



# ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT Capacity Statement

Light for the World  
May 2023



BURKINA FASO

ETHIOPIA

UGANDA

SOUTH SUDAN

KENYA

MOZAMBIQUE

©FreeVectorMaps.com

## Our aim

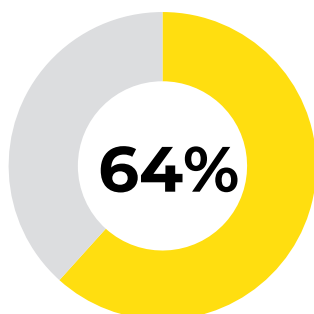
We work for an inclusive and enabling society that ensures decent livelihood opportunities for persons with disabilities and their families whereby improving their quality of life.

## About us

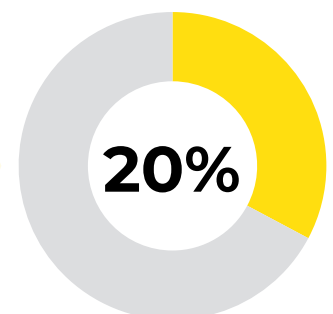
Light for the World is a global disability and development organisation, breaking down barriers to strengthen society and empower people with disabilities in some of the poorest regions of the world. With interventions in Economic Empowerment, Eye Health, Inclusive Education and Humanitarian Action, our programmes support development and mainstream actors to include persons with disabilities in their programmes and services and support persons with disabilities with skills, confidence and power to be agents of change. We work with communities, organisations, private sector, governments and a wide variety of partners to achieve sustained system change and maximum impact.

## Why

In sub-Saharan Africa, persons with disabilities are 19% less likely to be employed versus persons without disabilities. Our Economic Empowerment Programming positively impacts the livelihood situation of persons with disabilities and their households, their self-esteem and social status. Economic empowerment enables people to unlock their potential to be financially self-sufficient and become meaningful contributors to their local economy.



**64% of young people with disabilities worldwide are unemployed compared to 40% of their peers without disabilities. Vocational skills training increases their likelihood of being hired by 20%**



# What we do

---

We ensure that youth and adults with disabilities have core life and technical skills to enhance access to jobs, markets, and entrepreneurship opportunities. We enable sustainable system change and support the setup of holistic initiatives that bring together system actors around their commitment to disability inclusion. Our strategic priority areas for our work on economic empowerment are:

▶ ***Access to finance***

To increase financial literacy and access to finance, we support microfinance institutions and government-sponsored microcredit systems to adapt conditions and regulations to ensure equitable access of persons with disabilities. We support the establishment of inclusive Village Saving and Loan Associations and link them to formal financial institutions.

▶ ***Entrepreneurship and business development support***

To support the transition to work for youth with disabilities, our Disability Inclusive Development programmes sensitise, train and coach organisations that provide business development services and entrepreneurship skills so that they purposely and meaningfully include persons with disabilities in their services. Trainings and support are often provided by Business Development Service providers trained in inclusive business support services who co-design relevant, accessible and affordable development products for entrepreneurs with disabilities.

▶ ***Inclusive vocational training***

Persons with disabilities unable to complete primary or secondary education often depend on vocational training to get into work or start their own business. However, many technical and vocational training institutions (TVETs) are not accessible for youth with disabilities, or students face stigma and discrimination leading to low performance or drop out. We support TVETs and skills development providers to implement inclusive policies that enable persons with disabilities to enrol and complete their studies in a conducive, accessible setting and successfully transition to work.

▶ ***Inclusive rural development programming***

Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa have large, predominantly rural populations making rural development a key source of income for many. These populations, including persons with disabilities, have less access to opportunities like education, agricultural services and finance and face an increased vulnerability to shocks from climate change. We work with local partners and Ministries to develop services for rural development using disability inclusive participatory approaches to programme and activity planning, to promote inclusion for the improved social and economic lives of persons with disabilities.

