

Decent Work for People with Disabilities

Inclusion of People with Disabilities In Uganda



International Labour Organization



FACT SHEET

Women and men with disabilities can and want to be productive members of society. In both developed and developing countries, promoting more inclusive societies and employment opportunities for people with disabilities requires improved access to basic education, vocational training relevant to labour market needs and jobs suited to their skills, interests and abilities, with adaptations as needed. Many societies are also recognizing the need to dismantle other barriers - making the physical environment more accessible, providing information in a variety of formats, and challenging attitudes and mistaken assumptions about people with disabilities.

Current Situation

According to the 2002 Population and Housing Census, at least 4 out of every 25, or 16 per cent of the population, are disabled. Applying this estimate to today's Ugandan population (approximately 30 million¹) would indicate that they may be some 5 million disabled people in the country. Disabled people in Uganda, as in most developing countries in the world, face extreme conditions of poverty, have limited opportunities for accessing education, health, suitable housing and employment opportunities.

Governmental support for people with disabilities

The Government of Uganda has adopted a number of laws and policies pertaining to people with disabilities, including their right to productive and decent work and basic services. The main ones are listed below.

- **The Constitution of Uganda, 1995.** Article 21 prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. Uganda is one of the few countries in the world to recognize sign language in its Constitution.

¹ Uganda Bureau of Statistics in their 2009 Statistical Abstract projects Uganda's population to be 30.7 million persons.

- **The Persons with Disabilities Act, 2006**, makes provisions for the elimination of all forms of discriminations against people with disabilities and towards equal opportunities. Also provides for a tax reduction of 15 per cent to private employers who employ ten or more persons with disabilities either as regular employees, apprentice or learner on a full time basis.
- **The Local Government Act, 1997, Parliamentary Elections Statute, 1996, and the Movement Act, 1998.** These laws aim to increase the representation of disabled people in the public sphere. The Local Government Act, for example, provides for representation of disabled people at the various Local Council levels. In addition, Section 37 of the Parliamentary Elections Statute provides for five seats in Parliament for representatives of persons with disabilities.
- **Traffic and Road Safety Act, 1998**, prohibits denial of a driving permit on the basis of disability.
- **Uganda Communications Act, 1998**, provides for the promotion of research into the development and use of new communications techniques and technologies, including those which promote accessibility of hearing-impaired people to communication services.
- **Workers' Compensation Act, 2000**, provides compensation to workers who are injured or disabled through industrial accidents.
- **The National Council for Disability Act (No. 14), 2003**, monitors and evaluates the rights of persons with disabilities as set out in international conventions and legal instruments, the Constitution and other laws.
- **The Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (BTJET) Act, No. 12, 2008**, promotes equitable access to education and training for all disadvantaged groups, including disabled people.
- **National Policy on Disabilities, 2006**, provides a human rights-based framework for responding to the needs of persons with disabilities.
- **The Equal Opportunity Act, 2006, and the Employment Act (No. 6), 2006**, both prohibit discrimination of persons in employment based on disability.
- **The Universal Primary Education Act**, makes it financially possible for families to send their disabled children to school by providing free primary education to four children in every family, including disabled children.
- **The Uganda Vision 2025 and the Poverty Eradication Action Program (PEAP)**, provide a long-term development framework and initiatives aimed at sustaining rapid economic growth and tackling poverty.

Key ministries responsible for disability issues

The Department for Disabled Persons under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development has the primary responsibility for registration, vocational rehabilitation and coordination of employment for persons with disabilities.

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development coordinates the Uganda Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Programme. Uganda adopted CBR in 1992 as a strategy within general community development for rehabilitation, equalization of opportunities and social inclusion of all children and adults with disabilities.

The Ministry of Education and Sports is in charge of disability issues relating to education in collaboration with the Uganda Institute of Special Education (UNISE).

Consultative mechanisms - Other organizations

- The National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU), a national umbrella organization made up of disability associations, is frequently consulted by the government on matters related to disability.
- The National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda (NUWODU). NUWODU is one of the first organizations in Southern African run by and for women with disabilities. It provides leadership and training for emerging women's organization in other countries and focuses on economic development projects.

Key international standards on disability and their status

- International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention Concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation, 1958, (No. 111). Status: ratified, 2 June 2005.
- ILO Convention Concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons), 1983, (No. 159). Status: ratified, 27 March 1990.
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and Optional Protocol. Status: ratified, 25 September 2008. Optional Protocol ratified on 25 September 2008.

Uganda works to implement the Action Plan established for the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities, extended to December 2019.

Organizations of persons with disabilities

- The National Union of Disabled Persons (NUDIPU)
- The National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda (NUWODU)
- Uganda Foundation for the Blind
- Uganda National Association of the Blind
- Uganda National Association of the Deaf
- Disabled Women Network and Resource Organization
- Uganda Disabled Women's Association

Organizations for persons with disabilities:

- Uganda Mental Health Association
- Uganda Parents Care for the Mentally Handicapped
- Uganda National Action on Physical Disability, acts as an umbrella organization of/for people with disabilities.
- Uganda Parents' Association of Children with Learning Disabilities (UPACLED)
- Legal Action on Persons with Disability (LAPD)
- Spinal Injury Association (SIA)
- Epilepsy Support Association of Uganda (ESAU)
- National Association of the Deaf Blind (NADB)

The role of the ILO

The primary goal of the ILO today is to promote opportunities for everyone, including people with disabilities, to obtain decent and productive work, based on the principles of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. The ILO works to achieve its goals of decent work for all through promoting labour standards, advocacy, knowledge building and technical cooperation services and partnerships, both within the ILO and externally. The Uganda Decent Work Country programme establishes the framework for delivery of ILO action.

In Uganda, current ILO technical cooperation projects on disability are:

The project “Promoting the Employability and Employment of People with Disabilities through Effective Legislation” (PEPDEL). Earlier phases of PEPDEL included the compilation of a country study on legislation, policy and implementation mechanisms on the training and employment of persons with disabilities to build a knowledge base on people with disabilities; identification of priority and needs in consultation with government, representatives of workers’ and employers’ groups and disabled persons’ organizations; support to NUWODU for the development of a simplified version of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2006, and of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and, a disability audit of Ugandan laws concerning the education, training and employment of persons with disabilities.

The project “Promoting Decent Work for Persons with Disabilities through a Disability Inclusion Support Service” (INCLUDE). The project builds capacity at regional and national levels to effectively support the full participation of women entrepreneurs with disabilities in entrepreneurship development activities conducted under the ILO’s Women’s Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality (WEDGE) programme. INCLUDE also involves advocacy and awareness-raising activities to promote decent work for persons with disabilities.

The way forward

Productive and decent work enables people with disabilities to realize their aspirations, improve their living conditions and participate more actively in society.

Ensuring a disability perspective in all aspects of policy and labour legislation, effective implementation and enforcement of existing disability laws and policies and providing for equal employment opportunities and training are among the factors that contribute to the reduction of poverty and to the social and economic inclusion of people with disabilities in Uganda.

Further information:

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Skills and
Employability
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