



TOGETHER FOR INCLUSION

PROGRESS REPORT | 2021

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Together for Inclusion

– A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP FOR
EQUAL RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

“Synergies.” “Positive externalities.” These words might be dismissed as buzzwords, but after completing the second full year of implementation, they very much describe the positive developments from this consortium. While this report shows the results that the different country groups have achieved in 2021, we also aim to showcase the positive changes that are not reflected in a results framework. They can be small, but dramatic: An NGO for the first time hires a person with disabilities, after having collaborated with DPOs and understood that persons with disabilities can do any job non-disabled employees can do. Another organisation decides to use a model from the TOFI partnership in other countries, with other sources of financing. Little by little, inclusion is becoming the norm for these organisations.

All this is thanks to a new way of working for the Atlas Alliance. For the first time ever, Norwegian Disabled Persons’ Organisations (DPOs) and their partners came to take the lead on a large-scale initiative to help fulfil the rights of persons with disabilities, heading Together for Inclusion, a diverse consortium of Norwegian NGOs and DPOs, probably the only one of its kind in the world.

When a call for proposals for inclusion of persons with disabilities was announced in the spring of 2019, a group of Norwegian organisations, headed by the Atlas Alliance, came together and decided to apply as one consortium in which DPOs and NGOs would learn from each other, and where the DPOs would be in the driver’s seat. Later that year, the application was approved, and in December 2019, the Atlas Alliance signed the agreement with Norad. In 2020, a second round of

funding was announced, and Together for Inclusion was able to secure funding for an additional country and additional partners, bringing the total number of Norwegian organisations to 15; six DPOs and nine NGOs.

For the first time ever, the Atlas Alliance was supporting a large group of both DPOs and NGOs in implementing programmes to improve the lives of women and men, girls and boys with disabilities in five, and from late 2020 six, countries – Ethiopia, Mozambique, Niger, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda. The local partners of Norwegian DPOs and NGOs are working side by side to create inclusive programmes that centre the lived experiences of persons with disabilities, under the banner of the disability movement: Nothing about us without us.

After 40 years of continuous work with sister organisations in partner countries, the Atlas organisations have branched out and are working in new ways in this strategic partnership. After a complicated 2020, with the COVID-19 pandemic creating very difficult situations in our partner countries, 2021 saw the maturing of the partnership and the consolidation of structures and processes. Persons with disabilities face many barriers – attitudinal, environmental, legal – to their full participation in society. The Together for Inclusion partnership seeks to dismantle these barriers and move towards societies with equality for all. These are not simple processes, but with this innovative new way of working, we are on the way. We are delighted to share this status rapport with you.

FOTO: KOLONIHAVEN



MARIT SØRHEIM,
CEO, The Atlas Alliance

List of abbreviations

ACAMO	The Association of Blind and Partially Sighted of Mozambique	NAD	The Norwegian Association of Disabled
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency	NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
AMFIU	Association of Microfinance Institutions of Uganda	NFU	The Norwegian Association for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities
CBID	Community Based Inclusive Development	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
CRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	ORDA	Organisation for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara
CSO	Civil Society Organisation	PTA	Parent Teacher Association
CU-SBH	Central Uganda Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus	NUDIPU	National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda
DF	The Development Fund	RHF	The Norwegian Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus
DPO	Disabled Persons' Organisations	SBH	Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus
EE	Economic Empowerment	SCI	Save the Children International
EENET	Enabling Education Network	SCM	School Management Committee
ENAB	Ethiopian National Association of the Blind	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
FEADP	The Federation of Associations of Persons with Disabilities	SF	Stromme Foundation
FAMOD	The Mozambican Federation of Disabled Persons' Organisations	SHA-U	Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Association Uganda
FFO	The Norwegian Federation of Organisations of Disabled People	SHYNEA	Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Network for Awareness
FNPH	The Nigerian Federation of People with Disabilities	SIT	School Inclusion Team
HRA	Human Rights Advocacy	SSUPDO	South Sudan Union of Persons with Disabilities Organisation
IE	Inclusive Education	TOFI	Together for Inclusion
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation	WHO	World Health Organisation
MERL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning	WE-Action	Women Empowerment Action
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding	YMHN	Youth Mental Health Norway
NABP	The Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted	YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

Overview

Consortium lead: The Atlas Alliance

Implementing partners

Atlas Alliance organisations

- The Norwegian Association of Disabled (NAD)
- The Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted (NABP)
- The Norwegian Association for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (NFU)
- The Norwegian Federation of Organisations of Disabled Persons (FFO)
- The Norwegian Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (RHF)
- The Norwegian Association of Youth Mental Health

Norwegian non-governmental organisations

- Save the Children Norway
- Plan International Norway
- Stromme Foundation
- ADRA Norway
- Norwegian Church Aid
- YGlobal
- Naturvernforbundet
- SOS Children's Villages Norway
- The Development Fund

Implementing countries

- Ethiopia
- Mozambique
- Niger
- Somalia
- South Sudan
- Uganda

Total expenditure per country 2021

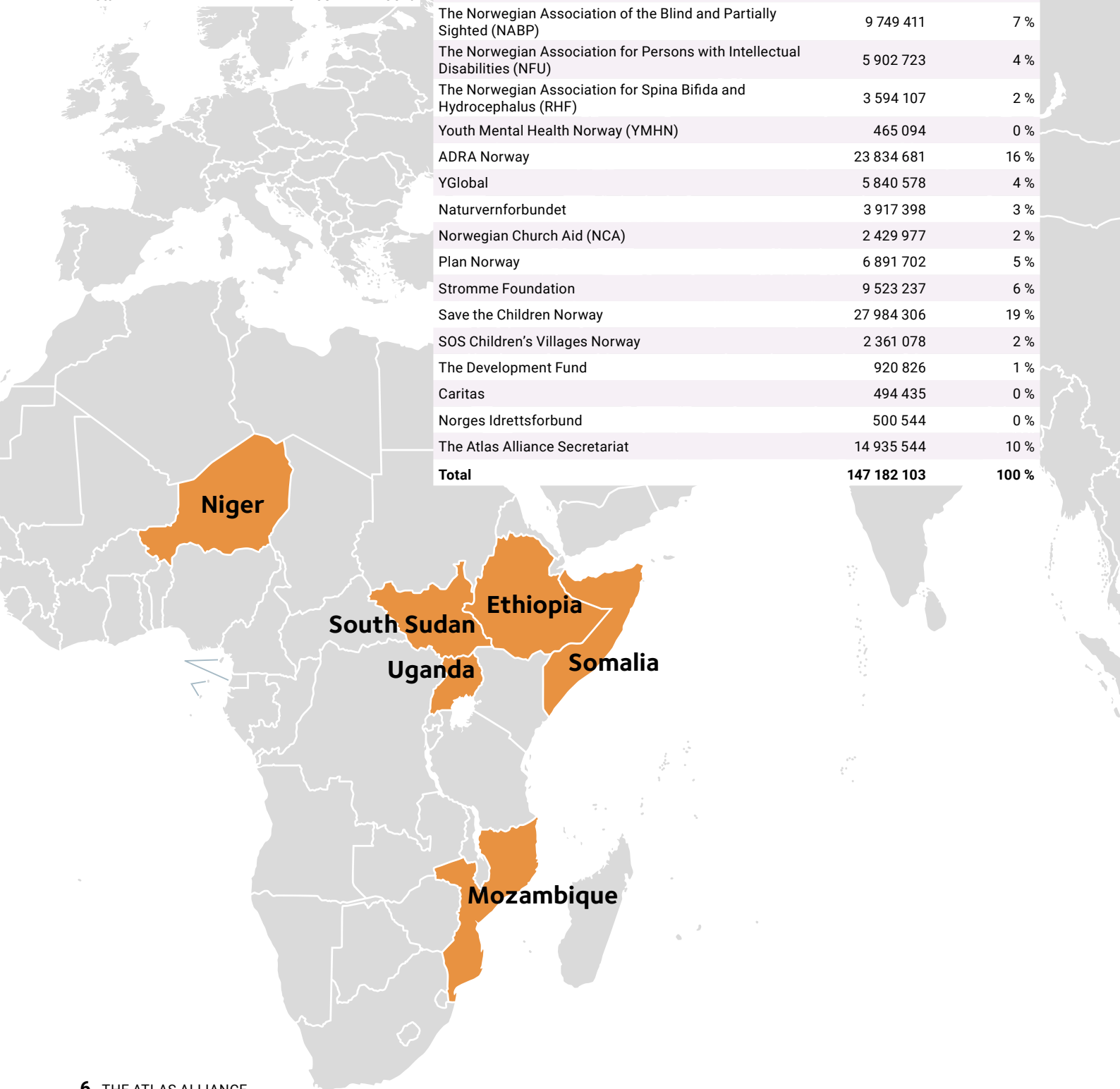
COUNTRY/REGION	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	PER-CENTAGE
Ethiopia	12 890 365	9 %
Mozambique	23 517 399	16 %
Niger	19 524 181	13 %
Somalia	19 153 968	13 %
South Sudan	15 174 717	10 %
Uganda	41 035 320	28 %
Zambia	950 609	1 %
Norway	14 935 544	10 %
Total	147 182 103	100 %

Project expenditure per thematic area 2021

THEMATIC AREA	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	PER-CENTAGE
Human Rights Advocacy	38 907 154	26 %
Inclusive Education	88 532 447	60 %
Economic Empowerment	19 858 502	14 %
TOTAL	147 182 103	100 %

Distribution of funding per organisation

TOTAL EXPENDITURE	2021	%
The Norwegian Federation of Organisations of Disabled People (FFO)	5 143 279	3 %
The Norwegian Association of Disabled (NAD)	22 693 183	15 %
The Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted (NABP)	9 749 411	7 %
The Norwegian Association for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (NFU)	5 902 723	4 %
The Norwegian Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (RHF)	3 594 107	2 %
Youth Mental Health Norway (YMHN)	465 094	0 %
ADRA Norway	23 834 681	16 %
YGlobal	5 840 578	4 %
Naturvernforbundet	3 917 398	3 %
Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)	2 429 977	2 %
Plan Norway	6 891 702	5 %
Stromme Foundation	9 523 237	6 %
Save the Children Norway	27 984 306	19 %
SOS Children's Villages Norway	2 361 078	2 %
The Development Fund	920 826	1 %
Caritas	494 435	0 %
Norges Idrettsforbund	500 544	0 %
The Atlas Alliance Secretariat	14 935 544	10 %
Total	147 182 103	100 %



Background

In Sub-Saharan Africa, persons with disabilities face basic human rights violations such as stigma, social exclusion, and lack of access to quality education and employment. To remove these barriers to full participation, and for the world to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the rights of persons with disabilities, as explained in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), must be fulfilled.

In this innovative strategic partnership, Together for Inclusion, Norwegian disabled persons' organisations (DPOs) have joined forces with some of Norway's largest and most reputable non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to deliver a ground-breaking programme. Combining the reach and development expertise of the large NGOs with a rights-based approach and the specific knowledge of the DPOs, the programme puts persons with disabilities in the driver's seat, thus realising the motto of the disability rights movement – nothing about us without us. The programme aims to reach the most marginalized with high quality organisational capacity development, disability rights advocacy, inclusive education and economic empowerment projects in six target countries.

Through this partnership model, the consortium aims to deliver quality programming and a sustained paradigm shift in the inclusion of persons with disabilities, working towards achieving several SDGs, mainly goals number 1 (No Poverty), 4 (Quality Education), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

At the core of the consortium is a strong commitment to meaningful inclusion of women, men, girls, and boys with disabilities of all ages. The programme is rooted in the lived experience of persons with disabilities in Sub-Saharan Africa and takes a strong participatory approach to design and implementation. The focus is to build on those experiences to generate innovation, learning and radical new approaches to influence policy and inform inclusive development practice in the target countries and beyond.

To ensure that no one is left behind, the consortium has been focusing on testing and evaluating innovative approaches to inclusion and on scaling up effective interventions. The partnership contributes to increased knowledge in areas where evidence is weak, reaches new or underserved geographical areas, and fosters innovation, both through the consortium model itself, where many organisations are joining forces and collaborating for the first time, and through a small grants mechanism combined with practical education in inclusive development, which responds to needs that emerge along the way. The most pressing challenge and need at the moment is the global COVID-19 pandemic, which the small grants as well as parts of the TOFI interventions are designed to address.

Six countries - Mozambique, Niger, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and Ethiopia – were selected to generate maximum learning in different contexts. The list includes countries with strong disability movements that have signed and ratified the UN CRPD (and in some cases also the Optional Protocol) as well as countries that have not yet signed, or signed very recently; countries from different geographical areas (East and West Africa), and different cultural and linguistic contexts (English, French and Portuguese speaking Africa). Some of the countries have experience in utilizing the Washington Group Questions on Disability as part of their national statistical work, while others have yet to start using this.

In Ethiopia, The Norwegian Association for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (NFU) is the country lead, partnering with the Ethiopian disability umbrella, FEAPD, and Fikir - Ethiopian National Association on Intellectual Disability (FENAID). Norwegian Association



The president of a women's community savings group, Niger. PHOTO: EGIL MONGSTAD, STROMME FOUNDATION

of the Blind and Partially Sighted (NABP), ADRA, SOS Children's Villages, Youth Mental Health Norway and the Development Fund, together with their respective offices and local partners, round out this country group that officially joined the consortium in December 2020 and started working in 2021. This country group works in all three thematic areas.

In Mozambique, the Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted (NABP) takes the lead role together with ACAMO, their local partner, working with Save the Children, Naturvernforbundet and the Norwegian Federation of DPOs (FFO) to deliver programming in human rights advocacy, inclusive education, and economic empowerment.

In Niger, ADRA (as country lead), Plan International, Stromme Foundation, FFO and the Nigerien Federation of Persons with Disabilities collaborate on innovative programming in human rights advocacy and inclusive education. For example, Stromme's "Speed Schools" model is being adapted and targeted to children and youth with disabilities to quickly get them on track with their peers, and FFO will for the first time work with a sister organisation in West Africa.

For the first time, a Norwegian DPO (The Norwegian Association of Disabled, NAD) is working in Somalia, joining forces with ADRA on inclusive education and with Save the Children on human rights advocacy, working to strengthen local DPOs. In Somalia, Save the Children is taking the lead.

In South Sudan, several Norwegian NGOs (ADRA, YGlobal, Norwegian Church Aid, Stromme Foundation) led by ADRA and with the support and guidance of FFO, is working to implement inclusive programming in all three thematic areas.

The country with the largest country group is Uganda, where NAD heads up a diverse group of organisations. Save the Children, the Norwegian Association for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (NFU), the Signo Foundation, Stromme Foundation, and the Norwegian Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (RHF) are joining forces to develop quality projects in human rights advocacy, inclusive education, and economic empowerment, with the local DPO umbrella organisation, NUDIPU, as a central actor.

The programme has a substantial component dedicated to monitoring, evaluation, research and

learning (MERL) to gather evidence on what works in disability-inclusive development, to ensure that the interventions are guided by evidence, and to contribute to the international efforts of acquiring solid disaggregated data on disability.

Consortium lead

The Atlas Alliance is the consortium lead for the programme. Founded in 1981 as an umbrella organisation for the Norwegian DPOs engaged in international solidarity work, the Atlas Alliance has a long trajectory of managing a collective of small and large organisations with varying level of expertise and international experience, making it an ideal lead for this multi-partner programme. The Atlas Alliance acts as Norad's contract partner for the consortium, being the principal liaison for Norad communications and donor reporting on finances and progress, including consolidating the thematic results framework. The Atlas Alliance has created sub-grant agreements with all participating organisations and is the overall responsible party for achieving the agreed-upon deliverables.

How do we work?

Together for Inclusion is implementing a "three-track approach" to inclusion: First, by supporting DPOs and their ability to effectively advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities and by engaging in broader coalitions of stakeholders to promote disability inclusion in mainstream initiatives. Working with and supporting the active involvement of persons with disabilities through DPOs is essential to ensure their inclusion in decision-making processes, following the disability movement's motto "Nothing about us, without us". Secondly, by directly targeting persons with disabilities, by giving specific support and attention to children with disabilities and their learning and protection needs, as well as providing adults with disabilities with necessary skills to engage in and benefit from income-generating activities. Thirdly, by advocating towards system change, through involving various duty bearers such as government actors and mainstream organisations. An important part of this approach is to strengthen partnerships with other organisations, to build allies for the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in their programmes and activities. This means creating joint platforms for cooperation, like thematic working groups, for mutual experience sharing, the development of inclusive

training modules, and the coordination of joint advocacy campaigns to ensure that inclusion becomes a reality.

Thematic areas

Together for Inclusion aims to create broad disability inclusion practises in three key thematic areas - Human Rights Advocacy, Economic Empowerment, and Inclusive Education, by creating synergies between major mainstream development actors and the disability movement in Norway and in programme countries. The programme is designed with and implemented in partnership with local partner organisations in each country. The programme focuses on strengthening DPOs as representative organisations of persons with disabilities and their role in improving access to education and financial services and their advocacy for general human rights for persons with disabilities through advocacy.

Human Rights Advocacy

Persons with disabilities are often subjected to negative denotation, neglect and abuse. Persons with disabilities face significant social and political exclusion and are among the most marginalized in society. To challenge these structures, persons with disabilities themselves are being empowered and tools developed to hold the duty bearers accountable. To remove the barriers that create disabilities, the programme applies a twin-track approach to strengthening the rights of persons with disabilities by supporting DPOs and their ability to effectively advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities, while at the same time making sure that the NGOs and the broader coalitions of stakeholders are inclusive of persons with disabilities.

In the consortium, DPOs and NGOs work together to achieve the goals set forth in the joint results framework:

Impact 1100: Improved ability of people with disabilities to claim their rights.

Outcome 1110: Improved ability of people with disabilities to participate in local and national decision making.

Outcome 1120: Increased capacity of DPOs to influence local and national decision making.

Outcome 1130: Improved inclusivity of decision-making processes, policies and services.

Inclusive Education

Education is a universal right and has the power to be transformative for individuals as well as their families and communities. However, many persons with disabilities, girls in particular, are unable to access education, participate in learning processes, or complete their education. Disability increases the risk of exclusion from education.

The work of the consortium is guided by two major international frameworks: First, Article 24 of the UNCRPD, which “recognises the right of persons with disabilities to education.” The article calls for states parties to ensure that persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system based on disability and declares that states parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels, including tertiary education. Persons with disabilities have the right to access inclusive, quality and free education in their communities.

Secondly, Together for Inclusion works to achieve the SDGs; in this case, Goal 4: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” The 2018 Progress Report of the UN Secretary General states that the world is not on track to reach this goal: it estimates that 58% of children and youth are not achieving basic literacy and mathematics skills, even if they are enrolled in school. Children and youth with disabilities are overrepresented among children without access to an inclusive quality education. Only about 60% of children with disabilities in poor countries attend primary school, and less than 50% continue their schooling. In the poorest countries, these numbers are even lower.

In the consortium, DPOs and NGOs work together to achieve the goals set forth in the joint results framework:

Impact 1200: Improved access to quality inclusive pre-primary, primary and secondary education for girls and boys with disabilities.

Outcome 1210: Increased participation of girls and boys with disabilities in pre-primary, primary and secondary education.



Student at a Speed School Centre with her grandmother.
PHOTO: EGIL MONGSTAD, STROMME FOUNDATION

Outcome 1220: Increased capacity of DPOs to improve the inclusivity of the education system for children with disabilities.

Outcome 1230: Improved inclusivity of the education system for children with disabilities.

Economic Empowerment

Persons with disabilities are heavily represented among the poorest of the poor in the programme countries. Access to work and a stable and sustainable income are key to combat poverty among persons with disabilities. Lack of access to financial services, both formal and informal, is a major obstacle for establishing a livelihood, particularly for women. The programme addresses this gap by facilitating access to informal financial services (savings and credit groups) for persons with disabilities. Self-employment initiatives for persons with disabilities in this programme includes training in entrepreneurial skills, access to a start-up grants, and long-term supervision and follow-up to strengthen sustainability of new businesses and link persons with disabilities to decent job opportunities.

In the consortium, DPOs and NGOs work together to achieve the goals set forth in the joint results framework:

Impact 1300: Enhanced economic empowerment of persons with disabilities and their parents/ caregivers.

Outcome 1310: Improved ability of persons with disabilities and their parents/ caregivers to earn money and manage resources.

Outcome 1320: Increased capacity of DPOs to improve economic opportunities for persons with disabilities and their parents and caregivers.

Outcome 1330: Improved inclusivity of economic empowerment services, employers and programs.

Ethiopia

Lewoge, tailor and independent business woman



Lewoge Tadege was born with an impairment in her leg. Discrimination in the local community made it difficult for her to get an education, and from the age of 14 she was forced to stay at home. Even her family used to call her “crippled” and referred to her as “monkey leg”. All of this had a detrimental effect on her self-esteem. She struggled in life with no income and very low support from her family.

Through TOFI, ORDA reached out to Lewoge and suggested she participate in project activities. It took some convincing, as she had never had a similar experience before. Finally, however, she attended a short-term training in tailoring at Molale TVT College, and she also received psychological support which improved her confidence.

After Lewoge completed her training, TOFI supported her in lobbying the local government to get a workplace for her tailoring business in a nearby city.

Now Lewoge is motivated and ready to start her own tailoring business. She has vowed to support TOFI by sharing her tailoring skills with other persons with disabilities. Lewoge is very happy to see how the negative norms towards persons with disabilities have started to change in her village.

Yodit, novice disability advocate



Yodit has a 4-year-old child with an intellectual disability. Yodit used to feel ashamed by her child's disability, and she thought that the child's condition was a curse from God. As a result, she hid her son from the community and she was not planning to let him attend school.

Yodit herself does not have much education. She works as a day labourer and does not have a steady income. Yodit has four children to support, so taking care of an intellectually disabled child has been a heavy burden on her.

Then, in 2021 Yodit attended a training for parents and support persons facilitated by FENAID and funded through TOFI. The training focused on important facts to better understand intellectual disability, and in the course of the training Yodit came to the conclusion that her son's condition is not a curse. She also learned support approaches suited to her son's condition and ways to help him learn and get an education. Yodit says she will no longer hide her son – on the contrary she is determined to advocate for his rights, for others with disabilities, and for increased community awareness.

Introduction

Key figures:

- **Estimated population:** 115 million (World Bank 2022; 2020 data)
- **Population under the age of 15:** 40% (World Bank 2022; 2020 data)
- **Urban population:** 22% (World Bank 2022; 2020 data)
- **Urban population growth (annual %):** 4.7% (World Bank 2022; 2020 data)
- **Human Development Index (HDI):** 173 (of 189) (UNDP 2020; 2020 data)
- **Gender Inequality Index (GII):** 125 (of 162) (UNDP 2020, 2019 data)
- **Poverty headcount ratio at USD 1.90 a day (2011 PPP):** 30.8% (World Bank 2022; 2015 data)
- **Adult literacy rate:** 52% (World Bank 2022; 2017 data)
- **Life expectancy at birth:** 67 years (World Bank 2022; 2019 data)
- **Child mortality rate (under 5, per 1000 live births):** 49 (World Bank 2022; 2020 data)
- **Mean years of schooling:** 2.9 (UNDP 2019 data)
- **Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (constant 2017 PPP\$):** 2,207 (UNDP u.å.; 2019 data)

Norway and Ethiopia

Norwegian development cooperation with Ethiopia started in 1964. For a long time, cooperation was modest in scale, but in the 1980s activity increased, and in 1995 Ethiopia and Norway signed an agreement for bilateral cooperation. In 2020, Norwegian development aid to Ethiopia amounted to NOK 735.9 million, of which 209 million went to environment and energy projects, 157 million to education, 115 million to civil society, good governance and conflict prevention, and 61.5 million to the health and social sector.

Persons with disabilities in Ethiopia

There are no reliable, up-to-date national statistics on disability available in Ethiopia. The most recent national census in 2007 found that 1,2% of the population had some form of disability. This is much lower than the global estimate of 15% and the disability movement regards the census data as skewed by under-reporting. The World Bank and WHO estimated that 15 million Ethiopians (18% of the population) lived with some form of disability in 2011, whereas UNICEF has estimated that almost 8 million Ethiopians (some 9 % of the population in 2016) live with some form of disability, 2.2 million of whom experience very profound difficulties.

While Ethiopia has experienced rapid economic growth over the last few years, rural areas are yet to benefit significantly from this growth. The government has estimated that 95% of Ethiopians with disabilities in the country live in poverty – the vast majority in rural areas, where basic services are limited and the chances of accessing rehabilitative or support services are remote. In Ethiopia, as in many other countries,

disability is often connected with severe stigma. Some believe that disability is due to demonic possession, whereas others believe that children with disabilities are a curse or the result of the sins of their mother. Many parents therefore hide their disabled child at home. As a result, very few children with disabilities, maybe as few as 3%, go to school in Ethiopia. A consequence of stigma and exclusion from education is that many adults with disabilities cannot take part in the regular work force and therefore depend on family support and/or begging for their livelihoods.

Ethiopia ratified the CRPD in 2010, yet there is no domestic law created to ensure consistency in the implementation, and monitoring is generally ineffective. The country had a 2012-2021 National Plan of Action of Persons with Disabilities, but reports on the implementation of the plan have yet to be published.

A civil war broke out in the Tigray region in 2020 and later spilled into the neighbouring provinces of Amhara and Afar. There is also sporadic fighting in western Oromia and in Benishangul-Gumuz. The conflict has resulted in a humanitarian crisis with an estimated 2-2.5 million internally displaced persons.

Description of country programme

TOFI Ethiopia is a collaboration between Norwegian DPOs and NGOs and their local partners/country offices. The Norwegian organisations include:

- The Norwegian Association for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (NFU)
- The Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted (NABP)
- Youth Mental Health Norway (YMHN/MHU)
- The Development Fund (DF) Norway
- SOS Children's Villages (SOS) Norway
- Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Norway

The Ethiopian organisations include:

- The Federation of Associations of Persons with Disabilities (FEAPD)
- Fikir - Ethiopian National Association on Intellectual Disability (FENAIID)
- Ethiopian National Association of the Blind (ENAB)
- Natanim Consultancy and Training PLC
- The Development Fund (DF) Ethiopia
- Women Empowerment Action (WE-Action)
- Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Ethiopia

- Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara (ORDA)
- SOS Children's Villages Ethiopia

NFU is the overall Country Lead of the consortium, while FEAPD has the coordinating role among the Ethiopian organisations.

This programme concentrates on creating broad disability inclusion practises in three key thematic areas, Human Rights Advocacy, Economic Empowerment, and Inclusive Education, by initiating synergies between major mainstream development actors and the disability movement in Ethiopia. The programme is designed and implemented in partnership with Ethiopian partner organisations. The programme focuses on strengthening Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs) as representative organisations of persons with disabilities and their role in improving access to education and financial services and their advocacy for human rights for persons with disabilities.

Thematic areas

HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY: The World Report on Disability 2011 estimated that Ethiopia has one of the largest populations of persons with disabilities in Africa (17,6% of the total population). The Ethiopian National Plan of Action of Persons with Disabilities (2012-2021) estimates that 95% of persons with disabilities in Ethiopia are living below the poverty line.

