



**INCLUSIVE**  
AFRICA CONFERENCE 2023



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**Theme: Taking Digital Accessibility & Assistive Technology in Africa to the Next level**

**Knowledge Document**  
**DAY 1**

May 29- 31, 2023

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

# Opening Remarks: Irene Mbari-Kirika, Founder & Executive Director, inABLE

## Key Takeaways

- “Disability is a long-term phenomenon and collaboration is important. If we get together, we can change and make generations to come access.”
- “If we get together, in the unity of purpose, we can change the generations to come in the work we do today in disability”.

# Faces of Africa: The Lived Experiences of People with Disabilities (PWDs)

## Speakers

1. Hudson Asiema -CEO Deaf eLimu Plus
2. Upendo Komba- Assistant Lecturer University of Dodoma
3. Winfred (DJ Wiwa) - Wiwa Entertainment
4. Princess Sibanda -Student Tutor University of Pretoria
5. Mary Njoki – Coordinator Short Stature Society of Kenya (SSSK)
6. Julius Mbura- Advocacy Officer InABLE

## Key Takeaways

- Persons with disabilities must be given independence and not limitations.
- The power that PWDs have cannot be impaired by disability, thus the need to support accessibility.
- The Internet needs to be both accessible and useful

# Keynote: Vint Cerf, VP, and Chief Accessibility Evangelist Google

## Key Takeaways

- “The Internet needs to be accessible and useful, and we have much to do. Coping with disability is not easy and the private sector should increase motivation on investment. There is plenty of room for improvement.”

# Keynote: Justice Dr. I. Laibuta, Judge, Court of Appeal and Chair, inABLE Board

## Key Takeaways

- “Today we are talking about accessibility and the various ways we can improve it. Let this conference be a timely beginning of a journey. We will be talking about inclusion in political, social, and economic aspects.”
- “The full participation of persons with disabilities in society is indispensable and there is a great benefit in working together so that disability no longer defines the person.”

# Keynote: Harun Hassan, Executive Director, The National Council for Persons with Disability

## Key Takeaways

- Communications may pose significant barriers to persons with disabilities; however, technology can play a key role in improving communication and in removing barriers.
- Kibaki signed the Disability Act and the current government is coming up with measures that will ensure its implementation.
- In many countries, Persons with Disabilities may be the poorest among the poorest because their economic lifestyle is expensive due to their need for accommodations and assistive technologies. Paradoxically, their economic needs may be bigger than the affirmative action budget allocated for them.

# CHIEF GUEST: Hon. Harriette Chiggai (CS), Advisor on Women's Rights Office of President, Kenya

## Key Takeaways

- For most people, technology makes things easier, but for people with disability, technology makes things possible. There is a pressing need for assistive technologies.
- The use of technology such as screen reading, augmentative technology, etc. increase independent participation among people living with disability and access is key.
- In Kenya, the government has put in place plans we need to transform into policies and laws. They have also put measures to make e-services available to people with disabilities.

# INCLUSIVE DESIGN WORKSHOP

**Rama Gheerawo, Director, The Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design**

## Key Takeaways

- Design is about the framework, facilitating, strategy, creation and, most importantly, humanity. Design enables accessibility. We need to bring those two worlds together by inviting designers to the conversation.
- The axis of inclusive design are age, gender, ability, and race.
- 61% of government websites are not accessible. And 79% of people with disabilities cannot evacuate during a disaster.
- The message we have as designers is for companies to hire people with disabilities if they want to make their organization better.
- Accessibility is Joy. Let accessibility be your love letter to the world, let joy be your love letter to the world.



# Panel: Assistive Technology Innovation and Funding Panel

## Speakers

1. Benard Chiira – Director Innovate Now
2. Regina Kline– Founder of Enable Ventures
3. Keoke King- CEO Participants Assistive Products
4. Serena Davis – Hippo Seeds (Living in Athens, Greece)
5. Brian Mwenda – CEO Hope Tech
6. Sewu Steve Tawia – Managing Partner Jaza Rift Ventures

## Key Takeways

- To create capital awareness and promote the adoption of assistive technologies, it is vital to create clusters, establish collaborations, and build networks. Inclusive Africa is the type of event where these connections can be established.
- At a global level, the main challenge for entrepreneurs in the assistive technology industry is obtaining funding, and investors expect them to exceed expectations. In the future, more funds should be invested in user research to deliver the best products for visually impaired people.
- Disability is important for the future of an innovative economy and advocates for a borderless global market that can meet urgent human needs. While customizing the global economy necessary to uplift people's differences specialization in assistive technologies is key.
- Disability is expected to play a key role in the future of innovation in an accessible, inclusive, and borderless global market, and widespread disability awareness training can contribute to revolutionize technology.

# Panel: Reporting disability in the media

## Speakers:

1. Luke Muleka Founder & Managing of signs media Kenya Limited
2. Kesa Princely: Journalist & CEO FIEPWDorg.
3. Ayoolo Efunkoya: Journalist & Accessibility Enthusiast-Accessibility 360

## Key Takeaways

- Positive role modeling and reporting can help to shape public perception of persons with disabilities.
- The way persons with disabilities are depicted in media has a very significant impact on how they are perceived among the public, policymakers, and government.
- Widespread-use digital devices such as smartphones can become a powerful tool to disseminate a truthful perception of persons with disabilities and prevent distortion.
- Media plays a crucial role in promoting disability inclusion in society. Governments, civil society, and corporations should encourage and support journalists with disabilities to report on disability issues in an open, transparent way.
- Persons with disabilities should also be given the opportunity to share their own stories, as disability issues are often overlooked in mainstream media.
- Digital media has become a powerful outlet for persons with disabilities to share their stories, abolish stereotypes and expand the disability community.
- However, journalists who lack knowledge on disability issues often report from a perspective of heroism and charity.
- It is important for media to allow people with disabilities to tell their own stories in order to challenge attitudes and stereotypes surrounding disability.

# Keynote: Howard Rosenblum, CEO & Director of Legal Services, National Association of the Deaf, USA

## Key Takeaways

- “Brilliant innovation must everyone, including persons with disabilities, as everyone has their individual experiences. Engineers must be involved to work with, not for, persons with disabilities.”
- “There is a need for legislation for all of us because we have experienced a disability. Legislation must be up to standards and inclusive of persons with disabilities. For example, in emergency situations, lack of accessibility in communications, alarm systems, or evacuation pathways may have dramatic consequences for persons with disabilities.”
- “Access to education and employment are critical. It is vital to have excellent tools to allow for persons with disabilities to access education and employment opportunities. Children of persons with disabilities will be senators in the future.”

# Panel: Accessible Travel and Transportation

## Speakers

1. Brianna Gilmore (Moderator)-Head of Accessibility Policy Uber
2. Rafael Friedman- Head of Public Policy for East Africa Uber
3. John Nalinya- Head of Passenger Service Kenya Airways
4. Victo Nalule- Executive Director Tunaweza Foundation
5. Rosaitah Kisuva – Driver Operations Manager, East Africa Uber
6. Kevin Yoo -CEO & Founder Wear Works

## Key Takeaways

- The world is a very confusing place and is not made for persons with disability. We design features to make the world more predictable so that persons feel safe.
- When people think of accessibility barriers, most of them think of accessible wheelchairs. However, investment in training for drivers on how to handle persons with disability is not there.
- Small aircraft is not designed for large wheelchairs.
- There are smartphone-based projects aimed to provide haptic navigation for persons with visual impairment to access ticket booths. In case the person walks in the wrong direction, the phone will vibrate.
- Accessibility of transportation and travel can be improved by engaging with policy regulators to ensure that the entire industry is covered by accessibility requirements and ensure seamless movement between transportation modes.
- It is also important to educate users and researchers about technology platforms to create a more inclusive environment for persons with disabilities.
- About 1.5 billion people in the world have a disability. Accessibility is more than just moving from one place to another; it is also about accessing the washrooms, boarding a bus, etc.

