

Welcome to the CBR Africa Network Newsletter 2025

The **CBR Africa Network (CAN)** is a continental civil society organization established in **2001 in Uganda**, dedicated to promoting collaboration, learning, and knowledge exchange on **Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR)/Community-Based Inclusive Development (CBID)** across Africa.

CAN facilitates information sharing among disability and rehabilitation stakeholders through regional and global events, online dialogues, training, and documentation initiatives. Hosted in Uganda, the CAN Secretariat works with Kyambogo University and other partners to advance disability inclusion and inclusive development across the continent.

Vision

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

Mission

To promote networking, documentation, and the sharing of information on **CBR/CBID** among relevant stakeholders in accessible formats.

Objectives

1. To strengthen **CBR/CBID** information acquisition, generation, management, and sharing capacity across Africa.
2. To establish and sustain a robust network that promotes effective **CBR/CBID** and disability-inclusive practices across the continent.
3. To enhance CAN's organizational capacity for effective and efficient delivery of its mandate.

Members of the International Advisory Board (2025 - 2029)

North Africa Representative	Chairperson of the CAN IAB	Ayman Mahmoud Eltantawy
Central Africa Representative	Vice Chairperson of the CAN IAB	Agho Tsangue Glory Tchiazé
Treasurer from Uganda	Treasurer for the CAN IAB	Barbara Batesaki Ssembatya
East Africa Representative from South Sudan		Catherine Visensio Loliha
West Africa Representative from Niger		Abdou Yohanna
Previous EC Representative from Egypt		Nabil Ezzat Halim
Youth Representative from Kenya		Samson Waweru
General Member Representative from Zambia		Eddie Mupotola

CBR Africa Network International Advisory Board (IAB) 2025-2029

Member Biographies

Representative for North Africa: from Egypt

Ayman Mahmoud Eltantawy is the Chairperson for the CAN International Advisory Board (IAB), a visionary leader, disability rights advocate, and expert in Community-Based Inclusive Development (CBID) with over two decades of experience in inclusive development, rehabilitation, and civil society leadership.

He has dedicated his career to empowering persons with disabilities, advancing their rights, and fostering sustainable community-based solutions across Egypt and North Africa.



Representative for Central Africa: from Cameroon



Agho Tsangue Glory Tchiazé is the Vice chairperson for the CAN International Advisory Board (IAB), a seasoned public health professional with 17 years of experience in disability and inclusive development. As the Program Manager at Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Services (CBC Health Services), she leads and strengthens a nationwide network of disability-focused partner organizations to implement impactful programs across Cameroon.

Under her leadership, her team has transformed access to (inclusive) education, (inclusive) health, social, and livelihood opportunities for over 20,000 children, youths and adults

with disabilities while reaching over 2 million indirect beneficiaries. She has pioneered innovative solutions for managing children with severe central neurological disorders, particularly cerebral palsy, ensuring better care and inclusion.

Passionate about research, impact communication, and multi-stakeholder collaboration, she drives evidence-based interventions that improve service delivery and sustainability. A strong advocate for accountability, she ensures that funds allocated to persons with disabilities are used effectively and that best practices are shared across partner organizations.

Treasurer: from Uganda

Barbara Batesaki Ssembatya is the Treasurer for the CAN International Advisory Board, a physiotherapist currently retired from public employment but continues to share her experience and expertise supporting different organizations towards a disability inclusive society.

Barbara has been involved in disability/CBR work for over 30 years, working in different environments ranging from hospital, community, Government Ministry, NGO and INGO as physiotherapist, trainer manager and technical adviser. She has been involved in CAN activities since inception and served as CAN Treasurer 2004 -2010. She has also served in professional bodies leadership positions.





Representative for East Africa: from South Sudan

Catherine Visensio Loliha is a representative for the East African Region to the CAN International Advisory Board, holds a diploma in community studies and rural development, department of community studies from University of Juba. She works with OVCI La Nostra Famiglia as the Empowerment Officer. She has the ability to plan and facilitate events such as trainings and workshops. She is also good at public speaking, including talk shows on media platforms.



