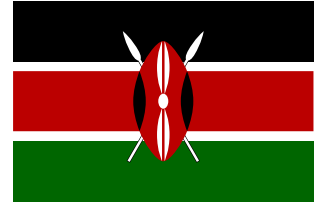


The Professional Fellows Program on Inclusive Civic Engagement



Spring 2023 Professional Fellow



Bakar Omar Hamad **Acting Executive Director,** **Organization of Women with** **Disabilities in Zanzibar (JUWAUZA)**

“From the Fellowship Program, I expect to learn from my peers, the Fellowship team and my Host organization on how to more effectively leverage my skills and ability to advocate for the civic rights of people with disabilities while learning from regional experiences relating to civic engagement.”

Bakar serves as the acting executive director of the organization of [Women with Disabilities in Zanzibar \(JUWAUZA\)](#), a nonprofit organization that advocates for the rights of women and girls with disabilities through awareness raising, training, and capacity building. JUWAUZA is based in Zanzibar, an island that is part of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Prior to joining JUWAUZA, Bakar worked for the Zanzibar Federation of Disabled People’s Organizations (SHIJUWAZA) as a program coordinator and for the Center for Youth Dialogue (CYD) as the executive director. Serving in these various roles, Bakar has been focusing on increasing people with disabilities’ active involvement in decision-making processes and supporting civic society. For example, Bakar was instrumental in the development of “Guidelines on Participation of Women and People with Disabilities in General Elections in Zanzibar,” a project of JUWAUZA.¹ He has helped people with disabilities run for political office, including the House of Representatives and the Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Bakar holds a bachelor’s degree in information and communication technology and accounting from the Zanzibar Institute of Financial Administration (ZIFA).

Bakar’s Fellowship follow-on project, titled Haki Yangu or My Right, aims to increase participation of people with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, in political decision-making and monitoring. Specifically, Bakar plans to train 20 people with disabilities (60% of participants will be women) on disability rights, including the right to political participation, and the political process. Additionally, he plans to build the capacity of four organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) to promote inclusive civic engagement and also implement a media (radio and/or TV) campaigns.

Overall, Bakar hopes that his follow-on project will enable people with disabilities to more effectively participate and be represented in the next general election in Zanzibar in 2025.

Bakar will complete a four-week Fellowship placement training with the University of Iowa’s [Center for Disabilities and Development \(CDD\)](#) in Iowa City, Iowa.

¹ JUWAUZA (n.d.): <https://juwauza.or.tz/2021/04/02/guidelines-on-participation-of-women-and-people-with-disabilities-in-general-elections-in-zanzibar/>

