

Impact of LinkSS project highlighted

...As 128 journalists oriented to enhance communication outreach on COVID-19

THE last two years have been challenging for most Zambians due to the adverse effects of COVID-19 pandemic.

Being a new disease and having been detected in the country on March 18, 2020, a lot of misinformation and myths surrounding the COVID-19 have dominated the discourse in society not only in Zambia but world over. This is because from nowhere, people were told to religiously follow the five golden rules which include masking up, staying at home, social distancing, and hand washing as advised by health experts. Another dilemma has been to convince ordinary people to start wearing facemasks, something which they had only been accustomed to seeing medical personnel in a hospital theatre room. Added to that has been the issue to do with vaccine hesitancy as few people initially wanted to roll UP their sleeves to get vaccinated when COVID-19 vaccination was first launched in the country in April 2021. Coupled with the myths surrounding the vaccines and a widening knowledge gap, some people had been sceptical despite seeing or been reminded



that others are succumbing to COVID-19. In its quest to help local journalists increase public trust in COVID-19 vaccinations currently being rolled out in the country, a local organisation says it has scored some success after embarking on training about 130 journalists on best ways to cover the pandemic and spread the correct information. This was after the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) through its cooperating partners last year gave a grant of US\$19,782 to Dziwa Science and Technology Trust (DSaT) through the Linking Science Society to Better Lives (LinkSS) project to promote science communication in Zambia. The grant was accessed through the local Science Granting Council Initiative (SGCI). DSaT founder and LinkSS Principal Investigator (PI) Veronica Mwaba says her organization decided to embark on training journalists on health



•DSaT founder and LinkSS Team Leader Veronica Mwaba speaking in Lusaka during a media and health experts engagement.

reporting, so that they could tell the COVID-19 stories rather than wait for press releases which in many cases go in a one-way fashion. Ms Mwaba said the media orientation, which targeted journalists last year throughout the country, was done in collaboration with Ministry of Health, Zambia National Public Health Institute (ZNPHI), Ministry of Media and Information, Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) and the NSTC. She said the project was supported through the COVID-19 Africa

Rapid Grant which is a partnership between the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), National Research Foundation (NRF), the foreign office of the United Kingdom (UK) and the Commonwealth and Development office. Others are the UK Research and Innovation through the Newton Fund, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), South Africa's Department of Science and Innovation and the Fonds de Recherche du Québec.

Ms Mwaba said several councils participating in the Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI) such as NSTC in Zambia provided additional support. In the year 2022, the science advocate was hopeful that in collaboration with scientists, the trained journalists would be at the core to turn-around situations for society to believe in science. Ms Mwaba said with journalism changes due to the digital era, team-based approach in the COVID-19 vaccination campaigns should include other platforms for

effective communication outreach with policy and other key stakeholders. Through LinkSS project, Ms Mwaba managed to bring together researchers, science journalists, academia, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), public and key industry players to highlight the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, current scientific research and its relevance to society. Ms Mwaba said LinkSS had set the agenda to establish a relationship between media and scientists to highlight the significance

of science engagement in the fight against COVID-19. She further said calls by health experts on strict adherence to COVID -19 preventive health guidelines should be supported by all. The DSaT founder and LinkSS Principal Investigator appealed to Government and the business community to support science communication and advocacy campaigns across the country. Ms Mwaba, a Cornell Science Fellow from United States (US) who is the PI for the LinkSS project, noted that there was a need for citizens not to ignore the reality on the ground. She said COVID-19 was present and killing people and as a result, health experts were under immense pressure to control the pandemic. Ms Mwaba urged people to take personal responsibility as advised by health experts by wearing face masks when they were in public places and washing their hands regularly with soap or sanitising. With the detection of Omicron variant which brought with it the fourth wave in Zambia late last year, she said people should continue to observe physical distance, keep the environment clean or stay at home. Ms Mwaba said her project supported 12 selected community radio stations and the deaf community representatives with health authorities providing technical support to build capacity in the teams on COVID-19. She participated in high level meetings that worked to validate biotechnology policy for 2022. Ministry of Health Assistant Director in-charge of Health Promotion Kalangwa Kalangwa urged the media to prioritise community engagement in their coverage of COVID-19. Dr Kalangwa said the community's response to various health campaigns would be positive if there was continued engagement. Zambia has so far vaccinated about 1.8 million people who are eligible to get a jab while over 3,700 lives have succumbed to death since the virus was detected on March 18, 2020.

Speak in public to electrify, inspire others!

AN inscription that was found in a 3,000-year-old Egyptian tomb reads: 'Make thyself a craftsman in speech, for thereby thou shalt gain the Upper Hand.'

The 38th United States (US) President Gerald Ford also said, 'If I went back to college again, I would concentrate on two areas: Learning To Write and to Speak Before An Audience. Nothing in life is more important than the ability to communicate effectively!' Public speaking is defined as an ability to get ideas across to inform, persuade and entertain an audience. Today in the 21st Century, the need to communicate ideas within and across countries to inform, persuade and entertain an audience is much greater than ever before. Successful people can speak in public. Hence, the need to Learn public speaking. Your Public Speaking Skill Is Your Greatest Success And Leadership Tool. For example, William Pitt, the Younger, became Prime Minister of England at 24 because of his remarkable talent in making inspiring-great speeches. Great-speakers weave ethos (ethics), pathos (emotions) and logos (logic) into their speeches to win over the Hearts and Minds of their audiences. A great- speech inspires and entertains its audience. A great-speaker is a great romancer of words. The way you apply simple everyday words makes the difference between a good-speech and a great-speech. Anthony Robbins writes, 'An effective collection of words to describe the experience of our lives can heighten our most empowering emotions. A poor selection of words can devastate us just as surely and just as swiftly. Realise now the power that your words command if you simply

