women's activities, the attitude beliefs and values in society do not help promotion of women with disabilities.

Many families would fear to expose children with disabilities because of the stigma attached to disability. Some husbands mistreat their wives when their off-spring happens to have disability. In 1989 a film crew was making a documentary in Embu Town when they discovered a nine year old disabled child who had been hidden in the homestead by her grandmother. Such behaviour deny children their rights which include education and health.

Violence

The media has worked towards the eradication of violence against girls and women. This continues to be a problem because of societal beliefs and attitudes. Some of the disabilities are brought about through violence in the home and other places of work or environment. Programs on the empowerment of women in peace process and peace education are important, because conflicts and war are of great concern as they also contribute to disability of women who do not understand the reasons behind the actions.

Some of the violent behaviour could be attributed to poverty, but poverty should not justify discrimination in opportunities. The media should emphasis the need for self respect and confident of each individual in society. This is why we should avoid presenting people with disabilities as dependent or pitiful.

The situation with women is not sound at all as one stereotypes includes inherently saintly or gratuitously dangerous, or uniquely endowed with a special skill due to disability. In all these we should consider carefully the words used to describe or characterize disabled individuals. Language usage is a problem especially in describing activities concerning women.

The Language problem is also manifested in songs (contemporary and folk songs). Blind, deaf and dumb people have not had it easy. It has not been easy for the media to present the achievement and difficulties of people with disabilities in ways that do not overemphasize the impairment or exaggerate or emotionalize the situation.

For example in news stories and documentary reports, the facts of a person's disability should be reported only when they are directly relevant. Information should be provided to be public about prevention and treatment of impairments that lead to disability, as well as the availability of services for people with disabilities and their families. This can be done through public information campaigns and also be integrated into general media products.

Commercialization of the Media

The new and emerging trends of media revolve around liberalization of the media and commercialization of informative, educational and entertainment programs. The Kenya Broadcasting Corporation is a public broadcasting service, but in order to survive it has to operate differently from the former Voice of Kenya which was a Government Department and part of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Most of the programs produced and recorded by outside agencies and personnel will require payment of air-time. Payment of announcements (matangazo) rates also went up because of high operational costs involved. Most of the announcements on Radio are therefore not free. Such a situation adversely affects the promotion of the activities undertaken by women with disabilities.

Those who have understood the importance of using Radio and Television, and other media always work out proposals and get funding from relevant agencies. This area of the public media having a social responsibility role needs to be argued at various levels and be incorporated in the new constitution. Otherwise it affects accessibility of the media to those who are in need.

Conclusion

In my concluding, I would like to emphasize the following points:-

- Accessibility to the media can be improved
- Participation in the media programs and News is important to all people
- Portrayal of Disabled Women in the media must be positive
- The role of the family in promoting a positive image of women with disabilities is crucial
- It will help change the perception about disabled people especially women. I now welcome comments and questions from the participants.

Thank you.

EXCERPTS FROM A PAPER TITLED 'FAMILY LIFE AS A CHALLENGE TO WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES'

By Mrs Catherine Mwayonga, a teacher at Thika School for the Blind

A girl with disability faces many challenges as she grows up. If counseling services are unavailable, unwanted pregnancies and emotional breakdown many predominate her life. Suffering disability and being a member of the disadvantaged gender, she may easily withdraw from the community at large.

Lack of education also emphasises the problems. This is because many parents of girls with disabilities tend to give educational opportunities to other children as a priority.

Girls with disabilities are not exempted from forced marriages as practised by some rural communities. Some parents seem to support such forced marriages because they do not wish to bear with the burden of having to care for girl-child with disability

Women with disabilities should have principles through which they could emphasize to their respective communities that they are capable of accomplishing most of life's challenges independently.

It is important for women with disabilities to build confidence. They should express their views undeterred on issues affecting them. They should stand firm and defend their beliefs if they wish to gain respect.

Women with disabilities should also consider practicing family planning. This would ease the problem of bringing up to many children with inadequate funds.

Health is an important issue. Women with disabilities should observe personal hygiene. They should learn to seek medical advice without fearing for rejection or ridicule.

Women with disabilities should pursue and uphold their rights as citizens. Like every other citizen, they should enjoy fundamental women rights such as freedom of worship and speech.

Most important is they should learn to be independent. In addition they should take leadership challenges in their home, communities, professions and organisations. Thank you.

