

# Fall 2022 Professional Fellow

**Name:** Fides P Uiso  
**Country:** Tanzania  
**Job Title and Employer:** Founder and CEO, Tanzania Epilepsy Organization  
**Project Title:** Kifafa sio Laana wala Uchawi kinatibika: Improving the Inclusion of Children with Epilepsy in Primary Schools in Tanzania through Teacher Training & Capacity Building

**Problem:** In Tanzania, there are nearly 100,000 children living with epilepsy and at least half of them are out of school (Quereshi et al., 2017). Parents are hesitant to enroll their children in school because of epilepsy-related stigma and discrimination and concerns that schools are not prepared to support children with these health concerns (Quereshi et al., 2017). Teachers generally lack knowledge about epilepsy, its treatment, and seizure first aid. Teachers are also not trained on how to create an inclusive learning environment that supports all students, including students with epilepsy and other health concerns.

**Project Objective:** In English, Kifafa sio Laana wala Uchawi kinatibika means “epilepsy is not a curse, it can be treated.” Fides proposes to raise awareness of epilepsy and its treatments and to improve teacher training and preparation as well as seizure-related safety protocols in public primary schools in Ubungu District in Tanzania. She hopes to create more inclusive learning environments where teachers serve as civic leaders and educators, helping students become citizens who think inclusively and appreciate and value difference.

**Project Description:** Fides will use an existing epilepsy training program that she developed specifically for teachers and piloted in four private schools in Ubungu District. Fides leveraged her lived experience as a mother of a child with epilepsy and her professional history to develop the teacher training program. She plans to replicate this training with teachers in public primary schools in the same district. The training is multi-faceted and includes working with the school administration and teachers on implementing seizure action plans and administering first aid. Concurrently, Fides plans to engage students and educate them about disability (and epilepsy in particular) so they can serve as student ambassadors, raising awareness about epilepsy among other students and in the community. With assistance from the Ubungu District education administrators, Fides plans to train approximately 75 teachers as epilepsy resource persons in public primary schools.

## Reference

Quereshi, C., Standing, H. C., Swai, A., Hunter, E., Walker, R., & Owens, S. (2017). Barriers to access to education for young people with epilepsy in Northern Tanzania: a qualitative interview and focus group study involving teachers, parents, and young people with epilepsy. *Epilepsy & Behavior*, 72, 145-149. Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1525505017300598>



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