

Disability Inclusion

insight series

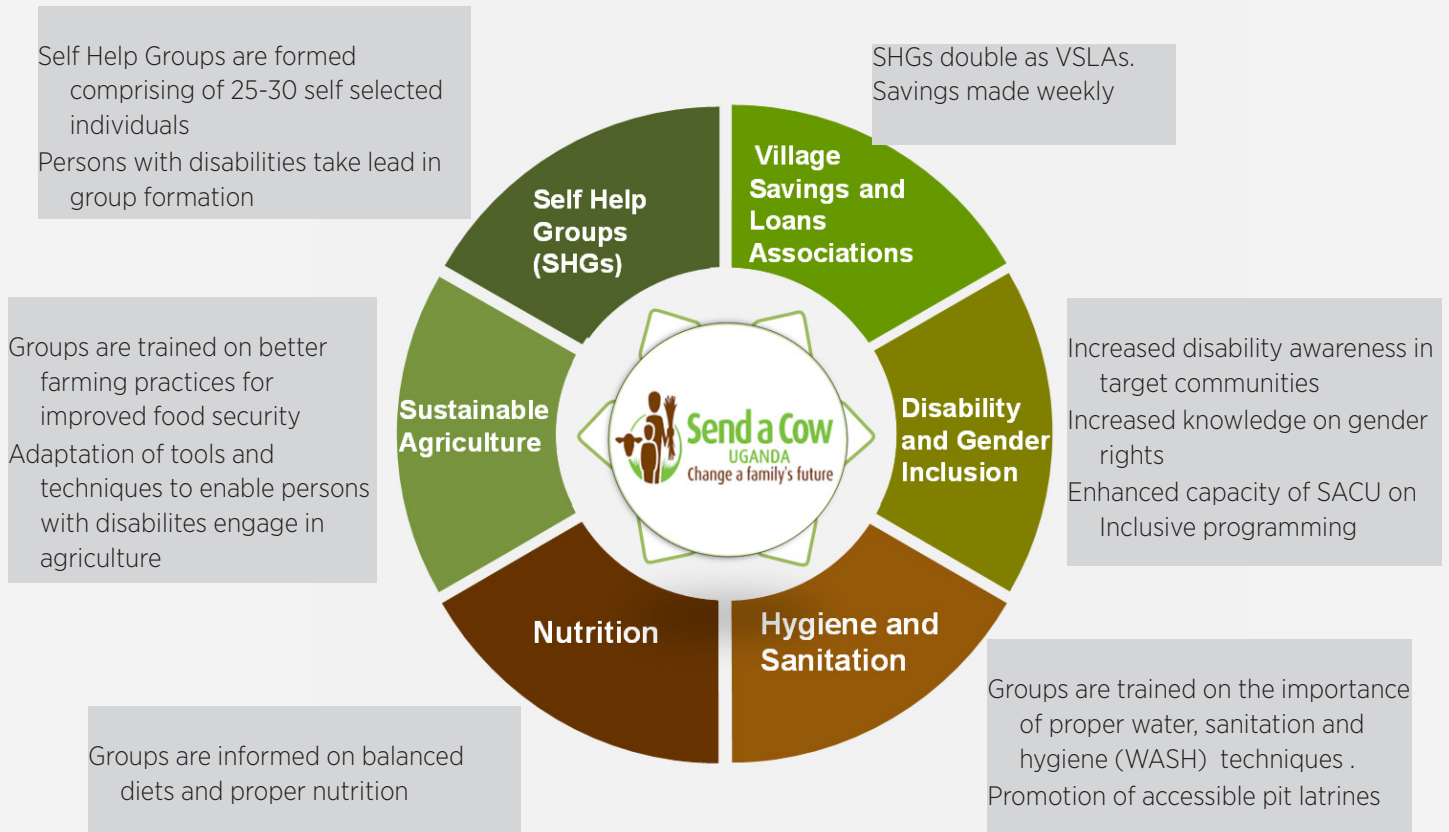
Amuru Disability Mainstreaming Project

Breaking barriers to participation in agriculture

Amuru Disability Mainstreaming Project (ADIMAP) is a three year project implemented by Send a Cow Uganda (SACU) in partnership with National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda (NUWODU), supported by National Community Lottery Fund. The project targets 1800 people in 300 households, with and without disabilities, spread across 12 sub villages in Amuru district, Northern Uganda.

The project aims at helping farming families achieve greater food security and improved livelihoods while reducing stigma around disability in target communities. Send a Cow Uganda also hopes to use ADIMAP as a learning pilot to develop an approach that will ensure better inclusion of persons with disabilities across all its projects.

The ADIMAP approach:



Francis joined the ADIMAP project as a participant in February 2018. Despite his interest in agriculture, he never thought he could actively engage in the occupation due to his physical impairment. “I used to think it was not possible. But through ADIMAP, I have learnt how to make my garden accessible.”

His garden is 30m by 10m, with a 0.6m pathway between crop beds. While in a pathway, he is able to comfortably work on crop beds on his left and right. With a height of 12cm above level ground, the crop beds are within easy reach for him.

The skills he has gained from the project go beyond farming. He has learnt more about sanitation and hygiene which he now practices in his homestead. Huts in his homestead have also been adapted for accessibility and a separate pit latrine modified to include a slab for support during transfers has been constructed.



Francis, participant in the ADIMAP project, in his accessible garden

His social circle has expanded through his Self Help Group, Kaciber, where he is a treasurer. “It is really nice to see people with disabilities and those without working together.”

