



**AFRICAN UNION OF THE BLIND (AFUB)
UNION AFRICAINE DES AVEUGLES (UAFA)**



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ACRONYMS

ACAMO	Mozambican Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted
ACASTEP	Sao Tome Principe Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted
ACHPR	African Commission on Human and People's Rights
ADA	Africa Disability Alliance
ADEVIC	Cape Verdean Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted
AFUB	African Union of the Blind
AGRICE	Guinea Bissau Association for rehabilitation and integration of the Blind
ANCAA	Angolan National Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted
ASTF	AFUB Solidarity Trust Fund
AU	African Union
CAN	CBR Africa Network
CBR	Community Based Rehabilitation
COPDAM	Communities of Practice in Disability Advocacy for Mainstreaming
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DPOs	Disabled People's Organisations
EAFOD	East African Federation of the Disabled
EFA-VI	Education for All Visually Impaired persons
FBU	Francophone Blind Union
GA	General Assembly
GBU	Ghana Blind Union
GOVI	Gambia Organisation of the Visually Impaired
HI	Handicap International
IDP	Institutional Development Programme
KUB	Kenya Union of the Blind
LNLVIP	Lesotho National League of Visually Impaired Persons
LTP	Long Term Plan
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NABP	Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted
NFVI	Namibian Federation of the Visually Impaired
NGO(s)	Non-Governmental Organisation(s)
OCA	Organisational Capacity Assessment
ONCIGE	Equatorial Guinea National Organisation of the Blind
OSF	Open Society Foundation
PC	Project Coordinator
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
SRF	Swedish Association of the Visually Impaired
UN	United Nations
WBU	World Blind Union

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This year was marked by preparations for the 8th AFUB General Assembly, which took place in October in Kampala, Uganda. For the first time the AFUB General Assembly was held jointly with the Africa forum. The year 2014, has been both a rewarding and challenging one. This year marked the second year of implementation of our four year strategic framework 2013 – 2016. It has been particularly characterized by preparations of AFUB's 8th Extraordinary General Assembly that was to be held jointly with the 6th IDP Africa Forum in October 2014 in Kampala, Uganda. However, due to the Ebola outbreak, this event had to be postponed.

Programmatically, we have been able to secure funds for the roll out of a plan to lobby for the signing and ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty by African States; we have also been able to revive the AFUB Solidarity Trust Fund (ASTF); however, administratively, we are still faced with the challenge of securing sources for unrestricted incomes and building sufficient reserves to guarantee organisational sustainability and expansion.

Nevertheless, in 2014 we have recorded our fair share of successes and disappointments alike. We have engaged and disengaged minds that over the years have discriminated against the emancipation of visually impaired men, women, boys and girls in Africa.

We are glad that, policies/legislations have been harmonised in a number of African states to articulate disability rights and development. In 2014, Mali was the first African country to ratify the Marrakesh Treaty which facilitates access to published works for persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled.

This report begins by providing a brief reminiscence of who we are as a regional umbrella, our vision and mission.

A section of the report gives an account of what has been accomplished under our administration and programmatic work based on the three strategic pillars of Advocacy, membership strengthening and organisational development drawn from our 2013-2016 strategic plan.

Overall, the report relays achievements, challenges, lessons learnt and a possible way forward for greater emancipation of blind and partially sighted persons on the African continent.

The Union acknowledges and appreciates all financial and technical support from development partners, the membership and other stakeholders, which made it possible for the successful rolling out of all projects and programmes as well as effective delivery of our advocacy role in 2014.

The struggle continues, and we cannot afford to be complacent with the few gains we have pocketed.

1.0. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

This report gives an account of administrative and programmes' development by AFUB between January and December 2014.

The objective of this report is twofold:

- To fulfil on administrative obligations of documenting evidence based and statistical programming outcomes; And
- To give feedback, share successes, challenges and lessons learnt in the field to AFUB membership, development partners and stakeholders.

