

PROFESSIONAL RESUME

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Seasoned governance and human rights leader with over 30 years' experience across constitutional institutions, civil society, social enterprise, and international advocacy spaces. Widely respected for principled leadership in advancing gender equality, disability rights, inclusive economic participation, and public accountability. Demonstrated expertise in oversight, governance, policy development, and multi-stakeholder engagement at national, regional, and global levels, with a strong intersectional focus on the rights and leadership of women with disabilities.

Founder of the Deaf Empowerment Firm, a pioneering social enterprise advancing economic inclusion for Deaf persons in South Africa, and Executive Director of the Deaf Empowerment Foundation (NPC). Serves as Chairperson of the National Council of and for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) and Chairperson of Sign Language Education and Development (SLED). Additionally, serves on the Presidential Working Group on Disability, served as Civil Society Lead for the D20 (Disability 20) process under South Africa's G20 Presidency, and serves on the Board of the Disability Rights Fund (Chair of the Governance Committee and member of the Grants Making Committee). Actively contributes to Pan-African leadership initiatives for women with disabilities through AHADI, reflecting a commitment to collective leadership, dignity, and systemic change beyond national borders. Brings strong constitutional literacy, independence of mind, and lived experience of intersectional discrimination to the work of a Chapter 9 institution.

CORE AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Constitutional Governance & Public Accountability
- Gender Equality & Intersectional Human Rights
- Oversight, Monitoring & Evaluation of Rights Implementation
- Board Leadership & Fiduciary Governance
- Policy Analysis & Advisory (CRPD, WPRPD, SDGs, Agenda 2063)
- Disability Inclusion & Social Justice
- Stakeholder Engagement (Government, Executive, Civil Society, Global Bodies)
- Institutional Strategy & Organisational Stewardship

STATUTORY, GOVERNANCE & ADVISORY ROLES

Chairperson – Executive Committee

National Council of and for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) | South Africa | 2022 – Present

- Provides strategic and governance leadership to a leading disability rights organisation within South Africa’s disability rights movement.
- Oversees fiduciary governance, organisational strategy, and national advocacy priorities.
- Provided strategic and facilitative leadership to South Africa’s disability rights movement by enabling sector-wide coordination in support of the Disability 20 (D20) process under South Africa’s G20 Presidency, fostering collaboration among Disabled Persons’ Organisations and allied stakeholders and strengthening unified sector engagement.
- Supported the establishment of strategic partnerships that facilitated alignment between civil society and government processes, contributing to a cohesive and representative disability sector position.
- Played a facilitative leadership role in sustaining collective engagement from the inception of the South African D20 process through to the formal handover of the disability declaration to international counterparts in preparation for the 2026 cycle.
- Advanced consensus-building within the disability sector, contributing to the articulation of a shared voice and strengthened policy coherence at national and global levels.

Member

Presidential Working Group on Disability (PWGD) | The Presidency – South Africa | 2015 – Present

- Advises the President of the Republic of South Africa on disability inclusion, policy coherence, and the implementation of constitutional and international obligations relating to the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Contributes to national policy dialogue on equality, access to services, employment, and social protection.
- Provides strategic advice to government on disability inclusion, policy coherence, and implementation of constitutional and international obligations.
- Contributes to interdepartmental coordination and national planning through participation in the National Disability Rights Machinery (NDRM).
- Played a strategic role in supporting government-led interventions to advance disability inclusion across key sectors, including the Disability Economic Empowerment Indaba, Inclusive Education Indaba, and Inclusive Transport Indaba.
- Engaged in sectoral oversight and policy input through structures such as the ICT Subcommittee of the Department of Transport.
- Worked closely with the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities to support strategic planning, monitoring, and coordination of the national disability rights agenda, with a strong emphasis on intersectionality, accountability, and implementation.

Board Member & Chairperson – Governance Committee
Disability Rights Fund (DRF/DRAF) | Global | 2021 – Present

- Provides strategic governance oversight to a global human rights fund supporting disability movements across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe, ensuring alignment with international human rights standards and donor accountability.
- Chairs the Governance Committee, overseeing board effectiveness, fiduciary responsibilities, ethical leadership, and compliance with governance best practice.
- Serves on the Grant-Making Committee, contributing to funding decisions that strengthen disability-led organisations and advance intersectional human rights outcomes.
- Supports institutional integrity, risk management, and organisational sustainability within a complex international funding and accountability environment.