Women, men, girls and boys with disabilities are some of the most marginalised and excluded people in Ethiopia, with gender disparity further affecting the lives of disabled women and girls. These groups face multiple physical barriers and social discrimination and even deliberate abuse and neglect. Persons with intellectual disabilities and their families are particularly affected by discrimination as well as high levels of unemployment, extreme poverty, inequality and exclusion.

To remove the barriers that create disabilities, the programme applies a twin-track approach to strengthening the rights of persons with disabilities by supporting DPOs and their ability to effectively advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities, while at the same time making sure that the NGOs and the broader coalitions of stakeholders are inclusive of persons with disabilities.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: Persons with disabilities are heavily represented among the poorest and unemployed in Ethiopia. As poverty can lead to secondary disabilities for those individuals who are already disabled, there is an urgent need to develop alternative, inclusive income sources for persons with disabilities in rural areas in particular.

Lack of access to financial services is a major obstacle for establishing a livelihood, particularly for women with disabilities. In terms of microfinance, persons with disabilities face significant barriers to accessing equal amounts of credit in comparison to persons who are not disabled as they are typically given less priority and are not among the main target groups for socio-economic integration. Local groups, farmer organisations and other associations often fail or are resistant to including persons with disabilities. Saving and credit group members are resistant to accepting persons with disabilities as part of their group mainly because most are perceived to have poor economic capacity and are therefore not able to contribute the initial cost share to become members.

The project addresses this gap by facilitating access to informal financial services (savings and credit groups) for persons with disabilities. Self-employment initiatives for persons with disabilities in this programme include training in entrepreneur skills, access to a start-up grant, long-term supervision and follow-up to strengthen the sustainability of new businesses, and link persons with disabilities to decent job opportunities

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: Reducing barriers to education is a challenge on both systemic and individual levels. A specific challenge is identifying and registering out of school children with disabilities and facilitating enrolment and follow-up of these children in their communities. Cultural beliefs and practices also present a major barrier to inclusion. Stigma may lead parents to hide their children in their homes, choose not to apply for a birth certificate, and not pursue available early childhood care or primary school for their disabled child(ren).

Moreover, a lack of understanding has led to a belief that children with disabilities cannot learn and many parents therefore do not send their children to school. Although there are some policy statements and guidelines on inclusive education, the implementation is very poor. No specific budget is earmarked for

inclusive education, manifesting in a lack of accessible school infrastructure for children with disabilities, qualified/trained teachers, learning equipment/materials and relevance/flexibility of the curriculum. The roles played by duty bearers, particularly the Ministry of Education, in promoting inclusive education on the ground is weak. Both the Ministry of Education and teachers lack a deeper understanding of inclusion, which again lead to schools lacking appropriate methods and the ability to identify specific learning needs of individual children. Hence, the programme follows a twin-track approach by focusing on mainstreaming inclusive education while at the same time implementing targeted interventions for children with disabilities. Inclusive education aims at emphasising equity in access and participation and responding positively to the individual learning needs as well as competencies of all children.

MENTAL HEALTH: In addition to the three aforementioned thematic areas, TOFI Ethiopia also has an important cross-cutting focus on mental health. In Ethiopia, mental illness constitutes a significant but largely unrecognised barrier to achieving inclusive education and employment. Children living in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) such as Ethiopia are more exposed to mental health risk factors such as socioeconomic deprivation, family disruption and poor physical health and violence, than their high-income counterparts. Children with physical or cognitive disabilities carry an additional risk of developing mental health issues and there is a correlation between poor academic achievement and mental illness.

Evidence from Ethiopia indicates that mental illness in children is common, ranging between 17% and 23% of children in the community. Despite the existence of affordable and effective treatments, fewer than one in 10 of the most severely affected people ever receive the treatment they need. These statistics show that mental illnesses have been overlooked as a major health challenge in Ethiopia and other LMICs and underscore the need for public health programmes targeting mental illnesses.

Stigma, discrimination and human rights abuses are part of the daily lived experience of those affected by mental illness and their families. Increased availability of mental health services and psychosocial support is crucial to improve this situation. In addition to awareness raising, the programme provides psychosocial support directly to individuals and

their families as well as works towards increasing the knowledge and experience of DPOs, health practitioners, teachers and support staff in how to identify and support children with mental health issues, so that their right to education and health is fulfilled.

Context

The COVID-19 pandemic affected Ethiopia and led to country-wide restrictions in 2021. The authorities limited the number of people allowed to gather at the same time. The official number of confirmed cases and deaths has remained low, but it is unclear whether the numbers are truly representative. The vaccine distribution remains very low throughout the country.

The COVID-19 situation also impacted project implementation. Activities which include gathering of people, such as workshops and trainings, were affected due to restrictions on gatherings, and because participants were reluctant to gather. Efforts were made to mitigate the impact by allocating resources for hand sanitisers and face masks, and by reducing the number of participants in each event. However, this means that more events need to take place in order for the output targets to be met, which has budget implications. The consortium has held a number of virtual meetings to mitigate the restrictions against physical meetings. The beginning of the new school year was postponed for a month due to the pandemic, and when schools opened, students attended class in shifts. This created delays for the inclusive education thematic group in their activities.

Highlights and selected results

Human Rights Advocacy

2021 was the first year of implementation for TOFI Ethiopia, and the consortium has spent time on a thorough start-up phase with staff recruitment, a baseline survey, and establishment of structures for collaboration. With 15 organisations represented in the consortium, it has been crucial to spend time reaching a common understanding of the project goals and agreeing on how to collaborate in the consortium model. Focus this year has been on internal capacity development both in the consortium and within the partner organisations in Ethiopia:

Several trainings have been arranged to strengthen the ability of persons with disabilities to participate in local and national decision making. **FENAIID** held trainings

on CRPD and self-advocacy for 80 members (33F, 47M) with intellectual disabilities, and for 140 parents and support persons (112F, 28M) on how to support children with intellectual disabilities. The trainings were held in Adama, Hawasa and Addis Ababa (#1111).

In the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR), **ENAB** gave pre- and post-election trainings on *inter alia* how to advocate towards the newly elected government. The 62 participants (25F, 37M) had different disabilities and were reached through DPOs that are members of FEAPD (#1111).

In Addis Ababa and Bahir Dar, **SOS Ethiopia** trained 29 volunteers and DPO representatives (19F, 10M) on volunteerism and the role of volunteers. A follow-up training on disability inclusion and behaviour change communication was then held for these volunteers along with representatives from DPOs, schools and the local administration. In total 66 individuals (23F, 43M) participated (#1112).

SOS Ethiopia also facilitated community conversations/peer-to-peer discussions among project participants. 45 (21F, 24M) representatives from different community-based organisations attended an orientation training on how to facilitate discussions. They then cascaded this through local coffee discussions with a total of 245 (134F, 111M) participants (#1112).

Several trainings were also held, *inter alia* by **FEAPD**, on capacity building for DPOs to influence local and national decision making. Topics included organisational operations, programme management, advocacy strategies, and CRPD and SDG monitoring. In total 140 (49F, 91M) individuals from different DPOs participated (#1121a, 1123, 1124).

Mental health is an important cross-cutting issue for the TOFI consortium partners. In order to mainstream mental health awareness across TOFI activities, **Natanim**, in collaboration with FEAPD, provided a one-day training on mental health for the seven committee members from the TOFI partner organisations (#1123a).

The Ethiopian consortium has established a Human Rights Advocacy Network. The network will facilitate interchange and partnership among relevant DPOs, government agencies, and local and international NGOs. The network has drafted terms of reference

and established a national advocacy committee. The network plans to draft the country level Human Rights Advocacy Strategy, implement various human rights advocacy and lobby activities, and ensure sustainable and collective efforts in human rights advocacy activities.

Inclusive Education

With the aim to develop the capacity of education staff on child protection and quality inclusive education policy, SOS Ethiopia provided a training of trainers for ENAB staff on child protection. Subsequently, the two organisations cascaded the training for 203 (90F, 113M) members of Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) in target schools, focusing on inclusive education, identifying disability inclusion gaps, mobilising and allocating resources, and how to work together. The increased knowledge empowered participants to play an important role in ensuring inclusive education where they are serving as PTA members and management team. Results have already been seen, for example, in some target schools where offices on the upper floors of buildings were moved to the ground floor in order to be accessible to all (#1231).

Natanim and ADRA Ethiopia produced a training manual on mental health awareness raising for teachers and students. The objective of the manual is to develop an understanding of what mental health issues are, what the causes of mental health issues are for children, the mental health needs of children, understanding the reactions, feelings and behaviours of children with mental health issues, how to enhance the capacity of children to cope with the effects of mental health and psychosocial issues, and how to identify – and to use the referral set-up to help – children with mental health and psychosocial challenges (#1217).

The manual was used in training for service providers and teachers and was distributed to the six TOFI operation schools by the end of 2021. The manual has also been distributed to several TVET schools and distribution will continue in 2022. The manual is available to the public on Natanim's website.

ADRA Ethiopia and SOS Ethiopia have prepared a document on advocacy strategy in inclusive education. The draft document was circulated for input from the participants at a validation workshop with a total of 26 participants (21M, 5F, three with disabilities) which was incorporated into the finalised document. The

advocacy document will be disseminated to partners for use in advocacy work (#1223).

Economic Empowerment

Two of the main consortium actors on economic empowerment, ORDA and WE-Action, were forced to evacuate their implementation areas during the second half of 2021 (see additional information below). The security situation has seriously hampered the implementation on this thematic area, however there are still some highlights to mention:

ENAB has taken a leading role in developing identification criteria for persons with disabilities who will participate in economic empowerment activities. All TOFI consortium partners gave input. Based on the agreed criteria ORDA has given priority to persons with multiple disabilities, especially in the three domains of sensory impairment (visual, hearing, and intellectual), to participate in income-generating activities. The criteria have also been used by the Development Fund for other projects outside of TOFI (#1311, 1312, 1313).

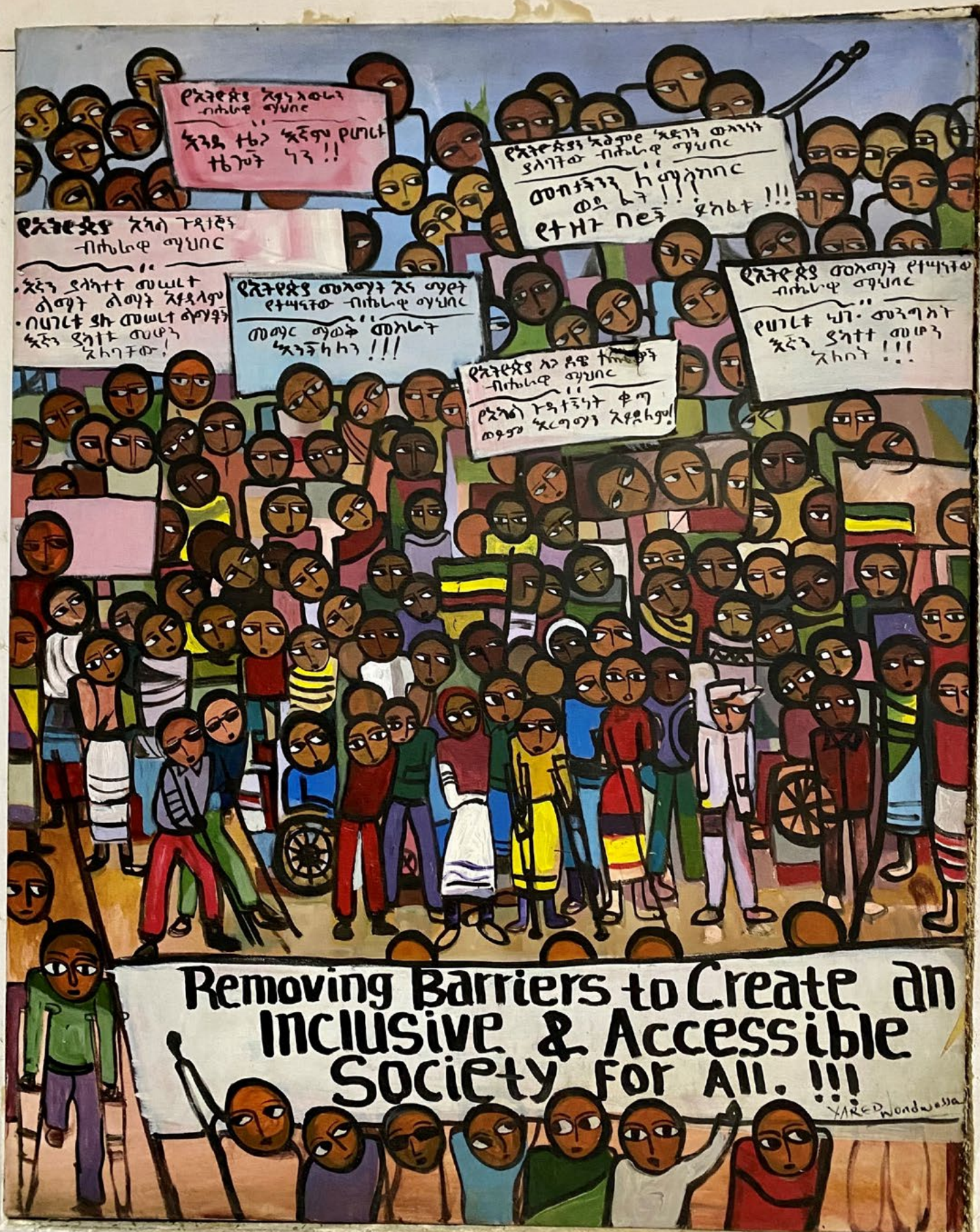
As a result of these identification criteria, ORDA was able to identify 400 (170F, 230M) persons with disabilities and establish 16 new Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLAs) in the Amhara region. Through trainings, ORDA improved the value chaining, entrepreneurial and marketing skills for 177 (70F, 107M) VSLA advisors and technical committee members. ORDA also contributed to income generating activities (sheep/goat fattening, poultry production, and garment production) for 80 (49F, 31M) target persons with disabilities (#1313).

ENAB, SOS Ethiopia, ORDA and WE-Action collaborated on providing trainings on employment rights and financial management for a total of 50 (19F, 31M) DPO participants and 50 (15F, 35M) government employees and cooperative members (#1311).

Challenges and adaption

Conflict

In the second half of 2021, the Tigray conflict spread further south and started to affect larger parts of the country. As the fighting intensified and Tigray forces advanced towards the capital, the situation deteriorated in the Amhara region. Widespread starvation, rape and other abuses has led to mass flight. It was long unclear whether the forces would reach the capital Addis Ababa, and the government



Painting on wall in the office of FENAID (Fikir - Ethiopia National Association on Intellectual Disability), March 2021. PHOTO: MARI HAGEN

asked citizens to arm themselves. Tigrayan forces secured an alliance with other military groups with similar aims to overthrow the government. Through a counter-offensive towards the end of 2021, the Federal forces regained control of much of the territory, but the situation remains tense and volatile.

The escalation of war in the Tigray region and the resulting instability in the neighbouring districts has led to insecurity in the Amhara region. This affected project implementation as two of the TOFI partners, ORDA and WE-Action, had to evacuate their implementation areas during the second half of 2021. When they finally were able to return, they found their offices looted and project property and documents destroyed. The capital has also been affected due by security measures restricting travel and the ability to move freely. Most government stakeholders suspended their regular activities, focusing solely on the conflict situation, and were thus unavailable for advocacy efforts and coordinated work.

Political and economic conditions

The National Elections which took place on June 21st also affected project implementation, as government officials and other stakeholders were involved in the preparation process and related administrative work. For this reason, it was challenging to reach the necessary stakeholders during a lengthy period of time. The consortium had to adapt its activity plan accordingly.

There is high financial inflation in Ethiopia due to lack of hard currency, natural disasters and conflict. This directly affected the project, as the cost of training venues, office furniture, utilities, transportation, accommodation etc. has increased beyond the budgeted amounts. The situation has been somewhat mitigated by the increasingly favourable exchange rate between ETB and NOK, but the situation may affect budgets in the future.

The project is also affected by geographical distances between implementation areas, exacerbated by poor internet connectivity and frequent electrical power cuts. This makes it challenging for TOFI partners to coordinate with each other, implement jointly, and monitor activities in several project areas.

Administrative challenges

The Routine Monitoring Tool has been a challenge since it was implemented in the second half of 2021.

Learning how to use the tool and how its technicalities work has taken time for both Norwegian and Ethiopian staff, but the country group is working hard on all aspects of the tool.

Ensuring implementation approval from the mandated government bureaus has also taken time. The Ethiopian authorities require detailed insight and approval, which took months during the start-up phase of the project. The consortium had to adapt its activity plan accordingly.

There have been significant delays in the implementation of the Inclusive Learning Approach (ILA), facilitated by EENET. The model is quite extensive and requires substantial capacity building and networking to ensure that all the relevant stakeholders from authorities, universities and schools have the necessary resources to roll-out the model. The delay is caused by travel restrictions causing remote trainings and meetings which have been challenging due to poor internet connection. The consortium has also spent time discussing the relevance of the model in the Ethiopian context.

Collaboration and harmonisation

Internally in the consortium

Country Technical Committee: The Country Technical Committee (CTC) is comprised of one representative from each of the implementing organisations in Ethiopia. The CTC has the overall responsibility for monitoring implementation progress and challenge mitigation. The CTC has met on a quarterly basis and is responsible for drafting the reports. The CTC is led by the Country Consortium Coordinator, employed by FEAPD.

Thematic groups: The group on Human Rights Advocacy is led by ENAB, the Inclusive Education group is led by SOS, and the group on Economic Empowerment is led by DF. The groups meet on a monthly basis and are responsible for the day-to-day coordination of activities. The groups draft and amend the thematic work plans.

Monitoring and Evaluation group: Towards the end of 2021, the consortium also created a Monitoring and Evaluation group, now led by Natanim. The group will be responsible for coordinating M&E efforts, including data collection in the Routine Monitoring Tool.

In addition to these structures, there is regular bilateral communication and coordination between TOFI partner organisations on individual activity implementation.

The Norwegian consortium partners have met on a biweekly basis in 2021. The Country Lead and the Country Consortium Coordinator have met digitally on a weekly basis in 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict escalation, it was unfortunately not possible for Norwegian partners to visit Ethiopia in 2021.

External collaboration

The consortium has also collaborated with a number of external stakeholders during 2021. Some examples:

The Human Rights Advocacy Network (see above) has drafted terms of reference, established a national advocacy committee, and agreed and signed on the importance of operating together.

An Inclusive Education Advocacy Network was under planning in 2021. Mapping of different governmental and non-governmental organisations working on inclusive education was completed, and establishment of the network is planned for 2022 under the Ministry of Education to ensure its sustainability.

There are also plans to establish an Economic Empowerment Network in 2022, and in 2021 the consortium mapped relevant partners from the government, private sector, NGOs and DPOs, such as the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, Civil Services and Ministry of Jobs Creation, and the Ethiopian Center for Disability and Development (ECDD).

Natanim signed a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate with ALERT Hospital and with Hope for Korah, a charitable organisation that works with mothers of children with disabilities and with primary and secondary government schools, ALERT Hospital medical directors, trauma and leprosy ward coordinators, school directors, and special needs experts.

SOS Ethiopia established a Project Support Group with an aim to better facilitate the implementation of the project, help with the screening of the right holders, and coordinate activities implemented in each target area.

FEAPD and ENAB lobbied higher level government officials and agencies through the advocacy workshop for the aim of mainstreaming disability inclusiveness and for the implementation of laws and policies which have been ratified by Ethiopia. Subsequently, each agency took the assignment to send its own action plan to influence the government to sign the laws and to mainstream disability issues into their programmes.

Based on a request from the Adami Tulu Jido Kombolcha district, ADRA Ethiopia arranged a children's parliament to demonstrate child right advocacy.

Added value

The consortium establishment has enhanced the visibility of the DPO umbrella organisation FEAPD and its member associations also outside the TOFI collaboration. The joint strength of the TOFI collaboration strengthens FEAPD and its member associations when it comes to influencing government institutions and advocating for disability rights also in projects and activities outside the TOFI programme.

The consortium has contributed to awareness around the mental health situation of persons with disabilities. Through the collaboration with Natanim, the consortium partners have increased their knowledge of mental health issues. Natanim has also been working with the ALERT trauma hospital, where individuals from rural areas and different regions of the country come to the hospital in the capital for medical treatment. Through the collaboration, patients can access counselling support which has meant they are more able to accept and improve their own situation, as well as address stigma and discrimination.

Because of the partnership with the DPO consortium members, and as a direct result of knowledge obtained through the collaboration, SOS Ethiopia is currently drafting a disability mainstreaming guideline for their organisation. SOS intends to ensure the consideration of disability issues in all its development programmes, also outside the TOFI project.

Cross-cutting issues

Women's rights and gender equality

The consortium has made efforts to ensure gender equality and protection of women's rights throughout the implementation of the TOFI project. Data is disaggregated on gender, and follow-up is made on activities where the gender balance is not as expected. In TOFI project management, a gender balance is ensured starting from the CTC which has four female and three male members.

Natanim's partner, Hope for Korah, works to empower women. Natanim is working to provide psychological and social support to these women, especially women with disabilities. As a result, in connection with Hope for Korah, Natanim is providing a series of individual, group and family counselling services to women, as well as providing various psychosocial training to mothers with disabilities and their families. In addition, Natanim has also been providing psychological support to mothers and their children who have been displaced by the war and come to ALERT Hospital for medical support.

Human Rights

In the context of the escalated conflict situation in Ethiopia, the DPOs have tried to give national attention to how violent conflict leads to higher rates of disability, and to show that persons with disabilities are more vulnerable during conflict. Many people are coming to the ALERT Hospital, which has partnered with Natanim to provide mental health and psycho-social support services. Many of the patients are women and girls whose rights have been violated, and who need individual and group counselling and training.

With the trainings provided for Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), teachers, and school management on child protection and inclusive education, TOFI has contributed to the protection of children overall at these schools. The school community is now empowered on how to respond to the needs of all children and create a safe environment for all students.

Through TOFI, the consortium has developed and translated manuals into different local languages in order to address national minorities. The project has focused on different norms and cultures and attempted to choose implementation strategies that directly fit with different localities.

Climate change and the environment

Throughout the project period, the consortium members have taken measures to properly utilise resources and avoid unnecessary waste of materials. Due to frequent electricity cuts, TOFI organisations unfortunately have to rely on diesel generators, as more environmentally friendly energy sources are not yet available or affordable. While public transportation is not always practical or available in Ethiopia, staff use public transportation as much as possible to reduce environment pollution as well as costs. Under the economic empowerment activities, there is a clear guideline that TOFI participants are not allowed to earn money through charcoal or wood selling activities. Furthermore, FEAPD staff have contributed to the environmental protection initiatives, by planting trees through the government's "green legacy" operation.

Anti-corruption

Anti-corruption and financial management policies are in place, such as fraud reporting mechanisms. Thorough due diligence assessments were also conducted for all DPO partners prior to signing TOFI agreements, and financial/organisational reviews are conducted annually, with continuous follow-up of improvement areas. Natanim has assisted FENAID with developing anti-corruption and anti-fraud manuals. The CTC and the Norwegian partners have jointly created a TOFI per diem policy, to ensure mitigation of corruption and fraud attempts.

Going forward

As a result of the conflict and political instability as well as delays related to the start-up phase, a number of activities were planned for 2021, but will be fully or partly postponed to 2022. Due to these delays, the country group foresees that some activities will be postponed to the no-cost extension period in 2023.

Mozambique

Overcoming social exclusion

PHOTO: SCREENSHOT ADEL SOFALA FACEBOOK



34-year-old João lives in the Macurungo neighborhood of Beira city in Sofala Province in central Mozambique. He has a wife and three daughters. João has a physical disability that does not impede his ability to work, but even so he was struggling to cover all his family's expenses through the small business he was running. During the COVID-19 pandemic, his family's economic situation worsened further.

Then, in 2021, ADEL Sofala – the Agency for Local Economic Development of Sofala – arranged a course in sewing and small business management as part of the TOFI programme partnership. João was offered a place in the course as well as a sewing machine and the necessary materials.

After this training, João set up his own tailor shop in Macurungo. He makes several different types of products, like children's clothing, bags and protective face masks against COVID-19. His new business generates a modest, but valuable daily income which increases the earnings of the family and supports the education of his daughters.

"I am very happy to be part of this project", says João. "The training provided by ADEL Sofala was very efficient, and in addition I was provided with a sewing machine. I used to have many difficulties, and sometimes had to rely on neighbouring charities for food. But now I have opened my own shop here at home and I make money to feed and support my daughters".

Antonio* challenges social prejudice and stands up for his rights to education

Antonio is 13 years old and an elementary school student. For a long time, he and his brother experienced exclusion from their classmates and the community because of their albinism.

"My brother and I felt isolated. We didn't have friends and several times I thought I was going to give up studying. I didn't know my rights well. I was being discriminated, and I was silent," Antonio says. He tells of being bullied at school and in the community, which resulted in low self-esteem and unwillingness to attend classes.

Through TOFI, his school participated in inclusive education training as part of the Inclusive Learning Approach. The project seeks to safeguard the rights of children with disabilities through awareness-raising for teachers and students and the creation of children's centres and school inclusion teams. Also, reintegration activities for children with disabilities are held, so that these children too can enjoy the right to education.

Antonio is a member of the Children's Club at his school, where he had access to teaching materials and participated in training on inclusive education, human rights, children's rights and the CRPD. This increased his level of perception and self-esteem.

"After participating in the training, my reactions to being discriminated against changed", says Antonio. As a result of the training, he overcame social prejudices and defended his right to education.

"Today, as members of the Club, we raise awareness in the school and, as a result, the way persons with disabilities are treated has changed a lot. For example, my brother and I have a lot of friends at school and at home, and we play with everyone", Antonio adds.

Antonio's family has also participated in training on inclusion. "We learned that disability does not preclude participation in school or social life. We have also spread this message so that more parents may realise that education is a right for all," Antonio's father reports.

Today, Antonio sits in the front row of the classroom and no longer feels that school is not for him.

**Name changed for privacy*

Introduction

Key figures:

- **Estimated population:** 31,255,000 (World Bank 2021; 2020 data)
- **Population under the age of 15:** 44 (World Bank 2021; 2020 data)
- **Urban population:** 37 % (World Bank 2021; 2020 data)
- **Urban population growth:** 4,4 % (World Bank 2021; 2020 data)
- **Human Development Index:** 181 (of 189) (UNDP 2022, 2019 data)
- **Gender Inequality Index (GII):** 127 (of 162) (UNDP 2020, 2019 data)
- **Adult literacy rate:** 61 % (World Bank 2021; 2017 data)
- **Life expectancy at birth:** 61 (World Bank 2021; 2020 data)
- **Child mortality rate (under 5, per 1000 live births):** 71 (World Bank 2021; 2020 data)
- **Mean years of schooling:** 3,5 (UNDP 2021, 2020 data (for året 2019))
- **Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, PPP (current international USD):** 1,250 (World Bank 2021; 2020 data)

Norway and Mozambique

Mozambique has been an important partner country for Norway for many years, e.g. in energy production and distribution. In Mozambique this cooperation has resulted in new power production and widespread electrification of the rural areas. In 2021, bilateral aid to Mozambique reached NOK 513.9 million. Of these funds, 160.1 million were channelled through Norwegian non-governmental organisations.

