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Light for the World **LEARNING SERIES**

Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Action in South Sudan

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Outcome Harvesting Case Study, 2021



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1. Introduction

Light for the World is a global disability and development organisation, breaking down barriers to enrich society and unlock the potential in everyone. While the organisation is mainly a development actor, in South Sudan it has been engaged in humanitarian action programmes since 2013, when the political crisis developed into a civil war. Since then, Light for the World has been collaborating with humanitarian aid programmes to support persons with disabilities in displacement camps with humanitarian assistance.

This case study documents the process which started with collaborating with one key player (Dorcas Aid International) and resulted in making the wider humanitarian aid sector more disability-inclusive. The lessons learned show that such a change requires committed individuals and organisations. The case study also demonstrates that persons with disabilities themselves can become agents for change and technical experts on disability inclusion.

Skills for Work Project

Implementing Partners: Dorcas Aid International, Edukans and Light for the World

Project duration: March 2016 – March 2020

Funded by: EU

Budget: 2.5 Mio. EUR

Overall objective: Contribute to increased employability and income generating opportunities for young women and men through provision of demand driven quality vocational and skills training, and access to productive resources by civil society organisations.

Target groups: Vulnerable young women and men between the ages of 15 - 35 who are un- or underemployed with emphasis on returnees, internally displaced persons, school dropouts, persons living with disabilities and young mothers.

At the end of the project, 6,089 youth were supported through inclusive relevant and high-quality training. 412 were youth with disabilities. Five vocational training centres, which were part of the project, are now providing a barrier-free environment. 3,484 trainees received a loan or a grant to set up a business, of which 325 were persons with disabilities.

Outcome Harvesting methodology

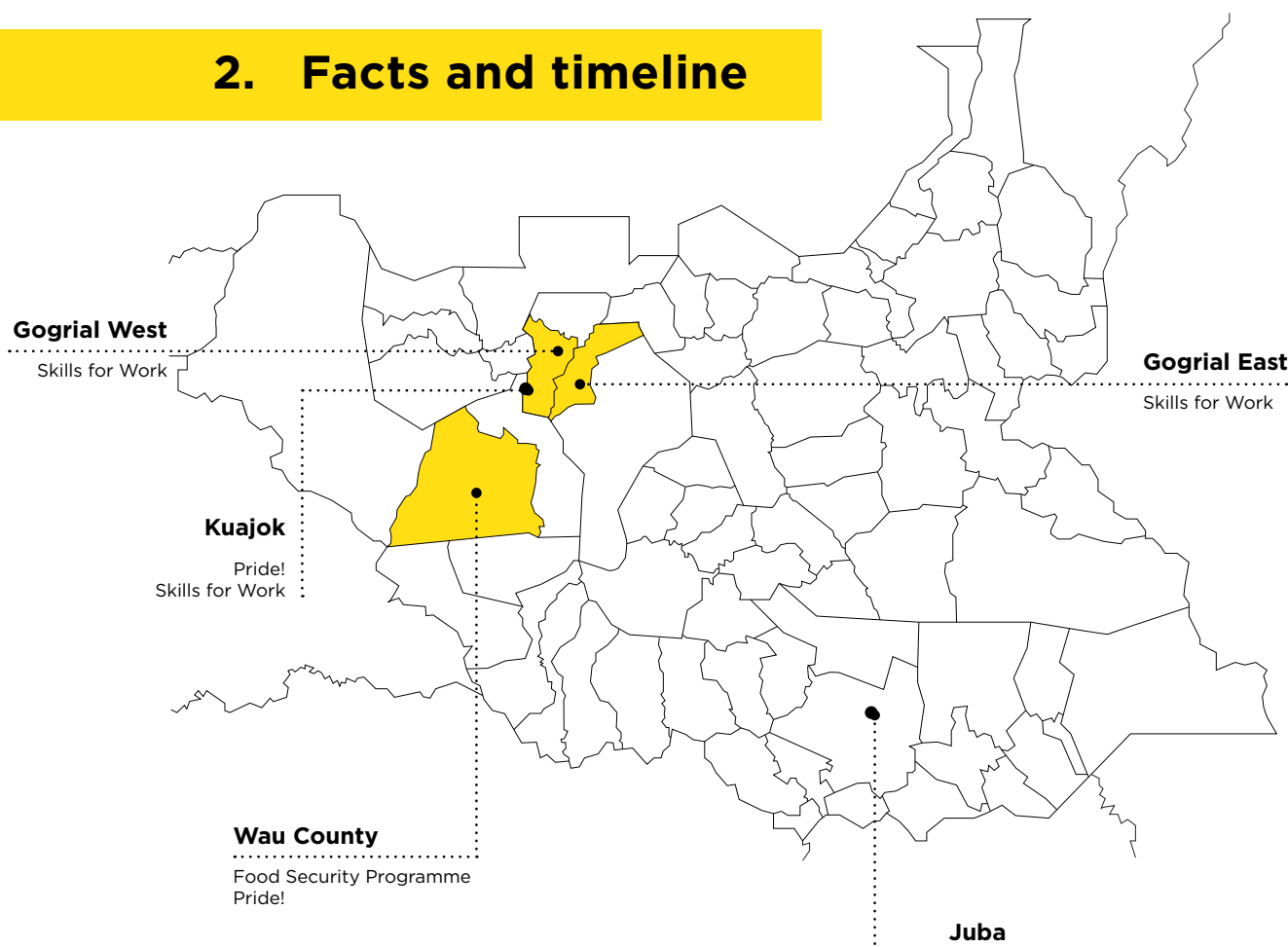
The data for this case study was gathered by means of an Outcome Harvesting (OH) process. This process was conducted by Light for the World in South Sudan, in collaboration with the organisation's international office and an OH consultant from Southern Hemisphere, who was brought on board for technical support and guidance. The harvesting process took place from May 2021 to January 2022 and included the following:

