



In partnership with



TODDAY PROJECT

Together for the Development of Disabled African Youth

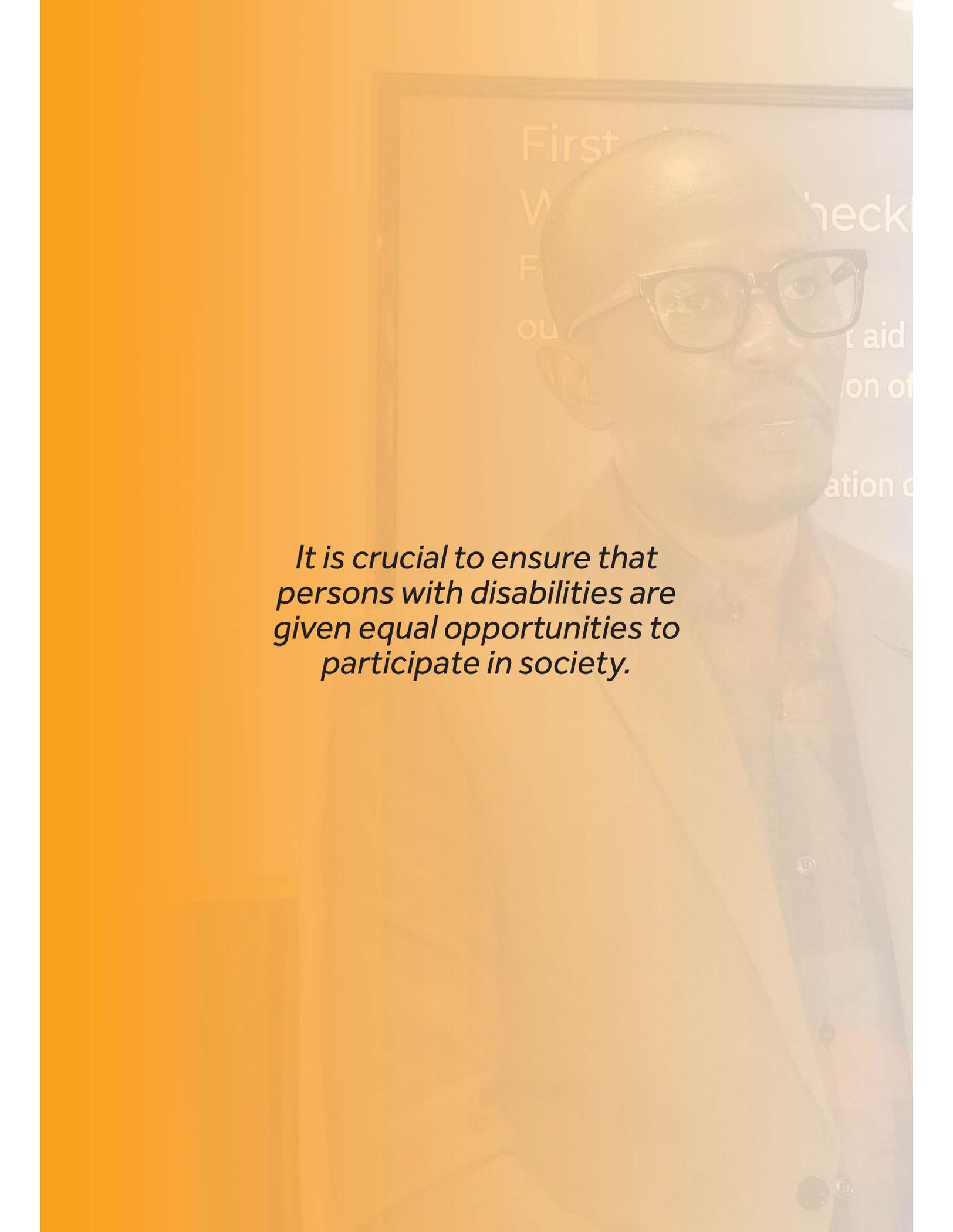


BRIDGING THE DEMAND-SUPPLY GAP FOR TALENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE FORMAL SECTOR



[CLICK TO VIEW VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS](#)



A man with glasses and a suit is standing in front of a presentation board. The board has text on it, including "First", "W", "F", "ou", "heck", "aid", "on of", and "ation of". The man is looking towards the camera. The background is a solid orange color.

It is crucial to ensure that persons with disabilities are given equal opportunities to participate in society.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
About Project Enable Africa	5
Context and Background	8
Program Profile: Project TODDAY	13
Approach	14
Project Implementation Report Summary	15
Our Impact in Numbers:	17
Youth Voices: Stories of change	18
Other Feedback	34
Feedback from Employer Partners	35
What we are learning	38
Looking forward	39

Together for the Development of Disabled African Youth

Executive Summary

The Together for the Development of Disabled Youth (TODDAY) project, implemented by Project Enable Africa with the support of Mastercard Foundation, aims to promote the economic inclusion of young persons with disabilities. The project is bridging the gap between the demand and supply of talents with disabilities in Nigeria. The project is creating equal access to economic opportunities for youths with disabilities by upskilling and placing them in decent jobs, and supporting organizations to become disability-confident employers in policies, processes, programs, and platforms.

The urgency of this project is clear. Over 80% of the 20 million youths with disabilities across Nigeria are unemployed, having limited access to education, digital skills, and a lack of economic opportunities. Over 95% of employers lack the institutional capacity to hire and engage youths with disabilities, missing out on a significant talent pool and market opportunities. Employment policies at the public and private sectors lack disability inclusion, and young people with disabilities of productive age are unable to contribute to the economy nor participate actively on issues that concern them. All these contribute to factors that make persons with disabilities one of the most vulnerable in society.

In one year, TODDAY project has upskilled and placed 75 youths with disabilities in internship positions with reputable organizations in Lagos Nigeria. About 60% of participants placed in internships have transitioned to full time or longer term employment with their host organizations. Fourteen corporate organizations have been supported to become disability-inclusive employers through disability audit, training, programing, and platforms. About 60% of these organizations have joined the Nigeria Business Disability Networks as active members. The project has also worked with the Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association to influence hiring policies among human resource professional networks in Nigeria.

This case highlights the impact stories of the project participants, showcases the employer partners and their disability inclusion journey, and ultimately amplifies the voices of youth with disabilities. TODDAY is advancing the access of youths with disabilities to meaningful employment, and strengthening the employment ecosystem in Nigeria to become disability-sensitive while ultimately promoting youths with disabilities as active economic contributors with productivity. Overall, the TODDAY project represents a significant step toward building a more inclusive and accessible society in Nigeria, and serves as a model for similar efforts in other countries and regions.