Persons with disabilities in Mozambique

There is a lack of reliable data on the number of persons with disabilities in Mozambique. According to data from the 2017 population census, the number is as low as 2.7 % of the population, while the World Health Organisation estimates that up to as much as 15 % of the world's population has a disability. According to a livelihood study carried out by SINTEF in 2009, 26 % of the households studied had one or more members with functional limitations, while 6 % of the individuals in the study had functional limitations. This would mean that there are approximately 1.6 million persons with disabilities in Mozambique.

Most persons with disabilities in Mozambique live in relative to extreme poverty, have received little or no formal education, have few or no opportunities to

earn a living, and are widely stigmatized, discriminated against, and excluded from benefits and social participation at all levels. The marginalization and stigmatization negatively impact the lives and opportunities of persons with disabilities themselves as well as those of their families. Persons with disabilities are mentioned in the country's laws and policies, but there is far from a comprehensive legal and policy framework addressing the rights of persons with disabilities, and there is a lack of implementation of existing legislation. Mozambique signed and ratified the CRPD and its Optional Protocol in 2012, and the Mozambican Government prepared its first report on its implementation to the UN in 2020.

In terms of national legal instruments, the Mozambican Constitution states that persons with disabilities shall fully enjoy the rights established in the Constitution, while art 37 in the Constitution offers several specific provisions for persons with disabilities. Yet, Mozambique currently has no national comprehensive disability law. In 2017, the Mozambican government submitted a proposal called "The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill". The proposal was not aligned with the CRPD and a successful Disabled Persons' Organisation (DPO) and CSO lobby initiative led to the Parliament rebuffing the Bill. FAMOD, the Mozambican

Federation of Disabled Persons' Organisations, and the Mozambican DPOs drafted and submitted an alternative proposal in 2020. The organisations are currently in negotiations with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to adopt the revised draft bill. Simultaneously the education authorities are drafting a new national strategy of Inclusive Education, and reform on teacher education is under development. ACAMO, the Mozambican Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted, and FAMOD participated in drafting the Mozambican Government's Commitments presented during the Global Disability Summit held in London in July 2018 and will continue to contribute and hold their government to account through this programme.

Description of country programme

In Mozambique, the TOFI programme is composed of six Mozambiquan organisations working with Norwegian DPOs and NGOs:

- ACAMO, the Association of Blind and Partially Sighted of Mozambique
- FAMOD, the Mozambiquan federation of Disabled Persons' Organisations
- Save the Children Mozambique
- ADEL-Sofala, the Agency for Local Economic Development of Sofala
- KULIMA, NGO working for integrated socio-economic development
- Livaningo, NGO working for the rights of communities and a better environment for people

Under the TOFI umbrella, the organisations work in three thematic areas: Inclusive Education, Economic Empowerment and Human Rights Advocacy.

The geographical area of action is the provinces of Maputo, Gaza, Sofala, Manica and Nampula.

TOFI Mozambique is a collaboration between Norwegian DPOs and NGOs and their local partners. The Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted (NABP) and their Mozambican counterpart ACAMO act as the country lead. The other TOFI organisations are the Federation of Organisations of Disabled People (FFO), partnering with their Mozambican sister organisation FAMOD, Save the Children Norway together with Save the Children International Mozambique, and Naturvernforbundet, partnering with national NGOs ADEL Sofala, Kulima, and Livaningo.

This programme aims to create broad disability inclusion practises in three key thematic areas - Human Rights Advocacy, Economic Empowerment, and Inclusive Education, by creating synergies between major mainstream development actors and the disability movement in Mozambique. The programme is designed with and implemented in partnership with national partner organisations. The programme focuses on strengthening DPOs as representative organisations of persons with disabilities and their role in improving access to education and financial services and their advocacy for general human rights for persons with disabilities through advocacy.

The programme complements the ongoing Norad funded projects and programmes of the various organisations, through interlinked interventions addressing institutional and systemic barriers, and using proven models and methods. It is based on the organisations' long-term experience working in Mozambique with local communities and participatory processes to empower children, community members, and civil society.

The CRPD is the starting point for the overall theory of change for the programme in Mozambique. Parties to the CPRD agree to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. The Agenda 2030 endorsed in 2015 shifts the traditional vision of partnerships by highlighting the significant role of stakeholders, including persons with disabilities. This view is in line with Articles 4.3 and 32 of the CRPD and the foundation of the disability movement "Nothing about us, without us". Persons with disabilities are de facto experts on the barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society. This includes children and youth with disabilities, who should also be involved in decisions and matters affecting them. The Mozambican DPOs are taking action to ensure the implementation of the CRPD and the SDGs on a national level. They are producing a shadow report to the forthcoming Mozambican government's review before the CRPD committee and using this evidence and competency to influence the government through other relevant UN reporting mechanisms, like the UPR and the CCPR in 2020 and 2021.

Highlights and selected results

HUMAN RIGHTS AND ADVOCACY

Inputs to a first Mozambican Disability Law (#1133)

A main priority for FAMOD in the TOFI project is to advocate for a Disability Law in Mozambique. In collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action, FAMOD has prepared a draft law inspired by the CRDP and the African Disability Protocol. A revised draft was finalized in September 2021 and subsequently submitted to the Ministry for review and approval.

FAMOD to coordinate the Civil Society report (#1124)

In 2018, the Government of Mozambique submitted its report to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for evaluation. CSOs and DPOs have a responsibility to monitor the government's implementation of the CRPD. To this end, CSOs in Mozambique, with DPOs in the lead, produced a civil society report (also known as a shadow report) as a response to the government's report. The shadow report, which will hopefully be delivered next year, was developed through consultations in the north, centre and south of the country with organisations of persons with disabilities such as ACAMO, FAMOD, Mozambican Autism Association and Nihuvuko Cultural Association. The production of the shadow report has generated data previously not available in Mozambique and has strengthened the reporting competency of Mozambiquan DPOs, enhancing their ability to take part in reporting mechanisms also for other UN treaties.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Trainings for better understanding of inclusive education (#1212)

Entities such as School Councils, Community Child Protection Committees, Children's Rights Clubs and Children's Parliament are important actors on the road to more inclusive education in Mozambique. Therefore, trainings were held for these entities on how to better understand inclusive education, establish School Inclusion Teams, and work with family and the community. These trainings contributed to creating, revitalizing and professionalising these groups and their members.

Turnout was high – 595 members (324F, 271M) of 18 school councils from all pilot schools in the provinces of Manica and Nampula participated.

Teacher trainings and training of trainers (#1231a)

Trainings in Inclusive Education based on the Inclusive Learning Approach were held for teachers, principal trainers*, school directors and other education sector partners.

Pilot school teachers strengthened their knowledge and practical skills in Inclusive Education and improved their understanding of inclusion in schools and ensured that children with disabilities have access to quality education.

2460 in-service teachers (1277F, 1183M) were trained in Inclusive Education, specifically Module 1 (Introduction to inclusive education) and in-service in Module 2 (School inclusion teams and the role of the coordinator in schools) in the provinces of Maputo, Manica and Nampula. The trainings contributed to a change in attitudes and practices and have the potential to reach approximately 56,000 children.

The above numbers include 88 principal trainers* (32F, 56M) who were also trained on how to identify out of school children.

*Principal trainers are individuals in key positions in the education sector in Mozambique who are trained in ILA and who deliver in-service training to all teachers in the 22 TOFI schools. The principal trainers are directors from pilot schools, technicians from the Provincial Directorate of Education and lecturers from the Pedagogical University.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

In the communities where the TOFI consortium carries out its economic empowerment activities, persons with disabilities were often hidden away by their families. Participation in TOFI activities has changed this for many persons with disabilities who now feel supported by their families. They feel freer and more confident and are now active in their communities, contributing to their family's livelihood.

Training in construction and maintenance of stoves and/or solar equipment (#1312)

Solar power equipment and improved firewood stoves can contribute to forest conservation and reduction of indoor pollution caused by smoke. In Maputo, Gaza and Sofala provinces, 838 persons with disabilities (436F, 402M) were trained in the production, use and maintenance of improved stoves and solar equipment. In addition to providing the participants with a cleaner

indoor environment, the trainings contribute to increased income through sale of these products, as well as savings for the users in purchase of firewood and energy for lighting.

Savings and credit groups (#1313)

In the districts of Marracuene, Manhiça, Chibuto, Manjacaze, KaMaxakeni, KaMpfumu, Maputo, Gondola, Sussundenga, Manica, Beira and Dondo a total of 77 savings groups were formed. 1449 persons (853F, 596M) are part of these groups. Of these, 780 (426F, 354M) are persons with disabilities, 172 (111F, 61M) are parents and caregivers, and 497 (316F, 181M) are persons without disabilities or persons with disabilities, but where there is no specific information on the disability. The groups saved about 6.5 million MZN in total, contributing to improving their living conditions.

Challenges and adaptations

COVID-19

Together for Inclusion Mozambique was formally launched in February 2020. However, the COVID-19 pandemic set in almost immediately after the kick-off and hampered programme start-up and implementation throughout the entire first year of operation.

The uncertainties of the pandemic have made planning extremely complex also in 2021. All partners have had to alter their work strategies, and restrictions on travel and the number of people allowed in meetings/gatherings have been challenging.

In the last half of 2021, the Delta and Omicron variants of COVID-19 arrived in Mozambique, dramatically increasing the number of infections in all groups, including persons with disabilities.

The control measures effectuated by the government significantly affected the implementation of TOFI activities. The close-down of schools at all levels, which had lasted almost the entire previous year, continued in 2021, directly affecting implementation of the Inclusive Education component. All plans in this component had to be carried out with adaptations. Adaptations also had to be made in work strategies, such as holding virtual meetings, reducing group sizes, and shouldering increased costs.

Programme work and implementation

ACAMO experienced some internal instability arising from the disagreement between some members and the outgoing Board of Directors. This resulted in a reduction of activities from February to August 2021. To address this situation, ACAMO held its General Assembly in September where a new Board of Directors was elected. The new Board started a process of trainings on organisational management, good governance, and participatory leadership to create stability within the organisation. This process will continue in 2022.

At the programme level, all consortium partners held a round of discussions to determine the implications that a reduction of activities in ACAMO would have to the programme. As a result, FAMOD and SCM decided to take over responsibility for some activities that had to be implemented in 2021. This process was done in consultation with the Norwegian partners and the Atlas Alliance and is clearly documented in the results framework.

The introduction of the Routine Monitoring Tool was a challenging process for which the consortium needed time and intensive training. Acquiring the necessary licenses to access the system was cumbersome and delayed the use of the tool. Through a joint effort between the partners, a workshop was held in November instructing partners in the use of the system. Likewise, a WhatsApp group was created to facilitate interaction, serving as a space for consulting the doubts encountered throughout the process. Currently, all organisations in Mozambique have access to the system and are becoming more familiar with its use.

The departure of FAMOD's Inclusive Education coordinator delayed the execution of activities and interrupted FAMOD's participation in common activities in this thematic area. FAMOD has hired a new coordinator for areas of inclusive education who is currently performing his duties.

Some beneficiaries of economic empowerment activities changed their address without informing the programme, making follow-up of their participation difficult. As a way of mitigating this situation, the group from the Economic Empowerment area is developing a strategy to raise awareness among beneficiaries, so that they inform the relevant persons/offices if they move from their current residence.



Two participants at inclusive education training in Mozambique.

Collaboration and harmonization

Information sharing was smooth using different channels, like WhatsApp, e-mail, Skype, Zoom and Teams, where all relevant documents such as thematic working group meeting minutes, annual plans, etc. were shared. This resulted in a more communicative, transparent, cohesive, and stronger consortium and thus in a better understanding of the various procedures within the TOFI consortium.

The thematic groups on Economic Empowerment, Human Rights and Advocacy and Inclusive Education

met monthly. The meetings informed members of what the different groups had been doing in terms of implementing activities, improving common planning, exchanging experiences between organisations of persons with disabilities and NGOs, and mutual strengthening.

The Country Technical Committee also held working meetings quarterly and extraordinarily when necessary to compile reports and analyse the progress of the TOFI consortium.

Technical support from NABP, FFO, Naturvernforbundet, Save the Children and the Atlas Alliance was of great value to the TOFI Mozambique consortium, and collaboration was always good. This close contact resulted in mutual learning between the Mozambican and Norwegian consortium members.

Added value

The TOFI consortium's way of working has given implementing organisations greater visibility to government and private institutions. They gain respect, which is manifested in numerous invitations to participate in debates on disability related topics (radio and television), invitations to various meetings with different government offices, and invitations to give input to government policies as was the case with the new inclusive education policy launched in 2021. These invitations gave the consortium members an opportunity to inform and influence the government, civil society, and the public at large about the rights of persons with disabilities.

Furthermore, TOFI is generating valuable knowledge on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in organisations outside the consortium. For instance, the Mozambican Association for Development and Democracy and the Provincial Forum of Civil Society Organisations (composed of more than 30 CSOs based in Gaza province) have started to hire persons with disabilities and place them in leadership positions after participating in TOFI activities.

The fact that the TOFI Mozambique consortium is made up of DPOs and other NGOs has enabled a wide exchange of experience in economic empowerment, the environment, and rights of persons and children with disabilities. It has allowed for mutual learning based on the knowledge and experiences of each of the participating parties.

For instance, Save the Children delivered a training for all consortium members where they shared their new Disability-Inclusive Child Safeguarding Guidelines. Likewise, ACAMO prepared a workshop on the new Routine Monitoring Tool for all TOFI consortium organisations.

The organisations in the TOFI consortium have done visible work with civil society and government on different topics. For instance, the Ministry of Education and Human Development (MINEDH) has decided to

use the principal trainers of the TOFI programme on ILA to extend training in inclusive education to all schools in the Maputo municipality, i.e., far outside the reach of the TOFI project. This is a result of close collaboration between TOFI and the MINEDH. The high level of involvement of the ministry is crucial for the project's sustainability. The rolling out of the training outside the TOFI pilot schools will take place in 2022.

Cross-cutting issues

Women's rights and gender equality

The consortium has created savings and loan groups where women are encouraged to join and take part in the management committee, assuming leadership positions such as the group presidency. This contributes to women's economic empowerment by increasing their financial literacy and promotes gender equality by increasing the level of agency of women in these groups.

TOFI also prioritizes the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in the various groups that have been created or revitalized, including training on children's rights, the rights of persons with disabilities and women's empowerment. For example, in children's clubs, the inclusion and participation of girls with disabilities is encouraged, so that they can strengthen their knowledge on their rights and actively participate in building disability inclusive schools.

Human rights

TOFI brings together duty bearers and rights holders in workshops. This method has increased awareness of the needs of right holders to claim their rights and of duty bearers to respect principles of equality and non-discrimination. The support provided under the TOFI programme for the reformulation, monitoring and drafting of a new disability law contributed to the strengthening of relations between state institutions and civil society organisations. If passed by the parliament, the law can provide persons with disabilities with a national legal instrument based on international human rights standards.

Climate change and the environment

To minimize the environmental impact, the TOFI Programme supports and defends the protection of the environment, making communities aware of the need for the sustainable use of natural resources, protection of the forest, soil, and water.

Specifically, it has encouraged and assisted communities in the production of improved stoves, saving firewood and encouraging the use of solar panels for lighting and cell phone charging.

To complement this effort, awareness campaigns were carried out on the rational use of natural resources and the preservation of the environment in the communities. The combination of these efforts leads to changes in behaviour in the communities covered by the project, thus contributing to the preservation of the environment.

Anti-corruption

In 2021, the Atlas Alliance launched a series of webinars on anti-corruption which were attended by collaborators from various organisations in the TOFI consortium. The organisations of the TOFI consortium have taken important steps and developed strategies to fight corruption in their institutions.

Going forward

During the reporting period, the Atlas Alliance introduced a Routine Monitoring Tool which the members of the TOFI consortium had to learn how to use. All consortium members in Mozambique will use the tool to register the data of upcoming activities in 2022. This will require increased effort from existing

human resources and/or hiring staff to work with system management. It will also require exchange of experience between partners when it comes to use of the platform.

At the time of writing, COVID-19 still has an impact on the development of activities, despite a lower level of occurrence. The Mozambican consortium will continue to work closely with the authorities, strictly respecting the prevention measures. This means that activities will continue to be adjusted according to the evolving context of COVID-19; for example, some meetings can be virtual, others can be in small groups as was done in 2021.

The delays caused by the pandemic in 2021 will require an extension of the project beyond 2022 to implement activities that have had considerable delays.

For some activities a technical cycle must be followed. For example, training of principal trainers must come prior to – and be followed by – training of in-service teachers. This means that a no-cost extension into 2023 will be necessary. For instance, the Inclusive Learning Approach modules will require a few extra months to be completed. This will increase the probability of continuity of this approach in the country's national education system. .

Niger

An optimistic learner

Ten-year-old Amina lives in a densely populated region outside Niger's capital. While the schooling rate in this urban area was average, Amina was not enrolled in school. She has physical disabilities and has difficulties with her upper and lower limbs. This makes walking and lifting objects a challenge for her, and it prevented her from being enrolled in the traditional school system. Amina's parents learned about the TOFI programme through a social mobilisation session in their region, and decided to register her in one of the participating schools. Amina was then enrolled in one of Stromme's Speed Schools which she now attends regularly.

Amina's grandmother has always been a supporter of Amina's education, so she was very happy when Amina was finally enrolled in school. As Amina's disability limits her capacity to walk, the grandmother took responsibility for getting Amina to class by carrying her on her back. Through the TOFI program, Amina received an adapted electric wheelchair to facilitate her access to school which reduced the task of her grandmother significantly. Amina is a fast learner and can now both read, write, and do mathematical calculations. She pays attention to what she is taught and wants to one day become a government official minister. "I am grateful for my grandmother's willingness to help me enrol in a Speed School Centre. Before, I used to play with my friends at home, but now I am involved in school activities", says Amina who is now a role model for others in her community.

Improving the learning environment

Established in 2016, Kollo Sonal elementary school was targeted for TOFI Project activities implementation. Before the project intervention, this school had four classrooms, all in straw huts under high voltage electric cables. The school also lacked latrines.

The mayor of the commune was informed of the issues with this school location, and the danger it presented to the children and their teachers, following a joint field mission led by project staff and officials from the Ministry of National Education through the directorates of school facilities and specialised education. The municipal authority provided this school with a new site that meets the safety and environmental requirements of the Ministry of Education. In addition, to avoid any dropouts or transfer to other schools, the project asked parents to sign commitments to keep their children in the same school for the full school year.

The new site, which houses two classrooms and two latrine blocks, now considers inclusion and environmental issues such as access ramps to classrooms and latrines; latrines adapted for persons with disabilities; low tables being accessible to learners with physical disabilities; classrooms equipped with desks, chairs and desks for teachers; and trees planted in the school yard to provide a better learning environment.

The programme's achievements helped keep children in school and improve the attendance rate of students with disabilities. Training in inclusive education, Braille and Niger Sign Language as well as care for children with intellectual disabilities received by teachers will allow enrolment of more children with disabilities in this school in the future.

Introduction

Key figures:

- **Estimated population:** 22,442,948 (World Bank 2020; 2018 data)
- **Population under the age of 15:** 50.0% (World Bank 2020; 2018 data)
- **Urban population:** 16.4% (World Bank 2020; 2018 data)
- **Urban population growth (annual %):** 4.3% (World Bank 2020; 2018 data)
- **Human Development Index (HDI):** 189 (of 189) (UNDP 2020; 2019 data)
- **Gender Inequality Index (GII):** 154 (of 162) (UNDP 2020; 2018 data)
- **Poverty headcount ratio at USD 1.90 a day (2011 PPP):** 44.5% (World Bank 2020; 2014 data)
- **Adult literacy rate:** 30.6% (World Bank 2020; 2012 data)
- **Life expectancy at birth (male/female):** 62 (60/63) (World Bank 2020; 2017 data)
- **Child mortality rate (under 5, per 1000 live births):** 84 (World Bank 2020; 2018 data)
- **Mean years of schooling:** 2.0 (UNDP 2020; 2018 data)
- **Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, PPP (current international USD):** 1,040 (World Bank 2020; 2018 data)

Niger is considered the world's poorest country and has a very young population, with almost 50% of the population under 15 years. According to Norad, "Niger is prone to recurrent droughts, floods, and locust infestations, and had the second fastest-growing population in the world in 2018 (World Bank 2020), which puts significant pressure on the state to respond to increasing social needs and demand for jobs. In addition to the strong demographic pressure, the effects of climate change, the influx of refugees in border areas (fleeing violence in neighbouring countries), and displacements because of deteriorating security conditions have had a negative impact on the population's livelihoods, exacerbating food insecurity." (Norad country evaluation brief – Niger, 2020.)

Niger has seen a doubling of its Official Development Assistance over the last 10 years. In 2020, Norwegian development aid to Niger amounted to NOK 211.5 million.

Persons with disabilities in Niger

Niger holds the 189th place of 189 countries in the UNDP Human Development index. 74.9% of the population live in "severe multidimensional poverty" (UNDP, 2018). The general socio-economic situation in Niger presents a plethora of interconnected challenges to development, including a high population growth rate, a volatile economy dependent on the export of primary commodities, recurrent droughts, and chronic insecurity due to the presence of insurgent terrorist groups.

In such a context, the situation of persons with disabilities is exacerbated by socio-economic inequality and discrimination. This translates into very limited access to education, employment, civic participation and services, and a lack of attention to their specific needs. According to the general population and the 2012 Niger housing census, 4.2% of the population were counted as people living with

disabilities, which amounts to 715 497 people with disabilities, of whom 361 938 are men (2.11% of the total population) and 353 559 are women (2.06%). These numbers are almost certainly underestimated, given underreporting of disability due to stigma and negative attitudes. Using the 15% prevalence of disability in a population estimated by WHO, it can be estimated that 2.4 million people in Niger live with a disability.

Niger signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2008. It has made clear its commitment to defend the rights of children with disabilities, including ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1999 (UNTC). The country has a legal framework that guarantees the rights of people with disabilities, including in its constitution (1999), and a series of laws and regulations. The public institutional system, represented by different ministerial departments, oversees the legislation concerning the protection and rights of people with disabilities within education, vocational training, health, food security, youth activities, and sports and public service, employment, social protection, women's rights advocacy, and child protection.

Children with disabilities are disproportionately affected by discrimination in access to education. Globally, they are less likely to be enrolled in school and more likely to drop out. Although education in Niger is compulsory and free from ages 6 to 16, the school environment is normally not suited to children living with disabilities. Traditional sociocultural beliefs about disability are manifest in the everyday lives of children with disabilities and deny them access to and understanding of their rights. In addition to the aforementioned challenge, school management and teaching staff lack an adequate understanding of the children's needs and constraints and, thus, fail to offer flexible education models that meet the various needs of students.

Given the particularly challenging context for gender equality in Niger (74% of girls are married before the age of 18 years, 24% before the age of 15), the situation of girls with disabilities is proportionately more difficult. The Plan West Africa study found that girls were more likely to be hidden by their families; the higher number of boys than girls with disabilities identified by the study probably reflects this. Because of this, the project has a strong gender focus.

Description of the country programme

TOFI Niger is implemented through a multi-actor partnership involving:

- Non-governmental organisation (NGO) members of the consortium: Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) (country lead), Norwegian Federation of Organisations of People with Disabilities (FFO), Plan International, and the Stromme Foundation (SF).
- The Nigerien Federation of People with Disabilities (FNPH). In addition, through FNPH, the project works closely with other Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs) as well.
- Local NGO partner Contribution to Rural Development (CDR)
- Ministry of Primary Education, Literacy, Promotion of National Languages, Vocational Training and Civic Education; Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Protection of the Child; the Ministry of Public Health and their decentralised services for the screening of children living with disabilities.

This programme aims to create broad disability inclusion practises in two key thematic areas - Human Rights Advocacy, Inclusive Education and Economic Inclusion, by creating synergies between major mainstream development actors as well as the disability movement in Niger. The programme is designed with and implemented in partnership with partner organisations in Niger. The programme focuses on strengthening DPOs as representative organisations of persons with disabilities and their role in improving access to education and their advocacy for general human rights for persons with disabilities through advocacy.

The programme complements the ongoing Norad-funded projects and programmes of the various organisations, through interlinked interventions addressing institutional and systemic barriers, and using proven models and methods. It is based on the organisations' long-term experience working in Niger with local communities and participatory processes to empower children, community members, and civil society.

It has been noted that Niger's international commitments have had a gradual impact on policy, being used as a point of reference by government institutions. On the other hand, the CRPD is available in French but not in other local languages, and there remains a significant gap between legislation and practice (Plan West Africa, 2013). The Together for Inclusion Niger programme works to support DPOs at a national and local level, through already strong connections with FNPH, as an effective way to enhance advocacy and influence, to put policy and rights into practice.

The project aims to promote formal and non-formal education for girls and boys with disabilities in an inclusive and equitable education system. It aims to strengthen the capacities of DPOs and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and enable them to better support persons with disabilities. This is in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: "Quality education with equity and promote lifelong learning opportunities"; SDG 5: "Gender equality and end all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls worldwide"; SDG 10: "Reduce inequalities within and across countries"; and SDG 17: "Strengthen effective partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society".

TOFI Niger is implemented in 36 villages in eight municipalities. SF works in 20 villages aligned with 20 Speed School centres in Balleyara and Dargol in the Tillabéri Region. ADRA supports 15 schools in the same municipalities. Students from SF's Speed Schools are transferred to ADRA's regular schools. Plan International supports 12 schools situated in the municipalities of Say, Kollo, Torodi, and Ouallam in the Tillabéri region, and Gaya and Doutchi in the Dosso region.

Highlights and selected results

Human Rights Advocacy

Awareness raising campaigns have been implemented in all four regions the programme intervenes in, many of them in relation to the beginning of a new school year (#1112). It is necessary to convince parents and communities and other relevant stakeholders that children with disabilities have a right to go to school. FNPH is organising the delivery of the campaigns together with ADRA, Plan and Stromme, through the regional authorities, which helps give legitimacy to the campaign. Regional authorities receive training

on the rights of people with disabilities to prepare for such activities. The medium is either community radio campaigns or traditional public messaging systems where these are not in place. These campaigns are crucial both to ensure attendance in school, in addition to reducing stigma and to inform about the rights of people with disabilities. ADRA has done surveys reporting changing attitudes towards children with disabilities because of these campaigns. The regional subsections of FNPH reports that they enjoy higher credibility in the community and that they are better organized, and the regional authorities are becoming better at inclusion of persons with disabilities. In Gaia, in the Dosso region, the regional FNPH has been awarded an office from the decision makers to be able to continue contributing with their efforts, and in Balleyara they report that they finally are able to be organized on a regional level. The celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities being organized by similar actors also helped spread awareness on children with disabilities' rights to attend school (#1210).

A second national forum on inclusive education was set up this year. The 120 representatives attending varied from representing government stakeholders, education partners, international NGOs and other Nigerian civil society actors. The objective of the workshop was to create a common framework to work on improving the national education system for children with disabilities. (#1122).

Several actors have been working on doing extensive capacity building during 2021. Amongst them, FNPH regional representatives have gone through "training of trainers" sessions on organisational management (#1112) and regional representatives of FNPH in Niamey have been trained on advocacy efforts in collaboration with regional authorities (#1111). Consequently, five new communal chapter are established to help strengthen local presence.

