



July 5, 2017 (Edition #34)

INSIDE THIS EDITION: PROFILES IN INCLUSION

Many thanks to TAAP Tuesday readers for nominating the following inclusion champions for this edition:

- **Bridgette Johnson-Beckett**: Promoting self-help and accessible housing in Jamaica
- **Bappaditya Mukherjee**: An advocate for transgender people in India
- **Judy Heumann**: Internationally recognized leader in the disability community
- **Senarath Attanayake**: An elected official advancing “universal accessibility” in Sri Lanka
- **Risnawati Utami**: Gender and disability rights advocate in Indonesia
- **Lkhagva Erdene**: Journalist highlighting the stories of marginalized groups in Mongolia
- **Ariunsanaa Batsaikhan**: Advocate for youth poverty and unemployment in Mongolia
- **Bahati Kenyanmanza**: Empowering African refugee children through education
- **Judithe Registre**: Changing lives through the power of storytelling



Bridgette Johnson-Beckett

Bridgette Johnson-Beckett leads the Portmore Self-Help Disability Organization (PSDO), which has made the city of Portmore, Jamaica one of the most accessible cities in the Caribbean. PSDOs activities range from refurbishing, repairing and customizing wheelchairs so that people can be independent to managing support hotlines for families. Johnson-Beckett started the organization 15 years ago to advocate for construction of accessible public housing. PSDO now brings a social entrepreneurship approach to its work, offering training in the proper use of wheelchair devices and providing home services for customers. On the day that the TAAP Inclusion team met with Johnson-Beckett, she had joined the Mayor of Portmore in breaking ground on a new municipal center which will be fully accessible, ensuring that future generations of Portmore citizens can carry on Johnson-Beckett's tradition advocacy and leadership for all.



Bappaditya Mukherjee

This International Visitor Leadership Program alumnus, Bappaditya Mukherjee, is a champion of inclusion. Through the advocacy work of his youth-led inclusion organization Prantakatha, two transgender youth were the first to be admitted to a nursing program in India. This was a rare implementation of India's 2014 Supreme Court landmark judgment recognizing the rights of trans people, thereby breaking the age-old discrimination that doesn't allow transgender people to find employment in mainstream livelihood options. Because of this exclusion, transgender people in India are often pushed to accept a second-class status without proper income and dignity. Bappaditya believes this effort will inspire many other businesses to start accepting trans people with dignity and honour.



A Trio of Champions: Judy Heumann, Don Steinberg and Susan Sygall

Judy Heumann is an internationally recognized leader in the disability community. Her activism started at an early age, having to fight to be able to attend public school as a young girl. After college, she became the first person in a wheelchair to teach public school in New York City. Heumann started the organization Disabled in Action, to secure civil rights protection for people with disabilities. She also helped develop what became the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Judy has been a leader at the Department of Education, the World Bank, the District of Columbia, and most recently the State Department, where she was Special Advisor on Disability Rights. Just last week she was given a lifetime achievement award from InterAction for “her outstanding contributions and commitment to disability rights globally.” Here Judy (left) can be seen with Donald Steinberg (center), CEO of World Learning, and Susan Sygall (right), CEO and co-founder of Mobility International; both of whom are inclusion champions in their own right.



Senarath Attanayake

Senarath Attanayake is a Sri Lankan politician and lawyer, who was the first person with a disability to become a lawyer, an elected representative, and given a ministerial portfolio. He is an inclusion champion through his work to help persons with disabilities gain equal status and access to services in his home district of Moneragala. Through his leadership the district is implementing measures to become a model inclusive environment, with help from the Age/Disabled Friendly Cities program from the World Health Organization. Senarath hopes to achieve “universal accessibility” throughout his home country, starting with creating accessible entrances for all public buildings in his district.



