Disability and Social Breakthrough: The Cameroonian Context

Ras-I Mackinzech

Preliminary Remarks

For some time now, I have been endlessly pondering over this anecdote which I entitle *The Nuremberg Experience*. In order to attend the wonderful BIGSAS Diversity Lectures I flew in June 2015 from Cameroon to Germany via France. On the outward journey it became apparent that Paris Charles de Gaulle airport and Airport Nürnberg are more adapted to different accessibility needs than at Yaounde Nsimalen Airport, where I had to limp with my walking stick from the control space to the foot of the plane. At Paris airport while being wheeled to my connecting flight to Nuremberg I gave an impromptu concert. The accompanying hostesses, ground control staff and other travelers were kept spellbound, not in pity of my impairment, but being stunned by the power of my “enchanting mellow vocals” as a passenger remarked. With this mindset of self-assertiveness, I have never allowed my impairment to disable me because I have transformed it into a powerful asset. Can you imagine I was held back by the check-in staff to perform for 25 more minutes after they had processed the documents for my flight? That is why I agree with Helen Keller, a great woman with multiple impairments who says, “Man creates his environment – mental, emotional, and physical by the attitude he develops” (Maxwell 2001: 76).

After such positive flight experiences I was thus shocked on the return journey when I was asked by officials at the airport in Nuremberg to either abandon my walking stick or pay 100 Euros (65600 CFA Francs) for it to be sent to the baggage hold. I protested to no avail, pointedly asking: “Did I choose this condition? Am I paid a salary, for being physically impaired, that is intended to cover such costs?” I did not really mind their concerns for the general security during the flight including mine, but I was disturbed by being obliged to pay for my walking stick, as if I reaped benefits from my physical impairment. This act, deliberately or not, tried to make me feel disabled. If you were in my shoes, what would you have done? Would you have abandoned your walking aid or pay the 65600 CFA Francs; feel psychologically battered and humiliated; or take it serenely?
All the same, life, powered by the soul which is endowed with free will for meaningful choices towards a qualitative living, is the greatest gift of God to the human race. This makes it a sacrosanct, though to an extent a frail, commodity which commands and necessitates utmost attention, care, happiness and protection by each member of the human family. In fact, the sanctity of human life and how well it should be lived has always dominated, and still does, the greatest proportion of human thought and actions. It is from this perspective of the sacredness of life that the concept of disability or the state of being disabled can be best discussed.

For analytical clarity, it is necessary to define the key terms of our topic on disability and social breakthrough. To achieve this goal, we are not going to engage in philosophical debates on the meaning of the terms concerned, but simply build up working definitions for the purpose of our investigation. Firstly, what or who is a person? In other words, what does it mean to possess the quality of humanity? Secondly, what is disability? Who are Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)? Thirdly, what is social breakthrough?

Joseph Omoregbe quotes Severinus Boethius who defines person as “an individual substance of a rational nature” (1996: 36). For his part, Thomas Aquinas sees a person as a “rational subsistent”, that is, a being with the quality of a priori existence by virtue of its essence (Stumpf/Fieser 2008: 160, 166). Hence, person is a combination of both individuality (rooted in matter and avidity with a strong sense of self or ego), and personality or the substantial form – that is, interiority to self, intellect and freedom. It would be more relevant, within this context, to go beyond the rationalistic, and the Cartesian intellective knowledge or self-consciousness meaning of man, to take a dialogical view that the essence of a person is fully expressed in his/her relation to, or rapport with, others.¹

Within the African context, the human person is seen more from the dimension of the heart. It is in this light that Leopold S. Senghor (1967) once said “Emotion is Negro and Reason is Hellenic” (Azombo-Menda/Enobo Kosso 1978: 29). He did not mean, like Lévy-Bruhl in How Natives Think (1926) earlier propounded, that the African lacked rationality or was void of logical thought, but that the African reflected and acted more from a compassionate, intuitive and humanistic point of view. Julius Nyerere (1968) underscores that a person becomes a person through the

---

¹ Such an approach was taken by Pope John Paul II (Catholic Church 1995: 74, 75, 76).
community. This underlines the culture of the African personality wherein man is asserted through his/her communication and cooperation skills and etiquette which highlight the respect and humane treatment of the other in social communion (Tempels 1959).

