

## Executive Summary

# Participation of disabled people in the PRSP/PEAP process in Uganda

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April 2005

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

ADD	Action on Disability and Development
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
BWIs	Bretton Woods Institutions
CAS	Country assistance strategy
CBR	Community-based rehabilitation
COMBRA	Community Based Rehabilitation Alliance
CSO	Civil society organisation
CWDs	Children with disabilities
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DPI	Disabled Peoples International
DPO	Disabled people's organisation
DRT	Development, research and training
DSI	Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People
DWNRO	Disabled Women's Network and Resource Organization
EAFOD	East African Federation of Organisations of the Disabled
HIPC	Heavily indebted poor country
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KaR	Knowledge and Research (programme)
LC	Local council
LGDP	Local government development programme
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MDG	Millennium development goal
MFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MHU	Mental Health Uganda
MTEF	Medium-term expenditure framework
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NGO	Non-government organisation
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation
NUDIPU	National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda
PAF	Poverty Action Fund
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PMA	Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
PPA2	Second Participatory Poverty Assessment
PRSP	Poverty reduction strategy paper
PWD	People with disabilities
SFG	School facilities grant
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNAB	Uganda National Association of the Blind
UNAD	Uganda National Association of the Deaf
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UPACLED	Uganda Parents Association of Children with Learning Disabilities
UPE	Universal primary education
UPPAP	Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Project
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDC	Uganda Society for Disabled Children

## Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge with thanks the logistical support and transport provided by the Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People (DSI) in Uganda and Denmark. We express our thanks and gratitude to Secretariat of the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU) for co-ordinating all appointments for the researcher and providing secretarial and staff support.

## Executive summary

Since the population and housing census in 2002, Uganda's population has grown at an annual rate of 3.3 per cent to approximately 26.8 million (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2003). This population is expected to double in another 21 years. According to the Ugandan definition of disability, 4 per cent of the population – about 1,072,000 people – had a disability in 2002, considerably higher than the 1.1 per cent recorded in the 1991 census.

Uganda was the first country to develop a poverty reduction strategy plan (PRSP). Disabled people were involved in the development of the third phase of the PRSP/Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP). The research on which this report is based sought to document the experience of the disability movement in its engagement with the development and evolution of the PEAP, and to draw out potential lessons for disability movements in other countries involved in PRSP processes.

The main methods of information gathering were interviews, a field visit to Uganda and review of relevant documents. The sample was generally representative of the institutional arrangements of the disability movement and other stakeholders in Uganda.

The main report presents the background to Uganda, and discusses objectives and the process of the PRSP/PEAP process. The participation of disabled people in the process is discussed in detail.

## Main findings

### **The poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) process**

The revised Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) is Uganda's comprehensive development framework. The PEAP has guided the formulation of government policy since its inception in 1997. Under this plan, Uganda is being transformed into a modern economy in which agents in all sectors can participate in economic growth.

The PEAP has four pillars that represent the major goals for the action plan:

- fast and sustainable economic growth and structural transformation
- good governance and security
- increased ability of the poor to raise their incomes
- increased quality of life of the poor.

Uganda is an agricultural country. The livelihood of the people is largely dependent on agriculture. It is necessary, therefore, that people with disabilities are empowered to participate in the mainstream economy.

The Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Process is a partnership between the Government of Uganda (represented by the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development, known as MFPED), local governments, NGOs, academic institutions and donors. The revision of the PEAP in 2000 drew on the progress made since 1997, including the development of sector-wide approaches and the participatory research carried out by the Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment project.

The preparation of the 2000 PEAP was highly participatory, with wide circulation of drafts supervised by a steering committee, strong involvement from civil society, general consultative workshops, the receipt of written comments, and regional and political consultations.

An initiative called the 'Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Project' (UPPAP) was implemented. This was an initiative of the Government of Uganda that sought to bring the perspectives of poor Ugandans, through consultations, into the formulation and the implementation of policies and planning for poverty reduction at both district and national levels.

### **Participation of disabled people in the PRSP/ PEAP process**

The rights of people with disabilities are stipulated in Article 35 in the Constitution 1995 (see Annex B):

“Persons with disabilities have a right to respect and human dignity and the State and society shall take appropriate measures to ensure that they realise their full mental and physical potential.”

Disability issues in Uganda have reached a level where they are part and parcel of the country's general concerns that are to be addressed in national policies and programmes. A number of legal provisions, such as the Parliamentary Elections Statute 1996, the Children Statute 1996, the Local Government Act 1997, the Land Act 1998, the Uganda Communication Act 1997, the Traffic and Road safety Act 1998, the UNISE Act 1998 and the Movement Act 1998, attempt to address the needs of disabled people. Each of these pieces of legislation mainstreams disability and provides regulations aimed at improving accessibility of disabled people to service delivery.

