



**Atlas
Alliance**



**Together
for Inclusion**

Together for Inclusion Progress Report 2022



Le village
mon ami Agali
ma mère Bonne heure
les jardins grand-père



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Overview	6
Total Expenditure	7
Background	9
Ethiopia.....	14
Mozambique	31
Niger	45
Somalia.....	58
South Sudan.....	74
Uganda.....	87
Summary of Results	102
Small Grants.....	105
Synergies and Positive Externalities	111
Disability Inclusion and Mainstreaming.....	113
Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning	116
Anti-Corruption and Risk Management.....	119

Front page photo: ADRA | Frank Spangler
 The photo shows a young girl in a classroom,
 she is wearing a green hijab and smiling at
 the camera.

Together for Inclusion

– a strategic partnership for equal rights and opportunities.

2019 marked the beginning of a new way of working for the Atlas Alliance. For the first time ever, Norwegian Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs) and their partners took the lead on a large-scale initiative to help fulfil the rights of persons with disabilities. Since 2019, DPOs have headed Together for Inclusion, a diverse consortium of Norwegian NGOs and DPOs, probably the only consortium of its kind in the world.



Marit Sørheim
Executive Director, the Atlas Alliance

When Norad announced a call for proposals for inclusion of persons with disabilities in 2019, a group of Norwegian organisations, headed by the Atlas Alliance, established a consortium in which DPOs and NGOs would learn from each other, and where the DPOs would be in the driver's seat. After a second round of funding in 2020, Together for Inclusion secured funding for an additional country and additional partners, bringing the total number of Norwegian organisations to 15; six DPOs and nine NGOs.

In 2022, the Atlas Alliance supported these DPOs and NGOs in implementing programmes to improve the lives of women and men, girls and boys with disabilities in 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 under the banner of the disability movement: Nothing about us without us.

The innovative approach of the Together for Inclusion consortium has enabled the Atlas organisations to explore new ways of working and collaborating, and we have acquired important lessons and experiences. These lessons learned are an important part for the design of our 2025-2029 programme, where we will merge the Together for Inclusion and the Leave No One Behind agreements, taking the best from both worlds.

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. In this 2022 progress report, we present the results of a successful year of implementation and results. 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. By working with a programmatic approach, the sum of our partnership is more than the total of the individual project. We have learned so much throughout this process and see how our work can be scaled up and replicated in other places. 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.

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
- The Stromme Foundation
- ADRA Norway
- Norwegian Church Aid
- YMCA / YWCA Norway
- Naturvernforbundet
- SOS Children's Villages
- The Development Fund

Implementing Countries

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

Total Expenditure

EXPENDITURE BY COUNTRY		
Country	Total Expenditure 2022 (NOK)	Percentage
Ethiopia	23,596,730	12%
Mozambique	27,219,759	14%
Niger	28,703,640	15%
Somalia	33,508,225	18%
South Sudan	21,087,149	11%
Uganda	44,465,360	23%
Norway	12,686,446	7%
TOTAL	191,267,309	100%

PROJECT EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA		
Thematic Area	Total Expenditure 2022 (NOK)	Percentage
Human Rights Advocacy	42,314,035	22%
Inclusive Education	120,109,633	63%
Economic Empowerment	28,843,643	15%
TOTAL	191,267,311	100%

EXPENDITURE FOR ORGANISATION 2022		
Organisation	Total Expenditure 2022 (NOK)	Percentage
The Norwegian Association for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (NFU)	6,098,032	3%
ADRA Norway	35,614,465	19%
SOS Children's Villages Norway	6,354,718	3%
The Development Fund	4,609,615	2%
Youth Mental Health Norway (YMHN)	862,295	0%
The Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted (NABP)	13,997,126	7%
Save the Children Norway	30,950,050	16%
Naturvernforbundet	4,296,363	2%
The Norwegian Federation of Organisations of Disabled People (FFO)	8,748,512	5%
Plan Norway	6,994,748	4%
Stromme Foundation	13,899,353	7%
Caritas	753,263	0%
The Norwegian Association of Disabled (NAD)	26,645,338	14%
Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)	6,103,769	3%

EXPENDITURE FOR ORGANISATION 2022		
Organisation	Total Expenditure 2022 (NOK)	Percentage
YGlobal	6,981,428	4%
The Norwegian Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (RHF)	5,271,789	3%
FOKUS	400,000	0%
The Atlas Alliance Secretariat	12,686,446	7%
TOTAL DIRECT PROJECT COSTS	191,267,310	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 – and aims to reach the most marginalised 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 Sustainable Development Goals, mainly goals #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 grant's mechanism combined with practical education in inclusive development, which responds to needs that emerge along the way.

Six countries - Mozambique, Niger, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, and Ethiopia (starting in 2021) – were selected to generate maximum learning in different contexts. The list includes countries with strong disability movements who have signed and ratified the UN CRPD (and in some cases also the Optional Protocol) as well as countries who 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 utilising the Washington Group Questions on Disability as part of their national statistical work, while others have yet to start using this.

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, F, 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, the Stromme Foundation, FFO and the Niger 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, Y Global, Norwegian Church Aid, the 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, The 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.

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 marginalised 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



Two young students wearing colorful hijabs working at their desk in the classroom (Photo: ADRA | Frank Sprangler)

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 Sustainable Development Goals; 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 reaching 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.
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 entrepreneur 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 programmes.

Ethiopia

Basliel Dereje Derbew, ninth grade student with an autism spectrum diagnosis

Mrs. Tiruwork and her husband have four children. Their second child, Basliel, is 16 years old has an autism spectrum diagnosis. In the beginning, Mrs. Tiruwork didn't understand her son's issue, so she went from place to place in search of a solution. In the end, Basliel was diagnosed with autism and Mrs. Tiruwork was told that there was no specific treatment for it.

The situation was very challenging for Basliel's parents. They didn't have any information about autism, neither its cause nor its treatment. Furthermore, Basliel's speech was regressing, and they were increasingly unable to communicate with him about his needs and desires. Taking care of him was demanding and balancing their attention between Basliel and his siblings was very hard for the parents.

Mrs. Tiruwork received a lot of criticism and judgment about her parenting from people who didn't understand her child's situation. Basliel's education also suffered, as schools were reluctant to accept him, saying he was restless and disruptive and would disturb others. However, Mrs. Tiruwork did not give up the fight, and despite the many challenges, Basliel is now in the ninth grade.

Funded by TOFI, Natanim's psychologist established group counselling for parents whose children were frequently absent or had dropped out of school. The parents shared their experiences, and most parents mentioned that they have maladaptive practices at home. Mrs. Tiruwork said it had been possible for her son to advance to the ninth grade because she had fought hard and done everything with patience and unconditional love. As a result of the group counselling, another mother was able to return her autistic child to school.

Natanim will share Basliel's and his parents' story on social media, create a training manual based on the story, and invite other parents to share their experiences. Raising awareness among parents of children with and without disabilities in this way can teach and motivate others to overcome obstacles and effect change.



Mrs. Tiruwork, Basliel, and three more members of their family in a garden full of flowers

Kirubel Anteneh, self-advocacy trainer for others with intellectual disabilities



Kirubel laughing in front of a wall with many posters as his mother photographs him.

Kirubel Anteneh (21) has an intellectual disability. His mother first learned about his disability when he was six years old, when she saw his difficulty in learning and understanding things. As Kirubel's condition became more noticeable, his mother took him to different hospitals, but they were not able to give her any concrete diagnosis. Finally, she took him to Mekane Eyesus, a school where children with intellectual disabilities can get educational support. At the school, Kirubel received vocational and life skill training for almost seven years.

When he turned 16, Kirubel joined FENAID where he started training on the CRPD and self-advocacy for persons with intellectual disabilities. The training changed his life in many ways. It made him aware of his rights, gave him confidence, and encouraged him to stand up for himself and others. Currently, through TOFI funding, he works for FENAID as a self-advocate lead. In this role, he represents persons with intellectual disabilities, provides trainings for other members, and holds short, daily reviews of the different articles of the CRPD.

Recently, Kirubel started a TikTok account where he shares information about disability rights and inclusion and inspires other persons with intellectual disabilities. He also takes part in the FENAID dance group and is a participant in the Special Olympics.

More inclusive schools in Addis Ababa and Bahir Dar

In order to promote inclusive education and create a friendly school environment for students with disabilities, Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and school management must be onboard. Therefore, trainings on the education rights of children with disabilities were organised by SOS Children's Villages Ethiopia for 52 PTA members in Addis Ababa and Bahir Dar target schools. The schools have since shown great improvement in this regard. For example, teachers now report to special needs experts when children with disabilities miss classes. The training also enabled teachers to teach in disability inclusive classes with many deaf students. One teacher and vice principal in Menelik II school in Addis Ababa showed their interest by learning sign language on their own. This teacher now helps to interpret messages for deaf students.

Teachers cleared school pathways of rocks to make them more accessible, and a first-floor library was moved to the ground floor to make it accessible for students with disabilities. Teachers properly respond to the needs of students with disabilities during exams, and in Bahir Dar schools are left open for students with disabilities on weekends so they can use the libraries, toilets and showers. Moreover, target schools have planned to modify their registration form to include several types of disabilities for the new school year starting in September.

Introduction

Key Figures

Estimated Population:	120,283,026 (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Population Under the Age of 15:	40% (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Urban Population (of Total Population):	22% (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Urban Population Growth:	4.8% (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Human Development Index (HDI) Ranking:	175 (of 191) (UNDP 2023; 2020 data)
Gender Inequality Index Ranking:	129 (of 170) (UNDP 2023; 2021 data)
Poverty Headcount Ratio at \$2.15 a Day (2017 PPP) (Percent of Population):	27% (World Bank 2023; 2015 data)
Adult Literacy Rate:	52% (World Bank 2023; 2017 data)
Life Expectancy at Birth:	65 years (UNDP 2023; 2021 data)

Child Mortality Rate (Under 5, per 1,000 Live Births):	47 (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Mean Years of Schooling:	202 (UNDP 2023; 2021 data)
Gross National Income (GNI) per Capita (2017 PPP \$):	2,361 (UNDP 2023; 2021 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 2022, Norwegian development aid to Ethiopia amounted to NOK 868.8 million, of which 246.8 million went to environment and energy projects, 140.5 million to education, 79.6 million to civil society, good governance and conflict prevention, and 56.9 million to the health and social sector.

Persons with Disabilities in Ethiopia

There are few reliable, up-to-date national statistics on disability 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 in 2016 estimated that almost eight million Ethiopians have a disability.

While Ethiopia has experienced rapid economic growth over the last few years, rural areas are yet to benefit significantly from this growth. The government estimates that 95% of Ethiopians with disabilities 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. Many parents therefore hide their disabled child at home. As a result, maybe as few as 3% of children with disabilities, go to school in Ethiopia. A consequence of exclusion from education is that many adults with disabilities cannot take part in the regular work force but must depend on family support and/or begging.

Ethiopia ratified the CRPD in 2010, yet no domestic law has been adopted to ensure 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.

An internal conflict broke out in the Tigray region in 2020 and later spilled into the neighbouring provinces of Amhara and Afar. According to the IOM, the conflict has resulted in a humanitarian crisis with an estimated 2.75 million internally displaced persons. After almost two years of internal conflict, in November 2022 the Ethiopian government and the Tigrayan Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF) signed an agreement to cease hostilities.

A severe drought has also caused a widespread humanitarian crisis and an estimated 10% of the population are at risk of famine in the southern parts of the country. The Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Food Programme mentions Ethiopia as one of 18 high risk hunger “hotspots” at risk in 2023.

Description of the Country Programme

Together for Inclusion Ethiopia is a collaboration between Norwegian Disabled Persons’ Organisations (DPOs), NGOs, and their local partners / country offices.

The Norwegian organisations include:

1. The Norwegian Association for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (NFU)
2. The Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted (NABP)
3. Youth Mental Health Norway (YMHN / MHU)
4. The Development Fund (DF) Norway
5. SOS Children’s Villages (SOS) Norway
6. Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Norway

The Ethiopian organisations include:

1. The Federation of Associations of Persons with Disabilities (FEAPD)
2. Fikir - Ethiopian National Association on Intellectual Disability (FENAID)
3. Ethiopian National Association of the Blind (ENAB)
4. Natanim Consultancy and Training PLC
5. The Development Fund (DF) Ethiopia
6. Women Empowerment Action (WE-Action)
7. Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Ethiopia
8. Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara (ORDA)
9. SOS Children’s Villages Ethiopia

NFU is the overall Country Lead of the consortium, while FEAPD had the coordinating role among the Ethiopian organisations in 2022.

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 organisations. The programme aims to strengthen DPOs as representatives of persons with disabilities, their role in improving access to education and financial services, and their advocacy for human rights for persons with disabilities.



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**Transformative Solutions for inclusive development:
The Role of Innovation in fulfilling an Accessible and
Equitable World.**

**Addis Ababa ,Adama and Bahirdar.
December, 2022.**



Banner from seminar on Inclusive Development in Addis Ababa, December 2022. The text in Ethiopian and English says “Transformative Solutions for Inclusive Development: The Role of Innovation in Fulfilling an Accessible and Equitable World. Addis Ababa, Adama and Bahirdar, December 2022 (in the Ethiopian text, the year is 2015).

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 (18% 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 live 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. Children and adults with intellectual disabilities and their families are particularly affected by discrimination as well as staggering 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



Two rows of women sitting on white plastic chairs making yarn on spinning wheels in the FENAID courtyard.

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

Lack of access to financial services is a major obstacle for establishing a livelihood, particularly for women with disabilities. Persons with disabilities face significant barriers to accessing equal amounts of microfinance compared to persons who are not disabled. Local groups, farmer organisations and other associations also often fail or are resistant to including persons with disabilities. Saving and credit group members are hesitant to include persons with disabilities because they are perceived as having poor economic capacity.

The project addresses this gap by facilitating access to savings and credit groups for persons with disabilities, as well as self-employment initiatives such as training in entrepreneur skills, access to start-up grants, and long-term supervision and follow-up to strengthen the sustainability of new businesses. It also links 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 them in their

communities. Cultural beliefs and practices present a major barrier to inclusion. Stigma may lead parents to not apply for a birth certificate, and/or not pursue available early childhood care or primary school for their disabled child(ren).

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. There are policy statements and guidelines on inclusive education, but implementation is poor. No specific budget is earmarked for inclusive education, manifesting in a lack of accessible school infrastructure for children with disabilities, as well as of qualified teachers and relevant curriculum and learning materials. The roles played by duty bearers, particularly the Ministry of Education, in promoting inclusive education is weak. Both the Ministry and teachers have limited competence on inclusion, resulting in schools lacking methods and ability to identify the 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 equity in access and participation and at responding positively to the individual learning needs and competencies of all children.

Mental Health

TOFI Ethiopia has an important cross-cutting focus on mental health. In Ethiopia, mental illness constitutes a significant but largely unrecognised barrier to 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, poor physical health, and violence than their high-income counterparts. Children with physical or cognitive disabilities have additional risk of developing mental health issues and there is correlation between poor academic achievement and mental illness. Evidence indicates that between 17% and 23% of Ethiopian children suffer from a mental issue.

Despite the existence of affordable and effective treatments, fewer than one in ten of the most severely affected ever receive the treatment they need. These statistics show that mental illnesses have been overlooked as a major health issue in Ethiopia and other LMICs and underscore the need for public health programmes to target 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. The programme provides psychosocial support directly to individuals and their families and works towards increasing the knowledge and experience of DPOs, health practitioners, teachers, and support staff on how to identify and support children with mental health issues.

Context: Covid-19 and Conflict

Covid-19 did not have a significant effect on the project's implementation progress in Ethiopia in 2022. However, the country's internal conflict did to some degree affect the work. We-Action had to temporarily evacuate their project

office, SOS were forced to postpone community dialogues, and FENAID and ENAB incurred additional costs for air transport due to security concerns on the road. The internal conflict and the general global situation affected the costs of different activities, as did foreign currency rates, which in turn impacted the price of imported materials. The cost of offices, venues for trainings, office equipment and supplies, and transportation increased at an alarming rate. The organisations worked hard to keep project costs down but were not always able to provide planned services to participants.

Highlights and Selected Results



A woman talks in front of a relief map of Africa and a banner announcing the Ethiopian National Association of the Blind's celebration of International Braille Day; the banner, which has text in both Ethiopian and English, says "Spread awareness about the importance of Braille".

Human Rights Advocacy

OUTPUT 1112: BEHAVIOUR CHANGE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY DELIVERED TO FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES ON RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND HOW TO PROMOTE THOSE RIGHTS.

The project aims to promote behavioural change in communities related to the rights of persons with disabilities and to empower people with disabilities to claim their rights. This was achieved through awareness raising campaigns, community conversation sessions and trainings, as well as celebrations of International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Mental Health Day and Leprosy Day. The campaigns reached an estimated 11,000 community members and led to an increase in the number of DPO volunteers. The sessions also led to behavioural change among local government service bodies, who in some areas went on to provide offices for DPOs. As a result of TOFI advocacy, Alert Hospital in Addis Ababa decided to open a psychiatric ward staffed by experts. To monitor

change, partners have been using pre- and post-tests, focus group discussions, client witnesses, and volunteer door-to-door visits.

OUTPUT 1133: GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION, POLICIES, AND PLANS REVIEWED AND REVISED FOR INCLUSIVITY.

One of the recommendations of the UN CRPD Committee is that Ethiopia should take legislative measures to realise different provisions of the Convention. There is currently a lack of strong and binding legislation on the rights of persons with disabilities, which has long been a concern for Ethiopian DPOs. In December 2021, years of advocacy efforts finally led to a draft Disability Act which was sent to the DPOs for comments. Unfortunately, the DPOs had not been consulted in the drafting process, and they were not satisfied with the wording of the Act.

Advocacy efforts from the DPOs led to an agreement with the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, where the DPOs were given the opportunity to re-draft the Act. Through TOFI funding, an expert committee was established and workshop were held. An updated draft Act was submitted to the Ministry in March 2022, and the Ministry subsequently revised the draft.

While several suggestions were accepted by the Ministry, the TOFI consortium was still not content with the result. In November and December 2022, two negotiation workshops were therefore held between Ministry representatives and DPOs. This time, the consortium was more successful in convincing the Ministry, who accepted most of their input – a major step in the right direction. The final revision of the draft Act is now pending with the Ministry.

Inclusive Education

OUTPUT 1213: CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IDENTIFIED AND REFERRED TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SERVICES.

It is necessary to identify the type, nature, and severity of disabilities of children to deliver the type of support and care receptive to their needs. TOFI Ethiopia has therefore worked to screen children with disabilities to identify their impairments and provide them with assistive devices and medical care.

ENAB, ADRA, SOS, and Natanim conducted the identification and screening of 1026 children, using the Washington Group sets of questions, and data was collected by professionals and project volunteers using the Key Informant Method. Moreover, clinical screening was conducted for 850 students and out-of-school children. The confidence of the children's families was increased as they saw their children treated without discrimination by health professionals. The screening created an opportunity for the families to share experiences and discuss challenges. As a follow-up, assistive devices, health care, psychosocial support, and material support services such as transportation fees, stipends, food, and house rent were provided for the children with disabilities and their families, improving the children's ability to attend school and perform well in class. For example, in Bahir Dar, children who had been about to drop out were among the high scorers after receiving TOFI assistance.

OUTPUT 1231: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EDUCATION STAFF ON QUALITY INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PRACTICE.

In 2022, the TOFI consortium continued to implement the Inclusive Learning Approach (ILA) in 16 target schools, with the support of the Enabling Education Network (EENET). SOS, ENAB, and ADRA identified principal trainers (PTs) from the schools and teacher training universities and institutions, as well as observers from the education bureaus. The PTs, trained by EENET, will cascade the training for schoolteachers, while the observers will observe the pre- and post-training changes and provide reports for the co-facilitators and concerned government offices for support. During 2022, 1393 teachers in target schools were successfully trained on Module 1 of the ILA which introduces the concepts and theories of inclusive education and active participatory learning methods.

Trained teachers indicated that the approach gave them different methods for how to involve and include students with different disabilities. As a result of the training, they were planning to change their teaching methodology. They also started assigning individual students in the classrooms to assist students with disabilities, and some teachers started to conduct action research on issues related to students with disabilities. The training also strengthened the collaboration skills and techniques used by the three TOFI partners, as they worked jointly to implement the approach.

Specialised skills trainings were also conducted for teachers. ENAB provided a five-day practical training on the use of the Orbit 20 (an electronic braille display device) for 16 (F7; M9) teachers with visual impairments. As a result, the teachers were able to prepare their notes and exams without the support of others. Natanim trained 450 (F163; M287) teachers and special need experts on mental health, 100 (F52; M48) teachers on the inclusion of students with special needs, and 80 (F42; M38) teachers on how to identify and assess children with autism. As a result, awareness was raised among teachers and school administrative bodies, increasing the respect for the rights of children. The trainings enabled teachers to pay attention to students' mental health, manage day-to-day classroom activities, and give advice to parents of children exhibiting signs of autism.

Economic Empowerment

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

In 2022, ORDA, WE-Action and SOS provided trainings on market relevant income generating skills for 1401 persons with disabilities and their caregivers. Vocational trainings were provided in tailoring, chicken rearing, hair dressing, shoat (a sheep-goat hybrid) rearing, and the like. Following the trainings, the organisations provided trainees with start-up



Three men working at looms in a big room with white plaster walls at FENAIID's weaving workshop in Addis Ababa

capital support such as financial and in-kind support (chicken, sheep, laundry machines, electric stoves, etc.). Based on this, participants with disabilities and their caregivers were able to engage in income generating activities (IGA). When ORDA evaluated the impact of the IGA engagement through focus group discussions, they found that participants had improved their income and started to earn money from their businesses. One IGA participant explained: "I have become a respected person in the community, since I can do any business that persons without disabilities can do, and I will help other persons with disabilities in our savings and loan group".