Thus, being in a community is seen as the basis of social well-being in African sociopolitical thought and existence. This is what Nkrumah in his Consciencism refers to as “communalism” (1964), what Senghor calls “a community-based society” (1967) and what Nyerere denotes as “Ujama’a”, meaning “the extended family” (1968). Even before the articulations of the abovementioned political thinkers, Belgian born missionary Placide Tempels had explicitly argued that in Bantu thought the human being is defined in terms of the community, which he describes as the “vital force” (1959). As such, the world is interpreted as an interrelationship of forces within the entire realm of existence. This relationship posits the importance of the whole community in shaping and reshaping the life of the individual.

Similarly, South African philosopher Mogobe Ramose uses the notion of “Ubuntu”, which means “humanity” or “being human”, to explain the African conception of community. He puts it more clearly in his maxim “umuntu ngumuntu ngabuntu” which means “a person is a person through other persons” (1999). This does not only describe human beings as “being with others”, but it is also a prescription of how to relate to others; that is, how being with others should be. On his own account, John Mbiti adds more quintessence to this collective ontology by arguing that: “I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am” (1969: 209). In a nutshell therefore, a person is a substance made of body and spirit, and endowed with autonomy in being, self-consciousness, communality, communication and self-transcendence.

At the next level of clarification of relevant terms, we can lexically define disability as a condition, illness or injury which makes it difficult for someone to perform the activities that other people do. Cameroon’s Law No. 2010/002 of 13 April 2010 relating to the Protection and Welfare of Persons with Disabilities defines disability as “[t]he limitation of a person’s ability, due to a deficiency, to fully participate in an activity in a given environment” (Law No. 2010/002: 3).

Within the same context, a person with disabilities is:

Any person who is unable to fulfill by themselves all or part of the requirements of a normal person or social life as a result of a physical or mental disability, be it of birth or otherwise. (Law No. 2010/002: 3)
That is why social breakthrough within the framework of this paper can be defined as the collective removal or surpassing of obstacles for a goal driven stride towards the enhancement of individual and societal well-being at large.

From this perspective, our focus is to find out whether disability really does pose an impediment to the (socioeconomic and financial) enhancement of PWDs? Hence, to what extent can disability and the mindset it creates hinder the social inclusion and progress of people with disabilities?

Challenges to the socioeconomic breakthrough of PWDs

Disability is a social construct which affects the way people treat fellow humans; the way society treats the physically and mentally challenged. The images people have of PWDs are ones acquired in society through the use of language which gives messages that have a lot of expressive power. Such language usages which generally result from myths and misconceptions about disability are afferent arteries to incomplete information, mistaken perceptions and ignorance that build up to stereotypes like pitiable, baleful, retarded, physically disabled, cripple, handicapped, and incapable of fully participating in everyday life. I well remember that when I was six, about four years after a polio attack that left me disabled, one superstitious old man in our neighborhood regularly threatened to drown me in a river on the mystical grounds that I could be a vessel of the “evil spirit” that attacked me and would in turn attack his children who were paradoxically very fond of me and admired my intellectual prowess. So, throughout history, society has been constructed along the lines of such language usages, posing as condescending hegemonies and even discriminating, which have a negative bearing on the self-image of PWDs. This greatly affects the performance of not only the individuals in question, but the society at large. Such negative stereotypes reduce PWDs to a predetermined and permanently unalterable condition, parallel only to Parmenides’ concept of the “changelessness of Being” (Burnet: 1930, cited in Stumpf/Fieser 2008:16-17). To Parmenides, permanence is real, while change is illusory. What is is; what is not is not. Hence all the stereotypes ascribed to PWDs by society are considered permanent and unalterable. It suggests that PWDs cannot transcend their predicament; thereby adversely affecting their self-esteem which can make them appear worthless to themselves and society at large simply because they are caused to focus more on their shortcomings than on their strengths and aptitudes. The situ-
Disability and Social Breakthrough

Disability and Social Breakthrough is unfortunately worsened by the fact that these tags give PWDs an identity which is predetermined and closed, affecting not only the level of awareness of the intrinsic value of their personhood, but also the care and education that PWDs deserve. So, the ensuing myths and misconceptions about disability greatly influence the way people think about disability and how they consider PWDs.

