



**NEXT  
STEP**  
FOUNDATION

IMPACT REPORT  
**2022**

# Table of Contents

<b>Letter from Executive Chairman</b>	3
<b>Letter from Executive Director</b>	4
<b>About Us</b>	5
Kenya	6
Tanzania	7
<b>Our Theory of Change</b>	8
<b>Our Impact</b>	9
<b>Beneficiary Stories</b>	10
Kevin Wamuge	11
Ephantus Kagwi	12
Karen Ngugi	13
Peter Kombo	14
Shamte Mahmoud	15
<b>Our Partners</b>	16
<b>Advocacy Work</b>	17
<b>Our Team</b>	18
<b>Staff Story</b>	19



## Letter from Executive Chairman



I am honored to author the first Chairperson's Letter as part of the Next Step Foundation's inaugural Impact Report. The Next Step Foundation was created to carry on the philanthropic work of Sally and Scott Harrison. The Harrisons started Cure International in 1998 to deliver the best medical care to the most vulnerable people free of charge. That vision resulted in a network of twelve pediatric surgical hospitals across Africa and the Philippines that have seen more than 5 million patients and performed more than 300,000 surgical procedures. One of the early learnings from their experience is that while Cure could improve the health outcomes of its patients, it could not improve patients' prospects for finding meaningful and sustaining work.

Many of Cure's patients are Persons with Disabilities. Persons living with disabilities in the Global South face enormous obstacles in all aspects of their lives. Most schools are not equipped to accommodate special needs. Physical infrastructure, including buildings, roads, and vehicles, are rarely accessible. And social stigma continues to permeate some cultures, further marginalizing those living with disabilities.

One billion people (about 15% of the global population) have a disability that impacts their daily lives. A World Bank study estimates the annual loss of global GDP due to Persons with Disabilities out of work is greater than US\$ 1.37 trillion.

**The Next Step Foundation believes that meaningful employment is the most cost-effective way to reduce the poverty of children, youth and adults with disabilities, their families, and their communities.**

The Next Step Foundation's mission is to address the barriers to employment and enable Persons with Disabilities, along with women and young adults, to acquire the skills they need to compete in the 4th Industrial Revolution and take the next step towards sustainable livelihoods and economic independence. We accomplish our mission through our proprietary RAATT Method of delivering training. The RAATT Method, which stands for Recruit, Assess, Accommodate, Train, and Transition, addresses the entire lifecycle of our beneficiary's progress towards employment.

In just our first full year of service, I am proud of the diverse and differently-abled team we have assembled to address the complex challenge of empowering Persons with Disabilities through digital skills training to obtain employment and live self-sufficiently. As described in this Impact Report, with the support of our funding partners and the many organizations with whom we work, we have been able to transform the lives of individuals who have for too long been ignored or ostracized.

**Chris Harrison**  
**Executive Chairman**

# Letter from Executive Director



**Dear donors, partners, and colleagues,**

Over the past year, we have achieved tremendous growth in our work in East Africa. I am particularly proud of the investments made on training persons with disability, to equip and empower them to take the next step towards economic independence. The impact of our work spanned across Kenya and Tanzania where hundreds of Persons with Disabilities, women, and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds received training on Amazon Web Services (AWS), Cyber Security, Software Development, and Data Annotation. At Next Step Foundation, we adopt robust monitoring and evaluation systems across all project portfolios to ensure efficient, timely project delivery and impactful results. Our framework enables us to review our impact against our vision and goals, build trust and transparency among our stakeholders, and report on the difference we are making.

In this report, you will read about our programs that impacted hundreds of youths in Kenya and Tanzania, and you will also read inspiring stories from our beneficiaries who have gained new skills and found dignified employment that has broken the cycle of poverty in their lives and given them economic independence.

All this would not have been possible without the amazing support of our donors, partners, and staff. I want to personally thank each one of you for your dedication, commitment, and support over the past year.

**Peres Were  
Executive Director**



# About Us



The Next Step Foundation is a 501(c)(3) foundation that accepts and deploys charitable donations to implement projects that combine the power of technology with talented but underserved individuals to advance their economic inclusion.

We leverage the power of technology to train and upskill people from marginalized communities, with a particular focus on people living with disabilities and young women, to equip and empower them to fully participate in the new digital economy.

