



NATIONAL UNION OF DISABLED PERSONS OF UGANDA (NUDIPU)

**REPORT ON THE COMMEMORATION OF NUDIPU'S 35 YEARS OF EXISTENCE AT GOLF
COURSE HOTEL ON 14TH DECEMBER 2022**



NUDIPU Staff and Board members pose for a group photo during the Commemoration of NUDIPU at 35 years held at Golf Course Hotel on 14th November 2022

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda [NUDIPU], is an Umbrella organization of all categories of Person with Disabilities in Uganda that DIPU came into existence on November 14th 1987. To mark this key milestone, NUDIPU organized a commemoration ceremony with the following objectives:

Objectives

- i. To profile and popularize NUDIPU milestones, challenges and lessons learned @35 years.
- ii. To show case the talents of persons with disabilities.
- iii. To present a plan of action for disability inclusion by 2023 as one of the pre-activities to commemorate the international day for persons with disabilities. It is on this basis that a plan of action for government shall be tailored on the theme for the day of persons with disabilities.

NUDIPU@35 participants included the following:

- i. Executive Directors and chairpersons of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities
- ii. Over 40 District Unions where NUDIPU is operating shall be mobilized to participate in NUDIPU's commemoration
- iii. Focal point persons on disability from Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).
- iv. Members of parliament representing persons with disabilities
- v. Development and Implementing partners
- vi. NUDIPU BOD and staff;
- vii. NUDIPU former chairpersons and Executive Directors
- viii. University leaders of Students with disabilities
- ix. Representatives of persons with disabilities on boards and commissions shall be mobilized to participate
- x. At least 15 successful persons with disabilities who have beaten odds in the various fields and recognized as role models for Persons with Disabilities
- xi. At least 6 persons or institutions who have demonstrated efforts in championing disability inclusion
- xii. Corporate companies
- xiii. Media

2.0 REMARKS FROM THE CEO NUDIPU.

The CEO observed protocol and welcomed everyone to the function. She congratulated NUDIPU upon celebrating 35 years of existence and service. The CEO observed that given the numerous achievements of NUDIPU, it was worth celebrating the 35 years. She mentioned that coming up to this time was not an easy task but we were there.



Ms. Esther Kyoziira, the Chief Executive Officer delivering her remarks during the commemoration celebrations

She however, reminded everyone that celebrating this day was intended to reflect on the Journey taken, the achievements registered and how to consolidate those achievements but also look at the challenges encountered and together find solutions. This was a time to come up with an action paper or a communique detailing the destination of NUDIPU. The function should increase the Feasibility of NUDIPU.

She thanked the Board of Directors for approving the organization of this function, appreciated the members of the organizing committee for the wonderful work done and appreciated all the development partners that make it possible for NUDIPU to continue delivering on her mandate.

In conclusion, the CEO stated that the plan was to continue celebrating the 14th November and at some time, it would be organized in open spaces where more people would have access to the celebrations.

She remarked that this celebration should help us to continue documenting our Successes and increasing our Feasibility.

3.0 REMARKS BY MS AERO KETTY, CHAIRPERSON BOD OF NUDIPU.

The Chairperson recognized protocol and welcomed all to the function. She thanked all staff, members of the organizing Committee and development partners and congratulated everyone including the founders on celebrating 35 years of existence and service.

She informed the members the commemoration aimed at fostering disability inclusion for sustainable development across the 3 key areas:

- i. NUDIPU's structure, systems and capacity are strengthened to deliver her mandate;
- ii. Effective advocacy and influence policies for better lives of persons with disabilities in Uganda by 2024; and
- iii. inclusion of needs and concerns of persons with disabilities in socio-economic empowerment frameworks in Uganda.

She requested all the guests to observe a moment of silence for the departed colleagues who had contributed extensively to the foundation of NUDIPU.

She observed that before the start of NUDIPU, the situation of persons with Disabilities was very bad but through utilizing various advocacy strategies, the situation has gradually improved. However, she said that Persons with Disabilities still faced some exclusion and therefore, more advocacy was still needed.

In conclusion, she affirmed that it was a resolve of NUDIPU to celebrate this Day annually. She wished participants fruitful deliberations.

4.0 REMARKS FROM NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY(NCPD).

Mr. Hassan Mulondo, the Vice Chairperson of the Council delivered these remarks.

