



Innovate Now
Unlocking Human Potential



Case study





Founded by Fredrick Ouko, Riziki Source, is a social enterprise in Kenya with a mission to facilitate job accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Their services include providing disability mainstreaming training and raising awareness among companies and organizations. Additionally, they offer ongoing support to these entities in the recruitment process of hiring people with disabilities.



15%
1B

Background

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), about **15 percent of the global population, roughly 1 billion people, live with disabilities.** Unfortunately, there are common misconceptions that individuals with disabilities are incapable of being part of the workforce, leading to fear, prejudice, and myths that hinder their inclusion in workplaces worldwide. One of these myths is the belief that accommodating people with disabilities in the workplace is costly and impractical.

Fredrick Ouko, who has a physical disability due to polio, faced difficulties while searching for employment. As a young graduate, he encountered obstacles while delivering his resume to different offices, where misconceptions about individuals with disabilities often led to misconstrued assumptions. These negative perceptions contributed to difficulties in accessing certain places and even affected how potential

employers viewed his capabilities.

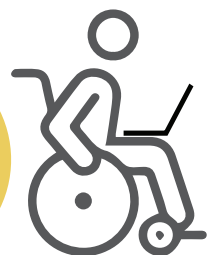
Driven by his personal challenges and a resolute desire to bring about change, Fredrick Ouko established 'Riziki Source' in 2015. The term 'Riziki Source' is derived from the Swahili word signifying "livelihood."

'Riziki Source' serves as an online platform (Web, app and USSD) with the objective of narrowing the divide in the employment sector by linking individuals with disabilities who are seeking jobs to prospective employers. The platform also allows employers to find suitable candidates, promoting inclusion and diversity in the workforce. Through this platform, Fredrick aimed to offer substantial employment prospects for disabled individuals in Kenya.

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Participation in the Innovate Now Program

Riziki Source' application for the Innovate Now Accelerator program, Cohort 3, aimed to secure support in validating and refining their value proposition to ensure business viability and attract strategic partners and investors. Riziki Source also sought assistance in structuring their fundraising strategy, building their team capacity and access to networking opportunities within the disability innovation community



Furthermore, the company also sought structured ways to connect with potential employers that could offer jobs to qualified individuals with disabilities.

In as much as the Innovate Now Programme is for founders, teams are also encouraged to attend the session. Fred started the journey together with his team. The organization benefited from the active curriculum that Innovate Now offered. The programme played a significant role for Riziki Source as it provided them a unique opportunity to engage directly with their target audience through Live Labs, where persons with disabilities were able to test the Web application which was the only platform that Riziki Source had. This hands-on experience allowed Riziki Source to gather valuable feedback from the very people they aimed to serve, individuals with disabilities seeking job opportunities.

The advice and insights gained from mentorship and Live Lab sessions played a critical role in shaping the company's value proposition and



Fundraising

Riziki Source emerged as the overall winner for Innovate Now Accelerator, Cohort 3 receiving media recognition and an award of \$ 10,000. The company with pitching confidence and right documentation obtained a \$30,000 grant from the Kenyan Department of Labor and the Ford Foundation, along with low-interest capital through a loan.

In 2017, Riziki Source made it to the finalist selection for the Africa Prize Award for Engineering Innovation. They presented their concept at the prestigious Pitch Palace event held in London, where they garnered favorable feedback and referrals for potential partnerships.

Over the course of time, Riziki Source's influence has garnered substantial acknowledgment, resulting in the organization being featured and highlighted in prominent outlets like Al Jazeera TV, The Guardian, and Standard Newspaper. Particularly noteworthy is the company's exceptional achievements, which culminated in their acknowledgment as the foremost mobile initiative dedicated to serving individuals with disabilities in the year 2022.

improving their range of products. A significant outcome of this user-focused research was the decision to integrate a mobile application to complement their services. Recognizing the increasing number of mobile users in Kenya and the convenience a mobile app could provide, Riziki Source embraced this enhancement as a way to further expand their reach and impact. The app offered enhanced features, user-friendly navigation, and real-time updates, making it easier for individuals with disabilities to explore job opportunities and for employers to connect with potential candidates seamlessly.

