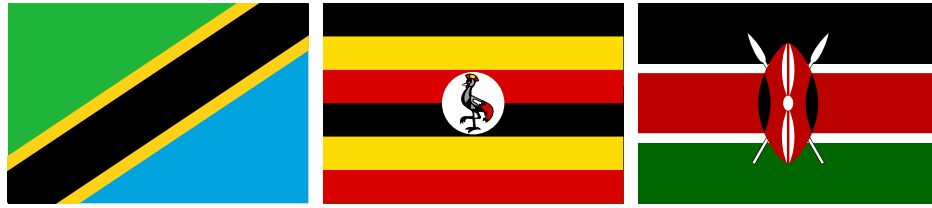


The Professional Fellows Program on Inclusive Civic Engagement



Fall 2025 Professional Fellow



Mponye Zerida Namponye
Director and Curriculum Coordinator,
Bluemoon International School
Uganda

Zerida is the Director and Curriculum Coordinator at Bluemoon International School, a preschool in Uganda that supports children with different learning needs. She creates learning programs that build on each child's strengths and works closely with teachers and support staff to help every student succeed in the classroom.

Zerida helped design a teaching plan that includes ways to support children with autism. She also leads training sessions for teachers to improve how they teach children with different needs. She studied early childhood education at the Montessori Early Learning Foundation in South Africa and will begin a master's degree in gender studies at the University of Cape Town in 2026.

Follow-on Project

Promoting Neurodiversity Awareness and Education in Uganda

Issue: Uganda has made significant progress toward embracing education for people with disabilities, as reflected in its legal and policy framework on disability (Emong & Eron, 2016). However, many neurodivergent learners continue to face significant challenges in accessing quality education due to a lack of awareness, teacher training, and teaching strategies (Okech et al., 2021).

Neurodivergence refers to a range of neurological conditions, including Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and dyslexia (World Health Organization [WHO], 2022). Nakalema and Ssenyonga (2020) found that over 75% of Ugandan teachers lack the necessary training to identify and support neurodivergent learners, which leads to misdiagnosis, exclusion, and poor learning outcomes.

As a result, only 10% of schools in Uganda implement teaching strategies that consider the needs of this population (Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports, 2020), leaving neurodivergent learners without the support they need to succeed. Addressing these gaps in awareness, teacher training, and teaching strategies is critical to Uganda's commitment to education for all.



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Project Objective: Zerida aims to enhance awareness and understanding of neurodiversity among primary school teachers. The project will equip teachers with the knowledge and practical strategies needed to effectively support neurodivergent learners in primary education through targeted training, ongoing follow-up support, and the creation of peer support networks.

Zerida will leverage her lived experience as a neurodivergent individual and her expertise as a primary school teacher to guide the project's development.

Project Description: Zerida will conduct an in-person training with 10 teachers from the Bluemoon International School, where she works as a primary school teacher. This session will introduce neurodiversity, focusing on ASD, ADHD, and dyslexia. Zerida has already developed the content for this training session and plans to enhance it during her U.S. Fellowship.

She will then invite other educators, including teachers from local public and private schools, and collaborate with nearby teacher training institutions, such as Kampala International University, to offer a broader in-person workshop.

The one-day workshop will focus on identifying and supporting neurodivergent students, using existing resources from the WHO and Ugandan education frameworks. Guest experts, including a neurodiversity specialist, a psychologist, and representatives from organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), will be invited to speak. To reinforce learning, Zerida will hold two virtual follow-up group coaching sessions, offering participating educators opportunities to discuss challenges, explore differentiated classroom strategies, and engage with a peer support network.

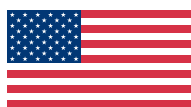
Zerida will also create a Teacher Resource Toolkit with key strategies, accommodations, and referral pathways, which will be available digitally and in print on the school's website and social media.

Her partners in this effort include the Special Needs Department at Bluemoon International School, who will collaborate with her to facilitate the workshops. Additionally, she will leverage the expertise of therapists, child psychologists, and OPDs, such as The Autism Support Network Uganda, to enrich the training.

By collaborating with these partners and focusing on long-term, sustainable structures, Zerida is confident that this initiative will have a lasting impact on neurodivergent learners in Uganda.

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