CLOSING REMARKS

By H.E. (Ms) W.W. Sinkala, High Commissioner for the Republic of Zambia to the Republic of Kenya

AND NOW ...



HONOURED: The Zambian High Commissioner Ms. Sinkala sharing the closing moments with participants. She was applauded for her supportive contributions she made during the closing session.

Dear participants, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I feel greatly to be honoured this afternoon and share personal experience with that of my government regarding plight of women with disabilities in our society(s).

I am convinced that two day program of the seminar has adequately addressed critical areas of issues relating to disabilities that have not received necessary attention and even action starting from the communities we live in, to the highest offices in the land.

Further, I am delighted to note that this seminar brought together affected community, the policy makers and implementors from appropriate Ministries as well as the media and the private sector with a view of finding the most amicable solution to the significant challenges facing women with disabilities.

It is an undisputable fact that women in general face greater obstacles in ascending to high positions in all aspects of human endeavour and indeed when they are coupled with physical disabilities, it becomes even more difficult to attain such levels.

It is important that we realize and appreciate that disability is a matter of universal concern. Causes of disability and its consequences do vary. While there are persons born with disability, there are others that acquire this position in infancy and adulthood through various occurrences it therefore means that none of us is indispensable as far as disability is concerned.

Realizing that the matter of disability has continued to receive little attention from ourselves who are infact vulnerable to this scourge, let me take this opportunity and urge all stakeholders to ensure that effective representation at all levels of decision making is effected.

Rights

This will make it easier for the disabled to express their position on issues that affect them so as to ensure they are not being neglected and relegated when policies are being formulated and later on implemented.

This will ensure their being at the same pace with the rest of the society, politically, socially and economically. Better still, as women with disabilities are more vulnerable, more attention should be afforded them to make it easier for them to acquire necessary education, skills, employment and exposure just to mention a few.

May I make myself clearer that I do not advocate for women with disabilities to be given extra opportunities than others but I want to underscore the fact that just like any other, this category of women should and must be given the opportunities *that they deserve* with not form of discrimination.

Role

Indeed it is the role of every government to create an enabling environment for its citizenry to rise to the occasion and prove their worth. In this regard let me commend the government of Kenya for facilitating your organisations operations and enable you pursue this noble course in assisting the less privileged and vulnerable groups of the society.

Allow me to make an earnest appeal to your organization, other non-governmental organisations and to humanity at large that having identified this challenge vis a vis the women with disabilities, we should all put our efforts together (Governments inclusive) in finding a more acceptable solution in order to ease this plight.

Equal

We cannot afford to give this situation a blind eye, as I have already alluded to, it is an issue that none of us is above after all is said and done, we are all equal before the eyes of God. Let's be assertive. Talent is with all of us e.g. whilst I walk so elegantly and appear physically fit, you've yet better talents than me.

In closing this seminar may I take this opportunity and commend your organization for the noble duties you continue to undertake not only with the women with disabilities but also the two others namely - Rehabilitation of ex-women prisoners and aids orphans.

In all these, I wish you every success and God's Blessings.

INTERLUDE

PART FIVE

- Persons with disabilities should be able to understand their conditions in relation to the rest of society who may have negative feelings towards them. They should develop optimism and hope in life.
- The Government and relevant authorities dealing with transportation should find ways of designing public service vehicles to cater for the needs of persons with disabilities.
- The law should be harmonised to cater for the plight of persons with disabilities by promoting their economic independence so as to make them cope with the changing economic state of the world.
- Victims of wife inheritance should be careful not to conform by discarding outdated traditions and cultures.
- Employers should be encouraged to engaged persons with disabilities in the areas in which they are skilled.

PART SIX

- Persons with disabilities do not need pity; they want acknowledgment that they have needs and desires
- Persons with disabilities should come to terms with their predicament and pursue their ambitions in life
- Through education and rehabilitation programs, persons with disabilities become more active and a driving force in developing a comprehensive disability policy
- Women with disabilities should not be encouraged to be promiscuous since some of them are easily flattered by advances from able-bodied men
- The Maendeleo ya Wanawake organization should establish a section attending to the specific needs of women with disabilities
- Women with disabilities should enroll as members of Maendeleo ya Wanawake (the monthly contribution is Kshs. 60 and life-membership fee is Kshs. 580)
- Research should be undertaken to consider setting up centres for educating children of women with disabilities

