



THE LAW SOCIETY OF ZIMBABWE



Mentorship through Toastmaster

The Law Society has become more deliberate about empowering women lawyers to become effective leaders and professionals. In pursuing this goal the Law Society has come up, with *inter alia*, an innovative **toastmaster platform**. This initiative is essential to the success of any young attorney. However, it is even more so for young woman attorney, because the practice of law continues to be male-dominated in many environments, especially at the highest levels of management. This particular programme seeks to build on confidence, presentation and leadership skills of women lawyers as key components of professional development.

The idea of toastmasters is to be embraced as a simpler version of mentoring and nurturing leadership skills. This concept has been borrowed from **Toastmasters International (TI)**, a nonprofit educational organization that operates clubs worldwide for the purpose of helping members improve their communication, public speaking, and leadership skills. The overall objective is to avail a platform of communication and leadership tasks set to promote the learning of the art of speaking, listening, and thinking.

The platform will bring members together on a regular basis to practice various skills useful in public speaking, including giving speeches, speaking extemporaneously, listening, and providing each other with feedback and evaluation. Over time, the goal is gradually to have polished public speaking and presentation skills, where attention to the structure of the speech, tone of voice or to own movement on stage is paid, *inter alia*. The distinctive feature of this concept is continual evaluation which evaluation is used as immediate feedback for members to self-assess and identify training gaps and needs. Out of this, many skills will be enhanced including the ability to effectively listen, motivate, encourage and support other members.

This platform is constituted on a voluntary basis and members may form their ad hoc committee to administer the running of the Club/Platform. Members will have meetings at a regular basis however not less than 12 times a year.

Objectives

The Law Society is committed to diversity and inclusion of female lawyers in the expansion of the legal profession and this one such opportunity that advances this cause while furthering personal development of individual woman lawyers. This program is designed to strengthen leadership

skills and confidence levels that may be expected of any lawyer .It is meant to support young women lawyers in their professional growth and development with bias towards attracting and or retaining more women lawyers into private practice. The LSZ recognizes the value of Mentoring as an instrument of organizational learning. This is also an opportunity for experienced members (mentors) to share wise counsel, knowledge, and general advice to young women lawyers. This interactive mechanism will not only seek to enhance the skills of women lawyers but also motivate career growth in private practice.

The mentorship will assist young women lawyers to handle various situations, enhance their developmental skills, and avoid some of the practical pitfalls that can potentially side-track a career or delay promotion opportunities.

Program operation

The mentorship program will commence as trial run in Bulawayo and Harare and members will participate on voluntary basis .Whilst the programme will be for women lawyers, the Club will be administered in line with the rules and guidelines of Toastmasters International .If any subscriptions are due ,each member will be responsible for such levies .

The program is also designed to provide support and networking for professional and client development issues, leadership styles, self-awareness, personal mastery and branding. The program is not intended to provide substantive advice or training in the practice of law.

The Law Society will also seek to enrich the program through supporting the mentees to attend any conferences or seminars that may cause professional development. This will be done through fundraising for such .The Law Society may also employ other methodologies deemed fit to bring diversity to this initiative. Any further clarifications and inquiries may be directed to anesu@lsz.co.zw.