ENAB further conducted several trainings on basic pre-job skills and CV development for around 300 graduates with various disabilities. As a result, 28 persons have since landed permanent jobs and are now earning an income. Other graduates were connected with industrial parks. An external evaluation of these trainings is being conducted.

Challenges and Adaptations

During the implementation period, an external audit uncovered mismanagement of TOFI funds by the Federation of Ethiopian Associations of Persons with Disabilities (FEAPD). Based on these findings, Norad requested the repayment of part of the grant, and FEAPD was consequently suspended from the TOFI consortium. This impeded the consortium's coordination and collaboration efforts as FEAPD had served as the local coordinating partner. As the Ethiopian umbrella DPO, FEAPD had also advocated towards the government and had kept good relations with DPOs outside the TOFI consortium. FEAPD's absence thus weakened the consortium's contact with government and other stakeholders. In the coming project period, remaining TOFI partners will need to scale up their own political relationships to compensate for what was lost with FEAPD's exit.

Inflation impacted activities through a significant increase in the cost of all project inputs. Material suppliers were also reluctant to submit quotes out of concern for rising prices. This issue took time away from project implementation, and partners were not always able to provide the planned number of materials.

TOFI partners continued to face challenges with the TOFI Routine Monitoring Tool (RMT). Restricted access to the RMT meant that local partners could not access or download summary data. The lack of funding for in-person meetings and trainings of the M&E working group posed a challenge to identify and resolve issues timely. However, regular digital meetings were held every month.

The implementation of the Inclusive Learning Approach (ILA) was delayed in 2021, but the implementation pace has since picked up. Adapting the training modules to the Ethiopian education system and curriculum has, however, taken more time than anticipated. As a result, the consortium was only able to implement the first ILA module in 2022. In an effort to further streamline coordination, the three ILA partner organisations collaborated on the recruitment of a joint ILA coordinator in mid-2022.

Other challenges in 2022 include the turnover of staff and focal persons, budget coordination, lack of local implementation permits, as well as expectations from participants to receive incentive payments. The consortium has met these challenges by adapting their plans and communicating more clearly.

Collaboration and Harmonisation

The TOFI consortium for Ethiopia is structured in the following way:

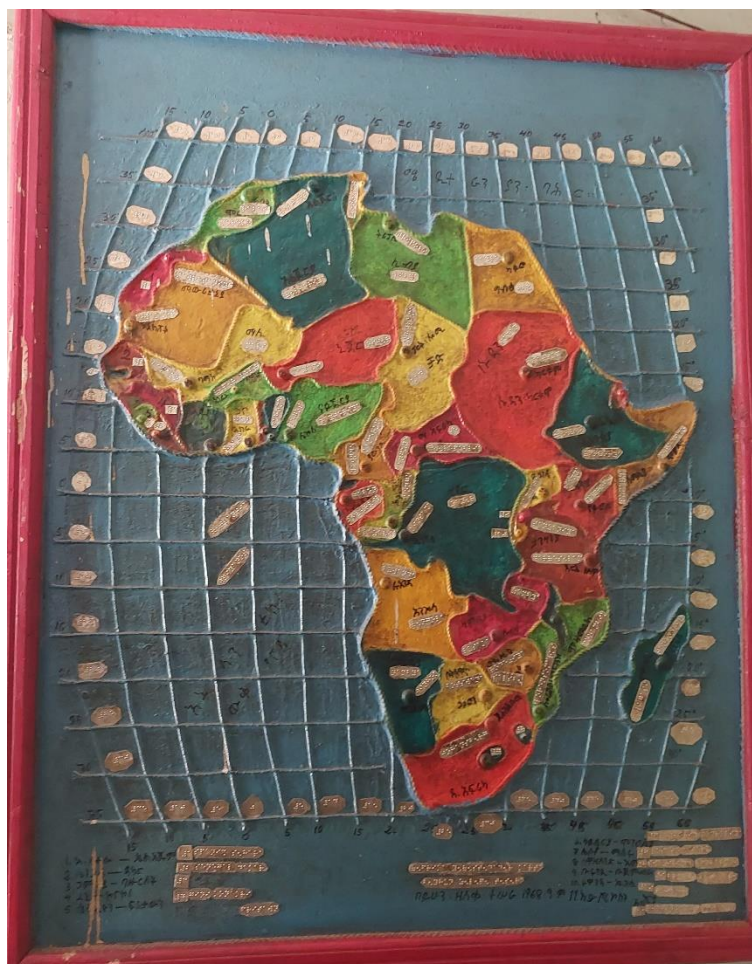
1. The Country Technical Committee (CTC) is comprised of one representative from each of the implementing organisations in Ethiopia. The CTC has the overall responsibility for monitoring implementation progress and challenge mitigation. The CTC has met regularly to discuss coordination issues and to draft reports. The CTC is led by the Country Consortium Coordinator, who in 2022 was employed by FEAPD.
2. There are three thematic groups: Human Rights Advocacy (led by ENAB), Inclusive Education (led by SOS), and Economic Empowerment (led by DF). The groups have met monthly to ensure the coordination of activities. The groups also draft and amend the thematic work plans.
3. There is also a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) working group, led by Natanim. The group is responsible for coordinating M&E efforts and monitoring / analysing data on project activities.
4. Meetings were also conducted in the three thematic networks for relevant external stakeholders.
5. In addition to these structures, there is regular bilateral communication and coordination between TOFI partner organisations on individual activity implementation.
6. The Norwegian consortium partners met monthly in 2022.

7. The Country Lead and the Country Consortium Coordinator have met digitally on a weekly basis in 2022.
8. Several partner visits to Ethiopia were conducted by the Norwegian partner organisations in 2022. However, a technical issue related to the Ethiopian visa application website has prevented some partners from obtaining visas for their visits.

The distinction between mental illness and intellectual disability is not always clear to Ethiopian stakeholders. In order to raise awareness, FENAID and Natanim partnered to facilitate a one-day workshop for 55 (F16; M39) participants from TOFI partner organisations, other DPOs, and government stakeholders on this topic. The workshop provided information on how to include participants with intellectual disabilities or mental health issues in public or project activities. The workshop also enabled DPOs to share their knowledge with other NGOs and government stakeholders. In addition, the workshop enhanced the awareness of families of children with intellectual disabilities to identify and clearly differentiate intellectual disability and

mental health for linkage to the right service providers. Later, the Ministry of Labor and Skills invited FENAID's intellectual disability dance group to celebrate the annual Children's Day in the presence of different government stakeholders, ministers, and international organisations. This kind of visibility and appreciation for persons with intellectual disability is rare in Ethiopia, and it showed that the workshop content had been understood by the Ministry.

The collaboration between ENAB and SOS in Addis Ababa and Bahir Dar has been particularly successful. SOS has seen the importance of including DPOs in their activities. As a result, SOS has received certificates of appreciation for their inclusivity from several stakeholders. In return, the collaboration has provided



Colourful relief map of Africa with information in Braille; on the wall of the offices of the Ethiopian National Association of the Blind in Addis Ababa.

ENAB with exposure to SOS' vast network and partnership with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

Added Value

Based on TOFI's reputation and an interest in becoming more inclusive, Save the Children Ethiopia asked TOFI for capacity development of their staff. Five of their staff were subsequently included in a two-day training on Disability Inclusion in International Programmes, held by the Atlas Alliance in June 2022.

Natanim's counselling efforts and the positive effect on patients has prompted the All-Africa Leprosy Rehabilitation and Training Center (ALERT) Medical Center to start its own psychiatry ward. This ward provides mental health services which were previously physically and economically inaccessible for many patients.

As a result of Natanim's two years' work with the humanitarian organisation Hope for Kora, and the good impact of this collaboration, Hope for Kora has now assigned a regular psychosocial support counsellor for women who have children with disabilities.

In an effort to make schools accessible for students with disabilities, SOS initiated an accessibility audit by an expert from Empower Persons with Disabilities Ethiopia. The auditor analyses the whole school compound to identify accessibility barriers and provides an audit report. The audit helps to identify all gaps the schools have and make school management aware of what needs to be done to become more accessible. This experience helped ENAB and ADRA to follow similar procedures before conducting any accessibility modification.

In the project areas of ORDA and WE-Action, the local government started an information desk for persons with physical disabilities. They are now making efforts to be more inclusive when engaging in community work and services.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Women's Rights and Gender Equality

TOFI consortium partners have made efforts to ensure gender equality and the protection of women's rights throughout the implementation of the project. Data is disaggregated on gender, and follow-up is done where the gender balance is not as expected or where the needs of for instance women are not adequately met. In TOFI project management, the CTC has four female and three male members, and all four working groups are led by women.

In economic empowerment activities, priority was given to female headed households in agricultural input and training provision, loan access, and other interventions. All trainings were provided for both genders. The strategy to avoid unintended harm or gender relation gap was improved through monthly meetings and community discussions, and no negative consequences were reported on gender related issues.

Through psychoeducation and individual and group counselling, Natanim assisted Hope for Kora's female beneficiaries who have children with disabilities.

Because of their children's situation, the women had divorced and were stigmatised and discriminated. The training helped build their self-help skills, self-esteem, and capacity for active involvement.

Human Rights

Human rights are a sensitive topic in Ethiopia. This poses challenges for projects like TOFI. The security situation in the country remained tense in 2022, and the government is on high alert. It is important that the consortium's awareness raising efforts do not cause harm to other human rights actors or worsen their situation. The consortium did not record any such effects in 2022, but remains cautious, especially towards government stakeholders.

The Inclusive Learning Approach focuses on children with disabilities, but also provides teachers and school management with methods to include children with other challenges. Trainings on child protection and mental health for Parent Teacher Associations, teachers, and school management contribute to an improved situation for all children in the target schools as the school community is empowered to see and respond to the needs of all students.

Climate Change and the Environment

Throughout the project period, the consortium members have taken measures to properly utilise resources and avoid unnecessary waste. 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 pollution as well as costs. Guidelines for economic empowerment activities prevent TOFI participants from earning money through the sale of charcoal or wood.

The project promoted climate smart technologies and practices in economic empowerment interventions to tackle the effects of climate change. For example, TOFI supported beneficiaries in the provision of climate adaptive seed varieties and provided technical support on climate smart agriculture practices and technologies.

Anti-Corruption

As mentioned above, one case of mismanagement of funds was uncovered during the project period. Lessons learned from this situation have been shared with the consortium, including information on Norad and Atlas requirements and tips on how to follow these. NFU also gave a presentation on the case for Atlas partner organisations in Oslo.

All remaining TOFI partners have taken a stand against mismanagement and corruption and implement a zero-tolerance policy. The case was enlightening for all partners, and there is now increased focus on following all relevant policies, regulations, rules, and procedures.

To avoid future cases, the consortium conducts regular discussions and/or reviews with all partners and key stakeholders on anti-mismanagement policies

and procedures, ethical guidelines, and staff codes of conduct. Anti-corruption and financial management policies are in place and supported by annual external financial audits as well as internal financial and organisational reviews. The TOFI per diem policy ensures transparent and accountable use of project budgets.

Going Forward

As a result of FEAPD's suspension from the TOFI consortium, FENAID is taking over the Country Coordinator position as of January 2023. The consortium is in dialogue with FEAPD to ensure constructive collaboration as FEAPD is the Ethiopian umbrella disability organisation and therefore involved in many of the same advocacy issues as the TOFI consortium.

The consortium plans a comprehensive one-week workshop in Addis Ababa in March 2023 for all Ethiopian and Norwegian TOFI staff. The agenda includes updating the results framework, setting new targets for the cost extension period, and planning future activities and collaborations.

A major political priority for the consortium in 2023 is to secure the adaptation of the Disability Act. As mentioned above, the draft Act is still pending with the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, and organised advocacy efforts are needed to ensure that the draft which is submitted to Parliament includes the DPOs' recommendations. Work is also needed to ensure that the Act is adopted by Parliament. The Norwegian Embassy in Addis Ababa could play an important role in supporting these efforts.

Mozambique

Overcoming Social Exclusion

Elisabeth Xavier began to have difficulty walking at the age of two due to meningitis. Her parents consulted several doctors who advised her to do physiotherapy. However, after three months of therapy the family stopped the treatment because they were not seeing any results. She is the eldest of five siblings. Seeing her siblings at school so often, she felt very lonely at home and asked her parents to go to school too. At the age of 15, she began studying at the



Elisabeth wearing a red top and standing next to her brightly lit popcorn machine.

special school of College of ADEMO. The school was a few kilometres away from her home, however as Elisabeth travels a bit slower than others, it took her and her companion over an hour to get there. At school she was very shy and got nervous when she saw other girls and boys talking and playing.

After three years, she categorically refused to go back to school because she could not write since she had difficulty holding a pen. She returned home, incredibly sad, and did not talk to anyone. Her parents asked her what else she would like to do to feel happy and she chose to start a business. She wanted to support herself, buy whatever she wanted and save money, just like her siblings.

Elisabeth was nominated by community leaders to participate in the TOFI project. When Kulima, ACAMO and FAMOD were identifying programme participants, they saw Elisabeth and she was then selected by the committee.

In 2021, Elisabeth received a popcorn machine through the TOFI Project. She got many clients in the area, including students from the nearby school. This business brought changes to her life, giving her a sense of purpose, which raised her self-esteem. She also participates in a savings and loan group. At the end of each saving cycle, she uses part of the money to pay down the popcorn machine and buys basic products. Elisabeth now contributes to her family's economy. Furthermore, she has now access to a banking system, where she deposits the money that she wants to save.

Due to her commitment to the business and serving her loan before everyone else, she continues being part of economic empowerment activities in 2022. This involved raising chickens at her aunt's house, close to Elisabeth's home.

Elisabeth's aunt, excited about her niece's hard work, offered her another popcorn machine located in the place where she raises the chickens. Elisabeth has now two popcorn machines, a chicken farming business, contributes to her family's economy, has a bank account, and feels an important member of her family and her community.

Nhamadjesa's Primary School Inclusion Team

Ana Zeferino, a teacher, and coordinator of the School Inclusion Team has successfully organised and led community awareness actions in collaboration with other groups such as the Community Committee for Child Protection, School Council, and Children's Center. These efforts aimed to promote human rights and identify children in need of educational support within the school and the community. The initiative started in late November 2021 and resulted in the rescue of four dropouts. It also resulted in the identification of nine children with disabilities who were enrolled in school. Thanks to Ana's dedicated efforts, learners with disability are now benefiting from the teaching and learning process.



Ana Zeferino, Coordinator of the School Inclusion Team, Seated at a Desk.

Ana explains her strategy for a successful initiative like this:

"I mobilised and organised meetings with my team and other groups in the community, including the zone leader. At school, I talked a lot with our students during the singing of the national anthem to help us identify children with disabilities. The community leader invited me to participate in one of the neighbourhood meetings where I talked about inclusive education and the rights of children, especially children with disabilities. I asked the parents to approach us at school if they had children or knew of other families with out-of-school children to send them to school."

In 2021, the school had a population of 2,810 learners, of which 61 were students with disabilities. In 2022, out of 2,823, 162 are learners with disabilities, which means that the work carried out by the School Inclusion Team contributed to an increase in students with disabilities at this school.

“We are satisfied with the results that the school is gradually achieving, this is the result of the interaction and efforts between the school inclusion team and the community. The increase in students with disabilities is a palpable fact of this work triggered by the school inclusion team combined with what we have learned in the in-service training organised by TOFI. The data speaks for itself, for example we received here parents who transferred their children with disabilities from private schools to this school,” pointed out the Deputy Director of School.



School director Felix Cabissira Massiriva, seated at a desk in front of a window.

The Nhamadjessa community is witnessing a significant transformation because of the ongoing efforts to promote inclusive education approaches. The community members have demonstrated remarkable involvement and commitment to support these initiatives. They are collaborating closely with the School Inclusion Team to identify and provide educational services for children with disabilities. This joint effort is proving to be successful in fostering an inclusive learning environment that is supportive of all children, regardless of their abilities.

“With the work we did in the community, we were able to recover four students from the 4th and 5th grade who were out of school and we supported the enrollment of 10 new students with disabilities in the first grade. Every school, from employees, teachers and students support our children and with that, our school environment is improving, dispelling prejudices that are harmful to inclusive education”

~ Ana Zeferino

The school management is satisfied with the performance of the school inclusion teams to make the Nhamadjessa school a safe and inclusive learning place for all children regardless of their condition and praises the dedication and social commitment of the inclusion coordinator.

“The IE coordinator is very strong, a lady dedicated to the work entrusted to her. The whole community already knows that the school has the capacity to receive and take care of any child with a disability, the TOFI project is helping a lot, the community committees, school councils, children's centre and other teachers have been endowed with knowledge in the area of inclusive educational package and that freed many people”, added the Deputy Director of the School.

Introduction

Key Figures

According to data from the 2017 CENSUS, Mozambique has a total population of **27,909,798**, of which 13,348,446 are Men and 14,561,352 are Women, of this

number **727,620** are people with disabilities being 372,061 Men and 355,559 Women.

Over the years many institutions have been updating this data in various variables as shown below:

Estimated Population:	32,077.07 (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Population Under the Age of 15:	44% (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Urban Population (of Total Population):	38% (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Urban Population Growth:	4.3% (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Human Development Index (HDI) Ranking:	184 (of 191) (UNDP 2023; 2020 data)
Gender Inequality Index Ranking:	136 (of 170) (UNDP 2023; 2021 data)
Poverty Headcount Ratio at \$2.15 a Day (2017 PPP) (Percent of Population):	64.6% (World Bank 2023; 2014 data)
Adult Literacy Rate:	63% (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Life Expectancy at Birth:	59.3 years (UNDP 2023; 2021 data)
Child Mortality Rate (Under 5, per 1,000 Live Births):	70 (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Mean Years of Schooling:	3.2 (UNDP 2023; 2021 data)
Gross National Income (GNI) per Capita (2017 PPP \$):	1 198 (UNDP 2023; 2021 data)

Norway and Mozambique

Mozambique has been an important partner country for Norway for many years, for instance in energy production and distribution. In Mozambique, this cooperation has resulted in new power production and widespread electrification of the rural areas. In 2022, bilateral aid to Mozambique reached NOK 493,2 million. Of these funds, 154 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 have 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 stigmatised, discriminated against, and excluded from benefits and social participation at all levels. The marginalisation and stigmatisation 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 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (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 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 the Country Programme

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

1. ACAMO, the Association of Blind and Partially Sighted of Mozambique

2. FAMOD, the Mozambiquan federation of Disabled Persons' Organisations
3. Save the Children Mozambique
4. ADEL-Sofala, the Agency for Local Economic Development of Sofala
5. KULIMA, NGO working for integrated socio-economic development
6. Livaningo, NGO working for human rights and the environment

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 collaboration creates synergies between major mainstream development actors and the disability movement in Mozambique.

This programme aims to create disability inclusion practises in three key thematic areas: Human Rights Advocacy, Economic Empowerment, and Inclusive Education. The programme is designed with and implemented in partnership with Mozambican partner organisations. It focuses on strengthening Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs) as representative organisations of persons with disabilities. This gives them an active role in improving access to education and financial services, along with being advocates for the human rights for persons with disabilities.

TOFI Mozambique complements the ongoing Norad funded projects and programmes of the various organisations. These projects address institutional and systemic barriers by using proven models and methods in their interventions. With their long-term experience working in Mozambique with local communities and participatory processes, the projects empower children, community members, and civil society.

The CRPD is the starting point for the programme in Mozambique. This means promoting, protecting, and ensuring the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights of persons with disabilities. Furthermore, it involves promoting 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.

Highlights and Selected Results



Outdoor training session on labour laws for persons with disabilities in the district of Dondo; some 20 men and women are attending, most of them sitting while listening to a man in a wheelchair who is talking (Photo: FAMOD)

OUTPUT 1124: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR DPOS TO MONITOR AND REPORT ON CRPD AND SDG IMPLEMENTATION.

ACAMO and FAMOD completed the elaboration of the civil society report (also known as a shadow report) on the implementation of CRPD. It serves as an alternative report to the one presented by the Mozambican government in 2018 to the United Nations, on the implementation of the CRPD in the country. The shadow report has been developed in consultation with DPOs across Mozambique and is a collection of experiences of persons with disabilities and civil society organisations. It is the result of institutional capacity building in DPOs to monitor and report on the implementation of the CRPD, as well as on national legislation. Furthermore, it is especially important to human rights organisations because it provides a basis for comparison for the United Nations Commission on governmental reporting.

OUTPUT 1131: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND NGO STAFF IN CRPD AND SDG.

In 2022, the first Conference on Disability and Human Rights was held by the TOFI consortium. The conference served to mark the 10th anniversary of the ratification of the CRPD by the Mozambican State. Representatives from Government, United Nations Organisations, International Partners, Civil Society Organisations, and Academics attended the conference. The conference resulted in several recommendations and commitments, for example:

1. The government expressed its technical limitations in fully understanding the CRPD and incorporating its principles into the Disability Act. They affirmed the need for training to deal with their limitations.
2. As part of the approval process for the Disability Act in Mozambique, the National Parliament undertook to carry out a public consultation and reviewed the current draft.
3. FAMOD will prepare a report with the conclusions, recommendations and commitments that were made during the conference, share this with the different stakeholders and follow up.

