Theme: Advancing digital accessibility & assistive technology in Africa
Day 1: May 25th, 2022

Knowledge Development

www.inclusiveafrica.org

Opening Remarks
Irene Mbari-Kirika, Founder and Executive Director, inABLE (Kenya/USA).

- The 1,200 blind and visually impaired students in the inABLE program have proven that they are capable of achieving almost anything once acquire digital skills.

- Accessibility is at the heart of the inABLE program, and the experience and expertise built could be scaled to the other schools for the blind in Kenya and to other African countries that desperately need these kind of programs.

- Africa has than 80 million persons with disabilities; the goal of inABLE is to make sure that young people with disabilities in the continent are at the forefront of the adoption of accessibility.

- The adoption of the EN 301 549 standard in Kenya will open up opportunities for businesses to create accessible products and services.

Keynote speech
Phil Cotton - Director, Human Capital Development, Mastercard Foundation (Ghana)

- The Mastercard Foundation started in 2006 that works in Africa independently from the company, initially focusing on inclusive education of children and young people from marginalized communities. The Scholars' program is the largest scholarship program for refugees in Africa.

- From the program we have learned that inclusion is at the start of greater inclusion and that we can learn a lot from young people with disabilities and their shared experience, as having present and actively participating can reveal challenges otherwise would simply not have noticed.

Official Launch: The first-ever National ICT Accessibility Standard for products and services in Africa

Chief Guest: Prof. Margaret Kobia, EGH- Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Public Service, Gender, Senior

Remarks:

- Stella Kipsaita -Assistant Director, Conformance, Enforcement and Standards and Region

- James Wafula - Lead Standards and Processes, ICT Authority of Kenya.

- Lt Col (Rtd.) Bernard Njiraini - MD, Kenya Bureau of Standards.

- Maureen Mbaka- Chief Administrative Secretary, ICT, Broadcasting and Telecommunications, Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs (Kenya).

Official Launch:

Harun Hasan, Executive Director/CEO, National Council for Persons with Disabilities, Government of Kenya

- The Government of Kenya is committed to "walk the talk", by changing the attitude of society towards those that look "different" and by leveraging technology to improve the lives of persons with disabilities.

- We consider Kenya a pace-setter in Africa in terms of inclusion of persons with disabilities, but we want look at and listen to the best in the world to learn, disseminate knowledge, and build capacity locally.

Official Launch:

Stella Kipsaita -Assistant Director, Conformance, Enforcement and Standards and Region

- Accessibility is the ability to access products and services. New technologies can create efficiencies for some users but pose accessibility challenges for others.

- Kenya is first country in Africa to adopt the EN 301 549 standard and this takes it to a higher level in the ICT agenda to create digital inclusion for persons with a wide range of abilities and disabilities and is expected to enhance participation at work, access to education, health information, and peer support networks.

- The launch of this standard is a combination of efforts for several key stakeholders and facilitators have been brought to the conversation, including the ICT Authority, the Ministry of ICT, the National Council for Disabilities, the Private Sector Alliance, the Ministry of Devolution, the Department for Social Justice. This partnership aims to build a framework that ensures maximum awareness and knowledge dissemination.

Official Launch:

James Wafula - Lead Standards and Processes, ICT Authority of Kenya

- The ICT Authority has been part of the development if the standards in collaboration with other stakeholders.

- The ICT Authority has a key mandate to standardize the implementation of ICTs in the public service; we are therefore expecting the standards will be key in designing accessible infrastructures, systems, and services.

Official Launch:

Zacharia Lukorito - Chief Manager – Standards Development and Trade, Kenya, (on behalf of Lt Col (Rtd.) Bernard Njiraini - MD, Kenya Bureau of Standards)

- The rapidly changing digital world is creating barriers for many persons with disabilities and older persons who are disconnected from e-governments services and form e-commerce platforms, but who have the right to a life without barriers.

- Several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focus on the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities: SDG 4 (guarantee inclusive and accessible education by building inclusive learning environments and by providing the assistance needed), SDG 8 (promotion of inclusive economic growth, full and protective employment), and SDG 10 (that advocates for the social, economic, and political inclusions of persons with disabilities).

- To accommodate all people in society, Inclusive Design and Universal Design must be integrated into digital products and services. The new standards, developed in seven months and finalized in May 2022, and are meant to ensure digital products and services in the public and private sector meet some minimum accessibility requirements. It is expected that Guidelines will be developed soon to facilitate the adoption and application of standards

- Persons with disabilities are neither heroes nor victims, but the agents of their own destiny

Official Launch:

Maureen Mbaka- Chief Administrative Secretary, ICT, Broadcasting and Telecommunications, Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs (Kenya).

- Kenya is the 1st country in Africa to develop accessibility standards through a partnership between different organizations. The Government of Kenya has a mission to facilitate universal access to ICT products and services and infrastructure and is committed to ensure inclusivity in every area of life, including the ICT sector.

- The National ICT Policy 2020 recognizes accessibility as a policy focus area and states that the government will provide an active environment fully accessible to persons with disabilities and stipulates that the government will take measures to ensure that services and emergency communications are made accessible. The Digital Economy Blueprint (Kenya´s roadmap to transform its economy into a digital one) recognizes accessibility as a cross-cutting issues.

- We aim at charting the way towards achieving the dreams of persons with disabilities who require accessibility.

Official Launch:
Prof. Margaret Kobia, EGH- Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Public Service, Gender, Senior.

- The very first Disability law in Kenya (now aligned with the Constitution 2010) was realized into Law in 2003 and affirms the rights and privileges of persons with disabilities and the importance of accessibility, allocates 5% of employment in the public sector to persons with disabilities, tax exemptions and the creation of the state-owned National Council for Persons with Disabilities.

- In 2018, the Government of Kenya, the UK Government and the international Disability Alliance co-hosted the Global Disability Summit where Kenya committed to implementing disability inclusion and accessibility policies. The realization of this commitment includes, among other measures, to perform data collection through the use of the Washington Group short question survey methodology in the National Housing and Population Census 2019, the establishment of a single registry to coordinate data on vulnerable persons, and the establishment of a new registration for persons with disabilities and the implementation of the Inclusion Charter Data Action Plan.

- All ministers are mandated to report on the progress made to mainstream disability and accessibility in their areas of responsibility.

Keynote

Christopher Patnoe- EMEA lead for Accessibility and Disability Inclusion, Google (USA).

- In 2017, Google committed to help 10 million Africans get digital skills training needed to grow businesses and careers.

- Inclusion is like a map: by working with the local community, you can understand who to talk to, involve and learn from the what are the challenges.

- People are not just their disability, but are complex and multi-dimensional: gender, social and economic status, sexual orientation, etc., all of which may define who they are and what their needs may be.

- Diversity is multi-faceted, and accessibility and inclusion is not a language of perfection, but of progress.

- In 2021, Google created in London the first non-US site to support accessibility in EMEA, because we understood that California is not Africa and things that work in one place will not necessarily work in others. Logistical challenges are often more important than technical ones, and we are here to partner with local stakeholders and understand the needs.

Keynote

Christopher Patnoe- EMEA lead for Accessibility and Disability Inclusion, Google (USA) (II)

- We have a lot to learn from each other and we want to understand how we van make better products and services in Africa, as many of the challenges faced in Africa are similar to those in most parts of the world.

- There is a huge business opportunity for persons with disabilities in Africa, and whatever is built here may help people in other continents. What is most important is to get started now, build the community, understand the needs, and work together to find solutions and build opportunities.

- We know only 3% of websites are fully accessible. With the new regulations implemented in Kenya we hope to have a common language to use, so that we all know what we are talking about.

- A more inclusive and accessible design is easier to use. Standards are also flexible and allow for change, but changing them often must be avoided, as this may pose adaptation challenges for the community and the stakeholders that use them to create accessible products and services.

- By building accessible products and services, we are building for good, because you do not know who may be benefiting from them.

Keynote

Haben Girma- Human Rights Lawyer advancing disability justice (Eritrea/ USA) + Questions from the audience (IV)

- Ableism is a system of beliefs and practices that say that persons with disabilities are inferior to non-disabled people.

- Employers assume that persons with disabilities can´t do jobs, and come up with excuses not to hire them.

- Web designers and developers believe that persons with disabilities will never be able to use them

- Ableism assumes that persons with disabilities are incompetent

- We have to learn to resist ableism.

- Disabled people are talented, and we need to fight ableism.

- It is important that employers engage in interactive process to find solutions that will work for persons with disabilities

- In the US, many organizations believe that the ADA only applied to physical spaces and not to digital ones. There are legal ruling stating that AAD apply to both.

- The tools for making websites accessible have been around for a long time, the same as the WCAG, screen readers, etc.

- If Online conversations are made accessible, many persons with disabilities can have access to social info, employment info, education, etc. and this is LIFE-CHANGING for persons with disabilities .

