



# INCLUSIVE

AFRICA CONFERENCE 2020



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**Theme: Digital Accessibility &**

October 8 - 9, 2020 (

**Knowledge Development &**

[www.inclusiveafrica.org](http://www.inclusiveafrica.org) (

# Keynote Speech: H.E. Margaret Kenyatta, The First Lady of the Republic of Kenya (



The First Lady and wife of the 4th President of the Republic of Kenya His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta, Her Excellency Margaret Kenyatta, is also the Founder and Patron of '[Beyond Zero](#)' – an Initiative aimed at complementing the Government of Kenya's effort to invest and improve the health of women and girls.

The program is anchored on her clarion call ***no woman should die while giving life; and leaving no one behind.***

The Campaign has triggered and sustained dialogue in maternal and child healthcare, cancer and HIV/AIDs contributing to increased awareness and concrete resource investment.

In recognition to her outstanding commitment and contribution to maternal and child health, the First Lady was presented with the United Nations Person of the year 2014 Award.

## Keynote Speech:

# H.E. Margaret Kenyatta, The First Lady of the Republic of Kenya '

- In these unprecedented times, accessibility and inclusion are needed to leave no one behind.
- Technology and innovation are very important in Africa's development.
- There are so many things that many of us take for granted, like keeping in touch with others, handling finances and online shopping, reading, staying entertained, and lots more. All these things visually impaired people would be able to accomplish independently by using a computer.
- We have had to learn many lessons as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic and a time when people, communities, and businesses have had to rely on access to the Internet, affordable smart technology, and online services to survive. Among the most affected by the pandemic have been blind and visually impaired persons and other persons with disabilities.
- Kenya has led in mobile telephone technology innovation; however, the country has not done well in designing or providing digital services and products that holistically serve the needs of persons with disabilities, as in African countries the dialogue around digital inclusion is only just starting.

## Keynote Speech:

# H.E. Margaret Kenyatta, The First Lady of the Republic of Kenya '

- The inclusive National Communication and Technology policy launched by the Ministry of ICT, Innovation, and Youth Affairs prioritizes access and inclusion of technology for persons with \$ disabilities, a significant step in the development of new standards for digital accessibility. \$
- Congratulations to inABLE for investing in computer labs in Kenyan schools that has enabled over \$ 7,000 blind and visually impaired youth to participate in inABLE's computer lab for the blind program. \$
- Businesses are encouraged to invest in innovation and programs so that many more children, including those with disabilities, can gain modern day text skills from an early age. \$
- We look forward to seeing accessible and affordable digital solutions and best practices will be \$ adapted across Africa and that more investment will be allocated towards education and digital training for the employment with youth with disabilities.

# Inclusive Design

## Rama Gheerawo, Director of the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design

- Design is a business tool and innovation tool, and everything in the world around us has been through a design decision. That is why it should be a good and inclusive one.
- Inclusive Design is defined by the British government as “Including the needs of the widest number of people in your design, but it simply is design at its most powerful and conscious. Its most enabled and enabling. And its most empathetic and inclusive.”
- Inclusive Design has been around for 25 years and was defined at the 1994 Applied Ergonomics Conference by Professor Roger Coleman, founding director of the Helen Hamlyn Research Centre. Since then, Inclusive Design has grown to become a global phenomenon, one of the most important aspects of modern design.
- Inclusive Design is not about post-it notes and not about death by paper. It’s about people in all of their diversity and people of all ages, abilities, genders, and race, in a global context and with a universal impact.

# Inclusive Design

## Rama Gheerawo, Director of the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design

- Inclusion affects all of us, as we are all aging as we speak, and disability is not someone else's issue, but also ours.
- We are all on a spectrum of ability. We want to use things that are aesthetic and not stigmatizing and not separate and are not excluding but inclusive.
- Issues of accessibility are now mainstream. The Covid-19 pandemic has reduced our access, ability and choice, and has also made us more reliant on technology so technology becomes increasingly important.
- Inclusive Design is underpinned by frameworks.
- Inclusive Design is the creative power to improve life and understanding that disability is important. Working with people with a range of disabilities gets it right for everyone else.
- Disabled people are pathfinders that lead users and extreme users and can point the way for the rest of the world.
- It is important to design for people's abilities, not just their disabilities.

# Inclusive Design

## Rama Gheerawo, Director of the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design

- Making simple changes like color change can make a significant difference between access or no access.
- In the digital space, working with real people can prove invaluable to codesigning inclusive services.
- Africa can become a global leader in making emerging technologies that benefit from Inclusive Design.

### Resources:

- The [designingwithpeople.org](https://designingwithpeople.org) website includes free tools, methods, and activities of inclusive design to use and share.
- [Royal College of Arts events](#)
- [Innovating with People - Inclusive Design and Architecture](#) by Onny Eikhaug (Author), Victoria Høisæther (Author), Marianne Støren Berg (Author), Cian Plumbe (Author), Merih Kunur (Author), Masashi Kajita (Author), Karine Denizou (Author), Gunn Schmitthenner (Author), Fiounnala Rogerson (Author), Rama Gheerawo (Editor)



# Digital Accessibility Policy: The African Perspective /

## Moderator

[Dr. K. I. Laibuta](#), Attorney at Law & Legislative Counsel, Chartered Arbitrator & Mediator, Kenya

## Panelists:

- [Yuval Wagner](#), Founder/ President, Access Israel
- [Christopher Patnoe](#), Lead Program Manager, Accessibility Programs Google USA
- [Daniel Onyango Obam](#), HSC, CEO/Communications Secretary at the National Communications Secretariat (NCS), Kenya
- [Ida Jallow](#), Program Coordinator ITU Regional Office for Africa
- [Eng. Irene Kaggwa Sewankambo](#), Ag. Executive Director and Director Engineering and Communications Infrastructure, Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), Uganda



# Digital Accessibility Policy: The African perspective

## Yuval Wagner, Founder/ President, Access Israel

- Awareness is key to promote digital accessibility, but it is not enough! There must be strong legislation to enforce that things are made accessible.
- Africa has a great opportunity to learn and adopt existing policies and regulations from other regions, including regulatory frameworks, legal mandates and enforcement mechanisms. There is no need to reinvent the wheel, going all over the process and making all the mistakes. African countries can implement accessibility in a much faster way. It is about copying and adapting what others have done! That is what Israel did: adopt regulations and standards and put enforcement mechanisms into the laws to ensure every technology had to be accessible.
- Nowadays more and more global companies are open to collaborate with governments in innovative ways with the common goal of improving accessibility.
- Ongoing training is key to keep up with new accessible technologies coming up!
- Aim high, adopt, and adapt! Don't reinvent the wheel! Raise awareness and provide training!