This Conference was a unique platform for learning and sharing experiences to advance the agenda of the disability movement. This is part of FAMOD's plans of institutionalising advocacy and capacity building mechanism to promote of the rights of persons with disabilities in Mozambique.

Inclusive Education**Outcome 1214: Children with disabilities receive adequate resources to support their learning.**

The consortium addressed the individual needs of children with disabilities to attend schools and improve their quality of learning. In Nampula and Manica, 18 children (seven girls and 11 boys) received assistive, didactic and locomotion technology materials. This included four Braille printing machines, four Perkins Braille machines, 12 slate and stylus, 80 reams of paper for printing in Braille, two tricycles, four wheelchairs, three white canes and three sets of crutches. In addition, all TOFI pilot schools received in total 52 Orbits 20 Readers. The technological device has the potential of reducing the barriers that learners with disabilities face. The Orbit 20 allows them to read and write in Braille, while the teachers without knowledge in Braille can access the information in a computer or smart phone.



Five persons, three men and two women, one of whom is using a wheelchair, are participating in a panel; they are sitting on a podium in front of a banner announcing the review of the 10 years since Mozambique's ratification of the CRPD (Photo: FAMOD)

The delivery of the abovementioned equipment has promoted the learning and monitoring of students with physical and visual impairments, as well as eliminating some barriers to access to schools.

Economic Empowerment

OUTPUT 1313: PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR PARENTS / GUARDIANS ENROLLED IN FINANCIAL SERVICES PROGRAMMES.

The thematic group for economic empowerment (Kulima, ADEL and Livaningo) assisted in the creation and management of 45 savings and credit groups with 835 people, of which 450 were persons with disabilities. The amount saved by the groups was around USD 100,000. The groups were regularly accompanied by activists and technicians from both DPOs and NGOs. This collaboration has resulted in more inclusive traditional financial services programmes. There is now a culture for saving at the community level and allowing access to credit for people without collateral and those excluded from the formal financial system. More importantly, the credit and saving groups serve as places of socialisation, coexistence, and exchange of experiences.

OUTPUT 1312: PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR PARENTS / GUARDIANS TRAINED IN MARKET-RELEVANT INCOME GENERATING SKILLS.

Through the TOFI project, 342 persons with disabilities were able to start their own businesses. Furthermore, 106 persons with disabilities improved their existing businesses. All the participants received training in entrepreneurship and sustainable business management, and most of them got a starting “kit” (production equipment or goods for sale). As everyone were members of a savings and loan group, the participants could get loans to invest in their businesses. With the new income from their businesses, they can now meet their domestic needs (for example, improve their diet, pay their children's school fees, rehabilitate their house). They also gained greater self-esteem, reduced their economic dependence on others, and contribute to the development of their communities.



A woman who is participating in ACAMO's economic empowerment activities is using a sewing machine in a backyard, working on a big and colourful piece of cloth (Photo: ACAMO)

Challenges and Adaptations

Response Time from Government Institutions

The consortium has faced challenges with implementing inclusive education activities. To identify out-of-school children it is necessary to obtain an ethical

approval from the Ministry of Health. This proved difficult and time consuming to acquire, and unfortunately the approval has not yet been granted. All the preparatory work to start with the identification work has been done. An experienced consultancy firm was selected, all tools for acquiring information were developed and key informants were trained in 2022. TOFI partners have continuously updated their ethical protocol and answered to all concerns raised by the ethical committee. Once the protocol is approved, the identification work will start.

High Staff Turnover

Personnel changes at different consortium partners impacted the project in 2022. Fear related to the project's future uncertainties, combined with limited salary competitiveness, contributed to the loss of personnel to other projects or organisations. These changes caused delays in the coordination of activities, and the consortium loses a lot of experience and expertise.

Cyclone Gombe

Project implementation was impacted by Cyclone Gombe in March 2022. The storm interrupted a teacher training organised by Save the Children, which needed to be rescheduled. This meant that the trainers from afar needed extra days of accommodation, car rental and allowances during the cyclone. Furthermore, these costs had to be covered for the rescheduled training. As a result, the cost of training was higher than expected.

Due to the damages of the storm, it was not possible to access the two TOFI pilot schools in the area. To alleviate this constraint, teachers and training directors had to conduct the teacher training process in other accessible schools.

Context of the Covid 19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 situation in Mozambique is under control. This led the President ending the state of public calamity in April 2022. All containment measures of a socioeconomic nature have been eased, but some preventive measures remain. This includes the mandatory use of a mask in health units, doctors' offices, laboratories, pharmacies, and nursing homes.

Collaboration and Harmonisation

Collaboration has improved with time. The thematic groups are well established and meet once a month, which allows partners to plan and implement activities together. In addition, each organisation shares their weekly plan of activities with the TOFI national coordinator. The regular contact keeps the consortium active and contributes to harmonising the different activities in the consortium. A weekly meeting between the Norwegian country lead and the Mozambican country coordinator advances their collaborations. In these meetings they discuss issues such as thematic area updates, reporting deadlines, and any concerns of the TOFI partner organisations.

To improve the efforts done on economic empowerment, the organisations chose to carry out a joint monitoring of project participants. By verifying the

difficulties faced in the field activities together, the organisations could better assist participants' businesses. This collective work allowed learning and improved the quality of the activities and models of each partner.

With the extension of TOFI for 2023 to 2024, all partners participated in thematic workshops in Manica and Maputo to update the logical framework and risk analysis.

Finally, all consortium organisations held an annual workshop to assess the implementation of the 2022 activities. These two-day workshops were used to assess their projects, and share challenges and solutions. This proved very fruitful, and the participants suggested that this type of meeting should be held twice a year. One important feedback coming from the workshop was that partners saw the need to have a communication officer to increase the visibility to the work developed by the consortium.

Added Value

The technical capacities of the partner organisations come from experiences acquired in working together in thematic groups. This involves collective planning, coordination of activities, and the development of technical and professional skills. The TOFI programme deepened the exchange of knowledge between organisations, consolidated the spirit of teamwork. Furthermore, it harmonised and improved planning, monitoring and reporting procedures. One example is how the collaboration on economic empowerment has inspired ACAMO to create a pilot saving and loans group, that will launch in 2023. Similarly, ADEL Sofala have created synergies with other projects, such as promoting sustainable energy, and linking formal and mobile banking groups. They also started to adopt inclusive practices in their office by removing some physical barriers.

Externally, FAMOD was asked by The Civil Society Organisations Forum to contribute to the discussion of the bill on Civil Society Organisations. Moreover, the Embassy of the United States of America in Mozambique invited FAMOD to present its annual report on the human rights situation in Mozambique.

Furthermore, TOFI partners have influenced national politics by assisting the Ministry of Education in the development the National Network for Inclusive Education. The civil society organisation Arquitetura sem Fronteiras invited FAMOD to make its technical contribution on teacher training. FAMOD used the Inclusive Learning Approach (ILA) developed by the TOFI programme, in the province of Inhambane. ACAMO also assisted the Ministry of Education to deliver a module on ILA to all Maputo schools that were not part of TOFI. The positive relationship between TOFI and the Ministry of Education is key in the work towards sustainability for the programme.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Women's Rights and Gender Equality

The situation of women's rights and gender equality in Mozambique has improved regarding the approval and reinforcement certain laws and strategies. Among others, these aim to prevent and punish gender-based violence, child marriage, and promote an enabling environment for girls to remain in school.¹ Despite these advances, the situation of women with disabilities remains challenging. For instance, data from the 2017 Census show that women with disabilities are in a more vulnerable situation when compared to men with disabilities.

In addressing this situation, TOFI contributes to reducing inequalities, by using SDG10. TOFI organisations have prioritised the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in the various groups created. This includes training on the rights of children and persons with disabilities. In addition, TOFI have educated staff and volunteers on gender issues, who have replicated this training at a community level. A partner organisation, ADEL-Sofala, has a code of conduct that contains matters on protection against sexual exploitation and abuse. Each ADEL employee get training on prevention against exploitation and sexual health. This is important in their work with vulnerable communities as the organisation has a zero-tolerance policy.

There is a gender equity policy that outlines measures to promote gender equity and women's rights in Livaningo. This gender policy lays the groundwork for community development and the empowerment of women and girls.

Human Rights



Six men in wheelchairs attend a coordination meeting between Save the Children and representatives of DPOs for awareness sessions (photo: Save the Children)

¹ Gender strategy in Public Administration 2020-2024, Law 19/2019; Law 29/ 2009, and Law No. 22/2019.

The protection of human rights in Mozambique, both with regards to domestic and international law is strong. However, in practice, the enforcement of these laws is still weak. The TOFI programme contributes to the improvement and consolidation of human rights through awareness-raising meetings. These events provide training on rights and how to claim them. In addition, the programme contributes human rights in the local communities. Many persons with disabilities who were hidden away in their homes, now have possibilities to be free thanks to the programme.

Furthermore, all the consortium activities are grounded in a human rights approach. This implies the protection and promotion of the rights of all participants and stakeholder, which permeates all internal policies and procedures. These are followed and must always be considered in our collaborative work.

Climate Change and Environment

Mozambique is situated in an area vulnerable to the impact and effects of climate change. In 2022, Mozambique was hit by two cyclones, Ana and Gombe, which affected the provinces in the central and northern regions of the country. Both events caused thousands of displaced people and damaged public and private infrastructure.

Persons with disabilities are the ones suffering the most during and after the occurrence of these phenomena. This is largely due to lack of implementing inclusive measures before, during and after extreme weather. Examples of this is a lack of information in inclusive formats, absence of inclusive emergency plans, and a shortfall of inclusive recovery initiatives. The cyclones damaged infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, and the social fabric, by displacing persons with disabilities in resettlement centres away from their communities. Additionally, the cyclones destroyed the business products of some economic empowerment participants. Consequently, this has negatively impacted the implementation of all TOFI activities.

As mitigating efforts on climate change, the project has contributed with information and awareness campaigns on the rational use of natural resources.

Anti-Corruption

The TOFI consortium organisations are autonomous and have their own administrative and logistical procedures. However, the consortium partners benefit from close collaboration and exchange of experiences on anti-corruption. As an example, ACAMO developed an anti-corruption policy, which will be submitted for approval and incorporated into the work routine. These actions aim to reinforce existing measures in the corruption prevention procedures manual. Save the Children trained all its employees together with two TOFI partners (FAMOD and ACAMO) on fraud prevention policies and procedures. With this training, employees are now more knowledgeable about the policies, tools, and measures to combat fraud.

Going Forward

The implementation of identification of out-of-school children is delayed because of bureaucratic issues. Any activity that collects information on children requires a previous approval by the National Ethical Committee (CNBS in Portuguese). Since the last trimester of 2022, the CNBS has been providing feedback and the approval is still missing. This approval is essential for carrying out four key activities, including identification of children, screening, referrals (to additional services as for instance community-based rehabilitation), and enrolment of out-of-school children into the TOFI pilot schools.

The seven modules of the Inclusive Learning Approach (ILA) will be rolled out by the end of 2023. After that, the TOFI partners will focus on getting the approach incorporated into the pre-service teacher training institutions (universities and colleges). Including the TOFI model on inclusive education in the country's teacher training curriculum is the best way to ensure sustainability.

Niger



A young girl in a blue hijab sitting at her desk in the classroom. (Photo: ADRA | Frank Spangler).

Determination Leads to Success

Ibrahim is an 11-year-old student from Niamey. He was born with a nerve condition that gave him a limp starting in early childhood, and later paralysed his right arm, which means he has to use his left hand.

He was enrolled in the local school, but his classmates bullied him because of his disability. In addition, the school facilities were not adapted to special needs which made it difficult for him to learn, so he only attended school for three years. His mother explains: "Ibrahim abandoned the school bench in spite of our will to keep him in school because the teachers did not take care of his needs".

When a relative informed them of the opening of a Speed School Centre, Ibrahim's mother suggested that her child enroll in the inclusive centre where he could study with other children in the neighbourhood. Ibrahim accepted and has been attending the centre regularly since his enrolment. Every morning his mother drives him to the



Ibrahim wearing a red sweater and blue jeans is writing on the classroom blackboard while supporting himself on a crutch.

centre to make sure he has perfect attendance. Moved by Ibrahim's courage, his mother always accompanies him to the centre despite the distance from his home to the school because her child is very interested in studies. He has established a brotherly relationship with his classmates and has found a favourable space to carry out his studies.

A studious and courageous learner, Ibrahim spends time playing or studying with his friends at the centre. His passion is soccer, which he plays with his classmates with the use of his crutch. He is dedicated and has the ambition to continue his studies to become a doctor specialising in neurology, so that he can help all children born with nerve conditions, just like himself.

Introduction

Key Figures:

Estimated Population:	25,252,722 (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Population Under the Age of 15:	49 % (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Urban Population (of Total Population):	17% (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Urban Population Growth:	4.5% (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Human Development Index (HDI) Ranking:	189 (of 191) (UNDP 2023; 2020 data)
Gender Inequality Index Ranking:	153 (of 170) (UNDP 2023; 2021 data)
Poverty Headcount Ratio at \$2.15 a Day (2017 PPP) (Percent of Population):	50.6% (World Bank 2023; 2018 data)
Adult Literacy Rate:	37% (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Life Expectancy at Birth:	61.3 years (UNDP 2023; 2021 data)
Child Mortality Rate (Under 5, per 1,000 Live Births):	115 (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Mean Years of Schooling:	2.1 (UNDP 2023; 2021 data)
Gross National Income (GNI) per Capita (2017 PPP \$):	1,240 (UNDP 2023; 2021 data)

Niger is considered one of the world's poorest countries and has a very young population, with almost 50% of the population under 15 years. According to Norad's country evaluation brief (2020), "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."

Niger has seen a doubling of its Official Development Assistance over the last 10 years. In 2022, Norwegian development aid to Niger amounted to NOK 167.5 million, which is a decrease from 2020 when approx. NOK 211 million were allocated.

Persons with Disabilities in Niger

In such a difficult 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.



A young girl wearing a purple hijab is standing in front of a classroom blackboard. (Photo: ADRA | Frank Spangler).

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

The TOFI Niger country programme is implemented by a consortium in the framework of a multi-stakeholder partnership including the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) which acts as the country lead, the Norwegian Federation Organisations of Disabled Persons (FFO), Niger's Federation of People with Disabilities (FNPH), Plan International, and Stromme Foundation (SF) with the support of two implementing partner organisations: Contribution to Rural Development Rural (CDR) and Niger's Organisation of Innovative Educators (ONEN).

The consortium also works closely with government stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Land Management and Community Development, the National Ministry of Education, the Ministry of the Promotion of Women and Child Protection, the Ministry of Public Health, Population and Social Affairs (in charge of disability issues in Niger), and the Ministry of Employment, Labour and Social Protection.

TOFI Niger is implemented in eight communes in the regions of Tillabéri, Niamey and Dosso. Stromme Foundation runs its programme in Dargol, Balleyara and the

city of Niamey with 40 speed school centres and 20 active literacy centres. After finishing the speed school cycle, learners from Stromme Foundation's SSA/P centres are transferred to schools supported by ADRA in the Tillabéry region. ADRA operates in 15 schools in Balléyara and Dargol. Plan International is working in 12 schools in Say, Kollo, Torodi and Ouallam Communes in the Tillabéri region, and Gaya and Douchi in Dosso.

The five remaining regions in Niger, Agadez, Diffa, Tahoua, Maradi and Zinder, are also supported by the project through FNPH, which implements DPO capacity building and advocacy programme with support from FFO.

Highlights and Selected Results

Human Rights Advocacy

Training of Persons with Disabilities on Their Rights and How to Claim Them

TOFI Niger provided training on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) to 113 persons with disabilities (F36; M77) in 2022. Some of them were equipped with digital tablets and received online training on communication techniques (#1111). The students were trained on CRPD's cross-cutting articles and learned how to write and publish articles to raise awareness and encourage the inclusion of persons with disabilities. The initiative also familiarised participants with online meeting platforms and strengthened the capacities of FNPH in delivering online training courses. The participants that were trained will become ambassadors in their schools to advocate for the rights of all children with disabilities and will contribute to a more inclusive school environment, in addition to training other children. The parents of the children involved made a commitment to support their children's education also after the project's closure, as well as to inform and encourage other parents of children with disabilities to attend similar trainings.

Improving DPO Capacity

Several capacity building sessions were held for DPOs supported by the TOFI programme. In total, 317 members (F112; M205) were trained on the CRPD and national legislation (#1124a). The objective of the training was to enable participants to understand and internalise the CRPD and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to base their organisations' actions on a rights-based approach. As a result of this training, there is now a pool of trainers, made up of young persons with disabilities, who can facilitate further trainings.

National Forum on Inclusive Education

In November 2022, the third edition of the National Forum on Inclusive Education was held in Niamey with the topic "Community Commitment for Inclusive Quality Education for all Children: Let's take action now" (#1122). This forum brought together 137 participants (F24; M113), among them 31 persons with disabilities. The objective of the forum was to enable community leaders from the project's intervention areas to have a shared and accurate understanding of the right of children with disabilities to an inclusive quality education; to strengthen the commitment of local authorities in supporting the implementation of the project;

to encourage local authorities to take ownership of good practices; and to support the engagement of teachers and communities.

Four main recommendations were made during the forum:

1. Creation of a budget line for awareness raising to help increase the enrolment of children with disabilities.
2. Contextualisation and adoption of a national strategy for accelerating education of children with disabilities.
3. Setting a framework for synergy of actions between different stakeholders (such as ministries in charge of education and training, technical and financial partners, organisations of persons with disabilities).
4. Systematically considering needs of persons with disabilities in regional and communal development plans.

At the end of the Forum, the Ministry of Education officially committed to updating and adopting a national strategy to accelerate the enrolment of children with disabilities. The forum also provided an opportunity to advocate for a stronger commitment from local authorities to facilitate access and retention of children with disabilities in school. The decision-makers committed to allocate financial resources in the budgets of their municipalities to support inclusive education, to take ownership of the results and good practices of the TOFI project. This advocacy was based on a study conducted within the framework of the TOFI project to assess the inclusion of disability in decentralisation laws, policies, programmes and planning.



A teacher wearing a bright yellow hijab is pointing out countries on a globe to two young students sitting next to her at a table in a classroom. (Photo: ADRA | Frank Spangler).

Engaging Local Communities

TOFI Niger engages local communities through Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and School Management Committees (SMCs), and in 2022, the programme provided trainings on inclusive education, child protection and organisational capacity. A total of 101 people (F47; M54) benefited from these trainings. The trainings enabled participants to understand issues related to stigmatisation and discrimination of persons with disabilities, the process of identifying children with disabilities and how to protect them from abuse, and the elaboration of organisational action plans (#1215).

Improving Teacher Capacities

Teachers in TOFI supported schools receive trainings annually to support the inclusion of children with disabilities in school. Following a request from the Ministry of National Education, the TOFI project supported trainings for educators from all eight teacher training colleges in Niger on inclusive education, Braille and sign language. In total, 293 (F201; M92) teachers were trained in inclusive education, and 433 (F151; M282) teachers were trained in Braille, sign language and mental health support (#1231a, #1231b). This marks a scaling up of the training of teachers and pedagogical supervisors in intervention schools on inclusive education that the project has been conducting since its inception. In an effort to sustain the results and address challenges related to teachers' mobility, which can hinder the achievement and consolidation of our objectives, this activity aims to ensure that all future teachers in Niger receive training in inclusive education. Regardless of their placement and location in the future, in the project areas or elsewhere, they will be able to apply and disseminate inclusive education. This will contribute to the sustainability of the project's achievements and to a stronger ownership of inclusion within the formal education system.

Accessible School Environment

TOFI builds and rehabilitates classrooms and latrines to make them accessible for all students. A total of 11 classrooms, six latrine blocks and 17 ramps were built in 2022. Additionally, six classrooms and 10 blackboards were rehabilitated. These adjustments are essential to have inclusive schools and to meet the needs of all students (#1232a, #1232b).

In addition, the project provided technical aids / assistive devices for children with disabilities to optimise their learning. In 2022, the project provided 48 tricycles, six wheelchairs, 63 crutches, two pairs of corrective glasses, 77 white canes, 32 math aids for children with visual impairment, and 30 bicycles. Sunscreen and hats were also provided for students with albinism (#1214b). Additionally, 968 learners (F381; M588) with disabilities received financial support through cash transfers mainly to facilitate their transportation to school and learning centres (#1214d).

Students with Disabilities Enrolled in School

A total of 939 (351F, 588M) students with disabilities attend TOFI supported schools in Niger for the 2022 / 2023 school year (#1210a). In comparison, in the previous academic year, 665 children with disabilities were enrolled, which means a 41% increase from 2021 to 2022. Several missions were carried out by the programme to identify out of school children and enrol them in either regular public school or in the Speed School Centres. The PTAs are highly engaged each year to find children and get them in school.



A young female student in a grey hijab is writing letters on a bright green blackboard under the supervision of her female teacher. (Photo: ADRA | Frank Spangler).

The programme also facilitated screening of 422 (F163; M259) students (#1213) which enabled them to be referred to relevant clinical centres and get assistive devices such as wheelchairs, crutches etc. pharmaceutical products and surgical intervention tailored to their specific needs. A total of 410 (F153; M257) children were referred to specialised centres (#1217).