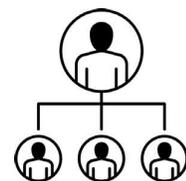


About Project Enable Africa

Project Enable Africa was founded in 2014 to promote the empowerment, rights, and social inclusion of persons with disabilities across Nigeria. We are incorporated with Nigeria's corporate affairs commission as Stanforte Edge Ltd/Gte. We envision a socially inclusive continent where persons with disabilities can prosper. Our 10-year post-COVID pandemic strategy is to bridge the demand and supply gap faced by talents with disabilities in the formal and informal sectors, while addressing issues that impact productivity. Project Enable Africa is dedicated to promoting digital and social inclusion for persons with disabilities, aiming to contribute to a sustainable and integrated society.

75

organizations supported to become disability-confident employers



One of the organization's key initiatives is the Inclusion Hub, Nigeria's first disability-focused digital training facility established with the support of Google.org in 2019. Through this program, we have successfully upskilled over 5000 persons with disabilities across Nigeria and facilitated connections to temporary and permanent job opportunities, including placements at reputable organizations such as the Unilever, Sterling Bank Plc., MTN, British Council, Access Bank Plc., BudgIT Foundation, Marriott Hotel groups, Radisson Hotel Group, Dataleum, etc.

We have provided training and support to over 1,000 persons with disabilities and their caregivers in over 30 States in Nigeria, and 5 African countries through

our business support program. Through this support, we have directly provided seed capital to over 350 entrepreneurs with disabilities and partnered with the UNDP and various State governments in Nigeria to help these entrepreneurs access more funding for their businesses. About 40% of these entrepreneurs have reported at least 50% increase in the business revenue within the first 6 months of business access training and mentorship.

Project Enable Africa has also played a pivotal role in supporting 75 organizations to become disability-confident employers by assisting them in developing inclusive policies, processes, programs, and platforms. In 2019 we co-created a private sector disability audit toolkit with the support of Sightsavers and the Institute





We have contributed to the discourse on disability inclusion through the research articles and documentaries, hosted stakeholders' dialogues to raise local and global awareness of disability issues in Nigeria while amplifying the voices of the community of persons with disabilities and strengthening their agencies.

of Development Studies, Uk. We also co-founded the Nigeria Business Disability Network, as a member of the ILO Global Business Disability Network. We have

since provided technical support to strengthen the institutional capacity of private sector organizations and employer networks across Nigeria.

In addition to our practical initiatives, we have contributed to the discourse on disability inclusion through the research articles and documentaries, hosted stakeholders' dialogues to raise local and global awareness of disability issues in Nigeria while amplifying the voices of the community of persons with disabilities and strengthening their agencies. Looking ahead, the organization will continue in its commitment to bridge the demand and supply of youth talent employment through public and private sector policies, strategic training programs, digital accessibility and assistive technology, and advocacy efforts that amplify youth voices. We are helping youths with disabilities find decent employment and live dignified lives.

Context and Background



15%

Nigerians live with one form of disability or the other; with over 50% of them in their productive age.

Africa's most populous nation and largest economy has a youth unemployment problem. In Nigeria, nearly a quarter of the population is out of work and 20% is underemployed. For young people aged 15 to 35, the figures are grim: 55.4 percent are without work. The reality is even worse for young persons with disabilities. According to the United Nations, at least 15% of Nigerians live with one form of disability or the other; with over 50% of them in their productive age. The community of persons with disabilities is the largest minority group in our population. The World Bank reports that persons with disabilities (PWDs) are regarded in the communities as the most disadvantaged; noting disability as

both a cause and effect of poverty. This establishes the fact that issues around persons with disabilities in Nigeria require immediate, intentional, and sustainable intervention; since Nigeria is now home to the largest population of people in extreme poverty.

UNESCO notes that many young persons with disabilities of productive age have very limited or no access to information and opportunities for continuous education, employment, and entrepreneurship, as they are cut off from platforms where these opportunities exist. Many training platforms and programs targeted at upskilling young people towards improving their employability do not take into account the





needs of young people with disabilities. A 2019 Labour Market Assessment Report by Sightsavers Nigeria, notes a chronic lack of relevant skill sets, aspirational limitations, and a shortage supply of qualified talents with disabilities for the formal sector in Nigeria.

The Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act (2019) in Nigeria provides a legal framework for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, including their employment rights. Specifically, the law demands that employers reserve 5% of their workforce for persons with disabilities. Albeit, evidence suggests that many employers are not disability-friendly in their policies, processes, programs, and (physical and digital) platforms; and do not know what the provision of reasonable accommodation means for persons with disabilities.

The situation in Lagos, Nigeria's economic capital is alarming, as the state has the highest cost of living in the country. According to the Lagos State government, the state is also home to

over 3 million persons with disabilities. The high cost of living and the high level of inequality have significantly contributed to the hardship and vulnerability faced by persons with disabilities. Additionally, Lagos is one of 8 Nigerian states with a state-level disability act. However, despite numerous corporate organizations, the act's provisions implementation is still far-fetched. The Lagos State Special Persons law expressly states that 1% of the corporate workforce must consist of persons with disabilities.

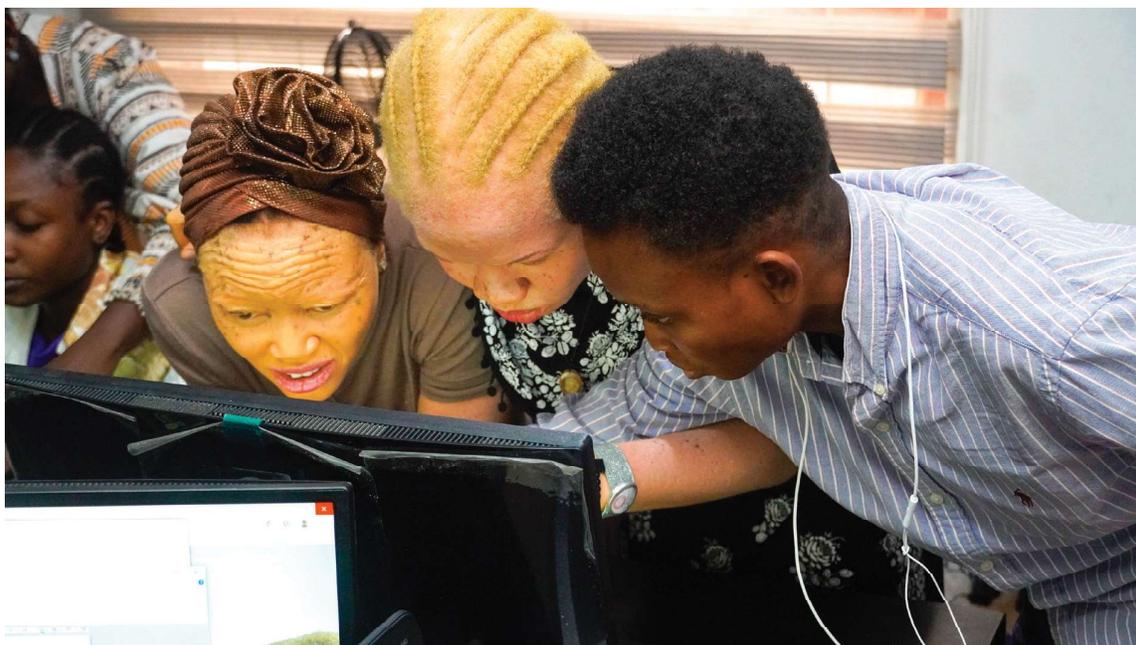
There is a gap in the supply and demand of talents with disabilities, and it is contributing significantly to the barriers that limit the employment opportunities available to persons with disabilities. Nonetheless, persons with disabilities can equally participate in society and contribute substantially to the economy if the appropriate support systems are available. This support system, however, must address the challenges on the demand and supply sides, and with the labour market ecosystem, for inclusive jobs. As such, Project Enable

