MICHAEL MUNENE, PhD

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# PROFESSIONAL BIO

Dr. Michael Munene is a distinguished academic, researcher, and interior design expert specializing in universal design, disability mainstreaming, and inclusive public policy. He holds a Ph.D. in Interior Design with a focus on disability inclusion and has led internationally funded research addressing accessible urban public transport and inclusive environments in Africa. As part of the Volvo Research and Educational Foundations (VREF) "Mobility and Access in African Cities" programme, he served as a principal researcher on two major projects: *“Towards a Disability-Inclusive Urban Transport System in Accra and Nairobi – A Policy-Practice Agenda (SITUATE)”*, and *“Removing Barriers to Disability-Inclusive Urban Transport System (Policies and Regulations) in Accra and Nairobi (SITUATE 2)”*, conducted between 2021 and 2024. These projects contributed to evidence-based frameworks for inclusive mobility and informed the publication of his co-authored policy brief *“Towards PWDs – Inclusive Urban Transport System in Nairobi, Kenya”*, published in June 2022.As a university lecturer and mentor, Dr. Munene has supervised numerous postgraduate students and contributed extensively to scholarly discourse through publications, policy development, and academic forums.

His leadership extends beyond academia through his former role as Board Director and Chair of the Audit Committee at the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD), where he played a key role in institutional policy development, accountability, and disability inclusion in governance. With strengths in evidence-based research, stakeholder engagement, and capacity building, he continues to influence the intersection of design, policy, and social equity, championing inclusive development in both academic and national contexts.

# SKILLS

University Teaching & Curriculum Development | Postgraduate Supervision & Mentorship | Academic Research & Publishing | Grant Writing & Project Management | Disability Mainstreaming & Inclusion Strategy | Universal Design & Accessibility Standards | Policy Development & Knowledge Translation | Stakeholder Engagement & Advocacy | Strategic Planning & Academic Governance | Capacity Building & Cross-Sector Collaboration

# EXPERIENCE

## Lecturer, 2010 - Present

*Faculty of Built Environment and Design, University of Nairobi* | *Nairobi, Kenya*

* Responsible for teaching, mentoring, and supervising undergraduate and postgraduate students, including curriculum delivery, examination, and academic assessment. Actively engaged in internationally funded research, including major grants under the Volvo Research and Educational Foundations (VREF), focused on inclusive design, universal accessibility, and disability-inclusive urban transport systems in Africa. Provide leadership in grant proposal writing, project implementation, and reporting, ensuring research aligns with public policy, community needs, and evidence-based practice. Collaborate with stakeholders across academia, government, and civil society to generate impactful, policy-relevant scholarship in the field of inclusive design and development.

**External Examiner – PhD Thesis – April 2024**

*Kenyatta University*| *Nairobi, Kenya*

* Served as an external examiner for a doctoral thesis titled “Sustainability in Green Design Practice Within Interiors of Commercial Buildings in Nairobi City County, Kenya.”(PH. D/030/2024): Reviewed the dissertation for academic rigor, methodological soundness, and relevance to current practices in sustainable and inclusive interior design. Provided critical evaluation, formal assessment, and recommendations in alignment with institutional and scholarly standards.

## Researcher, January 2021 - June 2024

*VOLVO Research and Educational Foundations| Sweden*.

* VREF's "Mobility and Access in African Cities", MAC programme - "***Removing Barriers to Disability- Inclusive Urban Transport System (Policies and Regulations) in Accra and Nairobi (SITUATE- 2)."* Project Cost - Euro 44,012.25; January 2023 - June 2024**
* VREF's "Mobility and Access in African Cities", MAC programme - ***“Towards a Disability-Inclusive Urban Transport System in Accra and Nairobi – A Policy-Practice Agenda (SITUATE).”* Project Cost - Euro 48,797.14; January 2021 – June 2022**

## Chairperson / Director, 2013 – 2024

*School of the Arts & Design and Department of Art and Design* | *University of Nairobi, Kenya*

* Coordinating and facilitating Administrative and Office related activities**;** Coordinating and facilitating Examinations and all related activities; Facilitating mentorship programme to male students; Charing and Coordinating Committees on Disability Mainstreaming, Research Week Conferences, Disability Policy Review, Ad Hoc Disposal Committee, Security and Welfare, and Corruption Eradication and Resolution of Public Complaints.