Representative for West Africa: from Niger

Abdou Yohanna from Niger Republic, is a representative for the West African Region to the CAN International Advisory Board, holds a Masters in Development Studies from the Geneva Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, in Humanitarian Action from the University of Geneva and in Social-Anthropology of Health from the University Abdou Moumouni Niamey. He has 23 years of working experience in the field of

Rural Development, Humanitarian Action, Social Economic Rehabilitation and Disability Inclusion.

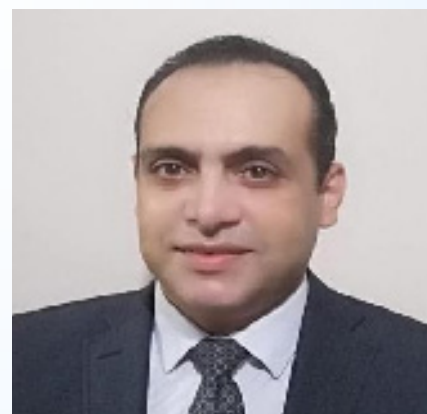
He first worked for 10 years as Socio-economic development Coordinator at SIM Danja Leprosy Hospital (funded by The Leprosy Mission). Since 2012 and currently acting as Head of Programmes and Research for The Leprosy Mission Niger.



Representative of Previous EC for Continuity: from Egypt

Nabil Ezzat Halim – CEOSS (Egypt) Is the Deputy Manager for Housing and Local Resources Development at the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS).

Mr. Halim has developmental experience in social development for more than 20 years in addition to Community Based Inclusive development (CBID). He is a member to the CAN International Advisory Board.



Representative for East Africa: from Kenya

Samson Waweru is the representative of youths with disability, appointed by the CAN General Assembly. He is a proven transformational leader as attested by the remarkable achievements undergone by the Kenya Society for the Blind over the last 6 years.

He has a background in Political Science and public administration, which has equipped him with the knowledge and skills to navigate

the complexities of policy, governance, and organizational structures. His leadership experience is broad and multifaceted, involving strategic decision-making, organizational development, and leading teams toward impactful change.

General Member Representative: from Zambia



Eddie Mupotola from Zambia is an International Advisory Board General Member appointed by CAN's General Assembly. He is the CBID Regional Advisor at the Norwegian Association of Disabled based in NAD's Zambia Country Office in Lusaka.

Eddie has been working in development for over 20 years, 12 of which have been in CBR/CBID. He has been a major contributor to the development of the Zambia CBR/CBID programme. He has also been instrumental in establishing more than 80 District CBR/CBID networks across Zambia and provided technical support to establishment of CBR/CBID networks in

Uganda and Zanzibar. He has also run training in establishing CBR/CBID Networks in collaboration with CAN both online and at the CAN Conference in Uganda in

2024.

Eddie has a wealth of knowledge and experience working on various projects and programmes with international organisations including UNICEF, the EU, USAID, Irish Aid, Christian Aid and the CP Trust. He has also participated in several research studies with acclaimed Universities such as John's Hopkins. He has proven experience in developing and managing programmes both in Zambia and Sierra Leone. A strong believer in teamwork, Eddie's philosophy is that there is no task that can't be achieved if co-workers put personal interests aside and strive to achieve the common goal regardless of who they may be.

