

AFRICA

WHAT GOES ON BEYOND THIS LAND?



Para Sport Against Stigma 2.0

Case Study: BeyondThisLand Harnessing Digital Media and Para Sport to Transform Perceptions

April 2025

Delivered by



Part of AT2030, funded by UK Aid and led by GDI Hub



Case Study: Beyond This Land

Harnessing Digital Media and Para Sport to Transform Perceptions of Disability and Assistive Technology

Introduction

- **The Problem:** Stigma around disability in Africa remains deeply entrenched, limiting societal inclusion, reducing visibility, and restricting access to assistive technologies.
- **The Opportunity:** Para sports, as a platform showcasing talent, strength, and motivation, can challenge traditional narratives of disability. Africa's growing digital landscape presents an opportunity to reshape perceptions and drive awareness of assistive technologies.



Watch: www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-XMqC9jduY

Read: www.sportanddev.org/latest/events/stigma-and-storytelling-can-commercial-be-political-para-and-disability-

About the Campaign: #BeyondThisLand

- **Goal:** To reimagine the narrative of disability sports in Africa, presenting para athletes as talented, motivated, and strong competitors while engaging audiences through relatable digital storytelling.
- **Key Insight:** Disability sports in Africa are often framed through charity-based narratives. By using digital platforms with a Pan-African storytelling approach, the campaign sought to normalize disability sports as mainstream entertainment and a source of cultural pride.
- **Execution Highlights:**
 - Partnered with influencers from diverse sectors (travel, entertainment, lifestyle) to reach new audiences.
 - Used culturally resonant visuals and poetry to craft compelling content.
 - Collaborated with the African Union and regional broadcasters for greater amplification.
 - Focused on creating relatable, empowering narratives while avoiding pity-based storytelling.



Key Learnings

1. **Shifting Narratives Shifts Perceptions**

The campaign demonstrated that framing para sports around **themes of strength, resilience, and competition**—rather than pity—can significantly influence public sentiment, achieving an 87.38% positive engagement score during post-campaign analysis.

2. **Localized Strategies Matter**

Effective engagement requires campaigns to resonate with regional audiences. Strategies must incorporate local languages, influencers, and culturally specific storytelling to break barriers.

3. **Bridging the Gap to Assistive Technology**

Increased visibility and positive framing of para sports can **normalize disability and reduce stigma**, creating a more supportive environment for assistive technology adoption.

4. **Structural Inequalities in Digital Campaigns**

- **Media Bias:** Overemphasis on medal-winning moments in global content banks excludes local qualifiers and regional stories, which are critical for African representation.
- **Collaboration Challenges:** Lack of a centralized storytelling ecosystem limits the consistency and visibility of disability sports content.
- **Digital Gaps:** Limited access to robust social media infrastructure among African stakeholders constrained reach.

From Stigma to Opportunity: Implications for Disability Rights and Assistive Technology

- **Raising Awareness:** Normalizing disability through relatable narratives can reduce stigma, driving greater openness to assistive technologies.
- **Increased Access:** Digital campaigns provide opportunities to educate audiences on the availability and benefits of assistive technology.
- **Collaborative Ecosystems:** Cross-sector partnerships—such as those between broadcasters, NGOs, and DPOs—are critical to creating systemic change.

Recommendations for Future Campaigns

1. Build Digital Capacity

Train disability organizations, para sports bodies, and broadcasters in digital storytelling and rights acquisition to overcome infrastructure gaps.

2. Expand Representation in Content

Advocate for increased African athlete representation in global media and machine-learning systems that curate video content.

3. Leverage Assistive Technology Messaging

Integrate assistive technology narratives into para sports campaigns to highlight solutions alongside representation.

4. Develop a Scalable Toolkit

A toolkit based on lessons from the #BeyondThisLand campaign can help disability rights organizations replicate successes across different African regions.

Conclusion

By strategically harnessing para sports and digital platforms, #BeyondThisLand offers a powerful example of how disability rights and assistive technology organizations can address stigma. As the conversation continues toward LA2028, initiatives like this can pave the way for sustained, impactful change across the continent.

Acknowledgments:

Sheila Cleo Mogalo
Oscar Ogero (Gufy)
Jennifer Wong

Collaborating organizations:

Sense Hub, SAFOD, Sport and Dev, AT Scale/Unlock the Everyday, and SSCN Africa,

Learn more about Para Sport Against Stigma:

Contact:

Jennifer Wong (Project Manager) Loughborough University j.wong@lboro.ac.uk

www.lborolondon.ac.uk/research-innovation/para-sport-against-stigma

Delivered by



Part of AT2030, funded by UK Aid and led by GDI Hub

