



AAN WOMEN'S LEARNING FORUM 2024

Report

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAN	Africa Albinism Network
AU	African Union
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EDI	Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
ESD	Empowerment Self-Defense
NAP	National Action Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PWA	Persons with Albinism
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNIE	United Nations Independent Expert
WLF	Women's Learning Forum

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Africa Albinism Network (AAN) hosted a Women's Learning Forum in Nairobi, Kenya, from May 28-30, 2024, to address challenges faced by women impacted by albinism (women with albinism and mothers of children with albinism).

Persons with albinism endure severe discrimination and human rights abuses, particularly in Africa. AAN's 2022-2023 survey found that women constitute only 30% of albinism leaders, and just 16% of albinism groups prioritize women's issues. These women often face, among other issues, heightened exposure to attacks, sexual and gender-based violence and denial of sexual and reproductive health services due to stigma, resulting in poor healthcare.

The forum aimed to enhance the women's leadership complemented with a focus on their well-being and personal growth. There were 28 women impacted by albinism from 17 countries and 28 albinism organizations across English and French speaking Africa. The Forum featured sessions on human rights advocacy, Empowerment self-defense, mental health, communications, relationship-building with funders, proposal development, and entrepreneurship.

Key themes included trauma-informed approaches, emotional regulation, and balancing values in entrepreneurship where participants learned about emotional regulation, mental health, and self-care which are all essential for trauma-informed work that most of them undertake in their service to people with albinism. The forum concluded with the participants making a resolution to implement the strategies learned at the forum to improve their lives, their leadership, the lives of women impacted by albinism in their communities and persons with albinism at large.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Rationale

The AAN Women’s Learning Forum 2024 aimed to foster leadership among women impacted by albinism by offering a platform for African albinism groups to learn, share perspectives, and receive training. This initiative aligns with United Nations Independent Expert (UNIE) on albinism’s recommendations to support women with albinism through capacity building.

The forum's program was designed based on the feedback from previous AAN forums and surveys, highlighting needs in trauma-informed work, mental health, funder relations, proposal development, communication, and entrepreneurship. Participants expressed a strong desire for peer learning opportunities.

The forum brought together stakeholders from human rights, women’s rights, disability rights, and the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion movements to collaboratively support and advance the leadership of women with albinism. The theme of the Women’s Learning Forum (WLF) was dubbed #EmpowerHerjourney (English) and #SoutenirSonParcours (French).



1.1.2 Forum Objectives

The main objective of the forum was to develop the capacities of 28 women impacted by albinism from 28 albinism groups across 17 African countries

namely Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The Learning Forum objectives included:

- Strengthen the capacities of albinism groups to address the specific needs of women through workshops in rights advocacy, strategic communications, and project implementation.
- Empower women impacted by albinism to cultivate wellness, confidence, self-determination, and self-representation.
- Increase the number of women in leadership roles within albinism groups.
- Enhance the inclusion of women impacted by albinism in feminist and disability movements.



- Launch group mentorship sessions to support the leadership development of women impacted by albinism, facilitate cross-movement exchange, and promote co-learning.

2. DAY 1 PROCEEDINGS

2.1 Opening Ceremony

2.1.1 Nomasonto Grace Mazibuko

In her opening remarks, Ms. Mazibuko fondly referred to as Mama Nomasonto, who serves as the Deputy Chairperson for the Commission for Gender Equality for South Africa appreciated the opportunity to be present at the important AAN Learning Forum that brought together women impacted by albinism to better advocate for the protection and realization of their rights as well as for people with albinism.

In her words, *"If Africa is safe, then persons living with disabilities will be saved"*.

She noted that being part of a forum, movement, work, advocacy, and all the work done in the respective areas was something to be grateful for. She pointed out the importance of taking care of oneself as well, stating,

"You cannot pour from an empty cup; make sure your spirit never runs dry, always go back to nourish your spirit in prayer and other ways that you exercise your spiritual care and beliefs."



In conclusion, Mama Nomasonto urged the participants to continue working with diligence and dedication and acknowledged that the commitment to serving the people in their communities for a better and inclusive world is always a rewarding work from God.

2.1.2 Jane Waithera



Mrs. Jane Waithera, Executive Director of Positive Exposure Kenya, expressed excitement about joining other women with albinism at the AAN Learning Forum. She was encouraged by Mama Nomasonto's wisdom and urged participants to draw inspiration from her achievements while advocating for the rights of people with albinism.

Mrs. Waithera stressed that it was now the responsibility of the current generation to sustain the progress that the pioneers had made in advocating for the needs of people with albinism. She called on more women to assume leadership roles and mentor younger women with albinism to continue the momentum.

She further urged women with albinism to empower themselves in all aspects of their lives and emphasized the importance of taking the front stage rather than the backstage, stating, "We are unstoppable."

2.1.3 Muluka-Anne Miti-Drummond

Ms. Muluka-Anne Miti-Drummond, the UN Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of Human Rights by Persons with Albinism, expressed enthusiasm for the Women with Albinism forum. She pledged to empower participants and encouraged them to inspire younger generations and advocate for their needs and inclusivity.