- 1 ▶ **Inception meeting:** Key concepts related to OH were presented and discussed, including the steps of the process, timeframes and key responsibilities.
- 2 ▶ **Designing the harvest (step 1):** During this step, the planning of the OH was undertaken. An outcome tracker was designed and shared with those team members responsible for conducting the preliminary outcome harvest. And a discussion was held to help identify the key informants and change agents.
- 3 ▶ **Harvesting of outcomes (step 2):** this included a review of secondary data sources and documents. Outcome tracker (which included outcome description, significance and contribution) was completed to enable the formulation of draft outcomes.
- 4 ▶ **Engagement with key informants (step 3):** Discussion with change agents to harvest the outcomes. The key informants included the chairperson of the South Sudan Union of Persons with Disabilities, a project manager from Save the Children, Project managers from Dorcas Aid International and Government officials in the Ministry of Gender and Social Welfare. Research methods included the administration of a self-completion survey and telephonic, semi-structured interviews. Completed surveys and interview notes were shared with all the OH team members.
- 5 ▶ **Substantiation (step 4):** The OH team reviewed the outcomes, based on the information obtained from step 3. The process was designed in an iterative way and when needed additional information was collected from key informants.
- 6 ▶ **Sense-making session (step 5):** Here the team members reflected on step 4 and refined and updated the harvested outcomes, utilising the additional input from step 4. Patterns or themes in the data were investigated, discussed and assessed to determine key outcomes and potential levers or mechanisms of change. Following the sense-making workshop, a structure for the case study was compiled and the compilation of the draft case study commenced.



Viola Sabino and Hakima Abraham both contracted polio as children. They have attended the vocational training centre of Dorcas and started a baking business together. Before they were begging on the street. **“The project has transformed our lives, we are independent, and we have money to sustain us.”**

2. Facts and timeline



2015: ◀●

Dorcas Aid International approached Light for the World in 2015 to seek expertise on how to mainstream disability inclusion in their food security and livelihood programme in Wau, Western Bhar el Ghazal State.

Light for the World provided Dorcas Aid International staff with training in disability inclusion; Dorcas Aid International was then able to support persons with leprosy in their food security and livelihood programme. The programme entailed grants that enabled the beneficiaries to start businesses and observing the progress of the businesses over a period of time. This included village and loan associations (VSLA) as a way of improving livelihood among the beneficiaries. The programme was a great success as the persons with disabilities were able to perform very well in their programme and become economically stable.

●▶ 2016:

Light for the World submitted a joint proposal with Dorcas Aid International called Skills for Work with a strong disability inclusion component to the European Union. This project was able to support persons with disabilities to become self-reliant and economically stable. The project provided vocational skills training to persons with disabilities. A technical vocational education training (TVET) programme ensured that enrolment of persons with disabilities was a priority. A total of 450 persons with disabilities were trained in different vocational skills such as baking, carpentry, tailoring, agriculture etc. This four-year training programme ended in February 2020.