# Digital Accessibility Policy: The African Perspective

## Christopher Patnoe, Lead Program Manager, Accessibility Programs Google USA

- Accessibility is part of Google's mission statement to make the world accessible and useful.
- Google has adopted a social model of accessibility where disability is viewed as a mismatch between the needs of the individual and design of the product or society. Thus, the disability can be experienced by anyone excluded in the design phase.
- By design a product inclusively and leveraging tools like Artificial Intelligence, you can meet the needs of the community, e.g. captions in Google Meets not only meet the needs of people who are deaf and hard of hearing, but also benefits people who speak a different language, who are distracted or that are sitting in a loud room.
- “Never about us without us”: you should bring the disability community into the development process early to co-design of inclusive products and to iterate based on their feedback. The easiest way to achieve this is to proactively build an inclusive workforce.



# Digital Accessibility Policy: The African perspective

## Christopher Patnoe, Lead Program Manager, Accessibility Programs Google USA:

- Bringing persons with disability early to co-design and develop inclusive products in conjunction with them process of becomes a win-win-win-win:
  - you reduce stigma of disability, as more people are exposed to people with disabilities,
  - It allows firms to design and release products that meet the needs of people with disabilities because they have been designed
  - you create products that meet everybody's needs,
  - the company's products will improve
- Tech is advancing fast, competition is strong and new things keep coming up fast. Most things are available, so you don't need to reinvent the wheel! Analyze what your users need and make use of it. Cost issues should not necessarily be an issue anymore, as many Android and Chrome solutions are available for free!



# Digital Accessibility Policy: The African perspective

## Christopher Patnoe, Lead Program Manager, Accessibility Programs Google USA

- What can Africa do to catch up with the rest of the world issues with digital accessibility? Big tech companies (Microsoft, Google, Apple, etc.) are competing with each other in the accessibility space, creating opportunities and platforms that people in Africa can use so that they do not have to build from scratch.
- The cost of assistive technologies should not be an issue; many are actually free, you just have to know where to look for them. Android and iOS devices have screen readers for free as part of their platforms that countries can take advantage of it.



# Digital Accessibility Policy: The African perspective

## Eng. Irene Kagawa Sewankambo, Ag. Executive Director and Director of Engineering and Communications Infrastructure, Communications Commission (UCC), Uganda

- Uganda's National Vision 2040 aims to transform the Ugandan Society to ensure accessibility needs of persons with disabilities are addressed.
- Uganda is determined to make deliberate efforts towards the inclusion of persons with disabilities through interventions and provisions within regulatory and policy frameworks. Initiatives carried out under Uganda's Persons With Disabilities Act, enacted in 2006, include:
  - TV stations are required to provide sign language
  - Telephone operators must provide adapted devices for hearing impaired people.
  - Provision of operating guidelines for licensed telephony operators on access requirements for persons with disabilities.
  - Digital training for women with disabilities across the country and sensitization workshops on the importance of inclusive design in communications. (
  - Provision of assistive technologies to schools with children with disabilities.

# Digital Accessibility Policy: The African Perspective

## Ida Jallow, Program Coordinator ITU Regional Office for Africa

- In 2016 ITU engaged with regulatory bodies and other authorities and stakeholders in the East Africa region in a lengthy process to draft, review and validate an accessibility policy framework for the region that countries could use to adopt their own policy at national level.
- African countries already have the normative framework in the UN Disability Strategy, together with the guidelines developed by ITU.
- ITU considers critical that all African countries have the policy in place. Once you have the policy, the next step is to pass a legislation. Building the legal framework at national level is key, as once a country passes a legislation, it has a framework against which to monitor what it is doing, identify gaps and work to fill them.
- There is no need to reinvent the wheel!. Lots of accessibility features and standards already exist # and African can learn a lot from developed countries who have done quite a bit of work in this # area. #

# Digital Accessibility Policy: The African Perspective

## Ida Jallow, Program Coordinator ITU Regional Office for Africa

- It is critical to build a policy that works for a whole region (e.g. the East Africa Region) so that it can become the framework for all countries in the region to use to create and implement its own policy at a national level. ITU provides a self-assessment toolkit for countries to know where they are in accessibility policy implementation, covering mobile, web and government procurement.
- From ITU's perspective, Africa's current level of inclusivity is 2 in a scale from 1 -10. The normative framework is already there, but implementation is still absent. It is critical that all countries pass a regulatory framework they can use and move on from there to monitor implementation.
- There are many tools, accessibility features, and technologies available for free available that can be leveraged and made practical use of. However, there is not of enough awareness about. ITU is helping raise awareness about this in many countries.
- 80% of persons with disabilities live in developing countries; therefore, it is very important for Africa # to leveraged all tools available to ensure accessibility is mainstreamed. African countries need to do more hands-on work for persons with disabilities.



# Digital Accessibility in Financial Services

## Moderator

[Nuru Mugambi](#), Public Affairs Director and Sustainable Finance Lead, Kenya Bankers Association, Kenya

## Panelists:

- [Irene Mbari-Kirika](#), Founder and Executive Director, inABLE.org Kenya/ USA
- [Tamara Cook](#), CEO, Financial Sector Deepening Kenya (FSD Kenya), Kenya
- [Judith Oigara](#), CBS, CEO & MD, KCB Group PLC, Kenya
- [Gerald Warui](#), Managing Director, Equity Bank Kenya
- [Jane Ocharo](#), Advocate of the High Court of Kenya





# Digital Accessibility in Financial Services

**Nuru Mugambi, Public Affairs Director and Sustainable Finance Lead,  
Kenya Bankers Association, Kenya**

- The financial sector can help make sure millions of persons with disabilities are not left behind and are given dignity and empowerment by providing access to banking to millions of people living with disabilities in the continent.
- In order to design financial products and services (accounts, loans, insurance, fund management) for persons with disabilities by leveraging digital technology and infrastructure, banks should bring them into them into the design process and hire them to learn from persons with disabilities community and co-designing services and products with them.
- If you are 18 you should be able to transact with a bank (law of contract).
- Banks should not treat a disability as inability and processing and sensitization and financial literacy and empowering and educating and empowering customers but also educating and training our staff.
- Banking is no longer about brick and mortar and just transactions, but about leveraging digital technology to create engaging customer experiences.