Ms. Miti-Drummond stated that, in the African context, the girl child is frequently denied leadership roles and made to doubt herself from birth. She noted that women carry unnecessary guilt due to their gender and the responsibilities they bear, and that women with albinism face even greater challenges in being heard as leaders. She expressed her hope that the forum would address the challenges and opportunities in advocating for the needs of persons with albinism.

While concluding her remarks, Ms. Miti-Drummond thanked the organizers for the well-organized forum and hoped that the engagements would encourage women with albinism to become brand ambassadors in advocating for the rights of persons with albinism.

2.1.4 Lefhoko Kesamang



Mr. Lefhoko Kesamang, the Senior Social Welfare Officer at the African Union Commission, delivered an opening speech at the forum where he thanked the organizers and expressed his dedication to advocating for the rights of people with albinism.

He highlighted the African Union's (AU) achievements, such as adopting a strategic disability framework and the African Disability Protocol. Mr. Kesamang discussed the AU's efforts in Gambia for persons with albinism and addressed increasing discrimination due to ignorance.

He mentioned the African Disability Protocol, endorsed by AU Heads of State in January 2018 has been ratified by ten countries, and announced an upcoming ministerial conference for persons with disabilities in July 2024. Mr. Kesamang emphasized the need for more representation of women with disabilities including albinism in leadership roles and suggested appointing a woman with albinism to the AU Social Protection Office for advocacy.

2.1.5 Sunita Caminha

Ms. Sunita Caminha, Regional Policy Specialist for Ending Violence against Women for UN Women, highlighted that UN Women collaborated with various organizations to ensure that women and girls had the right to live without violence.

She highlighted that despite the presence of laws and policies aimed at preventing discrimination and violence, their enforcement has been inadequate. She stressed the urgency of accelerating progress, translating commitments into tangible actions, allocating dedicated funding to organizations focused on ending violence against women and investing in improving access to and literacy of data for advocacy efforts.

Ms. Caminha further outlined four priority areas for UN Women, these included:

- Scaling up evidence-based approaches to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls.
- Fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships for greater impact.
- Strengthening collaboration among diverse organizations to advance women's issues and promote feminist leadership.
- Promoting innovation and generating evidence to transform systems addressing violence against women and girls with intentional feminist approaches.



She encouraged women to engage with UN Women's initiatives on gender, diversity, and inclusion by understanding national gender equality commitments, learning about the Sustainable Development Goals' (SDG) Voluntary National Review process, connecting with UN Women and other

UN agencies, and collaborating with regional women-led networks for advocacy. She concluded by urging participants to prioritize self-care, reflection, and solidarity-building through networking with other women.

2.1.6 Ikponwosa Ero



Ms. Ikponwosa Ero, the Executive Director of Africa Albinism Network (AAN) inaugurated the AAN in February 2021. She described AAN as a consortium of non-governmental organizations dedicated to promoting the welfare of individuals with albinism and their families. Additionally, AAN was part of a research group on women impacted by albinism funded by the

Government of Canada: see motheringandalbinism.com

Ms. Ero expressed her view that women with albinism bear a significant burden within the albinism community. They often face abandonment, single motherhood, and violence, making it crucial to address women's issues for greater inclusivity. AAN's Survey of 2022 revealed that only 2% of albinism groups focused on women, and 16% addressed "women issues" that could enhance inclusivity.

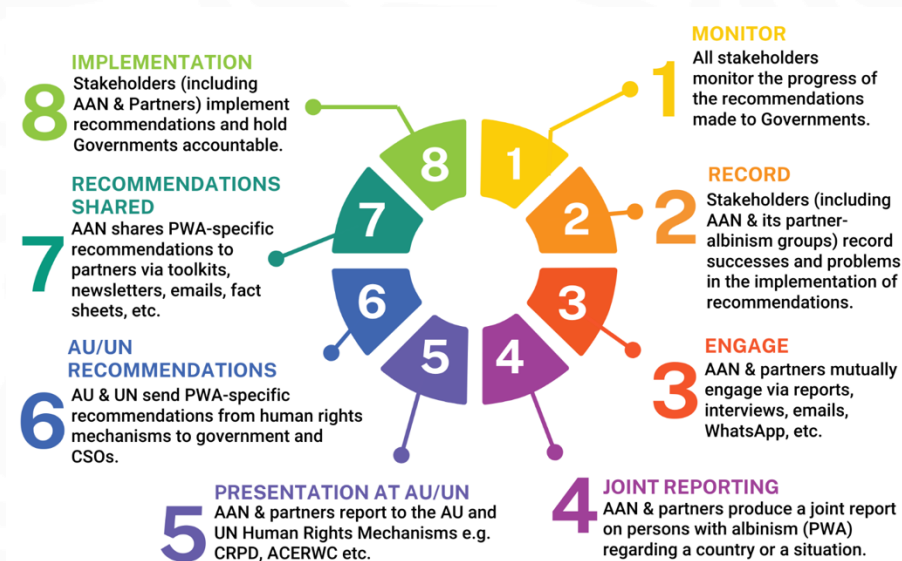
In her closing remarks, Ms. Ero highlighted the "Pull Her Down" (PHD) challenge among women and urged them to support each other. She emphasized that mutual support is essential for personal and professional advancement, encouraging participants to discuss challenges and recognize

their potential during and after the two and a half-day forum.