2017: ◀●

Dorcas Aid International started a very ambitious programme of becoming more disability inclusive. This entailed construction of ramps in their offices around the country, construction of disability inclusive sanitation facilities and disability inclusive programming. The venture was very successful and by 2020, all the offices, sanitation facilities and TVET centres supported by Dorcas Aid International were accessible to persons with disabilities. To ensure that the culture of disability inclusion continues, Dorcas Aid International is conducting annual disability inclusion training for their staff.

2020: ◀●

Dorcas Aid International, in collaboration with Light for the World, supported an inclusive project working with village saving and loan associations (VSLA). In this project, persons with disabilities formed VSLAs and received seed grants. VSLA members included some of the graduates from TVET training centres who had already been given the skills to start livelihood activities. A total of nine groups were formed comprising of 90-120 persons with 70% of the members having disabilities. This was a great success as they were able to expand their businesses and become self-reliant.

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In September 2020 Light for the World offered a blended training course on inclusive humanitarian action for DRA members. Due to COVID-19 related restrictions, the training was organised online, with regional workshops where participants could also meet in person in smaller groups. The training enabled the participants to understand disability from a rights-based perspective, to familiarise themselves with the IASC (Inter Agency Standing Committee) guidelines on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action and to develop action plans for their respective projects.

▶● 2019:

Light for the World recruited 20 disability inclusion facilitators (DIFs) who are persons with disabilities, and thus are role models within the community, as they have lived experience. The role of DIFs is to support disability inclusion among humanitarian aid partners in South Sudan. For that purpose, DIFs go through a training programme and are empowered to advocate for disability inclusion. A total of 16 organisations have been trained on disability inclusion and have embraced the disability inclusion agenda. The trained organisations are part of the South Sudan Joint Response of the Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA).

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▶● A Dorcas Aid International staff member who had been trained in disability inclusion, joined the Dutch Relief Alliance as a Senior Joint Response Project Manager. In his new role, he managed a consortium project of 16 partners to support multi-year humanitarian action activities in South Sudan. He has now instilled the culture of disability inclusion within the DRA and has ensured that the humanitarian organisations are embracing disability inclusion in their programmes. This has been achieved by offering training in disability inclusion for all the consortium partners and having disability inclusive training where sign language interpreters take part to ensure full disability inclusion.

2021:

Light for the World carried out an impact assessment of the humanitarian action programme for persons with disabilities, including the impact it has had on their livelihoods. Disability inclusion facilitators testified that the project has fully empowered them, and that they are now able to support their families. Others testified that they are able to support university education for themselves and their siblings, as well as have financial means to mitigate increasing costs of living South Sudan.

2020:

Light for the World, Dorcas Aid International and Help the Child, who are members of the DRA, submitted a proposal for an inclusive project called "Pride!". This project entails TVET training for 450 persons with disabilities and ensures that there is disability inclusion among the consortium partners. In order to achieve this important milestone, Light for the World trained the consortium members on disability-inclusive TVET training. Dorcas Aid International and Help a Child are members of the South Sudan Joint response of the DRA. During the training of the DRA members on disability inclusion, the two organisations embraced the concept of disability inclusive programming. This paved the way for the Skills for Work Project which had a very strong inclusion component and thus for the Pride! project which is also highly disability inclusive. The concept of working with disability inclusion facilitators has also been well embraced as each partner has a pool of disability inclusion facilitators that have been trained on disability inclusion and are positively driving the disability inclusion agenda among humanitarian and government agencies.



3. Findings

Changes can be observed at the level of Dorcas Aid International, the Dutch Relief Alliance and the wider humanitarian aid sector in South Sudan, as well as individuals with disabilities.

Dorcas Aid International has embraced disability inclusion:

- ▶ The organisation has made their offices disability inclusive through construction of ramps and accessible sanitation facilities.
- ▶ During the development of its strategic plan 2021-2023, Dorcas Aid International has formulated disability inclusion as one of the key strategic areas and aims to ensure that all their programmes will be disability inclusive.

Dutch Relief Alliance:

Disability inclusion training to staff of the member organisations of the DRA had a great impact. It has enabled staff to embrace disability inclusion even after they leave the organisation and become advocates for disability inclusion in their new duty stations. Joseph Kayi is a living example as he has positively advocated for disability inclusion among the consortium members of the South Sudan Joint Response. The partners implementing this programme have been encouraged to embrace disability inclusion and that will have a positive impact in their programming that will ensure that no one is left behind.