Challenges and Adaptations

In 2022, the main challenges faced in programme implementation in Niger included:

Insecurity Due to Conflict

In some of the communes where the project operates, the presence of armed groups and the risk of violence continues to force people to flee. These populations movements lead to a significant increase in the numbers of learners in our intervention schools, exacerbating the existing challenges in child protection and quality education. Insecurity al-so hinders close follow-up of activities in the field, especially in the region of Dargol. Staff take precautions when carrying out activities in this region. For instance, local stakeholders may carry out activities on behalf of TOFI staff, or beneficiaries travel to safer zones to rather receive trainings there.

Food Insecurity

The ongoing food crisis, together with other factors, including the consequences of climate change, continues to put to test community resilience and exert pressure on vulnerable families, further reducing the resources necessary to support children with disabilities.

Use of Straw-Hut Classrooms Poses Multiple Risks to Children in General and Children with Disabilities in Particular, Including Fire and Insects

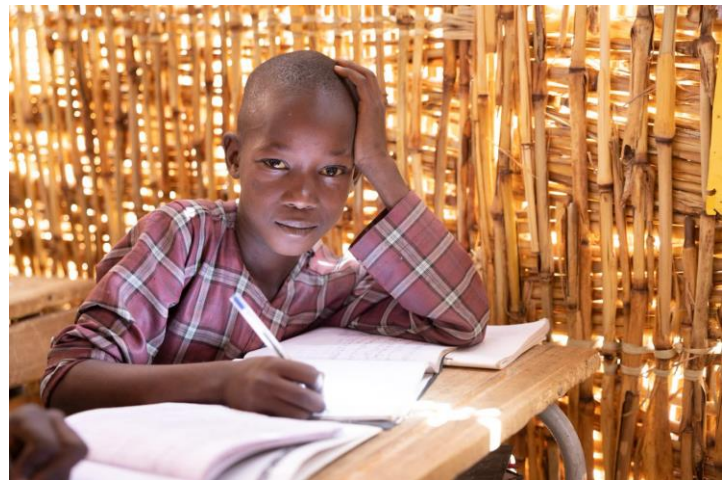
It is hence necessary to increase construction of accessible classrooms from durable materials and adapted to climate. TOFI has carried out fire safety training and provided fire extinguisher in order to cope with this risk.

Assigning Trained Teachers Outside Project's Intervention Areas Deprived Some Children with Disabilities of Adequate Care

Teachers' mobility is a challenge the project has faced from the start. It has made it more difficult to provide continued support for the children enrolled through the project, and to consolidate and sustain the positive results. To address this, the team partnered with the Ministry of National Education to provide training in inclusive education in all teachers' training colleges.

Lack of Adequate Opportunities for Children with Disabilities to Continue Their Education in Secondary School

Since the project operates at primary school level, its direct impact on quality inclusive education in secondary schools remains limited. The project continues, however, to collaborate with the authorities in Niger, advocating for greater inclusion of children with disabilities at all levels of education. Developing the national strategy for inclusive education, which is among the main objectives of phase of the project, should allow for this issue to be addressed and for the solutions to be integrated into the state's new policy. The team in Niger is also currently developing a monitoring tool that will support close follow-up of children with disabilities participating in the project and measure their retention, performance and educational opportunities beyond primary school. This will help us understand their trajectories and gather evidence to support concrete solutions.



A young student wearing a checkered shirt is sitting at his desk in a straw-hut classroom, writing in his exercise book. (Photo: ADRA | Frank Spangler).

Collaboration and Harmonisation

The TOFI programme in Niger is carried out with a strong focus on collaboration. The partnership between NGOs and DPOs is the foundation of implementation and a prerequisite for the achieved results. Significant efforts are made by the consortium to coordinate and harmonise implementation. As a result, the consortium's technical teams meet on a regular basis through workshops, meetings and field visits. The consortium also collaborates and meets regularly with relevant ministries, such as the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health.

1. In 2022, three quarterly technical meetings were held to compile country reports and harmonise interventions.
2. Within the framework of regional technical committees' meetings, several joint missions were carried out in collaboration with regional and local authorities to monitor TOFI achievements.
3. In the field, member organisations of the consortium rely on synergies to facilitate organisation of joint activities, to share efforts and promote communities' mobilisation.
4. Norwegian partners visited Niger to work together on programme planning and reporting.

Added Value

The TOFI project intervention undoubtedly brings added value in Niger by strengthening civil society structures. This can be seen on different levels:

1. Consortium organisations themselves have become more inclusive both with office facilities and in hiring staff with disabilities. For example, Plan Niger now has a position specifically dedicated to inclusion issues, to ensure a greater focus on inclusion in all projects. Next to this, they have also set up a support and orientation committee to secure the inclusion of people with a disability. DPOs are actively involved in this committee and participate in the monitoring of the organisation's activities.
2. Another achievement is that NGO consortium member are now taking people with disabilities into consideration in new project designs. NGOs are consulting people with a disability to make sure their views and suggestions are included in the project application.
3. Overall, the visibility of consortium organisations and other DPOs involved has grown, and operational and financial capacities are enhanced with an increase in organisations' staff and budget. This leads to these organisations being more sustainable.
4. A great example of this increased visibility is the interest that other major stakeholders are showing in collaborating with the consortium. UNICEF has expressed their interest and is designing a new pilot project regarding cash transfers in conversation and collaboration with the consortium. They are planning to target the same regions as the TOFI project to make

use of the structures that are in place in these regions. This leads to an even more comprehensive offer of services to people with a disability in these regions.

5. On a community level, we have seen that mobilising parents of children with disabilities, communities and education structures around the school has brought positive results in enrolment of children with disabilities. Local authorities are also more involved in inclusive education, as mentioned under the highlight results. During the forum on inclusive education, decision-makers committed themselves to designating financial resources in the budgets of their municipalities to support inclusive education, to take ownership of results and good practices of TOFI project.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Women's Rights and Gender Equality

TOFI Niger advocates for the rights of women and their full participation in society, with a specific focus on persons with disabilities. Traditionally, in Niger and elsewhere, women are subject to discrimination in general, and this is particularly true for disabled women. The TOFI project promotes participation of women in all activities, and in particular within arenas where women have not traditionally participated.

The Speed Schools aims to enroll 50% girls, but it is difficult to reach this goal. In the October 2022 enrolment, a total of 539 female learners were recruited out of 1,157 learners (46.5%). This is a slight improvement compared to the share of girls who graduated in the 2021 to 2022 school year (42.6%). Also, the project works hard to recruit female teachers and coordinators, and a total of 26 female coordinators were recruited out of altogether 44 (62%).

Human Rights

In Niger, most people have limited access to information about their rights and weak influence of civil society organisations hinder the effective fulfilment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Strategies and approaches used by the TOFI project that are specific to people with disabilities – such as training rights holders on their rights, raising awareness among decision makers and economic empowerment – can serve as a model that other organisations can duplicate to promote human rights. Advocacy and results of the project can be considered as examples in promotion of human rights. In this sense, TOFI is a human rights lab.

The implementation of the project made it possible to promote human rights at the consortium level. In this regard, inclusive education for all without discrimination is a means of recovering vulnerable children and children with specific needs, who are often out of school, giving them hope of having a place in society.

Climate Change and Environment

Climate change is affecting Niger in full force, causing natural disasters, loss of property and poverty. In recent years, Niger has been hit hard by floods and drought. The rain season is highly unpredictable which creates challenges for families of children in programme supported schools who are mainly farmers. Among disaster victims, people with disabilities are generally the most affected, mainly because their specific needs are not considered in preparation and response to climate emergencies.

The TOFI project aspires to protect the environment as much as possible. Potential environmental impact is considered when planning activities, and procurement and construction are carried out with materials of little harm to the surrounding environment. To prevent the abusive cutting down of trees, the project builds improved learning centres using metal sheds to house SSA/P and AA centres. In addition, about 100 tree seedlings (including fruit trees) were planted in schools to create a pleasant environment.

Anti-Corruption

All partners in the consortium work actively on taking anti-corruption measurements and have zero tolerance policies. The consortium has started the conversation of working together on anti-fraud guidelines, which will be continued in 2023.

In 2022, FNPH has trained 25 DPO members on national level, and eight regional offices on the anti-corruption policy and preventive mechanisms. This policy was developed earlier as part of the TOFI project (#1121). As a result of this, the DPOs now have a better understanding what corruption is, what to do if they discover corruption taking place, and how to take preventive measurements.

Going Forward

Learners from 40 speed school centres will finish their one-year training June, be enrolled to public schools.

20 speed school centres will be opened in October and accessible classrooms, latrines, and ramps will be built.

Food security and resilience will be increased among the savings groups including people with disabilities by expanding to new markets through gardening components. This includes improved access to water through manual boreholes in these sites as well as in schools.

Advocating for updating and adopting the National Strategy to Accelerate Enrolment of Children with Disabilities.

Teacher training colleges will be provided with specific teaching materials and set up a system of itinerant teachers in intervention communes.

Project intervention area will be extended to another commune; Hamdallaye.

The consortium will follow up on the collaboration they have started with UNICEF.

The consortium plans to begin using adaptive technology tools to support the education of children with disabilities.

Somalia

The Story of Mustaqbal School Community Education Committee in Baidoa

Mustaqbal, a TOFI target school, was established in March 2017 with a high percentage of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the student population. What began as two volunteer teachers and fifty learners in a makeshift classroom, is now a school with an enrolment of 1526 (F850; M676) learners in 18 classrooms with double shifts. “We are confident, and we are really proud of how far we have come as a school,” says Rukiyo Hassan, parent and member of the community education committee. “Starting a school in an IDP camp without support from the government or an organisation is very challenging”. The schools’ success is attributed to the salience and commitment of the school leadership.



A group of people waiting by the school bus of Mustaqbal integrated primary school.

Mustaqbal stands out in Baidoa as the school with the highest number of learners with special educational needs and disabilities. The dominating disabilities are auditory and physical impairments. Before TOFI interventions, inadequate human and financial resources challenged the school’s operations. The school was not able to offer learners with disabilities meaningful participation socially and academically, and this resulted in a high drop-out rate. “Learners with disabilities and / or special educational needs often faced discrimination and bullying from other learners. The school followed strict reporting schedules which did not take learners with special educational needs into consideration. Instead, teachers praised and gave material rewards to the best-performing learners and criticised underperforming ones without considering personal circumstances or the social ecosystem surrounding the students” observes teacher Madam Faiso Abdullahi.

“As a school management committee, we meet donors and discuss school issues, but we had no idea how to prioritise or address these issues”, says Mr. Abdi Abukar, a committee member. When asked how the TOFI project is contributing to the quality of the work, Mr. Abukar had the following to say; “The TOFI project has been an eye-opener and strengthened teachers’ and the community’s capacity to work for persons with disabilities and / or special education needs in the area.”

The Mustaqbal teachers and the Community Education Committee (CEC) have received continuous training on inclusion, thereby increasing their understanding of inclusive education practices and the right to education for every child.

Additional training has increased the CEC's capacity to influence relevant project planning fora. Consequently, the Ministry of Education has consulted the committee on matters of inclusion and disabilities in connection with the planning for large-scale projects. Moreover, the CEC's advocacy skills have resulted in several new projects at Mustaqbal, including the ongoing construction of an early childhood education centre with the support of the Global Partnership for Education. This early childhood education centre is the first of its kind in the Southwest State of Somalia. This will undoubtedly benefit learners with special education needs as well.

Through the community awareness-raising committee, the Mustaqbal school community succeeded in organising a feeder road connecting the school gate and main road. Until now, without the feeder road, the rainy seasons have made the school physically inaccessible for many learners with disabilities, and this negatively impacted all staff and learners. Community support also led to the hiring of a trained sign language teacher, himself hearing-impaired, who could both teach and promote inclusive education. Lastly, with the support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the committee was also able to get permanent walling built for the school.

How Fatima (10) was finally able to go to school

When Fatima was born ten years ago, her family was delighted to have a healthy little girl. Fatima was a bright, bubbly girl full of life and energy. She loved to run, play with her siblings, and explore the world around her. But when she was just five years old, she contracted Polio.



Fatima, wearing blue and white, in her wheelchair with her school bag in her lap; a woman is pushing her up a small ramp.

The disease left Fatima with a permanent physical impairment, forcing her to rely on a wheelchair to move about. The family's income depended on her father's on-and-off-jobs, and with seven children to feed and care for, her parents were struggling to get Fatima the medical attention and support she needed.

At first, Fatima was devastated by the changes in her life. She no longer had the freedom to move and play as she once did, and she struggled with feelings of isolation and sadness. But over time, she began to adapt to her new situation. She learned how to get around in her wheelchair and to navigate around their home. She also discovered a newfound love for education.

Fatima was determined to go to school. She begged her parents to enrol her in a school, but her parents were reluctant as they worried for her safety. The road to

school was full of bumps and steep inclines and most school environments were not barrier-free. Her parents couldn't afford a new wheelchair, let alone pay for modifications to the school building, and on top of that they knew how ruthless the local community could be, isolating children with disabilities and calling them hurtful names. They didn't want little Fatima to experience that, but Fatima was adamant that she wanted to go to school.

Her parents' opinion changed when they saw an awareness campaign from Save the Children's TOFI project about the importance of educating children with disabilities. They decided to enrol Fatima in an inclusive primary school. The TOFI project provided her with a scholarship and hired a minibus to transport her and other children with disabilities to and from school. The children were also provided with teaching materials such as books, pens, and bags.

With the support of Save the Children, the school administration conducted an awareness-raising campaign promoting inclusive education and the rights of children with disabilities to students, parents and teachers. Teacher trainings were held that pushed the instructors to care for all kids, including those with disabilities, and act as role models for their students. Also, with the help of Save the Children, the Puntland Disability Organisations Network (PDON) carried out medical screening of learners with disabilities and was able to supply assistive devices to 103 students from 15 primary schools in the two districts across Puntland. Fatima was one of them.

"I enjoy coming to school", says Fatima. "I am now in grade one and I learn how to read and write and many other subjects. In the future, I want to be a teacher to support children, including learners with disabilities like myself, who need access to education".

Introduction

Key Figures

Estimated Population:	17,065,581 (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Population Under the Age of 15:	47 % (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Urban Population (of Total Population):	47% (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Urban Population Growth:	4.4% (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Human Development Index (HDI) Ranking:	Somalia was not part of the last ranking.
Gender Inequality Index Ranking:	Not rated (UNDP 2023)
Adult Literacy Rate:	No updated data available (World Bank 2023)

Life Expectancy at Birth:	55.3 years (UNDP 2023; 2021 data)
Child Mortality Rate (Under 5, per 1,000 Live Births):	112 (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Mean Years of Schooling:	5.180 (UNDP 2023: 2021 data)
Gross National Income (GNI) per Capita (2017 PPP \$):	1,018 (UNDP 2023: 2021 data)

Norway and Somalia

Somalia is one of the world's poorest countries and one of the largest recipients of Norwegian aid. In 2022, Norwegian development aid to Somalia amounted to NOK 642 million with a particular focus on governance, civil society, and conflict prevention (NOK 242,3 million). Many Norwegian NGOs are active in the country and just over 50% of the total aid funds were channelled through Norwegian NGOs whereas 43% were given through multilateral organisations.

Persons with Disabilities in Somalia

Adults 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. Somalia did not ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) until 2019, and this has negatively impacted the recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities in the country.

Many children with disabilities in Somalia do not attend school and are kept at home, out of sight. Both children and adults with disabilities are stigmatised, segregated, and referred to in collective as well as derogatory terms. The barriers faced by these children are huge and often add to those already caused by conflict, gender, or refugee status.

DPOs, Save the Children, ADRA and other stakeholders pinpoint the following key issues:

1. At the individual level, persons with disabilities did not have access to information on their rights because of barriers in communication and little or no information adapted to their level of literacy. In fact, they often lacked self-confidence and were not empowered to defend their rights as they were subjects of pity in the community.
2. The disabled persons' organisations (DPOs) could not mobilise to change society's attitudes towards disability, and 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 limited the advocacy efforts for disability inclusion and

resulted in duplication of efforts. The majority of DPOs did not have comprehensive knowledge of disability and recent developments in the international disability work, such as the rights-based approach or the strategy of mainstreaming disability across sectors. Consequently, their skills in effective advocacy and communication were limited and their impact on promoting an inclusive and open society was also modest. On the other hand, mainstream Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and their networks had little understanding or a common misconception of disability and therefore did not address it in their agendas.

4. There was 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 relevant barriers, and this makes it difficult to plan properly and to take the needs of persons with disabilities into consideration in the regional agenda. There is a lack of mechanisms for guidance, monitoring, and feedback to ensure disability inclusion and mainstreaming are entrenched in policies and programming. The DPOs were not exploiting the little available space and time given to disability issues by stakeholders as well as authorities.



Two men, both wearing surgical masks, comparing notes under a tree in a yard.

Education for Children with Disabilities

It is estimated that there are 4.8 million children out-of-school across Somalia, a 15% increase in 2022 according to UNICEF. UNICEF estimates that only 30% of school-age children in Somalia are enrolled in primary school. Unfortunately, enrolment data for children with disabilities for all of Somalia is lacking. However, global trends from a UNESCO 2007 study indicate that 1/3 of all out-of-school children are children with disabilities. 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 state and regional levels still do not prioritise education for children living in vulnerable circumstances. The policy environment for inclusive education is weak since Somalia ratified the CRPD very late, and as a result children with disabilities suffer from the greatest education inequalities.

Women and girls with disabilities face double discrimination on account of their disabilities and gender and they are therefore highly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

Displaced children with disabilities living in IDP centres and underserved areas are further marginalised. As revealed by the UNHCR Protection and Return Monitoring Network report, the number of displaced persons increased from 874,000 in 2021 to 1.8 million in 2022 as the worst drought since 2011 hit the country.

Despite the lack of data on children with disabilities in schools and the dire situation when it comes to the enrolment of children with disabilities and inclusive education, there are some promising changes. There is potential in that there is now a policy in place, with the National Disability Agency as well as DPOs and CSOs / INGOs who are engaged in providing some habilitation and rehabilitation services. There has been a push from the Ministry of Women at the federal level in collaboration with the National Disability Agency, CSOs, INGOs and DPOs to conduct a data collection on persons with disabilities. Started in 2022, this initiative has not been comprehensively planned, but the anticipation is that some basic demographical data will be in place by 2023.

These existing support structures can be strengthened to enhance the collection of disability data using the Washington Group short set of questions (WG-SS) and other tools during community assessment. The Federal Government's Education Sector Strategic Plan (2018 to 2020) and the Draft National Education Policy, as well as the Puntland Education Sector Strategic Plan, have all articulated the government's commitment to providing equal access to education for children with disabilities, currently categorised 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 MoEHE in its education sector reform strategies. With support from Save the Children (SCI), the development of the National Disability Policy at the federal level was completed in 2022 with feedback and initial comments being expected in the 2nd quarter of 2023 and later submission to parliament for adoption.

With support from the project, SCI and PDON continue to influence the government and the Ministry of Education in Puntland who have begun discussions on the possibility of passing the Accessibility and Infrastructure Policy on school constructions. This will eventually change the school environment context of Puntland and later Somalia. The access to services for children and persons with disabilities is amended in the Constitution of Somalia and is corroborated by the ratification of two conventions, the Convention of the Right of the Child and the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. However, equal access to these services is still not possible in the current context in Somalia. Further, access to assistive technology for all children in need is still beyond reach for majority of children and adults in Somalia. With limited reinforcement of accessible public spaces, most buildings are not accessible to persons with functional limitations especially children and persons with disabilities. Additionally, inadequate accessible materials for Information, Education and Communication to children, youths and communities of persons with disabilities remain limited and this limits their access to information, knowledge on services and opportunities to participate in decision making platforms.

Description of the Country Programme

TOFI Somalia is a collaboration between Norwegian DPOs and NGOs and their local partners. The Norwegian organisations include Save the Children Norway (SCN), The Adventist Development & Relief Agency (ADRA), and The Norwegian Association of Disabled (NAD). The in-country organisations are Save the Children International (SCI) and Adventist Development and Relief (ADRA) Somalia in partnership with three DPOs – Puntland Disability Organisations Network (PDON), Somali Disability Network (SDN), and Somali Disability Empowerment Network (SODEN) – and one disability focused organisation (Disability Aid Foundation (DAF)).

This programme aims to create broad disability inclusion practises 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 is the one with the weakest DPO scene, although Somali DPOs have been progressing slowly since 2020 when TOFI started in the country.

The programme complements the ongoing Norad-funded projects and programmes of Save the Children and ADRA through interlinked interventions addressing institutional and systemic barriers, using proven models and methods. The Norwegian Association of Disabled (NAD) acts as an expert adviser and works to strengthen the relationship between DPOs and NGOs in the country.

The programme uses approaches and models that have been developed and tested over time, such as 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).

Context and the Covid-19 Pandemic

Somalia has made progress in reducing the spread of Covid-19 with the help from WHO, UNICEF, donors, and other partners. According to the WHO, the nation achieved its goal of fully immunising 30 % of its people against Covid-19 in October 2022. This year, Somalia has intensified and carried out vaccination campaigns, targeting the country's most vulnerable groups. Teachers and other public servants were among the target groups who were vaccinated. This reduced the risk of Covid-19 spread and promoted confidence for learners to go back to school safely. The Ministry of Health lifted all covid-related restrictions greatly facilitating programme implementation.

Highlights and Selected Results

Human Rights Advocacy

1121a: Professional development for DPOs on organisational operations and management:

SCI assessed two disabled persons' organisations in Mogadishu, the Somali Disability Network (SDN) and the Somali Disability Empowerment Network (SODEN), for formal TOFI partnerships. Based on this, SCI and the DPOs created capacity building plans. The DPOs attended a two-day training to promote gender and disability inclusion in governance and decision-making. 63 staff (F24; M39) attended, of whom 44 (F16; M28) were persons with disabilities.