Inclusive Education

The TOFI Niger Programme works for inclusive education by providing an inclusive learning environment, strengthening competencies in inclusive education, and engaging families, caretakers, and community members. Activities under this component contribute to the education, protection, and support of children with disabilities in intervention areas. The following activities contributed to this in 2021:



Speed School students in Niger. PHOTO: EGIL MONGSTAD, STROMME FOUNDATION

Inclusive learning environment

The programme contributed to an inclusive learning environment for children with disabilities through both building and rehabilitating classrooms. This included constructing latrines accessible for students with disabilities, building ramps, and adapting the height of blackboards. Thirty inclusive speed school centres were opened, enrolling altogether 770 out of school children, including 141 children with disabilities. (#1230). The children will go through an accelerated learning programme over 9 months, starting October 2021, and eventually graduate to formal school in June 2022.

Children with disabilities received assistive devices such as crutches, tricycles, power wheelchairs, and white canes. Transportation to school is a challenge for children with physical disabilities, so receiving assistive devices is essential in assuring their schooling. Additionally, 50 students (23F, 27M) received a monthly stipend which helped facilitate their transportation to school. The programme also provided accessible learning materials, such as Braille tablets, talking PC tablets, headphones, audiobooks, and sign language dictionaries, which allow students with disabilities to participate in the classroom (#1210).

Strengthening competencies in inclusive education

Teachers and other education staff in the intervention areas received training in various topics to strengthen their competencies in inclusive education. This year's focus was training in Braille and Niger Sign Language for 120 teachers (93F, 27M). This was a comprehensive training that will be refreshed annually. The project also focused on children with intellectual disabilities by supporting the validation of a module on the care for children with intellectual disabilities developed by the Ministry of National Education. This was followed by training of 22 teachers (10F, 12M) and other education personnel on pedagogical methods for additional learning needs of children with intellectual disabilities. A training was also conducted for 30 (11F, 19M) teachers in basic mental health, focusing on mental wellbeing, depression, and anxiety (#1230).

In addition, teachers received training in positive inclusive class management and Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct was translated into Hausa and Zarma, the two most common languages in Niger. In addition, it was recorded in audio format, transcribed into Braille, and interpreted in Niger Sign Language in a video with subtitles. The content was also reproduced in comic

book format for easy access. Overall, these trainings strengthened the competencies amongst education staff and strengthened the inclusion and protection of children living with disabilities (#1230).

Engaging caretakers and community members

The project facilitated several activities to engage local communities. Caretakers and community members are engaged at school level as members of Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) and School Management Committees (SMC). This year, 25 PTA and SMC members (18F, 7M) received training in their roles and responsibilities to improve their organisational capacity. The programme has also set up School Inclusion Teams (SIT) and Inclusive Child Clubs (ICC). The main role of the School Inclusion Teams is to ensure inclusion at school through identification, mapping of barriers to inclusion and creating plans to overcome those barriers, while the ICC's primary role is to carry out sensitisation activities at school and in the communities as well as extracurricular activities such as cultural evenings and sports tournaments to promote the inclusion of children with disabilities in social life (#1230). Students with disabilities testified that before they had been bullied by their peers, but that thanks to the sensitisation by the clubs, they became well accepted and integrated in all activities at school and in the communities. The clubs are designed to continue their activities beyond the project period to further support access to education and ensure equal participation of children with disabilities in social life. All TOFI supported primary schools have SIT and/or ICC.

Identification and Enrolment

The TOFI Niger programme facilitated screenings to identify children with disabilities. A total of 1382 (561F, 821M) children were screened, and 520 children with disabilities were identified. This group includes children in schools supported by the programme and out of school children in the intervention area. The screening was carried out by doctors and specialists together with local health services. Once the results are ready, children in need of health care will be referred to specialised care centres (#1210).

A total of 665 students with disabilities (237F, 428M) were enrolled in schools supported by the TOFI programme for the school year 2021/2022. This is an increase of 89 students from the last school year.

Economic Empowerment

The economic empowerment programme focuses on training persons with disabilities and parents/caregivers of children with disabilities in income generating skills.

In 2021, the programme facilitated for training in income generating activities (IGA) for DPOs and Disabled Children's Parents Associations (DCPA) leaders. A total of 47 DPO and DCPA leaders (24F, 23H) were trained, among them 35 persons with disabilities. The main themes were how to analyse and select a market relevant IGA, creating, managing and further developing IGAs. The main types of IGA focused on during the training was animal farming (goat and chicken) and fish farming, as well as restoration and agriculture. The training was carried out by a person with disability with 40 years of IGA experience from Balléyara (#1310).

Five women's Community Managed Savings Groups (CMSG) were created, totalling 127 women, of which 44 with disabilities. In addition to alphabetisation, the CMSGs were trained in small trades as food processing, oil extraction, ground nut processing, and liquid soap manufacturing. Following the training, start-up kits have been distributed to the groups. All the groups started out on a savings for change programme, aiming for each group to save up sufficient funds to function as start-up capital for the individual members of the group (#1310).

Challenges and adaptations

COVID-19 pandemic

The burden of the coronavirus disease in Niger has been lower than in many other countries, with 8,916 confirmed cases and 309 deaths reported to the World Health Organisation (WHO) as of 26th April 2022. A recent analysis by the WHO reveals, however, that the "true number of [COVID-19] infections [in Africa] could be as much as 97 times higher than the number of confirmed reported cases". At the beginning of the pandemic, gathering places, including schools, were closed to reduce the risk of contamination. With the introduction of protective measures: mandatory face masks, systematic hand washing, and social distancing, the authorities reopened the society. This allowed the students and teachers to return to school. Educational activities resumed and continued as normal throughout 2021.

Growing insecurity

In 2021, Niger witnessed an increase in attacks, incursions, and massacres of civilians by non-state armed groups, particularly in Diffa, Tahoua, and in the western region of Tillabéri, where some programme activities are implemented. Mounting insecurity has led to further displacements, exacerbated the vulnerability of populations, especially women, children, and persons with disabilities, and affected the TOFI intervention areas to varying degrees.

In Dargol, Ouallam, Torodi and Say, teams have faced challenges to implementation and close monitoring. A major issue has been the limited access to the intervention zones. In Tillabéri, three of the four communes are in a state of emergency, which restricts travel, and which means that aid organisations must use military escort. As a mitigation measure, a schedule for movements of NGOs is submitted to OCHA each week to coordinate and organise in convoys. The project teams also mitigate risks by respecting the instructions provided by their security advisers. Village leaders will occasionally carry out activities on behalf of programme staff as locals experience less of a risk. One of the schools supported by Plan – the school in Tiambanga – was attacked in October 2021. Its closure deprived 257 students, including 17 children with disabilities, of access to education. The authorities have recently decided to reopen the school, albeit with a reduced number of classes. This will allow Plan to resume activities.

Government restructuring

The general election held in February and the formation of the new government in the spring of 2021 led to a reconfiguration of TOFI's key interlocutors at the ministerial and local levels. The Ministries of Primary and Secondary Education merged into the Ministry of National Education, while the Ministry of Public Health was strengthened with the creation of a Ministry of Public Health, Population and Social Affairs. With the change of key stakeholders in ministries, the replacement of local government officials, and the appointment of new actors in decentralised technical services, gains from earlier capacity building on inclusion-related issues were partially lost. To respond to this challenge and mitigate its impact on TOFI's further progress, the teams have worked towards connecting with newly appointed officials and familiarising them with the project. The positive consequence of the merger of two education ministries into one entity is the emergence of new opportunities

for advocacy. Since almost all support and capacity building have been provided at the primary school level, children with disabilities who complete the cycle are not necessarily followed up in secondary school. The new set-up may contribute to bridging this gap.

Appointment of local government officials

The appointment of the local government management bodies took place after the general elections in 2021. Replacement of mayors and communal councils has led to the presence of new stakeholders who have no information about TOFI nor have received training. To respond to this challenge, the teams have worked towards connecting with newly appointed officials and familiarising them with the project.

Organisational and HR changes

There has been changes in staff in the consortium member organisations both in Norway and in Niger.

The programme's new routine monitoring tools have taken longer than expected to roll out. Adaptations have been made by continuing with former M&E systems all through 2021. The new tools will be formally rolled out in the spring of 2022.

Collaboration and harmonization

A significant part of the TOFI programme is the added value of collaboration and harmonisation. Cooperation between NGOs and DPOs increases the reach and quality of all parties. The organisations also become more inclusive themselves, not only the project, as staff members with and without disabilities interact and learn from each other.

Consortiums meet on a regular, sometimes weekly, basis both in the Norwegian and Nigerien groupings to discuss relevant issues, plan, and ensure good quality. In Niger, the three NGOs collaborate closely with the DPO FNPH, which takes ownership and oversees many activities. FNPH's regional offices are involved with planning and implementation in all four regional chapters of the project. The synergy of action in implementing the TOFI Niger programme is dynamic, and several activities are carried out jointly. The close partnership across the consortium members enables valuable opportunities to learn from others' experiences. For example, Plan had good success with providing scholarships to students with disabilities to make sure they had transportation to school. When seeing the good results from this, both ADRA and Stromme started facilitating for the same.

The consortium in Niger also collaborates with relevant ministries such as the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Health. There is also close cooperation with a local university involved in the teacher trainings that are part of TOFI.

A study trip to Ghana was carried out by the whole Niger consortium together with representatives from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of National Education in December 2021. This trip strengthened the close collaboration between consortium members and ministries. Furthermore, this brought learning from the Ghanaian experience and model, an admirable example of inclusion of persons with disabilities in society. The legal and institutional frameworks, the structures and functioning of DPOs, and the good practices of the Ghanaian education system were among the main takeaways from the trip and the consortium will work towards achieving similar results in Niger.

Added value

The TOFI programme has created significant added value throughout the implementation period. The programme is using a multi-stakeholder approach, involving a broad variety of networks, parents, organisations, DPOs, and youth, which allows for unintended results to happen.

The TOFI programme consists of several collaborative bodies contributing to the sustainability of the programme. A steering committee has been formed consisting of a member of the Ministry of National Education (chairing the committee), Ministry of Health and members of the consortium. Through this body, the TOFI actors can work for their rights, while the Ministries learn from the inclusion efforts made by the programme. In addition, technical committees have been formed in the four regions, made up of regional decision makers in the areas of education, health, social action, and infrastructure in addition to the TOFI partners. They meet at least twice annually and do follow-up and evaluation of the programme activities. These bodies are crucial in ensuring legitimacy, local ownership, and long-term results of the programme.

The Ministry of National Education is also involved with the programme's inclusive education trainings together with the pedagogical faculty at the University of Niamey. This is being mainstreamed into in-service and pre-service teacher training. The screening

process carried out by the TOFI programme has also had unintended positive value and will be used by the Ministry of Health as official statistics on persons with disabilities for the project implementation areas. The screening process in project areas has also encouraged the Ministry of Health to do screening in regions outside the TOFI programme.

Another added value is that ADRA has incorporated the model of NGO-DPO-collaboration from TOFI Niger into another inclusive education project in Mali, where ADRA is now collaborating with FEMAPH, FNPH's sister organisation. The same programme has also been inspired by TOFI's School Inclusion Teams; these are now being introduced in ADRA supported schools in Mali and schools in Niger outside the intervention area of TOFI, giving an increased focus on children with disabilities in inclusive education programmes. The TOFI project has also encouraged ADRA's e-learning labs to become more inclusive and accessible for visually impaired students.

The consortium organisations have themselves also become more inclusive both in the facilities of the offices and in hiring staff with disabilities.

Additionally, the National section of FNPH reports on higher credibility with national decision makers as they collaborate closely with international donors and improve the capacities of the national office.

Cross-cutting issues

Women's rights and gender equality

The gender gap in Niger is big. Women report relatively lower level of ability to make important decisions in their own life and have high underrepresentation in decision-making processes, including within the DPOs. Women with disabilities face double discrimination. They have lower probability of finishing school; they are left out of decision-making activities and suffer from socio-cultural stereotyping.

Long-term discrimination of women creates challenges that make it difficult to minimize the gender gap. The fact that many considers school unnecessary for girls challenges our efforts to recruit girls to our schools. Since comparatively fewer girls and women have an education and feel empowered to take on leadership position, recruiting women with disabilities as representatives of DPOs is more difficult.

This is being reflected through several components. The economic empowerment activities are only targeting women with disabilities, and we have optimistic targets of include an equal number of girls and boys in school. Both men and women are involved in programme activities implementation and TOFI is consequently working to minimize the gender gap. We use women as spokespersons during community sessions, and we have an ambitious aim of 50% female participants in our education programmes. During community sessions, women speak up and express their opinions openly. At school level, girls and boys also benefit from activities and participate fully. For example, at least 50% of children's clubs members are girls.

Despite our efforts, our school enrolment numbers report that there are twice as many boys (428) enrolled as girls (237). This is far below our targets in terms of gender equality and a bigger gender gap than the results from the baseline study. These numbers will be addressed in the coming year.

Within the DPO sector, there is a low participation of women with disabilities. This is obviously a democratic challenge that is difficult to solve quickly. It is of good news that FNPH, in the executive committee, during 2021 increased the member of female representatives from one to four, and for the first time having hired a female employee to the office.

Human Rights

The TOFI programme contributes to the realisation of the right to education, recognised as a fundamental human right. In 2021, it allowed for enrolment of 665 children with disabilities to integrate in the formal school system, increasing the enrolment rate in the intervention areas. Sensitisation of communities and local decision makers contributes to changes in attitudes and social norms, encouraging equal access to education for all, including girls and children with disabilities. Reinforcement of the local child protection system through establishment and training of child protection committees helps prevent different forms of violence, abuse, and exploitation.

In Niger, communities are often unaware of their rights and do not demand them. Civil society organisations, including DPOs, do not necessarily have the capacity for effective advocacy. Through the TOFI project, local CSOs gain knowledge and competencies necessary to raise human rights concerns and defend the rights

of the most vulnerable. TOFI also works with key stakeholders, including the authorities at all levels, to ensure that human rights concerns are recognised, understood, and addressed.

Since the needs in the communities supported by the project are important, TOFI's focus on persons with disabilities sometimes leads to frustration among other community members. For this reason, project teams hold community sessions to discuss the different project activities and the fundamental rights of children and people with disabilities.

It should also be noted that the implementation of the project is done in respect of the rights of all stakeholders.

Climate change and the environment

The project implementation area keeps seeing challenges related to climate change and the environment. Challenges are especially connected to the rainy season, which is now less predictable and tends to be shorter, but heavier, than before. Heavy rain has caused floods with significant material loss throughout Niger, leading to flooded roads and collapsed houses. Persons with disabilities are amongst the most vulnerable in such situations. Unpredictable rain patterns also challenge food security across the country, as crops risk getting no rain at all or too much rain at once. Consequently, children may be taken out of school to contribute to the household income through commercial activities. Other children may be taken out of school as families are forced to move to other regions. Hence, environmental and climatic changes can have severe downstream consequences on children's education.

Anti-corruption

All partners and consortium organisations have zero tolerance anti-corruption policies which are actively implemented by all relevant parties. The following joint actions have been taken:

- Partners and staff are regularly trained with refresher training on anti-corruption and anti-bribery procedures.
 - Implementing elements of whistle-blowing procedures, including sharing of relevant telephone numbers to contact to partners.
- An anti-corruption paper has been internalised by all staff and partners
 - FNPH elaborated and adopted its anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy in 2021, training leaders and DPO's on the policy.

Going forward

In 2022, TOFI Niger will focus on implementing key activities with the time remaining of the programme. All teachers in supported schools will receive comprehensive training in inclusive education, and teacher trainings will be developed together with local faculties. In the first phases of Together for Inclusion, the first inclusive education teachers received longer sign language and Braille trainings, with follow-up training each year. In 2021 they were also trained on positive class management training and mental health issues. The new inclusive education training is a broader training based on evidence-based principles of pedagogical methods for building inclusive school culture and teaching methods important for inclusion consisting of the following modules: positive class management, teachers' professional values, parent-teacher interaction and child participation, social and emotional learning, universal design for learning and lesson planning, learning disabilities, child development and brain functioning.

The programme's new routine monitoring tool will simplify the quantitative reporting period and keep better track of figures across all consortium member organisation. The tool will be rolled out in Niger in 2022.

The programme will continue to collaborate with the government, strengthen the focus on human rights advocacy, and continue with the inclusion component all across the programme.

Somalia

Amadi* (18) - shop owner and breadwinner



Learning to repair mobile phones in Kismayo. PHOTO: ADRA

Amadi is an 18-year-old boy from Calanley Village in Kismayo, Somalia. The first-born of four siblings, he lost both his legs in a fire accident at their home when he was only six years old. He also has seizure attacks.

Due to insecurity, drought, and famine in their home region, Amadi's family moved to Hagadera refugee camp in Dadaab, Kenya when Amadi was young. He and his siblings started school in the camp, but after some years, Amadi's father died. In his sixth year of school, Amadi left his mother and siblings to go back to Somalia as part of the UN repatriation programme.

Back in his hometown, the young boy was taken to his aunt's family. He was not comfortable in his new school and surroundings. He had lost his prosthetic legs during the relocation from Kenya and had to crawl to move around. As a result, Amadi ended up confined in a room he shared with his cousins. He had to quit school and he had no friends.

Then one day his aunt informed Amadi of an opportunity for youth with disabilities that she had heard about in a community awareness session arranged by ADRA Somalia and Kismayo Technical Institute. He applied and was enrolled in a mobile phone repair course. All learners in the different skill-training classes also attended classes in literacy, life skills and mentorship as part of their overall training. These free trainings for youths with disabilities and the transportation between the school and the learners' homes were provided by ADRA Somalia in coordination with the local education ministry through the TOFI programme.

In fact, this was only the beginning of Amadi's story. Kind community members noticed his hardship in the daily commute to the training centre, so they organised a fundraising through social media to provide Amadi with prosthetic legs and further support his family economically. The community funds also helped Amadi start a small shop so he could support his family.

"This is a rare chance for people like me who have physical impairments. I am glad to finally have an opportunity to create a future for my family, and I feel much better being part of a group again learning life skills, numeracy and mobile phone repair skills. I believe this will prepare me for a good career", Amadi says.

ADRA Somalia is implementing the Together for Inclusion project in Somalia as part of the TOFI consortiums' efforts to promote disability rights advocacy and inclusive education in Somalia. The project reaches adults and children with disabilities, as well as DPOs, schools and learning centres, and a range of institutions related to social protection and access to educational opportunities.

**Name changed for privacy.*

Barre* (12) - advocate for the rights of children with disabilities

Barre is 12 years old and lives in Garowe with his parents and five siblings. Three years ago, he was in a car accident in which he suffered severe injuries to his arms, legs and face. He was hospitalised and after nine days his leg had to be amputated. Now he walks on crutches.

The modest income of Barre's parents meant that it was difficult for them to pay school fees for their children. Barre says he felt ashamed when teachers would shout at him for not having paid his tuition, and in addition he was bullied by the other kids at school.

Children with disabilities face widespread discrimination in Somalia and have little access to educational opportunities. Through Save the Children and the TOFI programme, however, Barre's school fees were paid, and he was also provided with study materials. In addition, teachers in Barre's school were given extensive training on inclusive education,

which encouraged them to accept human differences, respect equality, and model positive behaviour for the children.

Barre is a member of his school's Children's Club which also focuses on inclusion. He loves the club where he has fun with his peers, but where they also learn to advocate for the rights of disabled children. In February, Barre was one of three children with disabilities who shared their experiences and opinions in a video presented at the 2022 Global Disability Summit.

All this has motivated Barre to continue his education. He has confidence in his ability to achieve in life, and he wants to help others who are physically challenged when he grows up. "I used to be terrified of school because of the stigma and bullying", says Barre. "But now I like learning and interacting with my classmates, and I am advocating for the rights of children who face the same issues I did in the past".

**Name changed for privacy.*

Introduction

Key figures

- **Estimated population:** 15,900,000 (World Bank 2021; 2020 data)
- **Population under the age of 15:** 46% (World Bank 2021; 2020 data)
- **Urban population:** 46 % (World Bank 2021; 2020 data)
- **Urban population growth:** 4,2 % (World Bank 2021; 2020 data)
- **Human Development Index:** Somalia was not part of the last ranking
- **Gender Inequality Index (GII):** Somalia was not part of the UNDP ranking
- **Adult literacy rate:** No data available (World Bank 2021)
- **Life expectancy at birth:** 58 (World Bank 2021; 2020 data)
- **Child mortality rate (under 5, per 1000 live births):** 115 (World Bank 2021; 2020 data)
- **Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, PPP (current international USD):** 1,240 (World Bank 2021; 2020 data)

Norway and Somalia

Somalia is one of the world's poorest countries and one of the largest recipients of Norwegian aid. In 2021, Norwegian development aid to Somalia amounted to NOK 526,6 million with a particular focus on governance, civil society, and conflict prevention (NOK 242,4 million). Many Norwegian NGOs are active in the country and 50% of the total aid funds were channelled through Norwegian NGOs whereas 41% were given

through multilateral organisations.

Persons with disabilities in Somalia

Persons and children with disabilities continue to be absent from the political and development agenda in Somalia, and their needs are not properly addressed by the authorities. There is no specific national legal or policy framework regarding persons with disabilities. The fact that Somalia did not ratify the UN Convention

on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) until 2019 has negatively impacted the recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities in the country. Puntland has progressed a little further than the rest of the country in that the needs of persons with disabilities are addressed in Puntland's policies and programmes. However, no concrete implementation has followed. Compared to Puntland, the federal government and the state-level administrations are lagging behind when it comes to inclusive policies. This is despite the provisional federal constitution providing equal rights for persons with disabilities. Although it prohibits the state from discriminating against them, authorities have not enforced these provisions.

According to a study by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) in Puntland, children with disabilities are subject to neglect, abuse, stigma, discrimination, negative attitudes, and exclusion at all levels. The families of persons with disabilities are also often faced with barriers because of stigma and the lack of services, and opportunities available to their disabled family member(s).

Many children with disabilities do not attend school and are kept at home, out of sight. Both children and adults with disabilities are stigmatized, segregated, and referred to with collective as well as derogatory names. The barriers faced by these children are huge and likely to be added to those already caused by conflict, gender, or refugee status. Some efforts to lobby authorities on disability issues are carried out by local disability networks; however, most of these efforts are hindered by the low capacity of the DPOs and tend to remain isolated from major initiatives by national and international human rights organisations.

While designing the project, Save the Children and ADRA shared their experiences from Puntland, Jubaland, and from consultations with stakeholders and DPOs in Garowe, to pinpoint some key issues:

1) At the individual level, persons with disabilities do not have access to information on their rights because of barriers to communication and because little or no information is adapted to make it accessible to them. In fact, they often lack self-confidence and are not empowered to defend their rights as they are subjects of pity in the community.

2) The DPOs are not yet strong enough to change society's attitudes towards disability or to accurately

reflect the views of their members and be accountable to them.

3) Weak DPO networks and poor coordination of DPOs in Puntland and at the federal level limits the advocacy efforts for disability inclusion and results in duplication of efforts. The majority of DPOs do not have a comprehensive view of disability and recent developments in the international disability work, such as the rights-based approach and the strategy of mainstreaming disability across sectors. Consequently, their skills in effective advocacy and communication are limited and have modest impact on promoting an inclusive and open society. On the other hand, mainstream CSOs and their networks have little understanding or they share a common misconception of disability and therefore do not address it in their agendas.

4) There is a need for DPOs to engage in constructive dialogue with the central and local authorities to propose reasonable solutions for the common well-being of persons with disabilities. The relevant governing structures do not have adequate information on the barriers faced by persons with disabilities, making it difficult to plan properly and consider the needs of persons with disabilities in the regional agenda. There is a lack of mechanisms for guidance, monitoring, and feedback to ensure that disability inclusion and mainstreaming are entrenched in policies and programming. So far, the DPOs have not been exploiting what little space and time have been given to disability issues by stakeholders and authorities.

There are an estimated 3 million out-of-school children across Somalia; UNICEF estimates that only 30% of school-age children are enrolled in primary school. Unfortunately, countrywide enrolment data for children with disabilities are lacking for Somalia. However, according to global trends from a UNESCO 2007 study, 1/3 of all out-of-school children are children with disabilities, so there is likely a considerable number of out-of-school children with disabilities all over Somalia. Despite significant political progress and strengthening of government institutions, the Ministry of Education at the state and regional levels still can or will not prioritize education for children in vulnerable circumstances. The policy environment for inclusive education is also weak as Somalia only recently ratified the CRPD. As a result, Somali children with disabilities suffer from the greatest education inequalities. Women and girls with disabilities face double discrimination

on account of their disabilities and gender. They are therefore highly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

Despite the insufficient data on children with disabilities in schools, the estimated low levels of enrolment of children with disabilities and the lack of inclusive education, there are some promising changes. The federal government's Education Sector Strategic Plan (2018-2020) and the Draft National Education Policy, as well as the Puntland Education Sector Strategic Plan, have all articulated the authorities' commitment to providing equal access to education for children with disabilities, currently categorized under the broader heading of Special Needs Education. For the first time since 1991, children with disabilities were able to sit for the national examinations in 2019. These developments encapsulate the significant milestone registered by the MoEHE in its education sector reform strategies.

Description of country programme

The Norwegian organisations that take part in the TOFI Somalia collaboration are Save the Children Norway (SC), The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), and The Norwegian Association of Disabled (NAD).

This programme aims to create broad disability inclusion practices in two key thematic areas, Human Rights Advocacy and Inclusive Education, by creating synergies between major mainstream development actors and the disability movement in Somalia. Out of the six countries in the Together for Inclusion partnership, Somalia has the weakest DPO scene. While the programme aims to strengthen DPOs as the representative organisations of persons with disabilities, and support their role in human rights advocacy, it is difficult to enter into the same kind of partnerships as in the other countries. Very weak organisations require strong partnerships and capacity development over time to avoid corruption, reliance on only one or two large personalities, and other issues, and that is not possible in a relatively short programme like this. The Norwegian organisations have therefore found other ways of engaging with DPOs, without large transfers of funds.

The programme complements the ongoing Norad funded projects and programmes of Save the Children and ADRA, through interlinked interventions addressing institutional and systemic barriers, and using proven

models and methods, while NAD acts as an expert adviser and works with the NGOs to establish relations with DPOs in the country. The programme uses approaches and models that have been developed and tested over time, such as the Inclusive Learning Approach (ILA) developed by NAD and the Enabling Education Network (EENET) in the IE component, previously referred to as the NAD/EENET model.

Highlights and selected results

HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY

DPO staff trained on advocacy and coalition building (#1123a)

SCI provided member organisations of Somali Disability Network (SDN) with a three-day capacity building on advocacy in Mogadishu in September 2021. The goal was to build the capacity of DPOs to develop an advocacy strategy and action plan to guide DPO advocacy and awareness raising initiatives in Somalia as well as their engagement with the government and INGOs. Among the member organisations were:

- Somali Deaf Center (SDC)
- Ururka Dhalinyarada Araga Naafada ka ah (UDHAN; Organisation for youth with visual impairments)
- Sanco Center (DPO advocating for rehabilitation services)
- Somali Association Female Disability (SAFD)
- Dayah Disability Organisation and
- Hidig Disability Women Organisation

A total of 35 (16F, 19M) participants received training. 32 of the participants (15F, 17M) were persons with disabilities.

