

**Every Child Can Learn Podcast**  
**Episode 25: Moureen on an inclusive workplace**

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**Glades:** Welcome to our 25th episode of every child can learn. My name is Glades Lanyero. Today, we are very happy to meet our new guest who is going to tell us her names, the place where she works, her position, and any other thing that she thinks listeners would want to know about her. Thank you.

**Moureen:** Thank you so much Glades, am called Atim Moureen. I work with Kijani Forestry company. I'm the human resource officer, me personally as Atim Moureen, I love so many things. In line with human resource, it cuts across even other activities. I love to socialize with people. I love to work with the community. I'm currently working with community. And what we do is tree planting, which we are trying to do and it is to combat deforestation in our community. So I love to socialize with the community, am down to earth, I'm a very social person. I love to play with kids. Actually, I love so many things to do. I love activities like sports, I can play football, I love to read. So partly that is what I love so much to do. Thank you.

**Glades:** Thank you so much Moureen, you do a lot of things. Today, we want to discuss more about inclusion. And it's amazing that we are meeting a human resource person. And this is very, very important that we also need to know whether inclusion is being practiced in your company or in your organization. I just want to know something Have you ever heard about inclusion? If yes, what do you understand by that? And maybe what do you understand by inclusive working space? And how does it look like to you?

**Moureen:** Thank you Glades. Yeah, I've heard about inclusion. And me working at Kijani Forestry, it is really happening. According to me, the way I understand inclusion is creating a sense of belonging amongst people, whereby you have to provide for them an equal access to opportunities, like the resources that they're supposed to use, you know, you give them the tools and then you support them in what they need to use. So, that is how I understand inclusion. And then inclusion, it is like to involve everyone within the organization, we have to involve the people irrespective of their races, irrespective of the sexes, irrespective of

culture, religion, where they come from me working at Kijani we have a population of so many people of diverse society. I work with people from Western Uganda, people from northern, North Eastern, even we have international staffs, northern part like we have a diverse working environment. So in line with inclusion inclusive workplace is about culture, understanding each and everybody's culture within the organization, about creating a workspace where everyone is treated with respect, value and then contributing for them in what they need. For instance, in line with dignity and equality. So this we align it with the organization mission and vision of the company.

**Glades:** Thank you so much for explaining that so clearly. And I also believe amidst, your inclusiveness at working spaces, you have also got people with different disabilities or people with challenges when it comes to their workspaces. And I also know for sure that these are people that you will not lift them out, because we are talking about inclusivity, or inclusive working space. So I want to find out something about what you do at Kijani Forestry, what specific disabilities and difficulties do you see at workplaces? That is, if you've been able to see.

**Moureen:** We've encountered a number of disabilities and difficulties that I've seen, amongst the staffs that we work with one of the biggest difficulty that I've seen, we have a learning disability for most of the staffs that I work with, what do I mean here that there is a learning disability, they always tend to forget, they always tend to forget what something let's say, if we have a meeting, and then we have come up with something we have planned something, they always tend to forget about it. I have ADHD, people with that difficulty ADHD is like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. These people behave in, they have trouble in paying attention. For instance, if we have meetings, for them, they don't take long in the meeting, we have a meeting of 30 minutes someone wants to stay for only 10 minutes and they move out, they frequently get distracted, if an issue has come up, they all want to be involved in that issue. You know, it is hard for them to say what they feel, for example, if someone is going through maybe a challenge, it is hard for them to come and disclose it out. Then I have those ones like who have intellectual disability, it is very hard for them to memorize things that has been said. Still in line with meetings, we can have meetings, these are people who have challenges maybe like in writing down the outcome of what has transpired in the meeting. And then they believe like they will grab that thing. But at the end of it all, they tend to have challenges in that, I have these kind of people who are always anxious, they get anxious, I don't know where I can associate them, it is always very hard for them to to associate with others, they always want to be isolated and yet we work as teams, then we have those ones who are visually impaired, they we have those kinds of people, it is always very hard because the nature of our work, we have the stuffs that are always on computers and but you're seeing someone is tearing up. So we are having difficulties of those kinds of people. I think we have others as well. But as time goes by, we shall get to understand them.