## Paper Presenter: Sheru W. Muuo, Research Associate, Sight savers

**Research Topic:** Digital Channels for Financial Inclusion of People with Disabilities; A Qualitative Study in Migori and Nairobi, Kenya.

**Study objective:** The study examined how financial institutions perceive the use of digital channels by people with disabilities, how people with disabilities utilize these channels for accessing financial products and services, and the positive and negative experiences they have with digital channels

### **Findings:**

- Financial institutions lack data on the digital channels preferred by their clients with disabilities and most acknowledge that their digital channels were not accessible for the persons with disabilities
- Persons with disabilities prefer to use digital channels to access financial products and services.
- Positive experiences included convenience, a low likelihood of stigma or discrimination, user control, and preserving dignity by avoiding borrowing from family members.
- Negative experiences included a lack of awareness about certain channels and falling into a continuous debt cycle resulting in credit reference bureau listings.

## Paper Presenter: Sheru W. Muuo, Research Associate, Sight savers (ii)

### Conclusions & Recommendations:

- Persons with disabilities are unable to fully benefit from digital channels.
- Financial institutions lack the necessary data and training to support this group, including making digital channels accessible and effectively marketing them.
- People with disabilities require training in data security and debt/loan management skills.
- Financial institutions and persons with disabilities must collaborate to address these challenges. For instance, financial institutions can employ individuals with disabilities to test their digital channels and prescribe them to other people with disabilities, ensuring the development of disability-inclusive products and services.

# Paper Presenters: Joel Snyder- President & Founder Audio Description Association, LLC & Shakila Maharaj, Shazacin App

## Key Takeaways

- The ShazaCin app aims to provide audio description tracks for individuals with visual impairments, cognitive disabilities, and learning disorders. It is a developmental instrument that impacts effective functioning.
- The app functions as a personal describer, allowing users to access audio descriptions on various platforms such as TVs, cinemas, computers, tablets, and smartphones. It offers diverse content across different disciplines and industries, and it is affordable. Its main goal is to bridge the gap between the sighted and visually impaired communities, promoting integration and participation in society.
- The ShazaCin app strives to create an accessible ecosystem for everyone.

# Paper Presenter: Nancy Maina- Co-founder and CEO, Lugha Ishara

**Research Topic:** A study on The Perception of deaf children on The Spiritual Nurture Experiences at Church; A Case of Lugha Ishara Centre, Nairobi County.

**Objective of the study:** Explore the perception of deaf children on their spiritual nurture experiences at church, specifically focusing on Lugha Ishara Centre in Nairobi County.

## Key Findings:

- The study highlighted the positive and negative experiences of deaf children regarding their spiritual nurture at church.
- Positive experiences included family support with interpretation, provision of snacks after church, having friends in church, availability of sign language teachers or interpreters, and innovative teaching styles.
- Negative experiences included an unfriendly environment of exclusion, lack of appreciation and involvement in church activities, absence of sign language teachers, self-stigma and public stigma, repetitive and boring routines, and lack of learning experiences.

## Recommendation and Conclusion:

- The study made recommendations to church leadership, Sunday school teachers, and congregants to improve inclusivity and support for deaf children.
- Church leadership should seek an audience with deaf children and their parents to understand their perceptions of existing Sunday programs and prioritize resources and time to make accommodations for the spiritual education of children.
- Sunday school teachers should ensure the availability of Kenyan Sign Language (KSL) interpreters in all Sunday school services to provide accessible language and equal participation for deaf children.
- Church congregants should avoid stigmatizing the deaf and work towards acceptance. The church should consider inclusive Sunday school programs.



# Panel: Employment - Getting More persons with disabilities to work

## Speakers

1. Stephen Njenga (Moderator)- County Director Light for the World
2. Alexander Kojo Tetteh- President Centre for Employment of PWDs
3. Sophie Okonkwo -Senior Talent Acquisition, Engineering EMEA Microsoft
4. Peter Njioka- Head of Talent Acquisition Safaricom PLC
5. Ayola Arowolo – Program Director -Deaf in Tech Project Datalead Africa

## Key Takeaways

- Microsoft is committed to promoting inclusion in its products and operations. The company has partnered with non-profits, startups, and researchers to develop grant programs and is building an inclusive tech lab to test product accessibility. It prioritizes the recruitment of persons with disabilities and has an employee resource group for disability with 3,000 members. Microsoft partners with talent organizations to provide internship opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- Safaricom is deploying disability awareness training by co-creating its curriculum and entrenching training to all programs including products and services, customers, suppliers, regulators to include persons with disabilities. Unconscious bias training is delivered across the organization (including the CEO), aimed to improve recruitment, development, and retention of persons with disabilities.

## Panel: Employment - Getting More persons with disabilities to work (II)

- Safaricom does not contemplate any strategy without diversity and inclusion and has set a 5% target of persons with disability by 2025 which as part of its structure, strategy, and culture, and is constantly monitored.
- For Deaf in Tech Project Datalead Africa, when it comes to employment, two things come to play: a) access to information (information usually gets to deaf persons late) and b) skills required, for which training deaf people in becoming instrumental in bridging the gap. Disability inclusion and data awareness training among employers is necessary to ensure that they are accessible. It is also important to train the deaf in technology and connect them with jobs in tech companies.
- Employers need to be intentional in involving people with disability, not only say “you are an equal opportunity employer” but actually put it in practice.

# Panel: Improving Access to Education with Assistive Technology

## Speakers

1. Yetneberesh Molla- Programme Specialist, Children with Disabilities UNICEF ESAR
2. Richard Orme- CEO, Daisy Consortium
3. Renita Nabisimu- Lead Digital Economy, Mastercard Foundation

## Key Takeaways

- Persons with learning disabilities such as dyslexia who had a lifetime of trouble when reading print can now have access to devices like smartphones to access information as they have images, colors, different fonts, page navigation and can read for them, making them feel included.
- There is a lot of progress and there's huge revolution in accessibility as the European Union will ban any E-books in the next two years that are not accessible.
- School curricula should be designed with everybody in mind to ensure it does not leave out student with learning disabilities and that they are able to access all educational materials.
- Instructors must be taught how to use assistive technology and should be aware of their students' accommodation and assistive tool needs. Parents and guardians must be supported to know the degree of impairment of their children to be able to support them.
- Although it is always recommendable to see medical specialists to diagnose the degree of impairment, some technologies may also be leveraged to assess the level of disability.



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powering potential

# Panel: Inclusive Consumer Research

## Speakers

1. Irene Mbari-Kirika -Founder and Executive InABLE
2. Bruce Walker -Professor Georgia Institute of Technology
3. Christine Hemphill- Managing Director Open Inclusion

## Key Takeaways

- User experience includes performance and visceral emotions which inform preference. You have to expect the unexpected and imagine the impossible, which is challenging and takes forever; you must be relentless, as you may think that you have everything in place, but still not be there.
- Usability could get the job done by focusing on performance, and accessibility.
- Since user experience is holistic and there is a difference in emotional connection, it is imperative to design interfaces that people can operate.
- In Africa, there is diversity, and designing products, services, and systems to meet diversity is a challenge. A great software can be developed but it may not be appropriate in all parts of Africa because of the lack of electricity.
- There are communities that are under-considered. Listening to people with disabilities allows one to take new approaches.
- Designs created in different countries can be inappropriate in Africa. You cannot design a product for people you don't know. Cultural context is important in consumer research.
- Disability is the new innovation. It is underheard, under-designed, and under-considered.
- A whole lot of assumptions will be made when designing. Involve other people in researching and telling you how your product is.
- Designing for Africa needs to come from Africa.

