

LEARNING BY EAR

“Africa’s physically challenged people”

EPISODE 7: “The fight for equality”

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List of characters / Episode 7:

NARRATOR

SCENE ONE: INSIDE THE LIVING ROOM OF THE MALI’S

- Kangwa (f, 18)
- Mr. Mali (m, 50)
- Mrs. Mali (f, 45)

SCENE TWO : MARKET PLACE IN MAGANYE

- Oluanda (m, 18)
- Gidi (m, 38)
- Wema (f, 40)
- Crowd (m+f, varied ages)

SCENE THREE : AT MAGANYE POLICE STATION

- Oluanda (m, 18)
- Gidi (m, 38)
- Inspector Joe (m, 30)

INTRO:

Greetings and welcome to Learning by Ear. This is the seventh episode of our radio drama, “**Africa’s physically challenged people**”, a story about a forgotten part of society. In the last episode, Oluanda talked to Kangwa about his plans, and later, he also told his mother, Tofa. But what are these plans and how does Oluanda intend to achieve them? Kangwa, on the other hand was about to let her parents - the wealthy Mr. and Mrs. Mali - know of her involvement with Oluanda. How will they receive the news? We will soon find out, in today’s episode called, “**The fight for equality**”. Let’s first join the Mali’s as they listen to their daughter, Kangwa.

SCENE ONE: INSIDE THE LIVING ROOM OF THE MALI’S

1. ATMO: MUSIC PLAYS FROM STEREO A BIT LOUDLY

2. MR. MALI: Kangwa, do you mind turning the volume down a bit. We have had a hard day.

(VOLUME REDUCED BUT STILL PLAYS FROM BACKGROUND)

3. MRS. MALI: So, my dear. What is it you wanted to tell us?

4. KANGWA: Dad, mum. Ever since I was a little girl, you have taught me to treat others with respect, fairness and to always be humble. I have not always done that. But now I have a chance, and all I ask of you, is to support me. Support us.

5. MR. MALI: Kangwa, you know that you can always count on us. What is it you want to do?

6. KANGWA: I am coming to that. Oluanda and I are planning on mobilizing all those with physical disabilities in Maganye, and holding a peaceful march to fight for their equal rights in society. - We have...

7. MRS. MALI: **(Shocked)** Excuse me? Can you please say that again?

8. MR. MALI: Mama Kangwa, just let her finish first. Yes, go ahead child.

9. KANGWA: Thanks Dad, you all know what happened to Oluanda. He was expelled from school, just because he is now disabled. These people are given no chance at all, but guess what? They too have dreams and ambitions. And to add salt to the injury, we, the so called normal people, make their lives even harder. In public places only stairs are built, without taking wheelchairs and crutches into consideration. In schools, they are taunted, in shops no one wants to do business with them, let alone give them a job. How would you feel if it were you? How would you feel if it were me? Can we blame them for begging?

- 10. MR. MALI:** **(Impressed)** Absolutely not! My girl. That is a very worthy cause you have taken on. I am proud of you, proud to be your father and we are behind you 100% in this effort.
- 11. MRS. MALI:** **(hysterical)** Have you two lost your minds?
(shocked) My husband, do you understand the implications of what Kangwa just said?
- 12. MR. MALI:** **(Happy mood)** Oh I do. Our daughter wants to help those who have been trodden on by society. I have never heard her speak so eloquently before.
- 13. MRS. MALI:** Kangwa, the beautiful daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Mali, marching in the dusty streets of Maganye surrounded by all the crippled, blind, deformed, deaf people from all over the place. Does that picture seem real to you?
- 14. MR. MALI:** Very real. But if I may add to it, she will not be alone. I will be right beside her.
- 15. KANGWA:** Thank you Dad. Mum, will you join us too? Let’s do this as a family.
- 16. MRS. MALI:** **(Dry sarcasm)** Over my dead body! If you two want to pretend to be the next Mother Theresa and Nelson Mandela, then be my guests. I am off to bed.

17. SFX: **HIGH HEEL SHOES WALK AND FADE AWAY**

18. MR.MALI: Don’t worry about your mother. She is just upset over some other stuff. I am sure she will change her mind. Tell me more about this boy...

19. NARRATOR: Kangwa told her father everything she knew about Oluanda, and Mr. Mali was so impressed, he couldn’t wait to meet him. The following day, instead of repairing and polishing shoes, Oluanda got ready to leave home. He decided to visit the market in Maganye and share his vision with the rest of the disabled people, who mainly went there to beg for coins or food from buyers and passersby. Amongst them were Gidi and Wema. Let’s catch in on their conversation.

SCENE TWO: MARKET PLACE IN MAGANYE

20. ATMO: **MARKET AMBIENCE**

21. WEMA: **(Begging, sound of some coins)** Help a disabled mother of two children! Help please.

22. OLUANDA: **(Calling out)** Listen up, please give me your attention. My name is Oluanda and I have something important to tell you. Most of you don’t know me, but that is not important.

I am here because I face the same physical challenges as each of you here. For too long people like us have been neglected by the community. We can’t and should not accept that anymore.

23. SFX:

**CROWD MURMURS IN DISAGREEMENT/
AGREEMENT**

24. OLUANDA:

I look at you standing and sitting here, begging, and I see no reason why many of you, shouldn’t be productive in society if given the chance. And since they don’t want to give it to us, then we need to fight for it.

