

Spring 2024 Professional Fellow

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Country: Tanzania
Job Title and Employer: Executive Director, ESS Creative and Legal Foundation
Permanent Court Certified Mediator
Project Title: Empowering Women with Hearing Impairments in Tanzania: A Campaign for Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Awareness

Issue: Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) provides an effective method for resolving disputes outside of court litigation, with the assistance of an ADR practitioner such as a certified mediator. ADR is generally faster, less expensive, and more cooperative than traditional litigation (Mallya, 2023). Studies throughout Africa have shown that ADR has helped women in particular access justice (Atua, 2013; Uwazie, 2011). However, in Tanzania, individuals with disabilities face barriers to accessing current legal information, including the advantages of ADR (United Republic of Tanzania, 2012).

Despite Tanzania promoting ADR nationwide, individuals with hearing impairments have been excluded due to lack of sign language support. Given the compounding vulnerabilities experienced by women with hearing impairments, ADR could serve as a crucial tool in safeguarding and realizing their rights to justice and inclusion in civic society.

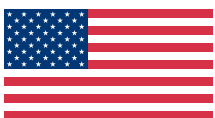
Project Objective: Erick's project aims to increase awareness of ADR among women with hearing impairments and advocate for systemic change through the creation and dissemination of accessible informational materials and personal stories.

Project Activities: Partnering with Joy Women Entrepreneurship for the Deaf (FUWAVITA), an organization supporting women with hearing impairments, Erick will develop and implement a campaign to raise awareness of ADR among women with hearing impairments. This builds on and expands their existing collaboration, where Erick provides free legal advice to FUWAVITA members, and FUWAVITA offers free sign language interpretation. They will create accessible informational materials, including videos with sign-language interpretation.

Concurrently, Erick aims to recruit 10 women with hearing impairments, ages 18 to 40, from FUWAVITA's network of 250 active members, who would benefit from ADR, particularly mediation services. He will work with them to resolve their disputes, document their stories anonymously, and share them as part of the campaign to raise awareness of ADR. The informational materials and stories, with the help of FUWAVITA and other disability partners, will be shared with women with hearing impairments and used to advocate for more systemic change.

References:

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