# Roundtable: I am Remarkable- Google

**Facilitator:** Regina Nyuguto from Google

## **Key Takeaways:**

I'm remarkable is:

- A self promoting global movement
- It's about the underrepresented people
- Self promotion against some traditions, culture, norms and stigma

Why is recorgising and sharing achievements important?

- To inspire self and others
- To speak for oneself
- To identify oneself

After sharing with others, there is feeling of being

- Motivated
- Celebrated
- Elated
- Challenged



# Roundtable: I am Remarkable- Google

**Facilitator:** Regina Nyuguto from Google

Some barriers that hinder self promotion

- Language is a tool that can be used to exclude
- Biases some of which may be implicit
- Frequency of tracking achievements is dynamic, practice and stretch your goals.

# Roundtable: I am Remarkable- Google

**Facilitator:** Dorothy Ouko from Google

## Key Takeaways:

- To create a more inclusive environment, it is very important to recognize and share accomplishments, encourage self-promotion, and challenge biases and stereotypes.
- The round table session on "I am Remarkable" started in 2015 and aimed to address the issue of women not talking about their accomplishments. It initially focused on women but later expanded to include other minority groups such as those based on ethnicity, race, or disability.
- If accomplishments are not shared, people might assume that one lacks intelligence, especially in the United States.
- Self-promotion is crucial for personal growth and well-being and sharing the value of one's work is important for professional advancement. Celebrating achievements not only boosts confidence but also serves as motivation to strive for more.
- Identity-based stereotypes, such as those related to race, gender, age, and ability, can influence perceptions of competence and ability, leading to unconscious biases.

# Roundtable: C-Level Closed Door: Challenges and opportunities for greater disability inclusion in Africa

## Speakers

- Mariam Abdullahi (Moderator) - Director Platform Partnership, Android and Play Google
- Dr Justice K.I Laibuta - Court of Appeal, Judiciary, Kenya
- Ashura Michael -Director Nation Youth Council, Kenya
- Irene Mbari-Kirika - Founder & Executive Director InAble
- Christopher Patnoe - Head of Accessibility and Disability Inclusion, EMEA Google, Inc.
- Susan Scott-Parker - Business Disability International (BDI)



## Roundtable: C-Level Closed Door: Challenges and opportunities for greater disability inclusion in Africa (ii)

- In Africa, 1 out of 6 people have a disability and their inclusion and accessibility to services and products is important. Technology can improve efficiency and effectiveness, and investment in it should not be hindered by cost.
- Empowering youth with disabilities with the necessary skills can help them compete in school and the job market. Persons with Disabilities should be determined and available to take opportunities as they arise.
- Despite sometimes being expensive, technology may improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- Accessibility and inclusion should be linked to economies, and businesses should not be supported if they do not consider accessibility and inclusion.
- Although laws and regulations on accessibility exist, they are not well implemented due to a lack of community awareness.
- Accessibility should be considered in both physical and non-physical aspects.
- The use of inclusive technology can improve accessibility and lead to great advancements.

## Roundtable: C-Level Closed Door: Challenges and opportunities for greater disability inclusion in Africa (iii)

- The Hearing Impaired, especially young people, need technology to communicate without barriers and access necessary services and products.
- Society's attitude towards people with disabilities is a problem, and advocacy is needed for business opportunities and accessibility to education and finances for all young people with disabilities.
- It is important of including people with disabilities in all activities and bridging the digital gap to provide them with access to services and products.
- The Inclusive Africa conference as a safe space to share information and technology related to disability.
- 70% of disabilities are hidden and that Kenya has developed standards on accessibility to ICT products and services, with ongoing efforts to make these standards regional.
- Google's mission includes accessibility and inclusion, demonstrated through products like Google Maps. They use methods such as leveraging strengths, involving those affected, starting with small steps, and focusing on progress.
- Google also includes captioning and speech-to-text options for those with hearing impairments, as well as real-time translations for those who speak different languages.
- All these functionalities aim to create a friendly environment for discussing disabilities and letting people know they are not alone.

## **Roundtable: C-Level Closed Door: Challenges and opportunities for greater disability inclusion in Africa (iii)**

- There needs to be a paradigm shift in business due to technological changes, in three priority areas: synchronizing ideas, involving youth with disabilities in innovation with a focus on representation, and reporting from meaningful data.
- It is of the foremost importance to train youth with disabilities in business skills and starting skill training from an early age to ensure access and inclusion in the workforce.
- GiZ ready to partner with other organisation to enhance accessibility and inclusion
- Inclusion is an attitude issue, there is a lot of stigma for autistic children and those who work with the children. To promote inclusion and accessibility of children with autism, Ghana has developed an Autism Aid App and there are Story books about Autism for lower primary learners to raise awareness about them.
- Kenya Airways is creating awareness forums and in near future will be hiring people with disability.

# Contact

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# INCLUSIVE

AFRICA CONFERENCE 2023



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**Theme: Taking Digital Accessibility & Assistive Technology in Africa to the Next level**

## **Knowledge Document**

### **DAY 2**

May 29- 31, 2023

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

# Launch: Assistive Technology Innovations Village

## Key Takeaways:

- Dasun – Uganda: There are 4.5 million people with physical disability in Uganda. Dasun offers them trained professional support by connecting them to various support providers all over the country.
- ANPH- Djibouti: we did a survey in 2019 and came up with an integrated system that found that 8.5% of the people in Djibouti were disabled. The integrated system seeks to connect them to various providers and government services
- Riziki Source app- Kenya: we are a social enterprise that facilitates the employment of people with disabilities. They upload their cvs and Riziki shares them with various employers. Riziki also sensitizes employers to train on disability mainstreaming.
- Cure bionics – Tunisia: The company produces bionic limbs and exoskeletons for people with disabilities.
- Seizure Assistant (Zambia): it is a phone-based seizure management platform. It helps anyone suffering from seizures. It has a panic attack button, which if pressed sends the location of the person to emergency contacts. It also has a sound beep on the person suffering an attack bystanders can check and know how to care for him in that state.
- DEP Dictionary - African sign language dictionary (Kenya): this is a sign language dictionary app for people with hearing impairment. It has 52 handshapes.

## Launch: Assistive Technology Innovations Village (ii)

- Mawazo (Kenya) is an online platform that provides mental health services and allows people to express themselves freely and anonymously
- ShazaCin (South Africa) is an audio description application that produces and delivers audio description tracks for people with visual impairment. It is used in music videos, and to read out illustrated movies.
- Deaf-tronics is solar-powered hearing Aid designed for people with hearing loss that costs 90 percent less than current prices of hearing aid. It uses solar so you won't have to buy batteries for 3 year.
- Keynoa (Austria) includes a hand-wearable gadget and a mobile application that allows blind people to read and write in any language, sense colors and identify diagrams



# Launch: Assistive Technology Innovations Village

## Key Takeaways:

- “When designing for people with disability across the globe, build your story around your diversity and make it stand out when it comes to innovations.”
- “We look at companies in terms of the team, taste, and terms. These three play a major role in our decision-making.”



# Keynote: Daniela Bas, Advisory Boutique International - Socially sustainable development

## Key Takeaways:

- It is critical to invest in education, employment, healthcare, and social protection systems for people with disabilities. By enabling their participation in society and development, inclusivity becomes a valuable investment.
- Visionary leaders emphasize The importance of prioritizing social development and sustainability in companies and organizations.
- The UN Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda recognize the significance of including people with disabilities in Africa.
- Innovative approaches and good practices have emerged across Africa to address the specific needs of persons with disabilities, such as inclusive education initiatives in Uganda and inclusive employment practices in Kenya.