## Director of Board and Audit Committee Chair, 2022 – 2025

*National Council for Persons with Disabilities* (NCPWD) | *Nairobi, Kenya*

* Leading oversight on audit processes and risk management strategies, ensuring accountability and transparency in public funds. Contributing to the formulation and implementation of policies that promote the rights and welfare of persons with disabilities. Participating in strategic planning and executing national initiatives aimed at enhancing disability inclusion in various sectors.

# EDUCATION

## University of Nairobi

1. Ph.D. in Interior Design (Disability Mainstreaming and Universal Design), **2018**
2. M.A. in Design (Sustainable Design), **2014**
3. B.A. in Design (First Class Honours – Education Facilities Design), **2006 Certificates**
4. Strategic Leadership Development Programme, *Kenya School of Government,* **2025**
5. Capacity Building Programme for Regulatory Authorities and Agencies, *Kenya School of Government,* **2024**
6. Resource Mobilization and Financial Sustainability, *Kenya School of Government,* **2023**
7. Mwongozo Induction Program for Boards of State Corporations, *Institute of Certified Secretaries and State Corporation Advisory Committee,* **2023**
8. Public Sector Induction Program, *Kenya School of Government,* **2022**
9. Grant Proposal Writing, *University of Nairobi,* **2019**
10. Diploma in Project Management, *Kenya Institute of Management,* **2010**

# AWARDS & AFFILIATIONS

Dr. Michael Munene has received several prestigious awards, including the DIAR Award for PWD Inclusion Champion in 2023 and a Ph.D. Fellowship at the University of Nairobi from 2015 to 2018. He is also affiliated with the National Council for Persons with Disabilities in Kenya, Kenya National Association of the Deaf, Kenya Society for Deaf Children and the Interior Design Association of Kenya, where he actively engages in initiatives that promote the rights and welfare of persons with disabilities.

# SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

# Successfully supervised multiple Master’s and Ph.D. students in inclusive design, universal accessibility, and sustainable interior architecture.

1. Lead researcher in two internationally funded projects under the Volvo Research and Educational Foundations (VREF) on disability-inclusive urban transport systems in Accra and Nairobi (2021–2024).
2. Co-authored and published multiple peer-reviewed articles, policy briefs, and conference papers on inclusive urban design, disability mainstreaming, and human-centered spatial planning.
3. Developed and reviewed academic curricula in Interior Design with a focus on universal design and accessibility at the University of Nairobi.
4. Organized and presented at international academic conferences, including VREF Workshops in Ghana and Kenya, and the Uganda Design Summit.
5. Played a key role in policy formulation and institutional audits as Chair of the Disability Mainstreaming Committee at the University of Nairobi.
6. Contributed to the development of inclusive infrastructure assessment reports for academic spaces, including University libraries, the Chiromo Funeral Parlour, and the School of Law.
7. Recognized for academic leadership through board-level appointments and active participation in academic exhibitions and university outreach programs.

# LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

1. **Member, Corporate Disability Mainstreaming Committee | University of Nairobi,** advocating for policies supporting persons with disabilities in the University of Nairobi and engaging in University of Nairobi Disability Policy Review process, 2022 – Present
2. **Member, National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC)** Selection Panel (The Kenya Gazette Volume CXXV – No. 8 Nairobi), January 13, 2023 – February 27, 2023
3. **Director and Audit Committee Chair | National Council for Persons with Disabilities,** overseeing audit processes and contributing to key policies, including Risk Management, 2022 – 2025

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. **Trustee** | Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Association of Kenya, **2022 – Present**
2. **Chairman** | Githurai Mixed Secondary School Board of Management, **2022 – 2025**

# PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND CONSULTANCIES

1. **Lead Exhibition Designer** | **Kenya Export Promotion and Branding Agency (KEPROBA),** Managing exhibitions promoting Kenyan exports in International Expos in Dubai, U.K., Italy, Germany, Madagascar, South Africa, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Kenya, **2013 – 2022**
2. **Project Manager** | **Government of Kenya,** Led infrastructure projects enhancing public service delivery in *Ministry* of Lands, *Public Works*, Housing, and Urban Development. and Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, Kenya Prisons Service, **2010 – 2022**

# CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

1. Mwangi R., **Munene M**., Maina S. (2023, October 6th) “Human Centered Design and Community Based Conservation in Kenya,” The Uganda Design Summit 2023, **Kyambogo University, Uganda**
2. Mwangi R., **Munene M**., Maina S. (2022, June 29th) “Natural Resources Use and Tourism for Sustainable Development in Laikipia District,” 4th Annual International Conference, **Machakos University, Kenya**
3. **Munene, M.** (2022, May 20th) “Towards a Disability-Inclusive Urban Transport System in Accra and Nairobi – A Policy-Practice Agenda (SITUATE),” VREF Workshop, **University of Education Winebba, Ghana**.
4. **Munene, M.** (2022, May 6th) “Towards a Disability-Inclusive Urban Transport System in Accra and Nairobi – A Policy-Practice Agenda (SITUATE),” VREF Workshop, **University of Nairobi, Kenya**.
5. **Munene, M.** (2016, September) “Off the Grid Sustainable Energy Systems: The Case for Rural Areas in Kiambu County, Kenya,” LeNSes Conference, **Cape Town, South Africa.**
6. **Munene, M.** (2015, July) “Mainstreaming the Visually Disabled into Commercial Banks Interiors in Nairobi, Kampala International Design Conference – KIDEC 2015, **Kampala, Uganda**.

# PUBLICATIONS

1. Koech, **R., Munene, M.,** & Gitau, M. (2024). Inclusive Design in the Aviation Industry for Passengers with Mobility Issues: A Case Study of Wilson Airport, Nairobi County, Kenya. *International Journal of Modern Hospitality and Tourism*, *4*(2), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.47604/ijmht.2773
2. Sam, E. F.., **Munene, M.,** Wamuchiru, E. K., Odame, P. K., Hayford, S. K., Danso-Wiredu, E. Y., Osman, A., & (2024). Removing Barriers to Disability-Inclusive Urban Transport Systems in Accra and Nairobi (SITUATE 2). Study report for the Volvo Research and Educational Foundations (VREF).
3. Sam, E. F.., **Munene, M.,** Wamuchiru, E. K., Odame, P. K., Hayford, S. K., Danso-Wiredu, E. Y., & Osman, A., (2023) “The journey from home: Experiences of persons with disabilities of the urban transport system in Accra Metropolis, Ghana”
4. Sam, E. F.., **Munene, M.,** Wamuchiru, E. K., Odame, P. K., Hayford, S. K., Danso-Wiredu, E. Y., & Osman, A. (2023) “Experiences of Persons with Disabilities of Bus Mobility in Accra and Nairobi”, Applied Mobilities Journal Submission ID **236749597**
5. Mwangi R., **Munene M.,** Maina, S.M. (2023, June) “Participatory Action Research (PAR) for Community Based Conservation in Kenya” Africa Design Review Journal Volume 1 Issue 4 (2023), **ISBN (print) 2664-5874 /ISSN (online) 2664-5866**
6. **Munene M.,** Wamuchiru E. (2022, June) Policy Brief No: PB-2022-01-07 "Towards PWDs - Inclusive Urban Transport System in Nairobi Kenya"
7. Maryam T. A., **Munene M.** (2022, June) “Installation Art: Identity of Millennials in Kenya” Africa Design Review Journal Volume 1 Issue 2, **ISBN (print) 2664-5874 /ISSN (online) 2664-5866**
8. Sharon K. J., **Munene M.** (2022, June) “Street Art: A Form of Expressive Art for Political Change” Africa Design Review Journal Volume 1 Issue 2, **ISBN (print) 2664-5874 /ISSN (online) 2664-5866**
9. Bradley D. W., **Munene M., Akatch J. A.** (2022, June) “The Significance of Art in The Matatu Culture” Africa Design Review Journal Volume 1 Issue 2, **ISBN (print) 2664-5874 /ISSN (online) 2664-5866**
10. Mounde A., Amollo A., **Munene M.** (2020, June) “Understanding the Maker in Academic Makerspaces” The Africa Habitat Review 14 (1) 2020, uonjournals.uonbi.ac.ke/ojs/index.php/ahr
11. Njeru, G. W., **Munene, M**., Maina, S.M. (2019, October) “Mainstreaming “Adaptive Standards for Multi- Purpose Interior Design in Low-Cost Housing Projects: A Case Study of the Kibera Soweto East Housing Project in Nairobi, Kenya” **ISSN 2278 – 0211 (Online)**, International Journal of Innovative Research & Development DOI No.: 10.24940/ijird/2019/v8/i10/OCT19076
12. **Munene, M.,** Maina, S.M. (2019, January) “Caregivers as Aids to People with Visual Mobility Disability In Interior Spaces In Kenya,” **ISSN (print) 2537-5997 /ISSN (online) 2559-4524**, Creativity and Innovation Journal / Revista Creativitate Şi Inovare
13. **Munene, M.,** Maina, S.M., Anyamba, T.J.C. (2017, December) “Accounting for the Needs of Mobility Disabled People in Public Universities in Kenya: Case of A.D.D. Building at the University of Nairobi,” ISSN 2519-7851, 12th Edition of the Africa Habitat Review Journal
14. **Munene, M.,** Maina, S.M., Anyamba, T.J.C. (2017, December) “Interior Design Strategies for Accommodating the Visually Impaired in Commercial Banking Services in Nairobi, Kenya,” **ISSN 2519- 7851**, 12th Edition of the Africa Habitat Review Journal
15. **Munene, M.** (2016, September) “Off the Grid Sustainable Energy Systems: The Case for Rural Areas in Kiambu County, Kenya,” **ISBN: 978-88-95651-24-8**, Edizioni POLI.design, Milano, Italy
16. **Munene, M.** (2015, February) “(In) accessible Universal Access in banks: Case Study of Nairobi, Kenya”, **Vol-10 No-2** Design for All Institute of India.