One area of human life which guarantees hope and breakthrough is the legal protection of individual rights and freedoms. In this domain, the state of Cameroon has done some commendable efforts in setting up laws for the protection of PWDs. These efforts, however, are being watered down by the absence of a strong political will which results in delays in the implementation of policies promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. The situation is worsened by the fact that key provisions of the disability law specify that the conditions of their application “shall be fixed by regulation” or “shall be laid down by regulation” (Law 2010/002: 4, 8, 9, 10, 13, and 16). A so-called Enabling Act or implementing regulations are required, but no such regulation has yet been put in place. This intensifies the social stereotypes which implicitly tag these citizens not as persons with full rights, but as burdensome and meriting only a pitiable and pitiful treatment, rather than as people with inalienable rights and freedoms which must be respected. How then can one expect PWDs to progress in life?

Another aspect of social life which is fundamental to the development of every PWD and society at large is education and training, but PWDs in Cameroon benefit from this to a mixed extent. The worth of education is a pointer to the fact that the human person, whether literate or not, needs empowerment in knowledge, skills and attitudes/values summing up to competences that will not only permit him or her to be autonomous, but to know how to relate well to fellow humans. In fact, there is much substance to Aristotle’s assertion in his *Nicomachean Ethics* that: “Educating the mind without educating the Heart is no education at all” (cited in Ross 1925: 67). From this, it is clear that the most powerful and dynamic economic resource is the human resource because of its auto-propelling, creative and inventive endowments. It is in this light that the Cameroon government seeks to guarantee the education of PWDs and their offspring by granting them affordable access to education at primary and secondary school levels. Unfortunately, the process is quite cumbersome and discouraging due to the resources involved (time, physical energy, and financial expenditure). This aside, there are few genuine schools for learners with special needs, given that there are very few teacher-training institu-
tions for that purpose. Even those structures that manage to provide such services are too expensive, given the poverty level of this category of people and the society in general. As such, their right to education is confounded by a poorly developed inclusive education system which, in itself, is a product of the absence of a special status for PWDs.

That is how more than three decades ago before the advent of digital ICTs one of my visually impaired university classmates only managed to study by recording lectures on audio tapes. Considering the cost of the total number of tapes he would use per month, it is clear that without the monthly scholarship scheme initially granted to all university students at the time, he would have dropped out of school like many students today. The monthly scholarship scheme was abruptly stopped in 1992 without considering the plight of PWDs. Yet PWDs are evaluated and admitted into professional schools on the same criteria as nondisabled students when the playing ground is not level. If we agree with Francis Bacon that “knowledge is power” (1905), then it is doubtless that with the lack of proper attention, their needs and the psychologically battering stereotypes, PWDs would naturally feel abandoned, discriminated against and disempowered in a world that, to me, seems more of a jungle.

One would think the PWDs who overcame the impediments to effective training had now made it. A worse uphill task, however, awaits those who brave the obstacles with excellent results. The point, here, is access to employment. This is where real discrimination takes place since PWDs are considered more as liabilities than assets due to the strong influence of tradition and societal stereotypes. Seen as dependent and incapable of fully participating in everyday life, PWDs are often sidelined for fear of low output. So their chances of getting employed are highly jeopardized. The situation is worsened by the frail backup in terms of social security. If there was a special allowance for employed PWDs, it would reduce the psychological and financial burdens that their condition imposes on them. In fact, I would not have embarked on the rhetorical questions of The Nuremberg Experience. I would simply have paid for the transportation of my walking stick out of my so imagined special disability allowance. Tragically, there is no regular support scheme even for unemployed PWDs which incapacitates them financially and makes it difficult for them to survive socially and take proper medical care of their impairment, let alone have an acceptable matrimonial life. Even though section 19 (1) of Law No. 2010/002 of 13 April 2010 relating to the Protection and Welfare of Persons with Disabilities contains provisions for financial support of PWDs, it is limited in scope by the absence of implementing regulations
as already indicated above. How then can PWDs provide quality education for their offspring with such financial limitations coupled with inadaptable access to their places of work?

Hence another hitch on the way of PWDs towards social breakthrough is their access to public, study/academic and professional environments that are not adapted to their conditions of impairment. Public gardens, leisure spaces, school buildings, workplaces and ministerial buildings are rarely constructed in cognizance of the different types of impairments. While the physically challenged are confronted with staircases, the blind battle with the difficulty of crossing roads and the absence of brail write-ups to indicate services in public places and buildings. Such glaring societal discrimination against PWDs negatively influences even the way they perceive themselves and creates barriers to full citizenship and personal achievements. Meanwhile, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities of which Cameroon is a signatory emphasizes that: “products, environments, programs and services” should be designed to “be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible” (UNCRPWD 2008: 7). My own tedious experiences of moving around the university when I was a student, having to climb stairs with my walking stick to give lectures in the school I taught before my appointment in 2017 and even access to my new office of Regional Pedagogic Inspector of Philosophy in Cameroon’s capital city, Yaounde, show quite how far short Cameroon falls of this requirement. Most often, I was obliged to solicit the assistance of my students to push me on my tricycle across the uneven and either muddy or dusty campus depending on the season. On the hilly roads outside my present workplace, I ask for help from oncoming vehicles to tow me on my tricycle uphill.

