

Govt urged to create special curriculum for autistic pupils

By Edward Qorro, Arusha

PEOPLE suffering from autism have made a passionate call to the government to roll out a special curriculum in schools for children suffering from the condition.

Addressing teachers and students suffering from the condition, the director of Connects Autism Tanzania, Grace Anna Lyimo, said the current curriculum was locking out students suffering from autism.

Lyimo, whose son Eric, suffers from Autism, also challenged the government to introduce vocational training centres for students with special needs.

"It is very unfortunate that the curriculum that is in use doesn't accommodate autistic pupils, thus leaving them in peril," said Lyimo on Saturday, during the marking of global Autism Awareness Day.

According to her, the society was at fault for not recognising people suffering from the condition by stigmatising them.

"Some parents hide their children for years once they discover that they are suffering from such conditions," she highlighted.

Introducing vocational training centres will assure people suffering from autism of employment opportunities.

Lyimo also challenged the district councils in the country to put in place facilities that will accommodate



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Studies have shown that about 44 per cent of people with autism have above average intellectual abilities.

For his part, Arusha City District Administrative Secretary David Mwakiposa assured the public that the government had allocated special learning equipment for students suffering from autism, which was due to be distributed to different schools around the country.

"As we speak, the equipment is in Dodoma, where plans are underway to have them distributed to different schools," he said.

Marked every second day of April, the day started with a peaceful march from Via Via recreational centre and headed to the Museum of Arusha Declaration where the event took place.

Autism is a general term used to describe a group of complex developmental brain disorders - autism spectrum disorders - caused by a combination of genes and environmental influences.

A report in the American Journal of Public Health released in March 21, 2017 says autistic people are three times as likely to die from an injury as the general population.

The study suggests that deaths among people with autism are up 700 per cent since 1999 and that people suffering from the condition die at age 36 on averages, half the age of the general population's average death age of 72.