



ANNEX: COUNTRY PROFILE UGANDA

**Gap Analysis on Disability Inclusive
Humanitarian Action in Eastern Africa**

Uganda's Disability Rights Commitment and Disability Inclusive DRR Strategies

In 2008, Uganda ratified the UN CRPD. However, in 2016, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities made some observations on the initial report of Uganda. One of the recommendations made by the committee was that the state party should harmonize the definitions of disability in various laws and policies. This would involve systematically reviewing all legislation and ensuring that it aligns with the Convention. Additionally, the committee recommended that Uganda adopt measures to amend and/or repeal legislation with derogatory terminology against persons with disabilities. By implementing these recommendations, Uganda can work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society for persons with disabilities. In addition, the 2016 report from the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities highlighted Uganda's insufficient provisions for persons with disabilities in emergencies, and recommended a national plan for their protection and inclusion in disaster risk reduction policies¹.

In March 2023, the latest report submitted by Uganda to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities highlights some of the country's efforts towards promoting disability inclusion. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Policy, passed in 2011, prioritizes vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, and integrates their concerns and needs in all ministries and strategies for risk reduction. The government has institutionalized universal designs in all infrastructure developments, ensuring equal access and utilization for all, including persons with disabilities. Recovery programs for Northern Uganda under the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (I, II, III), the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda, and Northern Uganda Rehabilitation Program embed a strong component supporting vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities. However, the provision of information in all languages, including sign language, remains a challenge, and there is a need for further improvement in ensuring the full implementation of disability-inclusive policies and programs².

Current humanitarian crisis

According to the INFORM Country Risk Profile of Uganda for 2023, the risk class for the country is very high, 10th. On average, for natural hazards, Uganda faces a score of 4.5 in terms of risks with high scores for epidemics (7.9), droughts (6.3), and floods (5.1) on a scale of 1 to 10. However, for humanly caused hazards, Uganda tops the list with a score of 9 out of 10 for current high conflict intensity. In terms of vulnerability, Uganda ranks 14th overall, including for other vulnerabilities with a score of 4.9 out of 10. Additionally, the country ranks 20th in coping capacity.

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https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2FC%2FUGA%2FCO%2F1&Lang=en

² https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2FC%2FUGA%2F2-4&Lang=en

These rankings highlight the significant risks faced by the country and the need for effective disaster risk management and humanitarian response strategies to address them³.

As of April 30, 2023, there are a total of 1,535,900 refugees in Uganda, according to the Office of the Prime Minister, UNHCR, and the Government of Uganda. Of these, 56.6% (868,930) are from South Sudan, while 31.9% (489,229) are from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In Obongi, only 8.0% (122,203) of refugees are currently located⁴. In 2023, Uganda reported 3,395 referrals for child protection, GBV, psycho-social protection, legal and physical, community based protection, livelihoods, and WASH according to the Inter-Agency Feedback, Referral and Resolution Mechanism⁵. As for funding, UNHCR's 2022 financial requirements are USD 343.4 million, but as of June 20, 2022, they are still unfunded by 79%, or USD 287M⁶.

Evidence and Data on persons with disabilities

Data collected indicated that the usage of standardized methods like the WGQs for collecting disability data is not widespread in humanitarian action in Uganda.

According to the National Population and Housing Census 2014, the disability prevalence rate in Uganda was 12.4% for the population aged 2 years and above, and close to 14% for those aged 5 years and above, with a higher prevalence among women than men⁷. While there are six functional domains identified by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, this data was collected by gathering information on each individual in the household regarding their difficulty in four out of the six domains, namely seeing, hearing, walking, and remembering.

However, in the Uganda Country Refugee Response Emergency Appeal report from April to June 2022, the term 'Persons with Specific Needs' was used instead of 'Persons with Disabilities', with only 8% of refugees identified as having 'specific needs', as referred in the Situational Analysis of Persons with Disabilities in Uganda (Ministry of Gender, Labour and social development, 2020)⁸ and there was no reference to persons with disabilities in the most recent operational update⁹.

The latest Uganda Refugee Statistics report for March 2023 includes disaggregated data on persons with 'specific needs', among which disabilities are identified. However, there is no further disaggregation by functional domains. There is no reference to persons with disabilities in the Uganda Population summary by settlement and sex or the Uganda Refugees and Asylum-seekers map.

