



Community Based Rehabilitation Africa Network (CAN)

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2024-2029

Glossary

CAN	CBR Africa Network
CBID	Community Based Inclusive Development
CBR	Community Based Rehabilitation
CGN	CBR Global Network
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
OPD	Organization of Disabled People
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TOR	Terms of Reference
WHO	World Health Organization

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1. Introduction

This Strategic Plan covers the period 2024-2029.

Since its inception, CAN has been guided by its five-year Strategic Plans, developed by its Board of Directors in consultation with CAN stakeholders, and implemented by the Secretariat with Board supervision and support.

This plan is an update to the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan developed by the Current CAN Board in 2019-2020 through a series of steps including a three-day facilitated strategic planning meeting held in Kampala, which analysed the input of CAN members and strategic partners to draft the strategy.

The plan has been reviewed by the CAN Board and Secretariat in 2024 to take into account the achievements and challenges of CAN over the 2020-2024 period, as well as external factors such as the changes in the CBR/CBID sector and the funding environment, and the impact of the Covid 19 Pandemic.

2. Background

The Community Based Rehabilitation Africa Network (CAN) was founded in 2001 in Uganda when stakeholders came together to share ideas and experiences relating to CBR/CBID. They identified that establishing an organization could help them to continue to learn from each other and share knowledge across Africa to benefit all stakeholders involved in addressing the needs and rights of persons with disabilities for the realisation of the UNCRPD and the 2030 Agenda. At the time of CAN's founding there was limited sharing of knowledge and experiences among CBR/CBID implementers within Africa and internationally and this undermined CBR/CBID practice.

Many African countries have embraced the CBR/CBID approach and yet lack the documented evidence to eloquently defend or share their strategies. Also, there has been a dearth of information about CBR/CBID training in Africa, with many training programmes remaining unknown to stakeholders including those who would want to access them.

Through CAN, CBR/CBID providers have an opportunity to voice their experiences and share knowledge on CBR/CBID good practice, to impact better service delivery resulting in improved access to rights and quality of life for persons with disabilities in Africa. CAN's objective is to share knowledge in line with the CBR Guidelines, and the achievement of rights for persons with disabilities in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) that many African countries have ratified. CAN's main channels of information sharing are its website (<http://www.afri-can.org>), its Facebook page, Twitter handle, and a YouTube account.

CAN has also successfully held six CBR Conferences in Uganda (2001), Malawi (2004), South Africa (2007), Nigeria (2010), Kenya (2015) and Zambia (2018). These have provided unique opportunities for networking and information sharing. From presentations at each CAN conference, CAN has published six CBR books on different themes. Each conference also developed resolutions aimed at improving CBR/CBID practices. In 2010, the CAN Conference in Nigeria was also the launch event for the CBR Guidelines.

Over the years CAN has also organised 15 Writing Skills workshops in 13 African countries to develop skills of its members in documenting CBR/CBID practices. Countries benefitting from such workshops include, Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Malawi, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Zambia and Uganda.

CAN has also collaborated with many national and international organizations and institutions. As the first continental CBR network, CAN played an important role in setting up the CBR Global Network (CGN) and is a member of the CGN Board. At the time of developing this strategic plan, the membership of CAN has grown exponentially and is close to 3,000 members from all countries of Africa.

In spite of CAN's many achievements over the years, a number of challenges have continued to affect its operations. For example, CAN has increasingly experienced challenges to secure the core funding to run its secretariat in a difficult fundraising environment and in the wake of the Covid 19 Pandemic. CAN has also struggled to establish an active Board of Directors through its current electoral system. The lack of a network of national CBR/CBID Networks has also limited CAN's potential. For these reasons, within this Strategic Plan, a restructure of CAN is recommended to rejuvenate the organization and to improve its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability for the future.

3. Vision and Mission

Vision:

To be a leading network for sharing information on developments and good practice in Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) / Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID) for improved disability mainstreaming.

Mission:

CAN exists to promote networking and documentation and sharing of information on Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) / Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID) among relevant stakeholders in accessible formats.