- The biggest barrier to persons with disabilities is ABLEISM

- We need to have a global perspective; if people have access to info, they will be able to help themselves. Digital information plays a key role in that.

- Q&A:

  – How can we use the digital space to champion the rights of persons with disabilities and build a stronger movement?

  – Digital info also includes stories. News programs are all online. We need to showcase stories that spotlight persons with disabilities doing all kinds of everyday life activities. We have to amplify these stories.

  – Also, we need to teach creators and influencers to make content accessible: SL, captions, image descriptions, transcripts, etc.

There is a lot of CRITICAL INFO that needs to be made accessible so that persons with disabilities are not locked out of it..

- Q: How did you learn how to speak?

- A: Deaf blindness is not black or white; I was able to hear when I was young, so I was able to learn to speak. We need to make sure that space is made for all kinds of voices, whether hi or low register, and that they are al valued

- Q: do all colleges have the facilities to train deaf-blind?

- A: all colleges have the ability to train DB people and to CHOOSE to provide accommodations. CHOICE is the key. ABLEISM is the main barrier, the concept that one´s worth depends on whether you are able-bodied or not.

- Q: How can other persons with disabilities help fight ableism?

- A: Start out with what you know, your own disability. The, engage un CROSS-DISABILITY experiences, disabilities that are different from yours, to become stronger and work together. Find out about tools and resources, and share them with the community

- Q: How can we enforce DISAB INCLUSION laws in African countries?

- A: Africa has many different communities and cultures are different and, in many ways, opposing. But I recommend having CROSS-DISABILITY conversations. Advocacy must also be done by non-disabled people. Learn and start doing. Notice ABLEISM so that we can remove it from our communities.

- Q: Can u tell us more about your device. Does it connect to the internet? Can it display pictures and other info from the internet?

- A: Yes, my device can connect to the internet, but it´s just one type of dozens of Braille computers. Many researchers are working to come up with Braille devices that are more affordable (searching for "The Holy Braille"). The way blind individuals access image information is through Alternative text (ATL text). As a blind person, I will read the text description of the image. Creators must include descriptions in the alt text of images.

- My way of communicating is considered slow that the mainstream way. People dismiss persons that communicate in a very slow way. That is ABLEISM, and we must fight it.

Presentation: Understanding Inclusive Design.
Rama Gheerawo - Director, The Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design, Royal College of Art and RCA Reader in Inclusive (UK)

- Ability, and not disability, should be highlighted and empowered.

- We all have abilities and disabilities, in different ways and degrees

- Chatbots can create digital discrimination

- Vocal accessibility interfaces: how can they be made more accessible? People are discriminated in the vocal world because of different accents, etc.

- persons with disabilities are LEAD USERS AND INNOVATORS, because they PUCH THE BOUNDARIES.

- Work with real people on a regular basis!

- Focus should be on PEOPLE, not products.

- Don't make up user personas of a product or service to be perfect, use real people!!!

- VR can help persons with hidden disabilities, e.g. mental, to test strength in a virtual environment

Presentation: Understanding Inclusive Design.

Rama Gheerawo - Director, The Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design, Royal College of Art and RCA Reader in Inclusive (UK) (II)

- People-centered design: Empathy, Clarity,

- The HHC has done 300 projects with over 200 organizations

- Inclusive Design = Inclusive + Design

- All things the we see, use, touch, smell, hear every day have been DESIGNED.

- Design means involving all peoples from all races, places, ages, abilities, etc.

- Inclusive Design = including the needs of the widest number of people, a term coined many years ago (designingforpeople.org)

- Inclusion means Age, Ability, Gender, Race, which are 4 ways we can be excluded

- Inclusive Design is a creative power to improve life, starting by one's own life.

- Inclusive Design is for ability, not disability.

Presentation: Understanding Inclusive Design.
Rama Gheerawo - Director, The Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design, Royal College of Art and RCA Reader in Inclusive (UK) (III)

- Empathy, Clarity, Creativity

- Inclusive Design can help PREDICT THE FUTURE. Just look 15 years back and see how many inventions and innovations have changed our lives and enabled us, e.g. Blackberry.

- Enabling Technology: any digital technology which empowers persons with disabilities to live more independently

- HHC's archive has 100+ assistive and inclusive projects for download

- Quite often design looks for power. Instead, Inclusive Design is about love

Fireside chat: Understanding digital accessibility.

Contributors:

- Jennison Asuncion - Head of Accessibility Engineering Evangelism, LinkedIn; Co-Founder. GAAD (USA).

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

Fireside chat: Understanding digital accessibility.

Irene Mbari-Kirika - Founder and Executive Director, inABLE (Kenya/ USA).
Jennison Asuncion - Head of Accessibility Engineering Evangelism, LinkedIn; Co-Founder. GAAD (USA).

- Jennison: Digital Accessibility to me is personal, because I benefit from it in a critical way, as a blind person, to create, publish, share or edit content.

- To me it's about being able to do all this INDEPENDENTLY and privately

- About the GAAD: it started as an idea coming from a 2011 from Joe Devon saying "Accessibility need to go mainstream now", talking about his dad's experience trying to use online banking. I started an Accessibility camp in Toronto. We need to have a Global Day in which developers can gain awareness about Accessibility, learn about it and apply it. In May 9, 2012, Joe and Jennison agreed on telling all their friends and talk about this to expose everyday tech professionals to Accessibility. Last year we celebrated the 10th anniversary.

- Irene: Africa is going to leap-frog in the adoption of accessibility through the adoption of the standard.

- Jennison: when you get an engineer or a designer into a room with a persons with disabilities trying to use what they have built, that's the A-HA! moment for them. It's critical to have conversations between engineers, designers, funders, end users and facilitators around Accessibility.

Fireside chat: Understanding digital accessibility.
Jennison Asuncion - Head of Accessibility Engineering Evangelism, LinkedIn; Co-Founder. GAAD (USA)

- Jennison: for me, the main achievement of the GAAD is that conversations around Accessibility have expanded to languages beyond English. People creating content or tech are not only doing it in English. It's important to double down in meeting with professional working on tech to bring them into the Accessibility conversation.

- Irene: What are the challenges or barriers to digital Accessibility.

- Jennison: to me, its' still BASIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS. We need colleges to teach basic concepts around Accessibility. Teach Access is committed to teach Accessibility to a million students in the next few years. Also, we need to find ways to be more nimble and find tools to make everyday life people to understand Accessibility. This is what we want to do through the GAAD. If you want to make something accessible, we want to be INTENTIONAL about it, and people need to be held ACCOUNTABLE for doing it. You need to include persons with disabilities in the mix, in all the processes.

Fireside chat: Understanding digital accessibility.

Jennison Asuncion - Head of Accessibility Engineering Evangelism, LinkedIn; Co-Founder. GAAD (USA) (II)

- Irene: how do we go about building Accessibility into every tech project?

- Jennison: make sure it's included as a key part of the whole process, involving PMs, Product Managers, in engineering, with metrics to track process, holding everyone with some role to play and responsibility accountable. Involve persons with disabilities from the very beginning, including during any changes. Accessibility is a PROCESS, not a PROJECT. Contact the DPOs in your country to partner with them and consistently involve them in the product design and development process.

- Accessibility benefits not only blind people, but persons with all kinds of disability, older persons, persons with low literacy, etc.

Case Study: Users with disabilities share their experiences with technology.

Introduction: Christopher M. Lee - Ph.D., VP & Managing Director, IAAP (USA).

Contributors:

- Christy Dumaduma Zimba- Project Officer, Disability Rights Advocacy Fund (Malawi).

- Lebohang Monyatsi - Model and Disability Rights Activist (South Africa).

- Wilson Macharia - Advocate, High Court of Kenya,(Kenya).

- Alexander Kojo Tetteh - President, Ghana Disability Forum, (Ghana).

- Karen Muriuki - Founder, Kenyans Living with Autism (Kenya).

Case Study: Users with disabilities share their experiences with technology (II)

- Christopher: Assistive Technologies (AT) is not only about specific devices or pieces of software used by blind or dyslexic people, etc. but, from a holistic perspective, it includes training, services, maintaining support, information, research, etc. Support services are very important component of AT, because not every user is technically savvy and even if they are given the best and most expensive AT, unless they are also provided with support services, it is likely they will not be able to embed them in their daily lives.

- Wilson: I, as a blind person, just like many other persons with disabilities, have been denied certain rights when accessing the justice sector, due to inaccessible physical spaces where the justice sector is located, negative attitudes by people working in the justice sector, and lack of knowledge about how to accommodate persons with disabilities. The role of technology in the justice sector is key, as for persons without disabilities, it makes things easier; however, for persons with disabilities, technology makes things POSSIBLE.

