



Developing self-advocacy skills through the use of ICT: A case of people with visual and hearing impairment

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Introduction

- People with disabilities suffer from exclusion and disempowerment, which hinder their experience of their fundamental human rights, such as leisure, culture and education.
- Based on the philosophical, scientific and social approaches of empowerment, the term “self-advocacy” emerged to encourage individuals to advocate for themselves and, thus, fight against the disempowerment promoted by society.

Impairment and Disability

Individual model

- Impairment whether it be physical, or of `mind`, is perceived as creating disability
- comes with discourses of personal pathology, individual difficulties and dependence in the face of care
- Focus of professionals aims the restoration of normality
- Self-advocacy fails to fit the assumptions as impairment, inadequacy and deficiency hardly parallel notions of growth, determination and capacity

Social Model

- Society disables people
- Although a person may be impaired this does not causally relate to their disabled role in society
- society excludes, discriminates and stigmatises people with impairments in a social, economic, cultural and political contemporary climate
- believes on emancipatory theory, research and action.
- Self-advocates raises basic issues: freedom, fulfilment, self-determination

Self-Advocacy conceptualization

- The social model calls for inter-dependence: people are people, no matter what their abilities or limitations might be.
- Self-advocacy can refer to a process of individual development through which a person comes to have the confidence and ability to express his or her own feelings and wishes.
- In schools, the common complaint about underachievers is, 'They won't do their work.' The reality is that they won't do the teacher's work, but would be very happy to work on what is meaningful for them (Winebrenner, 2001). A need for user participation.

Self-advocacy

Self-advocacy for people with disabilities is intensified by the innovative empowerment approach of 'user participation' where advocacy group may focus on:

Autonomy

Focus on politically, financially and organizational

Division

Developed out of parental or professional organization

Coalition

Affiliated to a with wider civil rights organisations

service-based

Providing a service including curriculum implementation

Self advocacy and self-determination

Self-advocates have to be supported in the many aspects of their self-determination

- thinking for yourself,
- saying what you think,
- having relationships like anyone else,
- people listening to you,
- changing people' s racist views about yourself,
- taking responsibility for yourself,
- making decisions,
- feeling good about yourself,
- feeling good about your own culture and way of life,
- standing up for your rights
- The right to make mistakes and the right to take risks

Assistive technology

Global Cooperation on
Assistive Technology (GATE)

- Enhances access to curriculum
- increase, maintain, or improve overall functional capabilities of the individual



Assistive Technology

“The Internet has acted as a platform for collaboration for all types of organisations. It has allowed for all citizens, including people with disabilities, to engage more actively in political and social life. The Internet in itself could be considered an assistive technology, allowing voices to be heard that traditionally could not be.” Anriette Esterhuysen, Executive Director, Association for Progressive Communications (APC) p.9

International Telecommunication Union. (2013). The ICT opportunity for a disability-inclusive development framework. Geneva, Switzerland: ITU

Assistive Technology

“Access to a computer is one of the greatest equalizers for people with disabilities. The ability to operate a computer and even program an application allows an individual with a disability to find a passion, find a career and become financially independent.” John Schimmel, Co-founder, DIY Ability (p. 26).

International Telecommunication Union. (2013). The ICT opportunity for a disability-inclusive development framework. Geneva, Switzerland: ITU

Is ICT for relevant to all? YES

Kuala Lumpur Agreements (2016) states that

- The world is undergoing a dramatic shift.
- Technology is changing how we live, work and play.
- Education should not only keep pace with change but lead change.
- Leadership have to provide access to education for the world's marginalized people such as the poor, disabled, and those forced to leave school.
- No one should be invisible; no one should be left behind.

Kuala Lumpur PCF8 (2016) Suggestions

- Plan for tomorrow's technology not simply today's,
- Increase flexibility and paths to learning,
- Integrate experiential learning,
- Share resources and keep costs low, and
- Create new industry-based credentials that lead to jobs.



THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA (OUT)

- Is an Government owned University that offers education through open and distance learning, established in 1992 (www.out.ac.tz)
- Started enrolling persons with disabilities in 1997
- Started offering ICT skills training for persons with visual impairment and the blind in 2011
- Started offering ICT skills training for the deaf in 2015

The Study

The Aim: The study aims at how to develop self-advocacy skills for people with sensory impairment using ICT. Specifically people with hearing impairment and people with visual impairment

The study objectives:

- How can ICT skills training support people with hearing impairment develop self-advocacy skills?
- How can ICT skills training support people with visual impairment develop self-advocacy skills?
- What are barriers to supporting people with sensory impairment to develop self-advocacy skills using ICT?

The study was qualitative in nature, in which 35 people (20 with hearing impairment) participated in ICT skills training at OUT were interviewed using an interview guide. The interview focused on how ICT skills training supported them in developing self-advocacy skills. Data were transcribed, coded and analysed using content analysis procedure.

Findings

- Access to ICT skills training
- Outcome of ICT skills training: developing confidence, participation in politics, participation in financial services, organizational visuals, and service-based issues
- Barriers to supporting people with sensory impairment to develop self-advocacy skills using ICT

Access to ICT skills training for people with hearing impairment

Developed Self confidence (*When I saw a laptop or a computer initially I was afraid to touch thinking that I can destroy*)

- Create ICT Sign language to be used for the training
- A deaf teach a deaf
- Teach internet so that can use google translator

The deaf enter ICT skills training with less previous experiences about a computer.

