



#WhatWENeed 2022

Spotlight interview with Samuel N Macharia

Transcript

Richa, TCI: Hello and welcome to the Spotlight Interviews. We will start the questions with very basic ones. We request you to please tell us your name, where do you live and what do you do?

Samuel N Macharia, CIC-K: My name is Macharia Njoroge. I am known as Samuel in the professional circles. I am the director of Championing for Inclusive Communities in Kenya and I am also a fellow with Transforming Communities for Inclusion Global. We advocate for the rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities in their communities because of the historical injustice and a lot of stigma and discrimination perpetrated towards them in all areas. The key thematic areas of our work are access to justice, peer support and inclusion within the communities. We find that people are taken out of their communities and incarcerated into institutions and others are left out owing to exclusionary policies and legislations. They do not have access to quality education, a healthy diet, housing and clean water. They are always left in abject poverty due to the needs of their disabilities, the social barriers attributed to that and various forms of human rights violations.

Richa, TCI: Thank you, Samuel. Thank you for that answer. Could you please tell us what you have been doing in your work and in your advocacy to promote deinstitutionalization in your country.

Samuel N Macharia, CIC-K: Recently, the Mental Health Amendment Act was launched because Kenya is a former British colonial country and we had the Mental Health Act which was very discriminatory. It was formulated so that it would establish institutions whereby through incarceration, people were subjected to atrocities and derogatory treatment including forced treatment. We are now trying to adapt and popularize the deinstitutionalization guidelines in our country. We believe that care, treatment and other services should not be offered to people outside of their communities. These can be provided within the community that a person is living in. When we take people out of their communities, it increases institutionalization and results in human rights abuses. There is no complaint mechanism and people get lost either in the institutions or in the criminal justice system because they are sidelined from the mainstream community. We are

trying to do stakeholders meetings, publications and also running a social media campaign under the #WhatWENeed campaign facilitated by TCI Global. I am a TCI fellow as well.

Richa, TCI: Thank you, Samuel. You mentioned the DI guidelines in your response and we wanted to ask how do you plan to use these guidelines in your work and your advocacy? If you could tell us about that.

Samuel N Macharia, CIC-K: We will use the guidelines to prepare messages that we are going to send to our government, to all the stakeholders, duty bearers and everybody who is concerned with the field of persons with psychosocial disabilities. We will also do publications. We are also going to prepare our position paper, which will be launched soon to the stakeholders. It will talk about the deinstitutionalisation guidelines and how we can use the guidelines to inform and educate the public. It will also talk about the need to offer services and include persons with psychosocial disabilities in their communities as opposed to institutions.

Richa, TCI: Thank you, Samuel. Thank you for giving us your time and all the best with everything that you've mentioned right now.

Samuel N Macharia, CIC-K: Thank you very much, Richa.