

# Fall 2022 Professional Fellow

**Name:** Salome N Gitau  
**Country:** Kenya  
**Job Title and Employer:** Accountant, Kenya Education Management Institute  
Motivation Peer Trainer  
**Project Title:** Restoring the Dignity of Kenyans with Spinal Cord Injury: The Right to Accessible and Affordable Incontinence Supplies

**Problem:** Mobility disability is the most common disability type affecting 42% or 400,000 Kenyans with disabilities. Spinal cord injury (SCI) is a type of mobility disability that may result in self-care difficulties. Data on the prevalence of SCI among Kenyans with disabilities are limited. A 2016 study of 49 SCI patients admitted to Kenyatta National Hospital found that 90% of them experienced bowel and bladder incontinence (Kinyanjui et al., 2018).

Furthermore, there is anecdotal evidence that people with SCI in Kenya experience difficulty accessing incontinence supplies, in part, because they lack insurance coverage that would make supplies more accessible and affordable. This problem is exacerbated by people with SCI feeling shame toward their disability, preventing them from seeking services and support necessary to improve the quality of their life and long-term health.

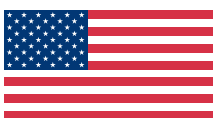
**Project Objective:** The proposed project aims to help persons with SCI overcome their feelings of stigma and shame by engaging them in strategies for self-care, including incontinence management, how to access health insurance and incontinence supplies, and how to advocate for their needs to be met. Salome and persons with SCI will work to make patient information inclusive and accessible by developing content and designing and sharing materials. The goals are to make health insurance programs inclusive and accessible for persons with SCI to live with dignity, as valued and respected members of society.

**Project Description:** As a motivation peer trainer and with the support of her 12-member peer team, Salome will (a) gather information produced by the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) for existing and prospective consumers, review the information from a SCI perspective, and make recommendations to NHIF on how to improve the information; and (b) share this information with consumers (persons with SCI), educate them about their disability addressing stigma and shame associated with their disability/incontinence, and help them access necessary incontinence supplies through NHIF and other sources.

Salome and her team of motivation peer trainers aim to reach approximately 140 persons with SCI over a 6-month project implementation period.

## References

- Inclusive Futures Consortium (May 2020). Status of disability in Kenya. Statistics from the 2019 census. Background paper. Nairobi, Kenya: Author. Retrieved from: [https://devinit.org/documents/727/Status-of-disability-in-Kenya\\_IF.pdf](https://devinit.org/documents/727/Status-of-disability-in-Kenya_IF.pdf)
- Kinyanjui, J.W., Mulimba, J.A.O., & Ombachi, R.B. (2016). Pattern and outcomes of spinal cord injury at Kenyatta National Hospital. *East Africa Orthopedic Journal (EAoj)*, Vol: 10 (March 2016). Retrieved from: <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/eaof/issue/view/14084>



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