

Disability inclusive ultra poor graduation in Uganda

Project timeline: June 2019 – March 2022

Disability Inclusive Development - Inclusive Futures funded phase:

December 2021 - March 2022

Project budget: £688,000

Capturing the power of collaboration: BRAC, Humanity and Inclusion, National Union of Women with Disabilities Uganda (NUWODU), Programme for Evidence to Inform Disability Action (PENDA).

Ultra poverty, living on less than US\$1 a day, affects millions of people around the world. It results in inability to meet the most basic needs and can mean a life without clean water and regular meals, exclusion from education and health services and barriers to financial services. People with disabilities around the world are disproportionately affected by poverty – and poverty itself is also likely to increase the risk of disability¹. **Disability Inclusive Development - Inclusive Futures is working to promote disability inclusive poverty reduction in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** to change lives and livelihoods for people with disabilities.



The situation in Uganda

Although showing signs of growth in recent years, Uganda remains among the poorest countries in the world. Around 24 percent of the population - up to 10 million people – are estimated to live in ultra poverty², including around 80 percent of people with disabilities. Uganda's Persons with Disabilities Act was updated in 2019,

however, whilst the act states that people with disabilities have a right to employment, **there remains much to be done to achieve inclusion and empower people with disabilities to reach their economic potential.**

How we helped

The Disability Inclusive Ultra-Poor Graduation project delivered long term change to ultra-poor, hard-to-reach households in four districts of Uganda (Kiryandongo district in Western Region and Gulu, Nwoya and Oyam districts in Northern Region), by supporting participants to gain socio-economic empowerment and social protection.

Targeting 15 – 64-year-olds, participants were supported to ‘graduate’ out of ultra-poverty through a combination of livelihoods, social protection, financial inclusion and social empowerment interventions. A strong focus was placed on reaching women and people with disabilities

Led by BRAC in partnership with Humanity and Inclusion, Disability Inclusive Development - Inclusive Futures stepped in to support the final four months of this UK aid funded project at a critical phase, allowing all participants to receive the full cycle of support.

In collaboration with partner organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs), impact was achieved through delivering BRAC’s ultra-poor graduation approach:

- **Inclusive livelihoods and income generation** activities supported participants to start a microbusiness. Informed by an inclusive market assessment, we developed tailored income generating asset packages for each individual and provided technical skills training in business and financial literacy. Participants were supported to develop business plans and provided with assistive devices and home and work adaptations.
- **Immediate relief for basic needs** was provided to individuals throughout the project via a social safety net. This included financial support in the form of a six-month consumption stipend cash transfer and healthcare subsidy, together with practical rehabilitation,



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“I feel better than I used to...I can walk longer distances without getting tired... I now do most of the house chores myself...I now interact freely with my friends and in community gatherings...it is easier to do what I want than before.”

Moses, 38, had been living with a devastating lower leg injury for 20 years when the project team referred him to hospital, where he was counselled and had an amputation. He and his family were supported throughout the process and provided with assistive devices and training, to give Moses his life back.

physiotherapy and psychosocial support, and support to access government benefits.

- **Financial inclusion** was promoted through financial literacy training and establishment of inclusive village savings and loan associations to encourage positive saving behaviour. This developed participants’ ability and confidence to prepare for and cope with financial shocks, such as loss of livestock or family tragedies, and invest in productive assets.
- **Social empowerment** was promoted with advocacy activities led by OPD partner the National Union of Women with Disabilities Uganda. We provided home coaching on life skills and individual empowerment planning to increase the confidence, aspirations and social integration of individuals and their households into communities. We supported formation of Inclusive Village Poverty Reduction Committees and sensitised village leaders on inclusion.

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Project impact



By the end of the project, almost 140 disability inclusive Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) were established, with over 200 people with disabilities holding leadership committee positions. VSLAs subsequently trained 2,700 people, including over 450 with disabilities (53% women), in enterprise development and connected participants with disabilities to local government social protection schemes. **Around 1,900 participants achieved all the indicators set to “graduate” from extreme poverty, with 74% of people with disabilities graduating.**



Three quarters of participants at least doubled their asset value from the original transfer of US\$ 300 - on average to US\$ 764 - highlighting the impact of the project. VSLAs were registered as Community Based Organisations and, at the end of the project, 12 were being considered for further support via Uganda’s National Parish Development Programme.

Discovering what works

The project produced learning resources and added to the global evidence base on disability inclusion in poverty reduction through impact evaluation, guideline development and multimedia content. Read the [disability inclusive graduation guidelines](#) informed by lessons learned and watch the [promotional video](#) present the results.

Breaking barriers for people with disabilities

Disability inclusion is critical for reaching the Global Goals and we have produced the evidence on what works in a range of different areas. We now need the allocation of resources for inclusive poverty reduction to turn evidence into action.

To find out more visit

inclusivefutures.org/employment or contact Claire Walsh at cwalsh@sightsavers.org.

Endnotes

- 1 World Health Organization (2011) World Report on Disability 2011. Geneva: World Health Organization
- 2 Results and Uplift (2017): Global State of Ultra-Poverty analysis. Accessible online at: <https://www.ultra-poverty.org/a-call-to-action/>