Francis hopes to head into seedling production, learn more about accessible gardens and expand his knowledge on inclusive farming to help other farmers with disabilities in his community.

Disability Inclusion in practice

Though the largest source of livelihood in rural communities in Uganda is agriculture, persons with disabilities face difficulty joining this workforce due to inaccessibility of gardens, lack of adequate training, and lack of support. ADIMAP seeks to address this through driving innovative solutions and new approaches to inclusion in farming. Farmers with disabilities are equipped with necessary skills to maximise their abilities in the trade.

Hands-on Learning

At the start of a planting cycle, groups select both food and cash crops to be grown during the season. Food crops are meant for consumption by their families and cash crops are grown for the sole purpose of sales to generate an income.

To facilitate learning, demonstration gardens are picked. These are portions of land, usually belonging to group members, which are used to demonstrate farming techniques. The garden, all through the planting season, is worked on by group members, that are usually divided into sub-groups of 8-10 individuals. All farming activities in the planting season are close monitored by the Agricultural Extension Officers provided by SACU.

Any issues that arise are solved and solutions are surfaced to tackle problems encountered during the season. This is also a chance to address any accessibility problems encountered by the farmers with disabilities.

Following the pilot planting season, group members are expected to apply lessons learned to their own gardens in the next season.

Make it work! Tips on teaching practices

- Break the group down into smaller units to enhance participation of members, particularly those with disabilities. In smaller units of 8-10 members, addressing individual needs of the farmers and tracking learning of each group member is easier.
- Farmers with disabilities will have different needs and will require different levels of support. Find out their concerns and together work out solutions to suit their individual situations and abilities.

Addressing Accessibility

Accessible gardens

Accessible gardens are designed to eliminate barriers, allowing persons with disabilities, particularly wheelchair users, access to the gardens to actively participate in farming.

Pathways between crop zones are made wide enough to allow free movement of a wheelchair and crop beds are raised at least 12 cm above leveled ground for easy reach.

Location of the garden is also put into consideration. A garden situated next to the homestead can be easily monitored and gardens placed next to shade canopies provide rest areas.



An accessible garden

Accessible Homesteads

To enable full participation of persons with disabilities, other barriers in the homestead have to be addressed. Huts are usually built with a step leading into the interior. This can be modified to allow a gradual incline that permits wheelchair use. ADIMAP, as part of improving sanitation and hygiene, also supports group members to construct accessible latrines built with a slab for support and to allow easy transfers.



Hut modified for accessibility



Accessible Pit Latrine

Make It Work! Tips on addressing accessibility

- Considering the diversity in impairments, farmers with disabilities will have varying accessibility needs. Tailor each modification to suit the impairment presented and the needs of the farmer.
- Encourage farmers with disabilities to come up with their own solutions to address their accessibility needs. Provide technical support during the process. Through coming up with innovations and taking lead in making modifications, farmers learn a lot and will be in a position to support other community members on the same.
- Where possible, address other accessibility needs not specific to agriculture but important to general livelihood. Much as this may stray from your project mission, an easier community life will help farmers with disabilities gain more enthusiasm to engage in agricultural activities.

Expanding Options in Agricultural Practice

Persons with disabilities may face limitations in their ability to engage in large scale agriculture. However, several options are available that could cater to their abilities. One viable option is seedling production.

Seed beds take up little space and are not labour intensive. Also, seed beds can be placed closer to homesteads to reduce travelling distance to farms and are easy enough to monitor. All these advantages present an opportunity for farmers with disabilities.

Seedlings grown are then sold to other farmers to transplant in their own gardens. This has proved to be a viable option in agricultural practice for farmers with disabilities and is presented to them through the project.



Francis checks on seedlings in a nursery bed

Scaling Innovations and Agro-solutions

As part of the project, community members are selected from the various groups and trained as Community Resource Persons (CRPs). CRPs receive extra training in farming practices and agri-business development to build their capacity and enable them to monitor the activities of farming groups in their communities. Following phase-out of the project, CRPs are expected to be in a position to take on the role of supporting other community members on good farming practices and techniques. This is done to ensure sustainability of interventions and a long lasting impact on targeted communities.

Persons with disabilities are also included and trained as CRPs. The trained CRPs with disabilities draw from their own experiences and use information gained through the trainings to drive innovative practices and support other persons with disabilities in their communities to engage in agriculture.

ADIMAP employs an integrated social and economic approach to address various challenges faced by impoverished rural communities.

Increased disability awareness leads to reduced stigma around disability and shared understanding between people with and without disabilities living in the same community. The Self Help Groups formed are taught better farming practices and adopt farming as a business in order to generate income for saving. The VSLA groups help members develop a savings culture and allow easy access to credit that can be invested in other income generating activities. Adoption of proper hygiene and sanitation has led to reduced incidences of disease. Savings on health costs are ploughed back into VSLAs and agriculture.

As a result, a continuous circle of change is created impacting the lives of project participants, their families and communities.

For more information:

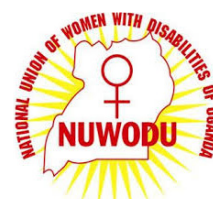
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Send a Cow Uganda (SACU) is a development non-governmental organisation that partners with farmer communities to impart knowledge and skills to overcome poverty and malnutrition.

Learn more about their operations from their website www.sendacow.org .

ADIMAP is implemented by Send a Cow Uganda and National Union of Women with Disabilities Uganda



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 Livelihoods 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