He congratulated NUDIPU upon celebrating 35 Years of existence. He observed that NUDIPU was no longer a child but an opinion leader. He remarked that celebrating 35 years was not an easy thing and was worth celebrating. He recalled the commemoration celebrations for NUDIPU at 25, where Francis Kinubi, the chairperson of NUDIPU promised that NUDIPU will shine and indeed it's shining let it be advocacy, policy influence and so forth.

The Vice chairperson observed that NUDIPU was a mother of NCPD because she influenced her coming into existence in 2003 charged with monitoring disability compliance for govt and non govt organizations including NUDIPU. He appreciated NUDIPU for influencing a number of laws and Policies that had positively changed the situation of Persons with Disabilities in Uganda.

He said that he was happy because besides fostering inclusion, NUDIPU was involved in influencing a number of acts to ensure inclusion and accessibility sighting the building and control act of 2013.

In conclusion, he wished NUDIPU and everyone fruitful celebrations.

5.0 KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY DR. NABOTH COOLE

He observed Protocol and expressed happiness to NUDIPU for having invited Him and given him an opportunity to speak on this very important function and Day. He was particularly happy because He was going to speak as a product of NUDIPU citing the fact that the first Office he visited in Kampala was NUDIPU.

He said that NUDIPU birthed many other OPDs that were doing great work in fostering inclusion. He recognized the founders and challenged all the guest to reflect on what NUDIPU would be remembered of in case she closed now.

He stated that his Keynote address which was supposed to cover 3 thematic areas on the level of inclusion in inclusive education, the Parish development model and the disaster responsive mechanism.



Dr. Nabboth Coole delivering his Key Note Address

Dr. Nabboth stated that the 1995 Constitution of Uganda provided the basis for fostering inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Uganda. This was accompanied by many other laws and policies and Acts of Parliament. He mentioned some of the examples as the University and Tertiary Act and the Affirmative Action Policy.

Despite all these laws and policies, He wondered how many Persons with Disabilities had benefited from them.

He asked why many Persons with disabilities were not benefiting from the many opportunities that Government had put in place such as UPE, USE and others. He stated that there could be some gaps that needed to be filled up.

Nabboth noted some of the challenges as being:

- i. Lack of awareness of the importance of including Persons with Disabilities in all sectors and private business
- ii. Poor methods of awareness creation that left out many persons with Disabilities and noted the example of how the persons with hearing impairment could follow news, and TV Adverts in times when there is no interpreter.
- iii. Poor accessibility in Government buildings including schools

He called upon NUDIPU to continue influencing laws and policies that foster inclusion and reminded every one of the slogans [Nothing for Us without Us.].

He ended with the following recommendations:

- I. Use appropriate and inclusive approaches in creating awareness on the importance of ensuring disability inclusion.

- II. Follow the laws and act based on human rights approach.
- III. It should be everyone's responsibility to foster disability inclusion.

7.0 PANEL DISCUSSION.

Following the delivery of the keynote address, a panel discussion was conducted to discuss key issues raised during the keynote address led by the Director of Program NUDIPU. These included: Dr. Pamela Nizeyimana, Senior Education Officer from the Ministry of Education and Sports, Ms. Pamela Komujuni, Senior Disaster Management Officer in the Office of the Prime Minister and Lydia Naluwende Acting Principal Community Development Officer from the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development.

Below are the ensuing discussions:

Dr. Nizeyimana Pamela from the Ministry of Education was asked to discuss whether Inclusive education in Uganda was practical or just theory.

Dr. stated that the laws and policies in Uganda were enabling inclusive education in Uganda including articles 34 and 35 of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda (as amended).

She said that there was a right to Education for all- where all Ugandans with or without disability had a right to Education. Institution of Universal Primary Education and Universal Secondary Education gave an opportunity to girls and children with disability to access Education.

However, she acknowledged that there were still challenges that hindering effective implementation of Inclusive education In Uganda. Notably she pointed out the following:

- i. Inadequate awareness raising from the none inclusive approaches used to create awareness.
- ii. Limited teachers with special skills to handle learners with specialized needs like Sign language and Braille.
- iii. Existence of inaccessible buildings or limited accessibility.

She highlighted the Ministry efforts to counteract these including refresher trainings and capacity building activities of teachers to enhance their knowledge in disability inclusion and

popularizing disability inclusive provisions in various laws such as the Building and Control Act and policy on Affirmative Action.