Do these difficulties provide sufficient grounds to dash the hopes of the socioeconomic and financial breakthrough of PWDs? In other words, are these obstacles a closed door to our (PWD’s) destiny?
The right mindset (attitude) of PWDs for authentic breakthrough

A person’s identity as a PWD is not essentially predetermined, but progressive. This is evident in the following existentialist view: “Man is at the start a plan which is aware of itself”; hence, “man will be what he will have planned to be. Not what he will want to be” (Sartre 1957: 16). Sartre argues that there is no such thing as a specific essence that defines what it is to be human. He asserts that the individual produces his/her essence because man does not possess any predetermined and fixed essence. Hence, each PWD “will be what he will have planned to be. Not what he will want to be” (Sartre 1957: 16). On this account a PWD illustrates just part of the total being or essence of the person that he/she is. This means that a person is what he or she makes of himself or herself.

This attitude of an individual persevering and making progress despite all odds can be likened to the evolution of society as illustrated in Auguste Comte’s philosophy of social evolution, progressing from the “primitive stage to the positive stage” (Comte 1830;1842). Just as nothing is fixed permanently, so also must PWDs make considerable strides of mental and
physical evolution so as to meet the challenges of time. Hence as society grows in complexity, PWDs have to move with the times, as much as the society has the moral obligation to accommodate their needs accordingly.

The early Greek thinker, Heraclitus, recognized this around the 5th Century BC when he propounded that the only permanent thing is change. To explain that “All things are in flux”, he uses the analogy of a river, stating “you cannot step twice into the same river, for fresh waters are ever flowing on upon you” despite the presence of huge rocks along the riverbed (cited in Stumpf/Fieser 2008: 12). With the understanding that the human person is a continuous project in adversity, PWDs should work relentlessly to create an essence for their lives by perpetually fine-tuning their positive qualities in the face of all arduous hurdles. As Jean Paul Sartre puts it, “existence precedes essence” (Sartre 1957: 15). Inferring from these views, I think without any doubt that PWDs have the capacity to develop a sublime personality that is capable of impacting their lives and the lives of others. To achieve this, PWDs need the right attitude and commitment.

So, instead of sowing seeds of discord and rivalry as is the case with some associations of disabled persons in Cameroon, it is imperative for us to synergize our various skills and resources in a common platform (like a Cross-Disability Alliance) so that we can advocate for our rights and well-being with consistency. This will enable us to brainstorm, share information and network in a bid to market what our potentials can offer, be they mental or physical. Unnecessary contradictions will be minimized, and state institutions and civil society organizations will take us seriously. As the adage goes, “divided we fall, united we stand.” Analogically, a broomstick breaks with little effort, but a bundle of broomsticks is unbreakable.

Working in synergy or combining efforts results in greater empowerment and bearing on society. In such a context, which is unity in diversity, our differences will instead be harnessed into a powerful asset. In fact, the African conception of communalism which projects “togetherness”, “brotherhood”, and “the extended family” should be our driving force. To buttress this point, it is worth citing the example of the Baptist Mission that, in cooperation with CBM International, runs an inclusive education scheme in 18 secondary schools across the North West Region of Cameroon. In the same vein, the Cameroon Association for the Blind, better known by its French acronym ANAC, has set up an inclusive education scheme in four public schools in the South West Region in Bokwaongo, Muyuka, Fiango, and Mbalangi. Imagine if a few other specific disability associations joined a project like this – what a federation of ideas it would
be; what an impact it would have! Julius Nyerere makes clear that such collaboration is crucial through defining his “Ujama’a socialism” as “the belief that a community should be based on cooperation …the advancement of the whole is the foundation for each individual’s existence” (Nyerere 1968:18). Hence, the thrust towards progress and an improved quality of life must be as a team.

