

SIGN LANGUAGE SPELLING BEE REPORT 2023



ISINYA
FOR THE
"nurturing &
"one deaf child"



Executive Summary:

The Sign Language Spelling Bee dubbed "SLIC Spelling Bee," organized by SLIC Hub in collaboration with Action for Children with Disabilities (ACD) and other partners such as; The Aga Khan University – IHD, Hand Language Kenya, Gifted Gem, One Planet Publishers, was a monumental event showcasing inclusive communication celebrating Kenya's linguistic diversity and importance of sign language in promotion of inclusive education.

The event was held on 23rd September 2023 at the Aga Khan Primary School, Nairobi to commemorate the International Day of Sign Languages in the world.

The event brought together the Deaf and Hearing learners from various primary schools and organizations for spirited competition, creative expression, and meaningful engagement.

Acknowledgments and Appreciation:

SLIC Hub extends heartfelt gratitude to all individuals, organizations, and sponsors who contributed to the success of the "SLIC Spelling Bee". To our Partners and Sponsors: Action for Children with Disabilities (ACD), Hand Language Kenya, The Aga Khan University – IHD, Gifted Gem and One Planet Publishers for their invaluable support and collaboration in organizing the event, and also the Aga Khan Primary School for hosting the first sign language spelling bee.

We appreciate the notable guests and attendees that included Ms. Charlene Ruto, the First Daughter of the Republic of Kenya, Mr. Washington Sati, Commissioner, and Vice Chairperson of the Commission on Administrative Justice (Office of the Ombudsman), Mr. Peter Miano, Deputy Director ECD and Vocational Training Nairobi County, Representatives from Kenya National Association of the Deaf (KNAD), and from the Agha Khan University, IHD.

We applaud the dedicated team of volunteers that included sign language interpreters, Judges, Ushers, safeguarding and security team who generously donated their time, energy, and expertise to ensure the smooth operation of the event and the well-being of all participants.

The event would not have taken place without our Deaf and hearing learners that participated in the contest; caregivers, teachers, and community members who attended the event and actively participated in the activities, making it a truly inclusive and impactful experience for all.



—
MS. Diana F. W. Kamau
Director



Led by SLIC Hub's Director, Ms. Diana F. W. Kamau, the event not only demonstrated the organization's dedication to promoting inclusive communication and education

but also emphasized the importance of collaboration in advancing the rights of individuals with disabilities.

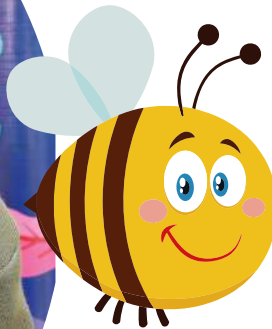


Introduction:

SLIC Hub, a leading non-profit organization with a decade-long commitment to promoting inclusive communication and raising awareness of Kenyan Sign Language (KSL), stands at the forefront of efforts to create a more inclusive society. The organization has been instrumental in advocating for the rights of individuals with disabilities and fostering a culture of inclusivity and acceptance.

Founded on the principle that communication is a fundamental human right, SLIC Hub has been relentless in its pursuit of creating a world where everyone, regardless of ability, has the opportunity to thrive. Through a multifaceted approach that encompasses advocacy, education, and community engagement, SLIC Hub has become a beacon of hope for individuals with disabilities and their families, offering support, resources, and opportunities for empowerment.

At the heart of SLIC Hub's mission lies a deep-seated belief in the transformative power of sign language by promoting the uniqueness of KSL as a "cool" communication skill for all. SLIC Hub has been instrumental in raising awareness of KSL among the broader community and also recognizing KSL as not only a mode of communication but also a vehicle for cultural expression and identity that also seeks to break down barriers and foster a society where sign language is embraced by all, regardless of age.



SLIC Hub has become a beacon of hope for individuals with disabilities and their families, offering support, resources, and opportunities for empowerment.

The "SLIC Spelling Bee"

The "SLIC Spelling Bee," held at the Aga Khan Primary School, Nairobi on 23rd September 2023 to commemorate the International Day of Sign Languages was organized by SLIC Hub in collaboration with Action for Children with Disabilities (ACD) and other partners. The event served as a testament to SLIC Hub's unwavering commitment and tireless efforts in promoting inclusive communication to creating a more inclusive society where everyone has the opportunity to communicate, connect, and belong.