25. WEMA:

This boy is wasting our time. What does he know anyway? He doesn’t even have a family to take care of.

26. OLUANDA:

No I don’t. And it’s true I am younger than most of you here. But that doesn’t change the fact that we have all been denied our rights. I was sent out of school after I lost my leg. I don’t know your stories but I am sure each of you has somewhere, at sometime faced some form of exclusion and discrimination simply because of your physical disability.

27. GIDI: The boy has a point. I lost my job after an accident in the factory I used to work in. I lost my right eye and became half-blind. After that, I couldn’t find another job, and I have been doing a lot of study on the disabled by attending some seminars now and then. Listen to this, 80% of working age people with disability are unemployed.

28. SFX: **MORE MURMURS FROM CROWD**

29. OLUANDA: **(Shocked)** What! 80%? And probably the 20% who are at work, are doing the lowest-paying jobs or are self employed.

30. WEMA: Boy, you watch what you are saying! So, what do you propose we do?

31. OLUANDA: Most of you vote for politicians during elections, right?

32. GIDI: Actually, people with disability account for more than 10% of the general population. I also learnt that only 1% of disabled women in developing countries are literate. That is they can read and write.

33. WEMA: You keep talking in percentages and expect everyone here to understand? Make it clear!

34. OLUANDA: Okay, it’s like this. Let’s say Maganye has 500,000 inhabitants, 10% of that would be...

35. GIDI: 50,000. As in 50,000 people, not money.

(Laughter from crowd)

36. WEMA: That can’t be real? Are there so many of us here in Maganye? Where are the others? I only know very few of them.

37. OLUANDA: Good question. But I think we all know the answer to that. Most of them are being confined at home; sometimes against their will by the very people we call family. My goal is to make the politicians, government, clerics, and everyone, realize that we are here and that we matter. To do that, we should hold a peaceful demonstration.

38. SFX: **MURMURS AND LAUGHTER FROM CROWD**

39. OLUANDA: It sounds stupid, but it’s sure to attract their attention. An assumed 50,000 votes is a lot for any politician.

40. GIDI: Oluanda, that is your name right? Look I don’t mean to disappoint you but I don’t see this working. It all sounds very good. But what if something goes wrong and they send the police to disperse us? Have you thought about that?

- 41. OLUANDA:** No, I hadn’t thought about that. But who in their right mind would want to tear gas or beat up a disabled person? Society wouldn’t allow that too, would it?
- 42. GIDI:** Let’s hope you are right. For our sake, let’s hope you are right.
- 43. NARRATOR:** Oluanda had managed to convince a group of disabled people to join him for a march in the city to demand equal rights. Next though, he needed to talk to his long time friends, Magoto and Karemi. Of course there was also the permit for the march to be obtained from the Maganye police station. So, Oluanda and Gidi went together to make a request for one at the station which was near the market place. Inspector Joe was the one on duty.

SCENE THREE: AT MAGANYE POLICE STATION

- 44. ATMO:** OLD TYPEWRITER BEING USED TO TYPE;
OFFICE TALK IN THE BACKGROUND;
POLICE CAR SIRENE FROM OUTSIDE
- 45. GIDI:** Hello officer.
- 46. SFX:** TYPING CONTINUES, SOUND OF
CRUTCHES APPROACHING

47. **OLUANDA:** **(Calmly)** Excuse me sir, can we...
48. **INSP. JOE:** **(Irritated)** What is it with you people? Can't you see that I am busy? Okay, here.
49. **SFX:** **COINS JINGLING IN POCKET, THEN PUT ON TABLE**
50. **INSP. JOE:** That's all I have today. Now please go!
51. **GIDI:** Sir, we don't need your money. We are actually here to formally request a permit.
52. **INSP. JOE:** **(Surprised)** Permit? What permit? The last time I checked you people didn't need a permit to beg. **(regretfully)** Sorry I didn't mean to offend you. I wouldn't want to be in your place. Oh sorry again. Yes, a permit, what for?
53. **OLUANDA:** We are representatives of the physically disabled people in Maganye. And we are here to ask for a permit to hold a peaceful demonstration.
54. **INSP. JOE:** **(Laughs out loud)** Very funny. That was a good joke, but now I really must get back to work. **(pause)** You were not joking? Oh okay, what are your grievances?

- 55. GIDI:** An attitude like yours. People don’t treat us as equals a lot of the time. We want to be given the same opportunities as the rest of society.
- 56. OLUANDA:** So we are here to request permission and also protection during the march.
- 57. INSP.JOE:** **(Serious tone)** This is a new case to me. I can’t decide on it alone. I have to talk to my superiors. Please come back tomorrow.

OUTRO:

That was it. Oluanda and Gidi could not persuade Inspector Joe any further. So they left the station and went back to report to the others at the market place. What happens next? Will the police grant them permission? How will Oluanda’s former school react to the planned march after Kangwa invites everyone? Will the local politicians get the point and join the fight? Don’t miss the next episodes to find the answers to these questions. If you wish to listen to this episode again or previous ones of Learning by Ear, visit www.dw-world.de/lbe.

Until we meet again, goodbye and take care.