We prepare an inclusive talent pipeline which enables sustainable employment for a technology-driven world. Our work delivers on solutions for the UN Sustainable Development Goals: 4, 8, 10, and 11 by

- Supporting the growth and development of artificial intelligence / machine learning to solve Africa's difficult challenges and create global solutions.
- Providing jobs and career opportunities for those who most often lack opportunities, especially women, young people, and Persons with Disabilities.
- Training and upskilling people from marginalized / disadvantaged communities in the digital and data science skills necessary to compete in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.
- Providing our corporate partners with support in defining their reasonable accommodation mechanisms, policies, disability audits, and assessment of their facilities.

# Kenya



*Photo: Students in a class in Kenya, learning Cybersecurity*

Our work in Kenya has seen us successfully transfer knowledge and tech skills that meet industry demand to hundreds of youths. We have established strong partnerships with leading corporations who hire from our pool of talented beneficiaries. Some of our corporate partners include Safaricom, Kenya Airways Innovation Hub, 4G Capital, among others.

## **i2i Project**

In January to March 2022, we trained 27 Persons with Disabilities on Tech Skills through funding from Innovation to Inclusion (i2i). Our programs included software development, cyber security, web development and android development. The beneficiaries also received soft-skills and job readiness through sponsorship from Dell Technologies.

## **S.A Joytown School Project**

In July 2022 we trained 30 students with disabilities at S.A Joytown School, with support from the Anne Louise Foundation. The participants, all of whom were recent high school graduates from the school, received training on digital skills and job-readiness. They are currently being placed on a data annotation project.

### ***Data Annotation Training***

Our goal is to create a large population of people with the skills that the global AI industry needs by **getting 30,000 young people in East Africa equipped with data annotation skills by 2025**. Investment in this idea makes Kenya the logical place for anyone who wants to deliver data annotation projects. **In September and October 2022, we trained 500 youth on data annotation.** The participants were from 20 counties in Kenya.

# Tanzania



*Photo: Students collaborating during AWS Cloud Computing training in Tanga, Tanzania.*

Young people and Persons with Disabilities face many barriers to meaningful employment in Tanzania. In 2022, the impact of our work expanded to Tanzania where over 200 youth, women, and Persons with Disabilities received training on Amazon Web Services (AWS) Cloud Computing, and Data Annotation for the AI industry.

## **Tanga Digital Skills Project:**

Tanga region, on the northern coastline of Tanzania, is experiencing increased youth unemployment, leading to mass migration of young people to already overcrowded urban areas in search for opportunities for economic advancement. For Persons with Disabilities, the situation is compounded by extreme levels of poverty and marginalization which make it virtually impossible for them to access marketable skills.

Cloud Computing and Artificial Intelligence are among the top five skills in demand globally for the next decade. Our training has provided 150 youth in Tanga with employable skills that have enhanced their competitiveness among global employers. As a result of the digital revolution, our beneficiaries can work remotely from Tanga, providing tech services to employers and clients around the world.

- Gender ratio was **50% women** and **50% men**
- 45 participants were youth with disabilities
- Trained on Digital Skills, Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Data Annotation

*This work is part of the Tanga Yetu (Our Tanga) project supported with funding from **Fondation Botnar**.*

*fondation*  
**BOTNAR**



# Our Theory of Change (RAATT Method)

R

## Recruiting

We have a network of schools, universities and Disabled People's Organizations who help us identify and recruit young Persons with Disabilities to participate in our training programs.

A

## Assessment

The assessments are program-specific and are designed to match candidates with the right training.

They also identify what tools / resources are needed to address any disabilities.

A

## Accommodation

We use the results of our assessment process to identify the accommodations each candidate will require to successfully complete the training program and obtain employment.

T

## Training

We offer only skills-based training that imparts practical knowledge that is aligned with existing and future labor market demands

- Business
- Cyber Security
- Amazon Web Services Cloud Practitioner
- Data Annotation
- Web Design
- Data Analysis
- Digital Skills
- Employability Skills
- Soft-skills training