It is important to note that in 2014, cross-cutting strategies used by AFUB to roll out programmes have ranged from organisation development to mainstream advocacy, empowerment, training and networking. This is inspired by the three key result areas of advocacy, membership development and organisational strengthening drawn from our 2013 – 2016 Strategic framework.

1.2. Who is AFUB?

AFUB represents one of the six regional blocks of the WBU. It is a continent-wide umbrella NGO of national associations of/for blind and partially sighted persons in Africa, established in October 1987 in Tunis/Tunisia under the auspices of the then Organisation of African Unity (OAU) - now African Union (AU), with an initial membership of 23 countries. AFUB enjoys observer status in the African Union under Resolution CM/Res.944 (XL); as well as in the African Commission on Human and People's Rights [ACHPR] [Number 447]. The Union also holds semi-consulate status in the Republic of Kenya. Currently, the numerical strength of AFUB stands at 60 national member organisations in 53 member states of the AU.

1.3. Our Vision

We envision an African continent where blind and partially sighted persons enjoy equal rights, social inclusion and full participation in development.

1.4. Our Mission

Our mission is to strengthen member organisations and create unity of purpose among them through capacity building and advocacy in partnership with governments, international agencies and other stakeholders.

2.0. ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2014

The year 2014 was the second year of implementation of our 2013 – 2016 Strategic Framework. During the year, we continued to focus on our three key strategic pillars of advocacy, membership strengthening and organisational development. In collaboration with our development partners, we managed to implement new and ongoing projects as well as provide governance and administrative support to the Secretariat for effective delivery of our programs.

2.1. Administration

AFUB Board of Officers' meeting was held at Lenana Mount Hotel in Nairobi from 29th to 31st January 2014; this was preceded by a two-day OCA.

One of the core outputs of the Board of Officers' meeting among other things was the adoption of the Human Resource and Financial policy documents key to organisation management. The meeting also reflected on the upcoming 8th Extraordinary AFUB General Assembly which was to be held jointly with the 6th IDP Africa Forum in October 2014 in Kampala, Uganda but was postponed due the Ebola outbreak.

An outcome of the OCA was that AFUB was able to identify its weaknesses for improvement, and chart ways to build on its strengths. We would like to thank NABP for their support in this vital exercise.

2.2. Programmes /Projects

2.2.1. Strengthening Lusophone Countries

Capacity building work in Portuguese and Spanish-speaking Africa has been ongoing, courtesy of NABP and IDP. Our interventions during the period have specifically been in Angola, Sao Tome and Principe, Guinea Bissau and Mozambique.

A capacity building workshop on the knowledge and exchange experiences on the CRPD funded by the Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted (NABP) was held from June 30th-to-July1st, 2014 in Luanda, Angola. The purpose of the workshop was to support the Angolan National Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted (ANCAA) in lobbying and advocating for adoption of CRPD in Angola. Later, the Government confirmed that Angola ratified the CRPD on May 19th, 2014. The expectations of the all participants, AFUB and ACAPO are that knowledge and experiences gained and lessons learned from the Luanda meeting should encourage advocacy work of target members.

Similarly, a workshop on the development of strategic plan for the Guinea Bissau Association for rehabilitation and integration of the Blind (AGRICE), took place from 7th to 10th July, 2014 in Bissau, Guinea Bissau. AFUB Project Coordinator AFUB doubled as the resource person for the workshop.

80% of information needed for this strategic plan was collected, participants were able to define strategic priorities for their organisation and acknowledge the importance of a strategic. Another outcome is that participants were sensitised on the need for mobilisation of resources to enable the implementation of this plan as well as the need for permanent monitoring and evaluation of the strategic plan.

A workshop on Fundraising Strategy for the Sao Tome Principe Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted (ACASTEP) was conducted between 22nd and 26th of September 2014, in Sao Tome & Principe.

By the end of five days of training, all the participants had knowledge of contents about fundraising strategy and some of them had attitude change towards the need for mobilisation of funds and resources for ACASTEP.

