

Disability Inclusion

insight series

Disability Inclusive **Healthy Entrepreneurs**

Covering the Last Mile

In rural communities characterised by remote and isolated villages, residents travel miles on difficult terrain to town centres to get very basic, yet essential, health products and over-the-counter medication. Coupled with limited knowledge on basic health care and financial constraints for the poor, chances of being duped into buying poor quality and expensive products are incredibly high.

Healthy Entrepreneurs aims to change this by establishing a large network of Community Healthy Entrepreneurs (CHEs) who are trained to deliver good quality and affordable health products and services to residents of their communities.

Healthy Entrepreneurs joined the Make 12.4% Work Initiative as a member and has since then made provisions within its organisational structure to recruit persons with disabilities as Community Healthy Entrepreneurs and in linking persons with disabilities in areas of operation to required services.

The Healthy Entrepreneurs' approach

- Preferably Female
- 20 years and above
- Minimum Primary school education
- Active and trusted in her community
- Trained as VHT (Village Health Team volunteer).

- Healthy Entrepreneurs and its local partner in the district call interested VHTs to a mobilisation meeting
- Tests are given and candidates who meet the criteria are selected.
- Requested to source a commitment fee of 70.000 Ugx.



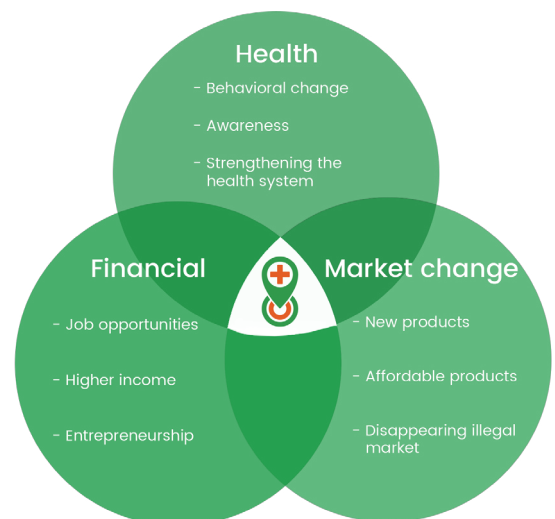
- Selected VHTs attend a 5-day training course focusing on Primary Health Care and Business Development
- Also trained in use of technology
- Equipped with a smart phone
- Device contains pre-installed apps with 125 health educational movies translated in the native language of the respective area

- CHEs receive products on credit worth 240.000 Ugandan Shillings payable over a period of a year to start operations.
- Operate within their localities and respective sub counties .

- Sanitary products, contraceptives, over-the-counter medicines including ORS/Zinc, multivitamins, anti-malarial drugs, pain-relief medication, de-worming tablets, etc.

The impact of the Healthy Entrepreneurs approach can be summed up as:

1. Improved access to basic health in isolated communities.
2. Financial independence for Community Healthy Entrepreneurs.
3. Market change offering trusted health services and products for low income population based on a sustainable last mile distribution chain.



The Healthy Entrepreneurs approach focussing on basic health, financial opportunity and market change offers solutions to some challenges faced by persons with disabilities. Those living in rural communities tend to be even more vulnerable, facing economic and social exclusion on many grounds. Persons with physical disabilities particularly, who are significant in number in rural Uganda, face mobility difficulties and incur exuberant transport costs travelling to town centres to get basic health products they need.

“As a Community Healthy Entrepreneur, I can do more for my people”

Meet Kellen; a nurse, women councillor, deputy speaker for Kabende sub-county, VHT and most recently, Community Healthy Entrepreneur. Living with a physical disability and the challenges that come along with it has not deterred her from working towards her dreams. She continues to beat all odds stacked against her, piling achievement after achievement.

Before Healthy Entrepreneurs, access to over-the-counter medication, such as anti-malarial drugs and pain-relievers, was very limited.

“We had to go all the way to Kabarole town (a journey of approximately 70km) to get medicine. If you’re like me (disabled), it is even tougher. Now people can just come to my home and get what they need. ”

Her success has served as inspiration to people in her sub county, with and without disabilities. “We meet them... they always ask ‘how can I also become a Community Healthy Entrepreneur?’”