In this report, we reflect on the success of the "SLIC Spelling Bee" and the profound impact it has had in promoting inclusivity, celebrating linguistic diversity, and empowering children with disabilities. Through an in-depth analysis of the event's objectives, activities, key successes, and next steps, *we seek to shed light on the transformative power of inclusive communication through sign language and the invaluable contributions of SLIC Hub and its partners in creating a more equitable and compassionate society.*

Through the "SLIC Spelling Bee," competition event, SLIC Hub aimed to not only raise awareness about Kenya Sign Language (KSL) but also foster a sense of inclusive education, community, and understanding among the Deaf and the hearing individuals. The event provided a platform for learners to showcase their sign language skills, engage in creative expression, and interact with peers from diverse backgrounds.

The event also sought to break down barriers and promote understanding, respect, and inclusion. In addition, it played a key role in showcasing ways in which caregivers, teachers and other learners can participate, boost and support the Deaf learners, fostering equity in Education and Social integration without limitation in communication.





Event Overview:

The "SLIC Spelling Bee" unfolded as a vibrant celebration of linguistic diversity and inclusive communication.

From the early morning hours, the venue buzzed with excitement as participants, volunteers, and spectators gathered to partake in the festivities.



The day commenced with an atmosphere of anticipation as learners from diverse backgrounds, both the Deaf and Hearing, eagerly awaited their turn to showcase their sign language skills.

The talent showcases added a touch of artistic flair to the proceedings, with captivating performances ranging from sign language poetry recitals to musical renditions, captivating the audience and showcasing the expressive potential of KSL.



Throughout the day, the spirit of community engagement was evident as participants interacted, learned, and celebrated together, fostering meaningful connections and a deeper understanding of the importance of inclusivity.



In addition to the spelling bee, the event featured engaging Reading Showcases, where participants demonstrated their reading comprehension skills through captivating presentations and creative storytelling in KSL.



The culmination of the event saw participants being recognized and awarded for their achievements in the sign language spelling bee and reading comprehension, further reinforcing the importance of celebrating linguistic diversity, recognizing the talents and contributions of all individuals.



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While initially planning for 350 participants, the event saw around 500 individuals in attendance, surpassing expectations and stretching available resources.

Key Successes:

Active Participation:

Despite initial planning for 350 participants, the event saw an overwhelming turnout, with around 500 participants in attendance. This impressive participation rate underscores the widespread interest and engagement in promoting KSL and inclusivity within the community.

Additionally, the event witnessed a significant boost in inclusive education, communication and community engagement.

Smooth Execution:

The event was meticulously planned and executed, ensuring a seamless experience for all participants and attendees, despite the larger-than-anticipated turnout.

Robust Volunteer Support:

A dedicated team of 32 volunteers both the Deaf and Hearing persons contributed to the success of the event, providing invaluable assistance and support throughout the day, ensuring that all activities ran smoothly and efficiently.

Extensive Media Coverage:

The event received extensive media coverage, with features in leading publications such as the Daily Nation and the Kenya Broadcasting Cooperation, amplifying the message of inclusivity and KSL awareness to a wider audience.

Prominent Attendees:

Notable attendees included First Daughter Charlene Ruto, representatives from Kenya National Association of the Deaf (KNAD), Deputy Director ECD and Vocational Training Nairobi County, Commissioner, and Vice Chairperson of the

Commission on Administrative Justice (Office of the Ombudsman), and representatives from Agha Khan University IHD, highlighting the significance of the event and the importance of promoting inclusivity.

Key Challenges and Possible Solutions:

Lack of Adequate Funding:

One of the primary challenges faced during the planning and execution of the "SLIC Spelling Bee" was the lack of adequate funding. Despite the ambitious goals and objectives set for the event, limited financial resources posed a significant barrier to securing essential supplies, resources, and logistical support. The organizers had to explore alternative funding sources and carefully manage available funds to ensure the event's success while maintaining a high standard of quality and inclusivity.

To address the challenge of limited funding for future events, SLIC Hub seeks to explore various strategies to secure additional financial support. This includes:

Seeking sponsorship from

corporate partners, local businesses, and philanthropic organizations and individuals interested in supporting initiatives promoting inclusivity and diversity.