Furthermore, this undertaking led to a more profound understanding of the unique needs and challenges faced by both job seekers and employers. As a result, Riziki Source refined its distribution methods and introduced training programs aimed at enlightening businesses about the significance of inclusive employment practices.

How the solution works

Users of Riziki Source engage with the organization's services through various channels, including the website, a USSD code, and a downloadable mobile app from the Play Store. Through these platforms, job seekers can input their qualifications, skill set, location, and disability information. Riziki Source utilizes this data to match individuals with potential employers. If an employer shows interest in a particular candidate, they establish contact with Riziki Source to proceed with the hiring process, ensuring the specific talent they require is acquired. Riziki Source places emphasis on training employers who have demonstrated an interest in implementing essential accommodations, thereby ensuring their readiness for inclusive employment practices..

Additionally, Riziki Source includes syndicated job opportunities from various platforms in their internal database, as well as direct postings from employers with vacant positions. Consequently, all registered members within the database gain access to these job openings, allowing them to apply directly or seek assistance with the application process if needed.

Impact

Over time, Riziki Source has expanded its impact, establishing a database of 1,510 registered job seekers with disabilities.. The organization has successfully provided training to 115 employers and currently maintains a network of 40 dedicated employers. Riziki Source proactively connects with its users through various media platforms, including social media, and also receives job applications through referrals from both job seekers and employers. Notably, the company has conducted soft skills training for 2,000 job seekers facilitating internships and employment opportunities as part of its accomplishments. All these efforts are geared towards promoting inclusive hiring practices.

Key factors contributing to Riziki Source success



The Lived in experience: The company's achievements can be partially credited to the distinct perspective of its founder, Fredrick, who has a physical disability. His personal experiences have undoubtedly inspired the team's unwavering dedication to providing innovative solutions and making a meaningful difference in the lives of people with disabilities.



Passion: The founders unwavering commitment to addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities, coupled with the backing and recognition from diverse funding organizations, has propelled the company's journey in developing innovative engineering solutions that significantly impact people's lives.



Mentorship: The team's coachable attitude has enabled them to receive continuous mentorship from Innovate Now among other organizations, which has proven to be highly beneficial. The mentorship has provided valuable insights, guidance, and support in overcoming challenges and capitalizing on opportunities, ultimately contributing significantly to the company's overall success.



Inclusivity: The Riziki Source team is a true embodiment of their principles, as it is composed of individuals with disabilities. Their commitment to inclusivity is unmistakable and inspiring. They not only advocate for these values but also exemplify them through their actions. Their team stands as a shining example of an inclusive workspace, showcasing the positive impact of embracing diversity and providing equal opportunities for all.

Challenges experienced



Limited inclusive employers: Riziki Source depends on forward-thinking employers who are committed to inclusivity by considering qualified job seekers with disabilities. However, raising awareness among corporations doesn't always lead to immediate results. Some companies face financial constraints that hinder them from implementing the necessary accommodations required to hire individuals with disabilities.



Pay for service: Riziki Source confronts the challenge of employers viewing their recruitment services as support for persons with disabilities and, consequently, being reluctant to pay for these services. This perception creates financial obstacles as the company depends on revenue from recruitment and training services to sustain its operations and support job seekers with disabilities.



Assistive technology market not seen as lucrative: Riziki Source encounters the hurdle of operating in a less financially rewarding market for assistive technology. Although vital for enhancing the lives of people with disabilities, the sector's limited commercial viability arises from factors like niche customer segments, pricing constraints, and regulatory complexities.

In conclusion, Riziki Source exemplifies the transformative power of innovation and determination. With the support of Innovate Now, they've turned challenges into opportunities, creating a platform that connects job seekers with disabilities to employers. By challenging misconceptions and fostering inclusivity, Riziki Source is not only changing lives but also reshaping the future of work.