

Salome learns to express herself

“Salome was 4 years old when she arrived at the Shule ya Viziwi Dodoma (Swahili word for Dodoma Deaf School) in August 2009. At first she was always very upset- but how could she explain this to the people around her when she didn't know how to communicate with them? Salome expressed herself through crying and crying, lying on the floor, and kicking and slapping all around her.

At the school, we introduced Salome to Sign language. During her first weeks at school, she was mostly in her own little world and would rarely interact or make eye contact with others.

Then one morning in October, Salome had a breakthrough. She ran up to me and one of the Matrons, smiling and signing with her two little hands: “Mzima!” (“Good” in Swahili). Her smile became even bigger when we answered her with the same sign “Mzima!” Salome probably didn't understand what she was saying, but at that moment it was clear that she did understand that she could use her hands to communicate – and that was the beginning



Today, Salome is one of the most cheerful happy and most experienced child in her nursery class. She still needs quite a lot of repetition before she masters new signs, but she is trying her very best with real results. She even does role plays with her teachers to help newly arrived children – and she is visibly proud of it.

Over the past few months, Salome has blossomed and bloomed like a flower. Every day she improves her communication skills. She has many friends and she laughs and smiles a lot. She has developed a great deal since her first days at Shule ya Viziwi Dodoma and its clear to everyone how much she is enjoying herself!”

VSO Volunteer- Renee Kwakel, Speech and Language Therapist at Shule ya Viziwi Dodoma