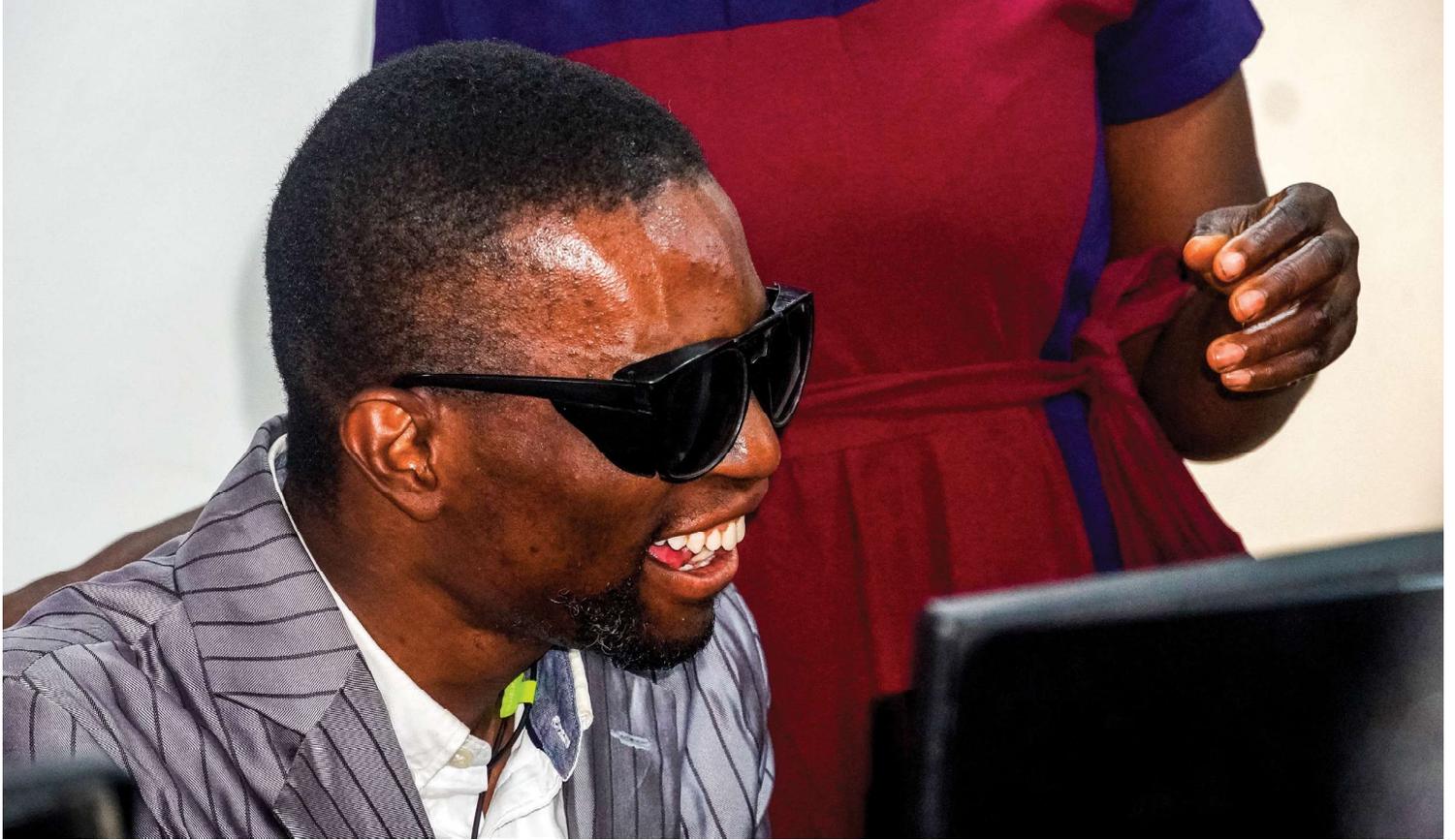
With the right support system in place, persons with disabilities can overcome the barriers that limit their employment opportunities, and create a more inclusive and prosperous society for all.

Africa in liaison with the MasterCard Foundation, developed the TODDAY project

Through TODDAY project, Project Enable Africa and the MasterCard Foundation are working towards creating an inclusive labor market ecosystem that provides equal opportunity for persons with disabilities to participate and contribute to the economy. This project aims to bridge the gap between the supply and demand of talents with disabilities by providing training, skill development, and job placement support for persons with disabilities. With the right support system in place, persons with disabilities can overcome the barriers that limit their employment opportunities, and create a more inclusive and prosperous society for all. The TODDAY project is a step towards achieving this goal, and it is hoped that more initiatives like this will be implemented to create more inclusive job opportunities for persons with disabilities in the future.

The TODDAY case study examines the project model and how it can be adapted within broader efforts to reform the education systems and employment practices to make them more inclusive. It is crucial to ensure that persons with disabilities are given equal opportunities to participate in society, including the labor market,





as this will lead to a more diverse and prosperous society for everyone. We hope that the TODDAY project will inspire more initiatives like this to be implemented in

the future and that they will contribute towards creating a more inclusive and equitable world.



Program Profile: Project TODDAY

Project TODDAY (Together for the Development of Disabled African Youth) is an innovative initiative implemented in Nigeria by Project Enable Africa in collaboration with the MasterCard Foundation. The project is supported through the Mastercard Foundation Employee Innovation Funds. TODDAY Project is building the capacity of youths with disabilities and placing them in decent job opportunities for a dignified life. The project aligns with the Mastercard Foundation strategy of placing 30 million youths in jobs by 2030.

Goals & Objectives

The aim of the TODDAY is to bridge the gap between the supply and demand for talents with disabilities in the labor market. The project will equip and place young talents with disabilities in decent jobs within the formal sector, position organizations to become disability-confident employers, and drive inclusive employment policies among human resource professionals.

Specifically, the goal of the project is to bridge the gap between the demand and supply of talents with disabilities in the formal sector in Lagos State. The following objectives will be achieved:



Approach

The program has a three-prong approach which has had an effect on the employment ecosystem in Lagos, Nigeria.