Further, a three-day training was held, covering introductory sessions to donor orientation, compliance, reporting, anti-corruption, financial and procurement management, and safeguarding of children and adults. The training gave a clear understanding of the safeguarding framework as well as which reporting procedures to use if there are concerns about safeguarding or fraud.

SCI provided on-the-job training for the DPOs to provide continuous technical support where needed. Staff extended regular visits to the DPOs offices and helped them in planning and improving their administrative tools. This gave DPOs strength and confidence and provided for two-way open communication. As a result, the DPOs function improved and they were able to plan, deliver and make financial liquidation with minimal comments. These efforts enhanced the participation of DPOs in programme planning and implementation compared to previous years.

1124a: Professional development for DPOs to monitor and report on the implementation of CRPD and SDGs:

Through trainings, TOFI aimed to build the capacity of DPOs to monitor CRPD implementation through the development and submission of an alternative report to the CRPD Committee. Further, 117 people attended a CRPD training workshop (F51; M66) of whom 66 (F27; M39) had disabilities. The training aimed to enhance comprehension around the fundamental rights of persons with disabilities and CRPD use in advocacy and reports.

The Federal Government of Somalia is responsible for reporting on the implementation of the CRPD. Such a report has never been submitted and DPOs have therefore never developed or submitted an alternative report to the CRPD Committee. 25 of the participants (F8; M17) were selected to attend a virtual training organised by NAD and SCI in September 2022. 12 of these participants (F4; M8) were persons with disabilities. The session was facilitated by four DPO consultants from Kenya and Zambia. During the virtual training, participants learned about the process of submitting an alternative report even when the government has not submitted its own report, as was the case in Zambia. A plan to develop an alternative report for Somalia was added to the next project period.

Inclusive Education

1213: Children with disabilities identified and referred to inclusive education services:

DAF, ADRA, SCI and PDON screened 490 learners in 2022 (SCI: 350 (F162; M188), ADRA: 140 learners (F55; M85)). Based on the screening, assistive devices were provided to 236 children (SCI: 96 (F41; M55), ADRA: 140 (F55; M85)) to enhance their learning. With DPOs and SITs in the driving seat, data were collected on learners with disabilities throughout November 2022. Identified children were screened and prescribed the type of support they needed by medical personnel.

Assistive devices such as hearing aids, magnifying glasses, recording devices, etc. were provided. These items contributed to increased participation and comprehension for learners.



A boy and a girl seated at a table, testing assistive devices for students with visual impairments.

1211: Awareness raising provided to families and caregivers of children with disabilities on their rights to education and how to support their children:

With support from ADRA and SCI, DPOs conducted awareness-raising sessions in target locations for parents and community education committees to promote, improve and support the education of children with disabilities, reaching 585 persons (F352; M233). These awareness sessions underpinned the need for joint collaborative efforts by duty-bearers and stakeholders to remove existing barriers to inclusion. Religious leaders and key influential persons highlighted the exclusion of learners with disabilities and appealed to participants' moral obligation to educate all children and allow them to realise their rights.

Both ADRA and the Disability Aid Foundation conducted awareness raising through face-to-face sessions in camps for internally displaced persons. Throughout 2022, parents and school communities demonstrated increased engagement in school affairs. School communities are now more aware of issues and barriers that hinder learners from meaningfully participating in education and the strategies to address these collaboratively with relevant stakeholders.

1222: Professional development for DPOs on quality inclusive education services:

With technical guidance from EENET, ADRA and SCI conducted two five-day workshops on Module 2 and 3 of the Inclusive Learning Approach (ILA) inclusive advocacy component, building the inclusive education capacity of 30 (F13; M17) DAF and PDON training facilitators, of whom 11 (F3; M8) were persons with disabilities. By having the DPO facilitators in one location, cross-organisational learning and interaction occurred. Topics covered included the formation of SITs, identification of out of school children, and mapping of community assets and strengths (i.e., infrastructure, people, and organisations that may contribute toward the realisation of inclusive education.)

OPD facilitators transferred knowledge and workshop contents to the local community including persons with disabilities. PDON and DAF will use the skills and knowledge acquired to network with key influential persons and through awareness raising and advocacy address the identified barriers for children with disabilities to actively participate in education.

1231a: Professional development for education staff on quality inclusive education practice:

Under the ILA model and supported by EENET, ADRA and SCI trained 66 (F13; M53) principal trainers (PTs) in Module 3 and 4 of the inclusive education teacher training component. The principal trainers included head teachers, college / university lecturers and education ministry trainers of teachers.

ADRA and SCI also trained 34 (F7; M27) observers from **inter alia** education ministries and teacher training institutions, in overseeing inclusive education implementation and improving their roles as mentors. Afterwards, the observers carried out school visits to identify training impacts and gaps. They reported their findings to the ILA principal trainers.

As a result of these trainings, significant changes in ADRA implementation schools were reported by observers. This included increased community engagement in school activities, improved hygiene, levelling of uneven / risky compounds, and teachers' increased awareness of learners' needs. With the support of SITs, school plans were made to identify out-of-school learners and support their transition between home and school.

SCI schools in Puntland expressed a willingness to accept and register learners with disabilities. Observers also noted positive attitude changes in parents and teachers. As a result, the enrolment of learners with disabilities has increased, although inclusive learning-access remains an issue. Although the teachers

motivate everyone to interact actively in class, they lack training on ways to provide individual specialised support. This will be covered in the coming ILA modules.

The PTs rolled out modules 3 and 4 to 382 local teachers (F93; M289) across 28 schools. 233 (F59; M174) of the teachers were from Hirshabelle, Southwest and Jubaland states and 149 (F34; M115) of them resided in Puntland state. Module 3 covered definitions and locating of out-of-school children, as well as how to support children in transition from home to school or grade to grade. Module 4 focused on the screening process and how to collect information about learners' needs to remove barriers for active learning.

Challenges and Adaptations

In Mogadishu, blocked and obstructed roads are commonplace and led to delayed TOFI activity commencement in a couple of locations.

Furthermore, clan tensions prevented ADRA from training teachers in two target schools in Hiraan and Hirshabelle states (Module 3).

The outbreak of Ebola in Uganda coincided with the planned learning exchange visit to the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU). To reduce staff risks of exposure, ADRA Somalia management decided to deny staff to travel. Nonetheless, cross-learning occurred as SCI and ADRA later had debriefing sessions where SCI, who had gone through with the visit, shared their experience and knowledge from the exchange.

The overall political and security situation in Somalia saw heightened tension during the reporting period. Delays in elections at the federal level and lack of consensus on election modalities by stakeholders sparked tension in South-Central Somalia. Federal government forces became divided along clan lines, and some tried to oust the then-government in leadership. This caused a direct security threat to staff movement and business operations due to forces withdrawing defence positions. The political standoff came at a time of looming drought in the country when communities were fleeing to major towns in search of basic services like water, food, and shelter. The crisis furthermore impacted the project implementation indirectly by overstressing target communities' capacities to withstand already dire school conditions. Schools with adequate facilities and teaching staff received an influx of out-of-school children. TOFI worked with schools and communities to prioritise awareness raising in different fora to encourage stakeholders to take responsibility and concrete actions to address the deteriorating situation.

Competing priorities and minimal political will resulted in limited monitoring from government institutions on inclusive education progress, mobilisation of resources, and implementation of policies. Nonetheless, the TOFI programme worked to strengthen government engagement in the adaptation of training resources and delivery of TOFI activities, in an attempt to raise awareness and increase advocacy and accountability.

TOFI supported DPOs are yet to submit parallel reports to the CRPD Committee with priority issues and recommendations. However, the DPOs have attended CRPD report training further enabling them to prepare and submit situational reports in the coming years. They have pledged to advocate for and pressure the government to send the CRPD report. The next training, planned for November 2022 in Zambia, was postponed due to visa rejections.

Lastly, in-service teacher training (INSET) planning had to consider and adapt to the school calendar. However, ADRA and SCI liaised with respective ministries of education and training to allow training to occur while schools are in session in December 2022.

Collaboration and Harmonisation

In 2022, TOFI Somalia contributed to a range of technical working groups and networks both internally and externally. Moreover, TOFI organisations collaborated closely with DPOs, relevant line ministries, and humanitarian partners within education and protection. Furthermore, DPOs, ADRA, SCI, EENET, and NAD collaborated through joint planning which provided insights into modalities that worked effectively across contexts, while promoting timely and harmonised activity execution. HRA and IE working group meetings took place on monthly bases. The meetings increased staff learning, reflection on challenges and revision of plans for improved programming. The staff was further grouped into sub-thematic groups such as the teacher training team, DPOs training team, and MEAL team.

The cooperation and participatory planning also enhanced relationships among partners, particularly DPOs and international NGOs. For instance, for the two-year extension planning, all target DPOs participated and shared their views across the meeting days with SCI and ADRA.

Cooperation was also cross-border. A learning visit to Uganda by Puntland Disability Organisations Network and SCI staff was a good exposure. SCI and PDON participated in Module 4 with Uganda DPOs and visited DPOs and inclusive education centres to see how inclusive education is implemented. Delegates learned about NUDIPU works at the local and national level and its key roles in inclusive education. The learning exchange highlighted ways to use local, improvised, low-cost resources and materials to address barriers to inclusion as well as the importance of advocacy through what is often called the Look-Think-Act Strategy. A WhatsApp group was established between Ugandan and Somali delegates to continue the cross-country learning exchange and support. Individual contacts enabled many participants to chat daily and help each other. A Quarterly meeting was also planned to start in 2023 to strengthen interaction between the two countries.

Meaningful participation of DPOs also increased and added great value to the programme. DPOs formed a stronger part of the planning and implementation of activities than previous years. They attended and influenced the yearly planning and review of project progress. Human rights advocacy, commemoration of disability days, and the delivery of assistive devices to children in need were

examples of areas of cooperation. This kind of interaction improved the relationship and coordination of all partners in the consortium.

DPOs also engaged in project extension meetings in Uganda including review of the result framework, revision of activities, and detailed implementation plan. The DPO representatives participated actively, and their views were heeded as they are knowledgeable about the context.

Added Value

TOFI capacity-building training has increased the frequency of persons with disabilities advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities. Recently, the OPD Mustaqbal Disability Association (MDA) held a collaboration call with relevant ministries, education partners, protection partners, and civil society organisations. Most MDA members are TOFI beneficiaries.

Further, ADRA and SCI staff and management have gained increased comprehension of inclusive education concepts and experiences as well as data disaggregation tools through DPO and Atlas Alliance engagement. Notably, all ADRA / SCI projects now embed inclusion and seek expertise from TOFI. All construction and rehabilitation undertaken by ADRA and SCI since TOFI commenced has adhered to principles of universal design. Furthermore, new programmes now engage with DPOs, and most proposals receive input from disability inclusion specialists to ensure that inclusion is mainstreamed. One priority of the SCI Somalia country office is inclusive programming. A workstream has been formed that will develop an action plan, follow up on achievements, and report back to senior management to track progress. The workstream will enhance the capacity and awareness of the sector managers to ensure their programmes are inclusive and accessible from now on. This was the fruit of awareness raising on disability inclusion by TOFI. TOFI further complements the Leave No One Behind Framework Agreement projects in Somalia.

As a result of awareness raising for staff on disability inclusion, SCI revised its human resource manual and added new articles on disability inclusion. SCI decided a minimum of 5% of its staff shall be persons with disabilities and resolved to make reasonable accommodations, including provision of assistive devices and interpreters.

PDON reviewed its governance structure and commitments in order to align them with the CRPD and its mandate. Upon return from a learning visit to Uganda, PDON staff called all districts in the state for a review meeting to reflect on its structure, commitments, and election procedures.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Gender inequality is evident across Somali communities. For instance, few Somali women participate in the workforce. The 2016 to 2017 election process introduced a 30% quota for the representation of women in parliament. Thus, women took high leadership roles for the first time in Somali history. Meanwhile, a reduced number of girls progress from lower to higher grades in school, though limited data is available. Forced early marriages, financial insecurity and socio-economically difficult situations are predominant reasons. These often cause dropouts with few mechanisms for girls to resume their education.



A TOFI seminar, showing two men and two women (one partly hidden), discussing and writing on a flipchart poster.

TOFI sensitises target communities on the social and economic consequences of inequalities and exclusion. Further, it has intensified strategies to address existing barriers. Guided by national and international commitments, deliberate inclusion of women and persons with disabilities has accommodated an increasing number of marginalised persons into the programme. TOFI has also empowered girls to actively participate in established school activities, school inclusion teams and inclusive child clubs to have their voices heard and their ideas considered.

Human Rights

Although advancements have been made, human rights violations continue to occur in Somalia. By November 2022, the United Nations Mission to Somalia (UNSOM) reported at least 1561 casualties, of which 613 had been killed. According to Human Rights Watch, the majority were killed during targeted and indiscriminate Al-Shabab attacks using improvised explosive devices (IEDs), suicide bombings, and shelling, as well as targeted killings. After a failed two-year extension for federal institutions in April 2022, between 60,000 and 100,000 people were displaced due to clashes between forces linked to politicians in Mogadishu. The recruitment of children into armed conflict continues to place children at risk of death and abuse. Additionally, the government is yet to establish a national human rights commission, with the appointment of commissioners pending since 2018. Persons with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to human rights violations and have limited opportunity to escape crises.

In response to rising abuses, TOFI-supported DPOs advocate for the human rights of persons with disabilities, focusing particularly on children and women. PDON has consulted with state authorities and highlighted that numerous government policies and legislations were developed before Somalia's ratification of the CRPD, and therefore should be revised. The current programmes and policies have shown limited impact on removing barriers for persons with disabilities to realise their rights.

In Mogadishu, where federal institutions are based, SDN participated in the recent development of the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities led by the Ministry of Women and Human Rights. Government officials made verbal commitments in the meetings with DPOs to advance the rights of persons with disabilities and involve DPOs in all matters.

The TOFI project organised capacity building for beneficiaries on their rights to inclusion in decisions affecting their lives. Disability Aid Foundation staff, volunteers, Ministry of Education officials, education implementing partners, and school communities received training on relevant United Nations conventions as well as national and international instruments on human rights.

Furthermore, the TOFI project raised awareness for persons with disabilities and marginalised groups in target project locations, participating in fora and speaking up for their rights.

TOFI programme staff ensured data disaggregation to track progress. SCI and ADRA have observed an increased number of female staff in decision-making positions within DPOs during activity planning and implementation.

Climate Change and the Environment

The current drought is the longest and most severe in recent history and has surpassed the 2010 to 2011 and 2016 to 2017 droughts in both duration and severity. The drought has caused widespread and worsening drought conditions across most parts of Somalia. This has resulted in failed crop harvests, widespread water shortage, triggering abnormal livestock migration, decline in livestock production and increased livestock deaths.

TOFI continued to work with the Ministry of Education and other partners to enable children to continue their education. This work served as an entry point for other humanitarian interventions including protection and psychological well-being. Among the activities were teacher incentives, scholarships, awareness raising on inclusive education, and the supply of assistive devices and learning materials to children with disabilities. Programme staff also approached other programmes and partners to provide safe drinking water to schools supported by TOFI. Education is not affordable to many children, especially children with disabilities who are overlooked in periods of crisis or when there are no adequate protective measures in place.

ADRA staff works with schools' management, teachers, learners, and communities on matters of environmental conservation. In Somalia, waste management is particularly an issue. Schools have established environmental clubs that take part in awareness raising about environmental conservation, tree

planting, and proper waste disposal. Additionally, ADRA constructs gutters in schools for catchment of rain waters and carries out proper environmental clearance processes after constructions or renovations.

Anti-Corruption

TOFI has expanded its partnership type and shifted from consultation to more advanced partnership like the provision of small grants to DPOs in Somalia. DPOs received introduction and training to upgrade their management skills as part of the prevention of corruption and misuse of resources. Fraud, procurement, and financial management were key topics in the sessions. The participants were well informed that fraud, corruption, and bribery have zero tolerance and will automatically lead to termination of contracts and loss of reputation.

The programme also hung awareness-raising posters in the DPOs' offices. The programme management team closely observed budget management and utilisation and reminded staff to flag any suspicious activities. There are also anti-corruption mandatory courses that should be completed and signed by any new staff.

Going Forward

TOFI Somalia organisations came together in October 2022 to review the Results Framework and decided which indicator targets needed reduction or increase based on context, resources, and capacities. Areas specifically highlighted for further focus included enrolment and awareness-raising. In December 2022, a study on inclusive education barriers and enablers was carried out which may inform further changes and revisions. However, the project is on track to achieve its indicators within the no-cost and cost extension period.

South Sudan



International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2022, attended by 1,093 persons (F458; M635) across Budi, Kapoeta and Twic Counties. (Photo: ADRA).

South Sudanese Government Officials' Feedback at DPO Professional Development Series

In their opening remarks for the TOFI DPO capacity building series in 2022, both the state representatives (the Director General of the Ministry of Gender, Equity and Inclusive Education and a representative from the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare), applauded YGlobal South Sudan's (YGSS) bottom-up approach of capacity-strengthening of DPOs, thus leading the way to inclusion for all. The two state representatives had, moreover, witnessed remarkably increased visibility of persons with disabilities and engagement on decision-making platforms due to TOFI awareness-raising campaigns. In addition, the Director General from MoGEIE mentioned that due to their engagement with the TOFI project in South Sudan, they now have three staff members with disabilities in senior positions. Finally, they both pledged their continued support to the TOFI project and DPOs in their efforts to build an inclusive society.

Economic Empowerment of a Young Lady with Blindness

EIS, a 28-year-old woman, has been living with a visual impairment from birth. To aid her mobility, EIS uses a white cane. However, earlier in life, the impairment hindered EIS from receiving an education, since her closest school was physically remote and difficult to access. Moreover, its facilities and approach lacked basic components of inclusive education. Further, EIS experienced stigma from her own family, who were reluctant to assist EIS in accessing educational services.

Fortunately, her luck turned in 2022 when Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) conducted a needs-assessment in her area for persons with disabilities. This was organised by the TOFI team in collaboration with the Union of People with Disabilities (UPwD), who gave her start-up capital to embark on income-generating activities.

During a recent interview with EIS, she happily expressed that the skills she acquired from the business orientation organised by NCA were invaluable. The skills have helped EIS manage her newly started business very well. Her profits have enabled her to pay the bills for medical treatment, buy basic household items and change her diet. Before this TOFI initiative, EIS was perceived as a beggar due to her poor living conditions. However, now her strengths are being recognised and EIS is experiencing a sense of value within her community.

Introduction

Key Figures

Estimated Population:	10,748,272 (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Population Under the Age of 15:	45% (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Urban Population (of Total Population):	21% (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Urban Population Growth:	2.9% (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Gender Inequality Index Ranking:	150 (of 170) (UNDP 2023; 2021 data)
Poverty Headcount Ratio at \$2.15 a Day (2017 PPP) (Percent of Population):	647.3% (World Bank 2023; 2016 data)
Adult Literacy Rate:	35% (World Bank 2023; 2018 data)
Life Expectancy at Birth:	55 years (UNDP 2023; 2021 data)
Child Mortality Rate (Under 5, per 1,000 Live Births):	99 (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Mean Years of Schooling:	5,7 (UNDP 2023; 2021 data)
Gross National Income (GNI) per Capita (2017 PPP \$):	768 (UNDP 2023; 2021 data)

Norway and South Sudan

Norwegian NGOs have been engaging with South 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 and 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 South Sudan since the conflict started (Forcier et al., 2016), 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 (Ayazi et al, 2013:1). Conflict alone is said to be the cause of at least 21% of impairments in South Sudan (Forcier et al, 2016). Mental health problems in South Sudan have also increased due to the conflict, with 41% to 53% of the population showing symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Amnesty International, 2016). Persons with disabilities face “multi-dimensional disadvantage” (Levitas, et al., 2007) due to intersecting vulnerabilities, with research showing strong links between disability and violence, particularly sexual violence against girls (Ellery et al, 2011). 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 (Forcier et al, 2016; Gilbert, 2016). Many communities see children with disabilities as a punishment from God (CARE, 2016:15). There have been reports of traditional killing of babies with disabilities (GoSS, 2013). In conflict, persons with disabilities and those who help them are more vulnerable to sexual violence and attacks or to being killed (HRW, 2013; 2017, CARE, 2016). The Coalition of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities report (Legge, 2016:1) states that persons with disabilities in South Sudan 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 (Legge, 2016; Sida 2014), 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 South Sudan 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. DPOs face challenges because of a lack of government support and a lack of income to keep programmes running. Authorities have 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 (HRW, 2017). Persons

with disabilities are often underrepresented or not represented at all in the political process, and 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 communities.

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

The programme concentrates on creating disability inclusion practises in three 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 Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs) as representative organisations of persons with disabilities, thus strengthening their role in the advocacy for general human rights for persons with disabilities, and improving their access to education and financial services. The DPOs in South Sudan are getting increasingly 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 are also 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.

Highlights and Selected Results

Human Rights Advocacy (HRA)

In 2022, 289 persons with disabilities (F159; M129) were trained and mentored through TOFI (NCA / YG) on their rights and how to claim them (#1111). To ensure a holistic approach, duty bearers from state and country authorities were among 79 participants (F29; M50) across three states attending trainings on human rights concepts, equal citizenship, removal of societal barriers to

inclusion, and engagement of persons with disabilities in social, cultural, religious, and recreational spheres. Likewise, advocacy roundtable discussions were held with 67 participants (F21; M46) representing stakeholder groups to exchange views on the scope and realisation of persons with disabilities' rights, share approaches to systemic change, and explore opportunities for cooperation.

