Policy brief: Policy and Secondary data analyses on disability and development in Ugandan’s employment sector

Key policy messages

- Lack of implementation of existing employment policies are currently limiting access of people with disabilities to the labour market.
- Although the National Employment Policy 2011, and the National Employment Act 2006 explicitly mention the involvement of people with disability in the process of their enactment, there is little evidence to show that the people with disabilities are systematically considered and included in implementation of this legislation.
- Lack of inclusion has led to significant differences in rates of employment between people with and without disabilities.
- Living with an impairment significantly affects access to work and effective participation in economic activities.

Overview

In Uganda today, lack of inclusion of people with disabilities constitutes a key development issue. This challenge can no longer be ignored by practitioners and politicians or by civil society. A review of secondary data sources as part of this research project found that results from Census 2014 show at least 12.4% of the population (5+ years) have a disability significant enough to make a difference in their daily lives. Considering that Uganda has a population of 34.6 million people, this constitutes a significant number of children and adults live with a disability. The same source shows that more females (15%) have a disability compared to males (10%). Disability was also found to be higher in urban areas (15%) compared to the rural areas (12%). Further analysis of the Census 2014 data show that the northern region has the highest proportion of people with disabilities (15%), followed by the Eastern region (14%). Interestingly, these two regions also exhibit higher levels of poverty compared to other regions of the country as reflected in the Uganda National Household Survey of 2012.

This research focused on the analysis of a series of ‘major’ key employment policies, as well as a series of ‘minor’ policies and cross-cutting or general disability related policies relevant to the Employment sector. Major policies analysed were: the National Employment Policy, 2011; the National Employment Act, 2006; and the Labour Unions Act, 2006. Minor policies were: the National Child Labour, 2006; Uganda National Policy on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work, 2007; and the National Trade Policy, 2007. The cross-cutting policies considered were: the Constitution, 1995; Uganda Vision 2040; the National Development Plan; the Equal Opportunities Policy, 2006; and the Information, Communication and Technology Policy (ICT) policy, 2012. Major policies are those which directly or to a greater extent address issues of disability whereas minor policies address
issues of disability to a lesser extent. General polices are not specific to a sector but generally address cross-cutting development issues and agenda.

Content analysis was conducted on the above policies and a standardised scoring system was used: 4 = high inclusivity, 3 = medium inclusivity, 2 = questionable inclusivity and 1 = weak or none. For people with disability, “high” would mean the employment policy explicitly acknowledges and is committed to including people with disabilities in the labour market. “medium” means the policy explicitly acknowledges that all people with disabilities have a right to inclusive employment but does not set out all strategies for inclusion; “questionable” means the policy states people with disabilities have a right to employment but do not specify what this constitutes; and “weak” means the policy has no mention of right to work for people with disabilities.

The major policies were also analysed against three pillars-their context, actors and process. Socio-economic and political contexts, both local and international were considered. Actors, in terms of scope of involvement and participation, from individual to global partners were part of the stakeholders included in the analysis. Inclusivity of disabled people’s organisations (DPOs)\(^1\) or related disability focused agencies were also considered in the process of policy development and enactment. All these pillars are considered important in determining a policy’s subsequent robustness and acceptability.

In addition to the policy analysis, Secondary data was analysed from a series of surveys and censuses, with the primary focus on the Uganda Demographic Health Survey 2011, the Uganda National Housing Survey 2013; and the Census 2014. The Washington Group on Disability Statistics\(^2\) indicators of disability as those people experiencing ‘a lot of difficulty’ was used against the six disability indicators: difficulty seeing, difficulty hearing, difficulty walking or climbing steps, difficulty remembering or concentrating, difficulty with self-care such as dressing, and eating, and difficulty communicating.

The results presented here form part of a larger research project: Bridging the Gap: examining disability and development in four African countries. The research programme is based at the Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre, UCL, UK, and is funded by the Economic and Social Science Research Council and the UK Department for International Development.

**Results**

On the basis of the data above, four key issues which are relevant to the policy community of lobbyists and advocates, practitioners and politicians stand out:

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\(^1\) DPOs are organisations run by and on behalf of people with disabilities.