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Representative for Southern Africa



Joyce Matara is a distinguished advocate for disability rights, a champion for gender equality, and a social development expert with over 30 years of experience in disability programming in Zimbabwe. Currently, she serves as the Acting Executive Director of the National Association of Societies for the Care of the Handicapped (NASCOH), where she leads a comprehensive disability rights coordination platform that operates across all ten provinces. She holds a Masters degree in Development Studies with a specialization in human rights, gender, and conflict studies from the International Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, Nether-

lands (2015). She also earned a Bachelor's degree in Adult Education from Midlands State University (2013) and possesses foundational qualifications in social work. This academic background positions her uniquely at the intersection of community development, advocacy, and inclusive programming. Leadership and Advocacy. Since May 2023, Joyce has provided strategic leadership at NASCOH, representing over 50 member organizations nationwide. She spearheads national advocacy campaigns, influences disability inclusive policy development, and ensures that the voices of persons with disabilities are central to Zimbabwe's development agenda. Her leadership encompasses resource mobilization, strategic partnerships with government and international development partners, and the coordination of accessibility initiatives across public and private sectors. Joyce's work is driven by a vision of a Zimbabwe where persons with disabilities enjoy full participation, equality, and empowerment in all aspects of society. Her approach combines grassroots community engagement with high-level policy advocacy, ensuring that systemic change is informed by lived experiences and implemented through sustainable institutional frameworks. Joyce Matara epitomizes a generation of African disability rights leaders, combining international exposure with deep community roots, technical expertise with passionate advocacy, and strategic thinking with practical implementation skills. Her leadership continues to shape Zimbabwe's journey toward a more inclusive and equitable society for all its citizens.



Stories From Our Membership

Karangwa Jean Pierre

He is a Rwandan professional occupational therapist since 2018 with six years of experience working in non-governmental organization focusing community-based rehabilitation (CBR/CBID).



CORNER SEAT MADE IN RECYCLED CARDBOARDS

He provided both center-based and home-based therapy services, focusing on improving the lives of persons with disabilities. His work includes designing and making assistive devices from recycled cardboard materials such as corner seats, standing frames, and special chairs as well as home modifications and adaptations. Currently pursuing a Master's degree in Disability and Rehabilitation Services Management, Jean Pierre continues to apply Appropriate Paper-Based Technology (APT) in producing affordable assistive devices. He recently received the APT Manual Book written by Bevill Packer, the founder of APT worldwide, which serves as a valuable resource for promoting inclusive, sustainable, and community-driven rehabilitation practices.



University of Eswatini Hosts Landmark Intersarsity Meeting on Disability Sports and Para Games



Date: 17 March 2025 | Venue: Main Conference Hall



The University of Eswatini proudly welcomed delegates from the University of Zambia and the University of Botswana to a pivotal intersarsity meeting focused on the revival of sports programs—this time with a special emphasis on disability sports and para games.

The event, held at the university's Main Conference Hall, brought together university leaders, student representatives, and disability advocates to discuss the re-establishment of intersarsity sports initiatives that were disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In his welcome address, the Vice Chancellor expressed heartfelt appreciation to the visiting universities and emphasized the significance of reviving intersarsity games in a way that is inclusive of all students. He acknowledged the challenges posed by the pandemic and current economic strains but stressed that the time is ripe to reignite the spirit of sportsmanship, especially by supporting students with disabilities.

"This meeting presents a unique opportunity for us to collaborate and develop disability sports programs that promote inclusion, advocacy, and empowerment," the Vice Chancellor stated. "Through shared insights and best practices, we aim to create impactful programs that allow students with disabilities to showcase their talents and thrive in every facet of university life."

The University of Eswatini has made notable progress in supporting students with disabilities through initiatives like the Disability Resource Centre, which ensures inclusive access to academic and extracurricular activities. These efforts lay the foundation for a broader institutional commitment to disability inclusion in sports.

Throughout the week, the university will engage with key stakeholders, including the Deputy Prime Minister's Office and its Disability Unit, the Eswatini Sports Council, and The Federation Organization of Disabled People of Swaziland (FODSWA). Their contributions are expected to

enrich the dialogue and support the development of sustainable disability sports initiatives across partner institutions.

A special welcome was also extended to the newly elected Student Representative Council (SRC), who are expected to play an active role in these discussions. The Vice Chancellor highlighted the importance of student leadership in promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion on campus.