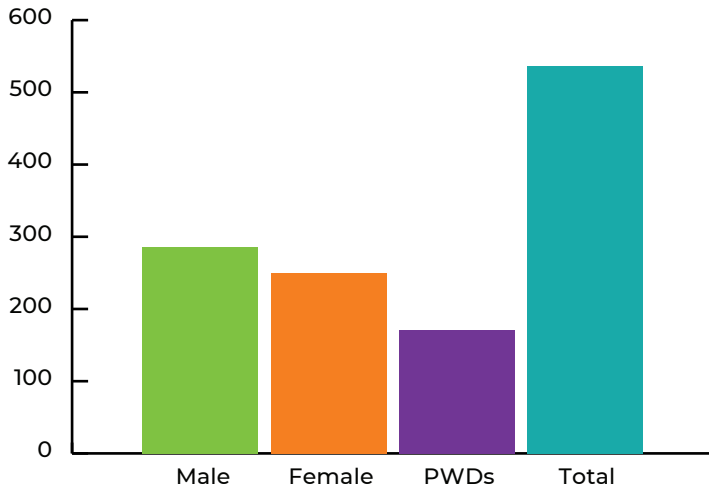
T

## Transition

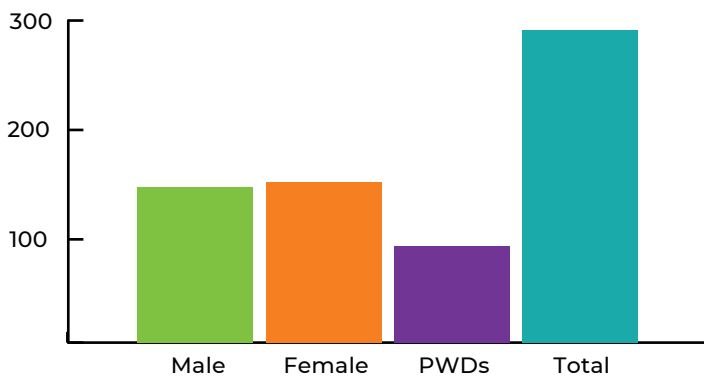
We provide mentors for our graduates that help them transition into employment and help identify ways in which corporations can establish and grow disability inclusion programs.

# Our Impact

## Number Trained



## Number of Placements



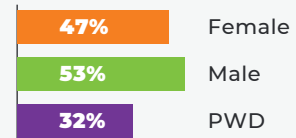
### Courses Trained

- Cyber Security
- Amazon Web Services (AWS)
- Cloud Practitioner
- Data Annotation
- Web Design
- Data Analysis
- Digital Skills
- Employability Skills

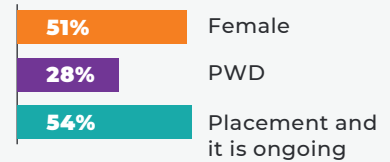
### Placement Industry

- Telecommunications
- Business Process Outsourcing
- Aviation
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing
- Customer Service
- Digital Marketing
- Hospitality