2.2 Session 1: Human Rights Advocacy Reporting

Mr. Kwame Andrews Daklo, Advocacy Manager at the African Albinism Network (AAN), detailed the Human Rights Advocacy Process, which follows an 8-step framework (see image below). Key points include:

- Monitor and document governmental responses to recommendations.
- Engage with partners through various communication channels.
- Present joint reports on Persons with Albinism (PWA) at African Union and United Nations (UN) forums.
- Contribute to AU and UN human rights mechanisms to amplify PWA-specific recommendations.
- Disseminate recommendations via toolkits, newsletters, emails, and fact sheets.
- Emphasize the need for government accountability in implementing recommendations.



Discussion Highlights:

- **Duration of AAN's 8-step Process:** The AAN's 8-step process is continuous but can be lengthy due to slow responses from the UN and its agencies.
- **Support for Advocacy:** Advocacy efforts face challenges because PWAs are not recognized as persons with disabilities in most countries. Recommendations were using the Advocacy toolkit, engaging with governments to secure resources such as sunscreen, and seeking guidance at all administrative levels.
- **Exclusion from Educational Activities:** Despite the ratification of the AU Framework, children with albinism are still excluded from educational activities. It was suggested to use the Advocacy toolkit, collaborate with advocacy groups, involve the media, and hold the government accountable for these exclusions.
- **Lack of Education Policy Enforcement:** There is a significant lack of enforcement of education policies. It is advised to report non-compliance and use these reports to hold governments accountable for human rights violations, including the right to education.

2.3 Session 2: Panel Discussion - Qualities of a Woman Leader

The panel discussion on the qualities of a woman leader featured a dynamic conversation with a diverse group of women leaders who are experts in the fields of disability, human rights, and inclusion. The objective of this discussion was to explore and highlight the key qualities that make an effective woman leader, drawing insights from their vast experiences and expertise.

Panelists:

- Puleng Molebatsi (Moderator) - Journalist and presenter for the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC)
- Dian Bourne - International Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Consultant
- Elizabeth Kamundia – Acting Director, Disability Rights Division at Human Rights Watch
- Ikponwosa Ero - Executive Director, Africa Albinism Network
- Lizzie Kiama - Managing Trustee, This Ability Trust

Discussion Highlights:

- **Elizabeth Kamundia:** Emphasized the importance of a growth mindset and investing in other women. She highlighted the need for clear articulation of needs and finding one's purpose, referencing Viktor Frankl's quote on enduring challenges through a strong "why."
- **Lizzie Kiama:** Described a woman leader as resilient, empathetic, and self-aware. She stressed the value of creativity from living experiences of women with disabilities, authenticity, continuous learning, and skill acquisition to stay relevant.
- **Dian Bourne:** Highlighted integrity, exceptional communication skills, and a strategic mindset as key traits. She underscored the importance of self-care for mental, physical, and emotional well-being, and encouraged standing up for justice and fairness for oneself and others.
- **Ikponwosa Ero:** Described a woman leader as an orchestra conductor and highlighted that despite lacking an instrument or making direct sound, the conductor orchestrated the entire performance, harmonizing all elements. Expounding on the qualities of a good woman, Ms. Ero

underscored the importance of discovering personal purpose and aligning it with life's trajectory, suggesting that leadership is a skill acquired through the integration of various virtues and aptitudes.

- The participants expressed their appreciation for the panel presentation in sharing their views and experiences on the qualities of a woman leader. They further recommended that more sharing and learning opportunities of such a panel be included as an integral part of future learning events.



Cultural Dinner

Participants had the opportunity to share and celebrate their diverse cultures by wearing traditional outfits during a vibrant cultural dinner, which became a cornerstone of the event. The dinner was honored by the presence of Honorable Isaac Mwaura, the spokesperson for the Government of Kenya.



In his inspiring address, Mr. Mwaura emphasized the crucial role of forums like this in empowering women impacted by albinism. His words of encouragement resonated deeply with the attendees, motivating them to continue their advocacy and empowerment efforts.



3. DAY 2 PROCEEDINGS

3.1 Reflections and Opening of Day Two

Overview: Ms. Elisabeth Martin, the session moderator, initiated reflections on day one of the forum, emphasizing resilience and mutual support among women with albinism, integrity in female leadership, the role of values in business, ongoing



advocacy for albinism awareness, authentic leadership, strategic skills for diverse business audiences. The session was moderated in the French language.



Key Discussions and Takeaways from Day 1:

- Communication is pivotal in effective leadership.
- Accessible services are crucial for people with disabilities.
- Technology should be leveraged for communication and service enhancement.
- Bold advocacy plays a critical role in driving change.

- Emotional grounding and self-love are essential for personal growth.
- Coaching and mentoring empower individuals with disabilities.
- Entrepreneurship has no age limit and requires continuous reflection and self-improvement.

3.2 Session 3: Empowerment Self-Defense

The session, led by Empowerment self-defense trainer Mwhaki Njogu, aimed to teach participants self-defense techniques focused on empowerment, not fear. It covered awareness, assertiveness, verbal



confrontation skills, safety strategies, and physical methods to prevent, resist, and escape unsafe situations. Ms. Njogu emphasized empowerment as internal power and defined self-defense as its physical aspect, highlighting the importance of personal boundaries and fundamental self-defense principles.