Government legislation, policies and plans reviewed and revised to include DPOs (#1130b, 1133)

In 2021, the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development made a first draft of the National Disability Bill. The ministry facilitated three national consultation meetings with CSOs and persons with disabilities on the bill in the reporting period. A total of 100 participants (48 female, 20 of them women with disabilities, and 52 male, 40 of them men with disabilities) from CSOs, DPOs and the inter-ministerial human rights task force participated in the meetings. SCI also provided financial and technical support. The bill is currently awaiting enactment by cabinet which will be followed by parliament.

The main objective of these consultations was to ensure that the bill is aligned with the CRPD. The participatory process was facilitated by a lawyer with vast experience in the development of this type of bill. The draft bill was shared with the disability stakeholders who all commented and gave valuable input, which was then passed on to the relevant authorities for final revision. The process produced a bill with nine chapters, broken down further into 50 articles. If enacted, the bill will provide a concrete legal basis for the promotion, respect and fulfilment of rights on people with disabilities in Somalia.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Awareness raising on inclusive education (#1211)

In close partnership with Puntland Disability Organisations Network (PDON) and Disability Aid Foundation (DAF), SCI and ADRA held four awareness raising campaigns on inclusion for marginalised children in 2021. The campaigns focused especially on children with disabilities and used different formats including community mobilisation campaigns, radio, and posters. The objective was to challenge existing barriers that prevent access to education for children with disabilities.

644 (303F, 341M) caregivers including parents of children with disabilities were trained in awareness raising on inclusive education in four target states. Among the key topics were the right to inclusive education and prevention of discrimination on the basis of disability and other social traits as prescribed in CRPD and national legal frameworks. Individuals from PDON and DAF shared experiences and the hard times they had survived in their communities and used this to raise awareness and address attitude barriers.

The awareness raising package included distribution of home learning resources to 930 families in Puntland to support learners and children at home during the lockdown period. The home learning materials consisted of booklets and posters with basic activities for academic and life skills development for children while schools were closed. The materials were developed and tested in other countries by NAD and the EENET. They were then translated and adapted to the Somali context.

Increased enrolment of learners with disabilities in school (#1210) (1213b)

In combination with other supportive efforts, this led to the introduction of flexible school timetables

and inclusive teaching methodologies. Community participation in the promotion of inclusion in schools was also improved, as community members proactively and voluntarily promote inclusion in school and no longer see this as the sole responsibility of the teachers. 681 children who were already enrolled in schools were identified as disabled, and 287 out-of-school children with disabilities were enrolled in school. In total, 968 children with disabilities (508F, 460M) were enrolled in 28 target schools in Somalia.

Training and support on life skills and personal empowerment provided to out of school adolescents with disabilities (#1216a)

In partnership with Disability Aid Foundation (DAF), ADRA carried out awareness raising and mobilization of communities, line ministries, disability groups and individuals in order to identify and bring out youth with disabilities so that they could be assessed and subsequently enrolled in suitable educational institutions, e.g., technical-vocational education and training (TVET) centres. Throughout the year, TOFI provided administrative and financial support to two TVET centres in the regions of Lower Juba (Kismayo) and Bay (Baidoa). The support was given by ADRA who provided teaching and learning materials, and paid instructors' salaries, learners' transport, and the provision of water and electricity. These centres have altogether 140 (61F, 79M) students. 36 of these youths (16F, 20M) were without disabilities, but from extremely poor backgrounds and were therefore included. The other 104 (45 female, 59 male) were adolescents with disabilities. The students learn employable skills of their choice, as well as literacy and numeracy.

ADRA also supported construction of two accessible latrines at Kismaayo Technical Institute to create a favourable environment for all learners. Based on the attendance register, this increased the attendance rate among learners with disabilities to 75 %.

Professional development for DPOs on quality inclusive education services (#1222)

EENET conducted a scoping review to assess the local context and identified DPO IE facilitators who would lead the foundational module 1 training of the Inclusive Advocacy Approach developed by NAD and EENET. 17 males (9 with disability) and 13 females (2 with disability) from Puntland Disability Organisations Network (PDON) and Disability Aid Foundation (DAF) attended an eight-day inclusive education workshop in Garowe in November 2021. Introduction to inclusive

education, discrimination, awareness raising, and advocacy strategies were key topics covered by the workshop. The overall objective was to equip DPOs with necessary skills and knowledge and take the lead in promoting inclusive education. As per post training evaluation, they were well equipped with skills to carry out awareness raising, advocacy and training local community for disseminating knowledge on inclusive education.

Professional development for education staff on quality inclusive education practice (#1230, 1231)

Under the Inclusive Learning Approach developed by NAD and EENET, the programme delivered two out of five Inclusive Teaching modules to 84 school principal trainers (16F, 68M) from the target institutions. EENET and Somalia TOFI field team adapted the material to make it contextually relevant. The two modules were introductions to Inclusive Education and to School Inclusion Teams (SIT) and Coordinators. The trainings took place in July and December 2021 in Puntland, Jubaland, South-West and Hirshabelle states of Somalia. The participating principal trainers were carefully selected to ensure they were qualified to roll out the trainings to all teachers in the target schools.

The principal teachers come from the MoEHE, universities and other schools. After completing the two inclusive teaching modules, they transferred first module training to 410 (90F, 320M) in-service teachers in 26 out of 30 target primary schools in Puntland and southern states. Of the participating teachers, 14 male and 4 female had a disability. Observers monitored the schools after the training. Both teachers and trainers expressed confidence that the training will prepare both teachers and ministry to accommodate individual needs of learners and make schools accessible to all children regardless of their background. The MoEHE led the trainers' selection process, oversaw attendances in the trainings and will follow up teacher performance.

Challenges and adaptations

COVID-19

After the second wave of COVID-19, implementing partners and government put in place new protocols to minimize the risk of infection including a total ban on travel and gatherings, closure of schools and working from home. Digital media played a key role in reaching many audiences who could not come together. For instance, awareness raising was effectively done

through channels such as radio and social media. COVID-19 also affected the implementation of the Inclusive Learning approach. NAD and EENET therefore continued the approach developed in 2020, using local facilitators to run workshops with remote support and mentoring from EENET consultants. The majority of field activities resumed in the second half of the year, and the last months of the year were a tough time for the implementing partners to bridge the gap.

Volatile security situation

The security situation deteriorated during the reporting period as elections were delayed – the federal government of Somalia, federal states and presidential candidates failed to agree on the approach and time of elections after the government's term came to an end in February 2021. Political turmoil followed, and Al-Shabab capitalized on the insecurity to encroach on and destabilise major towns, abruptly shattering hopes. The volatile security situation impeded implementation of trainings under the Inclusive Teaching component at the In-Service Teacher Training (INSET) level in the Hiraan region of Hirshabelle state. ADRA will work with principal trainers to deliver the training in target schools once the situation stabilizes.

Official restrictions

The Ministry of Education will only authorise teacher trainings during school holidays as it fears that trainings may interrupt the teaching and affect completion of the syllabus content. This means that the TOFI programme team can only deliver two Inclusive Teaching modules to principal trainers per year.

Collaboration and harmonization

Consortium members closely collaborated on annual planning and implementation. The programme formed three working groups on Human Rights Advocacy, Inclusive Education, and Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning, respectively. These were important platforms for discussions on programme updates including target review, challenges and delivery plans. Additionally, it was an opportunity for sharing best practices, identifying areas of cooperation, and sharing resources, be they human or material. In the group meetings, staff were able to foresee potential risks and deviations in implementation plans and could revise documents accordingly.

For instance, one of the areas of cooperation was capacity building for teachers and DPOs. EENET

and NAD developed and contextualised an inclusive education training package in cooperation with in-country implementing partners. On their side, in-country partners jointly facilitated trainings which increased integration and cross-learning between the two implementing NGOs ADRA and SCI, and the DPOs.

Likewise, joint annual/quarterly reporting was a successful collaboration strategy which improved common understanding of the report requirements, responsibilities, and key accomplishments that the country can be proud of as a collective achievement.

Both ADRA and SCI worked closely together on the areas of activity implementation either where they either jointly developed or borrowed Terms of References for effective and efficient delivery.

Added value

The DPOs' understanding of the concept of inclusion improved. According to interviews with DPOs, they used to think that inclusion is just about the presence of someone with a disability in the programme, regardless of their numbers, degree of participation, or influence on the activities. The DPOs' understanding of barriers and strategies of inclusion previously focused only on infrastructure and sometimes attitudes. The focus has now expanded, and the organisations advocate for equal rights of adults and children regardless of disabilities, gender or other backgrounds.

There has also been significant change in the mainstreaming disability tools and proposal of new programmes in the NGOs. The programme hired a disability technical specialist to help SCI review its policies and strategies on inclusion. The organisation has now applied for tools and proposal to be passed via the technical specialist to ensure they are inclusive and disability representative. In addition, SCI introduced inclusive community-based feedback mechanisms (like toll-free lines and suggestion boxes) which are accessible to people with disabilities and those with special needs. This was introduced after advocacy and frequent comments on disability inclusion in the programmes as per SCI strategic plan.

As a local disability specialist organisation, the Disability Aid Foundation (DAF) has pointed out the need for policy dissemination from the Ministry to the public for deeper understanding and better decisions.

DAF made a proposal on this to both ADRA and the Ministry of Education. The ministry then requested ADRA to support translation of the document from English to Somali for wider use to the public. The document is now translated and will be disseminated once approved.

Cross-cutting issues

Women's rights and gender equality

Gender was a key programme focus on inclusion besides disability. Equal space and opportunities were provided in all training, awareness raising, meetings, and selection of facilitators regardless of gender. Disaggregation of data by age, gender and type of disability was used as a tool during activity planning and implementation to enhance inclusion. One challenge is that there are few women in the teaching profession. This male dominance was highlighted as an area of future study to find its exact reason(s). However, some female head teachers have showcased the competence of women to hold leadership positions in the community – e.g., there are three female head teachers in the SCI supported schools. Affirmative action is now being taken to increase the number of female teachers with and without disabilities. In the Inclusive Education component, the facilitators work to ensure that both female and male principal trainers feel able to participate and that women increasingly lead discussions and group tasks.

The TOFI programme continues to ensure that case studies used in trainings highlight culturally relevant stories about female and male learners, teachers and parents, avoiding stereotyping. Discussion of girls' access to, and participation in, education is actively facilitated in workshops alongside critical discussion of teaching practices and policies that help or hinder girls' and boys' presence, participation, and achievement.

Human rights

Human right violations for marginalised groups and ethnic minorities are common in Somalia. The risks are especially high for children and persons with disabilities both at home and in playgrounds, schools and markets. Law enforcement and judicial institutions are incapacitated in Somalia and cannot hold perpetrators to account. Rather, the traditional mechanism of the Xeer system is widely used wherein traditional elders sort internal and external

issues. The Xeer system is neither founded on human rights principles nor on Islamic sharia, but rather on compromises. Marginalised groups like children, women and disabled persons pay the highest price of the injustices in the Xeer because the system has no room for their voices. The lack of strong government institutions and clear policies to apprehend perpetrators coupled with the wide use of the Xeer system results in violations of the rights of children, women, and persons with disabilities as well as other groups in vulnerable positions.

In response to this, TOFI engaged with ministries and local authorities to discuss the human rights of particularly children and persons with disabilities as established in the UNCRC and UNCRPD, with a view to minimize or remove the risk of injustices and violations. The draft Disability Bill and the TOFI supported inclusive education policies will enhance promotion of human rights in the country.

The TOFI IE programmes largely target learners with disabilities and/or special educational needs, but the training modules encourage DPOs and teachers to recognise and address the education rights of all children. The principles of inclusive education involve restructuring the culture, policies, and practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of all students in their locality.

Climate change and the environment:

Due to minimal or no rainfall for the last two rainy seasons, one of the worst droughts since 2017 hit Somalia affecting livelihoods and human life across the country. Families who lost their assets in the drought were forced to seek a better life or even survival in camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs). According to a rapid needs assessment conducted by Save the Children in December 2021, 3.9 million people across Somalia suffered from food shortages, with 1.8 million of them facing severe food insecurity. The influx of new arrivals increased significantly in IDP camps where TOFI schools operate. DPOs and the TOFI programme team mobilized parents and the community to enrol children in schools, but it is yet too early to establish the total number of enrolments. However, schools have inadequate resources to accommodate more children when it comes to classrooms, teaching materials and paid teachers. Even with these limited funds, the TOFI programme rehabilitated five classrooms and 16 toilets.

Anti-corruption:

New employees who joined the project were given an introduction on fraud and how to prevent it. There was also a mandatory course on fraud which everyone completed in the first months after recruitment. Control measures were put in place, such as assessment of potential partners to check whether they qualified for formal partnership. Similarly, an introduction was given to partners in the TOFI programme to inform them of the agency's work and policies on anti-corruption.

Going forward

Since all five teacher training modules could not be implemented or completed in the programme period, extension of the time period might be in order to complete a remaining module. Alternatively other programmes in the field may be mobilized to take over the last module and complete the programme within the reporting period.

Due to limited time left and few out-of-school children enrolling in schools, the country group will likely review the target and update it accordingly. The community engagement strategy may also be revised, and increased efforts may be put into awareness raising and advocacy to reach the target.

South Sudan

David: “We have no job for a visually impaired person”

David is DPO member with a visual impairment. David lives in Twic County, Warrap State, and is married with three daughters.

David fell ill with meningitis in 1996. The illness almost claimed his life and left him visually impaired. From 1998 to 2003, the Diocese of Rumbek in Lakes state gave him the opportunity to be trained as a catechist. David accepted the call and worked for the Diocese across several years before returning home to Twic County. In 2013, a job opened at the Directorate of Gender, Child and Social Welfare which entailed responsibility for persons with disabilities at the county level. David was interested and applied for the position.

However, when David went to the office and introduced himself to the department director, he was told “we have no job for a visually impaired person”. The director claimed that persons with visual impairments were incapable of doing anything of value within the office. David pleaded with him to reconsider and emphasised his many skills. Alas, the director remained adamant. As his application was denied and due to lack of support, David was also unable to continue his education in a blind school. Instead, he started farming to support his young family.

In October 2021, a team from TOFI and the Gender and Child Social Welfare Department went to Wunrok for a community awareness event on inclusion. David was one of the participants. He listened intently until participants and he recounted his experiences from 2013. David asserted that he was disgracefully denied an opportunity based on his visual impairment.

David also expressed his disbelief about what the TOFI team had shared concerning the rights of persons with disabilities, such as the right to employment, justice, political representation, and economic participation, enshrined in the UNCRPD.

However, the good news was that the current director for Gender and Social Welfare promised the DPOs an office at the county department following the community meeting. This announcement was an attempt by the director to rebuild trust. As a result, the DPOs now have their office at the county level with David as their Secretary for Social Welfare and Mobilisation in Twic County.

Josephine, Miss Deaf East Africa

24-year-old Josephine was born into a family of seven. At the age of five, she fell ill with cerebral malaria, causing her to become deaf.



Josephine attended school but experienced a multitude of challenges including bullying from peers and teachers who ignored her. Hence, every morning, Josephine would cry. However, her mother saw the value in learning and insisted that Josephine remained in school.

Josephine was raised by a single mother. Due to lack of funds to pay for school fees, Josephine decided

to find a man to marry while in secondary school. Fortunately, her mother convinced her otherwise, and Josephine successfully sat for the Senior Three Level exams and finished secondary school.

When Josephine met a TOFI project officer from YWCA during the “Let Girls Talk” program, she expressed her passion in human rights activism and modelling. Josephine wanted to promote the rights of deaf youth. Following guidance by TOFI staff, Josephine and deaf peers with a similar vision, established a national DPO called South Sudan National Deaf Children and Youth to help them champion for the rights of youth and children with hearing impairments.

The TOFI project engaged Josephine and other youth with disabilities on human rights advocacy, inspiring many to promote and defend their rights. Josephine became increasingly confident and passionate as she gained knowledge on the UNCRPD.

During the International Deaf Awareness Week in September 2021, Josephine was nominated to represent South Sudan in Miss Deaf East Africa 2021, and on October 1, she was crowned Miss Deaf East Africa. Her victory is a milestone in the advocacy campaign called ‘Leave No One Behind and Together for Inclusion’ run by youth with disabilities under the TOFI project. Josephine continues to promote the rights of youth with disabilities and offers sign language classes to anyone interested.

Introduction

Key figures:

- **Estimated population:** 11,062,113 (World Bank 2021; 2019 data)
- **Population under the age of 15:** 41.6% (World Bank 2021; 2019 data)
- **Urban population:** 19.9% (World Bank 2021; 2019 data)
- **Urban population growth (annual %):** 2.2% (World Bank 2021; 2019 data)
- **Human Development Index (HDI):** 185 (shared with Burundi) (of 189) (UNDP 2020; 2019 data)
- **Gender Inequality Index (GII):** South Sudan was not part of the UNDP ranking
- **Poverty headcount ratio at USD 1.90 a day (2011 PPP):** 76.4% (World Bank 2021; 2016 data)
- **Adult literacy rate:** 34.5% (UNESCO 2021; 2018 data)
- **Life expectancy at birth:** 57,8 (World Bank 2021; 2019 data)
- **Child mortality rate (under 5, per 1000 live births):** 96 (World Bank 2021; 2018 data)
- **Mean years of schooling:** 4.8 (UNDP 2021; 2019 data)
- **Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (constant 2017 PPP\$):** 2,003 (UNDP 2021; 2017 data)

Norway and South Sudan

Norwegian NGOs have been engaging with South Sudan (and before 2011, southern Sudan) since the 1970s and Norway's supporting role to countries in precarious situations, such as South Sudan, has increased in recent years. In 2019, Norwegian development aid to South Sudan amounted to NOK 603.8 million, with 242 million going to civil society as well as conflict prevention programmes, 231 million towards humanitarian efforts, 105 million to education, and 25 million to the health and social sector. The humanitarian situation has worsened from 2016 onwards.

Persons with disabilities in South Sudan

There is no reliable data on the number of persons with disabilities in SSD since the conflict started, but a study in 2013 found that the prevalence of people with severe disability was 3.6% while it was 13.4% for moderate disability. Conflict alone is said to be the cause of at least 21% of impairments in SSD. Mental health problems in SSD have also increased due to the conflict, with 41% to 53% of the population showing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Persons with disabilities face "multi-dimensional disadvantage" due to intersecting vulnerabilities, with research showing strong links between disability and violence, particularly sexual violence against girls. There is a significant level of stigma against persons with physical, social, or mental impairments because of traditional South Sudanese beliefs, with reports of discrimination, abuse, and isolation.

Many communities see children with disabilities as a punishment from God. There have been reports of traditional killing of babies with disabilities. In conflict, persons with disabilities and those who help them are more vulnerable to sexual violence and attacks or to being killed. The Coalition of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities report states that persons with disabilities in SSD are identified as the "most marginalised in society... their voices are hardly heard, and issues are barely taken into consideration in decision-making processes".

South Sudan has not signed or ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The transitional constitution has several clauses which refer to the rights of persons with disabilities, but it does not explicitly guarantee equal protection against discrimination and abuse of persons with disabilities. The National Disability and Inclusion Policy and the Inclusive Education Policy have been developed, but not implemented, due to a lack of political will and government funding. The disability movement in SSD is working in and around Juba and engages in rights advocacy, awareness-raising, and programmes aimed at the socio-economic and political empowerment of persons with disabilities. Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs) face challenges because of a lack of government support and a lack of income to keep programmes running. Authorities have had limited capacity to respond to the medical, educational, and mobility needs of persons with disabilities, and there has been little pressure on them to fulfil their obligations. Research suggests that persons with disabilities are often underrepresented or not represented at all in the political process and that their needs are not met. Their lack of voice means their issues are barely taken into consideration in decision-making processes. Mental health services are extremely limited, and many people are unaware of the opportunities and benefits of psychosocial support. Conflict and displacement have resulted in a collapse of traditional support mechanisms and networks such as neighbours, relatives, friends, and church.



Description of country programme

TOFI South Sudan is a collaboration between Norwegian DPOs and NGOs and their local partners. The Norwegian organisations include Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) as Country Lead, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), Stromme Foundation (SF), The Norwegian Federation of



Event during International Deaf Awareness Week. PHOTO: Y GLOBAL

Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (FFO), and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA).

This programme concentrates on creating broad disability inclusion practises in three key thematic areas - Human Rights Advocacy, Economic Empowerment, and Inclusive Education, by initiating synergies between major mainstream development actors and the disability movement in South Sudan. The programme is designed and implemented in partnership with South Sudanese partner organisations. The programme focuses on strengthening DPOs as representative organisations of persons with disabilities and their role in improving access to education and financial services and their advocacy for general human rights for persons with disabilities through advocacy. Some of the other countries in the Together for Inclusion partnership have stronger DPOs, which means these can take the lead in the consortium. In South Sudan, the situation is distinct, but the DPOs are getting resilient and in 2020, the South Sudan Union of Persons with Disabilities Organisation (SSUPDO) was officially established after DPOs and individuals had worked for several years towards this goal. Persons with disabilities are the de facto experts on the barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society. They also are agents capable of shaping their own lives and the communities around them if the barriers are reduced sufficiently.

The programme complements the ongoing Norad funded projects and programmes of the various organisations, through interlinked interventions addressing institutional and systemic barriers, and using proven models and methods. It is based on the organisations' long-term experience working in South Sudan with local communities and participatory processes to empower children, community members, and civil society.

Thematic areas:

HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY: Persons with disabilities are often subject to negative denotation, neglect, and abuse. Persons with disabilities in South Sudan face significant social and political exclusion and are among the most marginalized in society. To challenge these structures, persons with disabilities themselves are being empowered. Indeed, tools are developed to hold the duty bearers accountable. To remove the barriers that create disabilities, the programme applies a twin-track approach to strengthening the rights of persons with disabilities by supporting DPOs and their ability to effectively advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities, while at the same time making sure that the NGOs and the broader coalitions of stakeholders are inclusive of persons with disabilities.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: Persons with disabilities are heavily represented among the poorest and unemployed in South Sudan. One survey found that

89.3% of the respondents with disabilities were unemployed and had extraordinarily little social safety net. Access to work as well as a stable and sustainable income are key to combat poverty among persons with disabilities. Lack of access to financial services, both formal and informal, is a major obstacle to establishing a livelihood, particularly for women. The project addresses this gap by facilitating access to informal financial services (savings and credit groups) for persons with disabilities. Self-employment initiatives for this programme include training in entrepreneur skills, access to a start-up grant, long-term supervision and follow-up to strengthen the sustainability of new businesses, and link persons with disabilities to decent job opportunities. As the programme will target rural communities dominated by the informal economy, initiatives to help start small businesses are essential if persons with disabilities are to become economically empowered.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: Many persons with disabilities, particularly girls, are unable to access education and to equally participate and learn. Learning together benefits all children, not only children with disabilities. Inclusive education is about ensuring that every learner is present in education (including pre-school, nursery, primary, and beyond), is participating in academic and social activities, and is achieving to the best of their ability. TOFI's theory of change points out that if teaching and learning is more effective for all students, if attendance rates of children with disabilities are increased, if beneficiaries have greater self-esteem and agency, if households have greater economic capacity, and if local DPOs and other stakeholders have increased capacity to collaborate with and influence nationally and internationally with and on behalf of people with disabilities in South Sudan, then children with disabilities will achieve sustained, improved learning outcomes and transition from primary school to higher levels of education. The targeted children and youth face multiple barriers to education in South Sudan, including being based in rural and remote regions and having disabilities. Hence, the programme follows a twin-track approach by focusing on mainstreaming inclusive education while at the same time implementing targeted interventions for children with disabilities. Inclusive education aims at equity in access and participation, and at responding positively to the individual learning needs as well as competencies of all children.

Highlights and selected results

Human Rights Advocacy

Awareness campaign "Leave No One Behind" and International Deaf Week (#1112)

A seven-days social media campaign titled 'Leave No One Behind and Together for Inclusion' reached 31,676 viewers on different social media platforms: WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The messages were developed and posted by the DPOs and 'Together for Inclusion' champions that had been trained by YWCA on online advocacy. Furthermore, youth with disabilities and peacemakers were also engaged in a two-week online campaign as a follow up activity from the online advocacy training to create awareness during the International Deaf Awareness Week in September. The campaign concluded with one of the young women with disabilities under the TOFI project being nominated to represent South Sudan at the East Africa Miss Deaf competition, where she emerged as the winner.

Dialogue with duty bearers: community leaders, state, and national ministries (#1123)

Representatives from sectors working with education, gender, children, and social welfare both at the local level and nationally, came together with TOFI consortium members to receive guidance on inclusive decision making. The duty bearers were inducted into ways to include DPOs upon revision of current systems and policies to ensure inclusion. The primary objective was to enable DPOs to participate and address prejudice on harmful practices within leadership power structures and, moreover, foster respect, rights, and dignity for persons with disabilities.

16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence (#1123)

According to reports, women and girls with disabilities oftentimes experience a plethora of challenges and vulnerabilities, including gender-based violence. From 25th November to 10th December 2021, the world marked 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence with the theme: Orange the World: End Violence Against Women now! ADRA, NCA, Stromme Foundation, and YWCA joined hands with the DPOs to advocate through online campaigns, which successfully reached out to 33,944 viewers on social media. The campaigns were grounded in the national

theme: Take Action, Be Accountable: End Violence Against Women and Girls, with messages passed to state and non-state actors urging the community to address challenges related to gender-based violence against women and girls with disabilities.

Celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (#1123)

With DPOs in the lead, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities was held across 5 states and gathered an estimated 2,140 persons (817F, 1323M) whereof around 344 (127F, 217M) were children with disabilities and 158 (49F, 109M) were DPO members. The day was themed “Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities, towards an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post COVID-19 world” while underscoring that disability is not inability. Effective collaboration between DPOs, government and NGOs was paramount to the events, where all participants demanded the realisation of human rights.

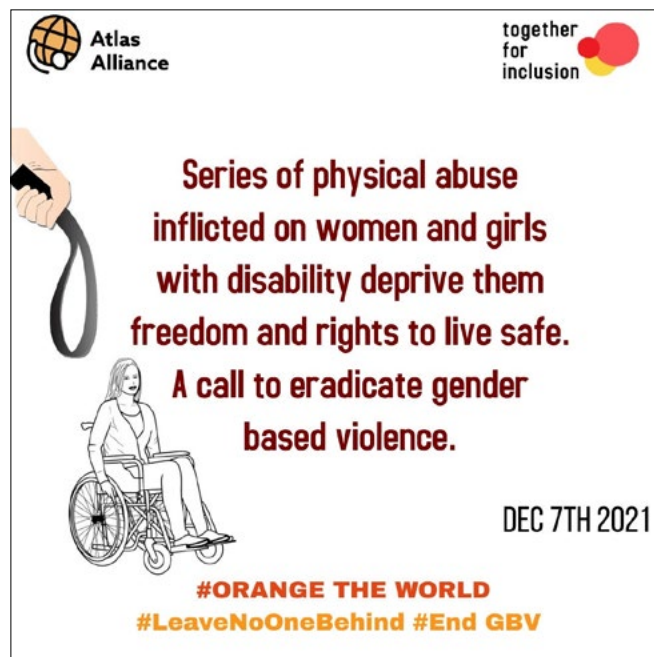
Inclusive Education

Training of caregivers on the management and care of children with complex development delays and disabilities (#1215)

322 caregivers of children with disabilities, within six school communities, were trained on ways to support and care for persons with complex development delays and disabilities including cerebral palsy, hydrocephalus, and epilepsy. Furthermore, the training outlined genetical, environmental or prenatal factors that affect a child during the early years in language development, mobility, learning, self-help activities and independent living.