# UNPUBLISHED THESES

1. **Munene, M.** (2014) “An Exploration into Barriers to use of Waste Glass in Interior Spaces in Nairobi.”, M.A. Thesis. University of Nairobi, Kenya
2. **Munene, M.** (2006) “Spatial Enhancement for Education: A Case Study of Mount Larvena Academy at Kasarani, Nairobi”, B.A. Thesis. University of Nairobi, Kenya

# GRADUATE STUDENT SUPERVISION

1. **2022 – 2024** (**MA** Candidate - Koech Rose Chebet): Inclusive Design in The Aviation Industry: A Case Study of Wilson Airport, Nairobi County, Kenya.
2. **2022 – 2024** (**MA** Candidate - Nyunja Goretty Mary): Redesigning Educational Facilities Using Sustainable Eco-design: A Case of Kinango Sub-County
3. **2021 – 2022** (**MA** Candidate - Sharon Johnson)**:** Designing Navigable Interior Spaces in Affordable Housing for The Visually Impaired in Kenya
4. **2020 – 2022:** (**MA** Candidate - Naomi Nekesa)**:** Assessing Accessibility of Memorial Parks by Visually Impaired Through Inclusive Design: A case study of Bomb Blast Memorial Park, Nairobi Kenya
5. **2020 – 2022:** (**MA** Candidate - Chepngeno Prudence)**:** Assessment of Challenges in Conservation and Storage of Historical Textiles in Selected Museums in Kenya
6. **2019 – 2021:** (**MA** Candidate - Omindi Sonia Ogembo)**:** Role of Design on User Experience in Public Parks
7. **2018 – Ongoing Research:** (**PhD** Candidate - Ruth Mwangi)**:** Community-Based Conservation: Social Design Thinking for Wildlife Conservation in Kenya
8. **2018 – 2020:** (**MA** Candidate - Mounde Arisi Alex)**:** Centering the user in Makerspaces through human centred design: A Case Study of the University of Nairobi’s Makerspace
9. **2017 – 2019:** (**MA** Candidate - Njeru Grace Wawira)**:** Mainstreaming Adaptive Standards for Multi- Purpose Room Occupancy in Low-Cost Housing Projects in Kenya: A case study of The Kibera Soweto East Housing Project in Nairobi, Kenya

# REFEREES

1. **Prof. Lilac A. Osanjo |** *Dean, Faculty of Built Environment and Design, University of Nairobi*

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1. **Mr. Harun Hassan|** *Commissioner, Public Service Commission*

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1. **Fr. Peter N. Kaigua** **|** *Catholic Chaplain, University of Nairobi*

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1. **Prof. Samuel M. Maina |** *Chairperson, Department of Art and Design, University of Nairobi*

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