DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT RWANDA





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About this report

This report was developed by Lifetime Consulting, the Umbrella of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities in the fight against HIV & AIDS and for Health Promotion, the International Centre for Evidence in Disability at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, and Mastercard Foundation.

The report aims to inform Mastercard Foundation's disability and inclusion programming and strategy development. It draws on a literature review, as well as key informant interviews with relevant stakeholders, investigating the inclusion of youth with disabilities in education and employment in Rwanda. The information in this report will be built on in the next phase of this research project, through in-depth interviews with young men and women with disabilities.

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The Mastercard Foundation is one of the largest foundations in the world and has worked to advance financial inclusion and education in Africa and transform education and employment systems for Indigenous youth in Canada, improving the lives of more than 139 million people.

Their *Young Africa Works* strategy seeks to enable 30 million young women and men to secure dignified and fulfilling work by 2030.

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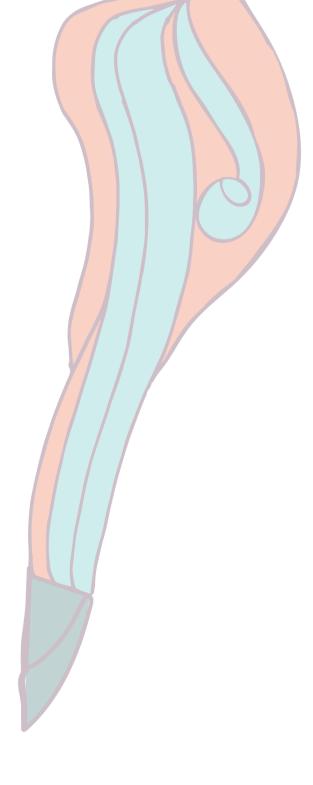
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Disability-Inclusive Education and Employment: Understanding the Context in Rwanda

About Disability

According to the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) people with disabilities include those who have: *"long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."*[1]

Estimates suggest that there are 1 billion people (15%) living with a disability globally [2]. People with disabilities often experience barriers to accessing education and employment and this can lead to an increased risk of poverty [2]. They may also face difficulties being included in other aspects of society [3].

Research in Sub-Saharan Africa shows that with the right support, people with disabilities can achieve economic success. Investing in education and employment for people with disabilities should be part of development efforts, as based on an economic rationale, as well as social justice [4].

Executive Summary

- Rwandan policies and legislature highlight a rights-based government disability agenda and a supportive policy framework on disability inclusion in education and employment.
- However, people with disabilities experience exclusion from education and employment.
- Gaps in implementing and enforcing policy and legislation contribute to this exclusion. Gaps in implementation include the limited dissemination of policies to national leadership and a lack of clarity and understanding on roles and accountability across Ministries and other key stakeholders. Implementation guidance is needed, as are monitoring and evaluation systems.
- Other challenges to implementing disability inclusion in education and employment include the lack of access to assistive technology, stigma and discrimination, and restricted funding opportunities.
- Promising initiatives were identified that promote disability inclusion, including parent support groups, and skills-training and mentorship for youth on employability readiness.
- Partnerships with OPDs and the meaningful inclusion of people with disabilities in the design and implementation of policies and programmes are vital to achieving disability inclusion.
- There is a need for further research on the experiences and perspectives of youth with disabilities in Rwanda, as well as evidence (e.g. from large-scale rigorous impact evaluations) to understand 'what works' to strengthen disability youth inclusion in education and employment.

Source: Flickr/GPE/Sarah Beeching

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Disability in Rwanda

As of 2021, 67% of the 13.3 million people in Rwanda were under the age of 25, with 39% under the age of 15 [5]. The 2019-20 Demographic Health Survey estimated the all-age prevalence of disability to be 5.9% (5+years) [6]. For youth, this ranged from 2.2% (10-14 years) to 2.7% (20-29 years). Note that this is likely a low estimate, given that the World Report on Disability estimated 15% prevalence.

Evidence suggests that people with disabilities in Rwanda experience barriers to employment and education, including stigma, inadequate teacher knowledge on disability and limited teacher training, and inaccessible buildings [7-10]. Research from the Education Development Trust, UNICEF and the Rwandan Ministry of Education suggested that there is growing government support on education for children with disabilities, including commitment to new accessible facilities. However, the report noted that implementation challenges persist [8].

Disability policy context

The Government of Rwanda ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2010 and in recent years has developed the National Policy of Persons with Disabilities and associated Four-Year Strategic Plan (2021-24). A 2018 scoping review suggested a trend towards the realisation of rights for people with disabilities since ratifying the UNCRPD [9]. However, this review also noted challenges, including discrimination, lack of awareness among healthcare professionals of disability rights, needs and support, and poor accessibility of public service buildings.

The National Policy of Persons with Disabilities and Four-Year Strategic Plan (2021-24) includes objectives to improve school enrolment and employment opportunities, improve the provision of assistive devices, and promotes digital inclusion, participation in agriculture, and inclusion in income support programmes. The National Policy of Persons with Disabilities defines disability in line with the UNCPRD and importantly acknowledges the historical, physical, social, cultural, attitudinal, and systemic barriers that have excluded persons with disabilities from participating fully in society.

Employment focus for this research: agriculture and tourism

Agriculture is the main economic activity in Rwanda, accounting for 33% of the national GDP [11]. The sector plays a critical role in absorbing the working-age population, including youth. More than 60% of young people in Rwanda report agriculture as their primary source of income [11]. Reports indicate that the government is committed to enhancing the development of the Agri-sector, with them reported to be making considerable investments in infrastructure, responsive institutions, inclusive markets, and innovative practices [12].

For Rwanda, the travel and tourism sector also represents a priority employment sector, with the industry contributing significantly to National Income and with steady growth seen over recent years; total overnight visitation to Rwanda doubled from 2010 to 2019 [13]. In 2019, the sector represented 10% of the total GDP and supported nearly 338,000 in employment (1 in 11 of working adults).

Throughout this research project, including the findings of this report, we have sought to focus on disability inclusion in these two key employment sectors, where possible.

About this study

This research aimed to assess the policy landscape relating to inclusion in education and employment for young men and women with disabilities in Rwanda aged 15-35, with particular focus on secondary, tertiary and vocational education, and employment in agriculture and tourism. Using the Policy Triangle framework [14], this study highlights:

- Key policies, programmes, and evidence on the situation for people with disabilities
- Key stakeholders and policy processes
- Policy implementation, gaps and challenges, and contextual influences
- Examples of innovation and promising practise to foster greater inclusion

This research involved a literature review and 16 key informant interviews (KIIs) with key stakeholders in Rwanda. Key informants (KIs) included representatives from organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs), government bodies, education providers, local and international NGOs, and private employers.