Facilitated the establishment of 31 parent support groups (#1215)

31 Parent Support Groups (PSGs) were formed in 31 supported schools. The PSG comprised 210 caregivers, 195 (114M, 81F) in Twic County and 15 (8M, 7F) in Budi County. The parent support groups were primarily formed to enhance the relationship and support between caregivers of persons with disabilities through sharing of ideas and collaboration in handling issues affecting their children. Also, the PSG roles include to lobby and solicit support from other likeminded groups to ensure the rights of these children are fulfilled by duty bearers and other stakeholders.



Training of counsellors to provide psychosocial support (#1114)

33 new counsellors (26F, 7M) were trained on customising counselling sessions to address the needs of persons with disabilities, particularly regarding coping mechanisms for everyday stress management. Further, participants were equipped with skills within case management, community based psychosocial support, self-care, and data management. To promote community-based support programs, five persons with disabilities were recruited as counsellors within TOFI, offering services in locations of implementation.

Procurement and distribution of assistive devices to children and adults with disabilities (#1214b)

To enhance the participation of persons with disabilities in DPOs and educational spaces, after identification of needs, 754 assistive devices were provided, with accompanying orientation as required on appropriate use and maintenance. This included, white canes, wheelchairs, elbow and axillary crutches tricycles, and Perkins Brailers. Moreover, the Central Equatoria State Union of the Visually Impaired received 3 months of Wi-Fi to enable the use of the JAWS screen reader.

Basic South Sudanese Sign Language training of various stakeholders (#1231)

A total of 508 individuals participated in basic training in South Sudanese Sign Language, including 95

teachers (95M), 29 (28M, 1F) caregivers of deaf or hard of hearing children from the eight school communities within Kapoeta South and North, 4 (3M,1F) deaf children, and 380 (304M, 76F) children who were hard of hearing or interested in learning sign language.

Training of government duty bearers, community leaders and state ministries of Education and of Gender, Child and Social Welfare on CRPD, SDGs and the concept of inclusion (#1130)

Trainings were conducted in Juba and Wau to engage the 57 (25F, 32M) government duty bearers and community leaders in improving inclusivity of decision-making processes, policies, and services through incorporating frameworks based on the UNCRPD and SDGs. The participants in the training included persons with disabilities, and in Wau one person with a disability was a co-facilitator and a translator during the training. These trainings enhanced awareness raising and collaborative sensitization in addressing specific issues relating to persons with disabilities, especially through the Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity.

Economic Empowerment

Establishment of savings and investment groups accompanied by training of adolescents with disabilities on entrepreneurship and financial management (#1311)

35 (31F, 4M) youth with and without disabilities were trained in Juba on the basic concepts of enterprise, entrepreneur, business planning, record keeping and financial management. They were taken through the seven functions of management including leadership, direction, organisation, control, communication, and motivation. These were presented in relevance to small business activities in the context of South Sudan. In addition, four inclusive self-help business savings and investment groups were formed, through which the participants can support one another and organise economic empowerment activities.

Coaching of DPOs on Financial Management and Bookkeeping (#1121)

The Union of Persons with Disabilities, Central Equatoria State Union of the Visually Impaired, National Disabled's Aid (NDA) and South Sudan Union of Persons with Disabilities Organisation were trained in procurement and QuickBooks. Furthermore, Central

Equatoria State Union of the Visually Impaired, together with seven local DPOs in Juba, were trained on financial management and introductory bookkeeping skills.

Challenges and adaptations

2020 was the first year of implementation, where setting up the collaborative structures and getting the project off the ground took a lot of time, and where the COVID-19 pandemic created a very challenging year for implementation. 2021 saw a more established consortium structure and a less restrictive environment, enabling the TOFI organizations to advance with the different components of the projects. However, there were still many challenges to implementation, including security issues and natural disasters.

For instance, attacks on civilian vehicles by armed robbers on Kapoeta and Budi roads have affected implementation of activities in two schools within Napak and Farkshika. Movement was restricted following the death of a medical practitioner working for Cordaid International who was killed while traveling from Budi to Kapoeta. In addition, floods during rainy seasons covered large parts of Twic County, Tonj South and Gogrial West Counties in Warrap State, hampering access to five TOFI supported schools and communities. Consequently, close support and certain activities were affected.

The inclusive education component of the project includes referrals to necessary services for children with disabilities, but there is a great lack of services: The Primary Health Care Centres generally lack Ophthalmic services and Ear, Nose, and Throat specialists. These professionals could have supported the screening and assessment of children with disabilities or issues related to visual, hearing, and ear-nose-throat in general. The only way to change this situation is through active lobbying by TOFI organisations.

Furthermore, the security clearance process required by the national security service was rather tedious and lengthy in nature. Before implementation of any activity, security clearance had to be approved. National security personnel were engaged as participants in multiple TOFI trainings to showcase the importance of the program. In addition, to avoid delays, several activities were included in each security clearance



Capacity training on human rights advocacy by YWCA for OPDs in Kapoeta South, with assistive devices provided by ADRA.
PHOTO: YWCA SOUTH SUDAN

letter. Similarly, there was a delay in procurement of certain assistive and mobility devices including wheelchairs, tricycles, Victor Reader Stream devices (accessible reading devices), Braille machines, white canes, crutches, and furniture. Providing assistive technology is also part of the inclusive education component. There are no specialized vendors or suppliers of assistive technology in South Sudan, and the slow delivery has caused delays. As a mitigation strategy, TOFI consortium partners have been asked to place orders as early as possible to avoid delays in the process.

Many of the organisations work in remote areas, where distances, mountainous terrain, and poor roads cause a multitude of issues. For instance, in Budi County where ADRA works with multiple schools, rough terrain and unpaved roads make the commute difficult during the rainy season. Hence, activity implementation and movement of children with disabilities for school have been negatively affected. Concerned parents have, therefore, requested that their children attend boarding school to enable daily attendance. Furthermore, it has limited access to services including wheelchair repairs, which has led to a need to train parents on basic repair skills for wheelchairs, hand-propelled trikes, and the like.

Collaboration and harmonization

Throughout 2021, TOFI consortium members ensured valuable partnership and networking via workshops, activities, and advocacy initiatives to support implementation. Participation in the consortium fostered learning and growth through collaboration and the sharing of information, expertise, resources, and best practice, which consequently improved coordination and harmonisation during the reporting period.

In collaboration with the DPOs, NCA, ADRA, YWCA, and Stromme Foundation planned, coordinated, and celebrated the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3) in Warrap, Western Bahr Ghazal, Central Equatoria, Western Equatoria and Eastern Equatoria. Norwegian Church Aid also collaborated with the national DPO network, South Sudan Union of Persons with Disability Organization, in advocacy training in Juba, which drew DPO members from across seven states. The facilitator was visually impaired himself and led the participants through three days of engaging training.

The TOFI baseline study was a key undertaking jointly planned, coordinated, and implemented by all the TOFI partners across six states. It drew staff members from the TOFI Technical Committee, DPOs, volunteers and community leaders working together for its success. Amidst COVID-19 regulations, security clearances, and

limited access to certain locations, the joint planning and combined technical capacity of staff outweighed the challenges.

Further, ADRA and Stromme Foundation were invited to be guest speakers at a YWCA event during Deaf Awareness Week in September. The consortium partners, moreover, supported YWCA in sharing advocacy messages during their awareness campaigns including Deaf Awareness Week as well as 16-Days of Activism. This increased the outreach of the campaigns.

FFO supported fast tracking the capacity development of DPOs by conducting a two-day disability inclusion training of DPO leaders and TOFI field staff. This training drew participants from NCA, ADRA, NRC, YWCA, Save the Children, and multiple DPOs. Further, YWCA counsellors provided support to persons with disabilities across Stromme Foundation and ADRA schools. This cooperation is invaluable and improves the psychosocial well-being of the students.

TOFI consortium partners were, lastly, part of the Inclusive Education Review Committee led by ADRA for the national school-based inclusive education policy. The technical inputs from the TOFI consortium members led to the finalisation and subsequent launch of the Ministry of Education National Inclusive Education Policy (IEP). The South Sudanese government extended a special recognition and thank you to the TOFI consortium for their instrumental role in lobbying for and developing the IEP.

Added value

The TOFI project is adding substantial value to civil society in South Sudan by forming, organising, and/or reorganizing community structures such as Parent Teachers Associations, Parent Support Groups, School Inclusion Teams, School Disability Clubs, and DPOs. TOFI consortium organisations, moreover, mobilised and created environments conducive to DPO establishment by persons with disabilities themselves. Upon interest from local populations with disabilities, the consortium offered support and provided facilitation to link newly established DPOs with networks and umbrella organisations.

Teachers and caregivers within the supported school communities as well as relevant government officials have gained an increased understanding

of and appreciation for inclusive education. Initially, there was significant resistance to the concept of inclusive education, grounded in the misconception that children with disabilities were unable to study with non-disabled peers. However, after continuous training and awareness raising, teachers, caregivers, and government officials are more familiar with and understanding of the concept and purpose of inclusive education. For some, observing a blind facilitator using a computer was a turning point.

TOFI has also created a network of PTAs at county level.

National DPOs have networked with county level DPOs, thereby enhancing their political influence when lobbying authorities/duty bearers such as the Ministry for Gender and Child Social Welfare. Collective actions further add value to civil society as communities change their conflict-solving mechanisms from methods relying on violence and threats that endanger lives to collective decisions.

Similarly, the school disability clubs established by TOFI, where students perform music, dance and drama as well as recite poems and hold debates on inclusive education, have been very effective in breaking down stigma. The children are trained on their rights, disability inclusion and identification of advocacy issues. These groups often participate in radio talk shows across the country to speak about the rights of persons with disabilities to complement the work of civil society in the country.

Cross-cutting issues

Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Women's rights and gender equality is a cross-cutting theme in the TOFI program interventions. The TOFI consortium partners ensured avoidance of exploitation of women, girls and other vulnerable groups and made deliberate efforts to empower these groups. For instance, while YWCA is a women-led organisation, it employs both men and women as a measure to create gender balance within the TOFI programme. TOFI encourages organisations of persons with disabilities to increase the number of women in their organisations as well as in their executive bodies, to help promote women's rights and gender equality. A mapping of the DPO scene conducted in 2020 showed that less women than men (about 41 percent) were members of DPOs, a number that was even lower within leadership positions.

Human Rights

The human rights situation in South Sudan remains dire as basic services including health facilities, educational systems, and infrastructure are deprioritized due to the protracted conflicts.

However, TOFI initiatives within human rights advocacy, inclusive education, and economic empowerment are affecting the community in a positive manner. Community members and local authorities have realized the need to support persons with disabilities in different aspects, socially, economically as well as education wise. Slowly, the attitude towards the rights of persons with disabilities is changing.

While TOFI especially works to fulfil the rights of persons with disabilities, the consortium also pays attention to other vulnerable groups including ethnic, sexual, or cultural minorities, through inclusive practices within schools, communities, and governmental processes. The promotion of human rights and inclusive education requires careful attention and effort. Persons with and without disabilities must understand their rights to advocate for and realise them. Many communities tend to maintain power imbalances, hence TOFI encourages fair and equal representation across decision-making bodies including parent-teacher associations, school inclusion teams, and school management committees.

Climate Change and the Environment

In 2021, South Sudan experienced extreme flooding, especially in the four States of Jonglei, Warrap, Upper Nile and Unity State. The UN interim President and Humanitarian Coordinator in the country Mr. Jamal said, "Communities, already struggling, are facing unprecedented floods and storms, unreliable rainfall, and distress under hotter and drier conditions as their basic needs and rights to water, food, livelihoods, land, and a healthy environment are hit hard." Indeed, the flood has grossly affected project implementation areas which caused accessibility challenges particularly to five TOFI supported primary schools; Burigiik, Marial Maper, Abapiny (all three in Aweng payam), Agany and Anyiel Kuac (in Turalei payam) primary schools. There were in total over 61 schools affected by the floods. Moreover, several women and children were left homeless in Maridi and many square miles of farmers' crops were washed away.

The TOFI program positively impacted the environment through a clean-up activity in Juba related to disability

awareness raising. Together, adolescents with and without disabilities collected garbage to prevent the city from flooding with rubbish heaps.

Anti-Corruption

In their 2021 report, Transparency International ranks South Sudan as the most corrupt country out of the 180 countries they surveyed. As the report asserts, "Corruption erodes trust, weakens democracy, hampers economic development and further exacerbates inequality, poverty, social division and the environmental crisis". NCA, ADRA, Stromme Foundation, and YWCA have zero tolerance for corruption and have corruption clauses in all staff contracts. All TOFI project staff are introduced and trained in these policies. The TOFI consortium works on creating awareness through carefully training staff on each organisation's anti-corruption policy as a measure to fight corruption.

Going forward

In South Sudan, no major changes are expected in the year(s) to come. However, minor adjustments in activities are expected:

As part of the sustainability and exit strategy, the plan that the organisations develop to ensure that changes are long-lasting and that new systems are sustainable, the TOFI consortium will work to further empower DPOs and provide capacity development of relevant government departments at all levels. Emphasis will be placed on networking and building connections between DPOs at community, state and national levels through joint disability inclusion conferences and meeting points. Further linkages will be created with line ministries at state and national levels to keep communication open and frequent.

Stromme Foundation anticipates some variance moving forward as a new model is introduced to the local saving groups. In this savings model, the group is composed of 50% persons with disabilities, 20% family members and caretakers of persons with disabilities, and 30% other community members. The gender distribution should be around 55% in favour of females; this should also be replicated within the leadership.

Otherwise, activities will be implemented as expected and in accordance with the results framework.

Uganda

Asadi Ntambi's journey to economic empowerment

Ntambi Asadi was born in 1994 and lives in Mayuge District where TOFI is being implemented. Ntambi has had difficulty walking since childhood. He dropped out of school in primary five because he could no longer crawl, and because he was too heavy for his mother to carry. She had been carrying him to the nearest school one and half miles from his home. Ntambi's community depends on farming and fishing, activities that he has not been able to take part in. As a result, he has not been able to become independent, but was forced to rely on his parents for his basic needs.



Asadi carries water on tricycle he received from AEE.

In 2020, African Evangelist Enterprises (AEE), in partnership with Stromme Foundation (SF), supported the establishment of Kyosimye iSAVE group under the TOFI Programme. AEE collaborated with local leaders to mobilise households of people with disabilities and that is how Ntambi's parents heard about the programme. They were encouraged to support him to enrol in the group. Through the group, Ntambi began to save an average of 1000 Uganda shillings (approximately USD 30 cents) weekly. He also received training in financial literacy, savings and investing alongside the other members in his group.

Ntambi enrolled in SF's "Tunaweza" Community Based Technical and Vocational Training programme in 2020, one of the flagship programmes of Stromme Foundation. Here, he first participated in a three-month long life skills training programme, followed by six months of training in marketable livelihoods and income generating skills. The income generating skills training takes place through placement with a local artisan and is based on each participant's interests and prospects. Ntambi decided to do his training in baking and graduated alongside 101 other youth with disabilities who completed the training in July 2021.

Although Ntambi wanted to start a baking business after graduating, he was hesitant because of his challenges with walking and the need to purchase inputs and find customers. In October 2021, Ntambi received a tricycle through the TOFI project to support his economic inclusion and participation. Ntambi now operates his bakery business; he produces a variety of snacks and takes them to customers in the trading centres within his village. His tricycle helps him to carry inputs for his business such as baking flour and water.

Because of the TOFI programme, Ntambi can meet his basic needs by using profits from his business. He no longer entirely depends on his parents and has big plans of using his savings from the iSAVE group; the profit from the bakery business will go towards opening a piggery farm to diversify his livelihood enterprises.

In addition to improving his economic productivity, the provision of the tricycle enables Ntambi to engage in other activities which enhance his independence and participation in social and community life. He can meet friends independently, perform home chores like collecting water, and commute easily to the iSAVE group and community meetings.

From exclusion to inclusion: meet Sheila, the TOFI Inclusive Education District Union facilitator with visual impairment

We have decided to call her Sheila for confidentiality purposes.

Sheila is a 42-year-old Ugandan woman, living with her daughter in Luuka, one of the districts where TOFI is being implemented. She engages in craft making, chicken rearing, pig rearing and crop farming all at a small-scale level for her livelihood.

Sheila has a visual impairment and is a representative of persons with disability on the Local Council and the District Union of persons with disabilities.

When she was 11 years old, Sheila suffered from severe illness which resulted in her losing her sight. She was in her second term of Primary Seven but dropped out of school due to the long-term effects of her illness.

"My family was very disappointed when I became blind in Primary Seven as they had hoped that I would become useful to the family upon completion of my studies."

When she lost her sight, Sheila self-stigmatised and thought that it was not possible for her to interact with her peers anymore. She was isolated from her community and faced discrimination because of her disability. However, she started gaining hope when she met other people with visual impairment and started feeling a sense of belonging again. She became a member of the Luuka District Union for persons with disabilities, supported by NUDIPU – the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda.

In 2021 TOFI Inclusive Education programme reached out to the Luuka District Union to find members interested in becoming an Inclusive Education

facilitator in their district. Sheila joined the training of trainers and has now completed two of the training modules. As a result of the trainings, Sheila has increasingly gained self-esteem, confidence, and independence.

"I can now talk about inclusive education and other disability related human rights with authority to of politicians, professionals' learners and the general public" Sheila testifies.

According to Sheila, parents now consider her a resource person on matters relating to inclusive education and disability. *"There was a parent who consulted me about the best way to have her child attend school since there was no school for children with disabilities. As I speak, the parent has taken the child with disability to the mainstream school nearest to her and as a sign of appreciation, the mother gave me an egg."*

Sheila has emerged as one of the most active mobilisers and monitors of inclusive education practices in schools.

"I sincerely express my appreciation to NAD and NUDIPU for empowering me and I know that as a local government leader, I will ably push for inclusive education and other child rights at the council," she says.

Introduction

Key figures:

- **Estimated population:** 42,723,139 (World Bank 2020; 2018 data)
- **Population under the age of 15:** 47% (World Bank 2020; 2018 data)
- **Urban population:** 23.8% (World Bank 2020; 2018 data)
- **Urban population growth (annual %):** 6.2% (World Bank 2020; 2018 data)
- **Human Development Index (HDI):** 159 (of 189) (UNDP 2020; 2019 data)
- **Gender Inequality Index (GII):** 127 (of 162) (UNDP 2020; 2018 data)
- **Poverty headcount ratio at USD 1.90 a day (2011 PPP):** 41.7% (World Bank 2020; 2016 data)
- **Adult literacy rate:** 76.5% (World Bank 2020; 2018 data)
- **Life expectancy at birth (male and female):** 63 (60/65) (World Bank 2020; 2017 data)
- **Child mortality rate (under 5, per 1000 live births):** 46 (World Bank 2020; 2018 data)
- **Mean years of schooling:** 6.1 (UNDP 2020; 2018 data)
- **Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, PPP (current international USD):** 1,970 (World Bank 2020; 2018 data)

With a population growth rate of 3.7% (World Bank 2018), Uganda has one of the youngest populations in the world, with 47% of the population under 15 years.

Norway and Uganda

Uganda has been an important partner country for Norwegian development aid for many years, and in 2019, Norwegian development aid to Uganda amounted to NOK 312 million, with a strong focus on health and education. Many Norwegian NGOs and DPOs are active in the country.

Persons with disabilities in Uganda

The CRPD and its Optional Protocol, which was ratified by Uganda in 2008, has been the major driver behind disability inclusion in Uganda. Through the CRPD, Uganda adopted a rights-based approach to disability. In 2016, the Government of Uganda was examined for the first time by the UN Committee monitoring the CRPD. The National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU) and its member organisations participated actively in this process by submitting a joint shadow report and meeting with the UN CRPD Committee during session 15. In their Concluding Observations, the UN Committee reflected many of the recommendations in the Shadow Report submitted by NUDIPU and other civil society organisations. Impairment-specific DPOs participated along with NUDIPU during the deliberations of the committee to ensure the concerns of their members received

adequate consideration. The committee specially had recommendations on people with visual impairments, Deaf and hard of hearing persons, deafblind persons, those with psychosocial disabilities, people with albinism as well as children with disabilities, and women with disabilities.

Uganda Vision 2040, the national development planning framework launched in 2007, will be guiding the government efforts for the coming years. The government's strategy is to implement its vision through shorter-term plans. The Third National Development Plan (NDPIII), launched in 2020 and guiding the period 2021-2025/6, however, contains only a few references to persons with disabilities, and does not specify any targets or measures to address their situation (mMentions include access to technical and vocational training, some statistics, and a mention of disability friendly health services).

While statistical information about disability and the standard of living of persons with disabilities in Uganda is very limited, the Uganda Functional Difficulties Survey 2017 carried out by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics was published in 2017, and the study on living conditions among persons with disabilities by NUDIPU, SINTEF, and Makerere was published in 2019. With these two studies, the disability movement and government in Uganda have comprehensive and updated data on disability that can be used for advocacy, policy development, and monitoring of CRPD.

As in other countries, persons with disabilities in Uganda are more likely to live in poverty than persons without disabilities, due to barriers in society such as stigma, discrimination, lack of education and employment, and lack of inclusion in livelihood and other social programmes. According to the 2018 UN Flagship Report on Disability and Development, the employment-to-population ratio of persons with disabilities aged 15 and older is almost half that of persons without disabilities. Women with disabilities are less likely to be employed than men. Apart from poverty, the economic empowerment of persons with disabilities is further hindered by four exclusion mechanisms, as described by Simanowitz (2001); self-exclusion, physical exclusion, exclusion by staff as well as service providers, and exclusion by design.

Children with disabilities constitute a particularly vulnerable group in Uganda, with inadequate access to early childhood development, education, healthcare, rehabilitation, and justice systems. Statistical information suggests a low enrolment and completion of primary and secondary school for children in Uganda in general, and children with disabilities in particular. The UN Flagship Report found that 34% of children with disabilities complete primary school, while the same is true for 40% of children without disabilities. A recent Regulatory Impact Assessment (2018) also found that only one in three learners with disabilities enrolled at primary level complete the cycle.

Despite the legal framework supporting inclusive education in Uganda (National Constitution 1995, Disability Act 2019, etc.), there is still overwhelming evidence of exclusion within the education and school system. The Ugandan Universal Primary Education policy (UPE) has been able to make only a limited impact in terms of increasing the participation of children with disabilities. The UN Flagship Report (2018) shows that 23% of children with disabilities in Uganda are out of school at primary level, while 11% of children without disabilities are out of school. At secondary school level, the numbers are 33% vs. 17%. Merely 18.5% of Ugandan children with disabilities are reported to have access to specialised rehabilitation services in their community (ACPF 2014, 4).

The educational situation significantly worsened with the two-year school closure in Uganda during the COVID-19 pandemic. The aftermath of the pandemic is highly likely to continue to negatively affect the quality of education in the years to come, especially

for students with disabilities and other groups in marginalised situations.

Persons with intellectual disabilities are among the most marginalised groups in Uganda and endure persistent discrimination. Even where services are available for persons with other disabilities, persons with intellectual disabilities are often neglected, in part due to a lack of advocacy by and for them. Persons with intellectual disabilities suffer disproportionate stigma and have insufficient legal remedies to protect them (CRPD Committee 2016, p. 2).

Description of country programme

TOFI Uganda is a collaboration between Norwegian DPOs and NGOs and their local partners. The Norwegian organisations include The Norwegian Association of Disabled (NAD), The Norwegian Association for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (NFU), The Norwegian Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (RHF), The Stromme Foundation (SF), and Save the Children Norway (SC).

This programme aims to create broad disability inclusion practises in three key thematic areas - Human Rights Advocacy (HRA), Economic Empowerment (EE), and Inclusive Education (IE), by creating synergies between major mainstream development actors and the disability movement in Uganda. The programme is designed with and implemented in partnership with Ugandan partner organisations. The programme focuses on strengthening Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs) as representative organisations of persons with disabilities and their role in improving access to education and financial services and their advocacy for general human rights for persons with disabilities through advocacy.

The programme complements the ongoing Norad-funded projects and programmes of the various organisations, through interlinked interventions addressing institutional and systemic barriers, and using proven models and methods. It is based on the organisations' long-term experience working in Uganda with local communities and participatory processes to empower children, community members, and civil society.

The programme uses approaches and models that have been developed and tested over time. These include the iSAVE model developed by Norwegian Association of Disabled (NAD), National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU), and The



Group exercise during inclusive education training for principal trainers. PHOTO: NAD

Association of Microfinance Institutions of Uganda (AMFIU) as a basis for the collaboration in the EE component, and the Inclusive Learning Approach developed by NAD and the Enabling Education Network (EENET) in the IE component, previously referred to as the NAD/EENET model. In Human Rights Advocacy, the programme focuses on building the advocacy skills of DPOs and on developing a common national advocacy platform for both mainstream NGOs and DPOs for the implementation of the CRPD. Uganda is set to report to the CRPD Committee in late 2022. This programme will ensure the active and strong voice of DPOs in the processes leading up to that, including producing a shadow report.

Highlights and selected results

Inclusive Education (IE)

Inclusive Education Teacher Training (IE TT)

workshops: Under the Inclusive Learning Approach, three modules (module 2 on establishment of school inclusion teams, module 3 on identification of out-of-school children and module 4 on screening of learners with special educational needs to identify their learning interventions) were delivered in 2021. With technical guidance from Enabling Education Network (EENET), the Norwegian Association of Disabled (NAD) in collaboration with the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU) trained 92 principal trainers (65M/27F) and 52 observers (40M/12F) in module 2, 84 principal trainers (61M/23F) and 49 observers (34M/15F) in module 3 and 73 principal trainers (47M/26F) in module 4. The Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association of Uganda (SHA-U) under the Obuntu Bulamu approach conducted a 14-session training on Inclusive Education peer-to-peer support for 93 teachers (35M/58F). 72 of the teachers received

an additional 2-day remedial sessions in Ugandan Sign Language, Braille, development, and use of locally available learning aids as well as inclusive lesson planning for improved classroom management. The activities contribute towards output 1231.

School Enrolment Campaigns: The TOFI IE partners conducted targeted school enrolment campaigns aimed at enhancing enrolment of learners with disabilities. Stromme Foundation (SF) in partnership with its local implementing partners identified 697 out-of-school children with disabilities (366M/331F). All identified learners were referred to schools implementing the TOFI Inclusive Learning approach, contributing to outcome 1210b. Similarly, Save The Children International (SCI) partnered with district local governments and DPOs in Amuru and Gulu districts on enrolment campaigns targeting learners with disabilities. Initiatives such as road drives, mass media awareness campaigns and door-to-door awareness sessions using the action research maps were utilised to raise awareness amongst caregivers (output 1211). All TOFI schools had registered an increased number of learners with disabilities enrolling for school by the end of December 2021.