# Digital Accessibility in Financial Services

Irene Mbari-Kirika, Founder and Executive Director, inABLE.org  
Kenya/ USA

- InABLE is working with seven banks in Kenya in a pilot project to bring inclusivity for persons with disabilities in the banking sector through the advancement in digital accessibility, by exploring the experiences lived by people with disabilities: can you access information about financial services, transfer money or open a bank account independently if you have a disability?
- Data indicates persons with disabilities are not being included in the banking process because banks do not have information about the needs of customers with disabilities and therefore they cannot design products and services for them.
- Recommendations: banks need to make a conscious effort to capture data to get to know persons you are serving and their needs, starting by employing persons with disabilities. Also, bank staff need to be fully trained to serve customers with disabilities.



# Digital Accessibility in Financial Services

Gerald Warui, Managing Director, Equity Bank Kenya

- Banks exist to transform lives and give dignity and expand opportunity by creating wealth and providing accessible banking products and services every other person regardless status and ability.
- Accessible Digital channels can be pivotal in making innovative digital products and services available to all persons regardless where they are and their abilities. However, face-to-face alternatives is critical for those that do not have access to technology or internet connectivity. Therefore, training banking agents in serving customers with disabilities is a priority.
- Banking is no longer a place you go but something you do. With accessible digital banking, mobile in particular, any customer, including those in vulnerable populations and those with disabilities, can be not only financially included, but also socially and economically empowered and dignified.



# Digital Accessibility in Financial Services

**Tamara Cook, CEO, Financial Sector Deepening Kenya (FSD Kenya), Kenya**

- Formal financial service providers can learn from the community to understand the needs of all customers, including those with disabilities, to design better products and services for all and provide adequate support.
- Ensuring privacy on transactions is critical. For instance, if a visually impaired person that uses text to speech assistive technologies, when trying to do mobile banking, unless they have a headset, they may compromise their privacy if someone is around.
- Technology may play an important role to help low income people seize social and economic inclusion opportunities, including those with disabilities. National census surveys should also include persons with disabilities and their needs, something that African bankers can use to design better products and services.



# Digital Accessibility in Financial Services

## Jane Ocharo, Advocate of the High Court of Kenya

- In Africa, some banks are disability friendly and supportive and even provide ATMs with braille keyboard. Others are behind and will not let you open an account or get a SIM card for mobile banking if you have a visual impairment.
- The law of contracts says you should be able to contract as long as you are over 18 and of sound mind; vision impairment does not make one a person with an unsound mind.
- A lot of awareness is needed. If a bank has a disability policy, it should make clear how persons with # disabilities can have access to the services. However, implementing this is easier said than done. #



# Digital Accessibility in Financial Services

Judith Oigara, CBS, CEO & MD, KCB Group PLC, Kenya

- KCB Group has policies that guide the bank's agenda and financial inclusion activities to ensure persons with disabilities are included, by working closely with communities with special needs to obtain their feedback on the policies on areas to improve from an inclusive banking perspective. The policies include capacity building and training staff to works towards making products and services more innovative in terms of inclusion.
- The bank is learning what are the challenges faced by customers with diverse needs, what needs to be done to address them and how it can help improve its services and products. Financial support is provided to persons with a disability build small businesses and startups.
- The partnership with inABLE aims to look at how to improve the accessibility of the bank's digital interaction channels including websites, mobile applications, online banking, and social media and ATMs. The goal is to implement accessible products and services that can be scaled to engage more and more persons with disabilities, help them become productive citizens, generate their own wealth and live a dignified lifestyle.



# Keynote

## Haben Girma, Disability Rights Lawyer, Author, Speaker

- There is a lot of diversity within the disability community. We need to build communities where all voices are valued. It is people who create communities. In many communities around the world, there is sexism, ableism, racism, and it is up to communities and people and individuals to call it out and remove this from our communities.
- Ableism is the assumption that disabled people are inferior to non disabled people, and that their lives are meaningless because they are disabled. Ableism is at the root of a lot of the barriers. That assumption is widespread, touching schools, employment and, unfortunately, it gets baked into a lot of our technology. If we can teach more developers to identify ableism, they can remove it from technology so our technology can be more inclusive.
- Disability can be defined as an opportunity for innovation. If you cannot do something one way, you can find another way to do it alternative ways are equal in value to mainstream ways of doing things.

# Keynote

## Haben Girma, Disability Rights Lawyer, Author, Speaker



The first Deafblind person to graduate from Harvard Law School, Haben Girma is a human rights lawyer advancing disability justice. President Obama named her a White House Champion of Change. She received the Helen Keller Achievement Award, a spot on the Forbes 30 Under 30 list, and TIME100 Talks. President Bill Clinton, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and Chancellor Angela Merkel have all honored Haben. Haben believes disability is an opportunity for innovation, and she teaches organizations the importance of choosing inclusion. The New York Times, Oprah Magazine, and TODAY Show featured her memoir, *Haben: The Deafblind Woman Who Conquered Harvard Law*. Haben was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, where she currently lives.

Her memoir takes readers on adventures around the world, including her parents' homes in Eritrea and Ethiopia.





# Keynote

## Haben Girma, Disability Rights Lawyer, Author, Speaker

- Technology should have multiple ways of performing a task. People should be able to engage with an app or website in multiple ways so that it reaches more people. Disabled people can play a central role in innovating and creating new solutions.
- There are many barriers because people are not removing the barriers. When a person with a disability has been successful, it is because someone has chosen to help remove a barrier. Ableism keeps coming up like a brick wall trying to stop us. We need more people, employers and tech developers to remove these walls.
- Many people say that technology is visual, so that you need to be sighted to use a smartphone or a laptop. That is not true, and tech developers absolutely can make accessible technology. The tools already exist and there are many guides out there for making technology accessible: the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines for websites, Android and Apple iOS accessibility guidelines for apps mobile apps, etc. We need more tech developers prioritizing accessibility rather than treating it as charity.



# Keynote

## Haben Girma, Disability Rights Lawyer, Author, Speaker

- In our world, there are many big barriers but also many, many small barriers. Those small barriers add up and it becomes extremely exhausting to deal with the small barriers over and over again. When you take time to address the small barriers, you build up the skills to tackle the larger obstacles, and that can make a difference. When a person with a disability advocates, it contributes to remove barriers and helps all of the people that come after that person.
- Why bother making technology accessible? You reach more people if your tech is accessible. (there is over 1.3 billion disabled people around the world; that is a significant market). You also increase content discoverability if you add captions and transcripts to videos. If you add image descriptions to photos, more text is associated with your content and improves search engine optimization and therefore more people will find your content, whether disabled or non disabled.
- Disability also drives innovation. Organizations that invest in making technology accessible will come up with new and innovative ways for people to engage with technology.