In another vein, and with such united forces, the challenges facing PWDs can be better surpassed through advocacy for a sincere public-private partnership like ANAC is currently doing in the South West Region of Cameroon. This will more expediently bring pressure to bear on the government for relevant legislation to be put in place. Secondly, the value of PWDs in the progress of society will be felt and recognized, permitting us to get the profits of our input into the national economy. Thirdly, the various derogative social constructs against PWDs in general will gradually die out, creating a more psychologically, emotionally, professionally and socially conducive environment for a better self-realizable, self-transcending, self-determining, and dignified life.

As we all know, freedom is not given, but taken. In the same light, education which is the source of the greatest power (knowledge) does not simply come our way; we grasp it. So, a strong advocacy for inclusive education, taking care of the specific needs of the various impairments within the same study space with the physically fit, should be the major concern of the whole confederation of PWDs. The advantage is that the PWDs will then not feel desolate, but will have the opportunity to interact, develop faster and easily integrate into society. Educational advocacy should be the greatest goal of PWDs (literate or illiterate) because education or knowledge is the greatest power without which even economic, political, military or any other power is impossible. It is knowledge that permits humanity to cajole nature and discover its secrets for the improvement of the human condition. It is nothing other than knowledge that dispels ignorance and prejudices or even social tags against PWDs. It is only when PWDs begin advocating from the platform of knowledge and wisdom that the collegiality of their voices will constitute a force to be reckoned with. They will not only be persuasive, but as convincing as the deductive thinker, such that their social insertion and breakthrough will come by necessity. This means that when associations of PWDs begin achieving inclusion through strategized, concerted efforts, the government and civil society will have no choice but to become partners.

Given that life is a continuous project, PWDs need a vision of epistemic empowerment which will serve as the dynamo of their aspirations for au-
Tonomy and job qualifications. This implies that PWDs, literate or illiterate, should do their best to develop personal skills and the ability to preempt any sort of discrimination. This is because they are generally pushed into a state of inferiority not only by the aforementioned societal tags, but equally by the lack of requisite talent, skills, self-confidence and hope for the future. But what are the aspirations of PWDs? Are they comfortable with their condition? If simply considered as the nature of things or unchangeable, such a psychological complex can lead to perpetual dependence and anguish. My fellows should know that it took an unknown Rosa Parks who refused to relinquish her seat in a bus to a white person for the civil rights movement to gain great impact throughout the United States. By this act, she turned inferiority into equity and provoked the rise of visionaries like Martin Luther King Jr. whose famous “I have a dream” vision brought a new turn to civil rights legislation in the US. In the same vein, my personal experience has taught me that one can possess all the right attitudes it takes to exist or execute a project, but when he or she is void of the capacity to conceive solutions, predict possible obstacles/difficulties and preempt the right actions, his or her passion for success will lack a sense of direction. That is why I can still hear Kwame Nkrumah echoing from his grave that “Practice without thought is blind; thought without practice is empty” (Nkumah1964: 78). So we need not necessarily be famous, but carry along with us a proactive winning mentality at all times. That is why I wish to call on us all, including you reading this chapter, to join the chorus with Abraham Lincoln as we say, “Always bear in mind that our own resolution to succeed is more important than any other one” (Maxwell2001, 8).

As concerns the society in all its ramifications, it is time to valorize every aspect of its potential and actual human resources, because disability is not merely a physical reality, but equally a social construct which generally ensues from impairments of any sort. Davis L. says:

An impairment is a physical fact, but a disability is a social construction…lack of mobility is an impairment, but an environment without ramps turns that impairment into a disability (cited in Harris 2006, 12).

The story of Pastor Nick Vujici of Australian birth is very inspiring. Born without arms and legs, he was sustained by true love and care of his parents to the point that he decided not to commit suicide when he saw just how much he was loved. Parental love equally prevented Nick from seeing his impairment as a disability. Today, he runs a nonprofit ministry, Life Without Limbs, and is inspirational to many, even the physically fit. He once declared that he has never had the opportunity to either embrace
his wife or carry his two children, but that he carries and embraces them with love. He equally professed that if he were given a second chance to be born into this world again, he would choose to be in the same physical condition. As such, society can benefit much from what it makes of people with impairment. U.S. citizens will confirm that the impairment of his two legs never limited President Franklin Roosevelt in taking the U.S. out of the worst economic crisis of its whole history and empowering the U.S. for its crucial role in ending World War II. This suggests that disability is not necessarily deterrent to the dreams and exploits of a person. In fact, the American electorate saw more of an asset than a liability in Roosevelt and offered him an unprecedented and never equaled four presidential terms. Let us also consider the therapeutic power of the artistic works of Stevie Wonder (United States of America), Talla Andre Marie, Angelina Tezano and the late and much lamented Kotto Bass (all from Cameroon), among others. These are visually and physically impaired musicians, whose exceptional skills in musical composition and rendition overpowered their impairments, thereby establishing themselves as role models over and above the usual attributes like derisory and pitiable. Therefore, the society, especially the state, should build strong institutions to guarantee the empowerment and protection of PWDs.