- Technology is gradually being adopted in the justice sector, in particular during the Covid-19 pandemic, for example, sending proceedings online through virtual platforms that are often inaccessible. However, seeking justice does not begin in court, but much earlier: with a phone call to report a dispute, etc. If technologies like virtual platforms, that in theory have been designed to avoid having to go to court or to the police station, are not accessible, persons with disabilities will face barriers to access to justice because they cannot access the platform used. Therefore, persons with disabilities must be included in the design and development of these tools and platforms, but the accessibility standards must also be applied during the development process.

Case Study: Users with disabilities share their experiences with technology (III)

- Christopher: how can people who cannot afford a Braille reader can get it?

- Wilson: For example, a BrailleNote Touch is an inclusive, accessible device because it has a screen and a Braille display on the bottom, so that different users can use it. However, it costs US $6,000. Therefore, to access these devices, it is recommendable is seek information on the AVAILABLILITY of these devices. It would also help to have some sort of subsidy, including tax incentives.

- Karen: to me, as an autistic person, success in the use of technology is means being able to use it to advocate for myself, specially through social media, where I have many followers. The barriers I face when posting information include the risk of being abused and getting inappropriate messages from unknown persons that hurt my vulnerability as an autistic person. I use technology to organize events and create support groups and communities to help autistic individuals and their families. I use including Facebook, Twitter Instagram, and WhatsApp; I just learned how to used them along the way.

Case Study: Users with disabilities share their experiences with technology (IV)

- CHRISTY: when I was growing up, I saw persons with disabilities begging in the streets, so when I injured my back, I was told I would join those people, as I would not be able to study, work, etc. On the contrary, I got a degree, a PhD, I had interviews for positions with for several international organizations. However, the interviews had to happen at the reception halls of the employer's buildings because the facilities were not accessible, and eventually I did not get hired. In education, the digital divide between developed and developing countries is increasing. In Africa, many education institutions simply refuse to serve students with disabilities. The Disability Rights Fund I work for provides funding to Disabled People Organizations (DPOs) to advocate for the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Unfortunately, in Malawi there are no places where Assistive Technologies can be purchased. Before providing any wheelchair to a person with disabilities that may need it, the specific NEEDS of the individual must be considered first to see which it the best option, otherwise the consequences can be negative.

- LEBOHANG: the many challenges faced have been access to the physical environment and to transportations. Assistive Technologies and accessibility have provided me the means to do many things like remote meetings, finding and request accessible transportation, etc. Thanks to Assistive Technologies , I have access to more opportunities and participation in society. Each of us attending this conference must become advocates in our own countries.

Case Study: Inclusive Education.

- Introduction: Theo Ressa - Inclusive education

Contributors:

- Richard Mativu - Country Director for Sense International Kenya

- Tobiloba Ajayi- Founder, The Let Cerebral Palsy Kids Learn Foundation (Nigeria)

- Victo Nalule- Executive Director and Founder, Tunaweza Foundation (Uganda)

- Dominique Archambault - Professeur, University of Paris (France).

Case Study: Inclusive Education.
Theo Ressa – Professor of Disability and Equality Studies in Education.

- There is evidence that the best way to empower persons with disabilities is to include them in the community; however, 70% of children with disabilities in Kenya do not access education.

- How do we create an environment that allows everyone to be included in education, so that they can contribute to the increasing the welfare of the nation?

- Lack of resources is always claimed to be the reason for not building a truly including education system.

Case Study: Inclusive Education.

Victor Nalule- Executive Director and Founder, Tunaweza Foundation (Uganda).

- As a person that acquired a disability at a very early age, I went from going to a special needs school where I was catered with everything I needed, to a regular secondary school where there was zero accessibility, and no accommodations were available.

- However, my disability became a blessing to me as it made me realize I had to adapt to a new life, motivated me to keep moving on, and made me stronger.

- I run the Tunaweza Foundation in Uganda from where we promote disability inclusiveness. We help students with disabilities discover their true potential to live a normal life, sponsoring them and using Design Thinking techniques to understand what each different person has to go through during the schooling process, their abilities, the challenges each encounters and their specific needs, to come up with education model that may meet the needs of the broadest range of students possible.

Case Study: Inclusive Education.
Richard Mativu - Country Director for Sense International Kenya.

- When I first started at the University, they did know how to care to my needs as a deaf person, so they recommended me to move to School of Education so I could eventually teach deaf or hard of hearing students. I completed my course and, although my command of sign language was still very basic, the computer lab really helped me catch up with other students, as I discovered the real value and benefits of digital platforms and digital books.

- In our organization ([Sense International Kenya](#)), when dealing with students with complex disabilities (deaf blind, etc.), besides providing teacher support assistance and communication assistance, we use a model based on the "[Learner Support Assistan](#)t" (LSA), a professional that directly supports the learner and not the teacher (receiving one-on-one support is key to the academic success of students with disabilities). The LSA helps the student with complex disabilities in the classroom by determining the right Assistive Technologies and strategies for the student.

- The role of parents is very important, as they need to have the right skills to support the child with disability, because in general they do not know where to start.

Case Study: Inclusive Education.
Tobiloba Ajayi- Founder, The [Let Cerebral Palsy Kids Learn Foundation](#) (Nigeria).

- It is critically important that children with disabilities get started in an inclusive setting as early on as possible. To make this possible, teachers, parents, and school administrators must be taught and empowered.

- Also, it is important that Assistive Technologies are also created in Africa for Africans, as scaling the provision and use of devices and software imported from developed countries is prohibitively expensive.

- Using a borrowed version of an accessibility solution or and Assistive Technology designed in a developed country may not necessarily work in African settings. Therefore, in African countries we need to define what inclusion and accessibility means for each of us, instead of using a borrowed concept. We need to use localized concepts of accessibility.

Case Study: Inclusive Education.
Dominique Archambault - Professeur, University of Paris (France).

- There are 40,000 students with disabilities in France. At the University of Paris 8 we started to get a lot of students with disabilities as soon as we created support centers at universities and learned that providing individualized, on-on-one support was key to their academic success.

- In France, disabilities have changed a lot in the last 35 years. 35 years ago, there were very few students with disabilities in higher education, most of them blind or visually impaired and deaf. Now, most of them have invisible disabilities e.g., learning disabilities like dyslexia, dyscalculia, ADHD, etc. Despite most university teachers declare having students with disabilities, they admit they would rather "don't have them" in their course.

- In the Technology on Disability Master ("Master MIASHS parcours Technologies et Handicaps") at the University of Paris 8, students are taught how to build assistive products and digital accessibility.

Panel Discussion: Inclusive Employment.

Introduction: Edgar Makona- Inclusive Employment

Panelists:

- Ronald Kasule - Chief Executive Officer, Diversity Ability Support Network System (Uganda)

- Dagnachew Wakene - Advocate, Educator and Researcher on Disability Rights (Ethiopia)

- Lizzie Kiama - Founder and Managing Trustee, This Ability (Kenya)

- Doreen Chizyuka -Inclusive WASH Coordinator, World Vision (Zambia)

- Paul Kasimu - Chief Human Resource Officer, Safaricom (Kenya).

Panel Discussion: Inclusive Employment.

Edgar Makona, Consortium Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Manager, Leonard Cheshire.

- [Leonard Cheshire](#) supports three programs in Africa: inclusive education, economic inclusion and safeguarding; the Economic Inclusion model aims at ensuring that persons with disabilities receive end-to-end support to access to and stay in both formal and informal employment. We work with candidates, families and employers to create inclusive workplaces.

- In its Inclusive Employment program, Leonard Cheshire focuses on career work readiness and entrepreneurship, capacity building on safeguarding, entrepreneurship, provision of Assistive Technology and reasonable accommodation, and guidance and support to employers.

- In collaboration with Accenture, Leonard Cheshire tested the hypothesis that LEARNING EXCHANGE (LX) improves employment outcomes for young people in Kenya. The LX approach explores innovative approaches to learning and upskilling. The pilot in Kenya, with 240 students aged 21-25, from different parts of Kenya, 50% with disabilities. We got a group to text the LX through a computer and another through a coach. Out of 180, 118 of the were able to access the course, 119 were able to complete at least one course and 74% finished the program. A number of learners with disabilities were able to complete, as compared with those without disabilities, and we obtained evidence that it improved their self confidence and skills and were eventually able to get a job.

Panel Discussion: Inclusive Employment.
Doreen Chizyuka - Inclusive WASH Coordinator, World Vision (Zambia).

- Sanitation and hygiene plays a key role in employment of persons with disabilities .

- Disability Inclusion for transformation as opposed to disability mainstreaming. In this approach, our Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) program we address issues of stereotyping, barriers faced by persons with disabilities insofar as sanitation practices are concerned. We work with persons with disabilities as partners to ensure that have access to water sanitation and hygiene.

- We also measure the outcomes and impact of these implementations in terms of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities .