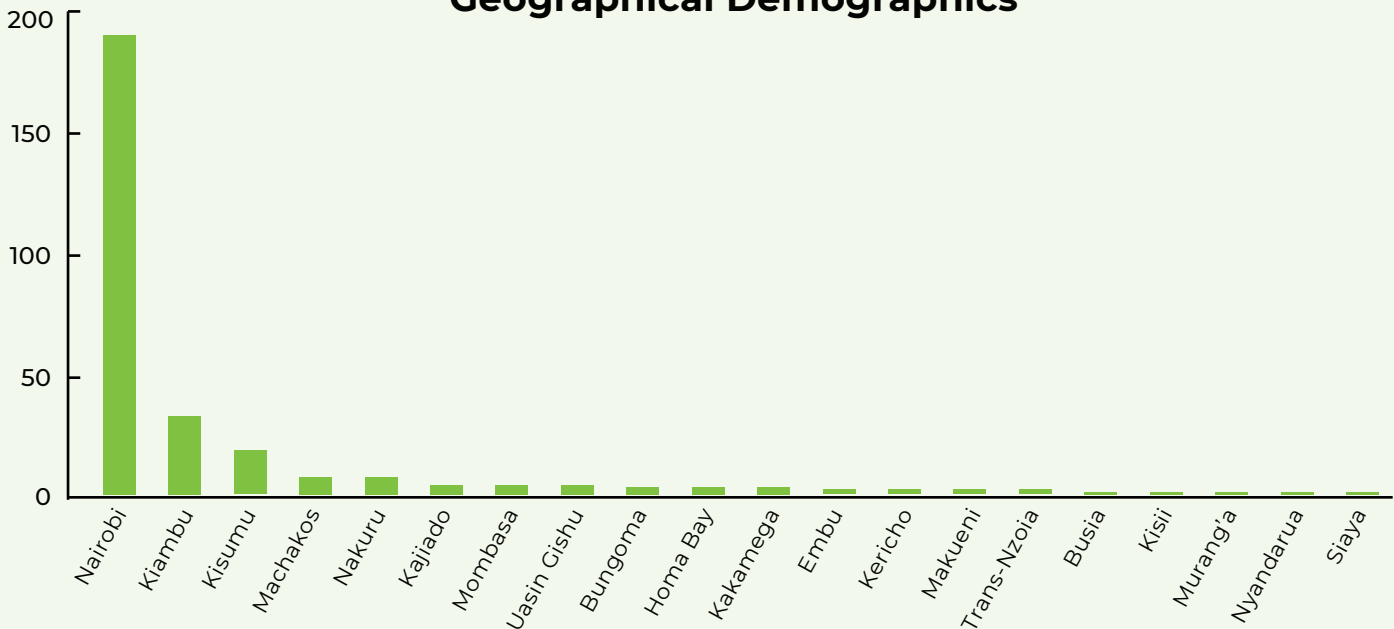
### Training Distribution



### Placement Distribution



## Geographical Demographics



# Beneficiary Stories





# Karen Ngugi

KENYA

*“Africa has a lot of talent and this talent is found in Persons with Disabilities. I would like to thank Next Step Foundation for investing in Persons with Disabilities because we are often overlooked. There are many Persons with Disabilities who have skills, talent and ways of seeing the world from a different angle.”*



Karen Ngugi's face lights up as she emphatically signs this statement. Thanks to opportunities provided through Next Step Foundation, she is now not only hopeful for her own economic future, she believes there exists hope for all African Persons with Disabilities.

Karen lost her hearing at age 4 due to an outbreak of spinal meningitis. Although she fully recovered, she never regained her hearing. A supportive home life, however, could not shield Karen from the harsh world outside her door.

*“After I became deaf adults treated me differently from other children,” Karen shares. “The other children avoided me. I began to feel unworthy.”*

This sense of being 'unworthy' did not compartmentalize itself to her ability to socialize. As she grew into her teen years Karen experienced an overall sense of low self-esteem. Again, it was her parents who reminded her of her worth.

*“My parents showed me and reminded me not only am I worthy of love--I am worthy of success even if I am deaf.”*

Karen made the conscious decision her disability would never stop her from succeeding in life.

She recalled how she used to follow her father around when she was little watching him do electronics repairs and learning from him about computers. She reflected on all he taught her where her disability did not matter: Microsoft Word, Power Point, Excel.

Slowly Karen's confidence began to build as she realized she needed to recognize the potential for greatness in herself so others could see it, too.

Karen's passion for computers turned into her pursuing a Computer Science degree from Riara University. She also acquired a certificate in Web Design & Development and through the Next Step Foundation she further gained Employability skills, soft skills training and job placement.

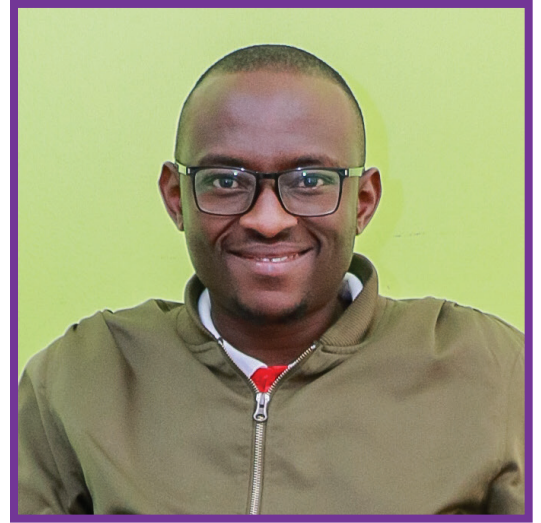
**Karen is employed in a DevOps internship at SafariCom PLC through the Next Step Foundation's job placement program and is energized by her work.**



# Kevin Wamuge

KENYA

*“Next Step Foundation literally saved me. It saved me from the struggle of navigating the accessibility barriers in my country alone. It is my hope they will also help thousands of other Persons with Disabilities who are seeking jobs and restore their hope of getting employed.”*



When Kevin Wamuge's life changed suddenly and traumatically in 2007 he never dreamed he could have the life he does today.

Kevin greets each morning with enthusiasm. He is passionate about his new job as a graphic designer at Kenya's largest airline, Kenya Airways. He spends his days transforming ideas into beautiful, creative visuals. Most importantly he is financially independent and hopeful for his economic future.