Kellen HE in Kabende Sub-County, Kabarole District

Disability Inclusion in practice

In 2017, following success in the pilot district of Kibaale, Healthy Entrepreneurs scaled up operations, expanding to more districts in the Western, Central and Eastern regions of Uganda. Despite the success attained, the limited participation of VHTs with disabilities was apparent. With more support and focus on disability inclusion, this could change. A new drive on disability inclusion for the operational year of 2018 was set.

In light of this, Healthy Entrepreneurs partnered with Light for the World through the Make 12.4% Work Initiative for technical support on disability inclusion. Kabarole was chosen as the pilot district for efforts on disability inclusion considering Healthy Entrepreneurs was in the process of starting operations in the district. It was agreed that the inclusion of persons with disabilities should take centre-stage from the very start.

Recruitment of persons with disabilities as Community Healthy Entrepreneurs

Health through Water and Sanitation (HEWASA), Healthy Entrepreneurs’ community partner in the district, worked with local VHT Coordinators to particularly source VHTs with disabilities to join the Franchise. Through this drive, 5 VHTs (4 with physical impairments and 1 with a visual impairment) that fit the profile were recruited.

Being a certified VHT is a requirement for one to be considered as a potential franchisee. This limited recruitment as few persons with disabilities in rural communities have undergone VHT training. Steps are currently being taken to motivate more persons with disabilities to join VHT training.

Make it Work! Tips on mobilisation of persons with disabilities

- Reach out to the district union of persons with disabilities and other grass roots organisations in the target area, provide them with information about your program and assure them of your commitment to disability inclusion. These structures are in a good position to help you reach out to persons with disabilities and encourage them to participate.
- Economic groups such as Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) that have persons with disabilities as members are also a good point of contact. The business-motivated mindset cultivated in these groups will attract their attention to your program.
- Use success stories of persons with disabilities in your program to motivate others to join. Seeing others succeed will help to dispel any fears about your program and convince the sceptical.

Healthy Entrepreneurs and HEWASA regularly monitor the activities of Community Healthy Entrepreneurs in the district, with special attention to those with disabilities. Monthly cluster meetings are held per sub-county. These meetings are a chance for the Community Healthy Entrepreneurs to receive their monthly ordered products, resolve any issues that may have risen during the month, share experiences and motivate each other to perform even better.

Make it Work! Tips on monitoring

- Regular check-ins and support are an effective way to monitor the performance of persons with disabilities in your program. Not only do these check-ins help resolve any issues in performance that may arise due to their disabilities, but they also motivate them to stay on track and do even better.
- Make use of the Disability Inclusion Facilitators! These are trained youth with disabilities eager to help you on your journey to disability inclusion. Disability Inclusion Facilitators are available to conduct supportive monitoring visits and regular follow-ups on your program and participants with disabilities to keep you on the Inclusion path and track your progress every step of the way. For more information, contact info@lightfortheworld.nl
- Encourage peer support and learning. This will encourage persons with disabilities participating in your program to come up with solutions to difficulties they may encounter and present an amplified voice to advocate for change where warranted.

Increasing awareness on disability and the basic health needs of persons with disabilities

At the launch of Healthy Entrepreneurs in Kabarole District, Disability Inclusion Facilitators delivered a Disability Awareness session for all attendees, including district leaders, health officers, police and community leaders. Energized by the topics discussed, district leaders expressed renewed commitment to disability inclusion and requested for more detailed training for other district staff including teachers, administrators and health workers.



Kellen gives drug information to a community member

During the 5-day training of Community Healthy Entrepreneurs, the Disability Inclusion Facilitators also delivered a session focussing on attitude change towards persons with disabilities. Myths and stereotypes about persons with disabilities were discussed as well as respectful language and communicating with people with various impairments.