30 inclusion champions (F16; M14) within the TOFI Advocacy Network, composed of DPO and Peacemaker group members, were trained on behaviour-change communication strategies. Applying their acquired skills and knowledge, the champions produced and disseminated advocacy materials promoting the rights of persons with disabilities in decision-making, policies, and services within their respective communities. Further, they engaged in 16 campaigns during **16 Days of Activism against GBV**, reaching a total of 28,892 persons. Consequently, multiple individuals expressed regret regarding their mistreatment of persons with disabilities and a desire to change their derogative attitudes.

Through TOFI (YG), community awareness and training of mainstream media personnel on positive disability coverage, led to seemingly increased acceptance and involvement of persons with disabilities. For instance, collaboration between state and non-state actors was essential to the success of International Deaf Awareness Week (IDAW) 2022, hosted by SSNDY and the TOFI consortium. Other support came from UNFPA, Humanity Inclusion, MoGEIE, the Mayor of Juba City, and DECES. The physical events attracted 212 attendees (F83; M29) (#1112). UPWD / EES, furthermore, conducted a Behaviour Change Communication strategy and door-to-door awareness raising, reaching 129 households across multiple counties. The online IDAW campaign, also championed by youth with disabilities and peacemakers, attracted 22,161 viewers across social media platforms.

Following previous years' TOFI (YG) training of counsellors, the programme continues to identify persons with disabilities in need of mental health and psychosocial support. In 2022, 116 persons (F87; M29) received psychosocial support counselling. Multiple cases of gender-based violence and abuse were disclosed to and followed up by TOFI-trained counsellors. A couple of the survivors also participated in income generating activities led by SSNDY. Furthermore, the psychosocial support counsellors identified 38 out-of-school children with disabilities to enroll in six educational institutions (#1114b).

In close collaboration with DPOs, TOFI (YG) organised events in four locations to celebrate International Women's Day. An estimated 2,832 persons attended these events, of which about 80% were women and 45% women with disabilities (#1123, indirectly). Further, in collaboration with DPOs, TOFI (led by ADRA) facilitated the annual celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on "transformative solutions for inclusive development". 1093 persons (F458; M635) participated within Greater Kapoeta, Budi and Twic counties (#1112).

Alongside the Atlas Alliance, TOFI (YG) partnering with DPOs and youth, organised a physical Global Disability Youth Summit 2022 side event. 34 participants, including government representatives, executive NGO staff, DPO

members, and TOFI consortium members, attended the event in person. Simultaneously, adolescent TOFI champions carried out an online advocacy and awareness campaign on the GDS and disability rights which reached 7,000 viewers. Additionally, with TOFI (ADRA), Philemon Loriang, chairperson of Kapoeta South Union of Persons with Disabilities (KSUPD), moderated a GDS side event on **Inclusive Education: Why Organisations of Persons with Disabilities' Leadership Matters**, with 435 registrants and 252 live participants.

TOFI (YG and NCA) further trained 96 DPO staff members (F46; M50) on organisational operation and management. Notably, in collaboration with TOFI consortium member organisations, YGlobal led a six-month DPO professional development series, which began in August 2022 with a three-day training. The training was officially opened by a representative from MoGCSW and the Director General of MoGEIE. The 37 participants (F13; M24) were from SSWDN, SSNDY, RWEO, GWN, JOS, and YMCA. Following their acquired skills and knowledge, the participating four CSOs and two DPOs have gained confidence to also engage further within the IE and EE thematic areas of TOFI (#1121a).

Inclusive Education (IE)

In 2022, 995 caregivers (F578; M417) received inclusive education awareness raising through TOFI (SF and ADRA). To mention one initiative, TOFI (ADRA) facilitated dialogue among 194 community members (M116; F78) on persons with disabilities' right to inclusive education (#1211). Moreover, TOFI (ADRA) identified, referred, and provided follow-up of 24 children with disabilities (F14; M10) in need of medical treatment (#1217b).



An ADRA school visit, with a class of children in yellow uniform shirts standing behind a row of teachers and ADRA staff members. (Photo: ADRA).

Further, TOFI (NCA / ADRA / SF) facilitated the identification of 359 learners with disabilities (F175; M184) across Eastern Equatoria, Warrap and Western Bar-EI-Ghazal states (#1213a). TOFI (YG / SF / ADRA) also equipped 122 persons with disabilities (F31; M91) with assistive devices (#1214b).

TOFI (SF) trained 75 caregivers of children with disabilities (F61; M14) on their rights and how to meet their physical and social needs. As a result of the training, parents and caregivers have demonstrated increased support for their children to realise their right to education. (#1215).

38 NGO representatives (F14; M24) participated in training on quality inclusive education practice organised by TOFI (ADRA) in Twic, Kapoeta and Budi counties (#1233). Additionally, under TOFI (ADRA / SF), 146 educational personnel (F39; M107) were trained in specialised skills. To mention one initiative, TOFI (SF) continued training 24 teachers and college tutors (F14; M10) in basic sign language to accommodate the needs of deaf learners. The college tutors will go on to train both pre-service and in-service teachers in sign language (#1231b).



15 adults and children with disabilities receiving assistive devices (crutches, canes and wheelchairs). (Photo: ADRA).

Economic Empowerment (EE)

TOFI (SF / YG) trained 200 persons with disabilities (F120; M80) and 82 caregivers (F55; M27) on employment rights and financial management. RWEOPeacemaker Saving and Investment Group (PMSIG) offered to follow up and assist the interested persons in acquiring necessary tools and joining Don Bosco Vocational Centre (#1311).

TOFI (SF) in partnership with Smile Again Africa Development Organisation (SAADO) and Women Aid Vision (WAV) mobilised 144 persons with disabilities (F80; M64), 56 caregivers of persons with disabilities (F37; M19), and 20 community members (F15; M5) in Juba and Aweil to join inclusive savings groups (#1313).

TOFI (SF) trained 10 local artisans (F7; M3) on the principles of reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities in vocational training and other forms of income generating activities (#1333). The local artisans trained all the 220 iSave group members (F136; M84) in income generating skills such as improved farming practices, catering and knitting (#1312). After their training, SF provided start-up kits to initiate group income generating activities. One iSave group in Aweil cultivated over ten acres of groundnuts and harvested over 50 bags within three months after their agricultural training.

Challenges and Adaptations

Human Resources and Capacity

Effects by the resignation of a key YGlobal staff member were minimised by the appointment of an interim finance officer alongside additional support by the finance coordinator. Moreover, SF identified the need to strengthen their monitoring and evaluation capacity, which led to the recruitment of a MEAL assistant.

Logistics and Service Availability

Changes within Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) delayed the aerial transportation of programme staff and items to certain target locations. To address this issue, TOFI staff will book alternative airlines in locations where Kush Air operates.

In project areas, there was often a lack of nearby services related to ENT (ear, nose, throat) treatment (e.g., hearing aid infections), ophthalmological treatment (e.g., blindness / low vision), paediatric orthopaedic surgery (e.g., talipes) and specialist interventions. However, persons with prioritised medical needs were transported to hospitals and clinics for treatment.

Commodity Demand and Procurement

Assistive devices are mostly procured from outside the country. Hence, the process is lengthy. Within 2022, contracted suppliers provided multiple incorrect devices despite TOFI staff providing careful specifications beforehand. This caused delays in the delivery of appropriate devices to beneficiaries. Further, the identified need and demand for assistive devices in 2022 was greater than the means available. The budget was, to partly accommodate this disparity, apportioned and realigned.

Security and Climate

Protracted conflict between the Ngok community of Abyei and Twic community disrupted activities in Ajakuac and Manhawan schools. Sporadic communal violence continues. The Budi to Lotukei road became insecure within the reporting period, thus affecting implementation in three supported institutions: Lorem, Lorege and Piobokoi schools. Further, it forced staff to travel by air, which increased transport costs significantly. Fortunately, the government introduced new measures to reduce crime rates along the roads of which impact may be eventually observed.

Heavy rainfall resulted in severe flooding in Warrap and Western Bahr El Ghazal states. Consequently, and upon compounding challenges (e.g., climate change coupled with unprecedented levels of food insecurity), a large proportion of the population required humanitarian assistance, with certain areas reportedly in danger of famine.

Financial Management

During the annual financial assessment visit in August 2022, YGlobal identified mismanagement of funds by a TOFI partner. This discovery led to a freeze in funding and activities were paused. In dialogue with Atlas Alliance and Norad, it was agreed that YGlobal-SS could adopt the budget lines and continue implementation through alternative partners. However, this led to some implementation delays and rescheduling. This case was reported to Norad upon identification and was closed in February 2023.

Collaboration and Harmonisation

Activities and Implementation

At the consortium level, cooperation and joint implementation ranged from identification of service providers to advocacy, training, and lobbying. SF, ADRA, YGlobal and NCA have (e.g., collaborated in the planning and delivery of the six months' organisational management training series for DPOs, led by YGlobal.) Further, led by SF, all consortium organisations and MoGEI were brought together for the National School-Based Inclusion Policy validation. This resulted in an adoption of the policy across South Sudanese schools. Multiple DPOs supporting persons with physical, visual, and hearing disabilities, engaged in the policy development, further strengthening the network between NGOs and DPOs. Sign Language Day, IDPD and White Cane Day were, moreover, joint consortium activities whereby DPOs took lead coordination roles.

Meetings and Networks

The consortium increased its collaboration via technical and steering committee meetings, coupled with joint resource sharing and decision-making in planning and monitoring of activities. The technical working group met several times for joint work on quarterly reports and 2023 to 2024 results framework development for the TOFI no / cost-extension. TOFI organisations participated actively in meetings with line ministries as well as monthly education cluster meetings and partner coordination meetings at county and state levels to share achievements, challenges, ways forward and areas of collaboration. Led by NCA, the consortium was further instrumental in lobbying toward UNCRPD ratification at the federal level.

Partnerships

Lastly, TOFI collaborated with and created referral pathways through health service providers and CSOs, including CORDAID, Smile Again Africa Development Organisation (SAADO), Women Aid Vision (WAV), PHCU / PHCC, Budi County Hospital, St. Theresa Hospital, Usratuna Hospital, Kapoeta Civil Hospital, Samaritan Purse, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC). CORDAID medical professionals, including doctors, supported monthly screening at the school level to identify and refer children with disabilities to appropriate services. They furthermore, agreed to support children and parents of children with mental health conditions through counselling and medication.



NCA planning workshop: six persons are huddled around a table, looking at documents (Photo: NCA)

Similarly, TOFI collaborated with Samaritan's Purse in mobilising children from Greater Kapoeta and Budi Counties, then airlifting them for surgery. TOFI, afterward, assumed responsibilities related to their rehabilitation and continued treatment within respective locations. Also worth mentioning was the collaboration with Usratuna hospital in Juba and PRRC in Wau. Usratuna supported the referral of children with disabilities to Gulu Regional Referral Hospital (GRRH) in Uganda. Similarly, ICRC supported prosthesis provision and physiotherapy support.

Added Value

TOFI continues to facilitate positive collaboration between DPOs and CSOs, expanding the scope and comprehension of inclusion. Following programme support, JOK, the Executive Director of South Sudan National Deaf Children and Youth, has become a TOFI ambassador to President Salva Kiir and his office. TOFI has, furthermore, contributed to the governmental decision to keep designated seats in parliament for persons with disabilities. Now, three persons with disabilities are in senior positions within federal ministries as a result of influence by TOFI.

In terms of mainstreaming, ADRA has facilitated the mobilisation of persons with disabilities and establishment of DPOs in Upper Nile areas Nasir and Maiwut within the humanitarian programme Education in Emergencies (EiE), following the successful collaboration between TOFI educational institutions, NGOs and DPOs. Also, EiE and SEAQE (Strengthening Equity, Access, and Quality Education) schools were made accessible to persons with disabilities through universal design principles learned through TOFI. The Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) programme in Warrap has, moreover, hired a person with disability as their data clerk. The TOFI inclusive infrastructure officer advises SEAQE staff as well, upon construction activities. The TOFI OCAT has been adapted by SEAQE and EiE for capacity assessment of civil society actors.

Advocacy toward the government and relevant ministries, has led to increased awareness of disability rights and support of policy development. In 2022, the School-Based Inclusive Education Policy and Inclusive Education Policy were reviewed through collaboration between MoGEI, NGOs and DPOs. This created an added value of stronger relationships between the actors and positive influence on the education system in its entirety. Further, TOFI conducted mainstreaming into Community-Based Teachers training (CBTT) in Imehejek County Education Centre (CEC) with trained teachers reporting improved inclusivity of curricula assessments and teaching and learning materials.

Mobilisation of community-based and faith-based organisations, DPOs, and NGOs for joint advocacy initiatives showed unity of purpose and strengthened cooperation among civil society actors in calling for an end to disability-based discrimination, gender-based violence, child abuse and early / forced marriages. Hence, collaboration has extended beyond the TOFI scope. Joint DPO meetings, facilitated by TOFI, have further enhanced the relationship between national, state and county organisations of persons with disabilities.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Women's Rights and Gender Equality

In 2022, numerous issues trembled women's rights across TOFI implementation areas. According to a UN report of 21 March 2022, "there is widespread rape being perpetrated by all armed groups across the country", with the report describing it as a "hellish existence for women and girls". Furthermore, community members in Kapoeta East created a bylaw to bar women from wearing inner garments, exposing them to increased risk of rape and sexual abuse. Hence the Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health (ASRH) team in ADRA brought the issue to light through radio talks, citing SDG 5 and 15 articles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Furthermore, ADRA has requested to meet with authorities to commence a dialogue on this issue.

TOFI consortium member organisations adhere to rigorous ethical regulations and policies to avoid exploitation of women, girls, and other vulnerable groups. Organisationally, SF, ADRA, YGlobal, and NCA strive to uphold gender sensitivity upon staff recruitment. The strategy of "Investing in Girls and Women" contributes to reversing the exclusion of girls and women with disabilities in education, financial spaces, and leadership roles. 70% of participants in iSave groups within the EE component are women with disabilities and female parents / caregivers for persons with disabilities. Likewise, across HRA and IE, TOFI promotes an increase in the proportion of women participating in community, advocacy, and education initiatives. Investment by TOFI in equitable rights across genders has a positive community-wide effect in terms of shifting mindsets, challenging stereotypes, and changing social norms. In terms of monitoring processes, the TOFI consortium in South Sudan continues to consider gender-inclusive objectives, activities and indicator tracking routines.

Human Rights

The human rights situation in South Sudan remains dire as basic services including health facilities, educational systems, infrastructure are deprioritised due to protracted conflict. A UNOCHA report to the Human Rights Council February 28 to April 1, 2022, stated that "political competition and ongoing localised conflict are responsible for fragmentation and increasing ethnic divisions". Inter-communal violence has led to countless human rights breaches and slowed down progress nationally. Nonetheless, TOFI initiatives within human rights advocacy, inclusive education, and economic empowerment aim to affect South Sudanese communities in positive ways.

Multiple TOFI initiatives advocate for and contribute toward peaceful co-existence. Worth mentioning are community dialogues on challenges faced by marginalised groups due to inter-communal violence, radio talk show discussions on cross-cutting issues, human rights awareness-raising, and national campaigns. The Government of South Sudan experiences capacity limitations in implementing commitments embedded within international human rights treaties including CRPD, CRC, and CEDAW. Hence, TOFI contributes to popularisation of

international human rights norms by supporting public campaigns and nationwide initiatives.

Climate Change and the Environment

The operational context of TOFI remains unpredictable with extreme weather conditions, environmental degradation, and food insecurity. According to UNHCR (Osire, 2022) climate change-driven flooding and drought are threatening to aggravate an already precarious situation in vulnerable parts of South Sudan. Thus far, the situation has caused massive internal displacement of people, heightened inter-communal violence and crime rates, reduced access to services, and increased pressure on market systems, disproportionately affecting person with disabilities. In response, the TOFI programme has engaged community leaders, youth, and women in dialogue around the issues facing their communities and joint resolutions.

Meanwhile, TOFI member organisations promote environment-protection and contribute to disaster preparedness and resilience. The national government is unable to deploy adequate technical and financial resources to mitigate the effects of natural and man-made calamities, hence the need exists for partnership with non-state actors. TOFI supports project participants to engage in environment-protection through, for instance, training iSave members on climate-smart farming practices, distribution of tree seedlings and encouragement to sow, distribution of garbage bins around marketplaces. Further, TOFI organisations frequently assess the programmes' environmental impact and adjust accordingly.

Anti-Corruption

According to the 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), South Sudan is the second most corrupt nation globally. NCA, ADRA, SF & YGlobal have zero tolerance for corruption and, therefore, include it within annexes to all staff contracts e.g., through the Code of Conduct and Anticorruption Policy. It sets conditions for transfer of funds to partners, which are preceded with accountability of previous instalments. All TOFI project staff are introduced to and oriented on these policies. The TOFI consortium are creating awareness through carefully training staff on their Anti-Corruption policy as a measure to fight corruption. Atlas' Anti-Corruption policy has proven effective in combating issues related to corruption throughout the planning and delivery of projects. The intention is to ensure that preventive measures are in place and that corruption is mitigated, anticipated, and detected. All deviation cases are reported. TOFI has also encouraged, supported, and provided suitable grounds or mechanism for whistle blowers to report corrupt practices by partners, volunteers, interns, employees, and companies. Finally, reporting on corruption issues has become a collective responsibility and a norm for TOFI staff across organisations. In August 2022, a financial mismanagement case was identified by YGlobal, and immediately reported to Norad. For more information, please see section 2.

Going Forward

TOFI 2023 NCE and CE results framework (RF) and plans have been jointly and carefully developed. Limited variance to the 2023 to 2024 plan is expected. The TOFI South Sudan consortium has, further, agreed to review and sign a two-year (2023 to 2024) memorandum of understanding (MoU) expanding the consortium to include the umbrella South Sudan Union of Persons with Disabilities Organisation (SSUPDO) and the Norwegian Association of Persons with Disabilities (NAD). Moreover, the TOFI team will continue efforts to mainstream inclusion principles at government, institutional, and grassroots levels.

TOFI teams will use the no-cost extension to consolidate achievements registered in 2020-2022 by reengaging with members of PTAs and SMCs to sustain school inclusive practices through their governance roles and retrain the teachers in supported schools using modules of the Inclusive Learning Approach (ILA) to strengthen their inclusive pedagogy and specialised skills for supporting children with education needs. In addition, TOFI will conduct post-training monitoring support of iSave members.

Uganda

Claiming Their Rights: Persons with Intellectual Disabilities and Their Families

Jane* is a 34-year-old farmer from Lwengo District, Central Uganda. After marrying, Jane got pregnant. When she went into labor, she was unable to access immediate medical attention from a professional physician. Jane was instead supported by a traditional birth attendant, but during the delivery there were complications. The lack of immediate medical attention resulted in her son Daniel* developing multiple disabilities. For the first five years of his life, Jane neglected her son because of these disabilities. This attitude was also reflected by other family members who discriminated against him and saw him as a burden. Other community members attributed his disabilities to witchcraft, causing the family to feel ashamed of the young boy.

Through the TOFI project, Inclusion Uganda has conducted trainings and set up parent support groups, in the area where Jane and her family live. Jane listed herself and was trained in the following topics:

1. Intellectual disability (different types and causes).
2. The Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD).
3. Trainings on selfcare skills, physiotherapy, and human rights.
4. Parents sharing experiences.

From what she learned during the training on disability, it is types and preventative strategies, she has identified Daniel's disability types as both



A mother with a young child are seated together on a ledge; the child is smiling at the camera.

intellectual and physical. She also learnt that his disabilities are a result of the lack of medical attendance at his birth, rather than caused by witchcraft. From the CRPD training, Jane has had an overall change in attitude towards all persons with disabilities. She realised that Daniel has rights and that she had been violating these rights since his birth. She understood that the only way her son can be able to live independently is to fully rehabilitate and care for him. She also mentions that she must change her family's attitude towards disability so that they can also support her son at home.

Jane is now an active member of a Parents Self-Help Group. Through sharing experiences with other parents and caregivers of children with disabilities, she learnt that persons with intellectual disabilities can become productive members of the community if they are empowered to learn different skills and to advocate for themselves. She was also able to meet and interact with other children with multiple disabilities which inspired her to start doing physiotherapy exercises with her son. He is now eight years old and is making efforts to both start walking and speaking, which she previously did not believe was possible. Today, Jane is immensely proud of her son, and Daniel is loved and cared for by everyone at home. Jane's hope is that with the continued support from herself and her family, Daniel will soon be able to go to school.

Human rights advocacy and self-advocacy start from the home. Through TOFI, Inclusion Uganda mentor persons with disabilities on their rights and how to claim them and provides training for persons with intellectual disabilities and their support persons on the CRPD and self-advocacy. As Jane's story shows, when parents and caregivers are trained, they are empowered to defend the rights of their children at home and in the community. This also boost the self-confidence of their children who in turn will be able to know their rights and claim them.

*The name has been changed for anonymity.

Obuntu Bulamu: Inclusive Education Benefiting All Learners



Tukore primary school has many pupils with disabilities. Now teachers have learned techniques to better reach learners with disabilities the their classes..