2

Secondly, the project addresses the demand gap by working with organizations to improve their employment processes, as well as organizational policies, programs and platforms. The objective is to support employers to become disability-confident, in line with the 5% provisions of the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2019. We carry out free disability accessibility audits on participating organizations. This audit process is accompanied with recommendations on how to improve accessibility, and support for reasonable accommodation. This directly creates employment opportunities for young persons with disabilities.

1

First, we address the gap in the supply of talent by equipping young persons with disabilities with the employability skills necessary to secure skilled and semi-skilled entry level jobs in the formal sectors. This is done using a global standard employability training curriculum that is improving the job readiness profile of talents with disabilities for various sectors.



3

Thirdly, the project supports the employment ecosystem in Lagos to become more sensitive to the needs of talents with disabilities, and make a case for the employment of young persons with disabilities. Professional recruiters/HR associations/network are engaged to promote inclusion in talent acquisition, recruitment, and retention within the human resource industries in Lagos State.

Project Implementation Report Summary



We kicked off project implementation in April 2023 with stakeholders' engagement and community sensitization activities. The stakeholders include HR associations, private sector networks/associations, identified sector leaders, etc. Community sensitization and mobilization were carried out to secure partnerships to recruit the project beneficiaries. The community mobilization activities commenced participant recruitment which was done in batches.

Till date, we have recruited and trained three batches of an average of 25 youths with disabilities, in the program. Each training program lasts for 20 days, covering personal development and leadership skills, communication and use of English, digital literacy and job profiling, employability skills including CV writing and interviewing skills, sector specific introductory training. The participants also write tests to evaluate their knowledge and job readiness. They also participate in a mentoring



section with industry leaders who provide practical guidelines. During the training, each participant and their caregivers receive transportation stipends.

During the training, employers are invited to participate, facilitate training sections, and interact with the participants. We also organize site visits to employer offices for more mentoring, interaction and exchanges. This commenced the internship placement for participants. Working with the Nigeria Employers' Consultative Forum we recruit organizations as employer partners for the project. We hosted a summit for human resources professionals to engage them as disability inclusion champions within corporate organizations. Employers that indicate interest to participate in the program are provided with disability audit, training, and disability inclusion support for free.

So far, we have 14 corporate organizations participating in the program who have improved their disability inclusion capacity, and provided temporary and permanent employment opportunities for over 70 participants of the program. Employers

cut across five sectors namely; banking, hospitality, Media, ICT, and FGMG/ manufacturing. The project's employer partners include Marriott Hotel Group, NECA, Radisson Hotel Ikeja, KFC, Sterling Bank, Background Check International, Dataleum, JONAPWD, etc. In addition to the disability inclusion audit and support, employers also received training on dealing with conscious and unconscious bias, safeguarding, reasonable accommodation, access recruitment tools, and were invited to join the Nigeria business Disability Network.

After the in-class training, the participants received daily transport stipends, one year health insurance coverage, and monthly stipend for two months of internship with employer partners. Our team supports the onboarding process of participants with their employers, and carry out monthly monitoring and evaluation visits to each participant for safeguarding and progress tracking purposes.

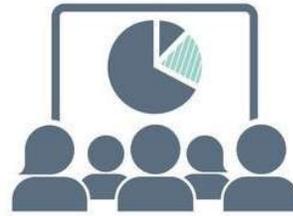
Our Impact in Numbers:

Number of participants trained:



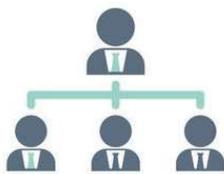
75
75 youths with disabilities:
49% female &
51% male

Number of participants placed



75
YWD

Number of employers supported



14
organizations

Number of human resources professionals reached & engaged:



110

Job retention rate:



70%

Average percentage increase in participants' salary:



136%



Youth Voices: Stories of Change 1

OVERCOMING BARRIERS WITH THE TODDAY PROJECT

Chidinma Anabel Nwandu,

Customer Experience Digital Agent,
International Brewerie



My name is Chidinma Anabel Nwandu, a young woman with albinism. Despite holding a B.Sc. in Economics, securing a permanent job has always been a major challenge for me. Before joining the TODDAY project, I had worked but I was never accepted in my workplace, so the jobs never last. Employers doubted my capability to perform due to my albinism; they questioned whether I could meet the demands of the job. This exclusionary

attitude made it nearly impossible for me to break through and find gainful employment.

“One of the biggest challenges I faced was acceptance. I couldn’t forge forward nor have a breakthrough in getting employed because of discrimination in the workplace,”

Things changed when I enrolled in the TODDAY training program at Project Enable Africa. The training provided me with

invaluable insights and practical skills that have shaped my professional demeanor. I got an in-depth knowledge on how to behave and conduct myself in the workplace.

The training helped me overcome the stereotype that persons with disabilities are introverted and unable to mingle. I was encouraged to step out of my comfort zone, interact more with my colleagues, and include myself in conversations that enriched my professional and personal life. Additionally, the training emphasized workplace safety, making me more aware and cautious about the use of technology.

I gained the mindset that my disability does not have to limit me.

I now work as a Customer Experience digital agent at International Breweries, where I support the team that manages the company's digital platform. I have been with the company for seven months. What I enjoy the most about my job is the acceptance I have received. Unlike my previous experiences, International Breweries embraces me for who I am without giving me any preferential treatment. This inclusive environment has allowed me to thrive and feel valued.

Participating in the TODDAY project has made me more open and interactive, fostering a sense of belonging and stability both at work and within my family. Financially, the job has given me stability and opened up more opportunities for me.

I now feel like I belong in my family.

Looking ahead, I can see a promising future filled with growth and opportunities for me.

"The TODDAY project was the only and is still the only means that treated persons with disabilities equally and given us a voice in the employment space,"

"The TODDAY project was the only and is still the only means that treated persons with disabilities equally and given us a voice in the employment space,"



Youth Voices: Stories of Change 2

A JOURNEY FROM UNCERTAINTY
TO CONFIDENCE

Ezekiel Kayode Adebisi,

Kitchen Staff, KFC Ogba, Lagos



Ezekiel Kayode Adebisi is a 22-year old with albinism with a senior secondary school certificate (SSCE). Ezekiel found himself at a crossroads before joining the TODDAY project. With limited employability skills and no previous job experience, securing a job seemed like a daunting challenge. Ezekiel's struggle was primarily due to his inability to see distant or small objects clearly, which severely impact-

ed his confidence and employability. His partial sight impairment made it difficult for him to perform tasks that required clear vision. The prospect of him securing employment were slim, as Ezekiel did not have any prior job experience or relevant skills.

According to Ezekiel, participating in TODDAY Project was a turning point for him. TODDAY is designed to equip youth with

disabilities like Ezekiel with essential skills to enhance their employability.

“Before, I wasn’t very confident due to my disability. I tended to be shy, but after going through the training program, I am now confident,” Ezekiel shared.