Make it Work! Tips on Disability Awareness Training

- Make use of Disability Inclusion Facilitators provided by the Make 12.4% Work Initiative in Uganda. Disability Inclusion Facilitators are available to conduct disability awareness trainings and give advice on the intricacies of inclusion tailored to the needs of your company or organisation. For more information, contact info@lightfortheworld.nl
- In rural communities, despite trainees having a basic knowledge of English, it is always better to translate training material to the local language widely spoken in the target area.
- Include pictures, info-graphics and videos in your training. This will greatly aid understanding of key messages.

Linking persons with disabilities to required services through Community Healthy Entrepreneurs

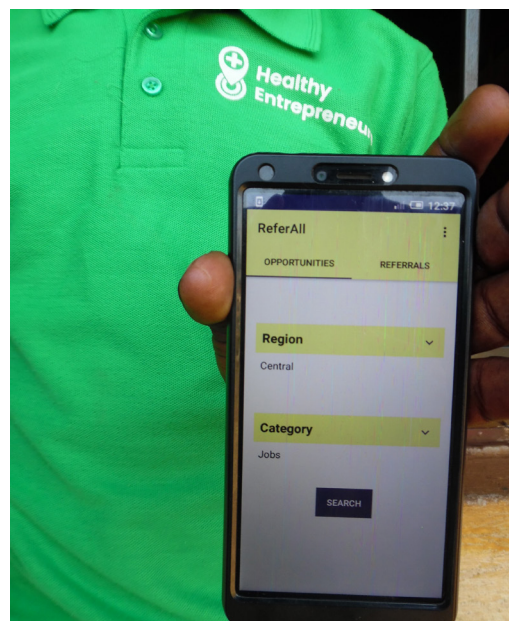
Residents of rural communities usually live far away from each other with hundreds of acres of farm land between them. This greatly limits the spread of useful information regarding medical and rehabilitation services when available.

To bridge this gap, the Make 12.4% Work Initiative has developed the ReferAll app. This app offers contact details for associations of persons with disabilities, national and district unions for persons with disabilities, service providers related to disability (sign language interpreters, rehabilitation services and equipment) and opportunities available for persons with disabilities. All this information is regularly updated and can be searched for per region in Uganda.

The ReferAll app offers a great opportunity for Community Healthy Entrepreneurs to expand their information services and share up-to-date information with other community members with disabilities

During the training session on use of technology, Community Healthy Entrepreneurs were taught on how to use the app to refer persons with disabilities to services in their vicinity.

“I have managed to refer 5 children with Cerebral Palsy to Kabende Health Centre for rehabilitation services. There is an NGO (Kyaninga Child Development Centre) that offers free therapy and equipment like wheelchairs and crutches. At least now they are able to go to school and play with their friends.” – HE in Kabende Sub County.



A CHE demonstrates use of the ReferAll app

Healthy Entrepreneurs has undeniably changed the primary health care sphere in remote and isolated villages in Uganda. The impact of the Healthy Entrepreneurs model goes beyond improved access to medication, health care products and spread of useful health information. There is improved community engagement with residents able to make informed decisions regarding their health.

Community Healthy Entrepreneurs under the Franchise earn a living while actively contributing to the wellbeing of their community. With increased focus on disability inclusion and outreach to community members with disabilities, challenges in access to health services and products will continue to diminish.

A future with better quality health products and primary health care covering the very last mile is in sight.

For more information:

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Healthy Entrepreneurs (HE) is a social enterprise that manages a fully integrated end-to-end supply chain to deliver affordable and reliable health products and services to the poorest families living in rural areas via a network of trained micro-entrepreneurs. Learn more about their operations on their website www.healthyentrepreneurs.nl



The Disability Inclusion Insight Series is a series developed by Light for the World. The series shows different approaches taken by organisations on disability inclusion in economic empowerment, providing inspiration and practical support to development professionals in their endeavours to make disability inclusion happen within the designs of current and future programs.

This Insight Brief is funded by National Community Lottery Fund through the Livelihood Improvement Challenge Project, under the Make 12.4 % Work Initiative. The Initiative brings together key stakeholders to create enabling conditions for inclusive economic growth and allowing persons with disabilities to fully access the job market. For more information, visit www.wecanwork.ug, or contact: a.maarse@light-for-the-world.org