Additionally, a secondary analysis of the 2019-20 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) [6] was conducted to compare education and livelihood indicators for youth with and without disabilities. Disability disaggregated data analysed and published by the Disability Data Initiative [15] and the ILOSTAT database Disability Labour Market Indicators (DLMI) [16] were also included. Further details on these methods are provided in the Appendices.



The findings of the study are organised in four parts: (1) education; (2) employment; (3) social and political context; and (4) opportunities.

Box 1: Information on the quantitative findings

This report includes estimates from secondary analysis completed for this study of 2019-2020 Rwanda DHS data [6], as well as survey data analysed and published by the Disability Data Initiative [15] and ILOSTAT database [16].

Some caution is needed in interpreting and comparing these estimates. Reasons for this:

- Disability is complex to measure and different surveys use different methods.
- The Washington Group short set of questions (WG-SS)¹ are widely recommended for use in national surveys and census [17]. They have the advantage of being relatively simple, rapid and non-stigmatizing, as they don't ask directly about disability. Some surveys using the Washington Group questions estimate lower than expected disability prevalence compared to the World Report on Disability estimates of 15% all ages and 5% children.

The reasons are unclear, but may include: i) WG-SS questions don't ask about mental health (and therefore don't capture all people with disabilities); ii) variation in implementation, such as alterations to wording and/or the meaning of questions intentionally or through translation difficulties; iii) if a statement about disability is included in the survey before asking the Washington Group questions, this may result in under-reporting due to stigma associated with disability.

- The relatively low proportion of youth with disabilities results in small sample sizes for this group, which affects the precision of the estimates. It also means disaggregation of disability data by other important intersectional characteristics (e.g. urban/rural, type of functional limitations) is often not possible.
- There are potential sources of bias, for example: how questions were worded and understood by participants, the extent of interviewer training, the extent that data collection is disability-inclusive (e.g. was there equal opportunity for people with communication difficulties to take part in the survey). These sources of bias can all influence the findings.

The disability estimates presented in this report are therefore subject to error and results may not be directly comparable across different data sources. The disability disaggregated data should be considered as indicators and trends of differences, rather than exact data on inclusion in education and employment.

1 The Washington Group Short Set (WG-SS) asks about level of difficulty ('none', 'some', 'a lot', or 'cannot do') in the following functioning domains: seeing, hearing, walking/climbing stairs, remembering/concentrating, self-care or communicating. Reporting 'a lot of difficulty/ cannot do' in at least one domain is commonly used to classify people as having a disability for the purposes of disability statistics and data disaggregation.

Prevalence of disability

According to 2019-2020 DHS data analysed for this report [6], 2.7% of youth (12-35 years) reported 'a lot of difficulty/cannot do' in at least one functioning domain asked in the WG-SS [17]. This is the definition commonly used to classify people as having a disability for the purposes of disability statistics and disaggregation. This estimate was similar for men (2.9%) and women (2.6%).

Figure 1 shows the percentage reporting 'a lot of difficulty' in individual functioning domains. Overall, 11.2% reported at least 'some difficulty' in at least one functioning domain. According to the 2018 Labour Force Survey, analysed by Disability Data Initiative [15], 3.5% of youth aged 15-29 reported at least some difficulty and 1.6% reported 'a lot of difficulty/cannot do' in at least one functioning domain.

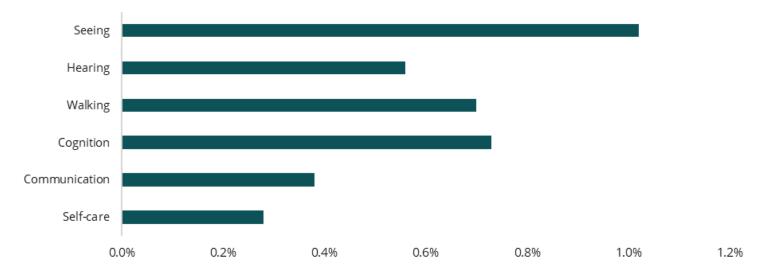


Figure 1: Proportion of youth (12-35 years) reporting a lot of difficulty/cannot do with each functional domain

Data source: 2019-2020 DHS data analysed for this report

1. Education

1.1. Education indicators disaggregated by disability status

Education level completion

As shown in Figure 2, according to the 2019-2020 DHS data, youth with disabilities (41%) were less likely to have completed primary education compared to their peers without disabilities (58%). A lower proportion of youth with disabilities had also completed secondary school (14% versus 20%).

Data from the 2018 Labour Force Survey (LFS) indicate similar trends for 15-29 year olds (primary school: 32% versus 48%; secondary school: 5% versus 15%) for people with and without disabilities, respectively. Overall, trends were similar for males and females. The DHS data indicate a slightly larger disability-gap for men compared to women, however this trend does not appear in the LFS data. Direct comparability between surveys is limited (see Box 1), but this finding on gender disparity does deserve further attention.

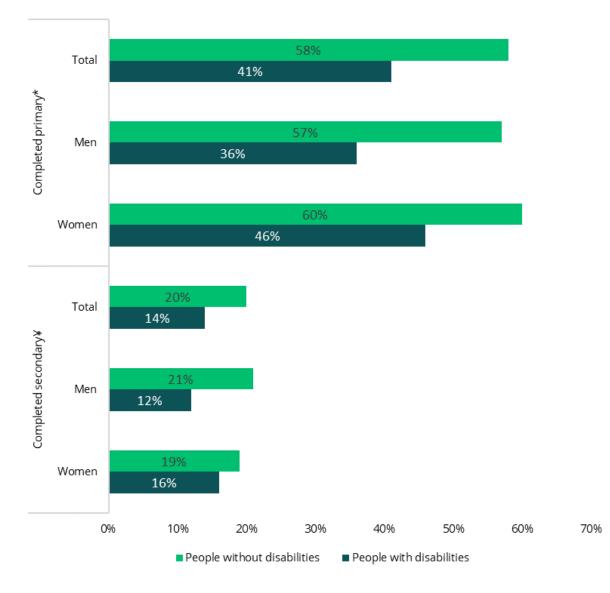


Figure 2: Education completion among youth (15-35 years)

*15+ years; ¥ 21+ years (age groups restricted to 3+ years above the expected age for completion; 12 years for primary and 18 years for secondary); Data source: 2019-2020 DHS data analysed for this report

Current school attendance (13-18 years)

Figure 3 and Table A3 in the appendix present current school attendance among young people of secondary school age (13-18 years) from the 2019-2020 DHS data analysed for this report. Figure 3 shows that young people (13-18 years) with disabilities were more likely to be out of school (39%) compared to their peers without disabilities (26%). Overall, secondary school attendance (i.e. attending secondary school out of those of secondary school age) was lower (22%) for youth with disabilities (36%). Disability disaggregated data are not presented separately for males and females due to the small sample sizes.