In 2007, Kevin was caught in the crossfire of post-election violence. He sustained a spinal cord injury and instantly became a T5 paraplegic.

"I was traumatized," Kevin shares. "I underwent a rollercoaster of emotions when I realized I would never walk again. I had expected to be enrolling in high school and instead found myself enrolled in rehabilitation. I needed counseling. It was that tough!"

Two years after his devastating injury, Kevin was finally able to begin high school at Joytown Secondary School. He knew this path would now look different, but he was not yet sure how.

After he graduated, he enrolled in Kenyatta University, pursuing a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts and Design.

Kevin graduated from the University in 2021 and started looking for a job. Unlike his abled-bodied peers who could distribute CVs around Nairobi with ease, Kevin quickly discovered as a Person with a Disability the process looked quite different for him. Distributing CVs for Kevin meant he needed to ask his family for cab fare as utilizing public transportation came with insurmountable accessibility challenges.

Additionally, being a T5 paraplegic, Kevin needed to rely on the aid of others.

All the extra steps required to execute a job search left Kevin frustrated and disheartened. As a result, he stopped looking for employment.

What Kevin did not know, however, was the trajectory of his life was about to permanently shift. The Next Step Foundation had just begun searching for someone with his exact skillset and leveraged its partner relationships to identify Kevin as a candidate. Kenya Airways, an employment partner of Next Step Foundation, had a vacancy for a graphic designer and Kevin was the perfect fit. Kevin has been working at Kenya Airways for five months. **Kevin is exceptionally grateful to Next Step Foundation for placing him with Kenya Airways and facilitating his economic independence.**



# Ephantus Kagwi

KENYA

*"Next Step Foundation is my destiny connector. They not only helped me with my intern application process but continue to walk alongside me in my journey to career success."*



Ephantus Kagwi shares these sentiments with a mixture of gratitude and pride in his voice. An awareness he could not have achieved all he has without Next Step Foundation's assistance combined with knowing he has worked hard to get to where he is.

Kagwi is living his dream working as a Network Engineer intern at Safaricom PLC, the largest telecommunications company in East Africa. Kagwi now strives to become an expert in the field and believes he can, with time, become the next prominent Network Engineer.

Kagwi's childhood was typical until he transitioned to college. It was then he became quite sick and was diagnosed with Meningitis, an infection of membranes surrounding the brain / spinal cord. What began as headaches progressed and Kagwi became unable to walk. As the disease ravaged his body Kagwi became unable to use his hands.

Tenacious, he refused to give up on his education. Kagwi recognized its importance especially in the life of a Person with a Disability.

Now that he had become a member of this fraternity, he was highly aware quitting was not an option.

Thanks to doctors and physical therapy, Kagwi recovered movement lost to Meningitis. He regained use of his hands, yet it became clear he would always require a wheelchair. On the surface Kagwi appeared ok; underneath he was struggling to process the changes.

Not only was he now a Person with a Disability, he discovered an unexpected struggle: **his social life**.

With his new limitations, Kagwi could no longer maintain his once vibrant social life. His world grew smaller until his family was his sole source of emotional support. His parents encouraged him to persevere. They were able to see in Kagwi what Next Step Foundation also saw: **his tremendous capabilities**.

Bolstered by his parents' deep faith in his potential, Kagwi rediscovered his old self.

He reignited his passion for school, determined to prove to the world disability is NOT inability. And he succeeded.

As Kagwi completes his schooling, he is confident he will be a changemaker in East African society.

Thanks to the support of Next Step Foundation, through upskilling and job placement, he also believes he will become economically independent.

Kagwi beams as he shares how his manager invites him to corporate meetings because he has proven himself someone who transforms ideas into actions.

His face lights up as he talks of inspiring Persons with Disabilities and reminding them anything is achievable when you have others, like Next Step Foundation, who believe in you.

Kagwi is thankful to Next Step Foundation for assisting him in turning his dream into a reality.