The panel discussants and key Note speaker during the commemoration of NUDIPU's 35 years of existence

Ms. Komujuni Pamela from the OPM was to talk about how Disaster preparedness interventions were inclusive.

She congratulated NUDIPU upon celebrating 35 Years and having observed protocol she told the guests that NUDIPU was a member of their disaster response network under their framework.

She said that OPM is guided by the Sendai framework for Disaster Reduction and they have implemented inclusive practices which ensure that in situations of disaster, Persons with Disabilities and children are part of the priority beneficiaries.

A Disaster Management Policy was instituted in 2011 and OPM identifies natural and induced hazards and assigns different line agencies responsibility for addressing them.

The OPM developed a detailed analysis of how inclusive various sectors are in relation to the various vulnerable groups and their needs.

- i. Ensure adequate public education for example location, daily chores and issues of access. There has to be deliberate efforts to involve persons with disabilities in taking decisions on disaster preparedness and management
- ii. OPM when developing disaster management plans, have to include persons with disabilities in pre disasters, response and recovery

However, she pointed out some challenges that were hampering their efforts which included but not limited to:

- i. Persons with Disabilities face disproportionate vulnerability due to various impairments thus they are usually the last to be evacuated. This affects their safety
- ii. Most of the common evacuation spaces do not have all the required infrastructure for Persons with Disabilities including lack of interpretation services.
- iii. Existing evacuation plans are not inclusive of the Persons with Disabilities
- iv. Inadequate commitment by the players in this field.

However, she noted that working with NUDIPU had increased commitment among players.

Komujuni also outlined Ministry commitments to enhance disability inclusion including:

- i. Involve NUDIPU in undertaking critical analysis and implementation of plans to ensure that they are disability inclusive
- ii. Profiling the lived experience of Persons with Disabilities during disasters to facilitate development of inclusive disaster management plans
- iii. A Ensure that all disaster prevention and response plans take into account the specific needs of Persons with Disabilities for example assess evacuation centres for mobility and other services to make sure that Persons with Disabilities are catered for.

Ms. Naluwende Lydia from the Ministry of Gender was asked to illustrate the level of inclusiveness in the Parish Development Model:

- i. She said that the PDM is the critical vehicle for national development and all the decentralized learning frameworks including disability, gender, youth
- ii. It targets 39% of the population who were living below the poverty level.
- iii. She also said that the PDM was practiced at the parish where most of the persons with disabilities lived.
- iv. The other pillars are yet to actualize their presence on ground, pillar 5 on mindset change has been actualized on ground
- v. Persons with disabilities benefitted from the mobilization and training.
- vi. Lydia mentioned that the PDM encourages disability mainstreaming because Persons with Disabilities were also included on the committees during their formation.
- vii. She observed that under the PDM, Persons with Disabilities were entitled to 10 Percent but they were not only limited to that as they can also benefit from the women and youth proportions (30% each).
- viii. Lydia noted that the model promotes National Values which was a good thing for Persons with disabilities.

Challenges.

Lydia noted that there were still some challenges which included but not limited to:

- i. The PDM emphasizes agricultural production which may be limiting for some persons with disabilities.
- ii. She mentioned the limitation in information dissemination for example no provision for braille and sign language interpretation

8.0 INVITATION OF THE CHIEF GUEST BY HON. ALEX NDEEZI

Hon. Ndeezi is one of the five Members of Parliament representing Persons with Disabilities

Hon Alex Ndezi was called to invite the chief guest to give her speech.

He reminded the participants that at 35 years of age, there are many friends who would be happy to be with us that made huge sacrifices but are now deceased, henceforth recognized them by a moment of silence. He implored and tasked the present NUDIPU to emulate our forefathers to sustain NUDIPU's relevance in Uganda. He emphasized that there is still a lot to be done and there is need to continue working around the clock to attain sustainability.

Further, he outlined various achievements of the movement including: a Minister for Persons with Disabilities, Persons with disabilities are enjoying tax free vehicles, and there is an existent National Council for Persons With Disabilities.

He emphasized the following:

- i. NUDIPU should accept the responsibility to carry the struggle for disability inclusion forward
- ii. NUDIPU was founded on the spirit of sacrifice (time, money and energies). There is need to reignite this spirit taking into consideration that funds are limited
- iii. Team work is crucial in being able to succeed
- iv. It is up to Persons with Disabilities to analyze the problems and prescribe relevant solutions.