The disability movement did not make a co-ordinated effort to ensure that people with disabilities were included in mainstream poverty eradication programmes until the most recent PEAP process.

During the process of revising the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP 2002), the Government of Uganda invited various stakeholders, including disabled people's organisations (DPOs), to participate in the process.

Reflecting on the role of leadership in the PRSP/PEAP process, respondents pointed out that their leaders lobbied and advocated for the inclusion of disability components in the PEAP.

The strategy of the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU) for participation included the following elements:

- close interaction with the centre of government
- active mobilisation of district and sub-counties

- setting up disability indicators for the PEAP – particularly, but not limited to, universal primary education (UPE), HIV/AIDS, and agriculture.

Senior NUDIPU staff played a useful role in the PEAP process. The staff handled technical work in terms of pulling together the views of the various disabled people's organisations who participated in the process. NUDIPU personnel also attended and provided inputs into the stakeholder and sectoral meetings and consultations on the PEAP process.

NUDIPU's organisational strategy was not confined to the national NGO network and uni-disability groups. The organisation also worked at district and sub-county levels.

Some respondents recalled that the major difficulty was that there was no clarity on the needs of disabled people to be addressed in the PEAP. Although the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MFPED) was interested in accommodating the needs of disabled people, it was not aware of what to include.

The level of involvement of disabled people's organisations and other civil society organisations in the formulation of PRSP/PEAP in Uganda seems to have been a function of:

- the experience and preparedness of local disabled people's organisations, NGOs, civil society organisations (CSOs), and individual members of civil society
- the willingness of the government to consult and take civil society views into account.

In addition to establishing a unified movement and building consensus among disabled people's organisations, NUDIPU created alliances with:

- the NGO Forum
- the Community-Based Rehabilitation Alliance (COMBRA)
- Uganda Society for Disabled Children (USDC)
- Uganda National Institute of Special Education
- government departments – particularly the ministries of Gender Labour and Social Development, Education and Health.

NUDIPU also created a working relationship with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and World Vision.

### **NUDIPU's proposal for the PEAP**

The process of developing the position paper *Participation of Organizations and Partners for Persons with Disabilities in the PEAP – 2003 Revision* (Ddamulira 2003) included reviewing a wide range of literature on disability and poverty in Uganda, interviewing several representatives of DPOs and partners, and deliberating in all stakeholders' meetings on the different proposals and options outlined in proposals.

The position paper argued that the PEAP treated issues about disabilities under the general headings of 'vulnerable groups', 'marginalised groups of society' and 'disadvantaged groups'. However, in most cases this kind of grouping had failed to give explicit strategies and relevant policy interventions for the intended target groups.

In addition to general concerns and issues raised in the position paper (see Annex A), NUDIPU proposed focused interventions (Ddamulira 2003) that needed to be incorporated in the revised PEAP. These included the following extracts from the position paper:

***Pillar I: Creating a framework for economic growth and transformation***

- Public expenditure allocations – medium term and annual – should indicate specific amounts to finance policy interventions for disability.
- DPOs should be consulted and involved in all planning, design, and implementation processes of the PEAP.
- Formal and informal employment for people with disabilities should be supported.

***Pillar II: Good governance and security***

- PEAP should set targets (indicators) to reduce factors that increase the incidence of disability – this could be part of monitoring process, especially of disability caused by insecurity.
- Legal systems should recognise the rights of people with disabilities in terms of protecting their social, economic, political and civil rights.
- There is a need for capacity building of the representatives (councillors) of people with disabilities in order to improve their capacity to effectively influence processes mainly in favour of people with disabilities.
- Participation and representation of people with disabilities in decision-making should be extended to tender boards, service commissions, and so on.

***Pillar III: Actions which directly increase the ability of the poor to ease their incomes***

- PEAP should recognise that people with disabilities need special support such as skills, appropriate technology, and access to information.
- People with disabilities should have access to land.
- People with disabilities should be availed with key agricultural technologies (including technical advice in processing, storage, preservation and so on) from government to boost their productivity.

***Pillar IV: Actions which directly enhance the quality of life***

- PEAP needs to provide avenues that enhance accessibility and utilisation of universal primary education (UPE) facilities by children with disabilities.
- Besides UPE, it is also important to address education concerns at secondary and other higher institutions.