For instance, the state should ensure that all laws are promulgated simultaneously with implementing regulations or what is commonly known in Cameroonian parlance as “texts of application”. It follows that PWDs need love, care, solidarity, justice, equality and equity for them to demonstrate their power of productivity for personal and social progress or else the ensuing societal tags will produce negative boomerang effects on the very society which sources them. For as Immanuel Kant propounds, we need the goodwill to do what is right and recognize the humanity of the other. Doing what is right is also a rational and autonomous will (Kant/Wolff 1969: 16).

Now, permit me to conclude alongside offering my final take on The Nuremberg Experience. Definitely, I refused to be a psychological victim in the whole dilemma of choosing either to abandon my walking stick or to pay for it to be checked into the hold; to feel battered and humiliated or to take it with composure. I wish to first and foremost call the attention of my fellow PWDs to the fact that in life there are situations whose course we can change or influence and there are others which do not directly depend on our competence and power. But the paradox is that we are always obliged to make choices for meaningful solutions. That is why, to end the anecdote, I immediately called my wife back in Cameroon to place an or-
der for another walking stick worth less than two Euros (1000 CFA Francs). So, fellow PWDs, do not allow yourselves to be taken in by whatever societal stereotypes you are confronted with because even the Holy Bible in Proverbs 23:7 says that a person is a product of his/her thoughts: “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he”. Even the “superstitious old man” finally had no choice but to become a defender of PWDs because of my positive self-image. I was more interested in my future and the redressing of my impairment which I saw more in the proper education of my mind and heart than in minute distractions. In effect, his threats and tags drove me, alongside other PWDs of the little community of Bolifamba, to a crazy quest for academic excellence. This created a widespread view that PWDs are naturally intelligent. Thus, disability is not synonymous with inability. Instead our various impairments should serve as great steppingstones to our destinies, because PWDs are persons with special abilities not inabilities.

We must carry along a positive mindset of self-worth and perseverance; a mindset that contains only what we are as a project or “plan” (Sartre 1957: 16). Just listen to the emphasis of General George S. Patton as you read through his lines: “Attitudes determine actions. You are not what you think you are. What you think, you are” (Maxwell 2001: 65). This reminds me of a good friend, an engineer, who decided to commit suicide on the pretext that life was unbearable because for more than ten years he had been applying for jobs to no avail. Curiously, one day after the attempted suicide he received a phone call offering him employment in an international company that he had earlier contacted. The job offer included a service car, a residence paid for by the company and a salary of over one million CFA Francs (about 1524.49 Euros). On this account, I wish to call on all of my fellow PWDs to always look ahead with optimism and bear in mind that hope should never be lost.

My good friend’s remorse over the attempted suicide, his zeal to live again, and the asset he has suddenly become to his community makes it compelling for us to take to heart Roberta Flack’s words that “The situation you live in doesn’t have to live in you” (cited in Maxwell 2001: 83). We are not liabilities, but assets and persons with special abilities that require only to be ignited. Yet, no one else can start this process but us, given that introspection is internal and personal. So, as Albert Schweitzer says, “Man must cease attributing his problems to his environment and learn again to exercise his will” and determination to make more out of life (Maxwell 2001: 37). In this light, introspection serves as the gateway to self-examination which constitutes a powerful instrument for the trans-
formation of any form of impairment to an asset that can be of great value to humanity as a whole. Hence we must pay attention to what we carry in our minds because “You are where you are and what you are because of the dominating thoughts that occupy your mind” (Maxwell 2001: 82).

List of Abbreviations

PWD  persons with disabilities
CFA Francs  Franc de la Coopération Financière en Afrique

List of Figures

Fig. 1:  Ras-I Mackinzeph braving the hilly roads of Yaoundé. (Photo by Ghong Ndum née Kang Odette Ezia, 2017)

References


