

# Disability-Inclusive Employment: Understanding the Context



February 2023

**Recognizing barriers to disability inclusion, a series of reports were developed with the aim of understanding employment and skills training trends for young people with disabilities in Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Senegal, Ghana and Nigeria. This brief presents a summary of the series' findings on supporting disability-inclusive employment.**

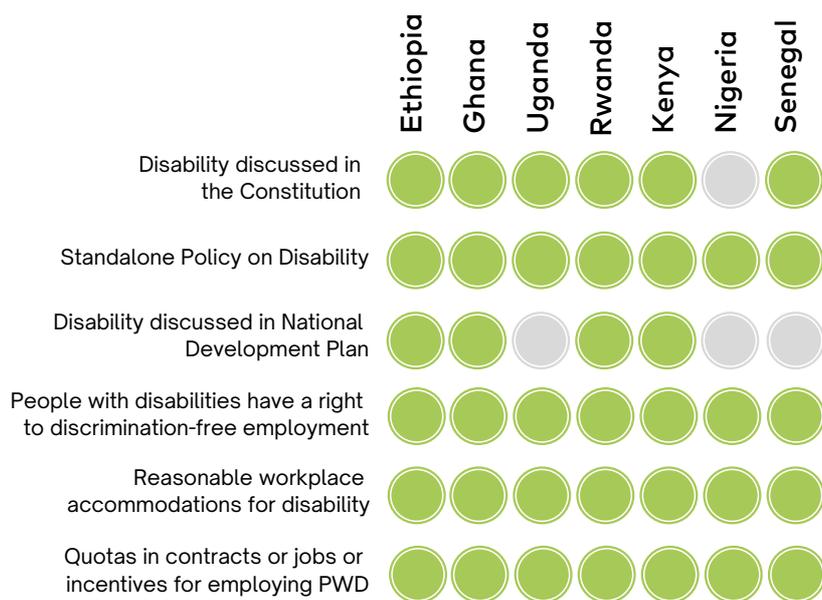
## Key Findings

- Across the seven countries, there has been widespread adoption of progressive policy.
- Barriers to employment remain widespread, and people with disabilities lag behind people without disabilities in key employment and livelihoods outcomes.
- Inequalities in access to education and training cascade into inequalities in rates of employment.
- Marginalizations intersect to disadvantage people with specific types of impairments, women, and people living in rural areas.
- Available evidence suggests that people with disabilities are overrepresented in informal work.
- Approaches to improving employment among people with disabilities include skills development, microfinance, internships, and disability sensitization.
- Gaps in epidemiological and monitoring and evaluation data hamper efforts to translate policy into effective programming strategies.

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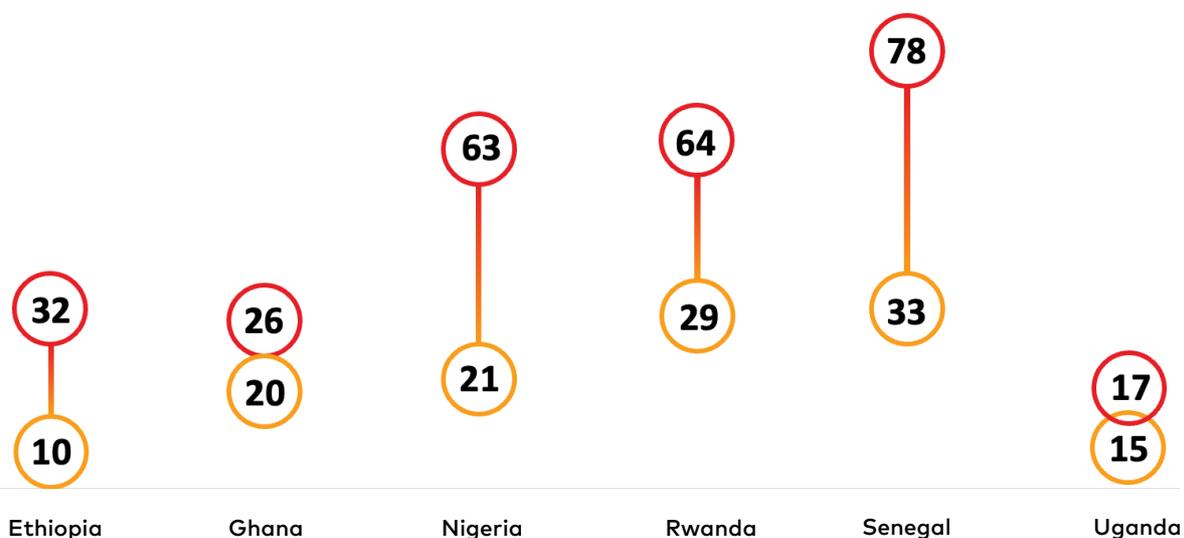


