

# THE BLUE LIGHT

December 2017 CA Tanzania Newsletter  
A quarterly newsletter educating Tanzania about Autism



*Connects Autism Tanzania envisions a country in which people with autism and co-occurring conditions coexist equally and independently as part of an inclusive community that offers equal opportunities so they may strive for a brighter future.*

## VETA

### CONNECTS AUTISM TANZANIA HOSTS VETA TRAINING WORKSHOP

On September 27<sup>th</sup> Connects Autism Tanzania gathered educators and professionals in Arusha to discuss the state of vocational training for those with autism and other intellectual disabilities in the Kilimanjaro region, and ways in which Vocational Education Training Authority (VETA) can better serve this population. Among the 44 participants were VETA's Zonal Director, Arusha's City Educational Officer and special education teachers.



**Educators gather to share ways to serve youth with intellectual disabilities through VETA programs**

CONTACT US!

[info@connectsautismtanzania.org](mailto:info@connectsautismtanzania.org)

[www.connectsautismtanzania.org](http://www.connectsautismtanzania.org)

+255 713 401 595

P.O Box 7791 Moshi, Tanzania

Grace Lyimo CA Tanzania  
Executive Director

CA Tanzania's leadership used the first sessions to revisit the basics of autism, as this condition remains unknown or misunderstood by many in the educational system and society at large. Speakers highlighted specific behaviors associated with autism versus other intellectual conditions, and urged those attending to learn more about the capabilities of this population and prioritize them in educational planning.

Speakers then focused on the critical need to develop vocational training programs for those with autism and other intellectual challenges after the age of 18. Various educators observed that political and structural aspects of the educational system have prevented continuity in addressing those with mental challenges effectively.

On a more positive note, the guest of honor, Arusha District Commissioner, Mr. Fabian Gabriel Daqarro, stated that autism awareness has increased recently and he urged VETA instructors in the Northern Zone to come up with curriculum proposals, learning materials and infrastructures that can help children with different disabilities to access quality education. He emphasized that it is better for such proposals to come from the ground up, rather than wait for action from the central government.



Arusha City DC urges VETA instructors to submit vocational training special needs curriculum to the Ministry of Education



City Education Officer, Eunice Tonni explains how special vocational programs can benefit youth with autism and other mental disabilities

After a review of the legal rights and entitlements of children with disabilities by Ms. Alice Malepu from the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), participants broke into groups to develop specific ACTION plans for skills training initiatives. Among those proposed were more and better trainings for special needs educators and tutors (especially in vocational training colleges), development of tools for identifying those with autism, and campaigns to bolster sensitization about autism and further reduce the stigma.



CA Tanzania co-founder Kerri Elliot responds to questions about autism

Star Television and Radio Free Africa and other nationally heard media outlets covered the event.



Teachers practice making observations of a special needs learner

# IEP

## CA TANZANIA LEADS WORKSHOP ON INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS (IEP) FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Following its September 27 meeting, CA Tanzania hosted a weeklong workshop from October 16 to 20 to guide special education teachers and other stakeholders in the use

of the IEP - Individualized Education Program - for students with special needs. This Workshop represented CA Tanzania's mission to raise the level of classroom services offered to these youth.

Attending the workshop were government stakeholders, Education Officers and educators from Makumbusho Primary School for Students with Autism (Special Unit). During the five days, participants were guided through the entire process of IEP use. Speakers explained the purpose of the IEP - an individualized plan of instruction based on a careful assessment of the student. Key components of an effective IEP including (1) coordination of a multidisciplinary team, (2) involvement of parents, and (3) agreement on the objective services and desired outcomes. Participants practiced completing forms so that they could better understand its components.

During the Workshop's fourth day attendees visited children at the Kaloleni Makumbusho School. Here, in groups of three or four, they met select students whom they analyzed according to the IEP form's fields and then wrote a report. Teachers were also able to work with parents, who are key to successful implementation of IEP strategies.

**"Children and youth with autism are capable of learning different vocational skills. Let us make their interests our interests and work on them accordingly."**

- Kintu Kilanga, who works for intellectually disabled youth at Dar es Salaam Vocational College (Chang'ombe VETA)

# STUDENT TRANSFER

## CA TANZANIA ENABLES STUDENT TRANSFER

During the Day of African Child on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2017, CA Tanzania's advocacy for the educational rights of children with disabilities led to the transfer of a physically disabled child from Losiyo Primary school in the Terrat ward to Arusha School. This move was made because Arusha School has a more conducive environment and infrastructure to help him learn. The child, Ernest Ibrahim, is in Class Three and has been placed in boarding. His transfer was facilitated by Arusha City D.C. and D.E.O. (for primary education).



Arusha City DC listening to Ernest talk about his new school

Connects Autism Tanzania strives to ensure more people in Tanzanian society are aware of “autism,” thus ensuring the rights of children and youth living with this condition. From July to November, CA Tanzania:

- Worked with international volunteers to share their insights, experience and knowledge with Tanzanian teachers.
- Carried out a major workshop for VETA heads of institutions to strategize about programs that can help youth achieve independence and employability.
- Carried out a transitional Board Meeting to establish new leadership following the death of Dr. Elly Macha and lay down future plans.
- Hosted a hands-on workshop for special education teachers to learn how to use Individual Educational Programs (IEPs) for youth with special needs.