**Glades:** And just like you said, as time goes on some of these disabilities, it's very hard to identify them, let's say in a week's time or in two weeks, it's quite challenging, but you need to be keen enough to be able to tell that this person is struggling in this particular disability. And, and something that I also want to know how were you able to identify all the disabilities that you have explained to us? What did you use, how we're just trying to see?

**Moureen:** How I was able to identify that we look at how they were behaving. Their behaviors could tell that all because if you see someone who always doesn't pay attention, someone who is frequently distracted, someone who gets this, I mean, who makes careless mistakes, you just see the behavior of that person. To me, I always engage them, I have time with them, and the engagement that I have with them, I can be in position to tell and if I've seen that this one is always distracted. What can I do to help this person? If I see that doesn't pay attention? What can I do to help this person? So it is just look at someone's behavior how he or she behaves? It will help you To identify that this person has this issue, sometimes we give them assignments, they take long to respond towards that assignment, you also be in position to know that, okay, this person has maybe a difficulty in this. So that's how I've been in position to identify them through their behaviors within the organization.

**Glades:** You have been mentioning something to do with you identifying them, and then trying to find out, it's driving me to the next question that I want to also ask you, how have you been able to help them? Now that you know that Gladys responds to emails slowly, Gladys does not come early, even after being told to come at eight they still come late, what have you been able to do to help them? And also, if you are able to attend any training that backup organized, how were you able to help them after the training that backup offered you?

**Moureen:** I'm so glad with the way Backup trained me. We had the training some few months ago. And the training helped me a lot. Through the training, I was in position to know, because the training that we had, from Backup enabled me to be in position to identify that, okay, the staffs are going through a lot of difficulty. So that training opened up my mind to be in position to identify, though initially, I could, but not so much just like before Backup trained me. So when Backup trained me, I was in position to identify that, okay, indeed, through the training that I had on ADHD on autism, I was in position to know that, okay, I also have really staffs who are like this. So the training was, helped me a lot. And then I had to give feedback to my staffs in line with the training. So how were they helped, I created a conducive environment, which caters for all of them. For example, if I have a staff who has, whom I know that has issues in, in making reports, I make sure that I always follow him up, or follow her up, how do I follow them up, I keep on giving them a reminder, I give them a reminder, or they have a timer that we set for them. And they always know, okay, I have a timer like this, that pops in on my email, or that pops in on my phone, then still in line with that I accommodated them. For example, like those ones who are who have issues with visual impairments, I requested the office to get for them maybe the glasses so that they can be in

position. If they're working on their screens, they can be in position to work without any difficulty. Then those ones who have issues like with communication, let's say verbal communication, I've given them a platform where they can just write emails, some people are not good at communicating verbally, but they can just do a written email, and then they send you, then we've also created a flexible schedules for them. You know, where, since Backup trained us, they tell us okay, at one point, you can have a therapy, where you're seeing you have difficulties. So these schedules that we have created for them, once in a while, we can get a therapist who helps them, we give them time, they can move out and they go, maybe someone is going through an issue and say, Okay, let me leave and go, am going to come back. So we don't deny them access to go have that flexibility of meeting up with the responsible persons, then we also pay them visits as well. That is one of the ways we have helped them. We pay them visit to check on them on how they're doing so that they can feel like they're really accommodated within the organizations and they're not left out. So that is partly how we've tried to help them including more let's say for for example when it comes to having meetings, we have meetings like these people who take long to like paying attention, it is hard for them to pay attention so much. We always make an interactive meeting session that can really accommodate them so that they don't feel bored. Sometimes it is maybe the meeting boring them but if you have a small skit in the meeting, a small maybe a small an icebreaker, so they'll feel like okay we are really being accommodated here. Then for those who tend to write their reports late, we give them that frequent emailing them that, please submit your report. So through that, it has really made them to feel accommodated.