**Key message 1**

All the Ugandan policies reviewed have gaps and contradictions which limit effective access to the labour market for persons with disabilities. For example, it is found that although the Disability Act 2006 sets an employment quota for people with disabilities, this is not reflected in the Employment Policy. There is nothing explicit in the major policies on disability on information management systems, budgetary allocation or national implementation plans are concerned – all key factors for effective inclusion of persons with disabilities. The ‘minor’ policies that address various components of the labour market rarely include the word ‘disability’, and lack any specific discussion of inclusion or implementation.

**Key message 2**

Although DPOs are cited as key actors in the process of enacting the National Employment Policy, 2011 and the National Employment Act, 2006, there appears to be no on-going consultation in implementation of these policies. The aforementioned gaps in implementation and lack of inclusion in other ‘minor’ employment-related legislation – including legislation that has been adopted after the National Employment Act of 2006 – suggests little consistent involvement of DPOs in the drafting of employment legislation or oversight once these are in place. In the Labour Union Act, for example, enacted the same year as the National Employment Act, there is no explicit mention of the participation of the DPOs or persons with disabilities in the process of policy enactment.

**Key message 3**

Disability affects access to work and participation in economic activities. People’s ability to work and to participate will also differ based both on the type of employment but also the impairment. For example, the UNHS\(^3\) 2009/10 conducted on a working-age population between 14-64 years shows different employment rates by type of impairment: seeing (33.7%), hearing (40.6%), mobility (52.6%), remembering and concentration (44.1%), self-care (42.6%) and communication (50.1%). In the national Labour Force Survey of 2002/3, it was also established that 3% of respondents indicated that they were unable to work because they were disabled, compared with 3.4% who reported that they were too old or young, 5.6% reported they were constrained by disability from preforming domestic chores. Among those disabled who were able to work, the majority (84.8%) were students. Although 3% is a small percentage, it is still a significant proportion of the population that if constrained from accessing the labour market, could have a negative effect on national productivity.

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\(^3\) Uganda National Household Survey
Key message 4

There is a significant difference between the persons with disabilities and without disabilities in many economic activities as indicated by the wealth index. Analysis of two waves of the UDHS\(^4\) (2006 and 2011) reveal consistent issues related to disability. For example, results show that there was significant difference among the persons with disabilities and non-disabled persons in terms of wealth quintiles. A higher percentage (43%) of persons with disabilities fell within the lowest quintile in 2006 compared with 39% of non-disabled people. The proportion of people with disabilities in the lowest quintile fell slightly to 40% by 2011, with the percentage of non-disabled people in this quintile remaining the same (39%). The percentage of poor people with disabilities was significantly higher compared to the non-disabled persons (p=0.000). The survey also showed that a smaller proportion of people with disabilities were in the highest quintile (38%) compared to non-disabled people (42%). These findings are also in tandem with other government-commissioned findings in 2008 that established that households with a person with disability had less savings and higher debts, and lower levels of land and asset ownership compared with non-disabled people. In the same data set of UDHS 2011, 30% of people with disabilities between the age of 15-49 years were unemployed compared to 27% of the non-disabled population.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings presented above in respect of disability and employment, we can recommend:

- In the arena of disability and employment, Government should enact implementation plans and management information systems (MIS) to augment and ensure the effective implementation of policies and inclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market. This must be accompanied by sufficient budgetary allocation to enable disability-focused programmes to by implemented effectively
- Interventions to improve access of people with disability to the labour market should be targeted and prioritised to improve inclusion. On the basis of the current data, all interventions to improve the mobility of people with disability within the labour force should be embraced as a matter of priority.
- The gap in the labour market between the persons with disabilities and non-disabled should be continuously addressed as a matter of urgency. This can be done particularly through affirmative actions that leverage economic opportunities in favour of people with disabilities as a priority area for fighting poverty and deprivation amongst persons with disabilities. A twin-track approach of the inclusion of people with disabilities in mainstream activities accompanied by targeted interventions to enable the inclusion of disabled workers in economic activities would help to facilitate this.

\(^4\) Uganda Demographic Health Survey
Further reading

For more information on this research, visit the project website: gap.leonardcheshire.org

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