³ <https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Risk/Country-Risk-Profile>

⁴ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/uga>

⁵ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/dataviz/84?sv=0&geo=220>

⁶ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/94972>

⁷ https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/09_2019DISABILITY_MONOGRAPH_FINAL.pdf

⁸ <https://www.developmentpathways.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Webready-DP1294-ESP-Disability-Uganda-Sept-2020.pdf>

In May 2022, the Child Protection Assessment in Refugee-hosting Districts¹⁰, conducted by REACH in partnership with the Child Protection Sub-Working Group (CPSWG) under co-leadership by UNHCR and UNICEF, asked respondents if they or anyone living in their household had a disability or chronic illness during data collection. While children with disabilities were not the focus of this assessment, the report does provide some reflection of disability issues by comparing assessment results for families with and without a member with a disability or chronic illness. However, the assessment missed the opportunity to disaggregate data by disability using the WGQs.

In comparison, the Uganda Annual Country Report for 2022¹¹ highlights the WFP's commitment to disability inclusion through standardizing data collection methodologies. This aligns with the 2020 Disability Inclusion Road Map and international best practices. As part of these efforts, the WFP aims to calculate the percentage of beneficiaries with disabilities. Out of 1,857,232 beneficiaries in 2022, there are 26,001 individuals with disabilities (1.4%).

Also, the Participatory Assessment Final Report 2022 conducted by IMPACT in Uganda had three main objectives, which included identifying protection risks and challenges faced by affected communities, understanding their views on the ongoing response, and assessing their knowledge and perspectives on existing complaint and feedback mechanisms. Both standardized and qualitative approaches were taken into consideration during the assessment¹². As for Palorinya, the report highlighted that persons with disabilities are among the most excluded from aid delivery, mainly due to the inaccessibility of distribution points.

Moreover, the use of the WGQs is increasingly prevalent in humanitarian action to collect standardized data on disability¹³. For example in Uganda, the organization HI collects data using the WGQs to inform its programming for persons with disabilities. The data collected serves as a baseline, informs proposal development, and is used for referral services, collaboration, analysis, programming, and resource allocation.

In August 2020, a rapid needs assessment was conducted by HelpAge in Adjumani Refugee Settlement in Uganda¹⁴ to evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on older people living in refugee settlements. The assessment found that 61% of older people in the settlement have at least one disability according to the six domains, as identified by the WGQs.

Additionally, the assessment identified barriers to accessing information about the support provided. Older persons with disabilities were found to be disproportionately affected when compared to the total population, with 75% experiencing food-related barriers and 47% experiencing barriers in accessing humanitarian services.

¹⁰ <https://reliefweb.int/report/uganda/uganda-child-protection-assessment-refugee-hosting-districts-may-2022>

¹¹ <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000147979/download/>

¹² <https://data.unhcr.org/fr/documents/download/99977f>

¹³ <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/wg-blog/should-you-use-the-wg-questions-in-your-humanitarian-programming-a-tool-to-help-you-decide-579/>

¹⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/report/uganda/uganda-adjumani-refugee-settlement-august-2020-covid-19-rapid-needs-assessment-older>

On the other hand, TPO Uganda, a humanitarian organization focusing on disability inclusion in refugee settlements, has data-driven reporting and developed their own tools for mapping households and collecting data on demographics, disabilities, and economic vulnerabilities. But by asking "yes" or "no" in response to the question "do you have a disability" may lead to hesitancy among respondents due to the stigma attached to having a disability, potentially affecting survey results. They work closely with UNHCR and other partners to avoid duplication of services. However, TPO Uganda staff have observed that, despite these efforts, some people leave without being registered. Additionally, they have identified a lack of protection and identification numbers in the settlements where they operate.

Overall, although using standardized methods like the WGQs for collecting disability data has potential benefits, interviews conducted with these humanitarian actors reveal that their usage is not widespread and used for programming purposes in Uganda. Additionally, there is a lack of incorporation of the WGQs in existing quantitative and qualitative tools, leading to incomplete and inconsistent data. This lack of standardization diminishes opportunities for sharing information in a comparable manner, making it challenging to assess the impact of disability-inclusive interventions. Therefore, there is a need for greater awareness and capacity building on the use of the WGQs to ensure accurate and comprehensive data collection.

There is no clear indication that a comprehensive mapping document of all OPDs in Uganda is available. Apart from National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda (NUWODU), there have not been many identified organizations in the OPDs mapping.