Key strategies covered included:

- **Think** (pay attention to potential threats and avoid dangerous situations),
- **Yell** (use a strong, clear voice to communicate boundaries),
- **Run** (escape safely and create distance from the attacker),
- **Fight** (use necessary force to protect oneself, targeting vulnerable areas like the eyes, nose, throat, groin, and knees), and

- **Tell** (share your story and seek help from bystanders or authorities).



Ms. Njogu emphasized that self-defense is not just about physical techniques but also about mindset, awareness, and effective decision-making.

3.3 Session 4: Toward Psychological Wellbeing

Mrs. Bohang Benedix, a Clinical Psychologist and Wellness Coach, led a discussion on achieving psychological wellness for women affected by albinism, emphasizing the impact of anti-black racism and sexism, particularly in the workplace.



She identified various forms of discrimination, including microaggressions, macro-aggressions, stereotyping, and bias, and noted that women with albinism face a triple bind of discrimination due to their race, gender, and albinism.



Examples included children with albinism being restricted from playing outside due to sun exposure, women with albinism being expected to accept any marriage and avoid divorce, denial of education rights, and job opportunities

for people with albinism.

Mrs. Benedix highlighted the negative impact of discrimination on mental health and advised participants to use mental wellness tools for relaxation during overwhelming times. These tools include radical self-acceptance, awakening self-awareness through body, soul, and spirit connections, radical self-compassion, self-soothing exercises, and seeking solidarity and co-soothing.

To reinforce these concepts, participants were guided through an activity on self- appreciation aimed to help participants develop a tangible practice for nurturing their emotional well-being and resilience.

Toward the end of the session, Mrs. Benedix took the participants through deep breathing exercises to help them self-regulate a very emotional session and activate the body's relaxation response.

Key Takeaways

- Educate society and the community about people with albinism to recognize their dignity and humanity.
- Persons with albinism should speak up boldly against discrimination.
- Regulate emotions and reduce distress through relaxation exercises.
- Use positive words and thoughts to help your body relax when stressed.
- Touching the top of your head can aid relaxation.
- Prioritize self-care and comfort as part of radical self-compassion, meeting physical, emotional, and spiritual needs with kindness, gentleness, and respect.

3.4 Session 5: Developing a National Action Plan (NAP)

Ms. Annabahati Gwacha, Project Manager at the Africa Albinism Network (AAN) led an informative session on the guidelines and importance of National Action Plans (NAPs) for persons with albinism. NAPs serve as essential policy documents that help governments outline priority actions to support international or regional policies, particularly the AU Action Plan for persons with albinism (2021-2031).



Key Points:

Role and Importance of NAPs:

- Provide specific measures to improve the lives of marginalized groups like persons with albinism.
- Supplement broader policies with targeted actions.
- Offer a framework for measuring progress and promoting sustainable best practices.
- Ms. Gwacha emphasized the urgency of adopting NAPs before 2031 due to uncertain renewal under the AU.

AAN's Support for NAPs:

- Offers technical assistance aligned with the AU Plan of Action.
- Facilitates benchmarking sessions among partners.
- Contributes to advancing human rights for persons with albinism.

NAP Development Process:

- Engage diverse stakeholders to set priorities and perspectives.
- Establish a national committee and understand the context of albinism.
- Draft and review NAPs, develop protective policies, engage with government and community, and allocate necessary budgets.
- Systematically adopt, approve, and disseminate the NAP to relevant stakeholders.
- Implement through collaboration among agencies, establishing Task Forces, and ensuring integrated efforts.
- Monitor and evaluate by setting targets, assessing effectiveness, gathering feedback, and adjusting as needed, with oversight from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).
- During plenary discussions, several key points were highlighted:
 - In Uganda, people with albinism are not allocated a specific budget but are grouped with other disability categories.

- Kenya has a drafted action plan awaiting adoption, with an allocated budget for albinism-related matters like economic empowerment, sunscreen provision, free treatment, and tax exemption.
- Namibia plans to commence drafting its action plan soon.
- Participants learned the importance of using a Human Rights-Based Approach to frame the situation of people with albinism, emphasizing that it's not a medical or charity issue but a matter of removing barriers faced by people with albinism, placing the primary responsibility on governments.
- In conclusion, Ms. Gwacha urged participants to engage in programs addressing albinism if their countries lack a NAP and to advocate for the removal of barriers to human rights for people with disabilities including persons with albinism.

3.5 Summary of Group Mentorship Sessions

The group mentorship session aimed at fostering a collaborative environment for participants to share experiences and challenges. By bringing together diverse individuals, the session promoted knowledge sharing, peer support, problem-solving, and leadership development. Participants gained new perspectives and enhanced their capacity to mentor and lead in their fields.

Five experienced mentors led small group discussions in five key areas:

- Approaching Funders (Alison Hillman)
- Communications (Elisabeth Martin)

- Developing a Fundraising Proposal (Christine Lancing)
- Trauma-informed approaches (Bohang Benedix)
- Entrepreneurship (Miranda Naiman)

3.5.1 Approaching Funders



Ms. Alison Hillman, a Senior Advisor to AAN, led this session focusing on understanding funders' perspectives and preparing for funding opportunities. Mentees shared their insights, leading to vibrant discussions.