Home learning: Under outcome 1210, EENET in partnership with NUDIPU translated all home learning materials into six local languages (Runyakitara, Swahili, Le-Acholi, Madi, Aringa and Luganda). A braille version was also made for the posters. The dissemination of translated home learning materials was conducted in eight districts reaching a total of 9,000 families. The TOFI IE implementing partners including SF and SCI supported the set-up of community learning centres in homes of learners with disabilities to enhance their participation in home learning initiatives. Due to COVID-19 the centres were restricted to a maximum of 15 learners and were provided with handwashing facilities for the safety of children and facilitators. In addition to home learning materials, SCI also distributed additional learning materials based on the national curriculum to schools. Parents, especially those of learners with disabilities, were encouraged to periodically borrow them. A total of 239 learners (109M/130F) benefited from the home-based learning activities in 2021. These initiatives strengthened home-school relationships and created a strong bond between learners, parents, and the teachers. This was documented in a 2021 monitoring reports produced by the District Education Departments of Gulu and Amuru.

Economic Empowerment (EE)

Mobilisation of persons with disabilities to access financial services: In 2021 the TOFI EE implementing partners collectively mobilised 1,757 persons with disabilities (826M/931F), including 121 children, across the five implementation districts of Mayuge, Moyo, Mpigi, Yumbe and Luuka. The 91 iSAVE groups accounted for 1,297 members while the formal financial institutions had 460 members. By disability categorisation, visual comprised 203, hearing 208, mobility 701, cognition 246, self-care 175 and communication 224. The iSAVE groups completed training in governance, safe money handling, financial literacy, and business development services and started saving and giving out loans to members. The groups mobilised Social Fund worth UGX 11,512,050 (\$3,070), savings worth UGX 123,456,000 (\$32,922) and disbursed loans worth UGX 78,746,050 (\$20,999). 21 out of the 91 iSAVE groups opened bank accounts with formal finance institutions. Three new financial services partners came on board, including one commercial bank and two Microfinance Institutions. This result contributes towards achievement of indicator 1313.

Training in marketable trades: Under output 1312, 1,050 persons with disabilities completed training in marketable trades. 189 out of the 1,050 (67M/122F) received training in technical and vocational skills. 42 graduated in tailoring, 16 in carpentry, 21 in hairdressing, 7 in auto mechanics, 1 in welding, 12 in handcrafts, 58 in baking and 32 in piggery. Those who did not receive training in technical and vocational skilling (861) received skills training in business development (448M/413F). A total of 1,486 (890M/596F) people with disabilities and 354 (115M/239F) family members were also trained on employment rights and financial management.

Human Rights Advocacy (HRA)

Training and mentoring of persons with disabilities on their rights and how to claim them; Under indicator 1111, SHAU trained 361 persons with disabilities (160M/201F) on their rights. This was followed by mentorship on identification of human rights violations and peer-led advocacy. The use of music and arts in the trainings resulted in increased participation of youth with disabilities in awareness and advocacy activities as well as in political and DPO leadership. Inclusion Uganda organised regional meetings targeting 18 persons with intellectual disabilities and 18 local committee representatives across six districts

including Bukomansimbi, Lwengo, Mukono, Luwero, Kibuku and Tororo. Eight participants were women with intellectual disabilities and seven were children below the age of 18. During the meetings, participatory approaches were used to map existing violations against rights of persons with intellectual disabilities and solicit effective peer-led advocacy strategies. Under Output 1122, NUDIPU mobilised 6,575 persons with disabilities (3,794M/2,781F) to form four new District Unions in Kabale, Kibaale, Ntungamo and Luweero. 366 parish associations were established in 78 subcounty associations to strengthen the local structures of Persons with Disabilities. The formed structures will foster collective action and increased representation of Persons with Disabilities in these districts.

Training on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD): Under output 1131, SCI trained 115 staff in the CRPD and disability inclusion. 16 of these were persons with disabilities (8M/8F). The trainings included practical sessions on the SCI disability inclusion policy, identification of children with disabilities using the Washington Group questions, disaggregated data reporting, accessibility standards, and best practices in working with DPOs. Using radio and TV talk shows, as well as print and online media, SHAU conducted national CRPD media campaigns reaching an estimated total of 150,000 families under output 1112. Inclusion Uganda also trained 89 persons with intellectual disabilities on CRPD and self-advocacy (40M/49F) under output 1111. In addition, Inclusion Uganda trained 447 local leaders (280M/167F) on the CRPD with particular focus on their role in protecting and advancing the rights of people with intellectual disabilities. Further, 409 parents and support persons (106M/303F) of whom 21 were persons with disability (14M/7F) were trained on the CRPD with particular focus on their role in empowering persons with intellectual disabilities.

Challenges and adaptations

Implementation delays due to COVID-19: Under Inclusive Education, all in-school activities were on hold due to school closures. Teacher and observer trainings were also delayed due to restrictions on travel and gatherings. To mitigate this, local facilitators were used to for the regional principal trainer and observer workshops with remote technical guidance from EENET. Virtual learning was adopted for activities such as meetings and staff trainings. Home learning

initiatives were employed to foster continuous learning during lockdown. These adjustments, such as the shift from national to regional workshops, led to a drastic increment in expenditures on logistics such as travel, personal protective equipment and accommodation. For Economic Empowerment, the serious effect of lockdown on the local economy impacted participation of persons with disabilities in iSAVE groups and led to low saving and loan repayment rates. However, the use of virtual learning platforms was adopted to support learning, publicity, and community awareness. Digital Finance Services such as use of mobile money for saving deposit and loan repayment were initiated, ensuring continuity of the iSAVE groups.

Limited teaching staff with specialised training to support persons with severe disabilities: Through Inclusive Education, teachers have appreciated the need for enrollment and participation of all learners. However, they lack adequate skills to foster meaningful participation of learners with severe disabilities. In particular, the inclusion of learners with sensory impairments requires skills such as braille or sign language that take a long time to learn. For example, the class teacher for Primary 4 at St. Theresa Primary school in Mpigi District has two blind pupils who require braille for full inclusion, yet the teacher is not trained in braille. Likewise, deafblind persons, those who are hard of hearing, and those with severe intellectual disabilities are sometimes left out during mass awareness community and media sessions. To mitigate this, the Uganda TOFI consortium is planning a project on reasonable accommodation which aims to provide a baseline of what reasonable accommodation exists, mapping of support services and the existing gaps to guide the design of a systems' change project. The consortium members are also engaged in district and national level advocacy for recruitment of specialised teachers in schools. Some implementing partners such as SF are exploring possibilities for using organisation resources to pilot schemes for providing specialist services as learning centres for evidence-based advocacy and scaling up.

Delayed adoption of the M&E system: The lack of appropriate licenses, skills gaps at both individual and organisation level and lack of face-to-face trainings led to the delayed adoption of the TOFI online MERL system in Uganda. To mitigate this, an M&E working group was formed whose key mandate is to support TOFI partners in the adoption of the M&E system.



Teacher Training on Inclusive Sports. PHOTO: NAD

Collaboration and harmonisation

Country coordination group: The country coordination group consists of seven programme leads from each of the implementing partners. Coordinated by the Country Lead, the group is responsible for planning, reporting and monitoring of overall project progress and performance. In 2021, three quarterly reporting and planning meetings were held, in addition to the 2021 annual reporting meeting (quarter one) and the 2022 annual planning meeting (quarter four). In collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), the country coordination group instigated the formation of the Inter-ministry Coordination Committee chaired by the director of Social Protection at MGLSD. The overall objectives of this committee are to coordinate and harmonise plans for effectiveness and efficiency in implementation of programmes to persons with disabilities across sectors, strengthen coordination of disability work in the country, strengthen implementation of disability policy and advocacy framework, and spearhead compliance monitoring of partners involved in disability work.

Thematic working groups: Each of the TOFI thematic areas has a Thematic Working Group (TWG). The IE TWG is coordinated by the NAD IE regional advisor, HRA TWG is coordinated by the NUDIPU HRA officer and EE TWG is coordinated by the NAD EE technical advisor. The thematic groups meet on a quarterly basis to jointly review progress, draw quarterly thematic plans, and discuss operational and policy issues. All organisations in the consortium participate in the

thematic meetings and collectively hold each other accountable to any action points agreed upon. The Thematic Working Groups are responsible for ensuring harmonisation of joint activities, implementation strategies and collective advocacy initiatives. In 2021, the IE thematic group worked with external stakeholders from Government, and the CSO fraternity to organise the first ever national Inclusive Education Symposium in Uganda. One of the key outcomes was the acceleration and approval of the National Inclusive Education Policy by the Ministry of Education and Sports.

M&E working group: The M&E working group was established in 2021, comprising M&E as well as programme staff from each of the implementing partners (two from each organisation). The M&E working group is responsible for ensuring utilising of the M&E systems, ensuring compliance to donor requirements in quantitative reporting, as well as improving programme monitoring and data management processes among consortium partners. The M&E working group also has a mandate to ensure learning, innovation, and documentation as well as support research and evaluation activities in the consortium. In 2021, the M&E group held five online discussions, one physical meeting and one learning exchange visit. Coordinated by the country lead, the learning exchange visit was made to SCI operations in Gulu district with participation of all M&E personnel and a few programme staff.

Added value

Shift in DPO-CSO relationships: TOFI has played a significant role in cementing the role of DPOs as key partners and leaders in programme design, implementation, and evaluation. The unique collaboration between DPOs and NGOs has resulted in significant wins such as the acceleration and approval of the National Inclusive Education Policy by the Ministry of Education and Sports as well as the development of National Capacity Professional Development module (CPD) for primary school teachers in collaboration with Sight Savers. Both the Obuntu Bulamu and the Inclusive Learning Approach TOFI models have been incorporated into the CPD.

Scale up of Disability-Inclusive Programming: TOFI NGOs have reported that TOFI has strengthened their strategic commitments to disability inclusion. One of the newly designed SCI projects on youth livelihoods

is disability inclusive and the project receives close technical support from the TOFI project staff and Principal Trainers using TOFI Inclusive Learning approach. SF's country-level data collection system has integrated the collection of disability disaggregated data during project baselines, routine programme monitoring, and end-line evaluations. In addition, projects developed since the commencement of TOFI include indicators and strategies for achieving disability inclusion. SF is also progressively training staff from all East African implementing partners on disability inclusion.

Expansion of the Inclusive Learning Approach to non-TOFI schools: The gains of the Inclusive Learning approach have been harnessed by key stakeholders such as the district education officers and the department of special needs at MoES. This government take-up has resulted in the scale-up of disability inclusion initiatives in non-TOFI schools as well as scale-up of impact within the TOFI schools. For example, schools have reported the use of local resources to construct ramps that align with the established accessibility standards. Some of the principal trainers under the TOFI programme have been invited to facilitate trainings in the Inclusive Learning approach for teachers in non-TOFI schools.

Cross-cutting issues

Women's rights and gender equality

- Due to the prolonged school closures, children, especially girls, were at greater risk of dropping out of, or not returning to school. However, with targeted home learning initiatives and back-to-school campaigns which emphasised girls education, TOFI fostered enrollment and participation of girls in education. Similarly, the home learning resources developed under TOFI challenged the gender stereotyping of male and female roles. For example, the illustrations used in the TOFI home learning materials were created by an artist who is a gender equality/identity expert. Images showed girls and boys doing non-typical activities, and fathers and mothers involved in childcare and development.
- The TOFI programme also embeds gender-responsive and gender-transformative strategies in implementation. For example, iSAVE's affirmative action that at least 55% of the disability slots in the iSAVE groups is preserved for women with

disabilities tackles the under-representation of vulnerable women among the poorest sections of society. Similarly, the iSAVE methodology requires that at least 50% of leadership positions are held by women, promoting the principles of the National Gender Framework advocating equitable representation of men and women in decision-making positions. Under Human Rights Advocacy, TOFI requires that at least a third of the Executive Committee members of the formed Parish, Sub-County, and District Associations of persons with disabilities are female. Equal participation of women is prioritised during recruitment of principal trainers and observers as well as during mobilisation of participants for community activities.

- In some instances, partners have reported that sometimes men prohibit women from participating especially in activities that call for both parents. These cases are documented, followed up and plans are made to conduct follow-up interventions aimed at attitude change.

Human Rights

- TOFI contributes to realising Uganda's obligations under international policy and human rights. Efforts towards making Uganda's schools inclusive contribute to the realisation of Sustainable Development Goal 4, fulfillment of Uganda's commitments on inclusive education submitted in the 2018 Global Disability Summit and Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities - over which Uganda received negative feedback from the committee of experts during the 2016 concluding observations on the CRPD.
- The mass awareness sessions on the CRPD for parents, local leaders, teachers, and DPOs shone a light on the different human rights violations within communities and enhanced evidenced-based advocacy for the fulfilment of rights. For instance, there were issues of child marriages and child labour that were rampant in the communities recorded at a rate of 68% among girls as per the study on Ending Child Marriages in Northern Uganda conducted in 2020. However, due to awareness creation in the TOFI implementation districts especially on child protection such cases are now reducing. This is based on interactions with the District Probation Officers of Amuru and Gulu districts, they both confirmed that cases of child

marriages have gone down as a result of mass awareness on child rights.

Climate change and the environment

- The COVID-19 pandemic offered lessons and opportunities for future environmental action and new ways of working, learning, and trading. Throughout 2021, TOFI continued to implement and fine-tune our approaches to remote facilitation, remote coaching, online learning, and procuring local services (translation, printing, etc.) to reduce the need for air travel and international shipments and reduce emissions.
- TOFI partners such as SCI encourage schools to plant trees in both the gardens and school compounds. Some of the Head Teachers in the TOFI schools were able to reach out the District Environment Officer for provision of seedlings. As a way of protecting the environment, TOFI advocated for use of reusable facemasks as opposed to the non-reusable polythene and synthetic masks. This has helped to prevent environmental contamination and promoted recycling.
- Under Economic Empowerment, partners have continuously advocated for environmentally friendly income generating activities. Non-green income generating initiatives such as charcoal burning and manufacturing of polythene bags are discouraged and an effort is made to provide youth with alternative income generating activities. Pro-green initiatives such as use of energy saving stoves, and the use of bio-degradable materials for wrapping products are promoted during trainings.

Anti-corruption

To promote transparency and counteract corruption, the TOFI partners have put in place systems for joint monitoring and cross-learning, such as:

- Joint programme monitoring processes, learning initiatives and quality assessment visits facilitated by the M&E working group. The periodic joint monitoring initiative has laid sound foundation of corruption risk assessments and enhanced safeguarding for staff, beneficiaries as well as community members.
- Joint monitoring by teams of national and district-based stakeholders including line ministry representatives, DPOs, district officials and programme staff of different projects. This has facilitated the set of various feedback mechanisms to support programme improvement and ensured transparency in implementation.
- Cross-learning such as through a visit by DPOs to SCI where they received practical sessions on setting up effective financial systems as well as monitoring systems. Following the learning visit conducted in September 2021, two of the three TOFI DPOs in Uganda reported restructuring the financial and M&E systems based on learning from SCI and SF. Those without M&E staff committed to recruiting M&E focal persons in their organisations in bid to fight fraud and corruption.

Going forward

- Activities not implemented in 2021 due to COVID19 will be postponed and implemented in 2022. Most of the in-school activities such as those on children's engagement, cash for education, and collecting children's voices for CRPD reporting will be implemented in quarter one and two of 2022 after schools reopen. Some partners, especially those implementing Economic Empowerment, foresee a need for an extension into 2023 due to unavoidable delays caused by COVID-19.
- Under the inclusive education component, we anticipate continuing using local facilitators with technical support from EENET to deliver modules 5, 6, and 7 of the IE TT as well as module 3 of the observer training. We also hope to adapt and use two or three of the new mini modules in conjunction with the main modules.
- Previously coordinated by the Inclusive Education advisor at NAD, the thematic leadership of the Inclusive Education Thematic Working Group will be handed over to NUDIPU in 2022. This is aimed at promoting DPO leadership and ownership of the TOFI programme in Uganda.



Community-based home learning lessons, Uganda. PHOTO: NAD

Results overview

	Ind #	Indicator	F / u18	F /a18	M / u18	M /a18
Human Rights Advocacy						
Output 1111 Training and mentoring provided to persons with disabilities on their rights and how to claim them.	1111	# of persons with disabilities trained on their rights and how to claim their rights	156	1 068	184	1 215
Output 1112 Behaviour change communication strategy delivered to families and communities on rights of persons with disabilities and how to promote those rights	1112	# of family and community members reached by behaviour change strategy campaigns	3 946	15 217	3 139	10 221
Output 1114 Community based support programs established for persons with disabilities	1114a	# of PWD registered in community support programs	8	187	-	96
	1114b	# of PWD receiving community based support services (Type of service in comments)	2	234	2	134
Output 1121 Professional development for DPOs on organizational operations and management.	1121a	# of DPO staff trained on organizational operations and management	8	354	32	341
Output 1123 Professional development for DPOs on advocacy strategies and coalition building.	1123a	# of DPO staff trained on advocacy and coalition building		163		220
Output 1124 Professional development for DPOs to monitor and report on implementation of CRPD and SDG.	1124a	# of DPO staff that have received training on policy making and policy monitoring and reporting on implementation of the CRPD and SDG		174		236
Output 1131 Professional development for government duty bearers and NGO staff on CRPD and SDG.	1131	# of staff trained on CRPD and SDG	10	226	10	285
Inclusive education						
Outcome 1210 Increased participation of girls and boys with disabilities in pre-primary, primary and secondary education	1210a	# of learners with disabilities enrolled in the targeted educational institutions	2 082	15	2 311	33
	1210b	# of out of school children with disabilities supported to enroll into educational institutions	659	9	790	13

	Ind #	Indicator	F / u18	F / a18	M / u18	M / a18
Output 1211 Awareness raising provided to families and caregivers of children with disabilities on their rights to education and how to support their children.	1211	# of caregivers receiving inclusive education awareness activities		6 238		4 636
Output 1212 Parent teacher associations and school management committees informed on the importance of inclusive education opportunities for girls and boys with disabilities	1212	# of parent teachers associations or school management committee members trained		1 032		2 021
Output 1213 Children with disabilities identified and referred to inclusive education services.	1213a	# of learners screened to identify impairments	1 722	59	2 237	152
	1213b	# children with disabilities referred to inclusive education services	383	13	459	32
Output 1214 Children with disabilities receive appropriate resources to support their learning.	1214b	# of children with disabilities equipped with assistive devices	170		224	
	1214c	# of students with disabilities in target educational institutions provided with learning materials	783	132	1 153	50
	1214d	# of scholarships/conditional cash transfers/fee waivers etc to students with disabilities	470	-	596	-
Output 1215 Training and support provided to communities and parents to protect and care for CWD	1215a	# of parents/ caregivers of CWD/ PWD registered in community support programs		37		66
	1215b	# of parents/ community members trained on topics to improve their care and support for CWD/ PWD		5		35
	1215c	# of parents/ community members trained on child protection and strategies to protect children with disabilities		60		44
Output 1216 Training and support provided to out of school adolescents with disabilities on life skills and personal empowerment	1216a	# of adolescents with disabilities registered in community support programs	1	99	-	104
	1216b	# of adolescents with disabilities in community support programs with 75% attendance	-	61	-	79
Output 1217 Community based rehabilitation services established for children with disabilities	1217a	# of CWD receiving community-based support services (Type of service in comments)	214		83	
	1217b	# of CWD referred to therapeutic/ clinical services (Type of service in comments)	52		45	

	Ind #	Indicator	F / u18	F / a18	M / u18	M / a18
Output 1221 Professional development for DPOs to monitor and report on education sector's implementation of CRPD, CRC & SDG.	1221	# of DPO workers trained in implementation of the CRPD, CRC and SDG for the education sector		80		127
Output 1222 Professional development for DPOs on quality inclusive education services.	1222	# DPO workers trained on quality inclusive education services.		224		279
Output 1231 Professional development for education staff on quality inclusive education practice.	1231a	# of educational personnel in the targeted educational institutions who complete training on inclusive education		1 778		1 815
	1231b	# of educational personnel in targeted educational institutions who complete specialised skills training to teach CWD (sign language, braille, mental health and others)		140		135
1232 Schools equipped with infrastructure to deliver quality inclusive education programs	1232b	# of accessible toilets constructed or rehabilitated	21		43	
1233 Professional development for NGO staff on quality inclusive education practice.	1233	# of NGO staff trained on quality inclusive education practice (Type of training in comments)		32		72
Economic empowerment						
Output 1311 Training and mentoring provided on employment rights and financial management for persons with disabilities and their families.	1311	# of people with disabilities and family members trained on employment rights and financial management (Type of training in comments)	17	1 669	40	1 746
Output 1312 persons with disabilities and their parents/ caregivers trained on market relevant income generating skills.	1312	# of persons with disabilities and their parents/ caregivers who complete training on market relevant income generating skills	57	1 522	37	1 184
Output 1313 persons with disabilities and their parents/ caregivers enrolled in financial services programs.	1313	# of persons with disabilities who are members of a saving or credit group (formal or informal service in comments)	55	2 215	66	1 629
Output 1314 Persons with disabilities and their parents/ caregivers enrolled in social security programs.	1314	# of persons with disabilities and parents/caregivers receiving social security assistance (Type of assistance in comments)	-	189	-	303
Output 1321 Professional development for DPOs to monitor and report on financial, labour and social security sectors' implementation of CRPD & SDG.	1321	# of DPO workers trained on financial, labour and social protection articles in CRPD and SDG		28		57
Output 1322 Professional development for DPOs on quality inclusive economic empowerment programs and services.	1322a	# DPO workers trained on quality inclusive economic empowerment programming and service provision		34		68

Small Grants

Introduction

Small grants were introduced as a mechanism to develop the capacity of NGOs and DPOs to better reach persons with disabilities. By providing a funding opportunity with a shorter time span and different application deadlines, the small grant scheme was designed to:

- Provide a flexible mechanism that includes smaller NGOs and DPOs for them to contribute to the expected outcomes of Together for Inclusion and to build capacity of the sub-grantees
- Answer needs that come up during the implementation of the programme and allow both the implementing partner organisations, and the other interested organisations, to test promising ideas
- Get new organisations in both Norway and implementing countries started with disability specific projects

The Atlas Alliance carried out two calls for applications for small grants, one in 2020 and one in 2021. The implementation period for the different grants has varied between seven and fourteen months. The length of implementation is decided by the nature of the project.

2020:

Organisation	NOK	Country
SOS Children's Villages	488 704	Zambia
YGlobal	500 000	Uganda
Caritas Norway	499 718	Uganda
Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports	425 000	Zambia
The Norwegian Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus	365 674	Malawi

2021:

Organisation	NOK	Country
Caritas	400 000	Niger
Caritas	400 000	Uganda
Save the Children Norway	233 000	Somalia
YGlobal	400 000	Uganda
FOKUS - Forum for Women and Development	397 808	Uganda
Save The Children Norway	300 000	Somalia

The projects awarded in 2021 all has implementation periods that go into 2022 and will be reported on in the 2022 report.

Finalised small grants projects awarded in 2020

SOS Children's Villages

Project name: Building socio-economic resilience for persons with disabilities in Ndola and Masaiti Districts

Project Goal: Vulnerable families with persons with disabilities affected by the consequences of COVID-19 in Zambia, have increased social and economic resilience, food security, and adequate nutrition and shared decision-making.

Selected results

- The project has strengthened the capacity of DPOs to run their organisations sustainably: seven organisations were trained in advocacy and resource mobilisation, governance, and organisational culture as well as project design and management, and finance and human resource administration.
- 200 households received emergency cash transfers.
- 37% of the households that benefitted from the emergency cash transfer managed to establish a small business that is contributing to the families eating at least two meals per day.

- Income generating activities for the DPOs benefit 230 households with persons with disabilities

YGlobal

Project Name: Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in COVID-19 Humanitarian Relief Assistance in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, Uganda

Project goal: COVID-19 humanitarian response for persons with disabilities. Increase persons with disabilities' capacity on advocacy work. Provide persons with disabilities with coping mechanisms to address individual and societal challenges.

Selected results

- 150 families of persons with disabilities received food packages as a COVID-19 humanitarian response.
- 10 KYDA members were trained on advocacy and lobbying. They successfully lobbied for youth with disabilities to be represented in Kiryandongo District Task Force on COVID-19, and successfully lobbied for persons with disabilities are considered in government sponsored food distribution.
- 23 counsellors (7F, 6M) received training on mental health and provided counselling to 180 persons with disabilities (108F, 72M).
- 15 persons with disabilities (9F, 6M) received assistive devices.

Caritas

Project name: Disability Response to COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda

Project Goal: Political representation of persons with disabilities, improve hygiene for persons with disabilities households and income generating activities for persons with disabilities households.

Selected results

- Successful lobbying leading to the inclusion of persons with disabilities on list of vulnerable population at district levels targeted for relief items like food, face masks, handwashing soap and hand sanitizers.
- Training for persons with disabilities on vegetable growing, poultry farming and liquid soap making, with 380 participants.
- A total of 150 households with persons with disabilities (102 female headed, and 48 male headed) were trained by field focal staff on home hygiene and sanitation in line with WASH standards. The same households received hand washing facilities.

Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NIF)

Project name: What about Sport – “Inclusive Sport in Zambia”

Project Goal: Capacity building of local organisations, parents, and community leaders; sport and physical activities for children and youth with disabilities; COVID-19 specific activities for disabled children and their caregivers.

Selected results

- Over 65 different headmen and over 60 government line staff attended meetings.
- Approximately 220 coaches and 120 teachers received training on identification of children with disabilities and how to meet them, especially with sports activities.
- 845 children and youth participated in the program, attending two to three weekly physical activity sessions either in their school or community, coupled with sessions on their rights to and importance of being active.

Small grants as a catalyst for continued involvement

In addition to the planned results from the small grants initiatives, other positive results emerged as well.

One requirement for receiving funding from this grant scheme was the collaboration with one or more DPOs. This resulted in the Norwegian organisations, and their long-term local partners, teaming up with local DPOs. This created new partnerships that could possibly continue in the future. The availability of funding earmarked for disability-specific projects also created an opportunity for certain organisations to start working specifically with this target group.

For example, SOS Children's Villages Zambia used this project as a pilot for how SOS Zambia can strengthen its work on inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in its wider work. YGlobal reports that training of YGlobal Uganda staff on disability inclusion and mainstreaming was very effective in ensuring all staff understand and value the need to advocate for disability rights and move away from the charity model of disability and instead embrace inclusion.

Synergies and Positive Externalities

When the idea behind Together for Inclusion was conceived, there was a strong focus on learning across countries and across organisations, and on the different strengths that various organisations brought to the table. DPOs would share their expertise in rights-based development and their detailed knowledge of the disability communities in partner countries, while NGOs would bring their professionalism and their often greater reach. Together, but with DPOs in the driver's seat, the partnership aimed to increase the focus on disability inclusion in all projects, while also implementing targeted interventions to increase the equal participation of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society.