# Keynote: Fred Haga- Director of Special Needs Education –Ministry of Education

- The Ministry of Education has prioritized disability inclusion and early identification of learners with disabilities. They are using technology to assess and develop interventions tailored to individual needs. They recognize the role of organizations like inABLE in building the capacity of teachers and providing devices and training to learners with disabilities.
- The ministry is implementing a sector strategic plan that incorporates technology into functional assessments. This enables them to identify the limitations of learners and develop responsive interventions tailored to individual needs.
- Since 2013, the ministry has been incorporating technology into teaching and learning processes. They started with a digital literacy program and have since developed specific accessible content for learners with disabilities. The ministry is committed to ensuring that no learner is left behind, even with the rollout of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC).

# Keynote: Dr. K I Laibuta- Judge Court of Appeal and Board Member inABLE

- There is an emphasis on the need for continuous efforts and determination to achieve the goal of inclusion, ensuring that no one is left behind in the pursuit of inclusive development, education, employment, and other aspects of a fulfilling life. It is critical to recognize the needs and potential of people with disabilities, focusing on advocating for fundamental rights and freedoms, particularly in the context of inclusive education.
- Also, inclusive development and legal and policy frameworks that promote education, equality, and non-discrimination for people with disabilities are fundamental. Education and employment are critical for persons with disabilities to achieve sustainable livelihoods and lead dignified lives; without equal participation in society, people with disabilities would face exclusion and prejudice.
- inABLE is playing a leading role in the area of education through its investments in the Thika Special School for the Blind.

# Panel: Policy- Scaling ICT Accessibility Standards Across Africa

## Speakers:

- Micah Rachuonyo, Kenya Bureau of Standards
- Derrick Simiyu, Principal Officer Communications Authority of Kenya
- Charles Gachahi, Project Asst Coordinator ARSO
- Immaculada Placencia, Senior Expert European Commission

## Key Takeaways:

- The Kenya standards KS2952-1:2022 and KS 2952-2:2022 on ICT accessibility were launched in May 2022 and aim to ensure the accessibility of digital products and services for persons with disabilities (PWDs) and older individuals in both the public and private sectors.
- The implementation of ICT-accessibility standards has resulted in significant progress. Training workshops, in collaboration with organizations like inABLE, have been conducted to develop E-accessibility training materials for KS2952, which has facilitated the integration of the standards in both public and private sectors.
- The goal of KS2952 is to improve accessibility standards for people with disabilities not only in Kenya but also throughout Africa through collaboration with the African Organization for Standardization.

## Panel: Policy- Scaling ICT Accessibility Standards Across Africa

- There is a need for enforceable standards and punishment for non-compliance, aligned to European Accessibility Act, and policies to promote the use of standards beyond the EU.
- The African Organization for Standardization (ARSO) plays a role in harmonizing standards at the continental level. ARSO consists of national standard bodies from its 43-member states. Their mandate includes harmonizing standards, incorporating conformity assessment systems, and implementing sustainable standards. The goal is to move from national standards to regional standards and eventually have one standard, one test, and one certificate at the African level.

# Presentation: Alexander Hauerslev Jensen, Accessibility Program Manager, External Engagement, North America Google

## Key Highlights:

- Google's mission is to make the world's information universally accessible and useful. For Google, Accessibility is an ongoing process, not a project. Google learns through partnerships and provides disability support and dedicated channels for accessibility inquiries. (see [www.android.com/accessibility.com](http://www.android.com/accessibility.com)):
- New developments and features:
  - Android, Geo (Google Maps), Chrome, and Chrome Book have accessibility features.
  - Workspaces in Google Docs, Slides, and Sheets with more control over accessible features.
  - Lookout, a feature for people with low vision, provides auditory cues and descriptions.
  - Broader Android updates: Braille support, Talkbacks for screen reading, page zoom, and reading mode on Chrome.
  - Google Maps offers wheelchair-accessible places for everyone.
  - Select-to-speak enhancements and improved accessibility in Docs, Slides, and Sheets.
  - Text in Gmail and an Accessibility Marketing Playbook.

# Presentation: Platform Livelihoods, Youths with Disabilities

## Speakers:

- Moderator: Jonathan Donner Sr. Director, Research Caribou Digital
- James Angoye: Research Coordinator inABLE
- Julius Mbura: Advocacy Officer inABLE
- Helene Smertnik: Programme Director Caribou Digital
- Irene Mbari-Kirika: Executive Director inABLE

## Key Takeaways:

- The objective of the study was to understand the challenges and opportunities faced by young people with disabilities in Africa when it comes to earning a living through digital platforms, such as social media and e-commerce platforms.
- Usability and Accessibility Testing, key issues identified included difficulty in:
  - Uploading photos and listing products
  - Unlabeled buttons and generally poor screen readers
- Accessibility compliance testing failed on, the 'sign-up/registration process, 'uploading a product', and 'log-out process.

# Presentation: Platform Livelihoods, Youths with Disabilities

## Recommendations:

- Build ease-of-use platforms by involving persons with disabilities at the beginning of the design process
- Include more robust accessibility testing of digital products across different disability types
- Promote inclusivity and adapt to the specific needs of different sellers with disability
- Provide sensitization and community education to reduce discrimination of persons with disabilities engaging in e-commerce or social commerce

## Reflections:

- Individual profiles hide critical collaborations and the need for human assistance
- Sellers often start, and often stay with social commerce
- It's a challenge to balance privacy and disclosures possible opportunity for more inclusive designs by e-commerce platforms
- The intersection of gender disability and platform work remains open and urges questions
- It may be time to see platforms not just as sales channels but as workplaces.



# Presentation: Platform Livelihoods, Youths with Disabilities

## Conclusions:

- The study concluded that there is a need for more inclusive designs by e-commerce platforms, especially to address the balance between privacy and disclosure for individuals with disabilities.
- It also highlighted the importance of considering the intersection of gender, disability, and platform work.
- The study suggested that platforms should not only be seen as sales channels but also as workplaces.

## Panel: Neuro-Diverse Innovations and Inclusions

### Speakers:

- Moderator- Alice Mundia- Chairperson Differently Talented Society of Kenya (DTSK)
- Veronica Muinjo – Spelling to Communicate Practitioner
- Edmore Masendeke- Executive Director Endless Possibilities
- Sophie Okonkwo- Engineering EMEA Microsoft

### Key Takeaways:

- Technological innovations for neurodiverse individuals include Text to Speech and Speech to Text, Microsoft surface headsets, Microsoft 65 (Text predictors and focus mode), augmentative communication, and letterboards.
- When developing technology, accessibility and usability considerations include understanding the place of user-centred design for each product through partnerships with developers and researchers in neuro-diverse communities, user-centred design interaction sessions, and upgrading the traditional classroom.
- Technology can address challenges faced by people with disabilities, but barriers to accessing technology exist, including lack of access to the internet and electricity, lack of awareness, and lack of functional skills.
- Solutions should enhance inclusion and empowerment and ensure participation and access to education and work.