Key Takeaways:

- Building relationships with funders to understand their priorities
- Advocating personally for your cause
- Investing in strong donor relationships
- Maintaining integrity
- Collaborating with other organizations for robust proposals

3.5.2 Communications

Ms. Elisabeth Martin started the session by welcoming the members to the group and giving a brief overview of her experience as an African living in Canada. The group mentor effectively structured the session by addressing each key topic comprehensively and providing actionable strategies for

participants to implement.

By covering diverse aspects such as;

- **Cultural Awareness:**

Understanding diverse communication methods across cultures is crucial for effective communication.

- **Art of Summarization:**

Distilling complex ideas into digestible information enhances clarity and retention.

- **Non-verbal Communication:** Paying attention to body language and nonverbal cues enriches understanding.

- **Audience Adaptation:** Adapting communication to different audiences and crafting messages accordingly is key.

- **Change Management:** Effective change management involve raising awareness, building capabilities, and reinforcing messages.

- **Full Engagement:** Engaging everyone effectively, from bottom to top, simplifies communication and fosters feedback.

- **Communicating with Subordinates:** Recognizing and appreciating workers, establishing expectations, and frequent communication is essential.

- **Resources:** Utilizing platforms like Coursera and Toastmasters to improve communication skills.

The session resulted in a notable shift among participants towards greater



cultural awareness and strategic communication practices, with a commitment to implementing these strategies for more effective communication outcomes.

3.5.3 Developing a Fundraising Proposal



Mrs. Christine Lancing, a Fundraising and Strategic consultant in shared her experience as a woman in leadership who had been surrounded by men mostly especially in the corporate world. Most often she was afraid to share her ideas

because they would always be pushed aside. She took the initiative to make her voice heard and push for the ideas she had. This made things change for how and she prided herself in sharing that now people pay her for her ideas.

The session focused on fundraising challenges and strategies for success. Participants shared their difficulties, including lack of accessibility to funders and competition within funding organizations. Key highlights emphasized the importance of preparedness, persistence, and building professional networks. The theory of change was discussed as essential for strategic organizational goals. Strategic presentation techniques for approaching donors were underscored, emphasizing shared values and thorough

research.

Action points included:

- Proactive fundraising efforts
- Personalized proposals
- Accountability in the process.

The session emphasized the need for a well-prepared concept note, thorough research on funders' needs and eligibility criteria, strategic team engagement, and a passionate, clear proposal to attract funding successfully.

“Through careful planning and execution, we aim to maximize impact and effectiveness in our endeavors”
– **Christine Lancing**

3.5.4 Trauma-Informed Approaches



The session led by Mrs. Bohang Benedix began with an open discussion, allowing participants to freely share their challenges. The session focused on emotions, emphasizing the importance of managing them through breathing exercises and developing a night routine for spiritual connection. Mental health was highlighted as crucial, stressing the need for self-care and setting boundaries. Cognitive behavioral techniques were discussed for

better managing responses and behaviors in life.

Key Points included:

- Environmental awareness
- Self-confidence building
- Well-being synchronization
- Safety measures
- Maintaining boundaries.

Participants committed to evaluating their priorities, challenging cultural biases, prioritizing mental and physical health, and seeking professional help when needed.

Overall, the session underscored the significance of emotional regulation, spiritual connection, mental health introspection, and cognitive behavioral adjustments for a balanced and fulfilling.

3.5.5 Entrepreneurship



During this session, participants introduced themselves and shared their entrepreneurial connections and concerns. The mentor, Mrs. Miranda Naiman, shared her journey and success tips, emphasizing managing

subcontracting expectations and documenting agreements to avoid failures. Key strategies for handling competition included knowing customers,

embracing competition, differentiating solutions, clarifying messages, and exploring partnerships. Participants committed to creating funding plans, maintaining financial records, separating personal and business finances, and turning ideas into viable ventures.

Key Highlights:

- **The concept of Ikigai (purpose of living)** was introduced, emphasizing the importance of aligning passion, skills, market demand, and community impact in one's entrepreneurial endeavors.
- **Values were underscored as paramount in the business world**, with a focus on integrity, reputation, and doing the right thing even when not observed.
- **Seeking expert advice and forming partnerships** based on mutual value exchanges were emphasized as keys to success.
- **Working with family in business** necessitated shared values, good governance, and clear boundaries to ensure success.
- **Building a strong brand** that extends beyond the founder and educating customers about the organization's identity were highlighted as critical branding strategies.

“Doing the right thing can make you unpopular, but it maintains your integrity throughout your entrepreneurial journey”

– Miranda Naiman

4. DAY 3 PROCEEDINGS

4.1 Reflections, Personal Resolutions, and Feedback

During the session, participants were divided into three groups to reflect on the valuable lessons learned from the forum.