The training was not only about acquiring technical skills; it also focused on building self-confidence and improving interpersonal abilities. Ezekiel, who was once an introvert, became more outspoken and interactive. Armed with newfound confidence and skills, Ezekiel was placed at a KFC outlet in Ogba, Lagos for his 2 months internship. During his resumption, we supported his onboarding, providing orientation and safeguarding training for his Manager and colleagues. He is now a full time employee as a kitchen staff at KFC where he has now been working for 6 months.

Despite having no prior job experience, he quickly adapted to his role, thanks to the comprehensive training he received from the project. Ezekiel’s training at TODDAY had a profound impact on both his career and personal life. It not only made him more interactive but also instilled a sense of financial responsibility. He learned how to save money, plan his finances, and manage his earnings effectively.

“My training at Project Enable Africa made me more open. Even my mum says I am more interactive and don’t keep to myself like I used to.” Ezekiel added.

The training also motivated Ezekiel to continue learning and improving his skills during his employment, reinforcing the idea that his disability should not deter him from achieving his goals.

Ezekiel Kayode Adebisi’s journey with the TODDAY project is a testament to the transformative power of training and support. From struggling with confidence due to his visual impairment to becoming a valued team member at KFC, Ezekiel’s story is one of resilience, growth, and empowerment. The skills and confidence he gained through the training program have paved the way for a brighter future, demonstrating that with the right support, individuals can overcome their challenges and thrive in their careers.

The training environment was highly engaging and supportive, resembling a close-knit family where everyone felt valued and encouraged.



Youth Voices: Stories of Change 3

FROM
STRUGGLING
ENTREPRENEUR
TO THRIVING
CORPORATE
PROFESSIONAL

**Oluwasegun
Steven
Samarudeen,**

Background Screening
Operator,
Background Check
International



My name is Oluwasegun Steven Samarudeen, a bachelors' degree holder in Business and Entrepreneurship Management from the National Open University, and with physical disability. I embarked on a transformative journey with the TODDAYS project that shifted my career from self-employment to a full-time corporate role.

Before joining the TODDAYS project, I was running a café and had experience running various ventures where I had gotten some marketing skills. I initially had the mindset that I won't work for anybody so that I can avoid discrimination, but I noticed that I was not making progress either. So I started searching for a full time job so that I can have a regular income.

As a person with a disability, I faced significant challenges in my job search. I remember an experience at a hotel where the secretary dismissed me outright, making me feel unwelcome. This kind of response was common; it was the reason I wanted to be self-employed in the first place.

I applied for the program at first and was not selected, and I almost gave up on re-applying, but I reapplied and was selected into the program on the second application. Some of the things I learned during the class training include teamwork, computer skills, and social media skills; these are the things that are found most useful in my current job.

My perseverance paid off when I secured an internship position at Background Check International (BCI) in Ikeja, Lagos. During the second month of my three-month internship, I transitioned to a six-month probationary period, after which I earned a full-time position as a Background Screening Operator in the operational department. I have now been working at BCI for almost a year.

My perspective changed when I joined the TODDAY training program at Project Enable Africa. The training was exceptionally beneficial, and easy to understand.

The training content was highly relatable, especially because the trainers had similar experiences and understood the unique challenges faced by persons with disabilities.

At BCI, I found an inclusive and supportive environment where there is no stigmatization. I was pleasantly surprised to find other persons with disabilities from Project Enable Africa working there. There are policies in place that favor persons with disabilities, such as flexible work-from-home options. This has been a big help to me.

The TODDAY project profoundly impacted my career and personal life. Professionally, I learned to navigate corporate settings, communicate effectively, and handle confidential information. Financially, the stability of this job allowed me to take care of myself and my family, save money, and contribute to household expenses. I can now feed myself three times daily, save, pay house rents, and support my siblings.

I am now motivated and able to give back to society and help others facing similar challenges. My story exemplifies resilience and the positive impact of TODDAY program.



Youth Voices: Stories of Change 4

FROM STRUGGLE TO SUCCESS IN
CAREER IN HR MANAGEMENT

Chukwudumebi,

Sterling Bank

Hilda Udemeh,

Human Resources Unit, Sterling Bank

My name is Chukwudumebi Hilda, I hold a BSc in Human Resource Management, and I am visually impaired. Despite my qualification, I have faced considerable difficulties securing employment. I have tried applying for several jobs, but they either say that I would not be fast enough for the job or they did not know how to incorporate me into the workplace. It was really difficult because a lot of people do not know how to incorporate/include persons with disabilities, especially visually impaired people like me. However, my good friend, Dolapo Agbede motivated me to apply to the TODDAY program, and the program became a deal breaker for me.

The TODDAY project provided me with vital skills, boosting my confidence, team-playing abilities, and leadership qualities. The training was easy to understand and accommodating to my visual impairment, enabling me to fully engage



with the content. The skills I built were very helpful and I have applied what I learned to my internship at Sterling Bank. I now work with a team of four people and collaborate with other departments within the bank.

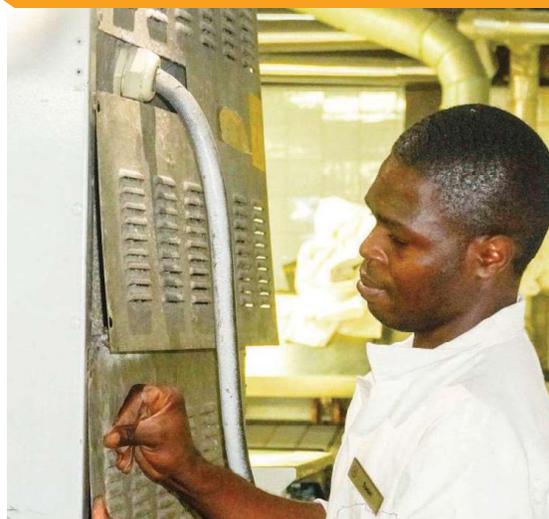
The internship at Sterling Bank has significantly impacted my career, financial stability, and family life. I now have a longer term contract. Working at Sterling Bank has not only put money in my pocket, which is very needed, it has also added something big to my career. I have gained independence and my family has been very impressed. They used to restrain me from a lot of things because they were scared. In the past months, they have been at peace with letting me do things by myself. It has been a good experience for me.

Youth Voices: Stories of Change 5

PATH TO EMPLOYMENT AND INDEPENDENCE

Tosin Adeyemi,

Electronics department, Sheraton Hotel
Lagos



Tosin Adeyemi is a person with hearing impairment and a senior secondary school certificate holder (SSCE). He embarked on a journey of independence through the TODDAY program.

Before he joined the TODDAY training program, Tosin had some experience as a storekeeper but he was unemployed at the time he was applying for the TODDAY program. According to him, finding employment as a person with disability proved to be extremely difficult. Tosin struggled to make ends meet.

'Before it was hard for me to get a job, I was managing with what I had. When I started the training program, it changed everything about me which was not what I used to be before.'

