



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

**SUCCESES AND CHALLENGES IN THE REPORTING ABOUT THE
SITUATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES INLINE WITH THE
SDGs:**

THE UGANDA CASE

**A PAPER PRESENTED AT THE EXPERTS GROUP MEETING ON
STRENGTHENING EVIDENCE BASED RESEARCH FOR DISABILITY
INCLUSIVE IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF
THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)**

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1.0 Introduction

The Uganda Bureau of Statistics Census Report (UBOS 2016) indicated that 12.4% of the Ugandan population lives with some form of disability implying that approximately 4.5 million Ugandans are persons with disability hence a development concern. This Report showed that disability was more prevalent amongst women (15 per cent) than men (10 per cent); higher in rural areas (15 per cent) than in urban areas (12 per cent). This nearly correlated with the World Health Organization Report of 2010 which put the global disability prevalence rate at 15%.

1.1 Situation of Persons with Disabilities

Persons with Disabilities are still among the most neglected groups in the policy domain as well as in the private sphere. The majority of these persons face enormous economic, political, and social barriers that have an adverse impact on their physical, economic, social and intellectual development and wellbeing. Many of them do not have access to basic needs such as health, education, experience multiple deprivations even within their family and are invisible in the national policy agenda.

Women with disabilities experience the combined disadvantages associated with gender and disability, such as sexual and gender-based violence, limited access to education opportunities, limited productive economic opportunities, lower incomes and poverty (UNFPA, 2018). Girls and young women with disabilities have limited knowledge about their sexual and reproductive health and rights, and limited access to services. Girls and young women with disabilities are not seen as needing information about their sexual and reproductive health and rights or capable of making their own decisions about their sexual and reproductive live (UNFPA, 2018).

In all societies, the prevalence of disability increases as people age, 60 years and above, 29% experience a severe disability, a significant proportion. But, even among those aged between 30 and 50 years, 8 per cent report being severely disabled (Development Pathways, 2018). In Uganda, older persons with disabilities (65 years and above) constitute 2.1% of the population (NPA, 2018: unpublished information).

1.2. Children with disabilities

The Uganda Population and Housing Census indicated that the total population of all children aged 18years and below was 57.2% (19,874,000) of the total population. Considering that 5.82% of Ugandan Children are estimated to be children with disabilities, this translates to 2,027,148 children with disabilities (1,052,000 boys and 974,488 girls), (National Action Plan for Children with Disabilities 2016/17- 2020/21, MGLSD). This is comparable to the estimated a prevalence of about 13%, that is, 2.5 million children living with a disability (UNICEF, 2014).

Uganda is overall on track towards achieving education for all, with a net enrollment rate of 93% boys and 96% girls (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2016/17). The Uganda National Population and Housing Census data 2014 shows that, 605,380 (304,270 males and, 301,110 females) were persons with disabilities aged between 6-12 years and rightly contributing to the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in primary education.

However, enrollment and completion of Children with Disabilities in primary and secondary schools is significantly low. Only 9% of Children with Disabilities of school going age attend. 0.81% (820) student with special needs out of 101,186 students sat Uganda advanced Certificate of Education Examinations (Uganda National Examination Board, 2017).

The major challenges for these children not adequately attending school are; inadequate financial resources provided to responsible institutions at national and local level, insufficiently trained staff, inaccessible physical environment, (disability-unfriendly classrooms and latrines) communication and information means (e.g. Lack sign language and Braille) as well as a shortage and unaffordability of assistive and mobility devices .(UNICEF, 2016:p9).

Evidence from the United Nations Agencies shows that ethnic groups are scattered across Uganda, live in rural areas and are largely disadvantaged. Ethnic minorities women with disabilities tend to experience triple discrimination, are marginalized, have very limited access to property and majority are never included at decision making levels both within their structures and mainstream.

The common practice by Refugee Response Agencies is to blanket persons with disabilities among Persons with Special Needs (PSNs). These include girls and boys at a risk, unaccompanied children, persons with special health conditions, persons with special legal or protection needs, single women, older persons, persons with disabilities and women headed households. This practice makes it very difficult to assess needs of refugees with disabilities and to appropriately target them for inclusive development

2.0 Legal and Policy frameworks

Disability is currently recognized as a development concern which requires inclusion as pointed out within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; the National Development Plan (NDP II) 2015/16 – 2019/20; the Social Development Sector Plan (SDSP1) 2015/16-2019/20. Uganda had earlier demonstrated its commitment to protecting and promoting rights of persons with disabilities through the 1995 Constitution with pro-active provisions in the State and Policy Objectives XV1on Recognition of Rights of Persons with Disabilities to respect, Objective XX1V on Development of Sign Language, Article 32 on Non-discrimination on basis of disability ,among others, Article 35(i) and (ii) stipulates the Right to respect and human dignity and; Taking appropriate measures to ensure their full mental and physical potential respectively, amongst others.