**Glades:** And I just wanted to add a little bit on what you have explained that even to the listeners who are out there. Most of the time, you've heard our podcast recordings, talking about children with disabilities, talking about parents who are struggling with their children that have got disabilities. But we've also thought of looking at our different workspaces. Different organizations will realize that inclusion, just like we say, has to be everywhere, not only in schools, not only in our homes, but also in our workspaces. And that is why today, we are hearing from one of our guest who happen to be a human resource manager. And from her experience, I believe the listeners out there are going to pick something. Now this is to our listeners, be it you're working in different organization, be it you're working in the ministry, we have to be inclusive in all our workspaces. And just like she said, you will have someone who will not respond to your emails, someone who will write reports, and take long to hand in her reports or his report. What do you do to such people? What do you do to such a person? Do you say I'm going to terminate your contract or you help them and just from what Moureen has just shared, that reminding them every time is something that is good. And another thing that I want to say about that is try to contact them try to get information from them? How best? Can I help you? Is it okay If I frequent giving you reminders? There are people who get mad when you keep reminding them every time. So it is also very, very helpful, If you get to know from them, how best can I help you? Is it okay? If they set a

notification, something that notifies you in your email every time that might work better for them. In cases where they are doing their work and notification, let's say you've set it at 10 pops up that please check your work, please hand in your report, that is something that could also be very helpful to people at workspaces and other things that she has explained. Now I also want to find out from our guess what have you done to make a working space inclusive for everyone? Thank you.

**Moureen:** Thank you, Glades. One of the things that I've done to make the workspace inclusive for everyone. Have involved everyone still, have involved the management team, the directors and all the employees. Through involving them, we've given them refresher training, for example, on policies and procedures in line with human resource, you give them reminders. On that time, they're supposed to report to work maybe we have these ones who come to work late. I give them reminders on their benefits as staff on the salary scale, something like that. So we always give refresher training and the refresher training should even go to the directors because managers and directors are like the top head. So if they also get to know that okay, this person is being inclusive in the organization. Sometimes they tend to be like they're very busy people with busy schedules. But if you keep on giving them this kind of refresher in line with that, okay, they get to know that okay, everyone is being included making workspace adjustments. What do I mean here making workspace adjustment. We as Kijani, we are a field team best. And we have this kind of mindset where they say this is a work of a lady, this is a work of a man. But as Kijani, we don't say that. So we have included everyone. The workspace we have is for everyone, whether it is riding a motorbike to go to the field, right? And something that a woman can do a man can do as well vice versa. So we've adjusted the workspace we have not segregated, I can shift today go and do the admin work, the admin can come do part of my work. Like we've adjusted into the workspace. And then we've created anonymous comment box. Because we have a scenario whereby people tend sometimes not to openly say out any issue that they have. But through the anonymous box, someone can just jot in an information that he or she wants you to get to know or an anonymous feedback that they can give. And they don't disclose themselves out. So we have created that to give them room to know that they are also being included, much as they don't want to openly come up with but they have that. Then we have also catered for all the staffs, irrespective of the kind of the staff that we have, including our visitors that come to office. For example, if we have a visitor who is lame, our office has a space where the ramps are, they can move and they can access Office, then we have created a space whereby mothers, let's say the lactant mothers who have given birth in case they want to go feed their young ones, let's say after their time, let's say the working and the lactant mothers, they can have access to a space where they would have catered for them to feed the young ones. So we've created this to make sure that everyone is being involved, we are not leaving anyone out. In cases where by we have a staff who has a disability maybe is lame, we can not say oh this one cannot ride, it does not stop that person from riding, the person is in position to ride.



So let's make sure that we include all of them, we give them room to express themselves out, irrespective of how they are because they are capable, they can even do it better than someone who is physically fit. So that is what we've done. So we've created room for them as well.