Key takeaways:

- Building meaningful relationships is crucial for personal and professional growth.
- Self-defense skills and awareness are essential, particularly for individuals with albinism.
- Understanding funders' criteria and aligning proposals with their priorities is key to success.
- Advocacy for women with albinism was emphasized as vital.
- Commitment to continuous learning and skill development was highlighted.
- Finding purpose aligned with personal values (Ikigai) was encouraged.
- Grounding in personal values and effective communication are foundational for success.
- Mental well-being practices are essential for overall productivity and fulfillment



In addition to the lessons learned, participants identified key challenges that they felt motivated to address following the forum, these included: -

- **Succession Planning:** There was a recognition of the need for structured succession planning within organizations, emphasizing proactive and strategic approaches.
- **Empowering Youths with Albinism:** Participants showed a strong interest in mentorship programs to empower youths with albinism, recognizing the importance of guidance for personal and professional growth.
- **Strategic Planning in Organizations:** Discussions focused on effective strategic planning techniques tailored to different organizational structures, emphasizing the importance of cohesive planning processes.
- **Empowerment Self-Defense Techniques:** Addressing safety concerns, particularly for vulnerable individuals with albinism, highlighted the need for self-defense skills and safety measures.

4.1.2 Personal Resolutions



The commitments made by participants in this session showcased a deep engagement and determination to address challenges and improve the lives of individuals with albinism. These include:

- Supporting women entrepreneurs through mentorship for growth and prosperity.
- Fostering empowerment and community development initiatives.
- Working closely with PWAs to promote education and independence.
- Focusing on mentoring young women with albinism into leadership roles.
- Promoting self-confidence and empowerment through advocacy and rights-based initiatives.

These commitments reflect a shared vision for positive change and inclusivity within the albinism community, emphasizing empowerment, leadership development, and rights advocacy.

When asked about their resolutions, the participants shared their commitment as indicated below:

- **Miranda Naiman (the Moderator)**, committed to continue supporting women entrepreneurs, by mentoring them and supporting them in their growth and prosperity.
- **Nadia Bayor** from Togo, committed to working more with persons with albinism and help them be independent by educating them more, more so women impacted by albinism, as well as seeking more opportunities for the empowerment of women and girls.
- **Ursule Amoussou** from Benin, committed to helping improve the image and reputation of people with albinism by mentoring them through sharing experiences.
- **Cabrelle Fofie Douanla**, from Cameroon, committed to supporting women with albinism to be more self-confident in their everyday life.
- **Sandra Anjaranandrasana**, from Madagascar, committed to supporting and improving the lives of people with albinism in Madagascar by showing them they have value, improving their health, and educating them.
- **Mama Nomasonto**, from South Africa, committed silently.
- **Ikponwosa Ero** from AAN committed to continue supporting through strategic leadership, particularly in albinism communities in Africa.
- **Kwame Andrews Daklo**, from AAN, committed to working with youth with albinism through mentorship and other areas of engagement.
- **Lefhoko Kesamang**, from the AU Commission, committed to working and supporting AAN activities for persons with disability to enjoy the same human rights.
- **Laurette Seigning Tametchop**, from Cameroon, committed to being available to people with albinism by participating in forums and sharing

experiences learnt.

- **Assana Bakayoko**, from Côte d'Ivoire, committed to collaborating and working with all associations fighting for the rights of people with albinism.
- **Chikondi Kanjadza**, from Malawi, committed to supporting young women with albinism by mentoring them to become great leaders, empowering them to speak out, and taking leadership roles without fear but with pride and courage.
- **Mawunyo Yakor-Dagbah**, from Ghana, committed to self-care, and support the sustainability of Africa Albinism Network as she ensures people with albinism are inspired to be the best they can be.
- **Carol Kapungwe**, from Zambia, committed to being a mentor, trainer, and consultant to the youth especially those with albinism by providing services in sexual and reproductive health, self-defense, leadership mentorship, and any other service they may need.
- **Virginia Chimodzi**, from Malawi, committed to end discrimination against people with albinism by educating the society that we are the same and include people with albinism in whatever capacities they can deliver.
- **Gift Sakala**, from Zambia, committed to influencing policy through advocate engagement with stakeholders and offer psychosocial support to persons with albinism.
- **Olive Namutebi**, from Uganda, committed to be an example of a good woman leader and raise the voice of people with albinism.

- **Olabisi Bamishe**, from Nigeria, committed to fighting for the rights of people with albinism by ensuring zero tolerance for skin cancer through inclusive healthcare.
- **Yumna Omar Dadi**, from Tanzania, committed to continuing the advocacy work by use of her knowledge and skills gained in the forum and mentor other persons with albinism to take their place in society.
- **Jeriter Mutisya**, from Kenya, committed to mentoring young people with albinism using mentorship programs to train in leadership. Also, to engage as many donors as possible to acquire funding needed to push the advocacy forward for people with albinism. Further, engage in activities on empowerment, capacity building, and advocacy.
- **Puleng Molebatsi**, from South Africa, committed to being a vessel, a voice to the albinism work going on. Also, to be a source of information and shine a spotlight on albinism advocacy.
- **Kadidjatou Moumouni**, from Niger, committed to fighting for the cause of young women with albinism, supporting them on an equal basis and fighting for their rights.
- **Aminata Traore**, from Mali, committed to mentoring women with albinism and strengthen their leadership capacity so they can



participate effectively in their development and communities. Furthermore, she committed to volunteer in the activities of AAN.