Further, this commitment is exhibited through the domestication of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which Uganda ratified in 2008. This Convention and other International, Continental and Regional Instruments have been domesticated into the national policy and legal frameworks which provide provisions for inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the Development Agenda. Major Disability Inclusive policy and legal frameworks are attached. Appendix 1

Government of Uganda uses a twin track approach; through the provision of mainstream and specialized services to persons with disabilities for inclusive development. Majorly mainstream services such as Health, Poverty Reduction Programs, Universal Primary and Secondary Education are all supposed to target persons with disabilities although data is very faint. The specialized services are implemented through programs such as the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR), vocational training, Special Grant for Persons with Disabilities as some of the key measures to empower them participate in development initiatives. Programs which have taken Persons with Disabilities into consideration at the Planning process factor them in even at monitoring and reporting levels.. Example of such program is the Youth Livelihood Program (YLP), a Government Program targeting unemployed and poor youth with revolving funds. (Table 2 in Appendix).

3.0 Uganda and SDGs

Sustainable Development Goals are global frameworks that call for actions within countries for inclusive development. SDGs 1,2,3,4,6,7,8,10,11..1.,17 and 18 are specific action for disability inclusion. Uganda's commitment to inclusive sustainable development demonstrated through the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other International, Continental and Regional Provisions. These have been domesticated and effort has been made towards the implementation, monitoring and reporting on the provisions. Uganda submitted its Initial Report in 2013 and was reviewed by the Committee of Experts on the CRPD in 2016 which raised several concerns including lack of systems to collect data on situation of persons with disabilities including refugees and giving a call to Article 31 of the Convention and 17.18 of the SDGs.

Uganda has continued to make progress on 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through, a framework which was developed in 2016 to guide and the coordination of the implementation of the

2030 Agenda under the leadership of Office of the Prime Minister. This framework is anchored within the existing coordination structures of government business steered by a multi-stakeholder SDG National Team.

To operationalize the framework, the Office of the Prime Minister in liaison with MOFPED, Ministry of Information, Communication, Technology and National Guidance, National Planning Authority and Uganda Bureau of Statistics developed a costed roadmap to create an enabling environment to deliver on the SDGs but also to act as a resource mobilization tool for the agenda during the NDP 11 implementation period. It spells out clear mandates for planning reporting, monitoring, resource mobilization and communication and advocacy and decision making for implementation of SDGs anchored within the existing coordination structures. All MDAs implement SDGs through their mandates and have indicators for specific SDG targets to guide reporting. This reporting is an integral part of national reporting under Government Annual Performance Reports (GAPR). In addition, National Reports on SDGs are submitted to Cabinet and Parliament. These committees are in process of writing a report on performance of SDGs the SDG Team is in process of compiling a report.

Other Institutions to monitor and report disability include, National Council for Disability, Equal Opportunities Commission, Uganda Human Rights Commission, Department of Disability and Elderly, in Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development. However, lack of disaggregated data, weak coordination, and inadequate funding affect their performances.

4.0 Current data collection and reporting systems in Uganda

The Uganda Bureau of Statistics is fully responsible for the data collection and dissemination to the different Ministries and other players for planning and implementation of programs. Uganda has limited analysis of disaggregated data for reporting on inclusive interventions. UDHS has been used as the avenue for data improvement especially with recent inclusion of Washington Group's Short Set of six questions on disability. This inclusion in 2011 UDHS provided opportunity for improved data and 2014 Census questions on disability from Washington Questions gave even better results. UBOS Further undertook the Uganda Functional Difficulties survey to improve on findings of 2014 Census.

Chapter II of the 1995 constitution outlines the decentralization policy and it was further explained in the Local Government Act of 1997 with an aim of availing powers to the lower local Governments to take part in self-governance, participation, reporting and decision making for the development of their areas.

It is through this system that the information is sent from the central Government to the lowest to national level. In the same way, data and reports are received from Local Level 1(LC) to the respective ministries in central government.