- We also work in Sanitation Marketing training, an emerging field in which we train artisans to make assistive devices for persons with disabilities who cannot, for example, squat. After the sanitation devices are designed and developed, we market and sell them.

- We have employed farmers, at a local level, including those with disabilities, and trained them to respond to climate change challenges.

- We also have a program called Empowered Worldview where we get persons with and without disabilities to view the world with a positive perspective.

Panel Discussion: Inclusive Employment.
Dagnachew Wakene - Advocate, Educator and Researcher on Disability Rights (Ethiopia).

There are three key imperatives to make the employment of persons with disabilities become a priority for employers: economic, moral and legal:

- Economic: studies say that the exclusion of persons with disabilities from the labor force countries lose between 2-7% of their GDP. It is argued that employing a persons with disabilities is expensive; but the cost burden of not doing it is much higher.

- Moral: 1) Disability may be a lived experience for many people (1.5 billion people), but no one is immune to disability; 2) inclusion should not be considered as a program dependent on budget availability. It should be part of the culture. Inclusion is an indicator of CIVILIZATION; 3) the biggest barrier to disability is not the impairment but the other persons IMPRESSION about me as a person; 4) ABLEISM comes in the same category as RACISM, SEXISM, HOMOFOBIA, etc. Disability is AN IDENTITY, nobody choses their gender or race or disability; and 5) the "special needs" vs "specific measures" dilemma: there is no such concept as "Special Need" in contemporary law. However, specific measures must be implemented to fully participate in society. The problem, and the solution, is in the ENVIRONMENT

Panel Discussion: Inclusive Employment.
Dagnachew Wakene - Advocate, Educator and Researcher on Disability Rights (Ethiopia) (II)

- Legal: when persons with disabilities compete for certain jobs, the get excellent scores in written assessments. However, when they get shortlisted and interviewed, recruiters don´t hire them, and it´s very difficult to prove that they have discriminated because of disability. In many countries there are already laws around the shifting the burden of proof from persons with disabilities to potential employers. Also, regarding REPRESENTATION, the Achilles heel of the disability movement is that the cause of disability is lead by persons THAT DON´T HAVE THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF A DISABILITY, like when man talk ON BEHALF of women. Therefore, SELF-REPRESENTATION is KEY, otherwise there is the RISK OF MISREPRESENTATIONS

- Accessibility should be systemic, should be there from the beginning. Reasonable Accommodation is an "ex nunc" obligation, done on a personalized, case-by-case basis, whereas Accessibility affects everyone.

- "#SayNoToAbleism" slogan: ableism is the source of all evil when it comes to disability-based discrimination.

Panel Discussion: Inclusive Employment.

Lizzie Kiama - Founder and Managing Trustee, This Ability (Kenya).

- We focus on advocating for reproductive and employment rights.

- Disability is wrapped around a lot of negativity for very few girls with disabilities access education, and this is tied to lack of employment opportunities.

- Reproductive health of women plays a big role when thinking of accessing employment.

- WWD experience sexual violence and corruption directly on their bodies.

Panel Discussion: Mobile assistive technology. Sara Basson - Emerging Markets Accessibility and Disability Inclusion Lead, Google (USA)

Panelists:

- Sara Basson - Emerging Markets Accessibility and Disability Inclusion Lead, Google (USA)

- Bernard Chiira - Director, Innovate Now Assistive Tech Accelerator (Kenya).

- Karen Smit - Principal Specialist: Specific Needs (disabled and elderly) Products, Vodacom (South Africa)..

Panel Discussion: Mobile assistive technology.

Sara Basson - Emerging Markets Accessibility and Disability Inclusion Lead, Google (USA)

- In the Accessibility and disability inclusion in the mobile space, Google has several Assistive technologies that have been designed for mobile environments and for a range of disabilities.

- For deaf and hard of hearing users, Google has created the "Live Transcribe" app that provides free, real-time speech-to-text captions for in-person conversations on an Android phone. It supports more than 80 languages and dialects, and it can work even without an internet connection, something that may be very important in emerging markets.

- For blind and low vision users, although Google has created several technologies like screen readers, magnifiers, etc., we understand the physical world still remains largely inaccessible. To address these barriers, it has created LookOut that leverages Machine Learning to help visually impaired users to better understand their surroundings, providing information about the location, recognizing different back notes, etc. through auditory output.

- For cognitive impairment, the ActionBlocks app helps users to use Android more easily through the creation of large, customizable widgets on the front screen of the phone to perform simple tasks, e.g. call a doctor through a single button, call your mom, turn lights on and off, etc. through Google Assistant.

Panel Discussion: Mobile assistive technology.
Bernard Chiira - Director, [Innovate Now Assistive Tech Accelerator](#) (Kenya).

- Q: What are the key areas of innovation in mobile assistive tech, and what will they mean for consumers?

- A: Accessibility features have been mostly hidden for many years. Many new solutions developed in Kenya, for example, POS, card readers with a screen, etc. are not taking into account consumers with critical accessibility needs.

- A: in Africa, there is no basis in law to enforce. This is often given as an excuse not to implement Accessibility. We need stronger legal mechanisms to ensure law enforcement

- Q: what is Innovate Now?

- A: At Innovate Now we believe tech is for people, as we involve users from the design phase, including persons with disabilities in different use settings. In mobile, it is all about understanding context.

- For example, with eGovernment procedures, we see that much of the tech currently available was design without having persons with disabilities in mind. At Innovate Now we have teams building Ats that aim at levelling the ground.

- The risk is that, with tech evolving so fast, many persons with disabilities cannot keep up with the pace. People working in innovative fields like the Metaverse, Blockchain, NFTs, etc. must have all demographics in mind, including persons with disabilities , from a skills and tech level. Africa will soon become the largest market and source of talent in the world because of its young population.

- Q; what have you seen in the mobile tech lately that has inspired you?

- A: for me it is amazing to see so many persons with disabilities being able to leverage technology to fully participate in society.

Panel Discussion: Mobile assistive technology.
Karen Smit - Principal Specialist: Specific Needs (disabled and elderly) Products, Vodacom (South Africa).

- Q; what does Vocacom do in the are of mobile assistive technology?.

- A: We have been working in this field since 2004, when mobile devices were very different from today´s. Nowadays, a person with a disability may buy a device of-the-shelf and star using it straight away, without any need to install anything else. A: we have also launched SMS emergency service and Vodacom Emergency Service App through you can contact 24/7 emergency services without having to use the voice. It´s about ongoing education internally of all out stakeholders. Also, it is important to get BUY-IN and have the CEO talk about accessibility, because without support it is impossible or very hard to achieve results or meet goals. Branding campaigns showing persons with disabilities are very important to convey that persons with disabilities are represented as part of the customer base I am serving. The markets are doing a lot in the space and the managing directors are supporting accessibility. There must be a DEDICATED Accessibility office that advocates and makes sure products and services are accessible.

- Q; what have you seen in the mobile tech lately that has inspired you?

- A: the Accessibility features in mobile phones, on Android in my case, which I use all the time and that have been LIFE-CHANGING for me to be able to work, socialize, etc.

Fireside Chat: Men with Disabilities.

Contributors:

- Cobhams Asuquo - Performing Artist (Nigeria).

- Hon. Overstone Kondowe- Member of Parliament (Malawi).

- Alexander Kojoh Tetteh - President, Ghana Disability Forum (Ghana).

- Bernard Chiira - Director, Innovate Now Assistive Tech Accelerator (Kenya).

Fireside Chat: Men with Disabilities.
Cobhams Asuquo - Performing Artist (Nigeria).

- One of the biggest challenges we face as men with disability, specially in Africa, is the cultural assumption that you´re supposed to have ABILITY, so disability may make you LESS OF A MAN.

- When I first started making music, the perception of the people surrounding me was that, by virtue of your disability, I was unable to work, earn money, and make a living.

- By breaking things apart and piecing them back together, I was able to progress as a man and as a person with a disability, building an identity and a career as an artist.

- Digital Accessibility opens up a lot of opportunities. All the challenges I face years ago when trying to use technology game me the ability to CAN, it instilled in me a SENSE OF CONFIDENCE that I could do things that other people couldn´t. SO technology has definitely helped me. I use a lot of AT, but the CAN attitude was extremely helpful and technology played a huge role in building it.

- Q: have you mentored other men with disabilities?

- A: one of the natural responsibilities that falls on you if you are successful AND have a disability is that you have to share your story and experience with others and mentor them, because you've built a "best practice" or a "science" around doing something that seemed impossible for you to pull of.

- Bottom line of my story and how I´ve lived my life: **IF I COULD DO IT, YOU CAN DO IT.**

Fireside Chat: Men with Disabilities.

Hon. Overstone Kondowe- Member of Parliament (Malawi).

- Albinism in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa: my biggest challenge was access to information. At school I faced challenges like accessing information, Ats, etc. However, proving that I could be a breadwinning man was the biggest challenge.