Planning & Coordination related to disability inclusion

This study analysed several questions related to disability inclusion in humanitarian action in Uganda. It focused on two main areas, such as (1) the extent to which disability inclusion is anchored in existing HRP, and (2) existing working groups or coordination mechanisms that could provide support and knowledge to all staff members regarding disability inclusion.

There is limited or no explicit reference to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in various humanitarian documents related to the Uganda Country Refugee Response, and other documents.

The Emergency Appeal for the Uganda Country Refugee Response from April to June 2022¹⁵ recognizes the urgent need for support to people with 'specific needs', including unaccompanied and separated children, single-headed households, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, who are particularly at risk of abuse and require special care and protection services. Similarly, the 5-year Interagency GBV strategy Uganda 2021-2025¹⁶ acknowledges that some specific measures should be provided to women and girls with 'special needs', however, it does not include specific reference to disability inclusion.

¹⁵ <https://reliefweb.int/report/uganda/uganda-country-refugee-response-plan-emergency-appeal-april-december-2022>

¹⁶ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/92618#:~:text=Through%202025%2C%20concrete%20actions%20and,relations%20between%20women%20and%20men.>

In addition, the Water and Environmental Refugee Response Plan for Uganda¹⁷, covering the period of 2019 to 2022, includes a focus on the status of sanitation in districts hosting refugees. As part of this response plan, extra support is provided for persons with 'special needs', including persons with disabilities, the elderly, and others. By providing specialized sanitation facilities, the plan aims to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to safe and hygienic sanitation services, which is essential for maintaining good health and reducing the spread of diseases¹⁸.

The WFP Uganda Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)¹⁹ has made a commitment to consider the unique circumstances and preferences of different beneficiary groups, including persons living with disabilities. This implies that the plan has a specific focus on ensuring that the rights of persons with disabilities are taken into account in all aspects of the plan's implementation. This is an important step towards promoting disability inclusion and ensuring that all members of society are able to benefit from the plan's initiatives.

In December 2022, the 16th Refugee Engagement Forum Meeting²⁰ focused on prioritizing general food assistance for refugees in Uganda. The meeting report recommended that new arrivals should receive 100% food and cash assistance, with special consideration given to persons with 'specific needs' such as child-headed households, the elderly, persons with disabilities, individuals with chronic illnesses, and extremely vulnerable individuals. The support provided should be based on the refugees' vulnerability status. Additionally, refugees should be allowed to choose the mode of assistance (cash or in-kind) for all food support.

According to the available evidence, it appears that currently there is no dedicated disability inclusion task group or working group within the existing coordination mechanisms to provide support and knowledge to all staff members regarding disability inclusion.

In Uganda, a National Protection Working Group has been established along with several working groups to address protection concerns²¹. Additionally, a 'Persons with Specific Needs Working Group' has been set up, although there is limited available evidence regarding its work. The term 'Persons with Specific Needs' is considered outdated because it implies that individuals require additional support because of their inherent characteristics, rather than due to societal or environmental barriers which would emphasize the need for inclusive and accessible environments.

According to the operational dashboard of December 2022²², Community Empowerment for Rural Development, HI, Lutheran World Federation, TPO, UNHCR, and War Child Holland are actively involved in providing humanitarian assistance and support in Obongi district.

¹⁷ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/75623>

¹⁸ <https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/eb/wfp293175.pdf>

¹⁹ https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/eb/wfp293175.pdf?_ga=2.64229928.641528356.1682851552-858307827.1676390527

²⁰ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/99755>

²¹ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/working-group/155>

²² <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/100991>

They participate in monthly coordination meetings to share experiences and lessons, avoid duplication of services, and make referrals, but it appears there is no evidence of Disability Inclusion Task Force.

The National WASH Humanitarian Coordination Platform in Uganda is currently missing a crucial task group focused on disability inclusion. Such a group could significantly contribute to the platform's function by developing guidelines for WASH interventions in emergency contexts that are inclusive of persons with disabilities. This would ensure that the platform's actions are evidence-based and prioritise critical areas, while also promoting innovation and capacity development for WASH actors.

Participation of Persons with Disabilities and their representative organisations

The National Union of Disabled persons of Uganda (NUDIPU)²³ is an umbrella organization in Uganda that has a strategic plan covering 2020-2024 and a wide range of partners. With more than 24 implemented projects, they are also involved in disaster risk management activities and advocate in line with international standards while trying to reach hard-to-reach areas. Although they were not interviewed, their online presence is quite strong, and they openly speak about enormous challenges.