Furthermore, NUDIPU called for DPOs and government to work out key indicators that could be used to measure progress in poverty reduction among people with disabilities. PEAP therefore needed to recognise the involvement of people with disabilities and DPOs in implementation and monitoring effective progress on poverty reduction in the country.

***Constraints***

The Uganda experience shows that deliberate efforts are needed to first build the capacity of DPOs – especially the national organisations – if they are to have greater impact on policy planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Capacity building includes recruiting high-calibre, skilled and well-trained staff to implement some of the strategic programmes.

DPOs in Uganda acknowledge that they have had their own capacity constraints, including insufficient numbers of staff (whether at national or local level) qualified to engage donors and policy makers in dialogue on macro-economic policy issues. However, they felt that they had much to gain by taking the opportunity offered to participate in the PRSP/PEAP.

In the case of Uganda, the pressure was on for the PRSP to be completed as quickly as possible. There was great internal urgency to qualify for debt relief, but this was compounded by external pressure from donors who needed a successful example of a country benefiting from the enhanced heavily indebted poor country (HIPC) initiative. As a result, the PEAP process, in which civil society had been meaningfully involved, became constricted to a six-month PRSP process from which they found themselves, to some extent, squeezed out.

Another challenge was to use DPO influence and achievements. The idea was to mainstream DPO inputs into the general policy-planning process. Some government officials, however, regarded DPOs' and CSOs' participation merely as an exercise to legitimise the PRSP process in the Ugandan government agenda.

### ***Best practices and lessons learned***

If resources had permitted, DPOs could not only have actively participated in the thematic working groups, but also established parallel working groups to provide dedicated input in mainstream sessions. Furthermore, the DPO movement in Uganda would have launched its PRSP process with an awareness campaign so that disabled people were made aware that the PRSP existed, knew what it was all about and would have, therefore, been prepared to participate in its formulation.

A small drafting team consisting of local and international disability consultants and DPO representatives would have added value, had it been recruited at the start of the PEAP process.

It is clear that the disability movement in Uganda did not have adequate capacity to engage in the PRSP/ PEAP process.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

Whether the disability movement continues to play a significant role in future donor-government policy planning process remains to be seen. What is clear is that for DPOs to effectively influence policies, in Uganda and elsewhere in Africa, the policy environment must be conducive to the participation and inclusion of disability components in government and other programmes. Disabled people's participation in the formulation of the PRSP in Uganda increased democratic ownership of the process.

In Uganda, economic growth and macro-economic stability are now targeted towards poverty reduction. Thus, while the economic growth model is not completely discarded, the poverty perspective that has become a major focus of macro policy formulation clearly demonstrates a paradigm shift on the part of the Bretton Woods Institutions (Gariyo 2002).

The demand has already been made that the government should involve civil society in the formulation of PRSPs/PEAP, and it has made some successful attempts to do so. Given the links between the PRSP/PEAP and the national poverty reduction initiatives of Uganda, this has often led to greater involvement of DPOs and other civil-society organisations in the latter as well.

The guarantee of the effectiveness of the PRSP/PEAP for disabled people in Uganda should be extensive, with a very high level of DPO participation at all levels, but neither the donors themselves nor Ugandan government have shown a consistent commitment to this principle – particularly in terms of taking into account all the issues raised by the disability movement and allocating adequate fiscal resources to back planned activities.

The PRSP/PEAP has some potential to transform the relationship between DPOs and government/donors. However, a key challenge is to ensure the mainstreaming of disability components and consistency in addressing the real needs of disabled people, as expressed in the NUDIPU PEAP presentation.

### **Recommendations**

- Although the disability movement participated in the PRSP/PEAP process, it faces the challenge of sustaining this policy involvement. Therefore the capacity of disabled people's organisations should be enhanced substantially, in order to sustain their participation and involvement in the development process.
- A process of formulating disability indicators and performance benchmarks that cut across key sectors of government, donors, and civil society organisations should be implemented.
- Advocacy for implementation of legislation and pro-disability poverty alleviation strategies within the PEAP should be accelerated, with the active involvement of organisations that represent different categories of disability.
- Ongoing advocacy and lobbying is recommended, alongside efforts to mainstream disability in all the pillars of the PEAP.
- The disability movement should continue to lobby for a share of resources flowing from the development co-operation and debt relief. NUDIPU should advocate for budget for disability programme components, and for the making of actual funding allocations to poverty-focused projects that benefit disabled people.
- NUDIPU should develop capacity to influence development co-operation – particularly in relation to disability-funding policies of agencies such as USAID, DANIDA, and NORAD, among others.
- Monitoring of PEAP poverty-alleviation strategies for people with disabilities should be based on both qualitative and quantitative approaches.