- **Pamela Capo Chichi**, from Benin, committed to supporting women with albinism to have better living conditions. She also committed to supporting women in ensuring there are institutional and political positions that are inclusive.
- **Tapiwa Gwenlisa Mushonga**, from Zimbabwe, committed to creating a safe space environment that empowers leadership.
- **Grace Wabanhu**, from Tanzania, committed to mentoring children and youth with albinism and build their capacity.
- **Rejoice Ziwu**, from Ghana, committed to change by advocating for people with albinism and helping the vulnerable in society, especially persons with albinism in healthcare.
- **Sherleen Tunai**, from Kenya, committed to empowering individuals with albinism from rural, especially with poor and unprivileged backgrounds or who are vulnerable by helping them gain self-acceptance and self-confidence to integrate into society.
- **Olive Auma**, from Uganda, committed to making women with albinism look beautiful and have confidence through aesthetics and good oral health and grow their self-esteem.



- **Grace Gathoni Chege**, from Kenya, committed to lobbying with the government of Kenya to provide

products to cater to people with albinism. Further, to work with NGOs to make sure people with albinism are empowered financially and have access to education.

- **Cecilia Paulus**, from Namibia, committed to supporting persons with albinism through advocacy and mentoring, especially the girl child.
- **Rozaline Joseph**, from Namibia, committed to advocating for the human rights of people with albinism.
- **Nontsikelelo Loteni**, from South Africa, committed to inspiring others to realize their own potential, by believing in themselves. Additionally, start her action plan while working with others and bring them to the realization of their potential.
- **Thando Hopa**, from South Africa, committed to supporting and mentoring people with albinism in the space of art, media, and culture by sharing her experience.
- **Innocentia Mgijima Konopi**, from South Africa, committed to connecting women with albinism with opportunities in areas she has influence.
- **Alison Hillman** from the USA, committed to supporting AAN through fundraising activities.
- **Muluka-Anne Miti-Drummond** from the UN, committed to supporting the albinism community by taking care of themselves.

4.2 Certificate Presentation

During this session, Ms. Ikponwosa Ero, the Executive Director for AAN, presented certificates to all participants.

Notably, special recognition was given to **Mr. Lefhoko Kesamang**, honored

for his advocacy as an ally of the albinism movement and his contributions to the African Union's Plan of Action.

Another individual, **Mama Nomasonto Grace Mazibuko**, was acknowledged for her remarkable 50+ years of advocacy for people with albinism in South Africa and Africa.

The ceremony concluded with these acknowledgments and celebrated the achievements of those dedicated to advancing the rights and visibility of individuals with albinism.



4.3 Closing Remarks

4.3.1 Jane Waithera

Mrs. Waithera expressed gratitude to the forum organizers and highlighted the forum's emphasis on self-care and community support.

- She stressed the value of the Empowerment Self-Defense session, especially for women with albinism facing gender-based violence, by emphasizing the importance of the "think, yell, run, fight, and tell" strategy in such situations.
- She concluded by encouraging participants to apply critical thinking and share their learnings within their communities.
- Additionally, she advocated for inclusivity in future forums to embrace diverse perspectives.

4.3.2 Muluka-Anne Miti-Drummond

Ms. Miti-Drummond highlighted the Women's Learning Forum's unique focus on entrepreneurship and personal challenges faced by women.

- She emphasized the importance of creating a supportive space where women can network and express themselves authentically.
- Ms. Miti-Drummond expressed satisfaction in witnessing open sharing among women at the forum, believing it empowers them to recognize their leadership potential.
- She advocated for unity among women, promoting a supportive environment where successful women uplift others instead of fostering competition.
- Ms. Miti-Drummond also urged for mentorship to cultivate the next generation of women leaders.

“You are never too important to give encouragement or too small to receive encouragement”
– Muluka-Anne Miti-Drummond

4.3.3 Ikponwosa Ero



Ms. Ero expressed gratitude to participants for their active engagement and contributions at the forum, emphasizing its regional significance as the first forum of its kind.

- She thanked funding partners, advisers, African volunteers, and Positive Exposure Kenya for their support, along with mentors, speakers, interpreters, photographers, paramedics, and the Empower team for their exceptional service.
- In her closing remarks, Ms. Ero highlighted the limited focus on women's rights within albinism advocacy, urging increased attention and collaboration to address this gap.
- She proposed utilizing platforms like Facebook groups in partnership with AAN to amplify awareness and support for women impacted by albinism.

- Ms. Ero acknowledged and appreciated the AAN team's support during the forum and encouraged participants to pursue their resolutions with determination.