Data on disability inclusiveness is expected to be collected by the LC 1 vice chairperson who is responsible for the children with disability in the village, the secretary for Persons with Disabilities in the village, The parish chiefs who are government employed personnel to implement government development programs in the parish, Community development officers at Sub county levels who are technical officers responsible for the overall social development activities and programs in the Sub county and the District Community Development Officer who receives these reports and sends them to the respective Ministry. However, this in most cases

In addition, National council for Disability is mandated to monitor and make reports to parliament through the same decentralization system because it is expected to have District Councils and Sub County Councils for Disabilities as per the National Council for Disability Act (2003).L

NGOs and CBOs concerned with issues of disability also make reports to their umbrella organizations and to their development partners and to the relevant Ministries.

4.1 Challenges in the data collection and reporting system

The availability of the data collection and reporting systems in the country is hindered by the following challenge;

- Negative attitude by the technical officers, leaders/politicians towards the issues of disability inclusiveness and tendency to refer to disability inclusion as an expensive venture
- Lack of awareness about the rights of persons with disability, need for disability inclusive reporting and limited knowledge on what to be reported.
- Financial and human resources which are not aligned to meet this challenge at all levels of governance which makes it rather hard to come up with real data on disability.
- Multi- sectorial coordination for disability and development which is weak
- Exclusion of persons with disability in the planning, implementing, monitoring. Evaluation and reporting on programs and activities to bench mark the issues of disability inclusiveness.

5.0 Recommendations

- a) Finalize, review, operationalize and report on performance of major policy and legal frameworks such as, Persons with Disabilities Bill 2016, National Policy on Disability, 2003, Draft National Inclusive Education Policy, Mental Health Bill, National ICT Policy on Persons with Disabilities, among others, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and 2030 Agenda.
- b) Lobby for allocation of quotas in poverty reduction and employment programs to for inclusive development.
- c) Include disability in Social Protection Programs especially with particular focus on those with severe and multiple disabilities
- d. Analyze and disseminate existing information on disability and advocate for disability specific researches and surveys

- d) Popularize guidelines on Disability such as; Guidelines on Disability 2012 and National Disability Inclusive Planning Guidelines 201 which are in line with Sustainable Development Goal and, CRPD Provisions
- e) Establish development funds to cater for unique needs of Persons with disabilities if they are to move along with others.
- f) Rejuvenate and scale up the Community Based Rehabilitation Program to raise awareness, build capacity and promote rehabilitation and rights of PWDS, among others.
- g) Mainstream disability in the five thematic areas of the Sustainable Development Goals framework, MDAs and Local Governments as cross cutting issue to be tracked from planning, implementation monitoring and evaluation and develop specific indicators for their reporting.
- h) Strengthen and build capacity Ministries, Departments and Agencies, Local Governments and Monitoring Bodies to plan, implement, monitor, evaluate and report on disability inclusion.
- i) Oblige Ministries, Departments and Agencies and UN Bodies to put in place focal persons on disability.
- j) Establish and mainstream Disability Information Management Systems across sectors strengthen and National Council for Disability to compile as a source