**Glades:** Thank you so much, Moureen. And thanks for that good work you are doing at Kijani, making sure that everyone is included, irrespective of their races, irrespective of their disabilities. And also to add on a little bit on what Moureen said, let's make sure that in our different organizations, let's cater for people with disabilities. Let's make ramps in those pathways. Let's make sure that there are landmarks, for example, because there are employees who might be able to want to work, but they use wheelchairs, there are those who might be using white cane. So let's involve them, let's consider them. Moureen just said there are those that we think might not be able to ride motorbikes. But there are a lot of those that have disabilities, especially physical impairment, that are able to ride motorbikes. And this is something that we should also include in our different organizations, let's make ramps in our pathways, especially when you're entering offices, let's make ramps that everyone can be able to access. There are also times where we think we have better legs to walk well. But when in the actual sense, we are struggling with certain issues that are affecting us, so meaning the Ramps would cater for all of us. Thank you so much for sharing that. What I also want to find out from you is what do you think needs to be done to make our working space more inclusive? Now this is a general kind of feedback that I want you to share to the listeners out there. What do you think needs to be done? On top of what you just mentioned that Kijani forestry does have,

**Moureen:** One of the things that needs to be done is let us be open to feedback, that is the main thing that needs to be done. We need to be open to feedback. Let's create an environment where someone can be in position to get feedback from you. You don't have to deny that person the feedback that they have to give you. So let's be open to feedback. Through feedback. You can be in position to know where the issue is. Sometimes if you don't give room to employees to give you feedback. How are you going to work feedback is very important. So let's be open to that. Let us create a safe workspace a very safe workplace earlier on Glades was saying ramps should be involved in place where everyone is catered for even the Disable, with people through that safe workplace, everyone knows that, okay, I love to work here. I'm being catered for I'm not being segregated. Let us use inclusive languages, for example, language that focus to all the teams. As at Kijani, we have different people who speak different languages, but at least we have that one official one where everyone speaks it. So that is the one that we should use, let's use inclusive language. So that someone cannot think like, maybe the backbiting at me, you know, when you speak that inclusive language, everyone gets to understand and know that, indeed, this is what is being meant. But if we don't use that, someone might think otherwise. So when we use that it will help. Let's communicate for frequently, that is one of the things that I think should be done. Communication is very important in every workplace. Sometimes, if you don't communicate,

you won't be in position to know what is happening. So let's communicate, you get to understand one on one with your team, one on one with someone, you know, in every workplace, there's always a way someone can be in position to identify that this person is going through a difficulty. If you're used to a staff who comes very happy, very okay and then the next thing is very quiet. You ask yourself what is happening, you don't keep quiet to wait for them, you need to communicate and find out, give them room one on one, and then you talk to them, so that they can openly tell you what is happening. Another thing that I think is let's involve the management team and the directors that is let them be a part of the inclusion. So that in case we have an issue, they can also be in position to respond. Where, let's say if me personally, I have a challenge. And I want maybe the director to solve it, the director should be open to me to come and accept me the way have come to him or her so that she doesn't deny me. So once the directors get involved in this, they can also be in position to know how to handle the rest of the teams as well.

**Glades:** When you were talking of involving administrators, or involving directors, I was already smiling, some of these things are very, very important if the big people in the organization are involved, because let's say if you are already thinking of constructing ramps, they need to know the importance. And then also something that I would advise is that even to all the different organizations is that it is also very key that if there are trainings about inclusivity, at workspaces, it's also very important that these people in big positions are involved. Because sometimes we talk about things. And if they have not had experiences in them, it is hard for someone to accept. So I am very happy that it's one of the things that you are informing people out there to do especially in a different companies and organizations. Just to add on what you've shared. What advice can you give the different workspaces or to the different organizations, different companies that are out there in terms of having an inclusive working space, what can you tell them to do? Or what advice do you have for them? Thank you.