# Keynote

## Haben Girma, Disability Rights Lawyer, Author, Speaker

- If you design for a disability challenge, you can end up building the next big thing. You need to increase hiring of disabled people, disabled engineers, designers, all aspects of your team should be diverse. When you increase hiring of disabled people, you are more likely to come up with innovative technologies that benefit everyone.
- Sometimes tech companies will make a second app for disabled people say rather than making their app accessible; separate is never equal. You might start out with good intentions, but down the line, the disabled app gets fewer resources and updates. That is not equal. It is better to have one app and one service that works for everyone.
- Another accessibility feature like captions helps provide access for deaf individuals but also helps hearing individuals who are situationally disabled; maybe the audio is not working; maybe someone is learning a new language and reading the captions helps; people struggling with Zoom fatigue also benefit from captions. Captions and transcripts are important for videos and podcasts.



# Keynote

## Haben Girma, Disability Rights Lawyer, Author, Speaker

- Keep thinking about new ways for people to access information and do not make assumptions about what disabled people can and cannot do. Design for everything to be accessible.
- There are many people who would think: do not bother making a photo app accessible, blind people do not take photos. However, they do take photos to identify what an object is, and therefore they need accessible camera and photo apps. Do not make assumptions. Design for everything to be accessible.
- Our bodies are always changing. We deserve dignity and access at every stage in our lives.
- Inclusion is a choice. When you choose inclusion, you role model it for everyone around you. Every time a tech company chooses inclusion, it role models it for its customers and its colleagues and other tech companies.
- One of the main barriers is ableism. Disability is not something to overcome; it was ableism that needed to be overcome.

# Keynote

## Haben Girma, Disability Rights Lawyer, Author, Speaker

- The COVID 19 pandemic has amplified the whole digital space but also all of the barriers that existed before the pandemic started that deny disabled people access to critical information, e.g.:
  - people with disabilities need access to health information and even more so at this time, but many have not been able to access this information. There are many health organizations that are not using the web content accessibility guidelines.
  - Many videos are being posted without captions, podcasts without transcripts and images, charts and flyers without any image description.
- Health organizations and hospitals and all organizations must make their information accessible. Web content guidelines are online posted and available for access. We need people to start using these resources.
- Also, we have to connect with disabled people and increase hiring disabled people and make sure that disabled people actually test the apps and websites to make sure they are accessible.

**INCLUSIVE**  
AFRICA CONFERENCE 2020



**Theme: Digital Accessibility &**

**Day 2 &**

[www.inclusiveafrica.org](http://www.inclusiveafrica.org)

# Welcome from G3ict

## Axel Leblois, President and Executive Director, G3ict, USA

- 97% of countries in Africa have signed the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As a result, 91% of Africans have a constitution that specifically protects the rights of those with disabilities.
- Today, almost two thirds of African countries have a legal definition of a reasonable accommodation. Something almost no countries had 15 years ago. This means that if reasonable accommodation is denied, it is considered discrimination against persons with disabilities. This is a very strong legal foundation for future policymaking and progress in countries.
- 48% of countries in Africa have already included ICTs (everything digital from television to mobile to computers to web sites and everything that is digital interface) in their definition of accessibility. We encourage the rest of countries to follow this example. If you do not have that accessibility accommodation that covers digital in the fundamental definition of the law, it is much more difficulty to push for policies.

# Welcome from G3ict '

## Axel Leblois, President and Executive Director, G3ict, USA '

- In terms of implementation, 88% of countries in Africa today have a government agency that focuses on persons with disabilities to help push for positive reforms in accessibility.
- However, only about 50% of countries have a government entity that is specialized, competent and focused on accessibility. Governments need to make efforts towards building teams that handle digital accessibility issues in government and in policymaking in general.
- Only 18% of Sub Saharan African countries involve persons with disabilities in policy development, policymaking, and policy monitoring. This is probably one of the most important missed opportunities for many governments. Without the input of persons with disabilities and without advocating to explain how to make things productive and work, deploying accessibility programs is more challenging. Countries with the best performance virtually always involve persons with disabilities in the policymaking of accessibility and monitoring of those policies.
- In the DARE index (a predictable variable on the G3ict website), four Sub Saharan Africa countries are clearly above worldwide average in performance: South Africa, Kenya, Zambia, and Angola.





# Mobile Accessibility .

## Moderator

[Shadi Abou-Zahra](#), Accessibility Strategy & Technology Specialist, W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI), Austria

## Panelists:

- [Clara Aranda](#), Insights Manager, GSMA, UK
- [Karen Smit](#), Principal Specialist: Specific Needs- Vodacom, South Africa
- [Brian Kemler](#), Accessibility and inclusion Product Manager, Google USA
- [Sitoyo Lopokoiyit](#), Chief Financial Services Officer at Safaricom PLC, Kenya



# Mobile Accessibility

## Shadi Abou-Zahra, Accessibility Strategy & Technology Specialist, W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI), Egypt/Austria

- Mobile access to the Internet and to the digital world through mobile has become predominant in Africa. Despite the fact that many people still do not have a computer, most people use a mobile phone as their main means of communication. This can be very important for persons with disabilities to get equal access to digital technologies.
- Access to the digital world, including digital economy and digital information, is a basic human right recognized by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- The Worldwide Web Consortium (W3C) develops the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines that define accessibility for digital content including web sites and mobile apps.
- It is not just about the standards and guidelines. It is about how we propagate this in the society and community among developers and vendors and also how we can ensure that people with disabilities have access to digital products and services.
- The best thing that can happen for accessibility is that it really becomes a recognized market and a business driver.





# Mobile Accessibility

## Sitoyo Lopokoiyit, Chief Financial Services Officer, Safaricom PLC, Kenya

- Statistics from the Ministry of Health indicate 7.8 million Kenyans are visually impaired. With 1.4 million visually impaired customers using Mpesa. Clearly there is still a big population that is excluded.
- Safaricom launched Mpesa in 2007 with the goal of promoting inclusion: financial health (providing products and services to the community that enable absorb shocks)
- All of Safaricom's products and services are about impact and impacting society.
- Safaricom has a purpose-led agenda that is to ensure that everyone within the organization is focusing on this inclusivity agenda and has a commitment to employ 5% people with disability as part of its overall staff across our businesses.
- We do work with the blind in Kenya to register persons who are visually impaired, as well as through ' partnership to blind people to test products and services to ensure that what we deliver is relevant and makes an impact on people's lives.