Launching fundraising campaigns

through crowdfunding platforms, social media, and community events to engage a wider audience and raise awareness about the importance of inclusive communication.

Applying for grants and funding opportunities

offered by government agencies, foundations, and international organizations that focus on disability rights, education, and social inclusion.

Huge Attendance:

Another challenge encountered was the unexpectedly large turnout of participants. While initially planning for 350 participants, the event saw around 500 individuals in attendance, surpassing expectations and stretching available resources. The organizers had to quickly adapt to accommodate the increased numbers while ensuring a smooth and enjoyable experience for all participants. Despite the logistical challenges posed by the large attendance, SLIC Hub and its partners rose to the occasion, demonstrating flexibility and dedication in ensuring the event's success.

To effectively manage large attendance at future events, SLIC Hub seeks to implement the following strategies:

Conducting thorough pre-event planning and registration processes

to anticipate and accommodate potential increases in attendance.

Securing a larger venue or outdoor space

that can accommodate a greater number of participants and spectators, while ensuring accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

Increasing volunteer recruitment efforts

to provide additional support and assistance throughout the event, including crowd management, registration, and logistical coordination.

Implementing technology solutions

such as online registration systems, digital check-ins, screen displays for the contest, and real-time communication tools to streamline event logistics and enhance participant experience.

Interpretation for Children Being Different:

Additionally, a notable challenge was the diverse range of abilities and learning styles among the participating learners. As children differ in their levels of sign language proficiency, comprehension, and communication skills, ensuring fair and inclusive participation posed a significant challenge. The organizers had to implement strategies to accommodate varying abilities, including providing additional support, modifying activities, and fostering an inclusive and supportive environment where all learners felt valued and empowered to participate.

To address the challenge of accommodating children with varying abilities and learning styles, SLIC Hub seeks to implement the following solutions:

Provide differentiated support and resources

tailored to the individual needs of participants, including sign language interpreters, visual aids, and assistive technologies.

Offer pre-event workshops or training sessions

for teachers, mini pre-events in respective participating schools for participants to increase awareness and understanding of diverse communication styles and strategies for inclusive engagement.

Incorporate flexible and adaptable activities

that allow for personalized participation and expression, such as small group discussions, interactive games, and creative projects especially in the Deaf Units or schools.

Create a supportive, safeguarding, and inclusive environment

where children feel valued, respected, and empowered to communicate and express themselves uniquely.

Digitization of Content for Balanced Comprehension:

The need to balance comprehension for both hearing and Deaf learners presented a challenge in delivering content that was accessible and engaging for all participants.

SLIC Hub seeks to address this challenge by digitizing event content,

such as educational materials, presentations, and interactive activities, to ensure accessibility and comprehension for both hearing and Deaf learners. This may include creating digital resources with visual aids, animations, and interactive features that enhance comprehension and engagement for all participants.

Conclusion

SLIC Hub will ensure the success and sustainability of future events by proactively addressing these challenges with targeted solutions, while advancing its mission of promoting inclusive communication, education and celebrating linguistic diversity.





Event Highlights:

The "SLIC Spelling Bee" was filled with memorable moments and unique aspects that truly made it a special and impactful event:

Bridging Worlds:

One of the most inspiring moments of the "SLIC Spelling Bee" was when a hearing child participant volunteered to serve as an interpreter for the rest of the children. In a heartwarming display of empathy and inclusivity, this participant took it upon themselves to bridge the communication gap between the Deaf and hearing participants, ensuring that everyone could fully engage in the event activities.

This act of kindness not only demonstrated the spirit of unity and acceptance fostered by the event but also underscored the importance of fostering empathy among participants. It exemplified how individuals from diverse backgrounds and orientation in sign language can come together to support one another and create an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and included.

Moreover, this gesture highlighted the educational significance of sign language in facilitating communication and promoting understanding among participants with varying abilities. By serving as an interpreter, the volunteer not only facilitated communication but also fostered meaningful connections among the Deaf participants, breaking down barriers and building bridges of understanding.

This educational aspect of usage of sign language reinforced the event's overarching goal of promoting inclusivity, celebrating linguistic diversity, and empowering individuals to communicate freely and express themselves fully.

Impactful Interactions:

Throughout the day, the Deaf and hearing participants and learners engaged in meaningful interactions and exchanges, breaking down barriers and building bridges of understanding. Witnessing this was not only inspiring but also a powerful testament to the transformative power of inclusive communication.