- Access to services by persons with Albinism is very challenging because of negative attitudes and discrimination. Many people with Albinism are killed, so that GPS devices were given to 10,000 persons with Albinism so that they could be located; also, a specific site was implemented to be able to communicate with the police in case they got assaulted or faced dangers.

- .In politics, you must not talk about your disability during campaigns, to avoid raising questions about why you need the position, inspiring pity, etc. Also , crate more social networks to raise awareness.

Fireside Chat: Men with Disabilities.

Alexander Kojoh Tetteh - President, Ghana Disability Forum (Ghana).

- What has digital accessibility got to do with men with disabilities? How can it improve our lives?

- Whatever we discuss and develop as policies should reflect as improvements in our lives.

- The barriers faced specifically by men with disabilities have often been out of the conversation, as the focus was predominantly in the intersectional discrimination that women summer. However, it´s important that we discuss the challenges facing men, and the fact that we do not does not mean they do not exist, and we do not face them.

Contact

George Siso

Business Development Manager, inABLE

George@inable.org

0711-328-577

Theme: Advancing digital accessibility & assistive technology in Africa

Day 2: May 26th, 2022

Knowledge Development

www.inclusiveafrica.org

Keynote
Jenny Lay-Flurrie - Chief Accessibility Officer, Microsoft (USA)

- Microsoft's mission is to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more, including persons with disabilities.

- The Disability culture is a GROWTH MINDSET, as there are many fields of study and subject matters around it and there is no-one that knows everything about all of them.

- A company's journey with disability is important, and Microsoft's started in 1990. We now have thousands of employees with disabilities in different groups around the world. Microsoft created the Disability Resource Group to support employees with disability.

- My personal journey was sustained by four key pillars: education, employment, healthcare and connectivity. Even though I became deaf at an early age, I received great accommodations and went to a mainstream school in England.

- During my journey as a person with a disability, I gradually realized that my disability is the basis and the foundation of my STRENGTH as a human being.

Keynote
Jenny Lay-Flurrie - Chief Accessibility Officer, Microsoft (USA) (II)

- Microsoft's mission includes bridging the disability divide in technology, talent development, employee, policy and partnerships, and everything starts with people, and people are the key to build anything. 7.1% of Microsoft's U.S. employees in its core business chose to self-identify as having a disability, but there is evidence there are many more, between 15-20%. Microsoft's inclusive hiring practices focus on neurodiversity, supported employment, and broad disability hiring. Training on Accessibility Fundamentals is MANDATORY for ALL EMPLOYEES (160,000 globally).

- Key technologies supporting accessibility in MS products:

  - the accessibility Checker

  - the Spell check

  - Captioning in Teams, etc. is a FREE LIBRARY you can use. Twitter is using MS captioning

  - Adaptive mouse: you can 3D print the design you need according to your specific needs. This was designed with persons with disabilities , REINVENTING THE MOUSE THROUGH THE LENS OF DISABILITY.

  - Microsoft Surface Adaptive kit, that includes a set of STICKERS that makes Surface much, much easier to use for persons with mobility impairments.

Keynote
Jenny Lay-Flurrie - Chief Accessibility Officer, Microsoft (USA) (III)

- We believe accessibility is now more important than ever, in particular during and after Covid-19. The use of captioning at Microsoft has increased 3,600%, making it a free and available piece in all its products.

- Technologies open up great opportunities for Africa.

- In Malawi, we are running a project to train in accessibility, equip with AT & tech, and implement physical access upgrades.

- The possibilities are ENDLESS.

- The goal is to partner with local stakeholders.

- Together we can accelerate the journey of accessibility.

- There are a ton of resources available in www.microsoft.com/accessibility

Panel Discussion: How to integrate inclusive policies and standards into your organization.

- **Introduction**: Jack Ngare - Technical Director, Google, Kenya.
- **Panelists**
  - Klaus Höckner - Member of the board of The Hilfsgemeinschaft der Blinden und Sehschwachen (Austria)
  - Michal Rimon - CEO of Access (Israel)
  - Abebaw Abebe G Michael (BSc, MPH, MPM) - Project Manager | African Disability Forum (ADF), Ethiopia.
  - Zacharia Lukorito - Chief Manager – Standards Development and Trade, Kenya

Panel Discussion: How to integrate inclusive policies and standards into your organization.
Jack Ngare - Technical Director, Google, Kenya.

- How can we ensure ICT products and services run on standards? How can we facilitate the implementation of accessibility standards in products and services in Kenya?.

- To create the standards, the first step was to involve persons with disabilities and ask them about software, hardware, the requirements, build a database, and a network

- Procurement of accessible ICT is critical, and the standards are meant to support it. We developed a document explaining how do you conform to the standards.

- The implementation process is lead by stakeholders. Having implementation overseeing and monitoring mechanisms are key. The ICT Policy 2020 of Kenya refers to the standards and implementation of the policy is key, and for this, involvement of stakeholders, including persons with disabilities , is critical, so that the standards can be reviewed and improved if needed.

- Laws and regulations underpinning the implementation of the standards are key.

- In the IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE we are looking at how can we translate them into TANGIBLE features that are added to real products and services.

Panel Discussion: How to integrate inclusive policies and standards into your organization.

Abebaw Abebe G.michael (BSc, MPH, MPM) - Project Manager | African Disability Forum (ADF), Ethiopia.

- Persons with disabilities are part of the community and should be treated just like everyone else. Governments should have and implement policies that ensure it.

- Any service providers, if they do not consider persons with disabilities, should clearly SAY SO and clearly state that "persons with disabilities are not welcome". However, they don't do it, of course. Why?

- Key questions to ask ourselves are: how do organizations adopt accessibility? Do they have policies in place? Do they include persons with disabilities in the product and service design? Do they ask them what they need?

- Organizations should internally raise awareness about Disability and accessibility.

- All products and services should include accessibility features that may benefit the broadest range of users possible.

- They SHOULD ALSO COLLECT FEEDBACK FROM THEIR USERS and add it to the design.

- Employees should be trained in understanding the needs of persons with different disabilities and cater to them accordingly.

Panel Discussion: How to integrate inclusive policies and standards into your organization.
Abebaw Abebe G.michael (BSc, MPH, MPM) - Project Manager | African Disability Forum (ADF), Ethiopia (II)

- The success in the implementation of any national accessibility policy and programs relies on several critical components:

    a) Obtaining commitment and support from the Government.

    b) Monitoring the implementation. The question here is: who is responsible for overseeing implementation?

    c) Officially adopting and referencing recognized standards, and raising awareness about is: what is it for? Who should use it and how?

    d) Partnership and collaboration with relevant stakeholders that can actively participate and contribute to the process.

    e) Involving persons with disabilities in planning, implementation and monitoring.

- Experience sharing platforms are very important to share knowledge and best practices.

Panel Discussion: How to integrate inclusive policies and standards into your organization.
Michal Rimon - CEO of Access (Israel).

- In many conferences, when we show great accessibility improvements by countries and companies, we usually DON'T TALK ABOUT THE CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING THEM. It is important to be very transparent about the challenges faces implementing them and to feel confident to speak about it.

- Israel has adopted the EN 301 549 standards, and also has laws enforcing accessibility, making implementation MANDATORY both for the public and the PRIVATE sector. Also, every company with more than 25 employees must have an accessibility leader whose name must be published on the company's website. Every service provider must publish their accessibility arrangements on their website. Service providers are mandated to TRAIN their employees in accessibility and disability awareness. Large and medium sized companies are gradually doing it the right way.

Panel Discussion: How to integrate inclusive policies and standards into your organization.
Michal Rimon - CEO of Access (Israel) (II)

- In Israel, involving persons with disabilities in all these implementation processes is mandatory.

- However, things that don't work in enforcement: there are lawyers that are seeing accessibility violations as a business opportunity, and the number of lawsuits has gone through the roof. This generates a negative perception of accessibility and digital inclusion. Before this law came out, Access Israel was successful in attracting companies through a positive approach.

- All ATMs in Israel are accessible, but some years ago banks implementing them had not asked persons with disabilities and older persons

- Key lessons from Israel:

  - EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT of the law,

  - accessibility is FOR ALL.

  - Mandate to make Internal software used by employees ACCESSIBLE coming soon!

Panel Discussion: How to integrate inclusive policies and standards into your organization.

Klaus Höckner - Member of the board of The Hilfsgemeinschaft der Blinden und Sehschwachen (Austria).

- The biggest problem to me is the LACK OF INVOLVEMENT of persons with disabilities in standardization processes and standardization agencies.

- Technologies enable people to meet, communicate and share information. In standardization meetings, it is important to meet face-to-face to read the other people's minds and understand what they want and reach agreements.

- Taking a positive approach to help companies adopt accessibility is proven to be much better that lawsuits.

