



Promoting a disability perspective in Uganda's HIV/AIDS National response

This case study from Uganda illustrates how the National Union of Disabled Persons in Uganda (NUDIPU) promoted disability inclusion in the national HIV/AIDS programmes.

Area: Africa

Sector: HIV&AIDS

Phase of PCM illustrated: Evaluation

Degree of relevance: Degree 3 – Disability highly relevant projects

Implementing organisation: National DPO (disabled people organisation) in partnership with the government

The national context

Uganda is inarguably the most cited success stories in sub-Saharan Africa in terms of fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic, partly due to responsible political leadership and a well-coordinated national and local response. However, HIV/AIDS is still a major cause of disease and mortality especially for young adults, putting additional stress on the already strained health system. HIV infection significantly varies according to factors such as gender, age and place of residence.

The national response to HIV/AIDS has resulted in several policies and institutions. Currently Uganda's response and its national priorities are guided by the Revised National Strategic Framework (NSF) for HIV/AIDS Activities in Uganda 2003/04-2005/06 and 2007/2012. To make the fight against HIV/AIDS more effective and informed, a National Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Framework was put in place by 2003 designed to measure and evaluate progress in the implementation of the NSF¹.

Persons with disabilities are at increased risk

However, persons with disabilities had not been given specific attention under the developed policies and frameworks. People with disabilities are at increased risk of HIV infection and are less likely to access HIV prevention, care and treatment services than their non disabled counterparts due to low levels of HIV/AIDS awareness, vulnerability to sexual abuse, ignorance or discriminatory attitudes among health workers and educators, inaccessible service facilities, and lack of institutional and human capacity of the disability movement in Uganda to address HIV/AIDS.

¹ Uganda AIDS Commission (2004). National Monitoring & Evaluation Framework for HIV/AIDS Activities in Uganda. 2003/04-2005/06. Kampala: Uganda.

Mainstreaming disability in Uganda's HIV/AIDS policies

The National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU), an indigenous umbrella NGO of people with disabilities, is now implementing a three year project on promoting and mainstreaming a disability perspective into Uganda's HIV/AIDS National response. In partnership with other Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs) in Uganda² the project is piloted in three districts of Gulu, Soroti and Masaka. It is funded by DANIDA through the Danish Council of Disabled People's Organizations (DSI). One outcome of the project was to initiate a national forum through which issues of major concern for persons with disabilities are discussed and harmonized (Disability Stakeholders' HIV/AIDS Committee). This forum acts as a uniting factor and the planning board for the disability fraternity in Uganda.

Results

Not only are people with disabilities the project target group but the entire project has been planned, managed, monitored and evaluated by PWD, relates and their representatives. The implementation is based on a partnership strategy involving already existing disability organisations at the grassroots levels and those operating at the district levels.



The mid-term evaluation demonstrates that persons with disabilities have been able to influence inclusion of their issues and needs in the current HIV/AIDS National Strategic Plan. However, the challenge now awaits in implementation. The project has also succeeded in bringing together all DPOs and people with disabilities in Uganda in the fight against HIV/AIDS. There has been significant unity achieved despite the diverse nature of disability needs and concerns.

² These include: Mental Health Uganda (MHU), Epilepsy Support Association – Uganda (ESAU), Uganda National Association of the Blind (UNAB), Uganda National Association of the Deaf (UNAD), National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda (NUWODU), Uganda National Action on Physical Disabilities (UNAPD), Uganda Society for Disabled Children (USDC), Uganda Parents of Children with Learning Disabilities (UPACLED).

CASE STUDY Uganda



Networking and collations with other CSOs has been a major boost in championing for people with disabilities concerns in the social – economic development perspectives. Consequently, the political establishment in Uganda is beginning to comprehend the need to include and plan for people with disabilities in all development processes.

Lessons learned and how this is an example for disability inclusion

- Participation of people with disabilities at all stages
- Championing disability concerns at national level in all development processes could be through:
 - The process of mainstreaming disability in the HIV/AIDS National Response
 - Networking and collations among DPOs and CSOs.

This is an abridged version of a case study written by Mwesigwa Martin Babu (NUDIPU)

For further information please contact:

Mwesigwa Martin Babu

HIV/AIDS Project Coordinator
National Union of Disabled Persons in Uganda (NUDIPU)
nudipu@utlonline.co.ug