The South Sudan Joint Response has also assigned disability inclusion focal persons in all counties of implementation. Involvement of persons with disabilities in project implementation is now a top priority for all DRA partners. This can be directly attributed to the disability inclusion training Light for the World offered to consortium members.



Joseph Kayi: **“Disability inclusion is a selling idea as inclusion is becoming a global topic. As DRA we value the knowledge that we received from Light for the World and all the 16 members took disability inclusion as one of the mandate areas.”**

Humanitarian aid sector:

Donors are embracing disability inclusion. This is evident in EU support for disability-inclusive programmes like Skills for Work and Pride!. These programmes have improved the livelihoods of persons with disabilities and will continue to have a positive impact on their lives. The disability inclusive TVET training will ensure that persons with disabilities

are able to participate in economic empowerment programmes. The VSLA programme has seen the culture of saving being instilled in persons with disabilities who have been able to expand their businesses, thus having a sustainable income and significantly reducing dependency.

As a result of the recruitment and training of the disability inclusion facilitators (DIFs), disability inclusion has become part of the programming of those humanitarian organisations that have received training.



Ajount Deng did three months computer training with Dorcas. **“It will help me a lot to find work because computers are everywhere and you need those skills to find a job. It’s not too difficult and I’m learning a lot.”**

Individuals with disabilities and their families:

The disability inclusion training given to Dorcas Aid International has enabled the organisation to work closely with persons with disabilities, especially those who have been disabled as a result of leprosy. Light for the World ensured they get the support they need by working closely with Dorcas Aid International to include them in livelihood activities. They often performed better than those without disabilities, as shown by the success of the businesses that were run by persons with disabilities. Dorcas Aid International was also able to refer them for medical treatment and empowered them to be self-reliant. This has had a positive impact and has strengthened the long-term engagement with Light for the World as demonstrated by the three projects that Light for the World and Dorcas Aid International have implemented and continue to implement together.

The TVET training for persons with disabilities have been a great success. Persons with disabilities have been given training on various vocational skills, including baking, agriculture, tailoring, carpentry and even motor vehicle mechanics. The beneficiaries acquired skills which have enabled them to establish livelihood activities.

The projects also have a positive impact on the DIFs themselves as their economic status and livelihood has improved. Their self-esteem and technical expertise on disability inclusion has also increased and they have been able to make presentations on disability inclusion to high profile audiences including the office of the vice president of South Sudan. As from 2020, ten disability inclusion facilitators have supported their siblings with secondary and university education and two of the DIFs have enrolled at universities. DIFs receive professional fees for advisory services and this income has enabled them to pursue their education; this will also have a positive impact on the vision and mission of Light for the World that embraces inclusion.

4. Lessons learned

Lesson 1: Organisational commitment is key

The biggest factor in success is that organisations are embracing disability inclusion. When Dorcas Aid International approached Light for the World for technical advice on their livelihood project, they positively embraced disability inclusion. This can be seen as the foundation for disability inclusive programming and created a favourable environment. This positive approach towards disability inclusion culminated in having disability inclusion in their strategic plan.

Lesson 2: Disability inclusion facilitators to provide technical support on scale

The concept of working with DIFs has proven to be a powerful tool that can increase the reach of the disability inclusion agenda. The DIFs have been able to train the staff of 16 humanitarian organisations on disability inclusion. Beyond the training, the DIFs provide technical support over longer time spans to these organisations. They carry out assessments, provide topical advice, track progress, link NGOs to organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) and service providers. DIFs are persons with disabilities themselves, they can speak from experience and act as role models. This creates a positive energy which has been transmitted to the various organisations and enables disability inclusion among humanitarian actors.

Lesson 3: Technical support beyond training

Technical support was not limited to the provision of training but was completed with tools and practical advice that help humanitarian aid organisations to become more inclusive. These tools and practical guidance covered accessibility assessments, reasonable accommodation, inclusive teaching skills, inclusive TVET curricula, having sign language interpreters, adapting computer training for blind students, etc.

Lesson 4: Disability inclusion ambassadors

Training staff on disability inclusion can have a huge impact on how they work. They can become advocates of disability inclusion even after they leave the organisation they have been working with. They know their organisation and can transform programming to support disability inclusion at a higher level. When they move to a new organisation, they can remain ambassadors for the inclusion agenda and help their new employer to develop disability inclusive programmes.

