

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



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Recognizing barriers to the inclusion of young people with disabilities in education and employment, a landscape report on Uganda was developed by the International Centre for Evidence on Disability at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the Medical Research Council/Uganda Viral Research Institute and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Uganda Research Unit, in partnership with Mastercard Foundation. This brief summarizes trends related to employment and education for young people with disabilities from the report.

Key Findings

- Ugandan 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 implementing, enforcing, and monitoring policy and legislation contribute to this exclusion.
- Challenges include exclusion from school at a young age, unfair academic assessments, and resistance to providing accommodations among employers.
- Promising initiatives to promote disability inclusion include scholarship quotas at universities and agriculture-focused capacity-building for women with disabilities.
- Future research should focus on understanding what works to promote disability inclusion in employment and education.

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The Ugandan Context in Brief

3.2% of Ugandan youth have disabilities according to the 2016 DHS, but this is likely an underestimate.

45% of the country's population of 46 million people are under the age of 14 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
2%
gap in rates of being not in education, employment, or training.

Policies are Supportive of Disability Inclusion

In 2007, the Government of Uganda ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and this was credited with accelerating much of the legal reform on the rights of people with disabilities. In 2020, the Persons with Disabilities Act came into effect, providing a framework for inclusive policy and services, including to improve school enrolment rates and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. This act states that people with disabilities have a right to education as well as to quality employment opportunities that are free from discrimination.

- Disability discussed in the Constitution
- Standalone Policy on Disability
- Disability discussed in National Development Plan (missing data)
- 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 are Excluded from Education and Employment



People with disabilities in Uganda 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 more likely to be out of school (44%) compared to their peers without disabilities (27%), and literacy rates are lower among youth with disabilities.



While available data suggest there is only a 1.8% gap between the rate of not in education, employment or training (NEET) among Ugandan youth with and without disabilities, estimated earnings for people with disabilities are far lower among people with disabilities (74% of that for people without disabilities). Employment indicators are consistently worse for women with disabilities than men with disabilities.

Key challenges include...



Exclusion of people with disabilities from school at a young age.



Academic assessments that limit the progression of learners with disabilities.

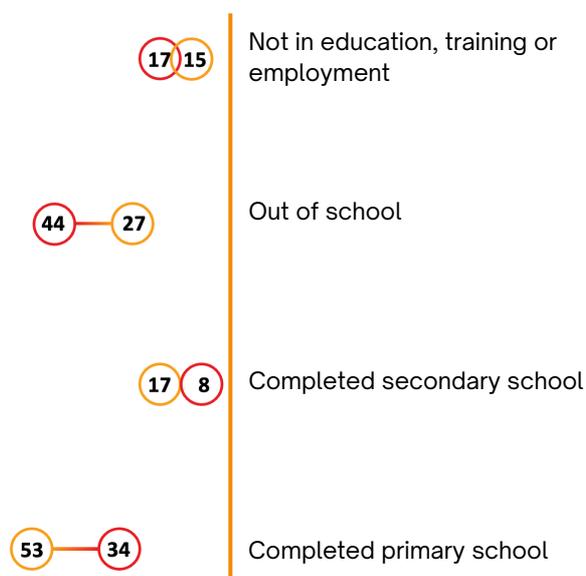


Limited awareness of inclusive policies and responsibilities.



Resistance to providing reasonable accommodations among employers.

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



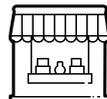
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Initiatives to Promote Disability Inclusion for Youth Include...



Scholarship quotas and affirmative action to reduce barriers to university.



Capacity-building for graduates with disabilities to start businesses.



Teacher development programmes to promote disability inclusion and improve teacher self-efficacy.



Training young people with disabilities as disability inclusion facilitators.



Agriculture capacity-building for women with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities.



Involving Organisations of Persons with Disabilities in policy design and implementation.

Opportunities to Strengthen Practice and Generate Research are Clear

- Develop awareness of existing laws and policies through targeted distribution channels such as community gatherings and workshops organised by OPDs.
- Conduct accessibility audits for every educational institution licensed by the Ministry of Education, including of physical structures, materials, and equipment.
- Consult people with disabilities to explore ways they can meaningfully participate in agricultural value chains and other sectors, to increase their employment opportunities.
- Focus on generating disability-disaggregated data to inform inclusion in education and employment.
- Ensure that for every donor-funded programme there is a memorandum of understanding with government to continue the services once the programme ends.

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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 Uganda; a secondary analysis of the 2016 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: Disability Research Group, MRC/UVRI & LSHTM Uganda Research Unit.



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