It was also during this training workshop that some of the participants effectively legalised their membership in ACASTEP.

As an outcome, an agreement of co-operation between Budo Budo Professional Training Centre and ACASTEP is in place.

Finally, in the month of December, a second training workshop for ACAMO on leadership and attitudes changes took place in Beira Mozambique and benefited from technical and financial support of IDP. AFUB Project Coordinator and IDP Resource Person also participated. Similar leadership training workshops are scheduled for 2015.

2.2.2. CRPD and Human Rights Advocacy

With the support of the Swedish Association of the Visually Impaired (SRF) we continued to implement our Disability and Human Rights Project. In 2014, an advocacy toolkit, with specific focus on five articles (9 on Accessibility, 24 on Education, 27 on Work and Employment, 28 on Adequate Standards of Living and Social Protection, as well as 33 on National Implementation and Monitoring) was developed. Translation of this toolkit into

French and Portuguese languages for the benefit of AFUB members in the Francophone and Lusophone countries is in progress.

The pilot human rights project in Uganda, supported by MyRight through SRF phased out in June. The success of this project has resulted to its extension to two new countries; namely Ghana and Namibia. In April, AFUB and SRF held a joint planning conference in Accra, Ghana with the two member organisations. The new phase of the project will run from 2015 to 2017.

2.2.3. EFA-VI Campaign

AFUB continued to host and provide management and monitoring support to the Education for All Visually Impaired Persons (EFA-VI) Campaign in Africa. This Campaign and program primarily focuses on children in the developing world and mobilising resources to support programs for these children. The campaign, which is part of a global initiative of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI), is being carried out in nine countries of Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Malawi, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda. These countries constitute EFA-VI focus countries.

2.2.4. IDP Support

The Institutional Development Program (IDP) has continued to support AFUB especially in the area of organisational development, specifically staff development and systems strengthening. In 2014, IDP funded two staff retreats for AFUB staff. The outcome of these activities was the development two management policy documents. Further, IDP facilitated the engagement of a volunteer to support AFUB secretariat in information technology and general administration.

2.2.5. Marrakesh Treaty Campaign

In 2014, AFUB developed and rolled out a plan to lobby for the signing and ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty by African States. The Treaty which focuses on copyright exceptions to facilitate the creation of accessible versions of books and other copyrighted works for Visually Impaired Persons and Persons with Print Disabilities will come into force once 20 countries have ratified it. In, 2014 Mali was the first African country to ratify this treaty.

The Open Society Foundation (OSF), through WBU, funded the African initiative to the tune of US\$ 20,000. The plan currently targets Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda in the East; Lesotho, Mozambique and South Africa in the South; Cape Verde, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal in the West; Cameroon and Congo Brazzaville in Central; as well as Mauritania and Morocco in the North. The plan basically focuses on formation of national “Right to Read” alliances; developing and sharing an advocacy tool kit in appropriate formats, modes and languages; creative use of social media – specifically Skype and Drop box; training of AFUB Board and staff members.

2.2.6. Revival of ASTF

The AFUB Solidarity Trust Fund, ASTF is an initiative of the European Blind Union (EBU) in conjunction with the African Union of the Blind (AFUB) and supports economic empowerment projects within AFUB member organisations for the benefit of blind and partially sighted persons at grassroots level. In 2014, three countries (Gambia, Kenya and Lesotho) benefitted from the Fund to start income generating projects.

Through these projects and initiatives, we were able to increase our engagement with the African Union to prioritise issues of blind and partially sighted persons in the agenda of African governments, expand our membership in relevant organisations and networks to

promote the priorities of blind and partially sighted persons in Africa, increase our engagement with regional, bilateral, international and corporate agencies for more inclusive policies for blind and partially sighted persons in Africa and enhance our profile and visibility at regional and international levels.