Mujurizi Bruno is a Grade 3 teacher at Tukore primary school, Mbarara district, in the Western region of Uganda. Ever since he started teaching in 2016, he has struggled with creating an inclusive learning environment for all the pupils in his class. He especially lacked the skills on how to include children with disabilities in a classroom environment. This hindered the active participation and learning of some of his learners. Mujurizi recollects that he was unable to identify, screen, or assess pupils in his school. He did not know that pupils with disabilities were like any other students who could excel academically. This lack of awareness led to his neglect of children with disabilities in his teaching. He states that:

“Before, even though we could mostly admit children with disabilities, we could teach them separately from others without disabilities. The pupils with disabilities in this school were termed as ‘invalids!’”

Tukore Primary School was selected as a TOFI implementation school by the Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association of Uganda (SHAU) because it is one of the schools with the most children with disabilities in the district. By improving the inclusivity of the school, it would not only ensure inclusive education, but also change the attitudes towards children with disabilities in the community. Mujurizi was selected as one of the five teachers at Tukore Primary School to participate in trainings on how to handle pupils with disabilities and ensure inclusivity in a school environment. In 2021 and 2022, he was trained together with other teachers under the TOFI project using the “OBUNTU BULAMU” training model. This model teaches peer-to-peer support to enhance the inclusion of learners with disabilities. The training provided him and his colleagues with skills on how to identify and screen learners with disabilities, as well as supporting individual learning. Mujurizi acknowledges that the training has changed his attitude towards persons with disabilities and taught him that everyone in the community is responsible for inclusion. He explains it like this:

“The ‘Obuntu Bulamu’ peer-to-peer support approach has created a sense of responsibility in me as well as other teachers and learners in the school.

After training in the ‘Obuntu Bulamu’ model, teachers at Tukore Primary School are now able to teach with inclusive instructional materials that make learning real, breaking down the barriers between the teacher and the learners. Mujurizi explains his learning outcome like this:

“I am able to conduct differentiated teaching catering for differences amongst learners such as attention span, mode of communication, academic levels, among others. I prepare individualised education plans and keep checking the improvement and weaknesses of each of the learners as well as communicate with the deaf children / people using sign language.

The trainings have made the teachers’ work easier, given them more confidence, motivated learners, and promoted creativity in the classroom both among the

learners and teachers. Now they make inclusive work and lesson plans to cater and suit all learners with and without disabilities.

Introduction

Key Figures

Estimated Population:	45,853,778 (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Population Under the Age of 15:	45% (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Urban Population (of Total Population):	26% (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Urban Population Growth:	5.6% (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Gender Inequality Index Ranking:	131 (of 170) (UNDP 2023; 2021 data)
Poverty Headcount Ratio at \$2.15 a Day (2017 PPP) (Percent of Population):	42.2% (World Bank 2023; 2019 data)
Adult Literacy Rate:	79% (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Life Expectancy at Birth:	62.7 years (UNDP 2023; 2021 data)
Child Mortality Rate (Under 5, per 1,000 Live Births):	42 (World Bank 2023; 2021 data)
Mean Years of Schooling:	5.731 (UNDP 2023: 2021 data)
Gross National Income (GNI) per Capita (2017 PPP \$):	2,181 (UNDP 2023: 2021 data)

Norway and Uganda

Uganda has been an important partner country for Norwegian aid for many years, and in 2022, Norwegian development aid to Uganda amounted to NOK381,4 million, with a strong focus on education, governance, civil society, and conflict prevention. 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 persons with visual impairments, Deaf and hard of hearing persons, DeafBlind persons, those with psychosocial disabilities, persons with albinism, as well as children with disabilities, and women with disabilities.

The government's Third National Development Plan, launched in 2020, only contains a few references to persons with disabilities, and no targets or measures to address the situation of persons with disabilities.

Statistical information about disability and the standard of living of persons with disabilities in Uganda is limited, but there is a couple of good sources. A Uganda Bureau of Statistics survey in 2017, and a 2019 NUDIPU, SINTEF, and Makerere study on the living conditions among persons with disabilities in Uganda are good sources. 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.

Notwithstanding, 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 rate of persons with disabilities aged 15 and older is almost half that of persons without disabilities. Furthermore, women with disabilities are less likely to be employed than men with disabilities. 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 (ACPF, 2014). Statistical information suggests a low enrolment and completion of primary and secondary schools for children in Uganda in general, and children with disabilities. The UN Flagship Report on Disability and Development (2018) 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 (MoES RIA, 2018).

Despite the legal framework supporting inclusive education in Uganda (e.g., National Constitution 1995, Disability Act 2019), there is still overwhelming

evidence of exclusion within the education and school system. The Ugandan Universal Primary Education policy 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).

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 impairments, 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).

Description of the 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), 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, Economic Empowerment, and Inclusive Education, 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 NAD, NUDIPU, and The Association of Microfinance Institutions of Uganda (AMFIU) as a basis for the collaboration in the EE component, and the model for inclusive education developed by NAD and the Enabling Education Network (EENET) in the IE component, often 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 was set to submit the

state report in response to the 2016 concluding observations by the Committee of Experts on the UNCRPD in 2022, however the process was delayed until February 2023. 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

Human Rights Advocacy

OUTPUT 1111: TRAINING AND MENTORING PROVIDED TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ON THEIR RIGHTS AND HOW TO CLAIM THEM.

In 2022, several organisational and community-based trainings and skilling initiatives were held for diverse groups of persons with disabilities. The trainings focussed on their rights and how to claim them. SHAU is using creative ARTvocacy and have empowered 61 (M22; F39) youth and children with disabilities with human rights knowledge and disability agency. A total of four songs were composed in four languages to create mass awareness on existing rights violations and increase the ability of children and youth to claim their rights. Overall, a total of 423 (M201; F222) youths and children were reached by SHAU as result of both trainings and ARTvocacy.

Inclusion Uganda trained 2,148 persons (M944; F1,204) of whom 468 were adults with disabilities (M239; F229) and 479 were children with disabilities (M247; F232). They were trained on different articles of the CRPD, advocacy strategies and selfcare skills. Some of them were trained to become trainers.

Furthermore, IU trained 219 (M95; F124) parents and support persons of persons with intellectual disabilities, changing their minds to the fact that if their children are given good support, they can live independently and become productive members of society.

OUTPUT 1124: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR DPOS TO MONITOR AND REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CRPD AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS).

NUDIPU held consultations with 67 (M37; F30) representatives of DPOs from across the disability community. The aim was to foster meaningful engagement in monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the SDGs and CRPD. The consultations led to the development of a draft alternative report which will be submitted to the UN Committee of Experts on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities once the cabinet has approved the state report.

Save The Children International (SCI) supported six children (M3; F3) of which three (2M, 1F) were children with disabilities to present challenges faced by children with disabilities regarding accessibility, education, health, and discrimination to 48 (M27; F21) key stakeholders including Chief Administrative Officers, District Inspector of Schools, tutors, and DPO leaders. The child-led disability inclusion advocacy has resulted in improved appreciation and fulfilment of children's rights.

SHAU conducted CRPD-trainings. SHAU trained 29 TOFI staff (M13; F16) who reported improved understanding of the CRPD and SDG monitoring and reporting.

This staff has also trained others in these skills bringing the total to 110 (M48; F62).

Inclusive Education

OUTPUT 1230: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EDUCATION STAFF ON QUALITY INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PRACTICE.

The Inclusive Teaching component of the Inclusive Learning Approach (ILA) was successfully implemented. NUDIPU, with technical guidance from the Enabling Education Network (EENET) reached 78 principal trainers (M52; F26) comprising centre coordinating tutors, lecturers, head teachers and tutors from primary teacher training colleges with Modules 5, 6 and 7. Topics include creating individual education plans and instructional aids, promoting active learning in the classroom, and developing learner participation. 78 teachers (M52; F26) finished all the modules of the ILA out of a target of 100. The drop-out is attributed to teacher transfers. All modules were cascaded to the in-service teachers in all the TOFI schools by SCI, and Stromme Foundation East Africa (SFEA). SCI reached 254 in-service teachers (168M, 86F) across ten schools in two districts, with use of Teacher Learning Circles and mentorship by Cluster Coordinating Tutors ensuring continuous sharing of knowledge with new teachers transferred to project schools, while SFEA reached 297 in-service teachers (M101; F196) across six districts.

Using the “Obuntu Bulamu” peer-to-peer approach, SHAU reached 241 in-service teachers (M84; F157) with on-the-job training and mentoring and cross-district learning exchanges. These facilitated further attitude change, the open exchange of ideas, and adaptation of good practices.

OUTPUT 1211: AWARENESS RAISING PROVIDED TO FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES ON THEIR RIGHTS TO EDUCATION AND HOW TO SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN.

Several trainings and workshops took place under this output in 2022. Through the home visit initiative, SCI reached 205 learners with disabilities (M101; F104) and their parents. The strengthened home-school relationship impacted positively on the learning outcomes of children with disabilities, as parents support their children to learn, follow their learning plans, commit resources, and give feedback to teachers on how the children are progressing.

SHAU empowered 445 parents and caregivers (M118; F327) with knowledge on inclusive education and how to support inclusion of children with disabilities at home, in the community and in schools. This has led to collaborative parenting together with improved and continued support of their children with disabilities in homes and schools. SFEA increased the enrolment of children with disabilities in schools in two districts through the training of 100 parents and caregivers (M55; F45) in the protection of children with disabilities and fulfilling their right to education.

To further the enrolment and retention of children with disabilities, SCI provided cash grants to 400 children (M200; F200) under output 1214. The post distribution monitoring reveals that 98% of the parents / guardians who received

the money paid the school fees on time and provided the scholastic materials. Additionally, 13 schools (SCI 11, SFEA 1, SHAU 1) received improved infrastructure such as classrooms and washrooms through the TOFI programme, contributing to output 1232.

Economic Empowerment

OUTPUT 1312: PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR PARENTS / CAREGIVERS TRAINED ON MARKET RELEVANT INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES.

NUDIPU provided vocational skilling to 102 young persons with disabilities (M50; F52), in collaboration with the District Unions (DUs) and local government. 36 youth were trained in tailoring, followed by 19 in motorcycle mechanics, 18 in hairdressing, nine in carpentry, eight in electronics, four in welding, three in shoe making and two in craft works.

SFEA trained 213 persons with disabilities and their family members (M86; F127) in marketable income generating activities (IGA) ranging from bookmaking to liquid soap making, handcrafts, backyard farming, improved poultry, and piggery management. AMFIU trained 3,189 persons with disabilities (1,455M, 1,734F) in business skills across 5 districts. The trainings under this output resulted in participants forming new IGAs as well as running their existing ones better. This again means that participants have regular income that they can save in their groups and that they can access loans for their enterprises.

OUTPUT 1313: PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR PARENTS / CAREGIVERS ENROLLED IN FINANCIAL SERVICES PROGRAMMES.

Both SFEA and NUDIPU surpassed the target enrolment number for the iSAVE groups. This was attributed to strong collaboration among the TOFI implementing partners, creative mobilisation initiatives such as going door-to-door, positive relationships with local government and other community-level leadership structures, as well as mass awareness done using radio in the target districts.

SFEA mobilised a total of 997 new iSAVE members (M265; F732), 979 are persons with disabilities and 20 are caregivers of children with disabilities. A total of 112 groups were formed. NUDIPU formed 160 iSAVE groups with a total membership of 3,643 (M1,313; F2,329). 100 of these do not have a disability, while all other members represent a wide variety of disabilities. By the end of the reporting period, the groups had accumulated savings worth UGX302,264,000 (approximately USD81,000) and accessed loans worth UGX200,041,50 (approximately USD5,300). To ensure participants are fully equipped to use to these opportunities, AMFIU also trained 3,905 persons with disabilities (M1,876; F2,029) in financial literacy under output 1311.

Challenges and Adaptations

Increased Costs

Inflation and costs increased due to the Russian-Ukrainian war. For example, fuel prices and transport refunds almost doubled, leading to a scale-back of some activities. Cost-effective approaches such as virtual meetings and strengthening of community / district structures to support implementation helped mitigate the

issue. However, vulnerable populations including persons with disabilities were the hardest hit, affecting their ability to save. In the 2nd and 3rd quarter, the savings rates in the iSAVE groups dropped and increased absenteeism and drop-out of the programme was reported by NUDIPU.

Uganda National Teachers Union (UNATU) Strike

UNATU enforced a country-wide, 20-day strike from 15 June 2022 following release of the 2022 to 2023 national budget. This affected implementation of in-school activities during this period. To mitigate this, meetings were held between TOFI partners and school administrations to plan for the postponement of in-school activities and subsequent fast-tracking of implementation. Additionally, consortium members increased implementation of community-based activities during the strike to limit time lost.

Teacher Transfers

The transfer of teachers from TOFI schools affected the total number of teachers completing the seven ILA modules. The impact was felt where the club patrons / matrons and the Inclusive Education Coordinators (IECOs) were transferred to other districts. The consortium addressed this challenge by enacting a whole-school approach to inclusive education where trainings are scaled up to the entire school community (i.e., all teachers and members of school' governing structures like the members of Parents Teachers Association (PTAs), School Management Committee (SMCs), The Community Mobilization Team (CMTs), and the School Inclusion team (SIT).) A positive aspect to teacher transferring to other schools is that they can extend their knowledge on inclusive education to their new workplace.

Staff Turnover

Staff turnover in TOFI partner organisations slowed down implementation of TOFI activities, affected full participation in joint consortium activities and hindered timely reporting in the routine monitoring system. However, recruitment and induction of new staff members was swiftly done to mitigate this.

Limited Commitment and Support from Local Government Officials

The TOFI Uganda programme prides itself in the continued positive relations between the consortium members and the Government. However, stakeholders within the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) frustrated TOFI implementation progress in the city. According to SHAU, the KCCA officials served their personal interests and high financial expectations and delayed the clearance for TOFI implementation in the city schools. To mitigate this, discussions were held at consortium level with other civil society partners and plans for a high-level engagement with City Authorities in charge of social services were drafted. Moving forward, SHAU has chosen to phase out TOFI implementation in Kampala city for the remainder of the programme.

Increased Enrollment of Learners with Disabilities in TOFI Schools

With increased community awareness on the rights to education for children with disabilities, the enrolment rate for learners with disabilities shot record high in most schools. This overwhelmed the teaching staff and exerted pressure on the already limited resources. Additionally, it increased demand for assistive devices beyond the respective organisations' budget scales. To address this, the consortium through NUDIPU continues to engage Government and hold them accountable to the provision of inclusive learning environment suitable for learners with disabilities.

Late Disbursement of Funds by Norwegian Partners

A few partners reported late release of funds, causing delays to implementation in the first quarter. Joint thematic planning enabled proper realignment and rescheduling of delayed activities and harmonisation meetings were held with respective Norwegian partners to prevent this affecting the programme in the future.

Collaboration and Harmonisation

Global Disability Summit (GDS)

The Norwegian Embassy in Uganda and the TOFI consortium collaborated to host observation meetings for the GDS Youth Summit and the GDS Civil Society Forum in February 2022. The meetings gathered stakeholders to observe and reflect on the 2022 Global Disability Youth Summit proceedings as well as the official 2022 Global Disability Civil Society Forum. The youth summit was attended by 36 participants, the majority of whom were youth representatives from DPOs. 32 participants attended the CSO forum, the majority were representatives of DPOs. The TOFI consortium also organised two side events, one on IE coordinated by NAD and ADRA and one on EE coordinated by NAD, NUDIPU, and SF.

Inter-Ministry Technical Working Group Meetings

NAD supported three Inter-Ministry Technical Working Group meetings coordinated by the ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development (MoGLD). These meetings have increased the coordination of disability programming in Uganda and fostered harmonisation of disability interventions. The meetings also provide an opportunity for the TOFI partners, DPOs especially, to influence the country's disability and development agenda.

Country-Level Coordination Meetings

The Country Coordination Committee with representation from all TOFI implementing partners held three quarterly review and planning meetings and one annual review meeting. These meetings were crucial to harmonising implementation of the programme, mitigating any issues and provide opportunities for cross-learning and adaptation of best practices.

TOFI Uganda 2023 to 2024 Cost Extension Planning Meetings

Norwegian and Ugandan partners held two meetings to decide on the strategic direction of the programme for the two-year cost extension. Both consortium-wide and thematic discussions on priorities, approach and scope were held, as well as reflections on the results and learnings so far.

Thematic Working Group Meetings

Thematic working group meetings were held both quarterly and ad hoc. These aimed at coordinating review of programme performance and joint planning.

M&E Working Group Meetings

Seven M&E working group meetings were held, led by the two DPO focal persons. They also held two refresher training on the M&E system. Two TOFI monitoring visits were organised, focusing on quality control, strengthening the adoption of the TOFI Monitoring system and ensuring that programme implementation is on track.

Inter-Partner Learning Exchange Visits

A joint learning visit to NUDIPU's implementation in Mpigi was held. Following a need assessment, knowledge gaps were mapped, and trainings tailored to support partner learning in areas such as disability movement building and financial management. The Uganda group also hosted the TOFI Somalia IE team on a learning exchange.

Transfer of IE Thematic Leadership from NAD to NUDIPU

Following a two-year mentorship, NAD handed over leadership of the IE thematic area to NUDIPU. This was done to foster DPO leadership in implementation and national level advocacy for IE.

Added Value

Mainstreaming of Disability Inclusion

Partners are using TOFI learnings to mainstream disability inclusion in other projects. For example, SF is drawing on TOFI's IE strategies and training materials to sensitise parents and community members on the inherent right to education for children with disabilities in the RISING project in Palorinya Refugee camp. Similarly, SF's livelihoods project in Tanzania draws on TOFI EE strategies to include deliberate targets for people with disabilities in livelihoods and food security interventions.

Increased National Engagement of TOFI Partners

TOFI partners have experienced increased consultations by the Ministry of Education and Sports and non-government stakeholders. This is a result of increased visibility, particularly after organising the National IE Symposium. As a result, NUDIPU submitted a memorandum to the Education Policy Review Commission with proposals to improve education for learners with disabilities. NUDIPU also participated in the drafting of the National Physical Education and

Sports Policy. SHAU has engaged with the Government on several policy matters regarding inclusion and the rights of children with disabilities, specifically Spina bifida and Hydrocephalus. SHAU was recently selected as part of the committee tasked to generate the list of Assistive Products to be included in the National Rehabilitation, Health, and Assistive Technology Strategic Plan through the Ministry of Health.

Scale Up of Adapted Games and Sport Beyond the TOFI Project Schools

Following collaboration between SCI's TOFI schools and the local DPO Ability Sport Africa, a total of 20 games and sport masters have been trained on disability friendly games. As a result, an inclusive games and sport competition organised in the districts for the first time. After witnessing this, non-project schools have requested their Games and Sport teachers to be trained in the same, so they can offer inclusive sports at their schools.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Women's rights and gender equality are mainstreamed throughout the TOFI programme. For example, through the iSAVE model, TOFI promotes financial inclusion and participation in leadership for women with disabilities and female parents / caregivers for children with disabilities by deliberately encouraging groups to have majority female membership (70%). This has boosted women's ability to participate in decision making procedures at community and district level beyond the TOFI engagements. For example, some of the women with disabilities who have risen to leadership positions within the iSAVE groups have gone on to seek other leadership positions within the community leadership structures.

Through the financial literacy trainings, the right of women to own and manage their finances is upheld. By saving in the iSAVE groups, they have been able to acquire land and other property, contrary to the traditional land ownership norms in some communities. Additionally, women with disabilities and female caregivers in iSAVE groups use their savings to access low-cost credit for establishing IGAs thus boosting their economic status while those holding leadership roles develop the confidence to voice their interests in advocacy spaces with other civil society and elected and technical government leaders.

The incorporation of gender mainstreaming trainings into the TOFI ILA, such as the District Union facilitators and principal trainings, has increased community knowledge and awareness on key gender concepts, including the inclusion of women in disability sensitive and mainstream approaches. This has indirectly boosted prioritisation and female engagement in Government social schemes such as the presidential initiative on wealth and job creation called **Emyooga**.

Human Rights

The wholistic approach to IE has helped highlight the challenges faced by other vulnerable groups such as refugee children. This has attracted the attention of mainstream partners implementing education in emergency situations. Dialogues

have been held between consortium members and the Refugee Law Project, the Fin Church Aid, Windle Trust and World Vision on possible avenues for collaboration on inclusive education within the humanitarian context.

The iSAVE groups emphasise democratic structures and inclusivity, practicing the right to information, education, and participation in leadership. The inclusiveness of the groups allows people of all gender and nature to equally participate and some iSAVE groups becoming training grounds for political leaders.

Climate Change and the Environment

Environmental protection has always been one of the priority considerations within the TOFI programme in Uganda. However, some of the IGA start-ups taken up by iSAVE group members are detrimental to environmental conservation. For instance, charcoal burning is often a desirable and very lucrative business sought by youth. Within the reporting period, project staff recorded testimonies of iSAVE members obtaining loans to invest in the charcoal trade through tree cutting and illegal lumbering were recorded. To mitigate this, groups have accessed training on good environment practices such as tree planting, solid waste management, and good agronomic practices as means of diversifying their incomes. However, the uptake of these alternatives has been slow as majority of the beneficiaries depend on charcoal use because it is the cheapest and most available energy source in Uganda. Additionally, several group members are wetland rice-farmers, encroaching on reclaimed wetlands and swamps for farming. Consortium members are however encouraging group members to adhere to Government policy directive prohibiting cultivation in wetlands to mitigate effects of climate change.