NUDIPU faces limited resources for implementing the previous strategic plan as only about 50% of the estimated budget for the previous strategic plan was mobilized. They also face inadequate coordination, collaboration, and synergy within the disability sector, civil society actors, private sector, mainstream actors, and development partners. In addition, NUDIPU struggles with inadequate institutional capacity of its secretariat and limited membership in key functional areas such as policy influencing, resource mobilization, joint disability programming, and geographical coverage.

Furthermore, disability inclusion in various sectors is still a big challenge, especially in planning and budgetary allocations, and access to quality goods and services. The dynamic socio-economic and political context in Uganda has an impact on disability empowerment models for persons with disabilities, including accessibility of services, implementation of inclusive policies, and overall societal attitudes towards disability inclusion. NUDIPU also faces limited data to buttress advocacy and policy influencing work, and limited inclusion and access to appropriate technology by persons with disabilities in Uganda.

The local branch of NUDIPU in Obongi district is currently active, however, it is evident that additional support is necessary. This includes collaborating with humanitarian sectors and providing peer-to-peer support to fellow persons with disabilities, in order to effectively empower them.

Disability Inclusive Humanitarian Programming

At the Obongi district, despite the involvement of both mainstream and disability-focused organizations in providing services to refugees with disabilities, there is no evidence of the existence of task groups at either the local or national level.

²³ <https://nudipu.org/>

In the past several years, based on interviews with INGO staff, limited number of organisations had disability specific activities, due to changes in donor funding and the closure of local NGOs. Among the main organizations involved are Lutheran World Federation, which provides construction services to people with 'special needs', and TPO, which advocates for universal design standards in shelters.

War Child Holland advocates for inclusive schools and has added ramps as a response to TPO's advocacy efforts. It appears that actual response will depend on the level of internal organizational commitments, ongoing advocacy efforts, and available funding that changes from time to time and affects the impact of targeted actions.

The TPO's project, funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany) and overseen by DAHW, lasted for 31 months (1st Dec. 2019 to 30th June 2022). The project aimed to improve the economic situation of families with children and young persons with disabilities, establish healthy coping mechanisms, improve the mental health of children and young persons with disabilities, caregivers, and community members, and improve the access of children with disabilities to the state school system. In addition, adaptable low-cost mobility assistive devices and income-generating interventions were provided to improve the standard of living for the beneficiaries. The project covered all the settlement zones of Palorinya and involved training members of the community to understand the issues affecting persons with disabilities and traumatized people and reduce stigma.

Most importantly, the UNHCR Palorinya Refugee Settlement Incidents Report regularly reports many incidents, including Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) incidents²⁴, highlighting the need for support to mental health-related issues. Previous projects with Caritas and DAHW only covered about 30% of the clients in need by the time they exited in 2018. This is further compounded by the fact that new refugees are arriving increasing the need for continued efforts in this regard.

HI Uganda is actively involved in providing humanitarian interventions on inclusive education, rehabilitation, psychosocial support, livelihood, and WASH in refugee settlements, host communities, and disaster response in Uganda. In terms of ensuring that these activities are inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities, the organization ensures that their programming activities are aligned with the support of Technical Inclusion specialists and Rehabilitation specialists. They involve persons with disabilities in project and programming and encourage their participation in monitoring and evaluation.

In terms of initiatives or innovations to further advance disability inclusion in their humanitarian programs, particularly in the areas of protection, food security, and WASH, the organization has undertaken door-to-door awareness-raising initiatives to create awareness to everyone, especially mothers who are always busy with domestic work and can not listen to radios or attend any public gathering.

The organization faces challenges in ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities in their humanitarian programs.

²⁴ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/98476>

Most of the disability inclusion program activities are too general, yet some persons with disabilities require targeted individualized approaches and interventions. In most cases, these services are not provided by the state or mainstream organizations due to reluctance to allocate budgets for such purposes, despite clear requirements of the UN CRPD.

Additionally, mobility and access are major challenges, and there is a need for the provision of assistive technology interventions. Poverty is another challenge, and collaboration with other partners is required to provide livelihoods and reduce the negative impact.