▶ ***Inclusive employment***

We support private sector actors to actively promote disability inclusion in their Human Resource policies and workplaces and make disability-related provisions in their procurement processes. We support the establishment of employer driven National Business and Disability Networks in our countries of operation and work with Higher Education Institutes to support the transition to work for students with disabilities.



# Our approach

Our approach to economic empowerment is underlined by 4 key principles:

**1**

## ***Self-reliance***

Build reliance, self-reliance and existing systems and structures to empower and enhance agency of persons with disabilities

**2**

## ***Environmental sustainability***

Leverage the process of structural change towards a greener, carbon-neutral economy; evaluate programme impact on the environment and improve through action learning

**3**

## ***Safe and equitable access***

Plan with a people centred approach, value intersectionality and protect the safety and well-being of persons with disabilities

**4**

## ***Partnerships***

Meaningfully engage with Organisations of Persons with Disabilities, Public and Private Sector Actors, Livelihood and likeminded Disability and Development organisations

We contribute to the goals of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), these are implemented through 3 main intervention strategies:



**Provide disability inclusion advisory services to mainstream economic actors**



**Targeted interventions to economically empower persons with disabilities**



**Advocate for inclusive economic development**

# Our tools and common goods

## ***Websites***

- ▶ [SPARK Inclusion](#) – Resources, tools and good practices for Disability Inclusion in Rural Economies
- ▶ Make 12.4% Work – publications on Economic Empowerment including Disability Inclusion Insight Series briefs on good practices around disability inclusion

## ***Tools, checklists and guides***

- ▶ Rapid Accessibility Checklist and Disability Inclusion Score Card: A monitoring tool developed specifically for mainstream development organisations and for vocational training institutes to benchmark inclusion and support disability inclusive action planning
- ▶ Checklists on Inclusion: A collection of tools that can be used to check for inclusion of mainstream services and facilities and to trigger action planning with companies
- ▶ Reasonable Accommodation Guide: for creating a more inclusive workplace where persons with disabilities can perform to their full potential
- ▶ Games that support different actors to better understand barriers to access work and services – examples are the Inclusive Vocational Training Game, the Chain Game and AgriPoly

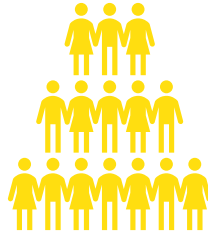
# Achievement highlights

2018 – 2022



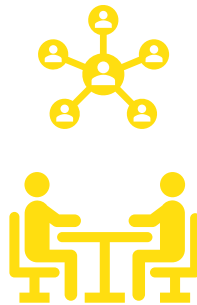
## 30,581

persons reached in **11 countries** in 2022, **53% persons with disabilities**, **58% women**.



## 218

micro-entrepreneurs with disabilities linked to businesses, helping them acquire **advanced business skills**.



## Make 12.4% Work

Initiative with **+150 members** committed to contributing to the economic empowerment of persons with disabilities – **with a focus on youth** – reaching **+7,000 persons with disabilities**.

## EmployAble programme



- in Kenya - **trained 985 youth** with and without disabilities on **employability skills**, **linking 149 youth to internships and employment** and providing 3,565 with **job shadowing and career mentorship opportunities**.

## 18,763

people, including **42% persons with disabilities**, were reached in the **SPARK Programme** by **DIFs who provided 284 professional services** in 2022 alone.