"This is a pivotal moment for us all," she concluded. "Let us seize this opportunity to build more inclusive universities where all students, regardless of ability, can excel. We look forward to the inspiring conversations and collaborative spirit that will emerge from this meeting." The event marks a significant step forward in fostering not only academic excellence but also inclusive development and sportsmanship across Southern African universities.



From Pain to Purpose: Florida Masele's Journey of Hope and Resilience

Born in a remote village in Kahama District, Florida Masele's story is a shining example of how care, community, and courage can transform a child's life.

A Humble Beginning

Florida Fredrick Michael Masele was born on 22nd December 2012 in Iyogelo, Ushetu, Kahama District of Tanzania's Shinyanga Region. As the eldest of four children, she spent her early childhood at home, far from any primary school, due to her family's remote location and limited resources. Recognizing the importance of education, a concerned cousin offered to take Florida to live with him in Shinyanga Municipality, where she could attend school. It was a new beginning that held promise until tragedy struck.

From Hope to Harm

Though her cousin had good intentions, he failed to explain to his wife that Florida was coming to stay for school, not just

for a visit. Sadly, this misunderstanding escalated into cruelty. Out of jealousy, the cousin & wife began physically abusing Florida, targeting her ears and eventually causing permanent hearing loss.

For months, Florida endured this abuse in silence, fearful for her life. It was only when her teachers at Lubaga Primary School, where she was enrolled in January 2018, noticed her distress and declining hearing that her story began to unfold. With care and persistence, teachers gained her trust and uncovered the painful truth.

Justice and Advocacy

Her abuser was arrested and sentenced to three months in prison. The case sparked public outrage and became a catalyst for national awareness on the abuse of

children with disabilities. Through media platforms such as Radio Sengerema, activists like Joyce Rollington used the incident to educate communities on child protection.

A New Chapter with Liliane Foundation

In 2020, Florida's life changed again, this time for the better. With the support of the Liliane Foundation and AWPDP (Association of Women with Physical Disabilities), she was admitted to Sengerema Special Needs School. She now benefits from inclusive education, specialized training in Sign Language, and comprehensive support including meals, health insurance, and counselling.



Despite her permanent hearing impairment, Florida has excelled in her studies. Currently in **Class Six**, she recently ranked **7th** out of **32 students**, a remarkable achievement that reflects her resilience and determination.

A Bright Future Ahead

With the dream of becoming a doctor or nurse, Florida is determined to use her life experience to care for others. Her teachers, community workers and family all believe she is on the right path to achieving her goals.

Loved at Home, Celebrated at School

Florida continues to visit her family during school holidays, helping with household chores and supporting her mother in selling fruits to earn a living. She is described by her mother as responsible, cheerful, and greatly loved by her siblings.



She has many friends in her community and enjoys watching football, especially when Simba SC plays its rival, Yanga SC. Her best friend, Yusta Njile, shares her love for storybooks and television, and together they bring joy to their neighborhood.

Florida's journey from abuse to empowerment is not just a personal triumph, it is a powerful reminder of the importance of education, compassion, and community support in the lives of children with disabilities.

Story contributed by:
Stella Nyamshengela
Child Empowerment Coordinator – AWPDP





Promoting Disability Inclusion: Progress in Pujini, Zanzibar City, and Urban Unguja

Community Action Transforms a Child's Life in Pujini

In Pujini Shehia, the local Committee of persons with disabilities responded to a distressing case involving a child with physical and intellectual disabilities living in severe neglect. After initial resistance from the family, the

committee, together with the National Council for People with Disabilities, secured the mother's cooperation. The child is now receiving medical care, home improvements were made, and efforts are under-

way to enroll him in school. This grassroots initiative, led by Chairperson Mwalimu Abdallah, reflects the power of community-based inclusive development (CBID).