Chairperson

Sign Language Education and Development (SLED) | South Africa | 2022 – Present

- Provides governance and strategic leadership to a specialist organisation advancing South African Sign Language (SASL) education, capacity development, and institutional recognition.
- Oversees organisational strategy, governance compliance, and board accountability, with a focus on strengthening access to quality sign language education and linguistic rights.
- Supports initiatives that promote inclusion, dignity, and equal participation of Deaf persons within education and public life.

Member & Pan-African Women’s Leadership Fellow

AHADI - Pan-African Women with Disabilities Leadership Initiative | Africa | 2025 – Present

- Contributes to a pan-African leadership initiative advancing the political, economic, and social leadership of women with disabilities across the continent.
- Participated in regional convenings, including the Pan-African seminar in Dakar, Senegal, focused on strengthening collective leadership, policy influence, and strategic positioning of women with disabilities within national, regional, and global decision-making spaces.
- Engages in movement-building and leadership consolidation aimed at amplifying the voice, visibility, and systemic influence of African women with disabilities, with a strong emphasis on dignity, justice, and lived experience–led leadership.
- Supports AHADI’s vision to strengthen sustainable leadership ecosystems for women with disabilities, enabling pathways into policy engagement, governance, and institutional power.

Member

World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) | Global | 2015 – Present

- Participates in global advocacy and policy engagement advancing the human rights of Deaf persons in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).
- Contributes to international dialogue on sign language rights, inclusion, and equality, informed by regional and national experience within the Global South.
- Engages with global Deaf leadership networks to strengthen cross-border solidarity and knowledge exchange.

Former Board Member

CBM South Africa | Global | 2013 – 2019

- Served on the Board of a leading international development organisation focused on disability inclusion and rights-based programming.
- Contributed to governance oversight, strategic direction, and accountability for inclusive development initiatives in South Africa.
- Supported alignment of organisational programmes with human rights frameworks and inclusive development principles.

EXECUTIVE & INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Founder & Chief Executive Officer

Deaf Empowerment Firm (DEF) | Johannesburg | 2016 – Present

- Founded and leads a nationally recognised social enterprise advancing economic participation of Deaf persons.
- Designed and oversees implementation of inclusive employment, skills development, and workplace exposure programmes, impacting over 550 Deaf youth.
- Provides strategic leadership, governance oversight, and institutional stewardship, including budgeting, compliance, and risk management.
- Built multi-sector partnerships with government departments, corporates, SETAs, and international donors.
- Leads development of innovative models linking inclusion, employment equity, and inclusive digital economies.

Founder and Executive Director

Deaf Empowerment Foundation (NPC) | Johannesburg | 2023 – Present

- Provides strategic and executive leadership to a registered non-profit organisation focused on preparing Deaf persons for economic and civic participation.
- Oversees organisational governance, programme strategy, and compliance with statutory and donor requirements.
- Leads engagement with funders, strategic partners, and public institutions to advance inclusive development outcomes.

- Ensures alignment between programme delivery, policy advocacy, and the Foundation's social justice mandate.

Programme Manager – Work Placements

National Institute for the Deaf (NID) | Cape Town and Johannesburg | 2011 – 2015

- Designed and managed national workplace exposure and employment placement programmes for Deaf youth.
- Engaged employers and policy stakeholders to challenge discriminatory practices and promote inclusive hiring.

Community & Leadership Contributions

South Africa – Pretoria and Johannesburg | 2006 – 2011

- During a period of recovery from severe illness culminating in hearing loss, remained actively engaged in community and leadership initiatives, contributing to the work of the Vukuzakhe HIV/AIDS NGO and the Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute.
- Curated speeches and intellectual material for the Institute's digital archive, supporting knowledge preservation and leadership development.
- This period reflects resilience, sustained civic engagement, and continued commitment to social justice during a significant personal health transition.

Corporate Services Manager

National Community Radio Forum (NCRF) | Johannesburg | 2004 - 2005 (Contract)

- Managed corporate services functions including human resources, finance administration, and organisational systems for a national civil society network.
- Supported governance compliance and operational coordination across community radio stations, strengthening organisational efficiency and accountability.

Office Manager

National Heritage Council | Johannesburg | 2004 (Contract)

- Provided office and administrative management support within a statutory body responsible for heritage promotion and preservation.
- Supported internal coordination, records management, and organisational systems in line with public-sector governance requirements.