# Our projects/programmes



PROJECT	PARTNER/ DONOR	IMPACT
SPARK	International Fund for Agricultural Development, International Labour Organisation, Procasur	<b>IMPACT IN BRIEF:</b> SPARK is a Disability Inclusive Rural Transformation programme impacting the lives of over 7,000 persons with disabilities by enabling full engagement in the economic activities of selected agricultural and pastoral value chains. As part of SPARK, persons with disabilities create and test approaches and prototypes as solutions to their biggest challenges, which are continuously adapted for maximum efficiency and impact. The programme raises awareness of local stakeholders on the potential and needs of persons with disabilities.
We Can Work	Mastercard Foundation, over 20 partners including The African Disability Forum, Crosswise Works, OPDs and Entrepreneurship hubs	<b>IMPACT IN BRIEF:</b> We Can Work supports 1,000,000 young women and men with disabilities to access dignified and fulfilling work in 7 countries. Market and core skills training, transitioning to work, creation of disability inclusive ecosystems and mainstreaming disability are brought together in a comprehensive approach paired with Light for the World's Disability Inclusion Facilitator model to make this a success. Ultimately, We Can Work will help young women and men with disabilities become role model economic actors and bring about system change toward a more inclusive society.
InBusiness	Humanity & Inclusion, Sense and United Disabled Persons of Kenya (UDPK)	<b>IMPACT IN BRIEF:</b> InBusiness economically empowers persons with disabilities through a twin-track approach targeting informal (self) employment and formal waged employment. The informal track supports small microentrepreneurs to increase their income through business skills training, small grants and market linkages while formal waged employment is supported with our Disability Inclusion Facilitator approach to provide potential employers with disability inclusion training and capacity building to create accessible and decent workspaces for persons with disabilities. Organisations of Persons with Disabilities are supported to advocate for inclusive policies and removal of systemic barriers facing persons with disabilities in the business sector.
Disability Inclusive Development Programmes	Multiple	<b>IMPACT IN BRIEF:</b> Light for the World was a consortium partner in the UK-funded Disability Inclusive Development programme. The programme aims to generate lessons learned on how to make development projects inclusive. To date, Light for the World has helped micro-entrepreneurs with disabilities in Kenya integrate into supply chains, explored how the coffee value chain in Nepal can be made more inclusive, and helped young people with disabilities access technical and vocational training across Bangladesh.
Crosscutting	Multiple	<b>IMPACT IN BRIEF:</b> Our Economic Empowerment programmes reduce the impact of a crisis on the economic well-being of people with disabilities. Examples of our programming include support to mothers of children with disabilities with income generation activities to ensure children are educated; establishing village savings groups to mitigate losses of the disaster; linking people with disabilities to shelter, food security and livelihood programmes of government or mainstream humanitarian actors and supporting business opportunities of people with disabilities. Our programming is intersectional and interlinks gender equity and climate change with disability inclusion in each of our thematic areas.

# Key partners

Austrian Development Agency, African Development Fund, Community FUND, Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office, Futuremakers by Standard Chartered Bank, GIZ, Humanity & Inclusion, International Disability and Development Consortium, International Fund for Agricultural Development, International Labour Organisation, MasterCard Foundation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Plan International, Procasur, Sense, Sightsavers, ZoaDorcas

# Key experts

**ANNEKE MAARSE** Thematic Director, Economic Empowerment

**AMBROSE MURANGIRA** Thematic Director, Disability Inclusion

**DAVID CURTIS** Disability Inclusion Advisor, SPARK Programme



©Bullen Chol LFTW

**LIGHT FOR THE WORLD** is an international organisation specialising in inclusive development. Our goal is an inclusive society that is open to all and leaves no one behind. We champion accessible eye care and basic living conditions conducive to a self-determined life, so that persons with disabilities can participate with equal rights in society.

**LIGHT FOR THE WORLD** works closely with local partners, eye clinics and Organisations of Persons with Disabilities. This enables us to apply donations in a targeted, sustainable way, to create lasting structures and pave the way to an inclusive society.

**PUBLISHING INFORMATION** Editor & publisher: LIGHT FOR THE WORLD International \* Niederhofstraße 26 1120 Vienna (AT) Editors: Kirsten McDowell-Barnett, Thomas Kingsley and Lisa Minchener  
**Graphic Design:** Lisa Minchener **Photos:** Light for the World \* All data as of March 2023



CONTACT

[info@light-for-the-world.org](mailto:info@light-for-the-world.org)  
[www.lightfortheworld.org](http://www.lightfortheworld.org)