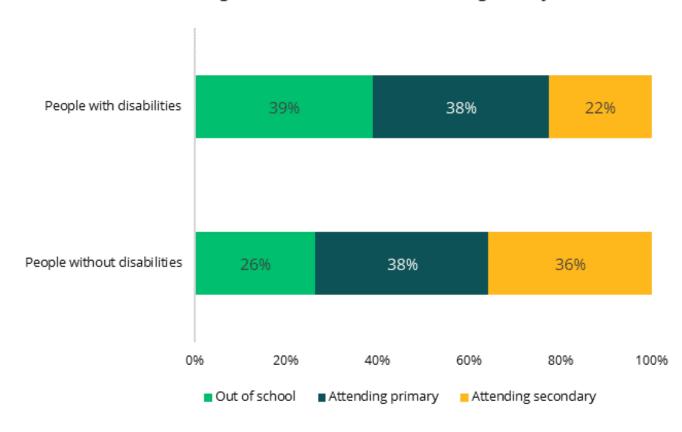


Figure 3: School attendence among 13-18 years

Data source: 2019-2020 DHS data analysed for this report

1.2. Policies and programmes

Table 1. Notable provisions in Rwanda policy and legislation related to disability-inclusive education

Notable provisions	Policy/law
People with disabilities have a right to education	 Constitution Law 01/2007 Relating to Protection of Disabled Persons in General
Learners with special educational needs must have equal access to education, promoting their autonomy	 Constitution Law 01/2007 Relating to Protection of Disabled Persons in General Revised Special Needs and Inclusive Education Policy 2018
Stakeholders in education must work in partnership to facilitate inclusion	 Revised Special Needs and Inclusive Education Policy 2018
Rates of enrolment and completion of 12 years of schooling among learners with disabilities must be monitored against targets	• Four-Year Strategic Plan 2021-24
In each Province, there must be at least one equipped inclusive centre of excellence to assess special education needs, offer referral services and provide information on disability to the local community and families	• Four-Year Strategic Plan 2021-24
In each District, there must be at least one special school of excellence	Four-Year Strategic Plan 2021-24

A full list of programmes promoting disability inclusion in education implemented in Rwanda within the past five years is provided in Annex Table A5.

Education

The Ministry of Education defines inclusive education as the process of addressing all learners' educational needs in a mainstream education setting. It is based on the principle that all learners are different, and can learn and develop differently, and therefore, the education system is expected to be adapted to fit every learner's (child's) needs.

KIs interviewed reported that Rwanda's policy environment was supportive on the improvement of access to education for children with disabilities. In particular, KIs noted the 2018 Revised Special Needs and Inclusive Education Policy, which sets out to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in education. Districts allocate budget for disability inclusion, including education programmes and purchase of assistive technology. A disability budget tracking process was slated to be available by 2021, which would allow government to monitor spending on disability inclusion. However, information on its effectiveness was not available.

Several KIs, including those from OPDs, described how policies supported people with disabilities to advocate for and secure their rights. For example, when a school is unwilling to admit a child with a disability, people can point to the provisions in policies in support of their right to education. Should a school continually breach national policy, families have the option to report the school to the Rwanda Investigation Bureau.

"[...] we found that some schools were unwilling to accept children with a visual impairment. They would tell you that they cannot teach the child. So, we showed this to the district authority and the school also told them that they are refusing to admit this child [...] We reminded them that it is a government policy. We can report this to the Rwanda Investigation Bureau." (Representative from an OPD)

When discussing tertiary and vocational training, some respondents reported that higher education institutions and universities had made substantial progress in the training of youths for readiness to enter key employment sectors, such as agriculture and tourism. In recent years, these institutions have better incorporated support for students with disabilities, ensuring that they receive the same quality of education as peers without disabilities. Examples of support now provided in education institutions included sign language interpreters.

"[...] when a student is in hospitality or culinary arts, we do everything we can to facilitate their practice with other students, without being limited by their disabil-ity." (Representative from a university)

1.3. Implementation gaps and challenges

Despite policies and progress being made, interviews with KIs highlighted a number of factors that hinder disability inclusion in education, including challenges in implementing policies. KIs reported that these challenges and the exclusion of young persons with disabilities in education had knock-on effects for later life, limiting their employability opportunities.

Gaps in policy implementation reported by KIs are listed below:

i) Lack of policy implementation and guidance

Despite improvements being seen and a generally supportive education policy environment, respondents described a lack of specific strategies or programmes focused on supporting access of youth with disabilities to secondary and tertiary education, that would help achieve policy objectives. There was also concern with regards to the impact of inconsistent inclusion and support throughout the school system. Policies and implementation strategies were needed at all levels of the school system; primary, secondary, tertiary, vocational.

"We have no specific policies for persons with disabilities, but our general policies are inclusive [...] The main challenge is where they start from; primary and secondary education [...] If they can't cope at the lower level, it will be difficult for them to be integrated into the higher level." (Representative from a higher education institution)

Kls reported that even policies were poorly disseminated and rarely known to non-specialists. This limited action across Government Ministries and other stakeholders.

We were told that all policies need to be supported by specific guidelines. Listing in general education policies that children with disabilities should be included is not enough to ensure disability inclusion. Implementers need specific guidance on how to achieve disability inclusion in education and where to get the support to do so.

ii) Limited knowledge on disability inclusion

As well as within Ministries, we were told that inclusion is not uniformly understood across education providers. As such, inclusive education is often focused on children with physical disabilities, as they are perceived easier to support. Children with a visual impairment or an intellectual disability are often not considered for inclusive education.

"[...] in terms of implementation, many schools do not accept children with mental [intellectual] disabilities. Most of the time, when they talk about inclusive education, they only consider people with physical disabilities, as people who can be helped. There is nothing for people with other disabilities, such as blindness, because their supporting tools are missing or the few that are available do not match their disability needs." (Representative from an NGO)



Education

ii) Limited knowledge on disability inclusion (cont.)

There is limited training for mainstream school teachers on inclusive education and supporting children with disabilities, either through university teaching courses or further training after graduation. This has contributed to the limited understanding of inclusion and inclusive education, and the refusal of some schools to admit children with disabilities, despite the present laws.

