

THE NEED TO DEVELOP RESEARCH COUNTRY WORKING GROUPS FOR THE AFRICAN NETWORK FOR EVIDENCE TO ACTION IN DISABILITY (AfrINEAD)

Introduction

The African Network for Evidence-to-Action on Disability (AfrINEAD) was founded in 2009 to ensure that networking and research contribute to a better quality of life for people with disabilities in Africa. AfrINEAD is a flagship project of the Centre for Rehabilitation Studies at Stellenbosch University. AfrINEAD's aim is to facilitate evidence-to-action in the disability field so as to impact for real change in the quality of life of people with disabilities in Africa. There is a need to translate research into evidence-based advocacy, practice and policy – particularly in the pan-African context and systematically addressed in a coherent and consistent fashion. AfrINEAD intends to be part of this solution. AfrINEAD's mission is to be a dynamic disability sector network where there is free and open exchange of ideas and evidence to advance the realisation of equal rights for people with disabilities and to promote action for social inclusion and participation. The vision for AfrINEAD is that it will become a significant contributor to and facilitator around the needs of people with disabilities in Africa, by assisting in translating existing and new research in the disability arena into meaningful evidence-based advocacy, practice, products and policy (see appendix 1 for further elaboration about AfrINEAD concept).

As part of the process of facilitation and coordination and developing an enabling environment for others to do disability research in relevant areas AfrINEAD proposed the establishment of country working groups tasked with identifying action pathways and producing Best Evidence-to-Action Practice Guidelines. The network aimed to work with member countries to develop a methodology for profiling their own local situation regarding people with disabilities, the services available to them, the research being conducted and areas needing investigation, and to identify facilitators and barriers for turning disability evidence to action. It is hoped that countries will present their 'state of our nation' with regard to disability research during AfrINEAD symposia. A further meta-analysis will be done during symposia debates with further inputs in preparation for a special issue in the African Journal for Disability (AJOD) and also made available in the AfrINEAD webpage.