Outstanding Performances:

The talent showcases featured a diverse range of performances that captivated the audience and showcased the expressive potential of KSL. From sign language poetry recitals to musical performances, participants demonstrated their creativity, talent, and passion for sign language, leaving a lasting impression on all who attended.

Awarding Ceremony: The first three winning

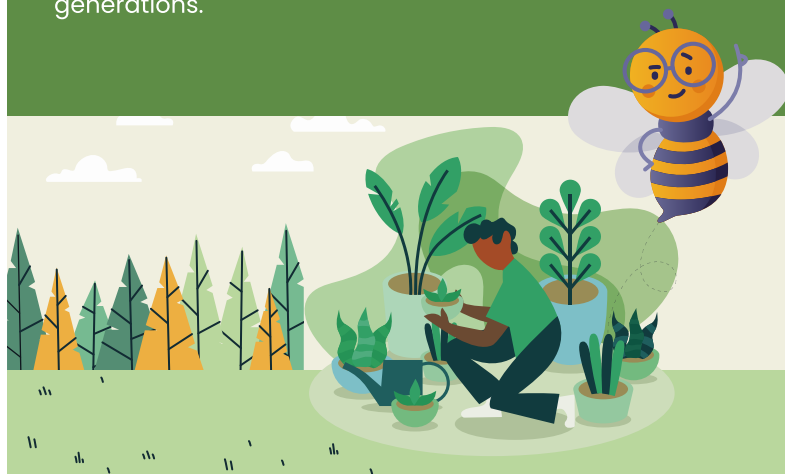
learners in the three categories were awarded a certificate of participation with different rewards that included Text Books, SLIC Hub hoodies and the top most winner was awarded a SLIC Hub trophy amongst other gifts. All participating schools were also awarded with a participating certificate.

Launching Event:

Being the first ever Sign Language Spelling Bee in the country, there was a launch; cutting the ribbon that was preceded by Ms. Charlene Ruto, other guests and a few learners. This event took place before the competition in respective venues/classes began.

Tree Planting:

In addition to the main activities, the event also included a tree planting ceremony, symbolizing growth, sustainability, and the organization's commitment to environmental stewardship. The guests, participants, volunteers, and attendees came together to plant trees, contributing to the beautification of the venue and leaving a positive impact on the environment for future generations.





Participant Feedback:

Feedback from participants, both the Deaf and Hearing Learners, Caregivers, and Teachers overwhelmingly highlighted the positive impact of the event on their lives:

Positive Comments:

Participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity to showcase their sign language skills, interact with peers from diverse backgrounds, and celebrate linguistic diversity. Many participants noted that the event helped them feel more confident and empowered to communicate and express themselves freely.

Testimonials:

Parents and teachers commended the organizers for creating an inclusive and supportive environment where children of all abilities could thrive and succeed. They praised the event for promoting empathy, respect, and understanding among participants and for raising awareness about the importance of sign language and disability inclusion.



The teachers and caregivers of the Deaf learners were encouraged to engage their learners and children respectively with other hearing populations.

The Deaf learners discovered new and interesting methods of learning to improve their comprehension and spellings. In addition, the hearing learners were encouraged to continue learning and improving their sign language skills.

Suggestions for Improvement:

While the event received overwhelmingly positive feedback, some participants suggested incorporating more interactive activities and workshops to further enhance learning and engagement. Additionally, there were suggestions to provide more resources and support for the Deaf participants to ensure equal opportunities for participation and success.

Impact Assessment:

The "SLIC Spelling Bee" had a significant impact on raising awareness of Kenyan Sign Language (KSL) and promoting inclusivity:

1. Attitudinal Changes:

The event fostered positive attitudes towards sign language and disability inclusion, challenging stereotypes and misconceptions and promoting acceptance and understanding. Participants and attendees alike gained a deeper appreciation for the value of sign language as a means of communication and cultural expression.

2. Behavioral Shifts:

The event inspired participants to become advocates for inclusivity and ambassadors for sign language within their communities. Many participants expressed a desire to continue learning sign language and to actively promote inclusivity and acceptance of individuals with disabilities in their schools and neighborhoods. In some instances, some of the schools participating started sign language clubs in their schools to promote the continuity of a culture of inclusivity in their community.