As well as training, OPDs recommended to us that the government hire staff to give one-to-one support to students in inclusive education, when needed. An example of such an initiative from Uwezo Youth Empowerment is provided in Section 1.4.

iii) Lack of assistive technology and inclusive materials

Exclusion from mainstream school environments was said to be associated with a lack of assistive technology and materials needed to support reasonable accommodations, such as braille materials, screen readers and wheelchairs. Assistive technologies are often expensive and cannot be sustainably used by education providers unless they are provided a continuous source of funding to maintain supply. Local manufacturing is largely unavailable and there is need to import in assistive products, increasing costs. No national programmes or funding were reported to be available to provide assistive technology to youth with disabilities. Some NGOs provide assistive products to individuals, when funding and stock are available.

1.4. Examples of innovative and promising practices

As well as gaps and challenges, KIs highlighted promising programmes and initiatives that have promoted disability-inclusive education practices.

Role models

Uwezo Youth Empowerment, a local NGO, run a number of initiatives to support inclusive education. One programme has trained 30 youth with disabilities (aged 18-35) to serve as mentors and role models for other children and youth with disabilities in education. They provide one-to-one support for students in schools. They also visit families once a week and provide practical and emotional support to children with disabilities. They also discuss school performance and issues that may be affecting their learning. We were told, however, that without funding, this volunteer scheme is likely not sustainable in the long-term.

Parent support

Further, Uwezo Youth Empowerment provide training to parents on how best to engage with their child's education, including how best to partner with teachers. They arrange for families of children with disabilities to meet four times a year, giving them the opportunity to share their experiences and offer peer-support. Whilst these sessions occur, children with disabilities are engaged in recreational activities, building relationships and community with disabled peers.

Similarly, CBM recognized that a child's education is reliant on their parents. They have therefore run programmes to provide information on disability inclusion and support to family groups. These groups receive social support and counselling, where needed. The groups also include aspects of economic empowerment.

Source: Flickr/GPE/Sarah Beeching

2.1. Employment and technology indicators disaggregated by disability status

In the 2019-2020 DHS data, respondents were asked if they were employed at the time of the survey. Men and women with disabilities were slightly less likely to report being employed (men 19-35 years: 87% and 93%; women 19-35 years: 64% and 69%, for people with and without disabilities respectively).

Among those working, men and women with disabilities were slightly more likely to be engaged in seasonal/occasional work (Table A4 in the appendix). The ILOSTAT data [16] suggest a larger disability gap (Table 2); 47% youth with disabilities were not in education, employment or training (NEET), compared to 21% for people without disabilities (21%). The ILOSTAT data [16] also indicate that monthly earnings for people with disabilities are lower (80%).

According to the 2019-2020 DHS data, women with disabilities were slightly less likely to be literate (79%) compared to their peers without disabilities (89%). Use of internet (ever) was generally relatively low (<30% for men and <20% women) and was slightly lower among men with disabilities (19%) compared to those without disabilities (29%). Mobile phone ownership was similar for people with and without disabilities.

Table 2. Estimates from the ILOSTAT database Disability Labour Market Indicators (DLMI), with 2019 as reference year [16]

	People with disabilities	People without disabilities
Inactivity rate	74%	43%
Proportion employed with less than basic education	37%	11%
Proportion employed in informal employment	78%	71%
Proportion of youth (15-29) not in employment, education or training	47%	21%
Monthly earnings for persons with disabilities (as % of earnings for persons without)	80%	

2.2. Policies and programmes

Table 3. Notable provisions in Rwanda policy and legislation related to disability-inclusive employment

Notable provisions	Policy/law
People with disabilities have a right to employment, free from direct or indirect discrimination	 Constitution Law 01/2007 Relating to Protection of Disabled Persons in General Labour Law (Law 13/2009)
People with disabilities must be provided working conditions that accommodate their disability	 Law 01/2007 Relating to Protection of Disabled Persons in General Labour Law (Law 13/2009)
People with disabilities are entitled to 'conducive employment environments'	 Law 01/2007 Relating to Protection of Disabled Persons in General
The government will support people with disabilities with assistance programmes, including micro-financing training, income support programmes, and opportunities in agriculture	 National Employment Policy 2007 (revised 2015) National Policy of Persons with Disabilities and Four-Year Strategic Plan (2021-24)
The government will provide incentives for public and private sector organisations to promote the employment of people with disabilities	 National Employment Policy 2007 (revised 2015)
The government will improve the access of persons with disability to existing social protection programmes	 National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) 2011 revised in 2013

The aforementioned Four-Year Strategic Plan 2021-24 includes employment-related targets including:

- Training 12,500 people with disabilities per year in entrepreneurship
- 600 people with disabilities accessing financial services to create their own jobs (by 2024)
- 40% of people with disabilities trained in accessible agricultural skills (by 2024)

A full list of programmes promoting disability inclusion in employment implemented in Rwanda within the past five years is provided in Annex Table A4.

Employment

KIs discussed the positive role that various policies have had for youth with disabilities in employment. Policies included the National Social Protection Strategy 2011 and the aforementioned National Policy of Persons with Disabilities and associated Four-Year Strategic Plan (2021-24). Such policies included specific provisions for people with disabilities in employment, promoting the role of youth with disabilities. KIs were unaware of specific policies or national programmes to promote the employment of young persons with disabilities in the key sectors of agriculture or tourism.

The National Council of Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) and the National Union of Disability Organizations of Rwanda (NUDOR) were reported institutions working well to support people with disabilities in employment. NUDOR, an umbrella organisation of OPDs, has experienced increased support from the government in recent years.

That said, KIs told us that people with disabilities have been excluded from employment opportunities. This can arise from what one participant described as automatic discrimination.

"In the tourism sector, they have been discriminated against automatically. Those hotel managers cannot give them the job because they see them as incapable people. Especially in tourism, inclusion is still very low compared to other sectors." (Representative from an NGO)

Employment opportunities were reportedly limited in the priority sectors of agriculture and tourism, although the reasons for this need to be explored further in interviews with youth with disabilities.



2.3. Implementation gaps and challenges

Analysis of the data highlighted several gaps and challenges in implementing policies and programmes on disability inclusion in employment.

i) Lack of policy enforcement

With the available policies and supporting institutions, KIs told us that those in leadership positions in Rwanda should know about employment support for people with disabilities. The Ministry of Public Service and Labour also reportedly hires 30 labour inspectors to monitor the day-to-day implementation of employment policies. However, KIs reported limited enforcement of employment laws and policies specific to disability, and that many in leadership roles were unaware of the structure in place to monitor and evaluate implementation at different levels. The understanding of roles, responsibilities and accountability mechanisms for disability inclusive employment was said to be lacking.

