

Day of Persons with Disabilities

Uganda is celebrating International Day of Persons with Disabilities under the theme: “wealth creation programmes: a key to socio-economic empowerment of persons with disabilities”. Mr Prosper Muhumuza, Commissioner, Disability and Elderly Affairs at the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development spoke to *Daily Monitor*’s **Patricia Marie Natakwa** about the ministry efforts.

Uganda intensifies efforts toward disability-inclusivity



A disabled woman feeds chicken. PHOTO/COURTESY

What are the Ministry’s biggest achievements this year in advancing disability inclusion, particularly in areas such as education, employment, and access to social services?

The Ministry has made tremendous progress in regards to training of learners with disabilities in income generating activities including, tailoring, welding and metal fabrication, carpentry, hair dressing, cookery and bakery, soap making and book making, knitting and weaving.

These learners are assessed by the Uganda Vocational and Technical Assessment Board. The department has developed the disability inclusive Gender based violence prevention and response guidelines. We are also finalizing the development of the National Guidelines on Disability Inclusion in Child Protection.

Uganda has several disability-related policies and laws, including the Persons with Disabilities Act. Where do you see the biggest

implementation gaps, and what is the Ministry doing to ensure these policies translate into real change on the ground?

One of the gaps has always been limited awareness on the needs and the rights of persons with disabilities by service providers, which has hindered proper provision of the care and support required by persons with disabilities.

Continuous efforts of information sharing will go a long way to educate the public on these issues. Secondly, the funding gaps have somewhat affected the expansion of coverage for the Programmes that target persons with disabilities. Limited funding because of the many priorities.

Also, uncoordinated service delivery among our stakeholders has led to duplication of services and wastage of resources. The Ministry continues to engage various partners to ensure that service delivery is done in a holistic manner.

We have continued to monitor and gather evidence of the impacts of our programmes to support the advocacy for sustainable funding of

Causes of disability

Key causes of disability include accidents at home (7 percent adults), malaria (4 percent), road traffic accidents (4 percent), with congenital and disease-related causes common among children. Poverty and disability are also deeply interconnected, both contributing to restrictions in livelihood opportunities.

DISABILITY DEMOGRAPHY

The UBOS (2024), indicated that 13.2 percent of Uganda’s population aged 2 years and above live with some form of disability and this comes with unique individual and social histories and exclusion which act as barriers to accessing better livelihoods and employment.

programmes has motivated a number of beneficiaries to increase their efforts to put the funds to good use.

Many disability challenges cut across different sectors—health, transport, education, local government. How is the Ministry strengthening coordination with other ministries, agencies, and development partners to achieve a more inclusive national environment?

We have created a coordination mechanism that brings together ministries, departments and agencies, organizations of and for persons with disabilities. These come together quarterly to discuss the service provision to persons with disabilities and share good practices.

Looking ahead, what new strategies, policy reforms, or nationwide programmes does the Ministry plan to introduce to accelerate disability inclusion over the next five years?

With technical and financial support from UNICEF, the ministry is designing a Child Disability Assistance Programme, which will largely support children and care takers of children with severe disabilities as a start.

The Programme will have other components including rehabilitation services, referrals for further support, social care and support component, among others.

Again, with support from development partners, the ministry has engaged in benchmarking visits to countries that already have similar programmes in place as a learning point.



Education for PWDs. These learners have vocational rehabilitation centres where they are skilled in various technicalities. These schools include Jinja Sheltered Workshop, Ocoko Rehabilitation Center, Lweza Rehabilitation Center, Kireka Rehabilitation Center, Mpumudde Rehabilitation Center and Ruti Rehabilitation Center. After the skilling, they are assessed by the Uganda Vocational and Technical Assessment Board. The Disability and Elderly Affairs Department has developed the disability inclusive Gender based violence prevention and response guidelines. We are also finalizing the development of the National Guidelines on Disability Inclusion in Child Protection.

Mr Prosper Muhumuza, Commissioner, Disability and Elderly Affairs at the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

Cumulative Disbursement of the National Disability Special Grant

| FYs | PWDs GROUPS FUNDED | BENEFICIARIES | | TOTAL | AMOUNT |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------|--------|--------|----------------|
| | | M | F | | |
| FY2019/20 | 168 | 722 | 719 | 1,441 | 832,856,000 |
| FY2020/21 | 814 | 3,361 | 3,349 | 6,710 | 4,028,660,300 |
| FY2021/22 | 1,526 | 6,223 | 6,070 | 12,293 | 7,584,199,900 |
| FY2022/23 | 2,420 | 9,673 | 9,987 | 19,660 | 11,791,986,025 |
| FY2023/24 | 2,497 | 8,371 | 8,433 | 16,804 | 12,000,678,875 |
| FY2024/25 | 1,363 | 4,101 | 4,263 | 8,364 | 6,260,169,592 |
| FY2025/26 (QTR1) | 80 | 248 | 264 | 512 | 398,301,972 |
| GRAND TOTAL | 8,868 | 32,699 | 33,085 | 65,784 | 42,896,852,664 |

Source: DMIS Database