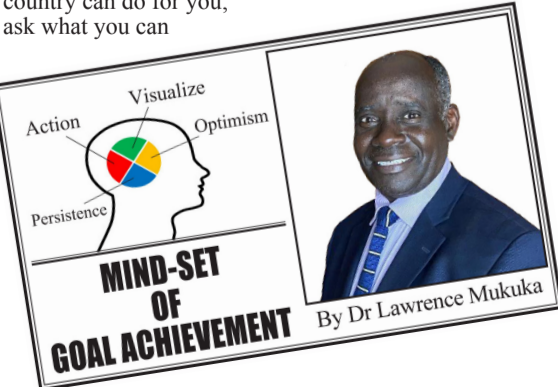
choose them wisely. Using emotionally-charged words can magically transform your own state or someone else's'. A great-speaker is positive, a sweet-heart of words, interesting, on fire and memorable. A great-speaker projects phosphorescence, one's own inner- light, onto one's audience. A great-speaker uses language accurately, clearly and vividly to appeal to audiences' emotions. Vivid Language applies Imagery and Rhythm. Imagery creates a mental picture of objects, actions or ideas in the audience's mind to make the audience imagine, think, feel, understand and remember your message. Imagery employs concrete words, similes, metaphors and hyperboles. A simile explicitly compares between things that are essentially different yet have something in common and doesn't contain such words as 'like' or 'as'. For example, her warm smile is like the morning sun-shine, as pretty as a rose and as clear as the blue-sky. A metaphor, on the other hand, implicitly compares between two things that are essentially different yet have something in common and doesn't contain such words as 'like' or 'as'. For example, positive mind power is the oxygen that keeps the fire of success burning in your life. Hyperbole is purposeful exaggeration. For example, Mike Sinyinza is so good at marketing and sales that he could easily sell umbrellas, rain-coats and snow-clearing machines to the inhabitants of both Kalahari and Sahara

Deserts! Rhythm refers to a pattern of sound in a speech created by the choice and arrangement of words and it's used to stir up emotions in an audience. Rhythm usually employs parallelism, repetition, alliteration and antithesis. Parallelism is similar arrangement of a pair or series of related words, phrases or sentences. For instance, 'One small step for a man; one giant leap for mankind' (Neil Armstrong moon-landing, 1969). The denial of women's rights anywhere is a threat to human-rights everywhere. Repetition is repeating the same word or set of words at the beginning or end of successive clauses or sentences. For example, it is time for a positive mind-set change, it is time for becoming Your Own Boss and it's time for prosperity. Alliteration is repetition of the initial consonant sound of close or adjoining words. For instance, 'The task is heavy, the toil is long and the trials will be severe' (Winston Churchill). Also, 'Challenges of the 21st Century are for the most confident and consistent.' The fourth tool of rhythm is antithesis, a juxtaposition of contrasting ideas in parallel structure. For example, 'Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can



•PUBLIC speaking is the ability to get ideas across to inform, persuade and entertain an audience.

do for your country' (US President Kennedy). Other examples are, 'Winners never compete with other people; winners compete with themselves.' Antithesis is a favorite of great-speakers. It nearly always produces a neatly-turned phrase, and gives ideas in your speech an extra impact and a special touch of class. Imagery and rhythm create and use hypnotic language to win over Hearts and Minds of others. Public speaking follows a formal pattern that divides a speech into Three different parts: Introduction, Discussion and Conclusion. The Introduction (15 per cent) comprises an Attention Getter (e.g., example, anecdote, quote, statistic, colorful story, question, etc.) to attract attention of an audience, and a Preview that introduces and outlines the speech. The Discussion (75 per cent) comprises the main body of the speech of major points arranged logically and held by data and supports like examples and colorful stories.



The Conclusion (10 per cent) comprises a review or summary of a speech and finally a memorable statement, that calls the audience to take action based on the message of the speech. The four ways of delivering a speech: 1. Speaking Extemporaneously: From brief outline notes. 2. Impromptu Speaking: Speaking at the spur of the moment with little or no preparation. 3. Speaking From Memory. 4. Speaking From Reading A Text. A speech uniquely combines the words a speaker uses, the way a speaker says them and the chemistry between the speaker and the audience. A great-speaker

is Relaxed, Smiling, Eloquent, Energetic, Lively and Humorous. Author of The Art of Public Speaking, Stephen Lucas, says that your success as a speaker depends on your personal credibility, knowledge of the subject, preparation of the speech to overcome stage fear, manner of speaking, sensitivity to the audience and the occasion. Dorothy Leeds in Power Speak writes, 'Effective public speaking is a true boost to self-esteem. People who control the effectiveness of spoken communication become more confident. People perceive persuasive speakers as leaders. The Ability To Speak And Present Clearly, Persuasively And Memorably Is A Skill That Will Pay Off For Years To Come. Communicate with excitement; focus on what you have to say to them instead of what you think they may be thinking about you and practice until you're 100-per cent confident'. Public speaking is the biggest fear in the world. However, a great-speaker always overcomes it by Knowledge and Preparation. Merikare (2135- 2040 BC) said, 'Be skilful in speech, that you may Be Strong.' Public speaking to electrify and inspire audiences is your greatest tool of success. Electrify and Inspire Others. Author is a specialist in positive mind-set change. Email: positivemindpower1511@gmail.com