- Many small and medium sized companies simply don't make their websites accessible because it's more costly to do it that paying a penalty, and sometimes there is no penalty.

- It is important to train and certify employees and subject matter experts in accessibility

Panel Discussion: How to integrate inclusive policies and standards into your organization.
Klaus Höckner - Member of the board of The Hilfsgemeinschaft der Blinden und Sehschwachen (Austria) (II)

- It is important to build an ecosystem of professionals and persons with disabilities that work in accessibility, so that they can help each other and share information.

- Professionalization of accessibility should be underpinned by the standards

- In the EU, the European Accessibility Act will be enacted this year in EU countries, and it will enforce the implementation of accessibility in private sector, for the s1st time. Non-compliance means exclusion of your product or service from the EU market, you will not be able to sell it in the European Union.

Panel Discussion: Accessible Social Media.

Panelists:

- Jennison Asuncion - Head of Accessibility Engineering Evangelism, LinkedIn; Co-Founder. GAAD (USA)

- Kiran Kaja - Accessibility Program Lead, Instagram(USA).

- Julius Mbura, inABLE

Panel Discussion: Accessible Social Media.

Jennison Asuncion - Head of Accessibility Engineering Evangelism, LinkedIn; Co-Founder. GAAD (USA).

Some of the accessibility features that LinkedIn has introduced into its platform and services include:

- Dark Mode and font resizing, which is good for everyone, not only for persons with disabilities. We also introduced automated captions in our audio rooms.

- We have leveraged Microsoft technologies for Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to provide Alt text descriptions. We also have support by BeMyEyes on mobile.

- We believe it's not only about the technological accessibility of our platforms. We have provided training for creator and added DYSLEXIC THINKING as a LinkedIn profile feature

- To find out more about LinkedIn's accessibility initiatives, go to www.linkedin.com/accessibility

Panel Discussion: Accessible Social Media.
Kiran Kaja - Accessibility Program Lead, Instagram(USA).

- Q: what do you do to make Instagram accessible?

- A: Meta/Facebook want to make sure everyone can communicate and share information. From the beginning we have been focused on creating EXPERIENCES that are great for persons with disabilities . We were the first ones to crate Artificial Intelligence-based Alt text for images. We hope we have pushed the boundaries in using AI for accessibility. We have also implemented AI-based captions in all Facebook videos. We know that AI is still not perfect creating ALT text for images. Therefore, we created 10,000 stickers and the possibility of adding ALT text manually. We strive not only to ensure the WCAG are met, but also to create DELIGHTFUL experiences for persons with disabilities

- Q: how can persons with disabilities give feedback on the accessibility of Instagram and FB?

- A. We do this in many ways; the FB accessibility Center, also a phone number, also an email address accessibility@fb.com. We bring change culture to all functions of the organization, so that they understand we have a large community of persons with disabilities who have needs and expectations of our products so that they are not only accessible and useful, but also delightful. The testing, research and feedback we receive from persons with disabilities through different channels is key to designing our products and services

Panel Discussion: Accessible Social Media.
Julius Mbura, inABLE, Kenya

- As a social media consumer, disability is not a topic that is discussed much. I use social media to do advocacy and talk about disability etiquette, change perceptions around disability and, ultimately, to touch people's lives. I follow how people with disabilities interact with my posts. I perceive there is a lot of ignorance about disability out there but there are also people that do not want to interact with persons with disabilities.

- Many people see the activities persons with disabilities post on social media as fiction, "what that blind person is doing impossible", etc. This perception is what I am trying to change, show that the person comes first, and then the disability, and that the disability is not what defines the person that has it.

- Q: how to make experiences more accessible for persons with disabilities when using social media?

- A: I recommend BeMyEyes for outdoor use. My wish list for LinkedIn would be refinement of interacting elements to be able to use it independently. Instagram Alt text is great. In Facebook, I would recommend improving the navigation across the interface.

- My recommendation for everyone and for persons with disabilities in particular is REACH FOR THE SKIES!

Keynote.

Mercy Ndegwa- Head of Public Policy, East & Horn of Africa region, Meta (Kenya).

- Public policy team is made of members from the region because we want to make sure we understand the culture of the local people .

- 1) Build a network that can support and shape the policies that shape the ways tech is used, and internet in particular, and influencing the Government. The Standards are a huge step in making this possible.

- 2) Make sure that we get the right insights and experiences from persons with disabilities about products and services and policies

- 3) Capacity building: make sure how you can amplify your knowledge and experience around accessibility and technology

Keynote.

Mercy Ndegwa- Head of Public Policy, East & Horn of Africa region, Meta (Kenya) (II)

- What things about working for Meta make me proud: access & inclusion are important. persons with disabilities often say they are excluded. Our company mission is to bring the world together. We must create accessible and inclusive products that work for 80 million people in Africa.

- We created a centralized accessibility team that implements practices, metrics, etc.

- AAT is an AI based feature capable of identify objects . By March 2022 80% of FB and Instagram images will have AAT

- Automated video captioning of live videos and also when uploading videos.

- Looking forward, the focus is on making AR and XR accessible, for which we are partnering with leaders in these fields and building accessibility standards for these universes.

Panel Discussion: Inclusive Financial Services.

Panelist:

- [Ricardo Garcia Bahamonde](#) - Head of Accessibility and Digital Inclusion for Iberia Region, Atos

- [Andrew Mwithiga](#) - Head, Digital Channels - Absa Bank Kenya PLC(Kenya).

- [Dr. Samuel Kabue](#) - Member of the UN Committee of Experts on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, United Nations, Kenya.

- [Polycarp Ndelkana](#) - HOD, Next Financial Services, M-pesa, Kenya.

Panel Discussion: Inclusive Financial Services.

Ricardo Garcia- Head of Accessibility and Digital Inclusion for Iberia Region, Atos, Spain.

- The growth in mobile technology and devices has led to a massive expansion in digital technology in the financial services industry. Most banks and financial institutions have embarked full-out on a digital transformation process. "Fintech", or financial technology, is a booming sector in Africa, with many innovative and accessible apps launching as a result.

- However, it is key that traditional and innovative services delivered through the online channel (web and mobile apps) are designed to meet the needs of the broadest range of clients and users possible, including persons with disabilities and older persons.

- Many banking and financial institution have understood the Business Case for making sure the experience of their online services is optimal for the broadest range of current and potential customers, including persons with disabilities with accessibility needs and older persons that are accustomed to using physical channels (branches, phone, traditional mail).

- What are the steps that these companies have taken, or should take? How can banks improve prevent senior clients that are accustomed to using physical channels (branches, phone, traditional mail) from feeling excluded as a result of the massive closure of physical branches in many countries (in rural areas in particular where older populations tend to concentrate as compared to urban and suburban ones) and ultimately improve their experience as valued customers?

Panel Discussion: Inclusive Financial Services.

Dr. Samuel Kabue - Member of the UN Committee of Experts on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, United Nations, Kenya.

- Q: What are the barriers that exist for persons with disabilities when using digital or mobile banking and payment systems?

- A: us persons with disabilities are experiencing the digital era in two ways: technologies may be enablers or disablers for persons with disabilities and may bring about inclusion or exclusion. In this era when the economy is geared towards digital, we have problems because we seem to be going back and forth and persons with disabilities are largely unable to cope with the changes that come with the digital changes.

- Q: In terms of training and resources, what is needed to provide better support to persons with disabilities when accessing financial services?

- A: there should be continuous training for the people involved in designing and developing the digital platforms, to ensure they follow universal design principles. Also, those that receive the services may need training to use the equipment needed (e.g. high-end smartphones, computers, etc.).

Panel Discussion: Inclusive Financial Services.
Andrew Mwithiga - Head, Digital Channels - Absa Bank Kenya PLC(Kenya).

- Q: What are the internal ICT accessibility policies that your organization is implementing, especially now with the launch of Kenya's new standard?

- A: we believe you can only improve by taking positive feedback to make improvements on ourselves. From 2019 the Kenyan Bankers Association, inABLE and Financial Sector Deepening Trust (FSD Kenya) started a customer satisfaction survey with the specific nuance to assess the accessibility of the industry, to independently assess the level of understanding and elements of friction for persons with disabilities in Kenya. The key learnings from this study were that there was a clear skew towards the shift to a more digital world, with more people using mobile and internet banking as their preferred way of banking.

- For us it was very important to get this knowledge to increase the level of internal and external awareness about how to we embed the elements of being able to train and equip our support staff in our branches and offices to be able to offer services in a way that you not only get to know your customer, but also get to "FEEL YOUR CUSTOMER", which means embedding key concepts like being as helpful, able, empathetic, responsive and trustworthy to the customer into our service standard, removing frictions to persons with disabilities when accessing our banking services.

- This led us to rethink how we develop both our products and our digital channels.