# Mobile Accessibility

## Karen Smit, Principal Specialist: Specific Needs- Vodacom, South Africa

- Vodacom has the vision to connect everyone inclusive of people with various disabilities and we realize the role we have to play towards the digital inclusion of disabled consumers.
- 7.5% of the South African population (approximately 3 million people) is disabled. In 2004, we launched the very first ever speaking phone for visually impaired persons in Africa and South Africa, with the understanding that technology can improve the independence of many persons with disabilities.
- Accessibility hardware and software is critical to ensure that disabled consumers can connect to a network and use Internet independently to enable social economic participation.
- Vodacom promotes digital literacy by partnering and empowering disabled persons organizations, supporting smart digital training centers by training disabled staff to in turn deliver accessible, and offers digital courses to disabled consumers.
- By including disabled consumer segments and not overlooking them, Vodacom expands its diverse customer positively impacting the bottom line.



# Mobile accessibility

## Karen Smit, Principal Specialist: Specific Needs- Vodacom, South Africa

- By making its technology and services accessible, Vodacom ensures that disabled consumers' needs are met, as they pay for technology and services just like other customers, and so that they do not stay behind and become part of the connected society.
- Vodacom design its services, apps and website with disability in mind, partnering with disabled users to assist with user testing and giving input from the design base.
- Developing accessible technology ultimately is about selling experiences that make a positive impact in the lives of customers with disabilities. Vodacom truly promotes digital inclusion as a way to manifest it truly is an inclusive company that aims to leave no one behind.
- Building close positive personal relationships with disabled persons and organizations is critical, not only when developing a new product or service, but all the time, and they provide honest feedback. That really benefits the company as well as them, as they give input, and at the end of the day, the company can develop appropriate services, and customers obtain a very good experience.



# Mobile Accessibility

## Brian Kemler, Accessibility and Inclusion Product Manager, Google USA

- Baked into Google's mission is making the world information accessible and useful. Android is a platform, so when Google builds its products, it wants to make sure that they work for everyone.
- Everyone wants to send an e-mail or purchase something using their smartphone, and just because somebody has a disability they should not have to get help from somebody else or have to have specialized equipment. That smartphone should just let that person do those actions independently. Independence is a key principle when making the Android platform as accessible as possible.
- Google has a number of different products and services provided entirely for free as part of the Android platform like Talkback, which allows a blind user to use an Android device with spoken output or Braille type of input. That way blind and visually impaired users can do anything that a sighted user can do.
- Google constantly explores how to make the functionalities of a smartphone help make the real world more accessible. Leveraging advanced technologies, like computer vision and automatic speech recognition, can be applied to meet unmet needs like accessibility in emerging markets such as Africa.



# Mobile Accessibility

## Brian Kemler, Accessibility and Inclusion Product Manager, Google USA

- Live Transcribe, a free application that ships with all Android devices, uses automatic speech recognition to help a deaf or hard of hearing person have a conversation with somebody who does not speak sign language and does not want to get out a pen and write it, e.g. hear what the doctor, the persons at the shop or the person in the coffee shop is saying.
- Every Google product is built in partnership with the accessibility community, with the users for whom Google is building, including developers, engineers, designers with disabilities and institutions, such as Gallaudet University in Washington D.C., one of the world's foremost universities for deaf and hard of hearing persons.
- Developers are responsible for making sure they build apps in a way they are compatible with assistive technologies by dedicating time early or in the development process to make the product more accessible and more inclusive. That is the right thing to do. It rewards in the shape of money and business case shall follow.





# Digital Accessibility Policy: Employment /

## Moderator

[Lizzie Kiama](#), Managing Director, This-Ability Consulting, Kenya

## Panelists:

- [Paul Kasimu](#), Chief Human Resources Officer, Safaricom PLC, Kenya
- [Alexander Bankole Williams](#), Chairman, National Advocacy Committee of the Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations, Ghana
- [Patience Ogolo- Dickson](#), Founder/National Coordinator, Advocacy for Women with Disabilities Initiative (AWWDI), Nigeria

# Employment

## Lizzie Kiama, Managing Director, This-Ability Consulting, Kenya

- The COVID 19 pandemic has shown how technology is a game changer in enabling people to work from home and providing increased flexibility, but has also made evident the barriers persons with disabilities face to work remotely or just access employment, particularly in Africa. This situation is not new and persons with disabilities have been advocating for this way before the pandemic started.
- We had been training young women with disabilities on digital skills and the COVID 19 pandemic made us shift the training mode and ended up investing in a Learning Management System and in facilitation.
- It is important to truly ensure that individuals with disabilities are accessing employment and are \$ using technology. Moreover, we also have to keep advocating for policies around this space. \$



# Employment

## Paul Kasimu, Chief Human Resources Officer, Safaricom PLC, Kenya

- Safaricom is driven by three Ps, by order of importance: purpose, people, profit.
- Purpose is what drives the organization, purpose to transform lives of people, serve and grow the number of people with disabilities within our ecosystem.
- Purpose helps bring accessibility forward as the right thing to do and a human right. Accessibility policies at Safaricom drive change within the organization and comes to life throughout the whole lifecycle of employment, from attraction onboarding, retention, development and even after retirement. We encourage people with disabilities to apply, making sure job posting platforms and channels are accessible.
- Safaricom has policies that support inclusion zero tolerance to discrimination and are built into its Human Resources systems, that also contemplate training of personnel.
- Organizational culture plays a key role in creating an inclusive workplace and is driven by the belief that technology alone can only take you this far. The only way to ensure complete inclusion is ensuring people with disabilities feel welcomed and valued through an organization and can be done in an effective organization culture.



# Employment

## Paul Kasimu, Chief Human Resources Officer, Safaricom PLC, Kenya

- Safaricom creates employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and, once they are part of the organization, the entire ecosystem embraces them, and they do not experience discrimination. Safaricom helps them harnesses their talent irrespective of their disabilities to be the best they can be.
- Safaricom uses something called LRSS: Language Rituals, Symbols, and Stories, and is about leveraging the language that is used to drive Safaricom's agenda and become a more inclusive organization; the rituals employees with disabilities adopt over time to build an inclusive workforce; and telling their stories.
- Nelson Mandela said: when you talk to a man in a language he understands, it goes to his head and then to his heart. Safaricom's culture is to touch people's heart every day.
- All individuals joining Safaricom are trained on unconscious bias to become part of one family.
- In order for employers to receive support to increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, it is important to understand it is a basic human right and to go beyond the legislation, seeking to become a diverse organization that can drive productivity.