Appendix 1: Attendees List

First Name	Country	Organization	Role
1. Adja Assana Bakayoko	Côte d'Ivoire	Albinos J'Assume	Participant
2. Alison Hillman	USA	Senior Adviser for AAN	Group Mentor
3. Aminata Traoré	Mali	Association Malienne pour la Protection des personnes atteintes d'albinisme (AMPA)	Participant
4. Annabahati Gwacha	Tanzania	AAN	Presenter
5. Ben Said Djaffar Moussa-Elkhadum	Comoros	AAN Board Member	Participant
6. Bohang Benedix	Lesotho	Clinical Psychologist	Presenter and Group Mentor
7. Cabrelle Fofie Douanla	Cameroon	Association Mondiale pour la Défense des Interêts des Albinos (ASMODISA)	Participant
8. Carol Kapungwe	Zambia	ABWENZI	Participant
9. Cecilia Paulus	Namibia	Namibian Albinism Association Trust (NAAT)	Participant
10. Chikondi Kanjadza	Malawi	Standing Voice Malawi	Participant
11. Christine Lancing	Canada	Senior Adviser for AAN	Group Mentor
12. Dian Bourne	Canada	International Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Consultant	Panelist
13. Doreen Mkatomboka	Tanzania	AAN	Organizing team
14. Elisabeth Martin	Canada	Consultant	Group Mentor and Francophone Moderator
15. Elizabeth Kamundia	Kenya	Human Rights Watch	Panelist
16. Ella Naiman	Tanzania	Empower Limited	Moderator
17. Gift Sakala	Zambia	Albinism Multi-Purpose Cooperative	Participant

18. Gladness Mayenga	Tanzania	Empower Limited	Organizing Team
19. Grace Gathoni Chege	Kenya	Albinism Society of Kenya (ASK)	Participant
20. Grace Wabanhu	Tanzania	Village of Hope	Participant
21. Haingo Rakotomalala	Madagascar	AAN	Organizing Team
22. Henry Mwakasonda	Tanzania	Empower Limited	Organizing Team
23. Ikponwosa Ero	Nigeria	AAN	Opening and Closing Ceremony Speaker, Panelist
24. Innocentia Mgiijima Konopi	South Africa	AAN Board Member	Participant
25. Isaac Mwaura	Kenya	Government of Kenya	Speaker
26. Jane Waithera	Kenya	Positive Exposure Kenya	Participant, Opening and Closing Ceremony Speaker
27. Janet Muthoni	Kenya	Smile Child Organization	Empowerment Self-Defense Training Assistant
28. Jeriter Mutisya	Kenya	Black Albinism	Participant
29. John Veron	Netherlands	Liliane Fonds	Participant
30. Kadidjatou Moumouni	Niger	Association Nationale des Albinos du Niger (ANAN)	Participant
31. Kwame Andrews Daklo	Ghana	AAN	Presenter
32. Laurette Seigning Tametchop	Cameroon	Association pour la Promotion des Albinos au Cameroun (APAC)	Participant
33. Lefhoko Kesamang	Botswana	African Union Commission	Opening Ceremony Speaker

34. Lizzie Kiama	Kenya	This Ability Trust	Panelist
35. Lubabatu Abubakar	Nigeria	AAN	Organizing Team
36. Magdaline Njeri	Kenya	Smile Child Organization	Empowerment Self-Defense Training Assistant
37. Margaret Waruiru	Canada	Consultant	Organizing Team
38. Mawunyo Yakor-Dagbah	Ghana	AAN Board Member	Participant
39. Miranda Naiman	Tanzania	Empower Limited	Moderator and Group Mentor
40. Muluka-Anne Miti-Drummond	Zambia	United Nations Independent Expert on Albinism	Opening and Closing Ceremony Speaker
41. Mwihaki Njogu	Kenya	Smile Child Organization	Empowerment Self-Defense Trainer
42. Nadia Bayor	Togo	Association Nationale des Personnes Atteintes d'Albinisme au Togo (ANAT)	Participant
43. Nomasonto Grace Mazibuko	South Africa	Commission for Gender Equality	Opening Ceremony Speaker
44. Nnene Bassey	Nigeria	Advocacy for Persons with Albinism Network (APAN)	Participant
45. Nontsikelelo Loteni	South Africa	South Africa National Albinism Task Force	Participant
46. Olabisi Bamishe	Nigeria	Albinism Association of Nigeria	Participant
47. Olive Namutebi	Uganda	Albinism Umbrella	Participant
48. Olive Auma	Uganda	The Source of the Nile Union of Persons with Albinism (SNUPA)	Participant

49. Pamela Capo Chichi	Benin	ONG Valeurs Albinos	Participant
50. Puleng Molebatsi	South Africa	Journalist - SABC	Panel Moderator
51. Rejoice Ziwu	Ghana	Engage Now Africa	Participant
52. Rozaline Joseph	Namibia	Support in Namibia of Albinism Sufferers Requiring Assistance (SINASRA)	Participant
53. Sandra Anjaranandrasana	Madagascar	Albinos Madagascar	Participant
54. Sherleen Tunai	Kenya	Ana Antami	Participant
55. Sunita Caminha	Kenya	UN Women	Opening Ceremony Speaker
56. Tapiwa Gwenlisa Mushonga	Zimbabwe	Alive Albinism Initiative	Participant
57. Thando Hopa	South Africa	AAN Board Member	Participant
58. Ursule Amoussou Ablet	Benin	Divine Connection Worldwide	Participant
59. Virginia Chimodzi	Malawi	Association of Persons with Albinism in Malawi (APAM)	Participant
60. Yumna Mmanga Omar Dadi	Tanzania	All About Albinism	Participant



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