3. Community Engagemen

Participants left the event with a sense of belonging and unity, motivated to work together towards creating a more inclusive society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive leaving no one behind.

Lessons Learned:

Organizing the "SLIC Spelling Bee" provided valuable insights and lessons for future events:

Flexibility and Adaptability:

The ability to adapt to unexpected challenges and changes in circumstances being essential for successful event planning while flexibility in logistics, programming, and resource allocation being crucial for accommodating diverse needs and ensuring an inclusive and enjoyable experience for all participants.

Community Engagement:

Building strong partnerships and engaging with the community are key components of successful event planning. Collaborating with local organizations, schools, and businesses can enhance outreach, increase participation, and amplify the impact of the event on the broader community.

Continuous Improvement:

Evaluating feedback and reflecting on areas for improvement is essential for refining future events and maximizing their impact. Incorporating participant feedback, conducting post-event assessments, and identifying opportunities for growth and innovation are critical for advancing the organization's mission and achieving long-term success.



Media and Public Relations:



The "SLIC Spelling Bee" received extensive media coverage, reaching a wide audience and raising awareness about the importance of inclusive communication through sign language, incorporation and importance of the skill to all.

Media Coverage:

The event was featured in leading publications such as the Daily Nation and the Kenya Broadcasting Cooperative, as well as on social media platforms and television. Media coverage helped amplify the message of inclusivity and KSL awareness, reaching audiences beyond the event venue.

Public Engagement:

Media coverage generated significant public interest and engagement, sparking conversations about disability inclusion, sign language, and the importance of celebrating linguistic diversity. The event's impact extended far beyond the attendees, inspiring individuals across the country to learn more about KSL and to take action to promote inclusivity in their communities.





Winner; Open Category:
Abdirashid Mohamed
 Samiic Basir Special Education Centre

Winner; PPI & 2 Category:
Hadasha Njeri
 St. Georges Primary School, Ruiru

Winner; Grade 1 - 3 Category:
Mopian Asiany,
 Isinya School for the Deaf

MEET OUR WINNERS & PARTICIPANTS

We would like to recognize and appreciate schools and individual learners from different schools that participated in the first ever Sign Language Spelling Bee "SLIC Spelling Bee" to commemorate the International Day of Sign Languages on Saturday, 23rd September 2023.

1. Aga Khan Primary School - The Deaf Unit
2. Kidszone Educational Centre
3. Rabbani Centre for the Deaf
4. Wangu Primary School - The Deaf Unit
5. Bright Light, Kitengela
6. Samiic Bassir Special School
7. Isinya School for the Deaf
8. Kings Kids Village
9. OakTree School
10. The Marion Schools
11. The Green Garden School, Rongai
12. St. Georges Primary School, Ruiru - The Deaf Unit
13. Babadogo Primary School - The Deaf Unit
14. Other Various Schools represented by Individuals for the Open Category.





FUTURE PLANS FOR THE SPELLING BEE:

Building on the success of the "SLIC Spelling Bee," SLIC Hub has ambitious plans to expand the sign language spelling bee.

①

We plan to initiate county-level school competitions in the national sign language spelling bee comprising schools from around the Nation of Kenya.

②

We plan to reciprocate the same in East Africa and Africa and enhance the event with a yearly mega Africa Sign Language spelling bee "SLIC Spelling Bee".

③

We plan to reconsider and have a better and bigger reward mechanism for the learner and the school.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE EVENTS:

Based on the challenges and lessons learned from the "SLIC Spelling Bee," SLIC Hub offers the following recommendations for enhancing the future events:

Sustainability Planning:

Develop long-term sustainability plans to ensure the continued success and impact of the future events. This includes securing stable funding sources, building strategic partnerships, and establishing clear goals and objectives for sustainability and growth.

Accessibility and Inclusivity:

Prioritize accessibility and inclusivity in event planning and execution, ensuring that all participants have equal opportunities to participate and succeed. This includes providing accessible facilities, resources, and support services for individuals with disabilities, as well as incorporating digital learning and competition resources and gadgets, diverse perspectives and voices in event programming and decision-making processes.

Community Engagement:

Strengthen community engagement efforts to broaden participation, increase awareness, and foster collaboration. This includes expanding outreach to underserved communities, leveraging social media and digital platforms for engagement, and hosting pre-event workshops and activities to build momentum and excitement.