4. Core Values

Rights-based approach: We know that the rights of persons with disabilities are consistently being denied; that health systems fail them; that they are not allowed to participate fully in community life; and that they are less likely than others to access education and leadership opportunities. A commitment to the rights-based approach means sending a message to everyone with whom we work that things must change and that no-one must be left behind. It means ensuring that persons with disabilities and their families, as well as those in their community, understand the rights they have and it means challenging government and development partners at all levels when those rights are denied.

Full and effective participation of persons with disabilities and their families: This means ensuring that persons with disabilities participate in every aspect of CAN's work - in consultation, planning, implementation and monitoring, and ensuring that our Board of Directors is representative of the constituencies with whom we work.

Strong and positive partnerships: We will build partnerships with organisations who share our aims and values. We will develop specific interventions and draft agreements together to ensure they reflect our needs and aspirations and those of partner organisations.

Equality, honesty and respect: CAN will not discriminate on any grounds. Rather we will seek to be honest with, and respect everyone with whom we work. We will seek to ensure the full participation of groups who have faced discrimination because of their disability, gender or other factor and promote these values throughout our work.

Transparency: We have a responsibility towards those who put their trust in us to be open in all undertakings.

Accountability: We are committed to the growth of CAN as a strong regional network through trust gained by being accountable for the resources entrusted to us. We will strive to ensure sustainability by fostering an environment of accountability with all our stakeholders and partners.

Ubuntuism: We recognise the interconnectedness of everyone with their society and the value and importance of sharing to increase the good fortune of all.

5. Governance Structure

According to the Constitution of CAN, the overall responsibility for governance, oversight and decision-making on all key matters are currently vested with the Board of Directors. The Board consists of seven members elected by the General Meeting sitting at intervals of four years during CBR Africa Conferences.

The head of the Secretariat, appointed by the Board of Directors, leads the day-to-day management of the organisation and the implementation of Board decisions and plans. The secretariat of CAN is based in Kampala, Uganda.

Note: The Governance structure of CAN has been identified as one of the main factors limiting its effectiveness, and for this reason, this Strategic Plan includes a recommendation to change the structure of CAN's governing (see recommendations below).

6. Aim and Objectives

Aim

To strengthen CAN's capacity to encourage and support networking, and promote the generation, documentation and sharing of information on all aspects of Community Based Rehabilitation / Community Based Inclusive Development in accessible formats.

Objectives

The specific objectives of CAN are:

- 1) To develop a strong CBR/CBID information acquisition, generation, management and sharing capacity across Africa
- 2) To establish a robust network for promoting effective CBR/CBID and disability inclusive practices in Africa
- 3) To strengthen CAN's organizational capacity for effective delivery of its mandate.

Strategy to achieve objectives

Strategic Objective 1): To develop a strong CBR/CBID information acquisition, generation, management and sharing capacity across Africa

We will develop and implement a communication strategy to strengthen our mechanisms for the acquisition, management and sharing of information relevant to CBR/CBID. This will utilise a variety of effective ways of reaching our stakeholders. Where possible, CAN will also support stakeholders to document and share experiences, information and learning opportunities relating to CBR/CBID and disability.

We will develop a broad membership of CBR/CBID stakeholders to ensure that information is gathered, organised and made available to people across the continent at all levels of CBR/CBID programmes and in a range of languages and formats.

We will continue to develop and share a Directory of CBR/CBID programmes in Africa to encourage dialogue, interactions and collaboration. We will promote information sharing on CBR/CBID training courses and modules. Gathering and sharing information on the progress of implementation of the CRPD and SDGs will be integral to our work.

Key Result Areas for Objective 1:

- i) Systems established for the comprehensive acquisition, management and sharing of information relevant to CBR/CBID from all stakeholder groups and regions
- ii) Expansion of the CAN membership amongst all stakeholder groups including persons with disabilities, government and non-government actors at international, regional, national and local levels.
- iii) Relevant information on existing disability and CBR/CBID programmes available in a variety of formats and languages through a range of channels to a broad range of stakeholders.
- iv) Capacity developed for information generation and sharing among CBR/CBID stakeholders.