# Panel: Education - Becoming a Certified Professional in Accessibility

## Speakers

- Christopher Lee- G3ict VP& International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP) Managing Director
- Colette Fransolet- Universal Access Consultant IAAP
- Eric Ngondi – Chairman United Disabled Persons of Kenya
- Irene-Mbari Kirika – Founder and Executive Director InABLE
- Doreen Kissoky- Deputy Chairperson Africa Accessibility Forum Group Vodacom Tanzania (Attended Virtually)
- Stephen Akinola- DEI Professional, Assistive Technology Trainer, Disability Rights Advocate Nigeria

## Key Takeaways:

- Networks are vital in knowledge sharing, collaboration, exposure to neurodiversity, legislation and accessibility standards.
- Professionalism, Passion and Competence are key. The International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP) Certified Professional in Accessibility Core Competences (CPACC) teaches people on issues of accessibility, legal issues on accessible design, allows people to look for networks around them and learn more ideas on accessibility issues. Certification in professional accessibility is a strong accessibility tool for persons with disabilities, brings out emerging issues in assistive technologies and virtual realities, creates a knowledge app to champion for persons with disabilities accessibility.
- Preparations for certifications exams include using online resources/platforms and intense guidance by the Digital Accessibility Rights Education (DARE) academy on how to move from one module to the next and provision of learning documents.

# Panel: Accelerating Accessibility through partnerships

## Speakers:

- Sunday Parker- Program Manager, Microsoft
- Grace Chikowi-Country Lead, Hunger Project in Malawi
- Emily Sheldon- Co-Founder and CEO Africa Health Innovation Centre, Ghana
- Winnie Karanu- Philanthropist Lead for Sub-Saharan Africa, Microsoft
- Martin Kieti- Melinda Rights of Education Information and Inclusion of Africa
- Juventus Duorinaah- Executive Director in Association of the deaf in Ghana

## Key Takeaways:

- The use of video surveys can empower deaf people to participate in surveys independently. Microsoft is helping by providing shared tablets and online surveys in Ghana sign language to reach this community. This eliminates the need to hire interpreters for interviews.
- Accessibility to me means freedom. Being able to participate, contribute, travel, and have a full life. Microsoft Philanthropy helps non-profit organizations by providing grants and access to tools to improve accessibility. The goal is to empower people with disabilities to participate fully in life by removing barriers to travel, contribution, and overall participation.
- The Hunger Project aims to provide digital services and connection centers to 17,000 people in communities to improve food and nutrition security. The Ministry of Agriculture's training materials are available for free online, and the community can pay a small fee for additional access. However, the challenge was making the product accessible for visually impaired individuals.

# Fireside Chat: Creative Leadership Empathy, clarity, and creativity: A pathway towards disability leadership

## Speakers

- Rama Gheerawo: Director of The Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design
- Sara Clements: Head of Inclusive Leadership, The Valuable 500

## Key Takeaways:

- There is an evident lack of diversity in leadership when it comes to accessibility and disability representation. Creative leadership emphasizes empathy, clarity, and creativity, and encourages individuals to reach their leadership potential.
- Creative leadership addresses the lack of diversity and representation in the world of accessibility and disability.
- According to research, empathy is the most critical leadership skill. Clarity which involves having a clear understanding of the project's visions and direction is also crucial.
- Common myths surrounding leadership include the belief that leaders must have loud voices, wear specific attire, and possess certain attributes, heterosexual orientation, or high social status.

# Panel: Inclusive Data

## Speakers

- Bruce Walker-Moderator- Georgia Institute of Technology
- Steve Bertrand Mboko Imbara- Chair Brazzaville Group on Disability Statistics
- Konere Djouma- National Institute for Demographic- Washington Group Contact Point
- Liban Yonis Omar- Statistician National Agency for People with Disability
- Sally Nduta- Chief Executive Officer United Disabled Persons of Kenya

## Key Takeaways:

The Washington Group (UN group headquartered in Kenya) Module was created to harmonize statistics in regard to disability, to have reliable statistics and implement inclusion policies and it was used in the 2019 Kenya national census.

The Brazzaville Group works with national data using employment demographics and includes issues including hearing, movement, cognitive, self-care and communication.

Sub-Saharan countries face challenges in collecting inclusive data due to a lack of resources, awareness, and skills. This includes issues with translators, gadgets for those with hearing impairments, and the use of the Washington model for persons with disabilities. Additionally, each country has its own laws defining disability, which makes it difficult to convince them to use the Washington model.

To improve data collection in Sub-Saharan countries, recommendations include adding medical, children, and disability-related questions to questionnaires, training enumerators, creating a disability monograph, and utilizing citizen-generated data.

# Panel: Disability and Accessibility in Times of Emergency

## Speakers

- Michal Rimon- CEO, Access Israel
- Angela Mwai- Chief Human Rights and Social Inclusion Unit UN-Habitat
- Sara Basson- Program Manager, Accessibility and Disability Inclusion in Emerging Markets Google

## Key Takeaways:

- Networks and connections are a powerful in times of emergency, as they can be used to help evacuate individuals who may be forgotten or left behind, such as the elderly and disabled. It is important to not leave anyone behind, even if they choose to stay.
- Flexibility is crucial in emergency situations. 7% of disabilities are not immediately visible, so it is important to listen to those affected to understand their needs. It is not necessary to create new programs, but rather adjust or utilize existing ones. Perfect accessibility is not the end goal.
- Most people with disabilities live in third world countries and the United Nations Habitat's strategic plan includes six cross-cutting issues, including people with disabilities. However, many designers do not prioritize accessibility because they are hesitant to push boundaries.
- Supportive technologies in the times of emergency include Google translate, Live Transcribe, Google Maps, Personal Safety app (save/ share emergency information), Select to Speak, Lookout, and Live Caption.

# Panel: Experiences Sharing Sessions on Disability Inclusive Cyber Security Training

## Speakers

- Thomas Ongolo (Moderator)- Regional Disability Advisor GIZ
- Lewis Nzimande -National Executive Director SANCB
- Moses Chege- Country Director Sightsavers
- Tshepiso Teffo- Digital Skills for Jobs and Income Advisor GIZ
- Kaz Chetty-Business Development and Skills Manager Bradshaw LeRoux Consulting cc

## Key Takeaways:

- The pillars of a disability inclusion ecosystem consist of cybersecurity training, professional support from private companies, and employability of people with disabilities.
- The cybersecurity training takes 9 months with onsite instructors and each level takes 3 months. These pillars help to make disability training possible, ensure equal treatment and opportunities, and help facilitators understand disability barriers.
- The cybersecurity training can be done through the CISCO system on the Netcare platform, with practical assessments on packet tracer systems and connectivity testers. The training includes networking, simulations, practical aspects, and teacher assistants.



## Panel: Experiences Sharing Sessions on Disability Inclusive Cyber Security Training (ii)

- The cybersecurity training is specialized for visually impaired individuals who have not used computers before. The training involves profiling learners, assessing their computer literacy, and introducing them to a sensitive cybersecurity environment.
- In the first cohort of cybersecurity training 34 learners got 8 months internship while 4 got jobs at Safaricom and retained one, in the second cohort 49 finished and 13 got internships and the third cohort is working with the Standard Chartered bank.
- Namibia is open to collaborate with the British Academy, Safaricom and Vodacom to create conducive policies and legal environment.

# Panel: Comprehensive Approaches to Disability Inclusion

## Speakers:

- Charlotte McClain Nhlapo- Lead Social Development Specialist, World Bank
- Ruchi Kulbir Signh: Disability Inclusion Specialist, World Bank Group (Virtual Participant)
- Annette Akinyi Omolo-Senior Social Development Specialist World Bank
- Catherine Holloway-Academic Director, Glubs Disability innovation Hub

## Key Takeaways:

- Persons with disabilities must be part of consultations, materials they use and the venue they meet for those consultations must be accessible.
- There is a high need for assistive devices, but access to them is low. NGOs and families are currently the main providers of these devices. Governments need to invest in developing assistive technologies and provide disability stipends to increase accessibility.
- There is a need to have persons with disabilities in key governance structures, have thematic sessions with them to identify their priority areas factored in the budget, and engage with different departments to develop sensitization and public participation guidelines.
- The landscape review of inclusive education includes people, product, policy and pedagogy.