# Employment

## Paul Kasimu, Chief Human Resources Officer, Safaricom PLC, Kenya

- The fight against stigma and discrimination starts with families where children with disabilities come from, as many are locked up and not taken to school because they have a disability. Organization should partner with wider communities to reduce stigma and discrimination.
- The economic aspect is tied to the developing the right skills. If schools can be equipped and people with disabilities at the very basic level can go through the right skills, they can compete effectively with colleagues without disability. Organizations can also go a step further, providing physical and digital support to others.
- It is important to build multi-stakeholder partnerships that bring together the national government with the policy and legal framework piece, county governments with implementation and data collection, corporations, disability organizations and academia. This way, they can see who is doing what, how they can support each other and work together to reduce the feeling that somebody with a disability is a cost.



# Employment

## Paul Kasimu, Chief Human Resources Officer, Safaricom PLC, Kenya

- During the COVID 19 pandemic, persons with disabilities have had to stay in their homes. The focus was put on their well being, providing them with protective gear and educate them on hygienic habits, like sneezing into their elbows. They were also provided with connectivity, laptops and education.
- There have been some events to make sure that everybody feels included and supported and no one is left behind.
- A regular staff survey is done to ask what do we do differently, partly targeted specifically to persons with disabilities. A variety of other things is done to ensuring they stay productive.



# Employment

## Alexander Bankole Williams, Chairman, National Advocacy Committee of the Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations, Ghana

- Employment is key to social development and to the quality of life of persons with disability.
- Barriers have always been a big issue for persons with disability, and society generally look at them as helpless beings unable to do things by themselves, thus impacting their employment chances. The mindset is that people with disabilities are not just good enough to do certain things, so the workplace environment is not exactly friendly.
- The first and foremost thing to consider is stigma and mindset. When you come into a workplace, do they welcome you? How do people look at you? Do they actually think that you can do the work? Generally, depending on that subjective information, they will employ you or not.
- On many occasions, even when a person with disability has gone through all the rigorous processes of being qualified for this position, he/she is told to stay at home, not to come to work and at the end of the month the employer we will wire the salary to him or her. “After all, what can you bring to the table that may be of value?”



# Employment

## Alexander Bankole Williams, Chairman, National Advocacy Committee of the Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations, Ghana

- Another issue is workplace accommodations: are computers accessible to different kinds of disabilities? Are there any applications for blind users?
- Also, in many areas there is no Internet services, which means persons with disabilities living in those communities are cut off from the world There are phones you have to use.
- Advocacy is achieving a lot in Nigeria, and the Discrimination of Persons with Disability Prohibition Act ( was signed to law recently, a great guideline for persons with disability to advocate for employment. (
- The rights of persons with disabilities in Africa cannot be upheld adequately unless there is an appropriate legal framework or policy regime to regulate matters. It has been crucial for us to be informed by what the legal framework or policy says.





# Employment

## Alexander Bankole Williams, Chairman, National Advocacy Committee of the Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations, Ghana

- Article 27 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities speaks specifically to issues of employment for persons with disability.
- The situation of high unemployment among marginalized groups does not only affect persons with disabilities, but also other minority groups. The Americas and Europe have addressed these issues using policy and legal framework.
- Globally, successful inclusion initiatives have been the result of creating diversity and inclusion policies or employment equity policies which contain more specific measures to deal with employment of persons of disabilities.
- South Africa has led the way in Africa creating an employment equity and legislation framework, which has been in place for several years now to cover minority groups, including the blind and persons with disabilities. Unfortunately, most African countries are not there yet.

# Employment

## Alexander Bankole Williams, Chairman, National Advocacy Committee of the Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations, Ghana

- When you look at employment situation of persons with disabilities, it is not just persons with skills that have to be employed in low level jobs. We are talking about highly skilled persons with disabilities with high competence that need to be employed at all levels.
- Relevant policy frameworks first and foremost seek to establish what their measures are to ensure that reasonable accommodation becomes a matter of right. Regulatory frameworks are needed within a policy framework that deals with the successful implementation of these policies, to ensure that they achieve the purpose of which they have been established.
- If we can move from advocacy for nations to actually adopt such policies and legal frameworks, we would move beyond talk and see actual implementation of right of persons with disabilities.
- Employment must be understood from different perspectives. One, there is a willing employer that genuinely wants to take persons with disabilities on board and needs the know-how to ensure that these people are adequately catered for. There must be support in place for such employers.

# Employment

## Alexander Bankole Williams, Chairman, National Advocacy Committee of the Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations, Ghana

- Taking persons of disabilities on board and providing them with reasonable accommodation may come with some degree of financial burden. Therefore, it is important that state parties ensure that employers get some incentives as entry point mechanisms.
- For example, in 2017 the Government of Ghana decided that persons with disabilities man half of toll booths on highways. The state is now making more money than it used to in the past. Potential employers have to be met in that manner, with a proven business case.
- Incentives are also a way to take into account the real cost of employing a person with a disability. Legislation in Ghana says that employers can take a tax rebate in as much as the income of the person of disability that they have employed. Thus, if you employ a person with disability whose income is quite low, the employer's relief or incentive is also quite low and not encouraging enough to even provide the relevant support mechanisms for the employee with disability. If this can be done, in addition to ensuring effective implementation of policies and legislative framework, employers will be better off employing persons with disabilities. '



# Employment

## Patience Ogolo - Dickson, Founder/National Coordinator, Advocacy for Women with Disabilities Initiative (AWWDI), Nigeria

- Women and girls with disabilities face increasing levels of discrimination in accessing basic education, something that limits their employment opportunities later on in life.
- The type of education opportunities young people with disabilities acquire is of lower quality, particularly in segregated schools, which often does not look at what employers need, thus making the skills of young people with disabilities less marketable. As a result, when young people transition into the workplace, they are in a very disadvantaged position.
- It is very important that persons with disabilities build their skills to ensure that they are on an equal playing field.
- Today, the interest around technology among the community of persons with disabilities is very low. We are responsible to empower our young, young ladies and our young men with disabilities towards what is happening now, especially around the digital and technology. That will determine if they will be employed or not in some cases.