"[...] the weakness is uncoordinated implementation and the provision of the policies and programmes. It is not clear what exactly should be done. At some point, the policy is there, yet there is no strategy to implement the policy and no effective monitoring. For instance, the National Employment Policy (NEP) is there, but then you realise that the number of youths with disabilities benefiting from this business development support programme is very small. It is not very clear how youth with disabilities should easily get such opportunities." (Representative from an NGO)

There were calls from KIs for an employment quota of people with disabilities, to ensure opportunities are available. Further, we were told that private employers receive little incentive from the government to employ people with disabilities and there were suggestions that such incentives be made available to further encourage companies to promote disability inclusion.

ii) Short programme length and restricted budgets

Moreover, it was said to be difficult to assess the impact of employment programmes for youth with disabilities when most programme cycles are short in length. Programme implementers reported being rushed to complete projects without the time to appropriately assess need, conduct baseline assessments, generate impact and evaluate effectiveness. All contributed to the limited sustainability of programmes.

"I would say the weakness is that we are implementing this as a pilot for only two years. And you know, when you start on a problem, sometimes you realise at the end or as you implement that many other issues need intervention. And again, two years is too short to see the impact." (Representative from an NGO)

Limited funding contributed to these shorter programmes. Without funding, programme implementers reported having limited reach and impact, and they have faced difficulties in developing sustainable disability-inclusive employment initiatives.

2.4. Examples of innovative and promising practices

The KI interviews highlighted several examples of promising practices to improve access to employment for young people with disabilities.

Mentorship and training for youth and employers

UWEZO Youth Empowerment provide mentorship in agriculture to youth with disabilities in the Northern Province of Rwanda. The organisation was founded by youth with disabilities and provides wide ranging support, including programmes to prepare youth for entrepreneurship, including skills in financial management. The organisation also formed an online radio show to engage young persons with disabilities in sharing opportunities and learning in key life areas, including education and employment. More information can be found on the organisation and these initiatives here: https://www.uwezoradio.com

Targeted employment and connection to the community

Masaka Farms, producer of yoghurt and other dairy products, made it a company objective to employ D/deaf youth. Currently they employ close to 40 D/deaf or hard of hearing persons. As well as providing employment, this initiative has connected D/deaf and hard of hearing people, creating a community within the organisation. Employees have reported being previously isolated, with the organisation giving them community and peer support. Not all employees were able to communicate with sign language at the start of their employment, and Masaka Farms partnered with the Rwanda National Union of the Deaf to teach them, so all could communicate together and be better connected to the Deaf community.

Partnership

The Umurimo Kuri Bose (UKB) programme, meaning "Employment for All" in Kinyarwanda, is a USAID -funded programme established in 2020, with an investment of USD \$1.5 million over two years. USAID Umurimo Kuri Bose aims to support employment and economic empowerment of 1,560 youth in 12 districts in Rwanda, of which 1,200 are youth with disabilities. The programme aims to train employers on disability mainstreaming and supporting youth with disabilities in the workplace, with information on how to make reasonable accommodations. This includes communication. Further, the programme provides youth with disabilities with skills and employability training. The programme also includes internship placements at prestigious Rwandan organisations. Organisations support trained youth through work-placements, teaching them skills in the realworld. Further, the UKB programme provides sign language training for deaf youth and training on the use of assistive technologies (including computer programmes) and braille to blind youth.

Key to the programme is implementation partnership. It is implemented by the Education Development Center, in partnership with Umbrella of Organizations of People with Disabilities in the Fight against HIV and AIDS in Health Promotion (UPHLS), Akazi Kanoze Access (AKA), Rwanda Union of the Blind (RUB), Rwanda National Union of the Deaf (RNUD), and UWEZO Youth Empowerment. Partnership with organisations of persons with disabilities throughout project design and implementation hopes to ensure impact and long-term sustainability.

Employment

Empowerment

Many people with disabilities find it difficult to access employment, yet also find it difficult to access capital to start their own business. Empowerment is important. CBM, working in partnership with NUDOR, aimed to empower people with disabilities with access to small loans and support through village saving schemes. They established the Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) to bring together small groups of people with disabilities to save together and to provide small loans from these savings, when they have an opportunity for income generating activities or to set up their own business. To support entrepreneurship further, CBM provided training in financial management and entrepreneurial skills. The programme aimed to support 14,000 people with disabilities across four districts in Rwanda. The aim is that such empowerment will lead to long-lasting impact on income generation.

Similar examples include establishing cooperatives of people with disabilities, who receive training, equipment and financial support to set up their own profit-making enterprise in the community.



Source: Flickr/Ministry of Environment

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3. Social and political context

As well as information on policy and implementation, the data highlighted contextual factors that frame access to education and employment for young persons with disabilities in Rwanda. KIs generally felt there is a conducive environment to support the inclusion of young persons with disabilities in education and employment, because of local authorities' commitment and support to policy and programme implementation. There has also been a movement away from a charity model of disability to a rights-based approach since adoption of the UNCRPD. This positive environment was thus favourable and responsive to advocacy efforts from OPDs and youth with disabilities.

"[...] efforts from the government and the local leaders has become one of the enablers. You go to the field and talk with authorities whenever you have the initiative or programme to implement. There is a level of understanding. At least you do not start from scratch." (Representative from an NGO)

i) Funding

That said, participants felt that implementation of national policies and programmes is generally driven by funders, NGOs and bilateral organisations that set priorities. These priorities may not always match local needs and solutions. In other instances, there was simply no funding available for innovative projects that could support youth with disabilities.

"So, the donors come with their conditions and they set the budget [...] Sometimes you develop your programmes and implement them, but restrictions sometimes push you to deviate from your innovations and you only implement depending on what is on the table." (Representative from an NGO)

KIs called for greater collaboration between funders and implementing partners to identify funding priorities.

Structural barriers also remain to disability inclusion, and KIs said that there is a reluctance to meet the costs associated with making buildings accessible and assistive technology available. Further, organisations such as the National Council of Persons with Disabilities do not have adequate funding to best support people with disabilities in priority areas, including education and employment.

Social and political context

ii) Community attitudes

In addition, KIs felt that stigma and discrimination towards people with disabilities is still present in Rwanda, creating barriers to education and employment. We were told that many people with disabilities are seen to be the object of charity and a group that cannot contribute meaningfully to society.

"The first one is the negative mindset that is culturally based. The fact that someone with a disability is someone who can only be helped for free. That means the charity is not something that will go soon. In addition, there is also a feeling that if you have a disability, whatever you are given, you should be grateful." (Representative from an OPD)

As a result of these attitudes, many in the community are not yet comfortable or confident engaging people with disabilities.