**Moureen:** One of the advices that I could give is let's let us create a multinational team, a multinational team or even international, whereby you get to have different kinds of nationals within the organization. And then at the end of it all, you speak like one language, and the team can be in position to work productively through that, we shall not have issues where people will be having their own separate discussion, because we know that this is a whole one big team and this is the whole one nation that we are in and through that they will have that one culture that we know that this is the official language that we use, this is how we do our things. We shall follow that because at the end of it all, we are moving towards a common goal. So as a team, we work together And then we achieve that goal. So if we create that kind of a multinational team, we can be in position to achieve a common goal. We can also create a friendly working environment, it should cater for all those that are in need. This still gets me back to the ramps, to the Brailles and so forth. So if we create that, it means that we are not left out. Even if a staff comes in, even if a new person comes in says, Okay, I can be in

position to apply. For example, we receive visitors who come, some of them work like our farmers, yeah, they are lame. But sometimes they can tell us that, okay, can I also apply because they have that kind of qualification, then we give them room to apply. So they're not being left out as well, because they know, okay, this organization will really suit me, depending on how I am or how I look like, then we have to communicate to teams all the time, we'll have to create an inclusive workspace policy, where we know this is what we do, let the team feel comfortable. Let them have a representative like us who are field based, we have representatives in the field that always come for catch ups in office, let them feel like they have someone who stands in for them even if they are not around, a representative can come and give us feedback on what is happening in the field. So let us be in position to take the feedback, because it is going to help us at the end of it also, when we communicate to the teams, they can be in position to give us honest response, they can be open to what we are saying. And it can help us at the end of it all. Then we need to personalize one on one discussion. We need to figure out the employees top priorities, we get to know what are their priorities, one on one, every staff that comes in, we need to first onboard them. So through getting to know your employees, it is also going to help you to identify their need, within that one on one discussion. You can have their conversation with them. You can also inform the managers to have that one on one open discussion with them. Let the managers be in position to adapt the tell me anything attitude, so that they feel like okay, I'm being welcomed. I'm so happy about the directors that we have. They are open to any team that we have on board. So they've created a space where they give room for any staff. Not like I'm following the channels yes, You can follow the channels of communication, yes, but there are things that you want to discuss with your director one on one. So they're open, they're open to anything to be discussed, whether it is a personal issue from home, even if it is not work related, they are open to listen to you. So they have created for us that kind of one on one discussion. And it has made the team so happy, because they feel like okay, I'm being accommodated here. I just love to work with this organization, because my director can also talk to me. And that is one of the things that has made the team so happy. And they love their work when a director speaks to you. Sometimes it adds in the zeal to really work so hard. Because other organizations, they can even take like a full year without seeing their directors. But at least for us on a daily basis, we are seeing them at least on a daily basis, a staff is talking to one of them and that is something that is so encouraging and it has really helped them. So that is one of the advices that I can give to the team that is out there to the organization. If they can apply that it would also really help within the organization. Thank you.

**Glades:** Thank you very much Moureen for sharing that and for giving your advice to the different people out there. And I believe if you have been listening to all this, there's there's a lot that you've got to do in your different organizations in your different companies. Just to add on a little bit on what Moureen said is that let's love our employees. That is one thing. Let's love them the fact that you have employed them, let's show them love let's treat them



like human beings. There are organizations where you don't see your bosses just like Moureen said, your directors are like gold you don't for you to enter their offices. You should have passed from I don't know how many offices there is that bureaucracy it's okay to have that bureaucracy that you follow this person you go to this person, but for someone with a disability or to any other person, it's a little bit tiresome or it's hectic. So let's let's be open enough to our employees. Let's work together. Let's make sure that in everything that we do, we are inclusive. She talked of workspaces. Let's make sure that we involve everyone regardless of what they're struggling in. Thank you so much, Moureen. As backup Uganda we always say every learner counts or every individual counts. Thank you

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