Lesson 5: Turning the aid paradigm upside down

The empowerment of persons with disabilities as DIFs enables persons who are usually seen as recipients of aid, to become actors of a change process. They actively change attitudes towards persons with disabilities. They demonstrate that once barriers are broken down, persons with disabilities are able to do what anyone else can. Similarly, participants on economic empowerment programmes prove that their empowerment not only positively impacts them alone but also their families and contributes to the economic growth of a country. They can offer employment to others and can act as a role model to people who feel marginalised and are stigmatised. This can be seen from the 450 graduates of the Skills Training Project who have gained knowledge on economic empowerment and are now able to support their families and also contribute positively to society.

The South Sudan Joint Response of the Dutch Relief Alliance

The Dutch Relief Alliance was established in 2015 by Dutch humanitarian NGOs, which started cooperating in 2014 on three crises – South Sudan, Ebola and Iraq. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), which was funding the relief projects, saw an opportunity for a large-scale, lean funding model.

Central to the DRA approach is the Joint Response Mechanism. Joint Responses are co-created and implemented by DRA partners and local partners, which are chosen based on geographical and technical criteria, and in collaboration with other international and local humanitarian actors. Peer-review mechanisms are in place to ensure the quality of each Joint Response.

The South Sudan Joint Response has seven international members: Save the Children (lead), Tearfund, CARE, Plan International, War Child Holland, Dorcas Aid International and Help a Child. They partner with nine national organisations including Centre for Emergency and Development Support (CEDS), Charity and Empowerment Foundation (CEF), Women Development Group (WDG), Association of Christian Organizations Supporting Sudan (ACROSS), Universal Intervention Development Organization (UNIDOR), Humanitarian Development Consortium (HDC), Widows and Orphans Charitable Organization (WOCO), Smile Again African Development Organization (SAADO) and Mary Help Association (MHA).

5. Conclusion and outlook

This case study demonstrates that disability inclusion in humanitarian action is possible. Yet, there is still need for further engagement. Light for the World has therefore defined its country strategy 2021-2025 for South Sudan as follows:

Our vision is to see South Sudan uniting together to help crisis affected people, including persons with disabilities, rapidly get the humanitarian assistance and protection they need. Humanitarian agencies, including UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), NGOs and the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, provide inclusive and accessible humanitarian response services for the people in need. Persons with disabilities are empowered to influence agencies and government bodies for an inclusive humanitarian action.

Our mission is to contribute to the national emergency response to save lives and protect people, including persons with disabilities, in humanitarian settings like IDP and refugee camps.

- ▶ We will advocate for effective, accessible, inclusive and principled humanitarian action by all, for all.
- ▶ We will continue to build the capacity of humanitarian and development agencies including government in disability inclusion through training and coaching by disability inclusion experts.
- ▶ We will continue to advocate for disaggregated data in humanitarian agency programmes for an inclusive service in all aspects from identification to implementation.
- ▶ We will continue to build a pool of disability inclusion experts to promote economic empowerment through relation building, training and coaching for mainstream actors, and government in humanitarian action.
- ▶ We will continue being an expert organisation in providing technical support for mainstream actors, relevant line ministries and UN agencies in humanitarian action.
- ▶ We will continue to pay specific attention to women and children with disabilities, and more excluded and invisible impairment groups with a focus on persons with Nodding Syndrome through community-based humanitarian response.

Pride!

Empowered women, including persons with disabilities, contribute to the inclusive development of their communities in and around Wau and Gogrial West Counties

Implementing Partners: Dorcas Aid International, Stichting Red een Kind (Help a Child) and Light for the World

Project duration: February 2021 – July 2023

Funded by: EU

Budget: 1.25 Mio EUR

Overall objective: Empower women, including those with disabilities, contribute to the development of inclusive and prosperous communities.

A central element of the intervention logic of the action is that it addresses the main barriers towards the participation of women, including those with disabilities, in community activities, local political decision-making and the labour force. At the same time, it stimulates the participation of women in the target locations by increasing opportunities for their engagement. This is done with the overarching rationale that the development of inclusive and prosperous communities requires empowered women and men who feel proud of their own and other people's contribution; and the inclusion and contribution of all. The consortium wants to see that women and girls with and without disabilities are empowered and recognised for the important and meaningful role they play in society. The project aims to reach 1,750 women, of which 450 (15%) with disabilities.



6. Want to know more?

Contact information:

Light for the World South Sudan

Address: Tearfund Compound, Hai Jerusalem, Juba
Phone: +211 92 333 13 06
Email: southsudan@light-for-the-world.org
www.light-for-the-world.org/southsudan

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