"[...] You will find that people usually avoid you. For example, at church, other people will tend to gravitate towards grouping together, and you find yourself left standing or sitting alone." (Representative from an OPD)

Prejudice and discrimination in the community could have a negative impact on the self-esteem of youth with disabilities and families. When lacking in confidence, we were told that youth with disabilities are less likely to seek education and employment opportunities.

KIs told us that programmes in recent years have shown that youth with disabilities can achieve in education and employment, but prejudice towards their capacity remains. Improving awareness on the achievements of youth with disabilities was called for to dispel these beliefs. Having disabled role models visible in media and public campaigns was said to show the community that youth with disabilities can thrive.

iii) Assistive technology

Lack of access to assistive technology was cited as a major barrier to quality education and access to employment for young persons with disabilities. Assistive products are often not available in the Rwandan market and those available tend to be expensive. As a result, youth with disabilities are often not able to buy them, especially when they or their families are not earning income. As previously noted, there were no national programmes known to KIs that support assistive technology.

Social and political context

iv) Disability-associated costs

Throughout education and employment, one of the major challenges for youth with disabilities is the extra cost of living with a disability. Primary among these costs was accessible transport. Programme implementers described how youth with disabilities often drop out of programmes because the cost of transport to attend is too high, especially if accessible transport is needed. For many, this often makes attending school or a job too expensive.

KIs called for tax breaks for youth looking to get into the job market, so that they could more easily afford transport and other associated costs. For programmes, it was recommended to facilitate transport for youth with disabilities, where possible.



4. Opportunities

Throughout the interviews, KIs indicated opportunities with regards to the scope of work, as well as stakeholders for strategic partnerships.

KIs told us that most programmes are implemented by international and local NGOs, with support from bilateral organisations. These organisations were said to be best placed to reach youth with disabilities in rural settings and may be important to partner with. As well as NGOs, organisations to seek partnership with include OPDs and especially NUDOR, who have worked in disability advocacy, education and employment for a number of years, with experience in policy development and programme implementation. They have learned lessons on what works and what does not in disability-inclusive programming.

We were told by funders that one key area of opportunity throughout a programme was to develop local organisational capacity, for long-term sustainability. This includes skills in seeking and applying for funding, financial management, and skills in training others to deliver the programme activities. This was stated as an opportunity to develop local structures that will promote long-term implementation and impact.

When discussing participation in decision-making processes, some KIs stated that persons with disabilities are consulted and that they are encouraged to participate in policy development processes in Rwanda. The aforementioned UKB programme, funded by USAID, was stated an example of an initiative that did well to include consultation with youth with disabilities throughout development and implementation. Often this consultation is facilitated by an initial needs assessment by programme implementers, to ascertain priority targets for the programme. Once initial ideas are developed, programme implementers approach potential implementation partners, including OPDs. The programme is then refined and implemented in partnership.

However, this was a best-case scenario and many of the KIs noted deficiencies in this process. We were told by informants from OPDs that they and youth with disabilities are often invited into the process too late, once the policies or programmes are already developed. They are expected to validate programmes and policies, rather than be embedded from setup as a valued partner in development and implementation.

KIs said that key partners, such as OPDs, and beneficiaries of the policy/programme, must be involved from the start of the process.

"We are invited during the validation phase of the policies [...] The draft was presented to us at the end, the final policy. So, in that case, it was very difficult for us to add some in-puts." (Representative from an NGO)

Programme and policy recommendations

This section outlines key recommendations to strengthen the inclusion of young persons with disabilities in education and employment in the agriculture and tourism sectors.

For policy developers

- People with disabilities should be proactively employed in government and visible in the country. Government can lead the way in promoting disability inclusive employment.
- There is a need for continued dissemination of national policies that promote the inclusion of people with disabilities at all levels of leadership in Rwanda. No school or employer should be unaware of their obligations. Policy implementation may be promoted through guidelines and targeted training.
- Further, develop monitoring and accountability processes, including regular inspections, to ensure compliance.
- Young persons with disabilities should be supported to access affordable, accessible transportation to ensure access to education and employment.

For programmes and policy implementers

- Guidance is available from the Rwanda National Policy of Persons with Disabilities on mainstreaming disability. Use this information to guide programme development and to help other organisations understand their obligations. Engage with the government where necessary to ensure that policy guidance is met.
- Employment programmes are lacking in agriculture and tourism. Education programmes are lacking that target secondary and tertiary education. Focus programmes in these areas.
- When designing a programme, ensure the effective and valued partnership of OPDs (such as NUDOR) and youth with disabilities from the first stage of planning. Sign a Memorandum of Understanding with OPDs and work in partnership for implementation. Ensure the capacity-building and funding of OPDs so that they may develop the skills and experience to manage large-scale programmes and interventions.
- Develop programmes with sufficient length and budget to generate impact. Strive to conduct an appropriate needs assessment to maximise impact and give sufficient time for development phases. Ensure efforts to build in components that will ensure long-term sustainability, rather than short-term implementation. This includes building capacity of local implementation partners.
- Programmes often fail because of limited and sustainable access to assistive technology. Invest in the local manufacture and maintenance of assistive products, as well as distribution systems, to ensure that youth with disabilities are not left behind in education and employment because of lacking assistive technology
- Continue building disability awareness in all programme activities. Limited awareness and prejudice still create a barrier to education and employment. In awareness-raising activities, highlight the capabilities of people with disabilities, sharing stories of success. Engage people with disabilities as ambassadors and role models, not just in educating the general community, but also to support the self-esteem and aspirations of youth with disabilities.
- Donors, especially large international organisations, should be aware of power dynamics when bringing their own agendas. Donors should collaborate with local authorities, NGOs and OPDs to conduct a needs assessment to identify local funding priorities. Donors should not come with a pre-defined agenda that may not fit the needs of the people with disabilities in Rwanda and specific districts.

For researchers

1. Explore lived experiences of youth with disabilities

- From the perspective of youth with disabilities, investigate the challenges, enablers, agency and aspirations relating to education and work in Rwanda. Specifically:
 - Experiences in skills training, mentorship and other support to encourage readiness and participation in education and employment
 - Access to assistive technology and digital skills as enablers to education and work
 - Participation across the agricultural value chain and tourism sector, including participation in targeted programmes
 - Transition from secondary to tertiary education
 - Specific individual, institutional and system level challenges faced by girls/women with disabilities in accessing and progressing through education
 - Experiences of participation in the development of programmes and policies

2. Explore experiences and perspectives of education providers and employers

- Explore perspectives and provisions on disability inclusion among teachers and management in mainstream secondary and tertiary education
- Assess the extent and nature of training on disability inclusion within teacher training curriculum and continuing professional development
- Explore the experiences of employers in supporting disability-inclusive employment

3. Evaluate the impact of interventions and programmes

- There is a need for evidence on 'what works' for strengthening livelihoods, education inclusion and to improve attitudes and reduce stigma towards disability
- Rigorous evaluations on the impact of programmes and interventions in these areas are needed. This report has highlighted various programmes being implemented in Rwanda. Priority interventions/programmes to evaluate should be determined collaboratively with OPDs, NGOs (and policy makers). Evaluations should assess outcomes as well as processes, to understand mechanisms and specific components that lead to change.