# Panel: Women With Disabilities - Opportunities and Challenges

## Speakers

- Hital Muraj (Moderator)- Consultant Hital Muraj
- Upendo Komba – Assistant lecturer University of Dodoma
- Princess Sibanda- Student Tutor
- Fatma Mohamed – Executive Director NONDO
- Crystal Asige- Senator Parliament of Kenya, Senate

## Key Takeaways:

- In parts of Kenya, making things accessible to persons with disabilities is a challenge.
- Everything about accessibility can be done from scratch. It is sometimes challenging to use gadgets in high levels of congress, for instance pressing yes or no when voting and there is no pathway for persons with disabilities to be represented in parliament.
- In addition to the lack of resources, finances or poverty, women with disabilities face huge challenges.
- Women with disabilities can navigate the hiring team in a manner that is not a hinderance by being confident, using the constitution of Kenya article 54 that states that there should be no discrimination in hiring and 5% affirmative action for persons with disabilities and do research on Equal Employment Opportunity when looking for employment. Be intentional with policies.

## Panel: Women With Disabilities - Opportunities and Challenges (ii)

- Talents among persons with disabilities can be honed through professionals and mentors who can identify the talent of children in school.
- Recommendations: choose people who choose you, stand up for yourself, find internal motivation and encouragement from family.
- Accessible digital technologies can contribute to ensures that persons with disabilities participate in education.
- In general, teachers are not knowledgeable on how to cater to the needs of learners or persons with albinism.

# Panel: Building an Africa Network of Certified Accessibility Professionals

## Speakers

- Christopher Lee-G3ict VP and IAAP Managing Director
- Irene Mbari Kirika- Founder and Executive Director, inABLE
- Collete Fransolet- Universal Access Consultant IAAP

## Key Takeaways:

- Africa is the birthplace for creativity African people are problem solvers. As many people as possible should be encouraged to learn about accessibility, and Africa needs to gain expertise to serve itself first.
- Beyond just talking about accessibility, action must be taken, and people must act as one force, one team, and as one continent to make Africa an accessible place.
- The DNA of all companies should be accessibility.
- Having an IAAP chapter in Africa is a must to provide guidelines and share information. Accessibility is not a quick fix, it's a process. Training must be delivered from and by a credible organization that offer internationally recognized certifications.
- IAAP has many benefits such as certification, networking, access to professional education, newsletters and an education training database. A chapter is a network of certified accessibility professionals, and it is much needed in Africa.

# Roundtable: Policy – Scaling ICT Accessibility Standards Across Africa

## Speakers

- Irene Mbari – Founder and Executive Director inABLE
- John – Nalinya Head of Passenger Services Kenya Airways
- Dr K.I. Laibuta – Judge Court of Appeal
- Zacharia Lukorito – Kenya National Bureau of Standards
- Christopher Patnoe – Head of Disability Inclusion Google
- Chalotte Vuyiswa – Global Disability advisor, World Bank
- Rosenblum Howard – CEO & Director of Legal services National Association for the Deaf (USA)
- Laura Allen – Head of Strategy & programs, Accessibility & Disability Inclusion Google
- Sarah Bason – Programme Manager, Disability inclusion Google
- Ashura Michael – Director, National Youth Council

# Roundtable: Policy – Scaling ICT Accessibility Standards Across Africa (ii)

## Key Takeaways:

- A common continental standard is needed to ensure seamless communication and prevent anyone from being left behind. Kenya has submitted a proposal and African presidents are interested in developing continental trade. The ARSO council meeting in Kinshasa in July will work towards pushing this initiative forward quickly.
- There is a need for resources and learning from Kenya's standardization process. Participation is still low and the process should be inclusive of everyone, especially those it is being made for. Access to technology is important and the approach should be integrated from development to implementation. Creating awareness to ensure participation from everyone is very importance.
- The East Africa Confederation is already making a constitution in which accessibility will be part of and e-governance, e-commerce, etc. are being included.
- Business entities should be included accessibility policy and standards; when business people are engaged then the business is sure to include accessibility.
- The ARSO is committed to moving these standards forward.
- inABLE and KEBS should submit the meeting report and we will take it up.
- Once ARSO takes it to the heads of states, it will be able to push it, because when politicians champion a cause, it is easy to get it across.
- ARSO must ensure that accessibility standards are met especially now that they are building up the African Continental free trade area. ARSO commits to take it forward and hope have it done by next year.

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**INCLUSIVE**  
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**Theme: Taking Digital Accessibility & Assistive Technology in Africa to the Next level**

**Knowledge Document**  
**DAY 3**

May 29- 31, 2023

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

## Panel: Google Digital Accessibility

### Speakers

1. Sara Basson -Program Manager Accessibility and Disability Inclusion in Emerging Markets, Google
2. Laura Allen – Head of Strategy and Programs, Accessibility and Disability Inclusion Google
3. Christopher Patnoe – Head of Accessibility and Disability Inclusion, EMEA, Google Inc.
4. Ashura Michaels- (Moderator)- Director of National Youth Council Kenya

### Key Takeaways

- The Essential Accessibility team is working towards integrating and embedding accessibility in different products, including talkbacks, with the help of engineers and AI. Chrome is also planning to add a feature where images can be described, freeing up space for creativity.
- Google is committed to the principle of involving people with disabilities in the development of accessible technology. They have a dedicated research space for accessibility and have conducted experiments with AI technology, including automated captioning and object description for the blind. They have also developed language-based AI models and a tool called Google Lookout for visualizing web images.
- Google has been working on improving services for people with disabilities for years and it is currently working on a project with InAble, an organization that aims to provide more services to visually impaired learners in schools in Kenya. It is critical to involve persons with disabilities in the design and testing process. The challenge is to prioritize the needs of the diverse population of 1.3 billion people with disabilities.

# Panel: Access to Financial Services for persons with disabilities in Africa

## Speakers

1. James Angoye - Research Consultant, inABLE
2. Ayoola Efunkoya - Journalist and Accessibility Enthusiast Accessibility 360
3. Brian O Micheal -UX Researcher Technoprise Global
4. Samuel Tiriongo - Director, Research & Policy Kenya Bankers Association

## Key Takeaways

- Research findings of the project to enhance digital accessibility with focus on persons with disabilities within Kenya's Banking Industry showed that persons without disabilities commonly used digital apps but most persons with disabilities would walk to the bank. The least satisfied customers among the persons with disabilities were the hearing impaired.
- Devices could not enable hearing impaired access reading of the bank statements since they are in PDF, and physical visits to the bank require them to fill hard copies.
- Bank staff were friendly to persons with disabilities but only for the visible disabilities but different from hearing impairments (the most helpful person was the guard who is not a bank employee).
- More data needs to be collected about persons with disabilities and their banking needs.

# Panel: Access to Financial Services for persons with disabilities in Africa (ii)

## Key Takeaways

- The idea of mobile money is relatively new in Nigeria; hence the members are still in dilemma of whether to remain tradition in banking or use mobile.
- Mobile banking was expected to reduce costs and increase profit, but this has not been realized.
- There are about 120 million telephone subscribers in Nigeria; however, this does not translate to digital money accounts.
- It is not clear of the advantages of mobile money over the tradition; there is a need for structure and accessibility.
- In introducing digital money, no policy was followed hence it became a one-time event.
- 2022 data from Africa showed that 90% people from East Africa were doing transactions using digital money.
- Major players in East Africa are Safaricom and Airtel and MTN in Nigeria
- Comparison of user experience research in Kenya and Nigeria show that, in neither of them, persons with disabilities have access to signup and use the apps; in some instances, persons with disabilities need assistance.
- Since 2018, there are different apps that do different transactions hence provision for making choices.