Last but not least, the continued reliance on charity or medical models of disability serves as a barrier to true empowerment of persons with disabilities, necessitating the need for further awareness-raising using social model/rights-based approaches that use language aimed at reducing negative stereotypes and stigma surrounding persons with disabilities.

Moving in the same direction, representatives from UN agencies working in both humanitarian and development contexts note the lack of intentional programs to target persons with disabilities in the settlement, despite supportive laws. While advocacy for inclusiveness is ongoing, deeper analysis and effective use of data are needed for organizing events and mobilizing resources. In general, UN agencies advocate for affirmative, non-stigmatizing services that are evidence-based and mobilize resources at the national and subnational levels, but further support in mainstreaming is required.

The largest enablers that support mainstreaming disability inclusion in the work, and in the work of protection, food security, and WASH clusters are the involvement of persons with disabilities in proposal designs and planning, conducting baseline surveys and using the actual results in planning, effectively analyzing WGQs results during planning, encouraging participation of persons with disabilities in project and programming, and letting persons with disabilities to participate in monitoring and evaluation.

Overview of Findings

Area	Findings/Good examples	Identified Gaps	Potential Actions
Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Participatory Assessment Final Report 2022 specifically highlighted that persons with disabilities in Palorinya are among the most excluded from aid delivery, primarily due to the inaccessibility of distribution points. - The Emergency Appeal for the Uganda Country Refugee Response recognizes the urgent need for support to people with ‘specific needs’, including persons with disabilities, who are at risk and require special care and protection services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of disaggregated data: While some reports provide disaggregated data on persons with ‘specific needs’, including disabilities, there is no further disaggregation by functional domains. This hinders a comprehensive understanding of the protection risks and vulnerabilities faced by persons with disabilities. - The use of outdated terminology related to persons with disabilities is widespread, including insufficiency of inclusive and accessible approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen data collection: Promote the use of standardized methods like the WGQs for collecting disability data in humanitarian action in Uganda. This can help improve data accuracy, comparability, and inform targeted protection interventions. - Improve coordination and awareness: Establish a dedicated disability inclusion task group or working group within existing coordination mechanisms (GBV, Child Protection) to provide support, knowledge, and coordination on disability inclusion, at various levels. This can enhance collaboration, capacity building, and knowledge sharing among humanitarian actors. - Address accessibility barriers: Take proactive measures to address accessibility barriers in aid delivery, such as ensuring distribution points and facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities. This can help promote the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in humanitarian programs. - Advocate for funding to improve protection measures related to identified issues

Area	Findings/Good examples	Identified Gaps	Potential Actions
Food Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The WFP Uganda Country Strategic Plan has committed to considering the unique circumstances and preferences of different beneficiary groups, including persons living with disabilities, and aims to calculate the percentage of beneficiaries with disabilities. - TPO Uganda has developed tools for mapping households and collecting data on demographics, disabilities, and economic vulnerabilities in refugee settlements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The term 'Persons with Specific Needs' is used instead of 'Persons with Disabilities', which may result in underestimating the number of persons with disabilities in refugee settings. - Lack of explicit reference to disability inclusion in strategic documents: Existing humanitarian documents, including the Uganda Country Refugee Response and other relevant strategies, have limited or no explicit reference to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the food security sector. - There is a lack of disaggregated data on disabilities by functional domains in the refugee statistics and population summaries, limited removal of barriers and targeted support in this area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the vulnerabilities of refugees with disabilities regarding access to food assistance. - Develop disability-inclusive guidelines and standards for food assistance programs in refugee contexts. - Enhancing coordination and collaboration between key stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of disability-inclusive food security programs. - Strengthen capacity building initiatives to enhance the knowledge and skills of humanitarian actors and implementing partners on disability inclusion in food assistance programs.

Area	Findings/Good examples	Identified Gaps	Potential Actions
WASH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Water and Environmental Refugee Response Plan for Uganda includes extra support for persons with ‘special needs’, including persons with disabilities, to ensure access to safe and hygienic sanitation services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of evidence that demonstrates meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in the design and implementation of WASH interventions, in line with standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in the design and implementation of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) interventions. - Conduct training and capacity-building programs for WASH practitioners and humanitarian actors on disability inclusion. - Strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems to assess the effectiveness and inclusiveness of WASH interventions for persons with disabilities. - Foster partnerships and collaboration between key WASH actors and disability-focused organisations