**"It is a good feeling knowing there are caring people like the NSF Team working hard to lift up others. Thank you for all you do in ensuring Persons with Disabilities are empowered!"**

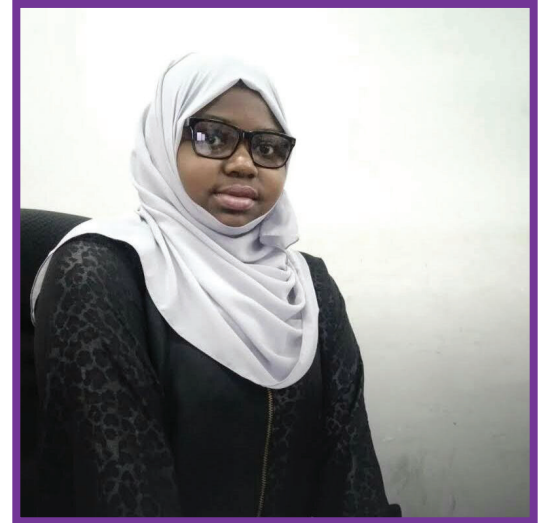




# Shamte Mahmoud

Tanga - Tanzania

*“I want to tell the Next Step Foundation you are doing good things. This knowledge and training we could not get anywhere else and get it for free. I want to tell the young people of Tanga, Tanzania not to hesitate to join any Next Step Foundation training that are provided.”*



“I wanted to be a software engineer, but I needed to focus on supporting myself. Tanga is my home. I was selling dresses here, but always looking for other opportunities.”

Shamte Mahmoud's father died when she was only eight years old. After his death everything changed for Shamte, her mother and her five siblings. Her mother, who did not work prior to her husband's death, struggled to find a way to support the family and resulted in farming. Shamte often worked early morning in the field before school and on weekends.

When Shamte was 13 she lost her mother, too. It was now her oldest sister's turn to surrender her dreams and take over raising Shamte and her siblings. Selected to go to University in Tanzania, Shamte knew she wanted to pursue a career in either teaching or nursing.

As fate would have it both areas of study were filled and unavailable.

As a result, Shamte had the opportunity to discover her true gift: technology. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in computer science and a 3.8 grade point average.

“I kept studying and practicing and my interest in computer science grew. I came to love system engineering and web programming.”

Armed with her diploma and impressive grades, life still did not fall easily into place for Shamte. She was ready to launch her career path, but the jobs were not there. Ever resilient, Shamte decided to become an entrepreneur until she could find a job in her chosen field.

It was while in pursuit of her new dress making venture Shamte serendipitously learned of Next Step Foundation and the Amazon Web Service Trainings offered through the Foundation's partnership with Fondation Botnar.

Excited to find out about the upskilling opportunity and never one to waste time Shamte joined the training ‘already in progress.’

Thanks to her tenacity and ability to learn quickly she caught up to the rest of the class with ease.

“It wasn't hard for me,” Shamte shares. “The day I started it was announced there was a test the next day. I told myself I can do this. I took the test and I passed.”

**Now a Certified Amazon Web Services Cloud Practitioner, she credits Next Step Foundation for assisting her in discovering and remaining on her career path.**



# Peter Kombo

Tanga - Tanzania

*"I received data annotation training from Next Step Foundation. I want to thank NSF for being willing to fund the training of the youth of Tanga. May you never get tired of training more youths."*



Peter Kombo was part of our Amazon Web Services training in Tanzania.

**"I grew up in with a hard life as I was raised by a single mother. She did what she needed to do make sure my siblings and I survived."**

Peter survived but did not have the opportunity to thrive. His schooling was sporadic at best given his mother's financial resources to consistently pay his school fees. This not only created a fractured educational foundation, it was stressful for young Peter.

**"I knew could be sent home (from school) at any time,"** he shares.

Additionally, due to a lack of trained teachers in Tanga, even when Peter possessed the financial means to enroll in school he did not learn as much as his peers with better/other academic options.

Still, Peter's childhood was not lacking in the areas which truly mattered.

**"My family has been really supportive especially my mother and siblings. They all made sure that as much as it was quite hard for me, I must finish my O-level exams."**

Passing his O Level examinations, a test which signifies the culmination of a student's secondary education in Tanzania, affirmed for Peter what his family already knew: despite his circumstances he is quite capable.

What his family could never have anticipated was Peter's career path was about to change. Referred to Next Step Foundation through a local partner, Peter was invited to be in the first cohort trained in Amazon Web Services. During the training, brought to Tanzania through a partnership with Fondation Botnar and Tanga Yetu, he was taught basic AWS skills in conjunction with essential digital skills.

**"The training provided by Next Step Foundation offered skills that had never existed before in Tanga. I have learned more than I expected I ever could about working in the cloud."**

Peter, given his educational history, additionally marveled at the skill of the instructors.