Panel Discussion: Inclusive Financial Services.
Andrew Mwithiga - Head, Digital Channels - Absa Bank Kenya PLC (Kenya) (II)

- This led us to rethink how we develop both our products and our digital channels. We use Design Thinking to put the human at the center of everything we do, considering many different customer personas. Inclusivity in financial services must be about building products and services that cater to all of them, not just one type of customer.

- Although for us there have already been many quick wins in terms of accessibility and inclusion, with the launch of the standards, we are already working on an accessibility roadmap with a clear list of priority areas for our industry and as an organization. Every July we will be giving an update of where we are in this journey as an industry, and there are 31 banks engaged in this initiative.

- There is a need for continuous training on web and mobile accessibility; we expect that, as we see how the application of the standards contribute to alleviate the frictions to online banking, internal staff within the organization must be kept abreast of it.

- As an industry, there is an acknowledgement of the person's disability. This is all part of a journey in which we strive for progress, not for perfection.

- We are collecting data from our customers to design customer journeys that meet their needs better.

Panel Discussion: Inclusive Financial Services.
Polycarp Ndelkana - HOD, Next Financial Services, M-Pesa, Kenya.

- Q: What has M-Pesa been doing to make mobile payments more accessible to persons with disabilities?.

- A: At M-Pesa, we are committed to leave no one behind and everything we do is driven by that. This is journey we started years ago, engaging different organizations to see how we include everyone. In 2017, to help customers with disabilities access their balances in their M-Pesa accounts, we launched Interactive Voice Response (IVR), an automated phone system technology that allows incoming callers to access information via a voice response system of pre recorded messages without having to speak to an agent that would tell the customer what their balance was.

- To improve our services for customers with disabilities, we partnered with several companies like Dot.Inc to launch a DotBraille watch, that allows a blind person to receive an SMS with info of the balance, payments, other transactions done, etc.

- The key pillars with which we work every day are accessibility, empowerment, sustainability.

- At M-Pesa we constantly ask ourselves: how do we include everyone so that they can use our services? How do we empower the agents and anyone who is blind to become an M-Pesa agent?

Panel Discussion: Inclusive Financial Services.
Polycarp Ndelkana - HOD, Next Financial Services, M-pesa, Kenya. (II)

- We also partnered with the Kenya Union of the Blind for distribution of the DotWatch and to register blind users using a USD shortcode to gather data, know who our customers are, how to reach them easily, etc.

- We have also partnered with SignMedia to launch the AssistAll app for hearing impaired persons so that they can receive customer service when they walk into a Safaricom shop.

- These are all components of the inclusive culture we are trying to build as a purpose-led technology organization that tries to leave no one behind.

- Our next partnerships are aimed at driving a fully voice-enabled M-Pesa platform so that people with different impairments can use our services easily, and to test these implementations through the Kenya Union for the Blind. We want to make sure that the key user experiences are embedded within our own culture and experiences.

Panel Discussion: The Future of XR.

Panelists:

- [Christopher Patnoe](#) - EMEA lead for Accessibility and Disability Inclusion, Google (USA).

- [Brenden Gilbert](#) - Senior Hardware Engineer, META (USA).

- Brannon Zahand - Senior Program Manager, Gaming Accessibility.

Panel Discussion: The Future of XR.

Christopher Patnoe - EMEA lead for Accessibility and Disability Inclusion, Google (USA).

- XR ("Extended Reality") is the combination of Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) and offers immense possibilities for persons with disabilities , combining real life with layers of valuable information.

- The applications of XR and endless, including real-time captions and translation apps. Imagine cameras on your own glasses and, while you walk around, you have 5G internet and it can tell you where you are in real time, it can read you the signs, it can provide situational awareness that you don't have any other way.

- XR Access is a community based in the U.S. that engages, connects, and influences the field of XR to build and share knowledge, skills, tools, user experiences, and leading practices to make XR inclusive of all, regardless of abilities.

- XR Association represents the ecosystem of XR industry players including headset manufacturers, technology platforms, component and peripheral companies, internet infrastructure companies, enterprise solution providers, and corporate end-users. The founders of XR Association are Google, HTC Vive, Microsoft, Oculus from Facebook, and Sony Interactive Entertainment. XR Association are currently working on a description of the virtual world, for which they are creating an Accessibility Object Model to experiment with this together with the community, to understand how to describe the virtual world.

Panel Discussion: The Future of XR.
Christopher Patnoe - EMEA lead for Accessibility and Disability Inclusion, Google (USA) (II)

- Regarding the work with the W3C around guidelines, Google is working in creating immersive captions in VR. We are experimenting with the community to make the Virtual World more accessible.

- We have developed a prototype of a pair of glasses that provides captions for languages going around you, so you can talk and hear, but can also provide translations, an example of a curb cut effect, as it also benefits deaf and hard of hearing people.

- These are exciting times in terms of Augmented Reality!

Accessibility Showcase: Google.

Panelists:

- [Abigail Klein](#) - Software Engineer, Google.

- [Chung Kim](#) - Accessibility Analyst, Google.

- [Henri Fontana](#) - Technical Program Manager on The Accessibility Engineering Team, Google.

Accessibility Showcase: Google.

At Google We have different accessibility features in our products, including:

- Live Caption in Chrome

- Auto-translation in YouTube:

- Captioning in Google Slides

- Accessibility features on Chrome: Translation, Fill out forms

- Compatibility of Chrome with Ats: screen readers, magnifiers, etc.

- Chromebox: Control+Alt+Z to turn it on. You can Get Image Descriptions from Google

Chromebook is a type of computer that is simple and accessible out of the box, with all the Accessibility features included in Chrome: ChromeVox, Magnification, Select to Speak, Dictation, Automatic Clicks, Switch Access

Accessibility Showcase: Google (II)

Accessibility features in Android include:

- TalkBack,

- SelecToSpeak,

- Magnification,

- AccessibilityMenu, SwitchAccess (access and interact with the phone with just one or two switches, or with the camera),

- BrailleBack,

- Google LookOut (describe objects),

- VoiceAccess

- SoundAmplifier: enhances audio from an Android device, using headphones to improve listening clarity

- LiveTranscribe: helps hard of hearing and other users like language learners by transcribing conversations

- Action Blocks: helps users with cognitive impairment to establish routines

- LookOut: assists low vision or blind people to recognize the surroundings and get a description of objects, including menus, bank notes, printed texts, etc.

Presentation: Accessible solutions for users with hearing impairments.

- In Central Africa Republic there is a law protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, but they are not enforced, and the government does not do much, there are not many repercussions, and the ministers don't really understand disability. There are many barriers in elections. Regarding the role of business and the rise of entrepreneurism, we need to include persons with disabilities in these initiatives.

- In most countries in Africa, Sign Language Interpretation is only for news, and in some schools. In education, many courses are not available for Sign Language deaf users

- "Serena Williams is to tennis what disability is to innovation."

- In South Africa, Sign Language is not very prevalent in education. It is only when deaf people start using Translator that are was able to attend classes. However, in general, they feel they are being left out of education, banking, etc.

Presentation: Accessible solutions for users with hearing impairments (II)

- Although there are many Artificial Intelligence-based solutions that really help me as a deaf person, it's not enough to do things like conveying information about emotions, etc. How can deaf persons use voice control systems? At school, there are things like the bell that deaf students won't hear; technology can cover those gaps, but only if those issues are identified and the needs of persons with disabilities are considered.

- Prior to talking about technologies, it is important to establish more essential elements like a strong legal framework, support systems, etc. Laws must be protecting of persons with disabilities .

- Key aspects to consider when developing accessible solutions for users with hearing impairments :

  – Incorporating the lived experience

  – Strong legal framework

  – Data

  – Use of edge technologies (AI, etc.)

Presentation: Accessible solutions for users with visual impairments.

- Many blind persons use iPhone all the time for everything they do daily. Professionally, it is a great idea to synchronize it with a computer, note things down; for blind social media content creator, YouTube is the number one place where to put your content, as it is a great way to educate and entertain. However, it is critical that you make sure your content is accessible.

- Great mobile apps for blind people include Scribe transcription, CashReader, SeeAI, and Teams and Zoom for conferencing, TapTapSee, BeMyEyes, SeeingAI, M-Pesa, Word, accessible PDF conversion tools, and all social media apps.

- As for the next exciting opportunity in accessibility for Kenya and Africa in the future, it is key that the Standard launched in Kenya is put into legislation in a tangible way, and that way open up to exciting opportunities in inclusive finance and banking. However, it is most important that accessibility helps persons with disabilities experience the independence they deserve.

Presentation: Accessible solutions for users with visual impairments (II)

- Innovative technologies like VR or XR open up new, exciting opportunities; radar and sonar for navigation and ambulation. It is important that we do not focus on adapting technology, but on moving along with it.