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Appendix A: Methodology

This report forms part of a multi-country study, investigating disability-inclusive education and employment across seven countries in Sub-Saharan Africa; Ghana, Senegal, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya. This report drew from two main sources of data. First, a rapid online literature review was undertaken to identify relevant policies and programmes regarding disability and inclusion of youth with disabilities in education and employment in Rwanda.

Qualitative data collection

Next, in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with 16 key informants to gain insights into the process, context, and actors involved in selected policies and programmes, as well as identify challenges, gaps, opportunities, and examples of best practices about education and employment for young people with disabilities. In Rwanda, the research focused on the sectors of agriculture and tourism selected in discussion with Mastercard Foundation.

Relevant key informants were identified through the document review and input from local partners, as well as through snowball sampling. Table A1 below provides a breakdown of participant characteristics.

Key informant type	n
Government	2
Organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs)	4
NGOs	1
INGOs	2
Education providers	4
Employers	2
Individual experts	1
Total	16

Table A1. Sample of Key Informants

Interviews were conducted in Kinyarwanda and English languages by Gatera Fiston Kitema and Peter Irunga at Lifetime Consulting from May to June 2022. Topic guides for the interviews were developed in discussion with the wider project team, Mastercard Foundation and two Advisory groups comprising youth with disabilities based in Uganda and Ghana (hub countries for the wider multicountry study). Prior to data collection, researchers participated in training workshops (jointly with other country teams) covering ethical protocols, interview techniques, maintaining data quality, and in-depth discussion of topic guides. These were pilot-tested, and researchers participated in feedback workshops after conducting at least one pilot interview.

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and the University of Rwanda - College of Medicine and Health Sciences institutional review board (UR-CMHS-IRB). All participants were provided information about the study, and informed consent was obtained (signed or verbal) before the interview.

Appendix A: Methodology

Qualitative data collection (cont.)

Interviews lasted between 35 to 70 minutes. Interviews were conducted face-to-face (n=9) or via phone/zoom (n=7) as convenient for the participant. All interviews were audio-recorded where consent was given (n=16).

Interviews were transcribed into Kinyarwanda and translated to English for analysis. Researchers participated in an analysis workshop (jointly with other country teams in this project) to discuss approaches to coding and analysis. A coding scheme and codebook were developed based on study objectives and emerging themes. Transcripts were coded using the atlas-ti software and analysed thematically.

Quantitative data analysis

A secondary analysis of the 2019-20 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) was conducted to compare education and livelihood indicators for youth with and without disabilities. The DHS uses a two-stage process to select participants across the five provinces in Rwanda. In the first sampling stage, 500 enumeration areas were selected from the fourth Rwanda Population and Housing Census (RPHC). In the second stage, households within these areas were selected according the DHS sampling protocol. For more details on the sampling strategy, please see the survey report [16]. The analysis in this study considered the sampling design.

The DHS collected data on disability using the Washington Group Short Set. These questions are widely used for measuring disability in census and surveys. They are designed to identify people with difficulties in basic universal activities who are at higher risk of participation restrictions in an unaccommodating environment. The questions ask about level of difficulty ('none', 'some', 'a lot' or 'cannot do') with: seeing, hearing, walking, remembering/concentrating, self-care or communicating. People reporting 'a lot of difficulty' or 'cannot do' in at least one activity were classified as having a disability, for the purposes of disability statistics and data disaggregation.

The proportion of youth with and without disabilities were calculated for different educational and work indicators (presented in the main report). The differences between youth with and without disabilities were tested for statistical significance using logistic regression analysis. The survey sampling design was taken into account in this analysis. Comparisons by disability status were calculated separately for males and females, where possible (i.e. if sufficient sample sizes). Data on livelihood, literacy and technology use were collected separately for men and women and due to sampling approach generating combined results (i.e. for men and women together) is not possible.

Tables of results are available from the next page.

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ducation completion by disability sta
Education
Table A2.

	Full sample (males and females)	les and females	(Males only			Females only		
	Youth without disabilities	Youth with disabilities	Odds ratio* (95% Cl)	Youth without disabilities	Youth with disabilities	Odd ratio (95% Cl)	Youth without disabilities	Youth with disabilities	Odds ratio* (95% Cl)
Comple	Completed primary school (15+ years)	ol (15+ years)							
	n=18,250	n=523		n=8148	n=244		n=10,102	n=279	
No	42%	%65	1.9 (1.4-2.4)	43%	%79	2.3 (1.7-3.1)	40%	54%	1.8 (1.4-2.3)
Yes	68%	41%	Reference	57%	%9E	Reference	%09	46%	Reference
Comple	Completed secondary school (21+ years)	100l (21+ years)							
	n=11,122	n=358		n=4760	n=163		n=6362	n=195	
No	%08	86%	1.5 (1.1-2.1)	%62	%88	2.0 (1.2-3.4)	81%	84%	1.2 (0.8-1.9)
Yes	20%	14%	Reference	21%	12%	Reference	19%	16%	Reference

Odds Ratio adjusted for sex; age groups are restricted to 3+ years above the expected age for completion

Table A3. Current school attendance (13-18 years)

School attendance Not attending school		39%	
		39%	
			Reference
Attending primary 38%		38%	0.6 (0.5-0.9)**
Attending secondary 36%		22%	0.4 (0.3-0.6)**
Among youth attending school N=5729	59	N=115	
Attending primary 52%		63%	Reference
Attending secondary 48%		37%	1.6 (1.1-2.4)**