## Despite Progressive Policy in Countries, Marginalisations Endure



There has been progress in policy development, but disparities in training and employment between people with, and without, disabilities endure. All countries have ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, but there is a lack of coordination and monitoring of policy implementation. Progressive policies create opportunities to test interventions to improve employment outcomes.

### Disparities between people **with** and **without** disabilities in the proportion of youth who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) (%).



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## Misconceptions about People with Disabilities and Work Persist

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Poor attitudes among employers, who worry about the ability of people with disabilities and the extra costs of hiring them, affect private sector participation. Negative perceptions affect participation in the informal economy too, as people with disabilities do not have equal access to land as a result of negative attitudes.

*"The challenge is to continue to advocate...so that they too change their perception"*  
- Key Informant, Senegal

*"It is easier to pay [the fine] rather than hiring two disabled people"*  
- Key Informant, Ethiopia

While disheartening, these findings provide clear entry points for intervention, including in respect of the provision of assistive devices; attitude change among employers; and the role of incentives for the employment of people with disabilities in the private sector.

## The Roots of Employment Disparities are Deep, and Marginalizations Intersect

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Despite policies and programs committing to disability inclusive education, across countries inequalities in educational access and achievement are marked. Across countries, between 11 and 61% of children with disabilities are out of school, a non-attendance rate which is up to 23% higher than among children without disabilities.

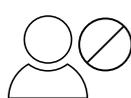
Up to 25% fewer people with disabilities have completed primary school compared to their peers without disabilities. Among young people with disabilities, girls and young women experience the lowest rates of educational participation and attainment.

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## Diverse Strategies are Needed to Meet Needs

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Barriers to education need to be addressed to improve employment outcomes.



Programs that promote digital skills in youth with disabilities are needed.



Awareness on disability-inclusive education and employment practices needs to be improved.



Organizations of persons with disabilities must be supported to continue to promote disability-inclusive employment.



There is a need for quality evidence on 'what works' for strengthening livelihoods and educational inclusion.



Policies need to specify responsible parties and metrics of success.

## Data Gaps Need to be Bridged

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- While some progress has been made towards disaggregation of education and employment data by disability status, this is not uniform across countries.
- Labour force surveys are inconsistently implemented across settings, and where they are implemented, data collection could be optimized to provide better insights regarding people with disabilities.
- There is a need for the perspective of people with disabilities to be foregrounded through qualitative research.
- Lack of intentional sampling of people with disabilities in national surveys means that small sample sizes often make data desegregation of data from people with disabilities gender, location or other demographic characteristics, impossible, limiting ability to understand intersecting vulnerabilities.

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## Acknowledgements and References

**Data sources:** The reports 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 each country; a secondary analysis of Demographic and Health Survey (DHS); and analyses of data from the ILOSTAT database.

**Notes:** All figures should be interpreted with caution as the use of inconsistent methodologies makes cross country comparison difficult. Grey circles indicate missing data. See full reports for further detail and additional references. Image credit: Annie Spratt via Unsplash.



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