Project Enable Africa's employability skills training program provided a lifeline. Tosin found the training to be immensely helpful, equipping him with the skills and confidence needed to secure a position. After completing the initial training, Tosin undertook a two-month internship at Sheraton Hotel Lagos, followed by a six-month employment period, totaling eight

months of experience at the prestigious hotel.

Tosin's role at Sheraton Hotel is in the electronics department. Reflecting on his time there, he describes his experience as "awesome," with positive relationships with his boss and colleagues. Communication challenges are effectively managed through text messages and photos, ensuring Tosin can perform his duties without difficulty. He does not experience any discrimination at Sheraton. The inclusive environment at the hotel allows Tosin to thrive and feel valued as an employee.

Tosin mentioned that the training was very helpful for him and has changed not only his life but his family's life.

'The training has helped my family and finances and it has helped my career. I didn't have money but when I started the training program, I had money for transport to sort out and also when I started working I had more money which also helped me in my family. I don't beg anybody anymore to help or assist me financially. My family was very happy to see me work.'

Youth Voices: Stories of Change 6

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES: A
STORY OF DETERMINATION TO
SUCCESS

Emmanuel Ebosemhen,
WeCanWork Academy Coordinator,
Joint National Association for Persons
with Disabilities (JONAPWD)



My name is Emmanuel Ebosem, a graduate of political science from Ambrose Alli University who has faced significant challenges as a person with a physical impairment.

Before joining the TODDAY project, I had some employability skills, including HR soft skills, product management, social media management, and basic knowledge

of Microsoft packages. Despite these skills, I struggled to find stable employment. As a person with a physical impairment, the job market was incredibly challenging. Disability impairment is one thing that prevents employers from employing PWDs. I often faced rejections due to my disability, as employers viewed me as an extra burden. Even when I secured a job, it was usually short-lived, lasting no more

than three months. Employers lacked reasonable accommodations and strategic plans for persons with disabilities, making it difficult for me and others like me to sustain employment. I realized that there is no inclusiveness in most private firms as they want to make profits so if you are not productive as a PWD or non-PWD they tend to push the person out, but as a PWD it is more disheartening.

As such, I decided to embark on a journey of entrepreneurship. I was self-employed, selling household electronics. However, it was not enough to meet my aspirations or financial needs. Initially, I didn't want to work for anyone but circumstances made me start considering the job market. My disability made it even harder to compete in the job market. This struggle was disheartening, but I was determined to prove my capabilities. This led me to the TODDAY project.

The TODDAY project was a game-changer for me. The training content was easy to understand and covered essential areas such as advanced communication skills, and the use of Excel and PowerPoint. These skills are now integral to my work. My role involves a lot of documentation, data mobilization, and arranging data in Excel sheets. I also give presentations during stand-up meetings, using PowerPoint, and write reports using Microsoft Word. The training equipped me with the skills needed to excel in these tasks.

While I've held my role for two months on a one-year contract, Working at JONAPWD has been a fulfilling experience. There are policies in place to support people with disabilities, and I have faced no challenges in my current role. I enjoy working at JONAPWD because I am learning new things, owning up to responsibilities, and working with team members who are ready to support you and make you grow at all costs to ensure you succeed. This environment has allowed me to thrive and demonstrate my abilities.

The impact of the TODDAY project extends beyond my career. Financially, it has made a significant difference. I am now able to support myself and contribute to my family's well-being. My family has always been supportive, and this opportunity has brought us closer and provided financial stability. Everyone in my family is now inspired to learn the basics of technology, and the growth we have experienced together is incredible.

I am deeply grateful for the TODDAY project. It was able to reposition me in better ways so that I could get a job and provided me with a network of people with sound minds ready to give their best for others. The skills and confidence I gained through the project have opened previously closed doors for me. For anyone facing similar challenges, I encourage them to keep pushing forward and to seek out opportunities like the TODDAY project. It has truly been a life-changing experience for me.



Youth Voices: Stories of Change 6

A STORY OF TRANSFORMATION

Idowu Oseni,

Communications Department, Sterling Bank



My name is Idowu Oseni, visually impaired, and I hold a Masters degree in Mass Communication. Before the TODDAY project, I had various employability skills such as customer service, digital marketing, and presentation skills, but I was unemployed and found the waiting period for job opportunities quite stressful. It was relatively easy to get interviews but landing the job was a different story altogether.

When I joined the TODDAY project, I learned essential life skills that have been incredibly helpful during my internship. The training program was straightforward to assimilate, and the skills I gained were immediately applicable. For instance, under conflict management, I learned how to cope with difficult colleagues and report incidences effectively. These skills were instrumental in managing workplace conflicts and interacting with concerned management.

One of the most beneficial skills I acquired was communication. Given that my job primarily involves communication via phone calls and emails, this skill has been invaluable. The employability training from the TODDAY project remains highly relevant to my work today. Communication is a helpful skill because my job is basically communication either by phone calls or emails, so it really went a long way.

Reflecting on my experience at Sterling Bank, I can say it has been truly amazing. Sterling Bank is an unusual place to work. I mean unusual in a good way. They care so much about their employees, putting everything in place for everyone, not just PWDs, to make sure that the work process is easy for everyone. I love everything about my job at Sterling Bank, and I am currently in the process of transitioning from an intern to full-time employment.

The TODDAY project has had a profound impact on my career, family, and finances. Professionally, I have learned a lot on the job, even things I didn't expect. I kept on questioning myself on what I was doing there as the department I was assigned to seemed like a department for engineers, but with time, I got to know that there was a lot I could do here. My family is pleased that I am no longer idle and that I have something meaningful to do. My family doesn't have to worry about me being idle. They are pleased that I have something to do, something to keep me busy, and I have cash to take care of personal needs and contribute to the household. The TODDAY project has been a life-changing experience for me. It has provided me with the skills, confidence, and opportunity to thrive in a professional environment. It has truly transformed my life.



Youth Voices: Stories of Change 8

FROM CHALLENGES TO TRIUMPH

Abiola Akanbi,

Kitchen Staff, KFC

Abiola Akanbi is a 31-year-old individual with hearing impairment, who only possesses a secondary school certificate (SSCE). Due to his educational constraints and disability, Abiola found securing employment to be quite challenging.

Prior to the TODDAY project, Abiola's only previous employment experience was in a bakery, where he faced significant challenges. Before I started working at the bread place, it was very difficult, Abiola recalls. The pay was very small, and we had to stand for long periods from morning to night. It was tedious work.

However, since He joined the TODDAY project and completed the training program, Abiola has learned essential skills like Work Ethics, Time Management, and Personal Belongings Management. His professional journey has taken a positive turn. "The training really helped me in my interactions at my current location," Abiola emphasizes. It improved my communication skills and taught me how to better interact with people who do not have disabilities. It also made me realize that I can teach others how to interact with persons with hearing impairment. The time man-



agement skills I learned have been crucial in managing my tasks effectively.