In spite of these successes, there is still a lot more to be done

- i. The impending merging of government agencies including the National Council for Persons with Disabilities and Equal Opportunities Commission. The committee should do its best to discourage this and/or ensure that issues of Persons with Disabilities are defended in Government programs, plans and budgets.
- ii. Under PDM, ensure that PWDs benefit from this program.
- iii. He implored NUDIPU to develop the prime land which houses the NUDIPU House to support sustainability of disability inclusive advocacy and service delivery.

He introduced the chief guest stressing that that she is a well-known champion of disability inclusion and was serving as the current Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee of Gender, Labor and Social Development. He then invited her to deliver her speech.

9.0 REMARKS FROM THE CHIEF GUEST; HON KABAHERA FLAVIA RWABUHORO.

Hon Kabahenda is the current Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Gender, Labor and Social Development delegated to deliver remarks on behalf of the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon. Thomas Tayebwa.

She congratulated NUDIPU on celebrating 35 years of existence and requested the audience to pay tribute to the founders of NUDIPU that participated in the foundation both alive and those who are dead.

She also thanked NUDIPU for advocating for inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Government plans, programs and budgets.

The HON noted that the focus of sustainable development now is not only advocating for not leaving no one behind but also leaving no space behind.

She thanked the Government for including Persons with disabilities. Recently received a delegation from Zimbabwe who wanted to know how Uganda has successfully implemented inclusion of persons with disabilities.

The Hon also noted that she has passion for Persons with Disabilities because she comes from a family that has persons with Disabilities.

She noted that the Councilors must not be merged. However, the ministry is still requesting for a writing and we are going to continue pursuing the president to put it in writing.

Challenges

- The president thought that by providing affirmative action would reduce the numbers of disability however the numbers are increasing due to the many various developments like urbanization and road accidents.
- Inclusive education was guaranteed for all children with disabilities in all schools, however there are limited instructors.

Recommendations

- The need for an Act for all cities in Uganda instead of having one Act for one city.
- Government should ensure to train more instructors for special needs because from the beginning it was not given priority

- There is need to start advocating for persons with Disabilities in the informal sector so that they also enjoy inclusive work policies and inclusive economic growth.
- The Ministers promised to implore the Speaker to include interpreters in the parliament



One of the recognized contributors to NUDIPU’s journey receiving a certificate from Hon. Flavia Kabahenda, Chairperson Committee of Gender, Labor and Social Development during the commemoration ceremony of NUDIPU’s 35 Years of Existence.

proceedings so that the persons with hearing impairments follow through. She noted that Parliament proceedings are watched by everyone however there are no interpreters for persons with Hearing impairment.

- NUDIPU should advocate for Government to provide assistive devices. There are only 2 organizations in the country providing assistive devices and they are overwhelmed by the numbers of persons with disabilities that need these devices.
- Government provides computers to schools however the NUDIPU should advocate for installation of software packages for easy accessibility for persons with visual impairments.
- NUDIPU should also advocate for Bednets in all rehabilitation centers through the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development.

- NUDIPU should continue sensitizing the communities about the right nomenclature for Persons with disabilities and stereotypes in our cultures to use when speaking with Persons with Disabilities.
- Govt should think about making schools boarding so that parents don't keep carrying their children with disabilities to school everyday

She informed the gathering that her committee is currently conducting public consultations on the Employment Amendment Bill and she invited NUDIPU to present its issue paper on this subject so that the crucial matters concerning persons with disabilities are captured.

After her speech the minister was requested to hand over certificates to the founder members, and this was concluded with taking of photos with the minister.

10.0 NUDIPU'S ACHIEVEMENTS AT 35 YEARS AND LESSONS LEARNT

This presentation was made by Mr. Kalyango David, NUDIPU's Director Finance and Administration

Some of the numerous achievements underscored included:

- i. Advocated for the establishment of the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, hence its current existence.
- ii. Advocated for affirmative action of students with disabilities in the government universities. The current 64 slots for students with disabilities on affirmative action are a result of NUDIPU's successfully advocacy with government.
- iii. Acquisition of the NUDIPU Home. NUDIPU is located on plot 530 Bukoto-Kisaasi road and operates the day today affairs in her own home without paying rent dues.
- iv. Advocated for the establishment of special needs education department in the Ministry of Education and Sports.
- v. Conducted awareness on disability inclusion at various levels in the country and outside the country.