- Many students with disabilities in Africa, during their university years, are not able to get hold of a single converted textbook, and access to Assistive Technologies (ATs) is not a given. ATs are crucial to overcome barriers in using technologies.

- Kenya is setting the pace and younger generations should exploit these opportunities. Other countries like Cameroon are still behind in this respect, and blind students never have the opportunity to use devices like Perkins machines.

- Blind young people must become the movers and shakers, and technology can help them in this mission.

Panel Discussion: The Future of Accessible Tourism.

Panelists:

- <u>Dr. Bruce Walker</u> - School of Psychology and School of Interactive Computing, Georgia Institute of Technology (USA).

- <u>Fiona Ngesa</u> - Director for Market Development, Kenya Tourism Board (Kenya).

- <u>Victor Calise</u> - Director of Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Walmart's Accessibility Center of Excellence.

- <u>Fred Maahs Jr</u> - Founder and CEO, Maahs Travels (USA).

- <u>Linda Okolo</u> - Central and East Africa Business Support Executive Kenya Airways (Kenya).

Panel Discussion: The Future of Accessible Tourism.

Dr. Bruce Walker - School of Psychology and School of Interactive Computing, Georgia Institute of Technology (USA).

- Fiona: being able to plan, book, pay for packages and experience the experience of traveling to a country like Kenya in an independent way, is our goal.

- Fred: I partner with Travel4All (Canada), founded and run by persons with disabilities and also with travel bloggers and influencers, something that helps crowdsource a ton of information about the accessibility of destinations. We also provide personalized services. The community of persons with disabilities has a huge spending power/disposable income of close to $7 trillion; therefore, the potential of tourism is enormous. We need to make a better job to educate tourism industry players along the value chain so that they can improve their products and services.

- Julius: one of the barriers persons with disabilities face when travelling is attitudes, as they think that persons with disabilities need help all the time. Even if the physical destinations are very accessible, access to information is very important, be able to feel and touch objects in museums, etc. that would enrich MY EXPERIENCE as a tourist or a traveler. It's very important for a blind person to make sure they can FEEL the experience. Hotels and services providers need to make a better job at catering for tourists with disabilities.

Panel Discussion: The Future of Accessible Tourism.

- Technologies can play a huge role in improving the accessibility of the whole tourism value chain

- Museums: most areas you cannot touch. However, technology may enable a much better and accessible experience.

- We need to involve all the stakeholders in the tourism value chain and help them adopt a GROWTH MINDSET through accessibility, identify where the gaps are, collect feedback from the public.

- From a marketing perspective, the content created in social media should be done in accessible formats.

- Booking websites must be made accessible.

Panel Discussion: The Future of Accessible Tourism (II)

- Walmart, in its mission to become the most accessible retail store in the world, looks at what people buys and how, and the determine how to build accessibility into it.

- Years ago, the New York City authorities adopted a strong commitment to improve the accessibility of the city. During this process they realized that accessibility of transportation was KEY.: metro, buses, taxis (now 50% of them are accessible). Now there are around 6,000 accessible vehicles in the city. Before embracing the move to making vehicles accessible, taxi drivers told the authorities that they would bankrupt them; however, evidence shows a huge increase in the number of rides since this shift. Also, in New Yor City there are now 30,000 acres of parks, all of them fully accessible.

- Key questions that we must ask ourselves are:

  – What is accessible?

  – How accessible is it?

  – How do we get all these accessible things to persons with disabilities?

  – Who and where are the advocates, and how do we get them to connect to those that need awareness, and share what they know?

Panel Discussion: The Future of Accessible Tourism.

- Kenya Airlines strives to do everything they can to serve persons with disabilities , but they not always get everything right because of lack of expertise.

- Kenya Airlines has an innovation lab in which interns with disabilities help identify new possibilities and designs for services that work for all passengers.

- Kenya Airlines is keen to follow the Standards recently approved in its path towards providing services that are more inclusive and accessible to all its customers.

Panel Discussion: Access to Entertainment.

Panelists:

- [Cobhams Asuquo](#) - Performing Artist (Nigeria)

- [Luke Muleka](#) - Innovator /Social Entrepreneur /Speaker/Leader (Kenya)

- [Timothy Owase](#) - Chief Executive Officer, Kenya Film Commission.

- [Julius Mbura](#) - Advocacy Officer, inABLE.org (Kenya)

Panel Discussion: Access to Entertainment.
Cobhams Asuquo - Performing Artist (Nigeria).

- The case of accessibility in entertainment in Nigeria is pretty much a reflection of what's going on in the country. As an artist and an entertainer with disabilities, you have to prove and prove and prove to yourself that you can do valuable things. The conversation about accessibility + entertainment is not there yet.

- There are no concerted efforts by stakeholders to do much in accessibility.

- Regarding the tools for persons with disabilities to consume and create content, it is important to distinguish the type of disability they are for. Many tools are mouse-based, and they're not necessarily easy to use with VoiceOver. There are some 3rd party scripts to work around the use of the mouse; these can bring great improvement in the creation of content. It's important to involve more 3rd parties in creating more scripts and commands to increase access to the consumption and creation of content.

- Q: how mentally wired are people in the entertainment space to receive and accommodate persons with disabilities ?

- A: it is what it is; it' a mixed feeling of fascination and pity that you experience…but the more it is done, and the more people is sensitized, the more persons with disabilities going out and about and enjoying entertainment will be normalized. So how do we sensitize people in this industry so that accessibility is part of the conversation and provide accessibility (access, captioning, AD, etc.?

Panel Discussion: Access to Entertainment.

Timothy Owase - Chief Executive Officer, Kenya Film Commission.

- Q: what is the situation in Kenya regarding the inclusion of persons with disabilities in entertainment in Kenya?

- A: we are working in bringing together public and private sector to build accessible way to access entertainment. We are seeing persons with disabilities increasingly consume content, but not necessarily being able to create entertainment content.

- We need to do more research and innovation in tools that can enable content creation by persons with disabilities .

- We have an opportunity to champion the inclusiveness of creation of content, involving all stakeholders in the field.

Fireside Chat: Women with Disabilities.

Contributors:

- **Moderator:** Irene Mbari-Kirika - Founder & Executive Director, inABLE (Kenya/ USA).
- Haben Girma - Human Rights Lawyer advancing disability justice (Eritrea/ USA).
- Lizzie Kiama- Founder and Managing Trustee, This Ability (Kenya).

Fireside Chat: Women with Disabilities.

- Q: how are things changed for persons with disabilities during your lifetime?

- Lizzie: years ago when I had an accident and became disabled, there were a lot of negative perception. As much as there have been advancements in disability rights, progress has been slow for women and girls with disabilities.

- Crystal: there is a lack of respect to the laws that protect the rights of persons with disabilities . In Africa, in general women are left out and discouraged from fighting for their rights and accessing jobs.

- Haben: Ableism is at the root of exclusion of women with disabilities from getting jobs and participating in society. Ableism is the concept of having to have a fully abled body to be able to fully participate in society.

- Q: how do we create visibility for women and girls with disabilities across the continent?

- Lizzie: it's extremely important to invest in women with disability. Media plays a critical role in changing perceptions around disabilities, and to generate opportunities to unlearn their perceptions about disability . It is important for W & G with disabilities to know that we do not have to ask for permission to be ourselves. They have to be empowered and become center of the discourse.

Fireside Chat: Women with Disabilities (II)

- Q: What needs to change?

- Crystal: the press should highlight the activities of my association for the blind in my country, so that people know what we do., and change the narratives to offer a positive view.

- Q: what inspires you?

- Haben: many disabled women inspire me. Disabled activist and leaders inspire me.

- Q: what can we do as women to hold each other up and involve men in this fight?

- Lizzie: as women, we all experience more or less the same experiences. In Kenya, the women's rights movement does not normally include WWD, and you are forced to choose. As a WWD, I first identify as a WOMAN. As women, we're all in the same fight. As to men, I would ask them to invest in women.

- Q: What needs to change?

- Crystal: the press should highlight the activities of my association for the blind in my country, so that people know what we do., and change the narratives to offer a positive view.

Fireside Chat: Women with Disabilities (III)

- Q: what inspires you?

- Haben: many disabled women inspire me. Disabled activist and leaders inspire me.

- Q: what can we do as women to hold each other up and involve men in this fight?

- Lizzie: as women, we all experience more or less the same experiences. In Kenya, the women's rights movement does not normally include WWD, and you are forced to choose. As a WWD, I first identify as a WOMAN. As women, we're all in the same fight. As to men, I would ask them to invest in women.

- Q: Crystal, who inspires you?

- Crystal: women who stand up and fight for are rights

- Q: Haben, what's the most important parts in your work?

- Haben: meeting people all over the world and learning from them. Men with and without disabilities need to be educated because they are part of the solutions.

Contact

George Siso

Business Development Manager, inABLE

George@inable.org

0711-328-577