Strategic Activities for Objective 1:

- Develop systems and mechanisms to expand the collection, management and sharing of information on CBR/CBID.
- Develop the CAN website and social media platforms (Facebook page, X handle and YouTube account) as comprehensive, accessible and well-known sources of information on CBR/CBID and disability.
- Develop and implement a strategy to further define and increase, maintain and share the CAN Directory.

- Develop and host online writing skills courses for CBR/CBID practitioners and share resources produced.

Strategic Objective 2): To establish a robust network for promoting effective CBR/CBID and disability inclusive practices in Africa

We will promote national and regional networking of CBR/CBID and disability stakeholders through supporting the establishment and strengthening of National CBR/CBID Networks and Associations. We will encourage the national and regional networks to share experiences, practices, innovation and opportunities. The Networks/Associations can be the vehicle for sharing information with CAN.

We will work closely with Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), government agencies, development organisations, and regional decision makers to create increased awareness of, and support of CBR/CBID as an effective strategy to promote disability rights in Africa and realize the CRPD and SDGs.

We will play a key role in the activities of the CBR Global Network (CGN). CAN will also hold its next CBR Africa Conference in 2024 in Uganda – for the first time in a Hybrid format offering in-person or remote participation options. CAN will once again follow up conference outcomes and produce and disseminate post-conference publications to further share the benefit of the event throughout the continent.

Key Result Areas for Objective 2

- i) A network of CBR/CBID Networks and Associations established for information sharing and partnership across Africa.
- ii) Regional forums, conferences and the Global CBR/CBID congress organized and attended for information sharing and raising CAN's profile.
- iii) The CBR Guidelines, CRPD and SDGs promoted as tools for Disability inclusive development.

Strategic Activities for Objective 2:

- Conduct a mapping of existing CBR/CBID Networks and Associations in Africa and develop and share models for networking.
- Support the establishment and strengthening of national CBR/CBID Networks and Associations as effective, representative and sustainable entities including providing online training.
- Promote networking with and amongst CBR/CBID programmes with strong linkages to regional and sub-regional coordinators.
- Contribute to activities of the CGN including the Global CBR/CBID Congress.
- Compile, edit and disseminate post conference books in collaboration with conference presenters and other CBR experts.
- Support sub regional CBR/CBID forums to promote information sharing and collaboration.
- Organise post conference e-discussions on Facebook and X.

Strategic Objective 3): To strengthen CAN's organizational capacity for effective delivery of its mandate.

To achieve the first two strategic objectives both the CAN Board and secretariat must be strengthened.

It is proposed to revise the current CAN Constitution to reflect a new mechanism for appointing the CAN Governing structure. An International Advisory Board is proposed to replace the existing Board of Directors structure. This revision will be presented for consideration by members at the CAN AGM within the September 2024 CAN Conference.

It is also hoped that the secretariat can be strengthened with the addition of a full-time Coordinator from early 2025 if resources can be secured.

CAN will implement the Strategic Plan through Annual Plans developed by the Secretariat under the guidance of the International Advisory Board. These will be reviewed through formalized monitoring and evaluation processes.

Key Result Areas for Objective 3:

- i) Functional CAN with an effective and efficient secretariat compliant with Uganda and international standards.
- ii) The International Advisory Board operating effectively and efficiently in line with CAN's Constitution and Board Charter.
- iii) CAN secretariat operating effectively and efficiently with skilled staff working to clear job descriptions and regular evaluations.