# Employment

## Patience Ogolo - Dickson, Founder/National Coordinator, Advocacy for Women with Disabilities Initiative (AWWDI), Nigeria

- During Covid 19, the humanity and dignity of persons with disabilities was significantly reduced and literally turning back the hand of time.
- Covid 19 also brought the need to work remote online. Effectively applying the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines is key for lots more persons with disabilities, who are limited to working online now or they are compelled to conduct business online currently. If that space is not made readily accessible or adequately accessible it would take them out of the virtual space, as it took them out of the physical space.
- It is easy to make a virtual space accessible and does not cost much. All that is required is appropriate digital knowledge and skills on making the virtual space accessible and available for various work content providers or digital access providers. Otherwise, we will not be able to see persons with disabilities getting employed than we used to have employed in the physical environment.

# Employment

## Patience Ogolo - Dickson, Founder/National Coordinator, Advocacy for Women with Disabilities Initiative (AWWDI), Nigeria

- Some surveys indicate that the COVID 19 pandemic has had practical negative consequences for many % people with disability and their families; some people reported that they had been the first to get laid off when their employers started firing people, something which, in case the person with a disability % was the household's bread winner, had direct negative consequences on the rest of the family. %
- With no income they cannot get medications or have access to hospital facilities.
- Many have not been able to access online education
- There has also been a gender disbalance during COVID 19, with women and girls with disabilities % particularly negatively affected by increased rates of sexual violence. %
- Finally, many persons with disabilities reported that although their isolation had worsened during % Covid 19, "they had always been isolated in a way". %



# Digital Accessibility Policy: Accessibility in Social Media 0

## Moderator:

[Bernard Chiira](#), Director, Innovate Now AT2030, Kenya.

## Panelists:

- [Jesse Beach](#), Engineering Manager, Accessibility and Usability, Facebook, USA. '
- [Ethan Cohen](#), Senior Software Engineer, Twitter, USA.
- [Aubrie Lee](#), Naming Brand Manager (Google) USA.
- [Cezanne Maherali](#), Head of Policy for Uber Sub-Saharan Africa, Kenya.



# Accessibility in Social Media

**Bernard Chiira, Director, Innovate Now AT2030, Kenya**

- Sometimes the question of accessibility or lack of it is not clear to people who have not experienced exclusion.
- If a business has a greatly accessible product, it would be great if they devoted a bit more time and effort in using social media to share information of the accessibility features that are often very well described in help documentation and how-to guides with the audience.





# Accessibility in Social Media

## Jesse Beach, Engineering Manager, Accessibility and Usability, Facebook, USA

- What benefits inclusive social media could bring to users with disabilities? You can share moments that are special for you with friends and family automatically and let them participate in it. When we do inclusion and accessibility well, we allow people to express themselves in a way that feels natural to them. For people receiving that information on their side, we make it easy to get that information in the format that is most useful for them.
- Human beings have an innate need to be included and part of conversations. Social media allows for this on a digital platform and persons with disability should not be denied the same experiences that everyone else has.
- The value underpinning social media is its connection to people's real-life experiences.

# Accessibility in Social Media

## Ethan Cohen, Senior Software Engineer, Twitter, USA

- There is a lot of things that can be done to make social media posts more accessible: adding descriptions to images or media content in posts by adding the descriptive text into an alt text field, something that allows the social media app to provide that image description in the alt text for screen reader users. Also, avoid overusing emojis and memes. This implies the need for behavior change in people who are used to posting.
- Twitter never had a dedicated accessibility team but a group of folks passionate about it trying to make change within the company and ensure that products we are building are accessible. Now it will have an accessibility center of excellence to make Twitter a better place to work for people with disabilities. Twitter does not have transcription yet, but it is coming.
- Recommendation: use your voice to send Facebook and Twitter feedback on the accessibility of the apps so that they can act on it.
- For developers, providing accessibility features is just as important as building features with accessibility built in.



# Accessibility in Social Media

**Aubrie Lee, Naming Brand Manager, Google, USA**

- For some persons with disabilities, it is hard to leave the house, especially during a pandemic, and the global connection they need comes through the Internet. That is why is it important to have social media be accessible. If it is not accessible, it widens the gap and there will be those who can and those who cannot.
- Accessibility is one side of disability inclusion, the other one is social one, which is not only about whether the format is accessible but how inclusive is the content, and also talking to persons with disabilities and asking yourself how are you including disabled people in everything you do.



# Accessibility in Social Media

## Cezanne Maherali, Head of Policy for Uber Sub-Saharan Africa, Kenya

- For UBER, the ability to apply a technology layer to mobility has really transformed the way that people with disabilities are able to move around, and this applies both for riders as well as for drivers.
- For riders with disabilities, UBER has made it easier to move around by having transportation available on demand, make cashless payments, have real time GPS to track where you are going and safety features like emergency SOS buttons and ride and driver rating. The UBER app supports Voiceover iOS and Android TalkBack for blind and low vision users; for riders who are deaf or hard of hearing it the app allows for messaging between riders and drivers.
- For deaf drivers the product has different capabilities to improve their experience like flashing trip requests to catch the driver's attention or prompting the rider to input their destination. For drivers with mobility disabilities, as long as you are legally qualified to drive, you are welcome to the platform. In Nairobi there are several disabled drivers with a missing leg or arm.
- It is critical to listen to users with disabilities, raise awareness about the accessibility features available and continue improving the experience for people with disabilities globally.



# Digital Accessibility Policy: Primary and High School Education

## Moderator:

[Florian Rabenstein](#), Education Officer, UNICEF, Kenya

## Panelists:

- [Leopoldine Nakashole](#), Deputy Director, Special Programmes and Schools, Ministry of Education, Namibia
- [Ambrose Murangira](#), Disability Inclusion Advisor, Light for the World, Uganda
- [Fredrick Haga](#), Director, Special Needs, Ministry of Education, Kenya
- [Irene Mbari-Kirika](#), Founder and Executive Director, inABLE.org Kenya/ USA



# Primary and High School Education

**Florian Rabenstein, Education Officer, UNICEF, Kenya**

- It is key that children with and without disabilities have quality remote learning as an education alternative until schools reopen.
- It is important to get children with disabilities into the discussion and see how can learning materials can be made accessible. There is a need for a mix of awareness about accessibility in education, and co-creating with students, parents and teachers is critical.



# Primary and High School Education

## Leopoldine Nakashole, Deputy Director, Special Programmes and Schools, Ministry of Education, Namibia

- In Namibia, the ministry has made sure all materials developed are accessible for blind learners, translating all materials distributed into braille. The COVID-19 prevention protocols were also made accessible to all types of disabilities. For example, when needed sign language, braille format and information for intellectual development are provided.
- Transparent masks were provided to enable deaf children to read facial expression and lips so they can see when they are communicating.
- Learners with disabilities have special care nutritional needs and medication, and because of some programs that have lost some income, schools have taken up the initiative to ensure that these parents and learners are supported.
- Communication barrier with learners with disabilities during Covid 19 lockdown have been challenging, as many could not be traced or reached.