PART SEVEN

- Feminist organizations should accept women with disabilities and empower them to speak for themselves
- The society should understand and accept the causes of disabilities and discard customary laws and practices which downgrade women with disabilities
- Those in authority should accept women with disabilities in decision-making positions in all walks of life and thus provide them with opportunities to prove themselves
- The Law Review Commission should consider enacting laws which ensure that parents educate children with disabilities and that such children are considered for property inheritance
- Many persons with disabilities are respectful of the law (they do not commit crimes in the magnitude of normal people) and that trend should improve further

PART EIGHT

- There should be promotion and protection of human rights of women through implementation of these rights in a convention to discuss all forms of discrimination against women.
- There is less coverage of issues affecting women with disabilities in mainstream media (There is also inequality in participation of women in Media positions)
- Because society has created a negative image of women with disabilities, the Media has a role to play in changing this attitude.
- Women with disabilities should provide information to the Media about prevention of impairments as well as their treatment
- The Media should encourage participation of women with disabilities in programs and news so as to try to bring out shared experiences.
- Since the radio is not suitable for transmission to deaf people, other Media should consider reaching this group

PART NINE

Women with disabilities should have principles through which they can demonstrate their independence and rights

Women with disabilities should consider family planning methods and birth control.

They should observe personal hygiene and seek medical care wherever necessary

It is the role of the Government to create an enabling environment so that women with disabilities can rise to the occasion and play a leading role in development.

Sports or some form of cultural programs be included during future Seminars/workshops.

Follow-up Seminars should be convened and policy makers including representatives of public transportation organizations should be invited

Such follow-up seminars should, if possible, be convened at provincial or district level to enable grassroots community leaders to participate in the deliberations

Another Seminar but on family life to deal with issues such as sexuality among women with disabilities should be convened.

Participants from North Eastern, Central and Eastern provinces including Nyeri, Machakos and Kitui areas asked for similar seminars/workshops saying there had been no such seminars/workshops held in those areas.

St. Jude's Counselling Centre to update particulars on developments arising from the Seminar as well as liaise with other relevant and crucial organizations regarding issues affecting women with disabilities.

St. Jude's Counselling Centre was applauded for the initiatives leading to the success of the Seminar and urged to consider follow-up Seminars/workshops.

Participants expressed their gratitude to the organizers, resource persons and distinguished guests.

PICTORIAL COVERAGE OF THE SEMINAR



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8.	M. N. NGUGI	K.D.D. SELF HELP GR.	873	KIKUYU
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12.	JESSY WANGARI	U.D.P.K.	220	KITUI
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85.	MARIA BOSIBOI	KNAD	365	KISII
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89.	ALSEBA AUMA	ADG	5	AHERO
90.	JOYCE APIYO	ADG	5	AHERO
91.	MONICA ATIENO	KAITTO	5	AHERO
92.	NANCY AKOTH	KAITTO	5	AHERO
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104.	JANE ADHIAMBO	UGUNJA GROUP	330	UGUNJA
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106.	ROSE ANYANGO	UGUNJA GROUP	420	UGUNJA

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110. ANNE AUMA	DISABLE GROUP	10	MIGORI
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114. ELIZABETH NYOBOKO	NYANG'OMA GROUP	237	SONDU
115. PRISCA BOSIBORI	NYANG'OMA GROUP	237	SONDU
116. JANE KERUBO	NYANG'OMA GROUP	237	SONDU
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118. MERCY CHEPKORUI	KIPCHEMCHENI	1123	KERICHO
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123. NAOMI NDITO	UDPK	217	KITUI
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127. JANE CHEPKORIR	N.D.G	4	BUNGOMA
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129. BEATRICE CHEPKEMBOI	UDPK	6	NANDI
130. BENTA AJWANG	B.D.G.	22	BONDO
131. JANE ATIENO	B.D.G.	22	BONDO
132. ANASLABIA ANYANGO	B.D.G.	22	BONDO
133. CELESTINE CHIRCHIR	BOMET D.G.	44	BOMET
134. AMINA ZAIDI	GARISSA D.G.	23	GARISSA

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142. DARKAS WALLIAULA	KAKAMEGA D.W.G.	182	KAKAMEGA
143. JESCA BUNDU	KAKAMEGA D.W.G.	182	KAKAMEGA
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