Risnawati Utami

Risnawati Utami is an Indonesian gender and disability rights advocate. She is a leader of the Indonesian Consortium for Disability Rights, a national consortium 45 organization members representing 8 provinces in Indonesia, which advocates for implementation of the CRPD at the local and national level. She is pictured speaking at the UN COSP in New York on behalf of OHANA Indonesia, in which she is promoting disability inclusive development into the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals, and for the SDGs to be in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



Lkhagva Erdene

Lkhagva Erdene is a LEAD Mongolia Program Fellow and one of Mongolia's most promising up-and-coming investigative journalists. Lkhagva is using his role in the media and as Executive Producer of News at Mongol TV to give a voice to Mongolia's diverse populations and issues. "Our audiences needs to hear what marginalized groups have to say if we want to build a humane, democratic society," says Lkhagva. "It's our job, the media, to mediate such action." Lkhagva recently hosted Mongolia's first-ever televised debate in sign language to draw attention to the country's growing debate over the poor quality of deaf education and access to education for deaf and hard of hearing children. "The discussion came during a public outcry on poor quality of education and deaf children being abused at school number 29 [Mongolia's only school for deaf students]. Mongol TV newsroom has been following the story since students protested for better quality education. We wanted to hear from the deaf community." The TV panel discussion featured six guests who all have personal experience with hearing loss and deaf education. This included one other LEAD Mongolia Fellow, Nemekhbayar Batnasan who is a deaf advocate and works for the Deaf Information Center in Ulaanbaatar. Lkhagva says he's committed to covering human rights issues and he will "cover disability issues until things get better."



Ariunsanaa Batsaikhan

Ariunsanaa Batsaikhan is leading the LEAD Mongolia “Poverty Alleviation & Unemployment” (PAU) team with 10 other LEAD Fellows committed to addressing poverty and unemployment among Mongolia’s youth who are increasingly frustrated by their lack of economic prospects. As part of the project implementation phase of the LEAD experience, Ariunsanaa and team are creating a short documentary *Journey to Job* to showcase how many young people, because of stigma and social barriers, face exclusion from the workplace. “*Journey to Job* will show the lives of three people from difficult backgrounds and tell what it takes for them to get a job,” explains Ariunsanaa. The documentary will tell the story of a single mother of children with disabilities, a graduate of School 29 (Mongolia’s one and only school for the deaf), and an internal migrant who recently arrived in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia’s capitol city. “Our society has so much stigma against these groups. They can’t find jobs and Mongolia’s employers are losing important talent. We hope *Journey to Job* will inspire other young people from marginalized groups and show employers why inclusive hiring is so important.” Ariunsanaa also says she was inspired by the social inclusion training she received as part of LEAD which inspired her to think and to act differently in order to ensure the voices of all groups are included in a meaningful and empowering way.



Bahati Kanyanmanza

Bahati fled the Democratic Republic of Congo and became a refugee in Uganda in 1999. In the refugee camp he watched young people turn to prostitution and drug abuse because they did not have access to education. At the young age of 22, while still in high school, Bahati decided to establish the COBURWAS International Youth Organization to Transform Africa. CIYOTA is a community owned nonprofit that provides education, especially on peacebuilding, for refugee children. Bahati is now living in the United States, studying as a SIT Global Scholar and advocating for the issues that made him a refugee and the challenges refugees face. He hopes to use what he is learning to grow his organization throughout Africa to help other refugees and to continue to help people struggling with poverty.



Judithe Registre

Judithe Registre is the founder of [Inclusivus](#) which focusses on individuals, innovators, advocates, activists, and agents of social change across sectors and industries who are working to transform their communities and the world at large. In

each episode of [The Get InPowered Podcast](#), host Judithe Registre speaks with InPowered women and men whose stories and work are inspiring change and action and making a transformative impact in their communities. These are people who, through their own personal experiences and a gender equity lens, are working to create more inclusive and progressive communities in the U.S. and around the world. Judithe also serves as the Program Director for the “Because I Am A Girl” Campaign at Plan International USA. The campaign creates sustainable projects in developing countries to give girls access to the most basic of human rights: clean water, food, healthcare, education, financial security, and protection from violence and exploitation.



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