Strategic Activities for Objective 3:

- Review CAN's Constitution and present recommended changes at CAN's GM during CAN Conference.
- Develop and implement new criteria for appointing the CAN governing body.
- Develop a call for application for the selection of the International Advisory Board members that will represent the five (5) sub-regions

(Africa West, Central, East, North and South)

- Appoint and orient members of a new International Advisory Board of their key roles in line with CAN vision, mission, and objectives if changes to the Constitution are approved.
- Recruit relevant and skilled staff and appraise them regularly.
- Organise an orientation for the staff especially regarding their job descriptions and what CAN expect from them.
- Review and update CAN policies and operational systems wherever necessary.
- Discuss collaboration possibilities and develop MoUs with partners wherever appropriate.
- Develop and operationalise a Resource Mobilisation strategy.
- Hold quarterly and annual Board meetings online or face-to-face as resources allow.
- Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation plan and systems in accordance with the strategic plan.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

To operationalize this Strategic Plan, annual work plans will be developed indicating the activities, centres of responsibility and required resources. The Plan will be implemented by the CAN secretariat and the International Advisory Board.

Monthly monitoring of progress against the annual work plan and budget will be conducted by the Secretariat team in partnership with the Board Chairperson.

Evaluation of the CAN Strategic plan will take place in three stages:

- i) Formative (Baseline) evaluation, which will establish the status of all indicators before the plan is fully operational. This will set targets and establish costs of each broad strategy.

- ii) Mid-term evaluation, which will be conducted half way in the life cycle of the plan to inform whether or not the implementation of the plan is on course, and recommend remedial actions to improve implementation.
- iii) Final evaluation, which will be at the end of the mandate of the plan. This will establish the success rate of the plan in achieving its outcomes as measured by the indicators.

8. Resource Mobilization

CAN currently has very limited funding with which to implement its Strategic Plan. It is hoped that if a new CAN structure is approved at the 2024 AGM in September 2024, a new CAN Advisory Board can be appointed by early 2025 and will be in a position to progress the following:

- i) Approach existing and potential donors to secure core funding for CAN to recruit a Coordinator, fund its Admin/Finance officer and carry out its core information sharing activities.
- ii) Develop a Resource Mobilisation strategy and plan, drawing on the skills and experience of the Advisory Board and Secretariat team. This will include:
 - a. generating unrestricted funds from conference and workshop surpluses.
 - b. Developing and nurturing partnerships with key international NGOs, national governments in Africa and UN agencies for collaborative arrangements aimed at sponsoring CBR Africa conferences and exploring possible support towards core costs and specific activities of CAN.
 - c. Developing joint programmes with OPDs and other CSOs for consortium funding.

Appendices

SWOT Analysis

This section summarizes the most dominant internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) as well as the external factors (opportunities and threats) that currently impact on the operations of CAN. The section also focuses on how the SWOT can be reworked to bring strong advantage to the organisation. The table below presents suggestions for leveraging the strengths, addressing the weaknesses, harnessing the opportunities and mitigating the threats.

Strengths	Suggestions of Leveraging the Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Registered International NGO with an office in Uganda• A well-known brand amongst members• A unique network bringing together CBR and disability stakeholders in Africa• A major resource on good practice in CBR/CBID• Regular strategic plans elaborated with a clear vision and mission• Recognized as the pioneer of CBR networking in Africa and globally• Being in existence for more than two decades• Presence of Major organisational structures (constitution, organizational policies, financial systems and strategic plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use this to enhance CAN's credibility and increase development partner attention.• Use the brand of CAN to strengthen partnerships and collaboration arrangements with members.• Use the unique history to advocate for better policies on CBR and disability among African countries.• Develop a strategy for collecting more and up-to-date materials• The regular reviews are an opportunity for CAN's renewal of its mandate and ensure its relevance among stakeholders.• Use this recognition to enhance CAN's representation on

