



PRESS RELEASE:
FOFA COMMUNICATION EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME 2018
“Hear me roar”

“Unless the lion learns to write, every story will glorify the hunter.”

African proverb

Standing up for what is right is never easy. It requires determination, perseverance, and many times a thick skin. However, unless someone does it, injustices and inequalities will never change. How can young people who cannot talk, and who have experienced marginalization and exclusion throughout their lives stand up and make their voices heard?

For the past two years, a group of young adults have participated in the Fofa Communication Empowerment Programme. They have found their voices to ‘dare to dream’ – to take control of their futures by setting goals, making plans, and putting them into action. They have found new ways of connecting with others, getting out there and becoming part of their communities. This year, the last in the 3-year project cycle, the focus of the project will be on advocacy – how to bring inequalities and discrimination to the attention of others and becoming a change agent.

At the annual programme week held at the Centre for AAC, they will be exposed to different platforms and media that can be used for advocacy. They will have an opportunity to learn about photo voice – using powerful images to make a statement. They will receive input from disability activists and experts in human rights. How to use social media and how to engage with the press will be other topics. The aim is for them to be empowered with strategies to change perceptions, practices and policies that marginalize and sideline not only them, but others with disabilities in their communities. In the week of 3-7 September 2018 they will join the UP campus community and learn, brainstorm, explore and create. The week will end with an exhibition of their work.

The Fofa Programme, the first of its kind in Africa, commenced in September 2005, and is loosely based on a similar programme, Augmentative Communication and Empowerment Supports (ACES), developed by Prof Diane Bryen, at Temple University, in Philadelphia, USA. After the training week held at the University of Pretoria, participants are supported by their personal assistants who attend the week with them, to put their newly acquired insights, knowledge and skills into practice.

Please join us for an exhibition of photos taken by the participants on Friday, 7 September, 10h00 – 12h30 in the Humanities Building Foyer, Hatfield Campus, University of Pretoria.

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