Zanzibar City Builds Inclusive Toilets

In April 2023, the Urban CBID Stakeholders' Forum welcomed Urban District Commissioner Hon. Msaraka, who affirmed the government's commitment to disability-inclusive infrastructure.

In response to long-standing sanitation challenges, especially for persons with disabilities, the municipality began constructing accessible public toilets in key locations like Darajani Souk and

Malindi. Equipped with ramps and inclusive features, these facilities will enhance dignity, health, and mobility for all.

Advocacy Leads to Accessible Road Design in Unguja

Thanks to consistent CBID advocacy, the government's major road construction project in Unguja's Urban region now includes disability-friendly features. Pedestrian pathways have been integrated into roads like the Airport-Mnazi Mmoja route, ensuring safer and more inclusive mobility. The commitment extended as far as demolishing a section of the Presidential residence wall to make way for accessible pathways—a powerful symbol of inclusive development in action.



Inclusive Public Toilets



Pictures of Airport – Mnazi Mmoja road, designed with pedestrian walkways where people with disabilities use conveniently.

By: Nassir Rashid Ali, Former CBID Human Rights Advocacy Officer
Abdallah Juma, Chairman, Pujini Shehia Committee for Persons with Disabilities



YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES EMPOWERMENT PLATFORM
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Empowering Youth with Disabilities: Building Skills, Breaking Barriers

In a rapidly evolving world, **access to opportunity** is a right not a privilege. Yet for many youths with disabilities (YWDs), barriers to education, employment, and inclusion persist. The **Youth with Disabilities Empowerment Platform (YWDEP)** is on a mission to change that.

Why We Do It

In Mauritius, youth with disabilities often face a harsh reality: segregated education, limited opportunities after the age of 20, and social exclusion. Without access to vocational training, many remain dependent on family support.

YWDEP responds with targeted training programs that build both technical and soft skills, empowering youth to become self-sufficient entrepreneurs or workforce contributors.

What We Offer

Skills Training for Empowerment

- EcoBag & Handicrafts Creating eco-friendly products for local sale.
- Cooking & Baking Preparing youth for jobs or small businesses in hospitality.
- Gardening & Agriculture Encouraging sustainable livelihoods.
- Upcycling Projects Fusing creativity with environmental awareness.
- Cleaning & Bag-Making Enhancing job-readiness.

Culture, Community & Confidence Inclusion isn't just about employment, it's about belonging. YWDEP organizes:

- Cultural Programs Music, dance, and drama workshops.
- Educational Outings Recreational Activities Promoting exploration and independence.
- Annual Rodrigues Island Trip Fostering cross-cultural exchange and personal growth.

Awareness & Advocacy

- Workshops & Seminars Educating families and employers
- Community Campaigns Promoting disability rights and inclusion
- Policy Advocacy Partnering with stakeholders for inclusive policies

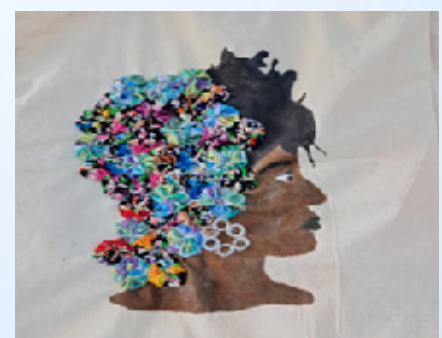
The Impact

- Economic Empowerment
- Increased Confidence & Independence
- A More Inclusive Society
- Environmental Sustainability



Looking Ahead

YWDEP envisions expanding its programs and collaborations to ensure no youth is left behind. With continued support from the community and partners, we are paving the way toward a more inclusive and equitable future—where every young person, regardless of ability, has the chance to thrive.



INDEPENDENT LIVING REALISED

Empowering persons with visual impairment Across Liberia

Liberia Christian Association of the Blind (CAB)

Project Period: July 2022 – December 2024

Impact Across Bong, Bomi, Grand Bassa, Grand Gedeh, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado.