**"Even as English is not the first language of youth in Tanzania the trainers did a great job helping us understand the teachings. The process went well from day one."**

While Peter is still seeking job placement, he is increasingly confident he will find economic independence as a result of the Next Step Foundation training.



# Our Partners





## Advocacy Work



*Photo: Next Step Foundation team members in a meeting about Inclusive Employment with other organisations at Amref HQ in Nairobi, Kenya*

At Next Step Foundation, we champion the employment and empowerment of Persons with Disabilities through our training and corporate partnership programs. We support organizations to fully understand how to attract, hire, onboard, retain, and consistently engage PWDs in the workplace. We also educate employers to increase confidence in the hiring process, dispelling and disputing common fears and misconceptions around Persons with Disabilities in and out of the workplace.

We also advocate for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities through our consortia networks: Kenya Business Disability Network (KBDN) and Disability Inclusion Lab Africa (DILA) in developing various interventions programs/strategies - employment, entrepreneurship, upskilling, and pieces of training, talent nurturing and mentorship.

# Team Members



**Chris Harrison**  
Executive Chairman



**Peres Were**  
Executive Director



**Carla Birnberg**  
Head of  
Storytelling



**Jim Cohick**  
Head of Healthcare  
Technology Solutions



**Calvince Odemba**  
Head of Impact &  
Sustainability



**Jacquiline Lidonde**  
Head of Corporate  
Partnerships



**Allan Maonga**  
Head of People,  
Diversity & Culture



**Daniel Ngugi**  
Head of Inclusion  
& Development



**James Ngane**  
Finance Manager



**Becky Mwaniki**  
IT Manager



**Mariam Ndegwa**  
Fundraising Support  
Officer



**Peter Simiyu**  
Logistics Manager



**Terry Mwea**  
Executive Assistant



**Peter Kanyagia**  
Research Analyst

# Staff Story

Becky Mwaniki

*“When I finally secured a job as a Data Analyst I was so happy and relieved. I quickly gained new skills and was promoted to IT Support. I now work at Next Step Foundation as an IT Manager. NSF is my haven. It offers me learning opportunities that have made me better and I am optimistic about my future. I am passionate about the ability and opportunity to impact the lives of Women with Disabilities in technology and Next Step Foundation has made my entire dream a reality!”*



*“The field of technology is ever evolving. As a Woman with a Disability in this field, I am constantly learning, relearning, and unlearning. Every day I am empowered to be a better IT professional.”*

From an early age, Becky Mwaniki possessed a deep passion for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math). She dreamed of becoming a powerful Kenyan woman capable of creating change for women and girls in the technology field--a dream she is well on her way to making a reality.

Becky was born in the eastern part of Kenya. She was healthy at birth and a typical, active child until age five. It was then Becky’s world changed dramatically when she began experiencing unexplained bouts of extreme fatigue. This exhaustion concerned her parents as did the fact one of Becky’s legs was rapidly becoming shorter than the other. Becky’s parents consulted doctors for six years—and received no answers.

This exhaustion concerned her parents as did the fact one of Becky’s legs was rapidly becoming shorter than the other. Becky’s parents consulted doctors for six years—and received no answers.

Eventually the family was advised to bring her to Cure International Hospital in Kijabe, a renowned mission hospital which remains one of the best in the region. Becky, now age 12, was growing increasingly weak and losing hope...until she met Dr. Scott Harrison.

**“My first surgery took eight hours. All my surgeries were performed by Dr Harrison. He was a good friend to my dad during this process and explained all my treatments. Dr. Scott was truly my guardian angel. I finally started improving and everyone was happy.”**

The success of Becky’s surgery meant she now had the strength to resume focus on achieving her dream. She enrolled in Joytown Secondary School, a school for Persons with Disabilities in Thika, Kenya. Following graduation from Joytown, Becky joined Zetech University to pursue a bachelor’s degree in Business Information Technology.

With her university degree achieved, Becky prepared to enter the next phase of her plan: the job search. This endeavor, challenging for all new graduates, proved to be even more challenging for Becky.



# NEXT STEP

FOUNDATION

## Keep In Touch With Us



[www.nextstepfdn.org](http://www.nextstepfdn.org)



+254 792 791 586 / +254 729 303 826



[info@nextstepfdn.org](mailto:info@nextstepfdn.org)

## Follow us for more updates



Next Step Foundation



Nextstep Foundation



@NextStepFdn