<https://www.out.ac.tz/vis/#>



Outcome of ICT skills training for people with hearing impairment



- A tool for communication (*I can now follow my friends in Facebook and through email*)
- Reduce dependence in sign language.
- Build self confidence
- Can do ICT maintenance
- Participate in Cisco courses
- Join workplace

“ICT skills training made me capable of using online communication tools. I managed to get married in USA” (Deaf ICT skills graduate)

Access to ICT skills training for people with visual impairment

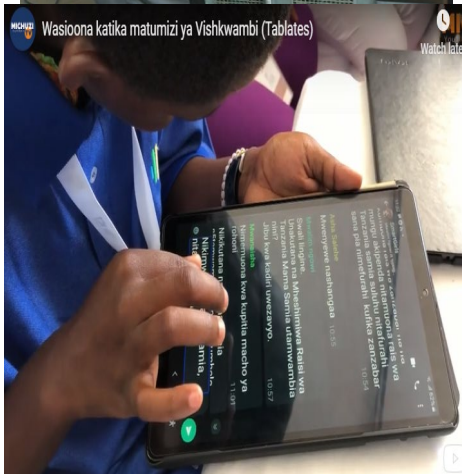


- Train keyboard skills
- Listening skills
- Use of synthesizer (A talking software like Jaws, NVDA).
- A visually impaired teach a visually impaired person

Outcome of ICT skills training for people with visual impairment



- Self-determination
- Reduces dependence on Braille skills
- Typewriter skills (will facilitate learning of Keyboard skills)
- Listening skills
- Self confidence
- Capacity building (improves job skills)
- Creates independence
- Networking (Helps to create friends)



Outcome of ICT skills training for people with visual impairment



- Became ICT teacher (I am teaching ICT at the college to the sighted persons and are doing well in National Examinations. I ICT has made me feel proud. You know sighted persons to believe that a blind person can teach ICT is not easy. But I am doing it)
- Use power point projectors
- Create online learning platforms
- Self-determination agent (Sighted people can depend in me)

Digital Accessibility

People with disabilities have right to access, create and share digital content



The 4th industrial revolution is for everyone. Innovative, inclusive strategic solutions have to start now!



To cross the road safely in a smart city, we need a buzz.

Inclusion in the 4th Industrial revolution have to start NOW



Smart Girls Participating modelling a Smart City during 6th Connected African Girls Coding Camp in Tanzania 2022

“During COVID-19 we used social media to receive information. We thank OUT for establishing ICT skills training classes for persons who are visually impaired and blind. We got information through: online radio, WhatsApp, emails, YouTube, telegraph and zoom”



<https://www.out.ac.tz/vis/#>



ICT Signs

[home](#) [about us](#) [menu](#)

Computer

Devices

Cables

Processor

software

Windows



Using the slogan “Nothing about us without us” and the user involvement design in action research at OUT we had to involve deaf community to create ICT signs to use in ICT skills training

ICT for the Deaf

“During COVID-19 it was difficult to get information. We use lip reading but people wear masks we cannot get information. But for us benefitted with ICT skills we searched online information and informed others through text messages”



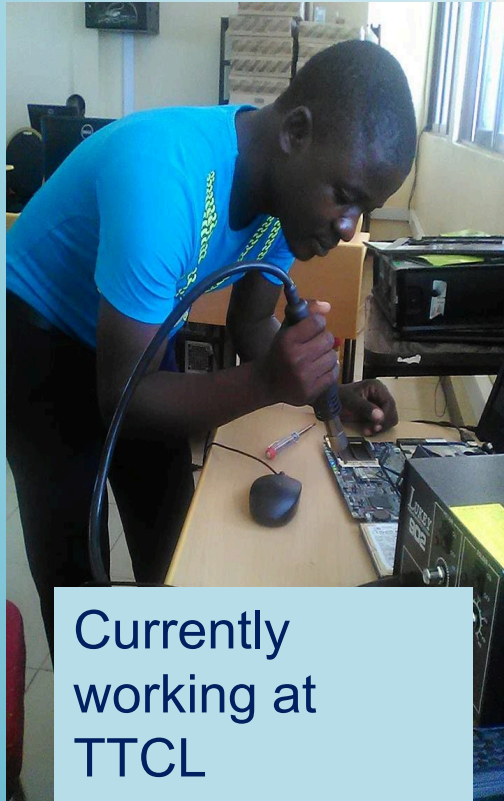
COVID -19 for the Deaf

Challenges

- Lack of information if received was too late

“I did not know the COVID-19, I just found one day my mother forcing me to wear a mask. I had challenges with communication even when I came to the class hear at OUT, I was asked to put a mask then I asked my fellow students who informed me about it. Now I know what is COVID-19, it is a bad disease.”

ICT at OUT creating jobs for the deaf



Currently working at TTCL



“COVID-19 affected us so much as we had challenges on receiving information. We decided to form a WhatsApp group so we continue informing each other on what is happening and continue with classes”

Barriers to ICT skills for people with sensory impairment

- Shortages of ICT skills training opportunities
- Availability (resources, electricity, gadgets/ devices, internet, materials)
- Shortages of self-advocacy training among individuals with disabilities

Conclusion

- People with sensory impairment (hearing and visual) can fully participate in self-advocating on issues related to politics, finances, organizational visuals, and service-based issues using ICT. Self-advocacy is hindered by having less opportunity for ICT skills training. There is a need for the government to set policy guidelines that calls establishment of ICT skills centres and the financing of research and innovation on assistive technologies.

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THE END

**Thank You
For Your
Attention**