# Primary and High School Education

## Leopoldine Nakashole, Deputy Director, Special Programmes and Schools, Ministry of Education, Namibia

- Most materials were translated into braille and audios were also recorded on different lessons. Lessons were prepared through sign language and also simplified material for also learners with intellectual impairments.
- Different Microsoft packages and social media channels were used to ensure that all the learners were reached.
- COVID-19 has taught us a lot of things, that we need to think out of the box. The Ministry is aware that digital education needs to be taken seriously and that necessarily needs budget for now and for the future as well. Training was initiated to ensure teachers were trained on how to use the different ICT materials, to develop online content.
- Many children with disabilities have been victims of abuse while at home during the lock down, proving that school is probably the safest place where these children can be kept and be handled.
- Teachers have also gone through a lot during the lockdown, and they also need psychosocial support.





# Primary and High School Education

## Ambrose Murangira, Disability Inclusion Advisor, Light for the World, Uganda

- Learners with disabilities are facing four challenges: 1) attitude, 2) communications, 3) accessibility and 4) participation. The issue is not about listening, but about participation and engagement for a learner to obtain education. It is not only about getting a child into the school, but also about ensuring that this child can fully participate in the learning.
- In general, school management and the teachers do not understand inclusion. Therefore, it is important to train them to understand the concept of inclusion and how to make the environment a special learning environment inclusive.
- Schools also need to do self-assessment to understand what they are doing is right or wrong, and where they need to improve.
- It is important to work closely with the parents of learners with disabilities because when you have parents doing well in supporting a child with disability, this can convince more parents.



# Primary and High School Education

## Ambrose Murangira, Disability Inclusion Advisor, Light for the World, Uganda

- Over 70% of students with disabilities are at home. Disability organizations in the country can provide support to help learners obtain education.
- Governments should provide supportive policies. Most African countries do not have clear policies on inclusive education.



# Primary and High School Education

**Fredrick Haga, Director, Special Needs, Ministry of Education, Kenya**

- When COVID-19 started, all institutions of learning, at all levels, were closed and 13 million learners were sent home. Next, the government launched remote learning programs through radio, TV through the AD channel, and the Kenya Education Cloud. Unfortunately, not all learners were able to access these 3 approaches. Therefore, when schools reopen, schools may start from where they stopped so that no learner is going to be disadvantaged .
- Learners with disabilities are disadvantaged in many ways: lack of accessibility or connectivity, electricity, or even TV signals, and they do not have devices to receive these programs. As a result, not very many of learners with special needs are actually learning.
- The Ministry developed and uploaded specialized programs and content materials accessible to these learners, but only if they have devices to receive and use these programs and materials. So existing barriers are still preventing most students with special needs from learning
- The Ministry is aware of the needs of students with disabilities and is trying to make sure, with partners, like UNICEF, that they are not at risk, anymore than other children.



# Primary and High School Education

## Irene Mbari-Kirika, Founder and Executive Director, inABLE.org Kenya/ USA

InABLE recently did a study to investigate the effects of COVID-19 on schools providing educations to children with disabilities, including psychosocial effects. The study polled 650 participants, with or without disabilities, including parents and teachers, across 4 continents. The results indicated that:

- Parents are giving household chores priority to learning and there is no accessible materials for students with disabilities
- Less than half of students with disabilities are engaged in online or electronic learning which has become popular because of COVID-19, and they prefer radios to smartphones; the reason is that there is no accessible content.
- Students with hearing impairments are the least engaged in eLearning.
- There is very little support from teachers.
- There is a psychosocial and financial stress on families, and students are distressed and isolated. -



# Primary and High School Education

## Irene Mbari-Kirika, Founder and Executive Director, inABLE.org Kenya/ USA

- Most students do not want to be at home. They are bored without socialization, daily chores and there's too much social distancing that is affecting their learning.
- Parents with students of disabilities are concerned about the health and nutrition and about teachers not offering meaningful support to students at home.
- **Recommendations:**
  - We need to develop accessible learning materials and ensure there are assistive devices available for students. Teachers and families need to understand how to use these devices.
  - Learners with disability require more attention to health and their needs.
  - The government and non-governmental organizations need to work together to put the right accessible ICT infrastructure to enable remote learning .

# Digital Accessibility Policy: Higher Education

## Moderator

[Prof. Bruce Walker, Ph.D.](#), School of Psychology and Interactive Computing, Georgia Institute of Technology USA

## Panelists:

- [Dr. Solomon Mekonnen Abebe](#), Director, Community-based Rehabilitation, University of Gondar, Ethiopian
- [Brenda Betty Kiema](#), Disability Inclusion Officer, Tangaza University College Kenya
- [Wilson Macharia](#), LLB (UoN), PG Dip (KSL), LLM Candidate (Centre for Human Rights), Advocate of the High Court of Kenya / South Africa
- [Dr. Wisdom Kwadwo Mprah](#), Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation Studies, Department of Health Promotion and Disability Studies, School of Public Health, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Ghana



# Higher Education

## Dr. Solomon Mekonnen Abebe, Director, Community-based Rehabilitation, University of Gondar, Ethiopian

- In Ethiopia, the utilization of technology is low as only 4% of the population use the internet on the daily basis, and 41% of the total population have mobile connection.
- For a person with disability that has no access this poses a serious challenge in digital literacy, education and employments access.
- The government has proclaimed the right of persons with disability to employment, but more is needed in education and employment. Actions are focusing more on basic supports than in addressing the gap in access to education or employment opportunity.



# Higher Education

## Brenda Betty Kiema, Disability Inclusion Officer, Tangaza University College Kenya

- How has COVID-19 impacted higher education for students with disabilities?
- Higher education learners are now learning from home and this generated challenges as most of them were unable to catch up with the school.
- The environment was not conducive to providing a good learning experience. There are challenges like for example, the online information accessible required for learners with visual impairment is not the same of that was of the deaf. In some of the areas in this country they only have 3G network.
- The online learning platform does not follow inclusive design principles, and many lectures were not captioned so deaf students could not really catch up. During lectures most of the time you could log in and learners are not using Internet. You could not even see whether they are learning or not.
- Universities need to put more effort and resources in addressing accessibility and inclusion issues. They need to take the needs of students with disability into account to accommodate them.





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Promoting Digital Inclusion