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Proposal for Partnership



We are excited to extend an invitation to you to join us in a partnership aimed at amplifying the impact of future events and advancing our shared goals of promoting inclusivity and celebrating linguistic diversity in Kenya.

How Your Support Can Make a Difference:

By partnering with us, you have the opportunity to make a significant impact on the lives of individuals with disabilities and contribute to the creation of a more inclusive society. Your support and collaboration could help us achieve the following:

Expanded Reach:

With your support, we can reach a wider audience and engage more communities in our initiatives. Your networks and resources can help us amplify our message and attract greater participation in future events.

Enhanced Resources:

Your financial support and resources can help us address challenges such as funding limitations and logistical constraints. By providing essential supplies, resources, and logistical support, you can ensure the success and sustainability of future events.



Innovative Programming:

Collaborating with you opens doors to innovative programming and initiatives that further promote inclusivity and celebrate

linguistic diversity:

Together, we can explore new ideas, develop engaging activities, and reach new audiences.

Community Engagement:

Your partnership can strengthen our community engagement efforts and foster collaborations with local organizations, schools, and businesses. By working together, we can broaden participation, increase awareness, and create lasting impact in communities across Kenya.

Next Steps:

We invite you to consider partnering with us on future events and initiatives aimed at promoting inclusivity and celebrating linguistic diversity. Whether through financial support, in-kind contributions, or collaborative efforts, your involvement is invaluable in achieving our shared goals.

Let's work together to create a more inclusive society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive and belong. Together, we can make a difference and inspire positive change in Kenya.

We look forward to the possibility of partnering with you and making a lasting impact together. Thank you for considering this partnership opportunity.

Yours Faithfully,

Diana F.W. Kamau
Founder and Director
SLIC Hub



...fun & more fun Galore!

- 1 An interaction moment in sign language.
- 2 Contestants of the Lower Primary category from the different schools paying attention to instructions.
- 3 Contestants of the Lower Primary category from the different schools paying attention to instructions.
- 4 A pose to the camera just after launching the first ever sign language Spelling Bee.
- 5 A learner attempting a question during the contest.
- 6 A learner having an aha! Moment.
- 7 Judge Peter keenly follows as the learner signs.
- 8 An applauding moment in sign language by learners and their teachers/caregivers.





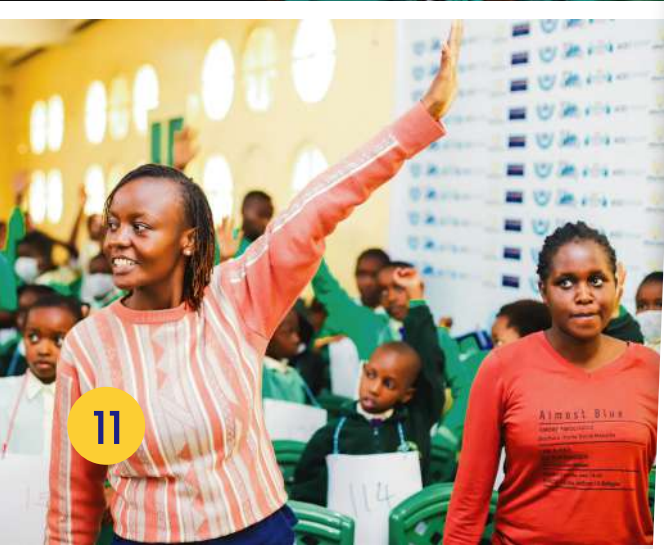
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SIGN language IS COOL CAMPAIGN



10

SIGN language IS COOL



11



12



13

...fun & more fun Galore!

- 9 Learners displaying the contests number tags.
- 10 Teachers, caregivers, and learners doing registration during the event.
- 11 Ms. Dorcas from Hand Language Kenya engaging the learners during the launch of Sign Language Spelling Bee.
- 12 Ms. Dorcas from Hand Language Kenya engaging the learners during the launch of Sign Language Spelling Bee.
- 13 Sign Language is Cool campaign champion.
- 14 Team from Gifted Hands assisting the learners and caregivers to register for the contest.
- 15 Learners posing for a photo after the contest.
- 16 A learner in the open category attempting a question in sign language during the contest.



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