# Panel: Access to Financial Services for persons with disabilities in Africa (iii)

## Key Takeaways

- The findings of the 2021 study on enhancing digital accessibility with a focus on persons with disabilities within Kenya's Banking Industry made it possible for banks to rethink about marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities.
- Regarding online banking services within the Kenya Bankers Association, 30 out of 39 banks have road maps to enhance accessibility for persons with disabilities, include videos on the website.
- It is recommended that each bank must have a staff who sign language interpretation.
- Financial inclusion of all is proven to be profitable and sustainability
- Under their Corporate Social Responsibility policies, banks have the obligation to disclose their sustainability activities which have an inclusion component in favor of communities.
- It has been proven that the digital space is providing efficiency for the banks.
- Being all inclusive facilitates social transformation which benefit all communities.

# Paper presentation: Leveraging Digital Access and Assistive Technology to promote Higher Education pedagogy in Ghana

**Presenter:** Prof. Appau Asante- Director E-Learning Center, Kwame Nkrumah University of science and Kumasi

## Key Takeaways

- The university has proactively incorporated digital accessibility and assistive technologies into its educational framework
- There are initiatives aimed at ensuring inclusive access to educational materials, enhance learning experiences and support students with disabilities in their academic journey

# Paper presentation: Digital Access for People with Disabilities in Central Africa Republic

**Presenter:** Bedayo Ngaro Dana Reine Esthers - Présidente de l'association Association «Le Cri du Silence»

## Key Takeaways

- 80% of persons with disabilities have not gone to school and among these 20% are women
- Women with disability have less digital access compared to men
- There are only two visually impaired women who have used computer adapted to their needs
- 1% of people with motor disability have digital access

# Paper presentation: Early childhood development of deaf children in Kenya: Barriers, needs and good practices in language and literacy acquisition for young deaf learners

**Speakers:** Vincent Odhiambo KSL Assistant Production Manager E-Kitabu

## Key Takeways

- Ensure employment of deaf teachers
- Adapt more instructional materials for the learners with hearing impairments
- Create more digital content for young deaf learners
- Provide teacher professional development
- Empower and engage parents
- Design teacher friendly assessment tools and provide support in implementation.



# Paper presentation: Accessibility of E-government Services for Persons with Disabilities – Stakeholders’ Perspectives

**Presenter:** Dr. Millicent Agangiba, Executive Director, Inclusive Tech Group, Ghana

## Key Takeaways

- Issues: presentation around assessing the use of technology in various areas related to taxes and registration, as well as to promote social inclusion for people with disabilities. Assessment findings highlighted the need for more education and support for both the general public and those with disabilities.

## Conclusions:

- Drafting of e-government contracts should be disability friendly.
- Capacity building for people with disability should be pursued
- There should be more Awareness and Education
- People with disability should be the frontrunners in advocacy

# Paper presentation - Paper Two: Where you AT? Supporting Clients Through Virtual Assistive Technology

**Presenter:** Lyle Williams, Lead Adaptive Technology Specialist, Centennial College

## Key Takeaways

- Issues: The research aimed to assess the effectiveness of virtual assistive technology and its impact on students, taking into account factors like access to technology and virtual conferencing software.

## Conclusions:

- Virtual technology was highly effective, with increased accessibility, support for students in different regions, and the use of cameras and webcams.
- There was also a significant increase in support for students, fewer missed opportunities, and easier content sharing.
- The preference for virtual support is becoming a permanent trend.

# Panel: Unlocking the power of your mobile phone. Why smartphones as Assistive Technology matter

## Speakers

1. Moderator: Christopher Patnoe - Head of Accessibility and Disability Inclusion, EMEA Google, Inc
2. Pascal Bijleved - CEO ATscale, the Global Partnership Assistive Technology
3. Catherine Holloway - Academic Director Glubs Disability Innovation Hub

## Key Takeaways

- Google sponsors 500 phones in Kenya, India and Brazil for visually impaired, how does it change the life of the user?
- Many visually impaired users experience challenges before having a digital device, including the need for a sign interpreter in college in order to get an education.
- When a device and app were acquired, it provided for interpretation and hence the drop for an interpreter. The app connected me with real world
- The phone was also used for learning, using life captions for real time transcription.
- The university is delivering awareness training to communities on the availability and use of Assistive Technologies
- At the universities, sometimes Assistive Technologies are only made available for visually and physically impaired students only.
- Law makers must be sensitized about the need to make Assistive Technologies available
- There is a need to have all equipment and assistive technologies made available for all Persons with Disabilities in a centralized university department.
- The use of smartphones may be critical to reach the last mile in the user experience to find out what works, what needs to be improved, which apps are best, and what is the way forward.

# Panel: Unlocking the power of your mobile phone. Why smartphones as Assistive Technology matter – Q&A Session

## **Caroline Wamatu (Life for the world):**

- There is a need to get into the space of Assistive Technologies.
- Training is open; but need to check on the accessibility of the phones.
- Centre of Excellence open for partnership.
- In India, most persons with disabilities do not have smartphones
- GIZ has established partnerships in Africa, Senegal, and Rwanda

## **Tata from Ghana:**

- Smartphones support day-to-day activities.
- There are low-cost smartphones available for persons with disabilities in Ghana
- There is improved accessibility for business
- Google is open to partnership.

# Panel: Men with Disabilities: Opportunities and Challenges

## Speakers

1. Cobhams Asuquo (Moderator) – Performing Artist, Singer-Songwriter, Music Producer Vintage Gray Media
2. Mugabi Byenkya -Writer, Performer & Business Manager, Self-employed
3. Ipolito Mubiru – Executive Director African Diversity and Inclusion Center (ADIC) Ltd
4. Nzomo Mbithuka- Board Member InABLE

## Key Takeaways:

- Men with disabilities face stereotypes on masculinity that prevent them from showing emotions and limit their opportunities in the workforce.
- Employers often overlook their potential contributions and fail to accommodate their needs.
- However, online working can be more inclusive, and platforms like Riziki are helping connect employers with people with disabilities seeking jobs.
- In Kenya, recent efforts have been made to increase accessibility, such as providing interpreters for TV programs.

## Panel: Men with Disabilities: Opportunities and Challenges (ii)

### Key Takeaways

- Organizations can be more inclusive for men with disabilities by allowing them to work from home, have flexible hours, and prioritize productivity over structure.
- The government does not have jobs for persons with disabilities as one position is given to them after elections, for one to stick to one job you have to work five more times than the average person to overprove yourself.
- However, the greatest support is intentionality, for instance, Safaricom 25% of whose employees are persons with disabilities, and provision of interview sessions where persons with disabilities can be coached about interviews for example the Riziki website and application



# Panel: Web & Mobile Accessibility

## Speakers

1. Irene Mbari-Kirika - Founder & Executive Director inABLE
2. Wilson Macharia - Legal adviser with JURIST- web developer
3. Kevin White- Accessibility Development and Operations Lead W3C
4. Christopher Lee - G3ict VP & IAAP Managing Director G3ict/IAA
5. Prince Kessah - Journalists, Cameron

## Key Takeaways:

- Web accessibility means that all people with or without disability can access information on web and perform the same functions regardless of the device.
- Using a phone under the sun for all with vision, the screen contrast of the web may make it inaccessible, something needs to be done.
- Implementation of Accessibility standards of Kenya is in progress. The standards have been accepted regionally and there is a request to have them as regional standards.
- Some services are available on both web and mobile applications but have different accessibility levels. Persons with visual impairment may need to use both while others may use either.
- International conventions on the rights of persons with disabilities exist and African countries should implement them.
- The African Disability Protocol has been ratified by eight countries but is not yet in force.
- Kenya and South Africa have standards in place, but enforcement can be challenging.
- There is little litigation on disability rights in law.
- All persons with disabilities need access to information like all others.