“Over 200 Blind and Partially Sighted (BPS) individuals have gained independence thanks to CAB’s Orientation and Mobility training program. With white canes and expert instruction, BPS persons can now move around their homes, communities, and even attend public events confidently and safely.

CAB deployed instructors and now has volunteers in each county, ensuring that mobility training is sustained locally. Alongside this, psychosocial counselling helped newly blind individuals rebuild confidence, find hope, and connect with mentors who have succeeded despite similar challenges.

On October 15, CAB hosted a vibrant celebration to raise awareness on White Cane Safety Day under the theme: “Using the White Cane, Meeting the Needs, Realizing the Rights and Addressing the Inclusive Social Development and Economic Sustainability of the Blind in Liberia”

Hundreds joined a parade from EBK Barracks to the CAB HQ, showcasing the power of inclusion. CAB President Mr. Beyan Kota highlighted the significance of the White Cane Law in ensuring equal access to public spaces and legal protections for BPS individuals.

“This day reminds us that independence is a right, not a favor.” – Beyan Kota, CAB National President

Looking Ahead: Sustainability and Inclusion

With volunteers trained in each county and ongoing advocacy for inclusive laws and services, CAB is laying the foundation for a more inclusive Liberia where no one is left behind due to disability.



Over 30 women from all eight counties have transformed from silent observers to confident leaders within CAB. Through confidence-building workshops, they learned about their rights, how to report abuse, and how to lead. Women are now actively taking leadership roles and designing their own programs, challenging traditional norms that often silence them.

From Dependents to Providers: Economic Empowerment

Thanks to training in business management, financial literacy, and micro-loans, over 200 CAB members and their families have seen economic improvements. From soap-making to petty trading, BPS members are now breadwinners, able to contribute to household income and support their families.

Liberia Christian Association of the Blind (CAB) remains committed to ensuring empowerment, equality, and opportunity for all BPS persons in Liberia.



Voice of the Care Giver

A Mother's Journey: Caring for an Adult Child with Multiple Disabilities

By Olive Tibekinga

"As my son grows older and as I grow older too the challenges of caring for him have become heavier than ever."

I am a parent of a 42-year-old son with multiple disabilities. He became sick when he was just two years old. Over the years, I have lovingly cared for him, but the demands have grown as both of us age. I would like to share some of the challenges I face today, in the hope of connecting with other parents and encouraging more spaces for caregiver support.

Physical Strain and Daily Care

My son has grown heavier, and I can no longer manage many of his daily tasks alone. Bathing him, helping him use the toilet, taking him outside for sunshine, and supporting his physiotherapy have become physically overwhelming for me.

Limited Access to Assistive Devices

He has outgrown his wheelchair, and I cannot afford a new one. Without it, I often have no option but to carry him something that is difficult, tiring, and unsafe for both of us. Challenges in Hiring Caregivers
Finding a caretaker is expensive and



complicated. Since my son is now a grown man, it is difficult to employ young female caregivers who may not feel comfortable bathing or attending to him. This means I must handle most of his personal care myself.

Healthcare Barriers

When my son is sick, it is hard to find a doctor who understands his condition. Transporting him to a medical facility is even more challenging unless I have access to a car, which is not always guaranteed.



Communication Difficulties

Because communication is limited, it is often difficult to understand what he needs or how he feels at a given moment. This makes it hard to respond quickly or appropriately to his discomfort.

High Medical Costs

He continues to experience convulsions, and the medicines required to manage these episodes are very costly, placing further pressure on our household finances.

Balancing Family Responsibilities

Like many families, we have more than one child. Meeting everyone's needs while caring for a child with significant disabilities is emotionally and financially demanding.

"I often wonder how other parents manage. I believe we need spaces to share, learn, and support one another."

I truly believe that parents and caregivers would benefit from opportunities to meet, interact, and share practical ways of managing these challenges. A support forum or peer group would make a meaningful difference for families like mine.