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed and experienced Board members plus a dedicated and supportive secretariat • A good reputation built over the years and being accountable 	<p>international and regional bodies on rehabilitation and disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the longevity of CAN to plan for the future in form of new projects. • Use these as internal controls to encourage development partners to offer further financial support and collaboration. • Strengthen qualifications further for becoming a Board member; and strengthen staff development as part of CAN's Human Resource plan.
Weaknesses	Suggestions of Addressing Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack clarity on who should be a member of CAN • CAN has a small team as its secretariat • Lack of some policies and systems such as on M&E, Partnership development and communications • Inadequate capacity/skills for resource mobilization • Weak presence on the social media with irregular postings on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube • Low engagement with French, Portuguese and Arabic speaking members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership qualifications should be clearly spelt out in CAN's constitution • Enlarge the secretariat by creating new positions that will enhance activity implementation. • Develop new policies that are lacking in CAN and review existing ones. • Hire a full-time fundraising officer. • Hire a communications assistant to increase engagement on CAN's social media platforms.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low collaboration with national governments in Africa • Reliance on weak country CBR associations for information sharing • More focus is on Uganda and less on other African countries • Weak Coordination of secretariat (management from a distance) • Has not relationship with African Union and its bodies • Weak financial sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance engagement with French, Portuguese and Arabic speaking members by maximising BOARD membership and hiring some staff members who are multilingual. • Use the CRPD and SDGs as entry points for enhancing collaboration with national governments in Africa and the African Union • Strengthen country CBR associations and initiate networks with specific CBR/CBID programmes and disability organisations. • Engage in proposal development and raise funds • Proactively initiate relations with donors • Enhance CAN's visibility by participation in regional conferences and meetings as well as engagement with international media channels. • Put in place mechanisms through which Secretariat should give regular updates to the Board of Directors.
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Opportunities	Suggestions of Harnessing the Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing skills training • The new phenomenon of inclusive development and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development • The ratification of the CRPD by many African countries • Belonging to several international networks on rehabilitation • Global inclusion drive – disability development agenda • International visibility of CAN as an African CBR network • Existence of disability and rehabilitation networks at all levels within Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use writing skills trainings to enhance networking and recruitment of more members into CAN. • Use inclusive development and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development as entry points for influencing policy on disability financing in Africa. • Make the CRPD a rallying point for CBR/CBID financing in Africa. • Use membership to international networks on rehabilitation as opportunity for resource mobilisation and information sharing. • Use this also as opportunity for resource mobilisation and information sharing. • Use this to become a key player in organising events on CBR/CBID in Africa. • Use CBR/CBID and disability networks to enhance collaboration with various organisations.

Threats	Suggestions of Mitigating the Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition for donor funding • Few donors have funding streams for information-sharing on CBR and disability • Communication challenges in Africa (poor Internet connectivity and language barrier) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use strategies that reduce competition for donor funds, say asking for funds in consortiums. • Enrich information sharing with other fundable activities, say policy influence and human rights advocacy. • Mitigate communication challenges by procuring reliable internet connections and establish specific points of contact in various African countries.

Stakeholder Analysis

The following eight broad categories of stakeholders and their interests were identified during the CAN strategic planning meeting.

No	Stakeholder Category	Interests
1	CBR/CBID programmes and practitioners in Africa	Access to information and learning on all aspects of CBR/CBID, sharing experiences and challenges in their work, participation in CAN conferences, communicating with other CBR/CBID programmes, and participation in activities of national CBR/CBID associations.
2	OPDs and persons with disabilities	Influencing policy, promoting disability inclusive development, looking out for funding and training opportunities, participation in CAN conferences and accessing information relevant to their work.
3	NGOs involved in Human Rights advocacy and/or disability work	Accessing information and learning on all aspects of CBR/CBID, sharing information about their work, and sponsoring and participation in CAN conferences.
4	Other disability networks in Africa	Accessing information on all aspects of CBR/CBID, training opportunities, sharing information about their work, and collaboration on joint projects.

5	Governments (national and local).	Accessing information on all aspects of CBR/CBID and participation in CAN Conference
6	Development agencies including UN Agencies.	Promoting inclusive development through provision of funds and participation in CAN Conferences. There are also interested to see what is working on the ground and that is aligned to the development frameworks and international legislation.
7	Universities and other educational/training institutions.	Accessing information on all aspects of CBR/CBID, sharing research publications, and participation in CAN Conferences.
8	The media (press and electronic).	Accessing information on all aspects of CBR/CBID, Provision of publicity to CAN and its activities.