* Odds Ratio adjusted for sex; ** statistically significant difference at p<0.05

Appendix B: Tables of quantitative results

	Men			Women		
	Without disabilities	With disabilities	Adjusted odds ratio*** (95% Cl)	Without disabilities	With disabilities	Adjusted odds ratio*** (95% Cl)
Work status (19-35)	n=2813	n=79		n=7474	n=209	
Currently working (19-35 years)	93%	87%	0.4 (0.2-0.9)	69%	64%	0.7 (0.6-0.9)
Frequency of work* (19-35 years)						
All year	49%	35%	Reference	53%	47%	Reference
Seasonally/occasional	51%	65%	1.9 (1.1-3.3)	47%	53%	1.5 (1.0-2.1)
Literacy** (15-35 years)	N=4081	66=N		N=10,072	N=263	
Cannot read at all	12%	17%	1.6 (0.9-2.7)	11%	21%	1.9 (1.4-2.7)
Able to read only part of sentence	%6	16%		8%	%6	
Able to read whole sentence	79%	67%	Reference	81%	70%	Reference
Technology (15-35 years)						
Ever used internet	29%	19%	0.7 (0.4-1.3)	17%	15%	0.9 (0.7-1.2)
Owns a mobile phone	58%	55%	0.9 (0.5-1.4)	46%	40%	0.7 (0.5-0.9)
Use mobile phone for financial transactions	84%	77%	0.7 (0.4-1.3)	87%	83%	1.1 (0.6-1.9)

Table A4: work, literacy and technology by disability status

Appendix B: Tables of quantitative results

* Among those who worked in the past year; ** excludes 25 people without disabilities as no card with required language and six people with disabilities who were blind; *** Odds Ratio (95% Confidence Interval adjusted for age; n=weighted numbers);

Programme	Implementers & Funders	Category and type of work	Target group	Region	Further details
Promoting Inclu- sive Access to Ser- vices and Economic Opportunities for Persons with Disa- bilities in Rwanda (2018-2020)	Humanity and Inclu- sion, Ministry of Local Government, NUDOR (National Union of Disability Organisations of Rwanda) Funded by US Em- bassy	Livelihoods: • Capacity building of local actors • Community mobilization for better inclusion • Support cooperatives of people with disabilities to improve live- lihood activities	All impair- ment types Working age	Rutsiro and Nyamasheke	Details, includ- ing figures on people support- ed, <u>here</u>
Expanding Access to Inclusive Basic Education (EXACTEIII) for chil- dren with disabili- ties in Rwanda (2018-2020)	Humanity and Inclu- sion Funded by UNICEF	Education: • Capacity building for inclusive education activists • Monitor local education activists to improve identification and mobilisation of children with disabilities out of school • Create and support inclusive education clubs • Train Teacher Trainers of Train- ers on implementation of inclu- sive education • Create accessible spaces with modernized equipment/ learning materials • Support removal of physical barriers at school	All impair- ment types School age	National	Details, includ- ing figures on people support- ed, <u>here</u>
HELASIA: Health, Education & Liveli- hood Africa: a Sus- tainable Inclusion Approach (2020-2022)	Humanity and Inclu- sion and NUDOR Funded by NORAD	 Education and livelihoods: Aims to build effective partnership and implementation of policies, programmes and services to improve rights and quality of life for people with disabilities. Developing inclusive policy reforms, with shared plans between OPDs and public authorities Expanding community mobilisation Creating directory of services locally accessible Awareness raising and capacity building activities 	All impair- ment types Age group unknown	Nyamasheke and Rutsiro	Details <u>here</u>

Programme	Implementers & Funders	Category and type of work	Target group	Region	Further details
Secure livelihood	Rwanda National Union of the Deaf Funding unclear	Livelihoods: • Aims to strengthen the ability of deaf people to make a living, with a focus on building skills for employability and entrepre- neurship, microcredit and agri- business	Deaf people Age group unknown	Unclear	Details <u>here</u>
Access to educa- tion for refugee children with disa- bilities	Initiative for Refu- gees living with Disa- bility (IRD)	Education • To improve the access to educa- tion for refugee children with disabilities the refugee camp of Gihembe (rural area) as well as in the town of Kigali (urban area) in Rwanda		Gihembe and Kigali town	Details <u>here</u>
Rwanda Assistive Technology Access (RATA)	RATA	Education and livelihoods: Aims to widen participation, in- crease educational and employ- ment opportunities for people with disabilities through the use of Assistive Technology. • Alongside community workers in different areas of Rwanda, RATA intervenes in 4 areas which are: "Raising Awareness and Advoca- cy on the use and importance of Assistive technology, Capacity development, Inclusive educa- tion and Innovation".	All impair- ment types Age group unknown	National	Details <u>here</u> See also their policy brief <u>here</u>
Helping people with disabilities in Rwanda to be fi- nancially inde- pendent (2020-2023)	СВМ	 Livelihoods: Aims to help people with disabilities earn a living and be financially independent by: Enabling them to access small loans and support through village savings schemes. Setting up and supporting Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) Training group members in financial management, entrepreneurship, improved farming methodologies, climate resilience, rain water harvesting and solar energy 	All impair- ment types Working age	Nyanza, Ru- hango, Rutsi- ro and Rusizi	Available <u>here</u>

Programme	Implementers & Funders	Category and type of work	Target group	Region	Further details
Umurimo Kuri Bose "Employment for All" Programme (2020 – 2022)	Education Develop- ment Centre, Um- brella of Organiza- tions of People with Disabilities in the Fight against HIV and AIDS in Health Promotion Funded by USAID	Livelihoods: Aims to increase youth employa- bility skills and to promote an inclusive and enabling environ- ment for youth with disabilities to enter the workforce. • Workplace development train- ings and work-based learning opportunities • Building the capacity of local advocacy groups to promote equity, inclusion and empower- ment	Youth with and without disabilities	12 districts of Rwanda	Further infor- mation is availa- ble in the latest quarterly report <u>here</u>
Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze (2016-present)	Education Develop- ment Centre Funded by USAID	Livelihood: Aim to improve young people's work readiness skills and employ- ment opportunities through the following activities: • Assessing and sharing data on employment opportunities • Building capacity of local organi- zations to deliver employment skills preparation and job inter- mediation services • Training youth in relevant job skills for work and self- employment • Growing the Akazi Kanoze net- work of local youth-serving organ- izations and employment re- sources	Youth with disabilities	23 districts of Rwanda	Further infor- mation can be found <u>here</u>

Programme	Implementers & Funders	Category and type of work	Target group	Region	Further details
Workplace Learn- ing Support Pro- gramme (WPLSP)/ Igira Kumurimo program (2017-2021)	MIFOTRA, Belgian Development Coop- eration (DGD), Asso- ciation for the Pro- motion of Education and Training Abroad (APEFE)	Livelihood: Aimed to provide quality, inclusive and equitable dual training for Rwandan youth and women. • Provided equipment and capaci- ty building to TVET schools and companies • Assisted the Federation of the Private Sector in establishing the IMANZI Business Institute • Established the Fashion and Design Department at IPRC Kigali • Trained providers in the imple- mentation of dual training to	Youth, includ- ing youth with disabili- ties	National	Further infor- mation available <u>here</u>

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