



16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

25 NOVEMBER TO 10 DECEMBER 2023

Invest to Prevent Violence Against
Women & Girls

Profile of Mrs. Massoud Barry by Nantenin Magassouba, SAI Guinea and Aissatou Abdoulaye (SAI Cameroon -CREFIAF)

Mrs. Massoud Barry, Councilor and member of the National Transition Council (CNT), which serves as Parliament in the Republic of Guinea, is a well-known representative of the Guinean people. Living with disability herself, she advocates as part of the legislative body of the State for the needs of people living with disability, fighting daily to raise awareness among families, society and the nation.

Living with the disability of her two lower limbs, Massoud Barry, a graduate in Economics and Finance, is the founding president of Organisation des Secours aux Handicapés, a structure she created in 2017 that defends and promotes people with disabilities. This organisation is the voice of people living with disabilities, and as such, has established several partnerships with non-governmental organizations Plan International, Amplify chance, UNDP Guinea, AFD, Gray Paralympic Fund.



Ms. Barry's work is widely recognised internationally through her participation as a member of the Guinean delegation to the 67th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in March 2023. At a national level, Massoud Barry is the vice-president of the Health, Social and Cultural Affairs Commission at the CNT, president of the Advocacy and Capacity Building Commission at the Caucus of Women Parliamentarians and member of the Guinean network of parliamentarians in population and development.

For Ms. Barry, the main challenge is to make decision-makers understand that the issue of disability is a cross-cutting issue and to make people living with disabilities understand that this situation should not be an obstacle to their development.

Her disability is her motivation and inspiration. Ms. Barry's belief is that everyone has some kind of disability, whether they realize it or not, and that all of society must understand this. She considers each obstacle in her life as normal, with the view that if we aim for any goal, naturally we encounter obstacles and challenges to overcome. Ms. Barry's special motivation is to help children living with disabilities so that they can flourish.

#NOEXCUSE

For people with disability to be included in society, actions are at three levels:

Within families, children with disabilities should not be considered as an obstacle, a source of problems, an additional burden or even a curse. We need to accept the disabled, have the same consideration for them as for other children, support them and enable them to access studies in the same way as other children. Parents need to know that it is their support that will help their child with disabilities feel normal and up to the challenges they face. Parents play a very important role because, most often, discrimination begins at the family level. If their family excludes them, the child with disabilities will be excluded for their entire life. The family must integrate this.

At the level of society, people must understand that disability is at each of our doors and no one is immune to this. Therefore, society must understand and accept people living with disabilities and integrate them into society as full members of it. The authorities must be there for everyone, including people with special needs. In a one-man-one-vote system, the vote of people with disabilities has the same impact as that of other voters. Currently in Guinea, the person with disabilities does not have the same opportunities to vote.

Likewise, at the level of the **overall management of public affairs**, the authorities must consider the issue of disability in the development of public projects and programs, starting from the base, the middle of the education: we must adapt infrastructures, train trainers to the needs of people with disabilities, raise awareness among students in order to accept and integrate people with disabilities. In today's health infrastructure in Guinea, it is very difficult for a person living with a disability to access care, both in terms of the physical layout of the infrastructure and the capacity to offer adapted care services.

In terms of access to jobs, efforts are being made even if they are not yet visible. For example, since the emergence of the National Transition Council which runs the country, particular emphasis has been placed on the issue of people living with disabilities in projects, with the introduction of the notion of "local content" in projects. This local content makes it mandatory to include people with special needs as employees in the implementation of the project and also as specific beneficiaries of some of the projects' deliverables. Infrastructure must also be accessible to people with disabilities.

At the CNT, all laws that are passed consider people with specific needs. Each time there is a funding agreement for the population as a whole, there are recommendations in this direction. Road agreements take people living with disabilities into account. The members of the CNT are sensitive to the issue. The president of the CNT always takes the floor to support Ms Barry's words in taking these questions into account.

In fact, as a direct result of Massoud's advocacy, the premises of the National Assembly have been adapted to include a ramp in consideration of the specific needs of people living with disabilities. UNDP Guinea, AIS and the British Embassy have all built access ramps to their premises, and the Embassy has even adapted its toilets.

The perception of this issue at the CNT is positive. Funding for the finalization of national law on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities has been mobilized. As a result of campaigning by Massoud Barry and others like her, the specific needs of people living with disabilities as well as the integration of these people as full citizens have been highlighted as major concerns for the authorities of the Republic of Guinea.