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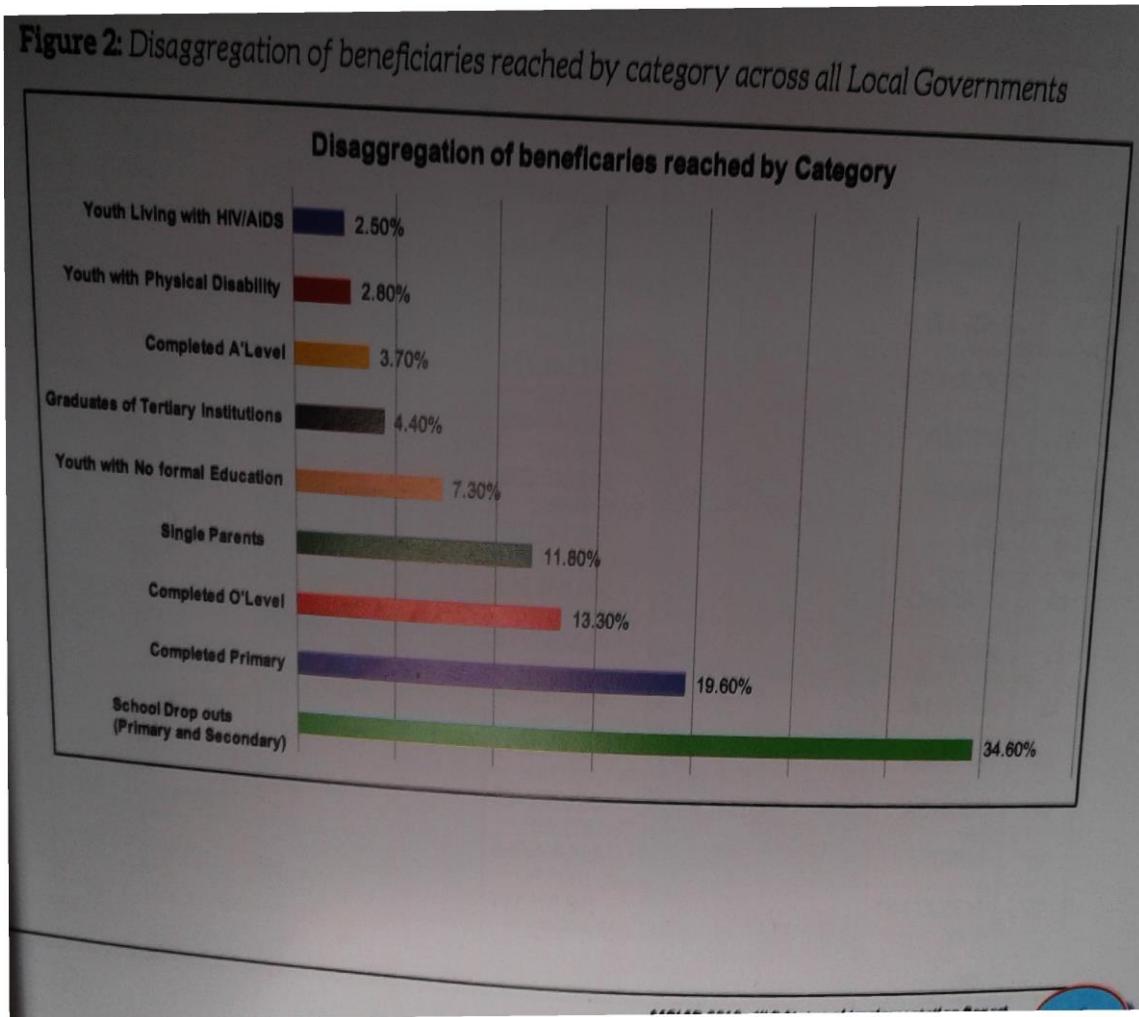
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6. 2018 CSO Report on the SDG Implementation in Uganda
7. Roadmap for Creating an Enabling Environment for Delivering on SDGs in Uganda, October, 2018
8. National Policy on Disability in Uganda
9. CRPD- Concluding Observations on the Initial Report of Uganda adopted by Committee at its fifteenth session 29thMarch -21 st April 2016.
10. National Inclusive Disability Planning Guidelines for Uganda 2017
11. Youth Livelihood Program, Status of Implementation Report, July 2019.

Table one: Sample of Legal and Policy Frameworks promoting Inclusion

Persons with Disabilities Act on 2006	Promoting dignity and equal opportunities to persons with disabilities; and the participation of persons with Disabilities in all aspects of life as equal citizens of Uganda
National Council for Disability Act 2003	Establishing a monitoring body to establish gaps in service delivery and communicate them to Government and other players among others
Public Finance Management Act, 2015	which relates to Gender and Equity Certificate certifying that the Budget Framework Paper is responsive and specifies measures taken to equalize opportunities for persons with disabilities, women and men and other marginalized groups
The Universities and other Tertiary Institutions Act 2001,	Makes consideration for affirmative action to include Persons with Disabilities and Public University Council to have representative of persons with disabilities
The Building Control Act 2013	Defining accessibility standards as a practical guide to barrier free environment in Uganda
Parliamentary Act 1996, as amended	Provides for election of representatives of persons with disabilities in Parliament and processes there of
Communications Act 2013	Providing for promotion of research and development of new communications techniques and technology including accessibility to persons with disabilities;
Employment Act 2006	Requiring employers to protect special categories of Employees
Penal Code Act,2007	Prohibits and increases penalty for rape and/or defilement of persons with Disabilities
National Inclusive Disability Planning Guidelines for Uganda 2017	Provides principles for inclusive disability planning
National Policy on Disability 2006,	The guiding framework for all interventions on disability
National Social Protection Policy 2015	Recognizing persons with disability in poverty arena and setting social care services for them, among others
The National Health Policy 2010/20	Recognizing barriers to access to health by persons with disabilities and recommendations to address them
National Action Plan for Children with Disabilities 2016/17- 2020/21MGLSD	Fostering inclusion and rights of Children with Disabilities in Uganda, among others

Table 2

Programs with Disaggregated Statistics on Disability



Source: Youth Livelihood Program, Status of Implementation Report, July 2019