Senior Development Officer

Legal Resources Centre (LRC) | Johannesburg | 2002 - 2004

- Led development and resource mobilisation initiatives for a leading public-interest law organisation advancing constitutional and human rights litigation.
- Contributed to programme coordination and stakeholder engagement in support of access to justice and social justice objectives.

Joint Managing Director

Bambanani Communication Strategies & Event Management | Johannesburg | 2001 – 2004 (*Self-Employed- part time*)

- Co-led a communications and events management enterprise, providing strategic communication support, stakeholder engagement, and event coordination services to public and private sector clients.
- Oversaw business operations, client relations, and project delivery, building early entrepreneurial, leadership, and organisational management experience within a results-driven environment.

Office Manager

International Water Management Institute (IWMI – Africa) | Pretoria | 2001 - 2002

- Managed office administration and operational support for a regional research institute operating within an international development environment.
- Coordinated administrative systems, reporting processes, and stakeholder interfaces in support of programme delivery and institutional effectiveness.

Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) | Pretoria | 1998 – 2001

Acting Director: International Liaison & Fundraising (2000 – 2001)

- Managed donor relations and international cooperation for democracy-building initiatives.
- Supported electoral capacity-building and international observer missions across the SADC region.
- Co-developed frameworks for international electoral support and monitoring.

Assistant Director: Human Resources (1998 – 2000)

- Established the IEC's first permanent HR Department following its transition to a Chapter 9 institution.
- Oversaw institutionalisation of HR policies and absorption of staff into permanent structures.

Account Executive

Simeka Recruitment Agency | Johannesburg | 1997

- Managed recruitment accounts and client relationships, supporting talent sourcing and placement across corporate and industrial sectors.
- Worked closely with employers to understand workforce requirements, recruitment needs, and labour market expectations, providing exposure to private-sector HR and recruitment practices.

Human Resources Manager

United Fram Footwear Manufacturers | Johannesburg | 1995 – 1997

- Managed the full human resources function within a manufacturing environment, including recruitment, employee relations, and compliance with labour legislation.
- Gained intensive practical experience in industrial relations, successfully managing complex labour dynamics on the factory floor, including engagement with multiple trade unions, disciplinary processes, and dispute resolution, strengthening organisational stability and labour compliance.

EDUCATION

Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Disability Studies (in progress)

University of Cape Town | Expected completion: 2026

Postgraduate Diploma in Disability and Rehabilitation Studies (Cum Laude)

Stellenbosch University | 2022

Bachelor of Administration

University of KwaZulu-Natal (formerly University of Durban-Westville) | 1993

AWARDS & RECOGNITION (SELECTED)

- **I AM ME – Voice of Dignity Award** (2025) – Awarded in recognition of transformative leadership amplifying dignity, voice, and inclusion for persons with disabilities through advocacy, governance, and systems change.
- **Lifetime Achievement Award – Sustainability & Social Impact Summit** (2024) – Conferred in recognition of sustained leadership and long-term contribution to social impact, inclusive development, and the advancement of economic participation for marginalised communities, particularly Deaf persons.
- **Gauteng Premier’s Disability Excellence Award – Business Excellence Category** (2024) – Awarded by the Gauteng Provincial Government in recognition of excellence in disability-inclusive enterprise development, innovation, and impact-driven leadership.
- **Outstanding Woman in Business – BBQ Awards** (2020) – Recognised for entrepreneurial leadership and business innovation advancing inclusive economic participation and women’s leadership within the disability sector.
- **Gauteng Women of Excellence Awards – Community Heroine & Women with Disabilities Category** (2018) – Awarded in recognition of community leadership and advocacy advancing the rights, dignity, and socio-economic inclusion of women with disabilities.

PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTION

Business & Enterprise Coach
SAB Foundation | South Africa

- Served as a business and leadership coach to enterprises supported through the SAB Foundation's Social Innovation and Disability Empowerment awards programmes, applying entrepreneurial and organisational development expertise to post-award enterprise growth and sustainability.
- Contributed to the Foundation's structured post-award support model, which integrates coaching, business development assistance, and follow-on funding to strengthen the performance and impact of award-winning enterprises.
- Leveraged practical entrepreneurial experience to support inclusive enterprise development and economic empowerment, aligning coaching interventions with the SAB Foundation's mission to advance social justice and sustainable livelihoods.

LANGUAGES

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REFERENCES

Formal nomination letters are submitted as separate attachments in support of this application.