With seven months of experience under his belt, Abiola describes his experience at KFC as very fine. When asked about what he enjoys most about his job, Abiola appreciates the salary and the absence of discrimination at his workplace. There is no discrimination at the store where I work, and we relate well, he affirms.

In terms of the impact of the TODDAY project on his career, finances, and family, Abiola speaks warmly. The training has helped me support my family financially, he shares. I have been able to support my family with what I earn, unlike before. It has also helped me become more independent, not relying on others for support or necessities. It has helped my career because I am learning every day and continue to grow.

Youth Voices: Stories of Change 9

EMBRACING OPPORTUNITIES

Precious Dacosta Adefunbi,

Guest Relations Department,
Radisson Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos.

My name is Precious Dacosta Adefunbi, a 29 year old young woman with physical impairment. I have a BSc in Accounting Education and a strong foundation in customer relations and communication skills.

Before joining the TODDAY project, finding employment was a daunting task. The job market seemed inaccessible due to my disability, particularly the challenges of location and mobility. Living in Agege and facing job opportunities in far-off places like Lagos Island made daily commuting impractical. Rejections and non-responses to job applications were disheartening.

However, everything changed when I joined the TODDAY project. The training provided me with essential ICT skills and enhanced my communication abilities. Learning to navigate computers confidently and mastering tools like Excel and PowerPoint opened new doors during my internship. The training content was straightforward and practical, directly benefiting me in my daily tasks at Radisson.

"I now know how to relate to people and also know how to work with computers. I can now access computers easily and

have more knowledge about PowerPoint because we majorly use Excel here."

Working in Radisson has been an interesting and fun experience. Interacting with diverse guests has boosted my confidence and erased any self-doubt. At Radisson there is no discrimination, there's a policy here that values competence over anything else. During my initial weeks, I rotated through different departments, finally settling in Guest Relations. This experience taught me that my disability doesn't limit me but rather enhances my unique contributions.

One of the most inspiring aspects of this project has been connecting with other individuals with disabilities. It's rare for me to interact outside my home, so meeting like-minded individuals has been enriching. They've become a source of motivation and shared experiences, creating a supportive community within the workplace.

The impact is profound. Careerwise, I have more experience and knowledge of working in the hospitality sector. For myself and my family, I can do something meaningful and not sit at home doing

nothing. As such I am no longer depressed. Going out to work gives me joy. Financially, it helped me with transportation and increased my finances.



Youth Voices: Stories of Change 10

A STORY OF PERSISTENCE IN SECURING MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT

Ekohante Yohanna,

Facility Management,
Sheraton Hotel, Ikeja.

Ekohante Yohanna is a 32-year-old individual with hearing impairment, and has a certificate in education (NCE). Ekohante wore many hats before joining the Project Enable Africa employability skills program, he was a painter, volunteer, teacher, and offered laundry service. However, with all these skills, he still describes it as hard to get a job.

As a person with hearing impairment, he remarked that one area where he struggled was the area of communication. There was always a communication gap in information due to a lack of access to sign-language interpreters in job interviews and opportunities. Despite these challenges, Ekohante persisted in his pursuit of meaningful employment.

Upon joining the TODDAY project, Ekohante underwent employability training that equipped him with crucial skills such as time management, proper dressing, and continuous learning. After taking part in the Project Enable Africa Employability Skills training, Ekohante did a two-month internship at Sheraton before transitioning to a full-time role where he has been for the past four months.



The skills acquired during the training, particularly time management, have proven invaluable in his current role at Sheraton Hotel. The skills have enhanced his ability to manage his shift hours effectively, ensuring punctuality and productivity.

Working at Sheraton has been a fulfilling experience. It has exposed me to working in a world-class organization. The atmosphere promotes teamwork, cooperation, and mutual support, which has allowed me to gain valuable experience across various departments. Overall, I genuinely enjoy being part of the Sheraton team.

The training has impacted not just Ekohante but his family as he now has a more stable source of income and has grown as a person.

The training has impacted my life, finances, and family cause I am no longer the person I was before. I now support my parents and they are impressed about how I support the household. I feel a sense of fulfillment in contributing to my family's well-being.

Other Feedback

1. I work as a deaf Intern in the Retail/sales department of Sterling Bank PLC, LASU Branch. The short time spent there has helped me learn the practical aspect of banking that I have longed for. As an intern; I'm still learning all that needs to be learned to work effectively with little or no supervision. Sometimes in my idle moments, I watch what other personnel do, learn from them, and ask questions in areas where I don't understand. So far, I have learned how to fill out personal and corporate account opening forms for customers, the requirements/documents needed before the form can be given out, and a few other things. Odunlami Ogundare (Hearing Impaired), Retail/sales department, Sterling Bank Plc.
2. My experience has been a great one with lots of perseverance and patience (I had to learn more because of my role with guests). I've also learnt to be proactive and think outside the box. Working in the hospitality industry, especially a renowned hotel like Radisson Blu Hotel has contributed to my experience. I am glad that Project Enable Africa placed me at Radisson Blu Hotel for my internship. Since completing my internship, I have become a contract staff at the hotel. Ijigbamigbe Gbemisola (Physical Disability), One Touch Service (OTS) Agent, Radisson Blu Hotel, Ikeja



Feedback from Employer Partners

DEVYANI INTERNATIONAL
(NIGERIA) LTD (KFC NIGERIA)

Olanrewaju Ayo,
DEI Champion,

Before starting with Project Enable Africa, the organization had never employed any persons with disability in Nigeria. Our partnerships with Project Enable Africa has opened us up to a lot of possibilities because part of the challenges in doing so was that we were not equipped to engage people with disabilities. But now, through our partnership with Project Enable Africa, we have started the baby steps.

Under TODDAY Project, we have employed over 10 persons with disabilities in our outlets across Lagos state, Nigeria and we are currently being audited towards putting in place a disability inclusion policy and improving our processes as a whole. We have also received training in safeguarding and a culture of inclusiveness. According to some of the team, the interns have exceptional focus and performance, often outperforming their peers without disabilities.

“These interns have changed the thoughts of their colleagues and managers. At the initial stage of the project some of the managers had their apprehension and reservations, but now, a lot of the managers will tell you that part of their best teams are people with

disabilities because they are more focused on what they are expected to do than their other team members who have lots of distractions. If you had to measure the productivity output in which people with a different spectrum of disabilities have impacted the business we can say that it has been a positive one.

At the moment we are fine-tuning our design structure and office layouts to remodel our restaurants to give access to persons with disabilities. We are also considering getting people in-house to be certified in sign languages to be able to communicate effectively with people with speech/auditory impairments. KFC aims to continue improving infrastructure and policies to support long-term employment of PWDs. The benefit is tremendous, as it has shifted perspectives and reduced biases among staff.



