

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



January 2023

Recognizing barriers to the inclusion of young people with disabilities in education and employment, a landscape report on Rwanda was developed by the International Centre for Evidence on Disability at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Lifetime Consulting, in partnership with Mastercard Foundation. This brief summarizes trends related to employment and education for young people with disabilities the report.

Key Findings

- Rwandan policies and legislation highlight a disability rights-based agenda and a supportive policy framework on disability inclusion in education and employment.
- However, people with disabilities experience greater exclusion from education and employment than people without disabilities.
- Gaps in resourcing and enforcing policy and lack of clarity and understanding on roles and accountability contribute to this exclusion.
- Other challenges to disability inclusion in education and employment include the lack of access to assistive technology, and stigma and discrimination.
- Promising initiatives to promote disability inclusion include parent support groups and skills-training for youth on employability skills.
- Future research should include participatory projects that amplify young people's voices, as well as rigorous impact evaluations to identify effective interventions.

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The Rwandan Context in Brief

5.9% of Rwandans are disabled according to the 2019-20 DHS, but this is likely an underestimate.

39% of the country's population of 13.3 million people are under the age of 15 years old.

Young people with disabilities are nearly
2 x
more likely to be out of school than young people without disabilities.

Between youth with and without disabilities, there is a
26%
gap in rates of being not in education, employment, or training.

Policies Reveal a Disability Rights Agenda and are Supportive of Disability Inclusion

The Government of Rwanda in recent years developed the National Policy of Persons with Disabilities and associated Four-Year Strategic Plan (2021-24). This shows a commitment in its provisions to realizing the rights of people with disabilities. The National Policy of Persons with Disabilities and Four-Year Strategic Plan (2021-24)

include objectives to improve school enrolment and employment opportunities, provision of assistive devices, and also promote digital inclusion, participation in agriculture, and income support programs for young people with disabilities.

- ✓ Disability discussed in the Constitution
- ✓ Standalone Policy on Disability
- ✓ Disability discussed in National Development Plan
- ✓ People with disabilities have a right to employment, free from discrimination
- ✓ Reasonable workplace accommodations for disability
- ✓ Quotas in contracts or jobs or incentives for employing PWD
- ✓ Legislation enshrining right of people with disabilities to equal access to education
- ✓ Access to inclusive education, including provisions required for specialised education

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People with Disabilities in are Excluded from Education and Employment



People with disabilities in Rwanda are less likely to have completed primary education or secondary education compared to their peers without disabilities.

Young people (13-18 years) with disabilities are more likely to be out of school (39%) compared to their peers without disabilities (23%), and are more likely to be at a lower level of schooling.



47% of Rwandan youth with disabilities are not in education, employment or training (NEET) compared to 21% for people without disabilities. Monthly earnings for people with disabilities are lower than earnings among people without disabilities. Rates of literacy and internet usage are also lower among people with disabilities.

Key challenges include...



Lack of specific policies, strategies or programs focused on supporting access of youth with disabilities to secondary and tertiary education, and weak policy enforcement.

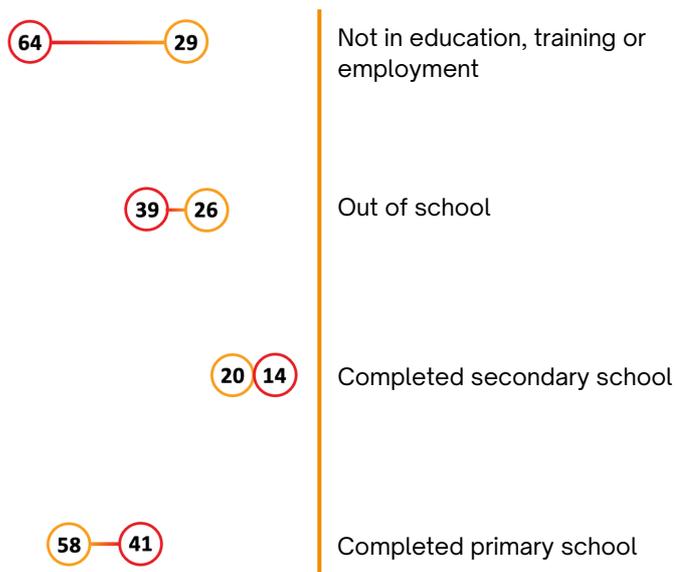


Lack of assistive technology and inclusive materials.



Short program length and restricted budgets.

Education, employment, and training disparities between people **with** and **without** disabilities (%).



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Initiatives to Promote Disability Inclusion for Youth Include...



Training of youth for readiness to enter key employment sectors, such as agriculture and tourism.



Policies which support people with disabilities to engage in self-advocacy.



Mentorship programs which use positive role models with disabilities to provide support to peers.



Parent programs for the families of children with disabilities, providing peer-support.



Initiatives which preferentially employ youth with disabilities and create community in organizations.



Village savings and loans groups to support self-employment and entrepreneurship.

Opportunities to Strengthen Practice and Generate Research are Clear

- People with disabilities should be proactively employed in government and visible in the country, including in government roles.
- Stigma and discrimination are still present in Rwanda, creating barriers to education and employment, and effective strategies to address these are needed.
- One of the major challenges for youth with disabilities is the extra cost of living with disability. Tax breaks, social protection, and other poverty alleviation programs are needed to meet these additional costs.
- Evaluations of programming approaches should examine outcomes as well as processes, to understand mechanisms and components that lead to impact.
- There is a need to develop local organizational capacity to seek funding, financial management and skills in training others to deliver program activities to improve sustainability.

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Acknowledgements and References

Data sources: The report upon which this brief is based drew from four main sources of data: a rapid online literature review to identify relevant policy and programs regarding disability and inclusion of youth with disabilities in education and employment; in-depth qualitative interviews with key informants in Rwanda; a secondary analysis of the 2019-20 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS); and analyses of data from the ILOSTAT database.

Notes: All graph figures are rounded up to the nearest whole numbers. Estimates should be interpreted with caution and considered as indication of trends rather than precise estimates. Reasons for this caution include challenges with disability measurement in surveys and small sample sizes. Further data and references are available in the full report. Image credit: Umbrella of Organizations of People with Disabilities in the Fight against HIV and AIDS and in Health promotion (UPHLS).



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