Some of the lessons learnt included:

- i. It is important to ensure that advocacy work goes beyond working with a single staff in an institution (whether a local Government, or MDA.) This is for purposes of sustainability.

- ii. Networking and collaborative advocacy with partners including Non-Government Organizations, Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and coalitions interests Government to address the given concern.
- iii. Disability inclusion is not an event, it is a process that takes time to achieve. Advocacy efforts therefore take long to be realized. It therefore requires patience and continued engagement without necessarily giving up.
- iv. Multistakeholder and integrated interventions for persons with disabilities leads to ownership, inclusion, effectiveness and sustainability of development.

11.0 PRESENTATION OF NUDIPU POSITION PAPER

This was made by David Nangosi, NUDIPU Program Officer

These were presented under two key themes namely:

A. UNDER POLICY INFLUENCE AND ADVOCACY

Disability and Disability Risk Reduction

- a. Lack of access to early warning information by persons with disabilities.
- b. Limited disability disaggregated data especially during assessments to show how persons with disabilities are impacted by different disaster risks.
- c. Persons with Disabilities face displacement as a result of the effects of climate change such as floods, landslides.
- d. Disasters are a threat to human health, including increase in mental health challenges as a result of the increase in disaster risks in the country including covid 19, ebola in additional to climate induced hazards.

Call to Action

- a. Capacity building of the leaders of Persons with Disabilities to counter, prevent and mitigate the increasing effects of climate change and sustain engagement in inclusive Climate change action and disaster risk reduction.
- b. Equipping and facilitating leaders of persons with disabilities in target areas with skills in Climate Smart Agriculture.
- c. Government and other mainstream actors should have deliberate efforts to include persons with disabilities in their interventions.
- d.

Disability and Gender

- a. Negative attitudes by the community and other stakeholders about inclusive programming for gender and disability inclusion.
- b. Institutional barriers characterized by inadequate facilities, skills, knowledge and expertise about Gender and disability inclusion.
- c. Inaccessibility of relevant services such as SRHR by Persons with Disabilities due to failure by service providers to take consideration of their needs.

- d. Limited participation of Persons with Disabilities to provide their input, insights, experience and knowledge in gender transformative programming by government and other mainstream actors.

Call to Action

- a. Fasttrack Domestic violence cases across the country against Persons with Disabilities.
- b. Intensify its efforts of making maternal health care services more accessible by allocating adequate resources.
- c. Increase budget allocation to the health sector by allocating 15% of the national budget as committed in the Abuja declaration to enable provision of Sexual Reproductive health services to persons with disabilities.
- d. Ensure universal access to family planning information and services by persons with disabilities.
- e. Invest in a country-wide sensitization program on reproductive information.

B. UNDER ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- a. Accessibility to information and premises. Some of the livelihood service providers have not provided inclusive services and this excludes Persons with Disabilities from accessing services such as Financial, Business development, employment, skilling and social protection.
- b. Attitudinal barriers. The society still perceives persons with disabilities as a risk or unable to involve, participate and contribute to livelihood. As such have been exempted deliberately from benefiting from livelihood interventions.
- c. Vicious circle of poverty. No income, No savings, No capital, No investment and No employment. Many persons with disabilities are engulfed in this cycle.

Call to Action

- a. Deliberately plan and address accessibility issues in all interventions at all levels by Persons with Disabilities.
- b. Use Multistakeholder approach to interventions for persons with disabilities. This will lead to ownership, leverage and synergy.
- c. Promote empowerment rather than charity approach to development. This will lead to transformation, equitable benefit and sustainability.
- d. Work with NUDIPU in building confidence of persons with disabilities as well as service providers as regards ability to participate, contribute and benefit from livelihood development.

12.0 CONCLUSION

Overall, the commemoration ceremony enabled NUDIPU to among others:

- i. Take stock of her achievements and lessons learned over its 35 years of existence with the support of its various founders, development partners and various well-wishers

- ii. Appreciate the key persons that contribute to these milestones
- iii. Develop and review its annual disability action plans which are presented during the International Day for Persons with disabilities celebrations on 3rd December annually.

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