AFUB also continued to remain relevant in the blindness sector as well as in the general disability arena by attending and being represented at several meetings of the AU and other players where policies/legislations in favour of blind and partially sighted persons were discussed, harmonised and adopted.

In March, AFUB participated in a Nairobi Conference on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the UN CRPD in Africa, jointly organised by IDA, IDDC and the UN Partnership to Promote the Rights of PWDs. The focus of the conference was to deepen dialogue between African and global and regional DPOs to strengthen advocacy for inclusive development. A key deliverable of this Conference was the Nairobi Declaration, which has been widely shared – and forms a strong basis for engaging African Governments on various development issues stemming from the CRPD and the Post-2015 development framework.

In the month of May, AFUB was represented in WBU's Executive meeting in Oslo, Norway by a delegation led by its President and Regional Officers from North Africa, Central Africa, and East Africa and was fortunate to have our Central Africa Regional Officer representing FBU also present.

In June, AFUB participated in a Nairobi Conference organised by the East African Community. This 2nd East African Community conference on persons with Disabilities (PWD) was organised to make Article 120 (c) of the Treaty establishing the East African Community operational. The conference brought together participants representing governments within the East African Region, public institutions and Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs). This conference was convened to build on the first EAC conference that was held in February 2010 in Kampala Uganda. The overall objective of the conference was to ensure that the disability concerns are mainstreamed in laws and policies at both the regional (EAC) and national levels.

In September, AFUB was represented in a round table meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe, organised by the Government of Zimbabwe in conjunction with the Africa Disability Alliance under their Communities of Practice in Disability Advocacy for Mainstreaming (COPDAM) project. This was an opportunity for the convening organisations and countries to share advocacy experiences, challenges, lessons, good practices and a feasible way forward in influencing African Governments and the African Union to mainstream disability issues in all development planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

In early October, AFUB participated in a symposium jointly organised by the East African Federation of the Disabled (EAFOD) and Handicap International (HI) to review implementation of the CRPD and MDGs in the East African sub-region. This symposium was organised in Arusha, Tanzania. The experiences, lessons and good practices shared were critical for stronger synergy, further learning, replication in other countries and the need for greater resource mobilisation.

Later that month, AFUB participated in a consultative meeting on disability organised by the African Union (AU) Commission and the East African Community. This consultative meeting took place in Nairobi, with the objective of determining priorities for Eastern Africa in a bid to mainstream disability in development policy and programming. The meeting got an update on the process of coming up with an Africa Disability Protocol; reviewed the Continental Plan of Action; shared information on the EAC policy on Disability, adopted in 2012; received updates on the AU Disability Architecture; came up with a plan for better involvement and training of senior government officials so that disability mainstreaming can be actualised. The AU Commission will be consulting with other African regions as well; and AFUB requested

to be involved as much as possible, so as to effectively represent the concerns of blind and partially sighted persons.

AFUB also continued to work with other disability actors in Kenya, as well as the Kenyan Government and the CBR Africa Network (CAN) to plan for and organise the impending fifth CBR Africa Conference in Nairobi. This Conference had been slated for mid November 2014; but has since been postponed to June 2015 due to the Ebola outbreak.

AFUB joined ICEVI in their EFA-VI campaign with “Elimu Yetu Coalition” in Kenya. This was part of the Global Action Week which was a worldwide campaign organised annually by the Global Campaign for education to raise awareness on the importance of education for all. The 2014 theme focused on "Equal Right, Equal opportunity - inclusive education for children with disabilities". The Campaign drew participants from Kenyan DPOs, other civil society actors and Government.

2.3. Resource mobilisation

Despite the financial constraints faced in 2014, AFUB endeavoured to expand and diversify its resource base.

In an effort to mobilise funds for the Africa Forum and AFUB Extraordinary General Assembly, the secretariat sent out several funding requests to development partners and received reasonable success. As a result, we managed to secure USD 5,000 from the World Blind Union (WBU), while NABP allocated US\$ 28,000 to mainly support national delegates from the Lusophone countries. In addition, SRF earmarked US\$ 2,100 for use towards the joint events which, initially scheduled for October 2014 in Kampala, Uganda, were later postponed to October 2015 due to the Ebola outbreak.