After two years of implementation, we have seen that the original idea very much made sense, and that the organisations are learning and working side by side. NGO staff are becoming increasingly aware of not only *why* inclusion is important, but *how* to include persons with disabilities in all parts of a project. We have also found unforeseen synergies and unexpected positive externalities of the project, and we have been able to outline some lessons learned on why something works.

Synergies and positive externalities

Monitoring and evaluation: While the Together for Inclusion agreement was signed at the end of 2019, the Atlas Alliance's framework agreement with Norad was signed in early 2020. The baseline studies for the framework agreement benefited greatly from the TOFI baseline: Under TOFI, a variety of new evaluation tools were developed, and DPOs played a key role in both developing the tools and carrying out the baseline studies. Some of these tools have been adapted and used for the baseline of the framework agreement as well.

The Inclusive Learning Approach: NAD's ILA is a concrete example of how a successful model is being implemented outside the project limits. The model was developed by NAD and EENET and was initially

implemented in Zambia and Zanzibar as part of the Atlas Alliance framework agreement with Norad. In Together for Inclusion, ILA was adapted to be used in Uganda, Mozambique, Somalia, and from 2021, in Ethiopia. This has meant making the model work in different educational and political systems and adapting and translating the model to other languages. In all four countries, DPOs and NGOs are implementing jointly, with the DPOs as expert advisers. In addition, one of the NGOs has started to adapt the model to another country outside of the project, and project countries that are not employing the model in its entirety are still learning from it and using parts of it in their inclusive education programmes.

To give a concrete example, before Together for Inclusion, NAD and Save the Children Norway had a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and were exploring ways of collaborating. However, establishing this collaboration through the consortium, with resources allocated to both organisations, enabled them to actually start working side by side. Save the Children are active in many African countries and reach a great number of children. When they use the ILA, they know they are using a model developed by and approved by DPOs. Moreover, working directly with the DPOs, they are accountable to the stakeholders and can change course or make corrections as necessary.

At the same time, Save the Children share their knowledge through trainings in child safeguarding and the participation of children, improving the capacity of the DPOs in these areas.

Within the project, DPOs like NAD also strengthen their knowledge base to be able to take an active advisory role. Very often, in developing educational programmes, children and adults with disabilities are not consulted, even though they are the ones who know what it is like to be a disabled child in a school setting. The parents and the teachers are of course important parties as well, but by empowering the DPOs to take an active role, the lived experience of persons with disabilities is taken into account and informs the programming.

The iSAVE model: In the area of economic empowerment, NAD has joined forces with the Stromme Foundation (SF) on savings and loan groups using the iSAVE model developed by NAD and its partners in Uganda. SF's groups were reaching more people than NAD's groups, but with the collaboration SF has been able to make their groups more inclusive and have increased the membership of persons with disabilities in their savings groups.

The Norwegian DPOs and their partners have shown that putting persons with disabilities in the lead of their own development is crucial to both the quality and legitimacy of all development initiatives – not only those targeting persons with disabilities in particular. Also, and importantly, DPOs have gained thematic competence and extensive reach through the large national and international NGO partners that share competence in their respective fields.

Several of the NGOs are reporting that they have hired persons with disabilities for different roles in their organisations, both for tasks related to Together for Inclusion, and in other areas. Many have expressed that they had not previously considered hiring persons with disabilities, which shows that their view has changed: they now see that disabilities are part of human

diversity, and that an accountant with a disability does the same job as a non-disabled accountant.

Lessons learned

Within the consortium, we are coining the term “Finance and Formalise”: It has become evident that for collaboration to work, all parties must have financing, and the relationship must be formalised. In this consortium structure, the resources are allocated to each organisation, while in most DPO-NGO collaborative efforts, funds flow from the NGO to the DPO, creating a power imbalance. When both receive funding, they are on an equal footing. It is also often a great learning experience for NGO staff to see successful persons with disabilities coordinating and leading projects – unfortunately, in most of the world, people are not used to seeing professionals with disabilities.

At the same time, the collaboration is formalised in an MoU that lays out the governance of the partnership. In each country, one organisation acts as Country Lead, with a local Country Coordinator that handles the day-to-day running of the project. The organisations meet regularly in a coordinating committee and in different thematic groups. Together they plan activities and events and learn from each other.

It is important to note that establishing a successful collaboration takes time and effort and is not necessarily a painless process. It takes time to develop new structures and roles. There can be conflicts, and some NGOs may not be used to taking direction from a DPO. Each country has a different experience but in all of them, the organisations now work well together, guided by the Country Lead and by the agreements and structures the organisations established together. Time is also of the utmost importance for the organisations to grow together – time to design together, plan together, implement together, report together. Working in silos does not create the kind of positive externalities we see in Together for Inclusion.

Disability Inclusion and Mainstreaming

Disability inclusion and mainstreaming have failed to be a top priority for Norway in the country's international development aid and humanitarian work. The Norad report *Mapping of Norwegian Efforts to Include Persons with Disabilities in Development Assistance 2010-2019* shows that less than 3% of international development programmes are disability inclusive. A similar finding from a previous Norad report, *Mainstreaming disability in the new development paradigm Evaluation of Norwegian support to promote the rights of persons with disabilities*, indicated that less than 1% of Norwegian international development programs and projects were inclusive of persons with disabilities. This lack of focus on disability inclusion and mainstreaming in the Norwegian international development work contributed to the development of the Inclusion Project in the last decade.

The Inclusion Project aims to strengthen the abilities of mainstream development organisations and humanitarian actors to include persons with disabilities in all Norwegian-funded international development programmes. Studies have indicated that persons with disabilities are one of the most marginalised groups in international development work and humanitarian action. Therefore, the Inclusion Project is based on one of the universal values of the Sustainability Development Goals, that we "Leave No one Behind" and underscores the disability movement's principle of "Nothing about us, without us".

After the COVID-19 pandemic showed signs of receding in 2021, the Inclusion Project, under the umbrella of the Together for Inclusion project, was revamped, and a full-time project manager was employed to coordinate the work. The Inclusion Project tries to share best practices, build capacity, and disseminate information on disability inclusion and mainstreaming in Norwegian international organisations, both in long-term aid and in humanitarian efforts. As part of the Inclusion Project in 2021, the Atlas Alliance organised inclusion network meetings, delivered disability inclusion trainings,

offered webinars, and launched a podcast series titled "Road to Inclusion".

Highlights and selected results

Inclusion Network Meetings

The objective of the inclusion network meetings is to create a space for sharing knowledge and experiences of including persons with disabilities. Inclusion network meetings accentuate why disability inclusion matters and highlight how to achieve disability inclusion in international development work. In the meetings, the Atlas Alliance and other actors share best practices, disseminate research, and showcase diverse lived perspectives. The inclusion network meetings respond to the Atlas Alliance's core thematic areas, such as human rights advocacy work, economic empowerment, inclusive education, and inclusive health care, and disability-inclusive disaster risk management.

Between August and December 2021, the Atlas Alliance organised four digital inclusion network meetings. While the target audience of the inclusion project is Norwegian NGOs, the digital format also allowed for participation from NGOs and DPOs in

partner countries as well. On average, more than 50 participants joined each meeting. The participants included staff from Norwegian NGOs and DPOs, and NGOs and DPOs in partner countries. The panellists who contributed to these events came from countries such as Tanzania, Zambia, South Sudan, Uganda, and Norway. They discussed a wide variety of themes such as economic empowerment of youth with disabilities, combatting discrimination and ableism, realising inclusive education, and commitments leading up to the Global Disability Summit 2022.

Disability Inclusion Trainings

The objective of the disability inclusion training courses is to build capacity and raise consciousness about disability inclusion and mainstreaming among Norwegian NGO working in long-term development aid and humanitarian efforts. These disability inclusion trainings are designed to offer high-quality information, research expertise and practical tools to achieve inclusion of persons with disabilities within their projects.

The main introductory course, entitled *“Are we including the most marginalized? Online introductory course: Disability Inclusion in International Programme”*, was offered to Norwegian NGOs and to several of the countries in the Together for Inclusion partnership. These digital trainings were offered six times to a total of more than 100 participants. The participants came from Somalia, South Sudan, Niger, Ethiopia, and Norway, and included members from Norwegian NGOs and DPOs, and TOFI partner organisations.

Three trainings entitled *“The time is now for disability inclusion: An online training on how to promote the human rights of persons with disabilities”* was carried out three times. The first two trainings were held online for the Norwegian Human Rights Fund as part of their capacity-building series, with participants from Thailand, Indonesia, Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka. A total of 32 persons were trained. The third training was held in-person at the offices of Landsorganisasjonen i Norge (LO Norway, where 12 staff members participated.

Webinars

The purpose of the webinar series is to provide expert knowledge on core themes linked to disability inclusion and disability rights advocacy work. Webinars can provide state-of-the-art content which could help in developing a knowledge bank.

In the fall of 2021, two online webinars were organised with more than 60 participants in each one. The first webinar was dedicated to changing the narrative on disability inclusion, and the

Panel Debates

By organising panel debates, the Atlas Alliance aims to centre the theme of disability inclusion within the socio-political discourse in Norway and internationally on one hand, and to raise consciousness concerning disability mainstreaming and the human rights of persons with disabilities amongst Norwegian stakeholders in the domain of development aid and humanitarian work on the other.

The Atlas Alliance participated at Arendalsuka in August 2021, organising two panel discussions. One focused on the upcoming Global Disability Summit, and one on placing persons with disabilities first in humanitarian action. The panellists for the two debates included prominent Norwegian politicians, head of NGOs, and heads of DPOs.

Podcast: Road to Inclusion

The purpose of the podcast series was to engage in an open and inclusive, yet substantive, conversation about disability inclusion, disability rights advocacy, empowerment of persons with disabilities, disability-inclusive international development, and disability-inclusive humanitarian action. The Atlas Alliance launched the podcast series “Road to Inclusion” in November 2021. Three podcast episodes were published in November and December 2021, and guests such as the Member of Parliament Dag-Inge Ulstein, the Secretary General of the Blind Association Per Inge Bjerknes, and the International Director of Disabled Peoples Organisations in Denmark, Mette Müller Kristensen attended these three episodes.



iSAVE group skills training in Mpigi District, Uganda. PHOTO: NAD

The way forward

The Inclusion Project will continue for the duration of the Together for Inclusion agreement and has proven to be an efficient way of putting disability inclusion front and centre among Norwegian NGOs. The Atlas Alliance carried out two studies as part of the project in 2021, one mapping the capacity and wishes of Norwegian long-term development actors, and one aimed at the humanitarian organisations. Particularly the first study showed that Norwegian organisations very much understand *why* they should include persons with

disabilities – but they want to get better at *how*. The Atlas Alliance and the Inclusion Project takes this task seriously and is continuously developing new products and services to serve the international development community. New thematic courses will be developed, for example on inclusion in humanitarian efforts, while earlier courses will be updated, such as the course on inclusive education. This way, Norwegian development aid and humanitarian assistance can improve both on targeted efforts and on mainstreaming disability inclusion in all projects.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning

Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning, often referred to as MERL, is a central part of the Together for Inclusion partnership. The Atlas Alliance is responsible for the MERL system of the project and has introduced standard procedures and templates for monitoring and evaluating.

The goal for the MERL component of the project is to produce real and tangible evidence on what works and what does not work in disability-inclusive development. The TOFI MERL system has been developed to support the monitoring and evaluation of the project. It is meant to respond to the lack of rigorous quantitative and qualitative evidence on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development. Evidence is crucial to ensure that the project does not allocate resources to efforts that are not effective. Close monitoring of the project is also important, because a timely and active learning process throughout the programme cycle will enable the implementing agencies to identify potential challenges or areas of weakness swiftly so that adaptations can be made, ensuring that the project achieves the intended results.

An M&E, or MERL, system, can be defined as a series of policies, practices, and processes that enable the coherent and effective collection, analysis and use of monitoring and evaluation information. The Together for Inclusion MERL system is made up of four main elements:

1. A system for routine monitoring, based on a selection of the information that will be necessary and helpful to follow the results of the project, and for analysing this information.
2. Evaluation studies to help establish the baseline for the project, and which will be used to measure progress against the planned outcome of the project.

3. Plans to support more research on issues related to inclusive development and the experiences of persons with disabilities in the thematic areas.
4. A component for sharing and learning, to ensure that data is in fact used to support evidence-based interventions in our project countries.

Many important Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning activities were carried out and completed in 2021. Key achievements include the mixed method baseline study that was completed in all six TOFI countries, and the finalization and roll-out of the digital routine monitoring system. In addition, there was focus on M&E capacity strengthening by ensuring that DPOs and partners were directly involved in the baseline study and through the provision of a series of trainings. Finally, a midline review was carried out to get a better understanding of the quality of the collaboration and information flow within the consortium and to acquire recommendations as to strengthen the TOFI programme.

Mixed method baseline study

The TOFI mixed method, multi-country baseline study was carried out in all six TOFI countries to generate qualitative and quantitative findings to measure core performance indicators across the TOFI programme.

DPOs played a key role in the development of the tools and in carrying out the baseline study. Four standard tools were used; The Inclusive Education Assessment tool (IEA), Community Survey (CS), Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Organisational Capacity



Using a reading board in Niger. PHOTO: EGIL MONGSTAD, STROMME FOUNDATION

Assessment tool (OCAT). The OCAT had been further developed from the already existing Atlas OCAT while the other tools had been developed based on similar tested tools and based on input and review from DPOs involved in TOFI and the TOFI M&E working group members.

The process of overseeing the study in each country was done by TOFI consortium members, with DPOs in the lead. The Atlas Alliance senior advisor on M&E had the overall responsibility for managing the study, while country study leads, either DPO or NGO partners of TOFI, led the study in their respective countries supported by the Atlas M&E team. The study leads were responsible for; overseeing translation and backtranslation of the tools into local languages (the tools were translated into 19 local languages across the six countries); identifying local requirements for conducting the study (for example, applying for ethical authorization); developing comprehensive budgets and detailed plans for data collection; recruit local enumerators (between 20-30 per country); coordinate local trainings on each tool with the support of the

Atlas M&E team; and finally; provide first line support throughout the data collection process. The study leads played a key role to ensure that the study was successfully completed despite challenges such as Covid19 restrictions, local elections, local unrest, and difficult weather conditions.

The result of this extensive effort was that the project was able to collect data through the CS with 4850 men and women, with and without disabilities, from sampled communities in the six TOFI countries. The teams carried out a total of 28 FGD in urban and rural areas of the TOFI countries, ranging from two in South Sudan, to six in Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Niger, with a total of 208 (102M/ 106F) adult men and women with disabilities. A total of 44 DPOs were assessed using the OCAT, ranging from two in Mozambique to 13 in Uganda. Finally, the IEA was carried out with a total of 212 target schools which provided us with data that allows us to have an in-depth understanding of the level of inclusivity in these schools as well as the lived experience of the children with disabilities who attend these schools. Finally, by being themselves so involved

in preparing for and carrying out the study we believe that we contributed to building capacity in terms of carrying out such studies, useful to understand the experiences of persons with disabilities in the countries we are working in.

Once data was collected, the Atlas M&E team presented initial findings back to the country teams for verification and comments, conducted thorough analysis and used this to produce the baseline reports. A total of seven reports were developed (one overall programme report and one per country) and shared with Norad and other relevant stakeholders. Further, the data was used to update the Results Framework and as a basis from which to set realistic targets for the project moving forward.

TOFI Routine Monitoring tool

The roll-out of the TOFI digital routine monitoring system (RTM) was an important milestone in completing the TOFI M&E system. This digital routine monitoring system has been developed integrating the following Microsoft 365 tools: PowerApps (for data collection), SharePoint (for data management) and PowerBI for visualization of data.

The TOFI RTM tool compliments the other data collection tools that make up our M&E system (CS, IEA, FGD, and OCAT) and it is used to collect, manage, and visualize data relevant to some of our key outputs. The tool allows us to acquire data that is disaggregated according to sex, age, type of disability and as such track the reach of the project. Using PowerBI, we can create any type of relevant reports. The aim is to be able to monitor our status with regards to reaching our results and to use the collected information to inform our project. It also allows us to facilitate the generation of reports and easily visualize our data. As the data is available in one shared system, where partners in the country, Norwegian TOFI partners and

Atlas all have access, it will be possible to see situation as it develops. We do not need to wait until quarterly or annual reports to see whether we are on track or not.

The tool that was rolled out in June 2021 was version 1, v.1, of the TOFI RMT. As a first version it contains the minimum requirements needed for us to use the system to report according to the requirements of the TOFI project and Norad. Later, as users gain experience in using the tool and become familiar with the functionalities, they will be well suited to suggest improvements to the system, identify flaws and provide Atlas with recommendations relevant to improving the tool. We will use this type of user feedback to develop v.2 of the system.

Developing a system through such an interactive approach is challenging and requires a lot of follow up from Atlas, but it allows us to 1) not spend resources on functionalities that users have never requested, and may not need, 2) allows the system to become more and more relevant and tailored to the users need over time, 3) allows us to start using the system, acquire data, even though there still are room for improving the tool. We now have approximately 200 active users across the different TOFI countries, and their feedback will be valuable as we move into developing version 2 of the tool in 2022.

Challenges in using a common digital tool

Despite extensive training and support already provided, there have been a lot of difficulties rolling out the tool. Only one country has come as far as being able to use the tool for the reporting for 2021, and other countries are using the tool to a varying degree. It has become evident for Atlas that there were challenges for many to get full access to the tool, and some have waited a long time before settling on an appropriate unique identifier code which is required to start using the tool. In addition to this, others report

that the use of such a tool requires a lot of time and effort. Moving forward, it will be important for Atlas to provide more training and capacity building on the use of the tool and to strengthen the understanding of M&E in general. It will also be important to communicate the benefits of accessing better data so that this type of effort is not simply seen as an additional burden but as an effective means of strengthening our projects.

Capacity building

An important part of the TOFI M&E efforts is to strengthen the M&E capacity of the participating organisations. It is important to ensure that programme staff and partners have the capacity to use data to inform and strengthen their projects, to monitor data to see if they are on track to reaching targets and expected results, and to successfully report to donors and others interested in the TOFI project. It is also important that we acquire quality data on disability in general, as this is currently lacking, especially in the project countries.

The Atlas Alliance's approach to strengthen the M&E capacity of staff and partners under this project is multi-faceted. We try to ensure that programme staff themselves get hands on experience by being directly involved, or, by being responsible for key areas within M&E. For example, some participate actively as study leads or as enumerators. Secondly, we seek to provide relevant training on all our tools, and thirdly, we ask M&E staff in the TOFI countries to select specific M&E topics in which they would like more in-depth training, which Atlas then organises. Also, before each M&E training there are pre-assessments to ensure that the training material developed is as relevant to the participants needs as possible. Finally, the team records all trainings, translates these into the relevant languages for the TOFI countries, ensure that they are subtitled and otherwise made accessible to persons with disabilities, and upload everything to the project

e-learning platform. This allows people to revisit the training materials at any time, it allows any new staff to be introduced to the M&E system, and it makes it possible to download the training materials for local training events. Currently, the platform has 31 training courses and there are a total of 363 registered users who accessed training through the site in 2021.

Midterm review

The Institute for Urban and Regional Research at OsloMet was commissioned by the Atlas Secretariat to carry out a midterm review of the "Together for Inclusion" Consortium (TOFI) in the last quarter of 2021. The team was asked to assess the collaboration in Norway, in the six project countries, and between Norway and the partners in the project countries. The review was carried out in the period between November 6 and December 23, 2021. Data was collected through document review, a survey, and by carrying out individual interviews and group discussions with the Atlas Secretariat, country leads in Norway, country coordinators in the project countries, and consortium members in each country.

The midterm report has been shared with Norad as well as with all partners. It included a set of clear recommendations for all the consortium members and was therefore a very useful report that we can draw on in our efforts to strengthen the collaboration under this project. Findings under this midline review showed clearly that many found the M&E system challenging that there is a need for Atlas to provide the TOFI members with further support in this area. Considering the small team that works on M&E in Atlas, there is a need to come up with innovative and sustainable ways to provide this support moving forward.

Anti-corruption and Risk Management

Over the last four years, the Atlas Alliance has significantly improved its efforts on anti-corruption and risk management. Several new routines have been implemented, and others have been improved. This process of improvement is an ongoing process. Some efforts have resulted in immediate improvements across the projects, like following up on financial checklists and management letters. Other improvement processes take longer to finish, and sometimes we also see that our efforts do not bear fruit. Some implementing partners have significantly improved their routines and accountability, resulting in reduced corruption risk. Others are struggling more to improve, while yet others have suffered setbacks. We see that we still have work to do on improving internal controls.

The secretariat develops routines, contracts, checklists, and reporting requirements. The Norwegian organisations follow up their partner organisations directly and respond to organisation specific corruption risk. At the same time, the secretariat controls the Norwegian organisations' capacity and competence to follow up their partners – and provides support in specific cases when needed.

When it comes to anti-corruption and risk management, the Atlas Alliance secretariat differentiates its control and support of Norwegian organisations. Organisations with direct funding from Norad and/or the MFA, and with solid competence and capacity on risk management, follow up this work quite independently. Organisations without funding agreements with the Norwegian government whose work on international development is funded only through the Atlas Alliance, get a more in-depth follow up from the secretariat. Most of the specific efforts mentioned in this chapter are relevant only for the work with the latter group of organisations.

In Norway and on the systematic level

- The Atlas Alliance manages an anti-corruption action plan which outlines selected priority areas for the anti-corruption work. The plan lists

tasks for both the secretariat and the Norwegian organisations, and for finance staff and programme staff alike.

- In addition to the Atlas Alliance plan, the Norwegian organisations have their own anti-corruption plans.
- During the spring of 2021, the secretariat organised a series of four online webinars on anti-corruption for Norwegian organisations and implementing partners in programme countries. During the webinars the participants received an introduction to corruption and anti-corruption. In addition, they were presented with an introduction to risk analyses, due diligence, organisational capacity assessments, anti-corruption plans, financial checklists and management letters. The seminars were interpreted into Nepali, French and Portuguese to reach organisations in countries where English is not a commonly used language.
- In October 2021, the secretariat organised a two-day course on risk management for Norwegian organisations focusing on risk analysis. The aim was to improve the organisations' capabilities in managing risk.

- Throughout the year, the secretariat has been working on the implementation of a new management information system called Metis. After a tender process and a lengthy setup stages, the database was formally launched in August. Metis is still not complete, and the system is continually being developed with new functions and features added. This online database enables the secretariat, the Norwegian organisations and implementing partners to manage most official documents, reports, budgets, and accounts in one common database. This improves the reliability of information and eases the follow up and oversight of large amounts of information associated with the programmes. Metis features of special relevance for anti-corruption are the accounts and management letter module, and the management of due diligence, financial checklists, and organisational capacity assessments. These modules are being rolled out in 2022.
- While developing Metis, the Atlas Alliance has spent a large amount of time updating the due diligence and financial checklist forms, and coordinating the contents in the due diligence, financial checklist, and organisational capacity assessment tool. The main goal is to make it easier for Norwegian organisations and implementing partners to use these tools more systematically, and especially to improve the follow up of findings. By creating tasks in Metis based on specific findings and choosing a person responsible and a deadline for each task, it is easier to prioritise efforts on the most important issues. It is also easier to keep oversight of weaknesses and risks and therefore easier to better prioritise one's efforts. The new setup will also make it easier to manage a more holistic overview of weaknesses and risks.
- Together, the Atlas organisations and the secretariat maintain an overview of management letter findings on local partners identified by their auditors. In addition, we work systematically to improve identified weaknesses.
- In the TOFI project, the Atlas Alliance manages one risk analysis per country. Risks concerning individual projects are identified in collaboration between the implementing partner and the Norwegian organisation. This is done in relation to project milestones like writing of multi-year project proposals, annual plans etc.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected the TOFI project. Some activities have been postponed, some have been cancelled, and some have been changed. In particular, the reduced possibility to travel and organise meetings have had an impact. In addition, lengthy closures of schools in implementing countries, and a reduced possibility for organising meetings has hindered implementation. Some project follow-up has suffered from this, as possibilities for following up the implementing partners were reduced. Measures taken included online meetings and increased use of online tools for sharing documents. This helped, but only to a limited degree.
- Implementing organisations have undergone organisational capacity assessments. In this participatory process, staff have been actively involved in identifying weaknesses in their own organisations. This process, and the follow up of findings, are important instruments in identifying and addressing risk.
- During the baseline process a lot of in-depth information was gathered. Identified risk is being followed up.

Risk identification and risk assessment

Risks concerning individual projects are identified in collaboration between the implementing partner and the Norwegian organisation. This is done in relation to project milestones like writing of multi-year project proposals, annual plans etc. During the last years, major revisions of risk assessments have also been spurred by unexpected events like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Internal risks

A central part of our project risk management addresses internal risks related to organisational capacity and internal control in the implementing organisations. These risks are assessed through due diligence, financial checklists, and organisational capacity assessments in addition to annual audits and the day-to-day follow up of partners from Norwegian organisations. The Norwegian organisations follow up on the findings in the assessments and agree with implementing partners on plans for improving routines etc. A significant portion of the internal risks is related to documented weaknesses in the organisations. Sometimes risks concerning low organisational capacity result in increased spending on organisational development or financial staff.

External risks

Identifying external risks is a process characterised by a higher degree of uncertainty than identifying internal risks. It is difficult to find hard evidence on how likely it is that different external events will affect the project implementation and to what degree. Indeed, we have been unable to predict some of the most important risks that have affected the projects, like COVID-19. We do, however, try to be flexible and adapt the projects to unexpected events. We have for instance moved many planned trainings and events over to digital platforms in response to the pandemic. The details in risk management must always be adapted to the situation after the risk has materialised, and the flexibility the Atlas Alliance and the Norwegian organisations grants to implementing partners makes this work both easier and better. Sometimes external risks like COVID-19 or a problematic security situation result in minor or major changes in the planned implementation.

To make sure risk treatment is based on the best possible information, the process is done in collaboration between the Norwegian organisation and the implementing partner. In cases of high importance, or if the Norwegian organisation requests it, the secretariat is involved. The secretariat also assesses projects and partners at the start of an agreement period, and throughout the implementation. These assessments sometimes result in the identification of risks that need a specific type of risk treatment.

Country specific reporting

Country specific reporting on anti-corruption and risk management is included in the different country chapters of this report.

Reported cases closed in 2021 and 2022

NFU started supporting Uganda Parents of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (UPPID) through Together for Inclusion in early 2020. In the middle of that year, the collaboration became increasingly difficult, and NFU received complaints from two UPPID employees who had received notices of termination of employment. NFU immediately froze all funding to UPPID and started organising an independent special audit. The special audit revealed falsified receipts, suspicious receipts, and duplicate wage payments. NOK 125 783 has been paid back to Norad, while NFU has ended the collaboration with UPPID.

RHF is supporting the Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association of Uganda (SHA-U). Cash payments were needed to upgrade toilets at a school. Due to COVID-19 related travel restrictions, normal routines for handling cash could not be followed. One employee was told to travel together with the regional team leader to withdraw money, but instead travelled alone. The person claims to have lost the money. 7 240 000 Ugandan shilling (NOK 19 200 as of June 2022) was lost. The incident was reported to the police. It has not been confirmed whether the money was stolen. After the incident, several measures have been introduced to reduce the possibility of similar incidents in the future. NOK 17 000 has been paid back to Norad.



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