## Panel: Web & Mobile Accessibility (ii)

### Key Takeaways

- Disabled people in Cameroon cannot access any websites and are sometimes denied mobile banking services. Access to information is crucial for security, particularly in areas affected by conflict.
- Accessibility guidelines not enforced in Cameroon and national laws on inclusive technology are not in place.
- The standards for accessibility launched in Kenya in 2022 should serve as guiding principles for all other countries.
- There are no IT facilitated libraries in all levels of education; therefore, students complete tertiary education without IT literacy skills.
- Persons with disabilities need to make themselves available and take opportunities and make decisions since “independence is better than welfare” to contribute to the larger conversation.
- Content such as an image needs a caption or a description or a label for it to be accessible to all and especially those using screen readers. Captioning and having alternate text is the standard for content to be accessible for those using assistive technology.
- African countries and organization can contribute to the W3C WCAG.
- Accessibility features on devices are necessary so that the content is usable.
- Textbooks need be mediated for learners using technology such as captioning



## Panel: Web & Mobile Accessibility- Q&A Session

- Tech for autistic people needs to be in place for non-speech and immobile people with mortal problems.
- Research in space is young and the tech is coming up.
- The use of touch screen is not user-friendly for persons with Cerebral Palsy due to hysteric issue.
- Ensuring that the keyboard can connect to a smartphone. How does the keyboard work on the small screen of the smartphone?

# Panel: The Power of Collaboration: Startups, Incubators, Skills and Knowledge Transfer

## Speakers

1. Bernard Chiira (moderator)- Director at Innovate Now
2. Mihal Rimon - CEO Access Israel
3. Klaus Hoeckner – Managing Director HGBS/Access Austria
4. Hudson Asiema- CEO Deaf Elimu Plus
5. Pascal Bijleveld- CEO ATscale, the Global Partnership Assistive Technology
6. Calvin Mogajane- Self-employed

## Key Takeaways

- There is a need for collaboration, as 15-20% of people globally have a disability.
- Access Israel has amazing networks with 125 countries across the world, including Global Accessibility and Inclusion leaders and Friends of Access Israel.
- ATscale collaborates with the government, UN agencies, and NGOs with recent partnerships including Joint project with Google around smartphones and Assistive Technologies providers network working with space assistive technologies.
- The use of networks has led to the development of innovative technologies like Apex, a portable computer for the blind that includes braille and assists to run a radio station.
- Assistive technologies are also being used to publish books. South Africa is working on improving assistive technology and collaboration is important for long-term solutions.

# Panel: The Power of Collaboration: Startups, Incubators, Skills and Knowledge Transfer (ii)

## Key Takeaways

- How the journey has been: Information sharing is becoming easier. Challenges experienced in the past include partnering, communication, access to funding, and getting information late. Collaboration and exchange of ideas is important.
- We have only 8 million people in Austria and 12,000 are visually impaired.
- There was a conversation on how to increase accessibility to People with disability and Artificial Intelligence can make accessibility more archivable.
- African organizations are welcome to go to Austria to present their projects at the incubator in Vienna and bring at least have a minimum of one viable product.
- One of the key ideas taken to the incubator is called “sixth sense” and is from Kenya.

# Keynote Speech by Charlotte McClain Nhlapo, Lead, Social Development Specialist-World Bank

## Key Takeaways:

- Including people with disabilities in problem-solving leads to innovative solutions that benefit everyone. This is done through an empathetic approach called design thinking and by using assistive technologies.
- Based on recent statistics, 9.9% of households, own computers, and 17% have access to the internet at home. Only 20% of individuals in Sub-Saharan Africa have access to the Internet. Households with persons with disabilities have lower access to the Internet and ICT across the development and income spectrum.
- Under the Disability Inclusion Education in Africa Program (funded with support from USAID) and the Inclusive Education Initiative (funded with support from NORAD and FCDO), the World Bank awarded multiple brands across Africa to address long-entrenched barriers that prevent children with disabilities from accessing school and having successful learning outcomes.

## Lessons learned from the projects:

- Including PWDs and their organizations in stakeholder consultations and doing project paper preparation is essential in informing the project design.
- Using disability inclusion in feasibility studies, and assessments before project design can also help with the dialogue with the client.
- Ensuring active and sustained participation of organizations of persons with disabilities design is important.

# Panel: Big Tech Companies

## Speakers:

1. Sunday Parker -Program Manager, Microsoft
2. Laura Allen: Head of Strategy& Programs, Accessibility and Disability Inclusion Google
3. Brianna Gilmore- Head of Accessibility Policy, Uber
4. Mercy Ndegwa -Board Member at InABLE and Public Policy Director at Meta

## Key Highlights:

- Big tech companies such as Microsoft have made efforts to improve accessibility and inclusivity for people with disabilities through co-creation of products, external partnerships, and inclusive designs.
- Microsoft prioritizes privacy, security, and ethical AI, and have dedicated teams to ensure these values are upheld.
- Microsoft also offers support for emerging innovations through programs for startups and AI accessibility grants.
- Futuristic technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) bring about privacy risks and has the capacity to stimulate the way people think and criminalize them. There is a risk in surveillance, and we also need to look at data in terms of independence.
- Microsoft has deep collaborations, also fierce competitors but when it comes to accessibility they work together because many of them are facing similar challenges.
- Microsoft is also working with universities to integrate accessibility in the long term.
- Privacy and security are embedded. Accessibility needs to be embedded as privacy and security. These technologies are built by humans and humans are biased.

# Panel: Giving Youths with Disabilities a Voice

## Speakers:

1. Jane Waithera (Moderator) – Disability Inclusion Advisor- We Can Work, Light for The World
2. Godfrey Nanyenya – Disability Inclusion Advisor, Light for the World International
3. Julius Mbura- Advocacy Officer InABLE
4. Karen Muriuki – Neurodiversity Consultant Ubongo TV
5. Ashura Michaels - Director of National Youth Council Kenya

## Key Takeaways:

- Employers and society can harness the strengths of Youths with disabilities through personal branding to highlight their expertise and achievements relevant to employers, mentorship programs to hold them accountable, and communication.
- Persons with Disabilities face physical, digital, and information access barriers that sidelines them; hence the need to give them opportunities in every aspect including employment.
- Other challenges include attitudinal barriers and negative perceptions about autistic people; for instance, not supporting them in advocacy work hence the need to collaborate, listen and work with youths with disabilities.
- The power of determination e.g., using our skills to mentor young Persons with Disabilities and talent building through vocational training centres (VTCS) can help youths with disabilities to transition to employment.

# Closing Keynote: Laura Allen Head of Strategy & Programs for Accessibility & Disability Inclusion at Google

## Key Takeaways

- Digital accessibility and assistive technology are very important for people living with disabilities.
- Technology has immense transformative power.
- The support systems provided by families, schools, and workplaces are critical in promoting inclusion and accessibility.

# Closing Remarks: Hon. Isaac Mwaura, CAS, office of the chief cabinet secretary

## Key Takeaways

- There is a need for societal confidence in persons with disabilities.
- Innovation and inclusion are very important to ensure that no one is left behind, especially in the face of the fourth industrial revolution.



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