Likewise, two separate activity proposals were submitted to IDP for internal policy development, team building, and carrying on with the work in Mozambique. These got funding to the tune of US\$ 15,000.

In addition, AFUB was able to secure US\$ 20,000 from the Open Society Foundation (OSF), through WBU for the Marrakesh Treaty Ratification Campaign.

2.4. Organisational strengthening

AFUB continued to enhance its operational capacity to effectively deliver on its advocacy and coordinative roles in Africa.

Board support to the Secretariat has been continuous and/or as and when requested. It has often taken the form of physical/Skype/telephone meetings, and E-mail exchanges. The above notwithstanding, the AFUB President visited the Secretariat in April, and he was joined by Fred Haga the East African Regional Officer and Martin Kieti the Honorary Treasurer, and in November he was joined by East Africa Regional Officer.

The main resolution of these meetings was that an interim plan for running the secretariat in 2015 needed to be put in place and staff needed to work as a team.

Staff Development: In a bid to improve skills, the AFUB Director was sponsored to attend a week-long training in fundraising, proposal writing and grant management in the month of July. The training was conducted by Asset Afrika Institute in Nairobi.

The staff held two team building sessions facilitated by the honorary treasurer and funded by IDP where they were able to start polishing up the Human Resource and Finance policy documents.

IDP also provided some financial support to engage a volunteer from July 2014 to June 2015, to support staff on general office work

Partnership Strengthening: AFUB also continues to conduct telephone/Skype and physical meetings with development partners. In August, NABP officials visited the Secretariat; and, among others, we reviewed the performance of the Lusophone capacity building project;

looked at internal financial and administrative systems; considered progressive implementation of the OCA recommendations; and started laying strategies for 2015 and beyond.

3.0. CHALLENGES

AFUB recorded some significant achievements in 2014. However, a number of challenges were faced, the greatest of which is lack of sufficient financial resources to sustain the organisation in the coming years. Mobilisation of resources has generally remained an immense difficulty making funding for the union's activities and especially administration and overhead costs a challenge.

Lack of an appropriate communication mechanism makes information flow between the secretariat and national member organisations and among member organisations themselves difficult.

AFUB's programmes/projects face the challenge of being extinct after their funding period, given the fact that their lifecycle revolves around donor/external funding.

In addition the high turn-over of personnel especially in the position of Executive Director continues to pose a challenge for AFUB.

4.0. WAY FORWARD

AFUB is proud of its achievements to date; but also deeply concerned about the worrying challenges, which are however not insuperable.

Over the next year and beyond, in line with our four-year strategic framework 2013-2016, we shall continue to work towards expanding our membership in relevant organisations and networks to promote the priorities of blind and partially sighted persons in Africa, to improve our communication mechanism to facilitate and coordinate flow of information between the secretariat and national member organisations as well as among national member organisations themselves, to strengthen the relationship with our current development partners as well as develop new partnerships, to strengthen management systems within the secretariat, to expand and diversify our resource base and to enhance our profile and visibility at regional and international levels.

In addition we shall endeavour to put in place a model that enhances sustainability of programmes, which model encourages establishment of income generating projects and sustainable ones.

5.0. CONCLUSION

AFUB's greatest challenge remains securing sources for unrestricted incomes and building sufficient reserves to guarantee organisational sustainability and expansion.

Nonetheless, together with the concerted effort of our membership, development partners and stakeholders as well as our team of dedicated staff, and board of officers, AFUB will remain relevant on the continent, in the blindness sector and in the general disability arena. We will soldier on in our mission to strengthen member organisations and create unity of purpose among them through capacity building and advocacy in partnership with governments, international agencies and other stakeholders.

AFUB Secretariat
18 January, 2014