STERLING BANK PLC, NIGERIA

Samuel Idowu

is the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Officer

Sterling Bank has made significant strides in incorporating policies and practices to support persons with disabilities. Through deliberate planning and execution, Sterling Bank has embarked on a journey to foster an inclusive environment, aligning with global best practices. Recognizing the need for a structured approach, Sterling Bank partnered with Project Enable Africa on the TODDAY project and initiated the Sterling Embrace Program, specifically designed to include and support youths with disabilities. This program is backed by leadership buy-in and a thorough accessibility audits has been conducted by Project Enable Africa, paving the way for a more inclusive workspace.

Under the TODDAY and the Sterling Embrace Program, the bank has successfully integrat-



ed 10 youths persons with disabilities into its workforce, starting with a one year contract position. There is no discernible difference in performance between employees with disabilities and those without. Both groups exhibit strengths and weaknesses, underscoring the need for a barrier-free environment that allows everyone to thrive. Participating in this program not only fosters a sense of belonging but also reinforces the bank's commitment to valuing all employees equally.

SHERATON HOTEL, IKEJA, LAGOS

Samil Olayinka,

HR Officer at Sheraton Hotel, Ikeja.

Sheraton prides itself as an equal opportunity employer, with longstanding policies to support persons with disabilities. What matters to us is the individual's willingness to work with the team, passion for the job, and seeing themselves as part of the family. The employability training provided by Project Enable Africa has significantly boosted the interns' morale and confidence. Hence, the interns entered the workplace eager and ready to contribute, seeing themselves as part of the normal workforce rather than individuals with special needs. The character of the interns speaks volumes; they are very friendly, happy, and welcoming, fitting seamlessly into our community. In fact the feedback the HR Officer received from the interns' managers was overwhelmingly positive, noting that the in-

terns quickly found effective ways to integrate into their teams. By participating in TODDAY Project and hiring youth with disabilities, we are sending a strong message of inclusivity and respect to all employees and guests, thus cultivating a culture of open-mindedness and acceptance within the organization.



THE CABLE NEWSPAPER

Oluwamayowa Tijani,

Journalist and Curator,



Project Enable Africa contributed immensely to the success of TheCable App, which is Nigeria's first disability-inclusive news app. They were a worthy and valuable partner every step of the way; from the very first meeting to the deployment of the app to global audiences, Project Enable Africa gave insights that ensured we did not create a product that was not suitable for the market.



What we are learning



modation at the early stage of internship placement of youths with disabilities. Hence, the provision of stipend to interns in the first two months of employment gives both the employers and the interns an opportunity to evaluate their engagement before they commit to investing in salaries and reasonable accommodations.

A feedback we received from one of the employers was that Project Enable Africa should increase the length of the internship. Currently, the initial duration for the internship is two months, which is considered to be limited by some employers. They suggested that a longer internship, approximately 3-4 months, would provide more time for PWDs to hone their skills, understand their career choice and the various possibilities for career growth, and effectively transition to more permanent roles.

Through the project, we are understanding that employers too have fears, especially around disability hiring. This demonstrates the lack of disability-inclusion capacity among employers, often reflected as discriminatory hiring practices. We are learning that disability accessibility audit and support lead to the direct employment of persons with disabilities in the formal sector. For most of the employers that we worked with, interest in hiring PWDs increased significantly after they have improved institutional capacity in the form of audit, training, and access to toolkits. However, many employers find it difficult to invest in reasonable accom-

We have seen that employers who provide remote working opportunities tend to attract and retain more youths with disabilities. Given the general inaccessibility of public infrastructure, providing remote working opportunities empowers youth with disabilities even more. However, working remotely can be challenging as many PWDs do not have sufficient electricity and internet access to work productively from home. Hence, our office became a remote work location for the intern, providing them with a suitable workstation to be productive.

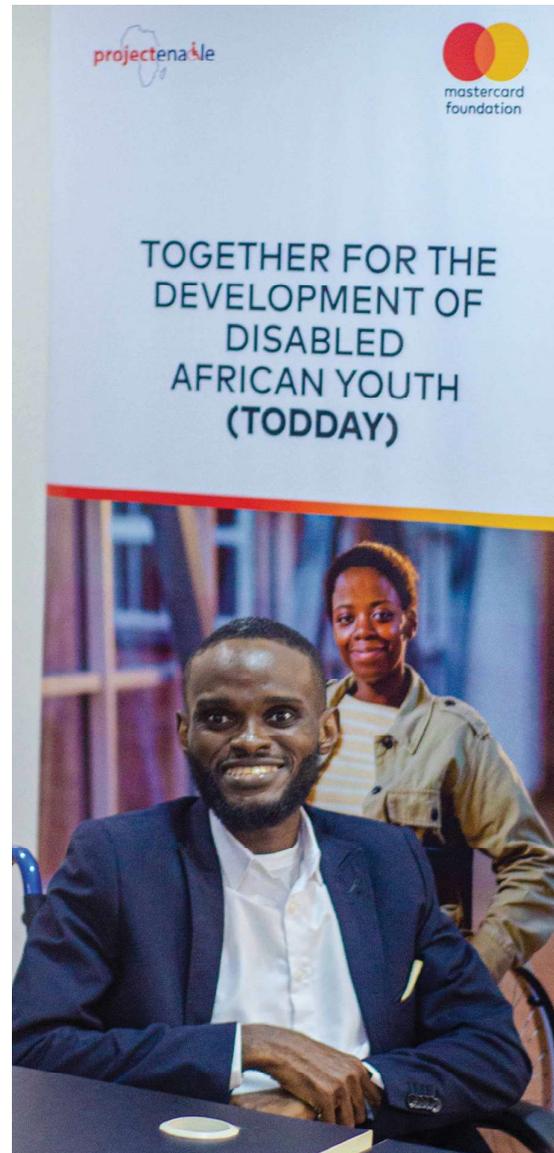
Ultimately, TODDAY project is giving us a unique opportunity to build and share evidence on disability inclusive practices that work, providing data-driven evidence to policymakers at organization, national and continental levels, and promote learning for better programming. Addressing the demand and supply sides of talents with disabilities in the formal sector is certainly helpful in promoting access to job opportunities for PWDs, however, there are bigger challenges around HR policies that must be addressed to ensure systemic change among market actors.

Looking Forward

As we look forward to the completion of this project under the Mastercard Foundation Employee Innovation Fund in 6 months, we will:

1. Recruit, upskill, and place the last batch of 25 youth with disabilities in internship;
2. Continue to support the 75 participants earlier trained to ensure safeguarding, transition to full time/permanent employment;
3. Recruit 6 more corporate organizations as employer partners;
4. Continue to support employer partners with disability inclusion, especially through the Nigeria Business Disability Network;
5. Host an event to commemorate the International Youth Day, as a platform to amplify the voices of our participants.

Project TODDAY is a pioneering project that represents a significant step toward building a more inclusive and accessible society in Lagos, Nigeria. The program's holistic approach to empowerment, advocacy, and stakeholder engagement makes it a model for promoting disability inclusion and social empowerment on a broader scale.





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