Anti-Corruption

In 2022, NAD Norway with the financial support of the Atlas Alliance coordinated an anti-corruption workshop in Zanzibar for its partners including teams from NUDIPU, AMFIU and NAD Uganda. Members were skilled in prevention and mitigation of corruption within the respective organisations. Organisations were encouraged to continuously review and evaluate their codes of conduct, fraud policies, safeguarding and procurement policies as well as the whistle-blowers' policy regulations in bid to fight corruption.

This type of training is valuable across the consortium, as partners are borrowing best practises from each other. SHAU and Inclusion Uganda have adopted the cashless system and the e-quick book system which have significantly improved their organisational-level systems. AMFIU has also reported adoption of the e-transaction system including the e-banking, e-invoicing in bid to mitigate corruption.

At consortium level, quarterly review meetings are coordinated by the TOFI country coordinator where all organisations are tasked to report on implementation progress versus planned activities within the TOFI results framework. Additionally monitoring checks including spot checks and TOFI Field monitoring visits are conducted at consortium level to assess impact and quality of services / activities implemented under the TOFI programme.

Going Forward

The IE component will be scaled-up to 35 new schools including 10 secondary schools. For the first time, the ILA model and the 'Obuntu bulamu' peer-to-peer learning approach will be piloted in secondary schools. This follows learning and demand from community and stakeholders to have inclusive education scaled up to secondary schools. This will enhance smooth transition of learners with disabilities from primary to secondary education.

SCI anticipates a revision of their target on "construction / rehabilitation of classrooms and WASH facilities." Due to inflationary tendency, its most likely that the target set initially of five classroom blocks and seven WASH facility may reduce to five Classroom blocks and four WASH facility.

During the reflection and planning for the cost-extension (2023 to 2024), the EE team agreed to increase the number of sub-counties from five to ten. In addition, the consortium members under the EE thematic area agreed to work to avoid collision and conflict among consortium partners, as witnessed to some extent in previous years.

Summary of Results

Human Rights Advocacy

Human Rights Advocacy is the cornerstone of the Together for Inclusion partnership. Under this thematic area, there are targets on both organisational development of the partner organisations and on advocacy. On organisational development of DPOs, the targets are exceeded. A total of 696 DPO staff members were trained on organisational operations and management in 2022. For the period 2019-2022, 1451 was trained, which is 236% of the original target (#1121a). Both individuals and organisations report that they are taking a more prominent role in discussions on local and national levels, and that their organisations are taken into account at a grater level.

The advocacy work is done on different levels. One part of the work is enabling persons with disabilities to do self-advocacy and claim their own rights. In 2022, 3618 persons with disabilities were trained on their rights and how claim their rights, while the cumulative number for the project period is 7463, or 281% of the original target (#1111). 873 persons with disabilities were mobilised to participate in in DPOs in 2022. For the period 2019-2022 the total number was 1828, 121% of the original target (#1113).

The other part of advocacy is the work where DPOs advocate for disability rights at local or national level. In 2022, 837 DPO staff members were trained on advocacy and coalition building. The total number of 2019-2022 is 1260, 207% of the original target (#1123a). The project also exceeded the target on the number of DPO staff members that have received training on policy making and policy monitoring and reporting on implementation of the CRPD and SDG: A total of 1294 persons were trained, 688 of them in 2022.

116 persons with disabilities received community-based support services in 2022, and a total of 488 in 2019-2022 (98% of target) (#1114b).

Inclusive Education

In Together for Inclusion, over 50% of the resources are designated towards Inclusive Education and many of the participating organisations are important actors in this field. In this third full year of implementation, the partnership is seeing enrolment numbers that exceed targets and show that the intense efforts of the implementing partners in all areas of the inclusive education are bearing fruits. For instance, the cumulative number of learners with disabilities enrolled in the targeted educational institutions is now at 10 300 students, which is 151% of the original target (#1210a). We see a similar trend in the cumulative number of out-of-school children with disabilities supported to enrol in educational institutions: At 3 327, this is 149% of the original target (#1210b). A large number of these, 1856, were identified in 2022. The number of learners screened to identify impairments is right at target, 6817 children (1213a), the same with the number of children with disabilities referred to inclusive education services, 2967 cumulatively, with 1247 having been screened in 2022 (1213b).

The partnership is also exceeding targets on children being equipped with assistive devices (1214b), and receiving learning materials (1214c), with a cumulative number of 1932 children and 3796 children, respectively. Number on children with an Individualised Education Plan (IEP), are low, at only 29% of target, but this area is continuously being worked on in the partnership (#1214a). The main reason is that most countries had not yet started the module of the ILA, which meant that most places had not yet implemented IEP. For instance, the TOFI Inclusive Education Working Group has dedicated a learning forum to the topic, and the country groups are sharing information and experiences. In addition, the implementing partners see that there is some degree of misunderstanding of what an IEP is. Not all children with disabilities need an IEP, for instance. In addition, it can be challenging in large classrooms to implement these tools.

With inflation and increasing food prices, most families in the project countries in 2022 found themselves in a more difficult financial situation than before. Therefore, scholarships, conditional cash transfers, and fee waivers have been an important instrument to enrol and/or keep children with disabilities in school and the country groups are happy to report that three times more children than planned have benefited. 3349 children benefited from this kind of financial aid, 1983 of them in 2022. In the 2022 cohort, almost 20% of these students had an intellectual disability (“cognition” in the Washington Group functional domain), which shows that the participating organisations are serious about including the most marginalised and leaving no one behind.

DPO advocacy is an important part of the IE component (outcome 1220), and so far, 927 DPO workers have been trained on quality inclusive education services, 333 of these in 2022 (#1222), which is 152% of the target. Under outcome 1230, the number of teachers/educational personnel who complete training on IE far exceeds expectations: a total of 9055 persons have been trained (291% of the target), 4849 of them in 2022. The number of accessible classrooms constructed or rehabilitated is below target: 215 total, which is 73% of the target (1232a).

In the TOFI partnership, the results focus tends to be on persons with disabilities, but it important to remember that a more inclusive society benefits everybody. This is particularly important when looking at education numbers – the indicators count learners with disabilities, but the models implemented make schools better for all learners, so that the impact is much greater than the number of children with disabilities reached.

Economic Empowerment

Because of the difficult financial situations in the project countries, there has been a lot of interest in economic empowerment programmes from persons with disabilities and their family members and caretakers. This is reflected in the numbers: Almost all targets under this component have either been reached or exceeded. For instance, a total of 12 074 persons with disabilities and family members have been trained on employment rights and financial management (151% of target), with most of them, 7678 persons, having received training in 2022 (#1311).

A similar number were trained on market-relevant income generating skills: 11 953 total, 8837 in 2022 (#1312). This is twice the target. The organisations are also on target on the number of persons with disabilities who are members of a saving or credit group – a total of 10 711 persons are enrolled, and 5783 of these joined in 2022. When the endline study is conducted in 2024, we will get a clearer picture of the long-term impact of these interventions.

Small Grants

Small grants were introduced as a funding opportunity with shorter time span and different applications deadlines. The goals were to:

1. Provide a flexible mechanism.
2. Answer need that came up during the implementation of the programme, and for organisations to test new ideas and new partnerships.
3. Get new organisations both in Norway and implementing countries started with disability specific projects.

An important element in the projects was a demand for collaboration with one or more disabled persons organisations in the project countries. This ensured local disability expertise in the projects, created new opportunities for these organisations, and established new partnerships.

There have been two calls for applications on the small grants scheme, one in 2020 and one in 2021. The projects awarded in 2020, were included in the 2021 report. In this report we include the grants that was awarded in 2021 and implemented in 2021 and 2022.

Finalised small grants projects awarded in 2021

ADRA Niger

Project Name:	Rehabilitation is a Right
Project Goal:	Using the Global Disability Summit as an occasion to promote better rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities in Niger.

Selected Results

1. A study was conducted to map the current state of rehabilitation in Niger. The study assessed legal texts and existing rehabilitation offers, as well as the rehabilitation needs for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in order to make recommendations for the future development of rehabilitation services and care.
2. A workshop was arranged where the findings in the study was discussed.
3. Two articles on rehabilitation were produced and published to raise awareness of rehabilitation among decision-makers and the general public.
4. An awareness video was produced and distributed through public and private radio and television stations in relation to the Global Disability Summit, as well as on social media.

An unintended effect of the "Rehabilitation is a right" project in Niger was the positive impact of bringing together many key actors from all eight regions of Niger.

Caritas Niger

Project Name:	Improving Opportunities for People with Disabilities in the Territory of Maradi, Niger
Project Goal:	The project aims at improving the economic and social situation of people with disabilities and advocating for their equal opportunities in Niger.

Selected Results

1. The goal of training 35 people with disabilities was surpassed, with 60 individuals trained in various trades. They gained skills in sewing, knitting, cosmetics, food processing, welding, leather goods, chair weaving, and chalk manufacturing. Collaboration among participants led to increased productivity and a sense of community. Providing necessary tools contributed to the programme's success.
2. Support was provided to 200 disabled individuals, including two widowed women responsible for their children, by distributing rice, millet, and cooking oil to alleviate their financial burdens.
3. Efforts were made to improve hygiene and prevent the spread of Covid-19. Over 1,459 people, including 679 individuals with disabilities and their families, were sensitised in small groups. Hygiene and Covid-19 prevention sessions were integrated into association meetings, and hygiene kits were distributed.
4. To enhance mobility for individuals with locomotor disabilities, tricycle bicycles were provided to 24 beneficiaries, enabling them to attend school or work. This had positive effects on their psychological well-being and revitalised support efforts for people with disabilities.

However, some beneficiaries received warnings for using their tricycles for begging, but they stopped the behaviour after being cautioned.

Yglobal Uganda

Project Name:	Promoting Inclusion of Refugees with Disabilities in Uganda
Local Partner:	Kiryandongo Youth with Disability Association (KYDA)
Project Goal:	Empower young refugees with disabilities to advocate for disability rights locally and in the Global Disability Summit.

Selected Results

1. KYDA mobilised and facilitated 23 (F10; M13) Refugees Youth with Disabilities (RYWD)s to participate in 2022 GDS related events.
2. YGlobal and KYDA organised a public consultative meeting, hosted by Uganda's NTV, to raise awareness about the commitments made during the 2022 GDS and discuss implementation plans (estimated 540,000 viewers).
3. 75 young refugees with disabilities received trainings on disability rights and communication, advocacy, mental health and psychosocial support.
4. Eight dialogue sessions addressed barriers faced by PWDs in accessing services and focused on policymaking, leadership representation, and decision making in the district and refugee settlement.
5. YGlobal's community-based counsellors provided psychosocial support services to 150 (F80; M70) PWDs. Among those who reached to YGlobal's counsellors, 71 (F41; M30) PWDs were referred to other stakeholders based on the problems presented to YGlobal counsellors.

FOKUS Uganda

Project Name:	Advocating for Strengthened and Increased Access to Government Empowerment Programmes for Women with Disabilities in Uganda
Local Partner:	The Uganda Association of Women Lawyers in collaboration with National Association of Women's Organisations in Uganda and National Union of Women with Disabilities in Uganda.
Project Goal:	Advocate for the increased and strengthened access to government empowerment programmes and opportunities for financial and economic enhancement for women with disabilities.

Selected Results

1. The coordination of regional consultative meetings to determine the economic needs of women with disabilities. Barriers affecting access to government programmes were identified, such as limited accessibility, low leadership representation, illiteracy, and negative attitudes.
2. Advocacy efforts were conducted at the national level, resulting in commitments from government entities to prioritise and include women with disabilities in existing programmes.
3. A virtual Global Disability Summit was attended to raise awareness and draw attention to the financial needs of women with disabilities.

4. A workshop was held to validate government commitments and develop monitoring mechanisms.

Caritas Uganda

Project Name:	Promoting Inclusive livelihoods among PWDs in Northern Uganda
Local Partners:	Caritas Uganda, Uganda National Action on Physical Disability
Project Goal:	Promote and advocate for effective access and inclusion of PDWs to different livelihoods in Northern Uganda.

Selected Results

1. 23 PWD advocacy groups were formed and registered as CBOs. Savings initiatives were introduced to promote sustainability and capital building in the groups.
2. A study was made on existing livelihood opportunities for PWDs. Awareness raising and advocating for inclusion. Trainings on rights and obligations were conducted for PWD group leaders and caregivers, while capacity-building activities strengthened the UNAPD district association.
3. Assistive devices were provided to 36 PWDs to enhance mobility, and start-up kits and training were given to eight income-generating groups.
4. Social security kits and trainings were provided, focusing on sustainable practices and value addition. The introduction of village savings and loan associations facilitated socio-economic empowerment. Ongoing trainings and follow-up were identified as crucial for ensuring sustainability.

Save the Children Somalia (GDS)

Project Name:	Child consultations for Global Disability Summit
Local Partners:	Save the Children Somalia, Puntland Disability Organisations Network
Project Goal:	Produce advocacy content to be presented during Global Disability Summit, increase children’s skills in fighting for their rights, and giving children an opportunity to express themselves.

Selected Results

1. Save the Children (SCI) and PDON collaborated on community sessions, gaining support from headteachers, parents, and the community.

2. A three-day thematic training enhanced staff capacity in safe and inclusive interactions with children, focusing on child participation, disability inclusion, and communication.
3. A three-day consultation workshop empowered 15 children with disabilities to express their challenges and influence decision-makers, with logistical support and media assistance.
4. The children's message was showcased at the Global Disability Summit, where the Somali government made commitments to inclusive education and health.
5. In a dissemination session, the children expressed their advocacy desire and hope for positive changes, seeking support to protect their rights.

Save the Children Somalia (Advocacy)

Project Name:	Advocacy Small Grant
Local Partners:	Save the Children Somalia, Somali Disability Network
Project Goal:	Build the capacity of Somali Disability Network to hold the government of Somalia accountable to its commitments from Global Disability Summit 2018, monitoring progress towards implementation of the CRPD and raising awareness to the public about the rights of persons with disabilities.

Selected Results

1. A two-day thematic training was conducted for organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs) in Somalia, focusing on advocacy for the rights of people with disabilities. The training aimed to empower participants to effectively advocate for their rights and hold duty bearers accountable.
2. A national disability conference was held where representatives of OPDs presented their priorities and called for action. The government acknowledged the progress made and reflected the communique when making new commitments at the Global Disability Summit.
3. Youth with disabilities shared their experiences with discrimination in side-events at the Global Disability Summit.
4. The findings of the summit were disseminated to OPDs, highlighting commitments in various areas.

Important indirect results

Through these projects, Norwegian and local organisations have got experience working on disability issues, and new collaborations have been established between these organisations and disabled persons organisations. Some

organisations have expressed that the small grants schemes have been eye openers when it comes to disability issues. Several organisations are planning to continue the projects with other funding. In addition, these small projects can create a starting point for making the aid work more disability inclusive in general.

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 three full 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. In this section, we share some examples.

The Inclusive Learning Approach: NAD's Inclusive Learning Approach (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 framework agreement with Norad. In Together for Inclusion, ILA was adapted to be used in Uganda, Mozambique, Somalia, and 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 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 were 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 have coined 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. 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

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. Persons with disabilities are one of the most marginalised groups in international development work and humanitarian action. 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”.

In 2022, the different activities of the Inclusion Project, such as inclusion network meetings, disability inclusion trainings, capacity building workshops and webinars, have strengthened disability inclusion and mainstreaming, and have promoted disability rights advocacy work across Norwegian mainstream organisations, organisations of persons with disabilities, and TOFI partners.

Inclusion Network Meetings

The objective of the Inclusion Network meetings is to create a space wherein knowledge and experiences concerning disability inclusion can be shared and built upon. Inclusion Network meetings accentuate why disability inclusion matters and highlight how to achieve disability inclusion in international development work. They facilitate sharing of best practices, dissemination of thematic and context-specific information, and showcase diverse lived perspectives. The Inclusion Network meetings are grounded in the Atlas Alliance’s thematic areas, such as human rights advocacy, economic empowerment, inclusive education, and inclusive health care.

In 2022, the Atlas Alliance organised three Inclusion Network meetings. The meetings invited participants from both Norwegian and international non-governmental organisations, OPDs, and humanitarian actors. On average, 30 participants participated in each meeting. Panelists who contributed to the meetings came from countries such as Nepal, Zambia, India, Uganda, Pakistan, Ethiopia and Norway.

Disability Inclusion Trainings

The objective of the Disability Inclusion trainings is to build capacity and raise awareness about disability inclusion and mainstreaming among Norwegian and international organisations working in international development aid. The Disability Inclusion trainings are designed to offer high-quality information, research expertise, and practical tools to achieve inclusion of persons with disabilities within their development projects.

In 2022, the Atlas Alliance conducted the introductory training “Are we including the most marginalised? Online introductory course: Disability Inclusion in International Programmes” three times to Norwegian NGOs, DPOs, and TOFI partner organisations. These digital trainings reached more than 90 participants from countries such as Mozambique, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Norway.

In addition to the Disability Inclusion trainings, the Atlas Alliance organised one Training of Trainers (ToT) for TOFI partners in Mozambique. Five trainers from ACAMO and FAMOD participated. These trainers further co-facilitated a Disability Inclusion training.

Furthermore, capacity building workshops were offered for YGlobal and Save the Children, Norway. These training workshops were attended by more than 100 participants from their partner organisations in Africa, Asia, and Norway. The capacity building workshop for YGlobal was titled “From Inclusion Policies to Inclusive Practices: Insights from Disability Rights Advocacy Work”, and the workshop for Save the Children Norway as titled “Seeing through our blind spots: Conversation on disability inclusion and ableism”.

Webinars

The Inclusion Project provides expert knowledge on disability inclusion and disability rights advocacy work. These webinars can provide state-of-the-art content, which could help in developing a knowledge repository.

In 2022, the Atlas Alliance organised four webinars. Two of these webinars were held digitally in June 2022 on the sidelines of the United Nations Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN COSP CRPD). The first event was titled “Strengthening youth with disabilities’ meaningful participation in society” and was organised in collaboration with The International Disability Alliance (IDA) and Youth Mental Health Norway. The second event was held in collaboration with IDA and the government of Norway and was titled “The Global Disability Summit 2022 – promoting inclusive and participatory societies in the Global South”. More than 65 participants attended each of the events.

Policy and Attitudinal Change

The capacity building workshop titled “From Inclusion Policies to Inclusive Practices: Insights from Disability Rights Advocacy Work”, directly contributed and expedited the process for YGlobal Norway to formulate a specific disability inclusion policy for their organisation. Similarly, the capacity building workshop titled “Seeing through our blind spots: conversation on disability inclusion and ableism” helped raise awareness on the topic of disability-based discrimination and promoted attitudinal change for Save the Children employees in Norway and their international offices.

Global Disability Summit

Inclusion Project activities have contributed to strengthening the reach of the Global Disability Summit 2022. The two webinars held on the sidelines of UN COSP CRPD strengthened the efforts of youth with disabilities to conduct disability rights advocacy, and gave a momentum to organisations of persons with disabilities to implement disability inclusive projects.

The Way Forward

The Inclusion Project will continue to focus on underexplored topics such as the interlinkage between climate change, food security, and disability inclusion, the participation and inclusion of persons with psychosocial disabilities and mental health conditions, and the potential pitfalls associated with the implementation of the OECD DAC policy marker on disability inclusion.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning

Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning (MERL) are crucial aspects of disability-inclusive development. The Atlas Alliance recognises the lack of access to high-quality data on the lives of persons with disabilities.

To address this, the TOFI project dedicates significant efforts and resources to produce concrete evidence on effective and ineffective practices in disability-inclusive development. The TOFI MERL system, developed to support the monitoring and evaluation of the TOFI programme, consists of multiple components that enable us to gather rigorous quantitative and qualitative evidence on the inclusion of persons with disabilities. This data allows us to closely monitor the project and supports timely and active learning, facilitating the identification of potential challenges or areas of weakness. Adaptations can then be made to ensure that the project achieves its intended results.

The components of the Together for Inclusion MERL system:

1. A system for routine monitoring, which provides direct follow-up on the project's activities.
2. Surveys and tools specifically developed to measure change related to the expected outcomes of the TOFI programme. These assessments are used at various intervals throughout the project, while routine monitoring tools are utilised regularly.

In 2022, our focus was on disseminating the data collected during the baseline and expanding the number of countries familiar with the Routine Monitoring Tool and finalising all tools ahead of the endline.

In terms of disseminating the data from the baseline, the Atlas secretariat organised a comprehensive baseline dissemination workshop early in 2022. This workshop, held online and open to partners from TOFI countries and Norwegian partners, had over 100 participants from Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, Niger, Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Norway. Participants were divided into their country groups and were required to prepare ahead of the workshop. Their preparations included reflecting on relevant dissemination materials for their context and developing draft plans for sharing the findings from the baseline studies.

During the workshop some of the key findings were reviewed, and discussions were held on how these findings can be shared internally to inform programme planning, raise awareness of key issues that influence our work, deepening the understanding of important issues and topics, and shared externally to promote action for meaningful change and increased inclusivity for persons with disabilities.

Participants were also introduced to different ways of disseminating the findings. Such as how to prepare policy briefs, presenting the findings in meetings and

seminars, disseminating through public media such as TV and radio, and organising interactive discussions around different themes covered in the baseline. Country groups were then supported in developing detailed data dissemination plans, including identifying target groups, determining relevant knowledge products, and budgeting for dissemination activities. The Atlas secretariat received examples of products developed by country groups, after the workshop.

In 2022, the secretariat also commenced the development of the Most Significant Change (MSC) tool, which will be part of the TOFI M&E system and used for the endline in 2024. This tool, designed to collect qualitative data, was shared with all TOFI partners for input and feedback. Their feedback and ideas will be integrated into the final version. Prior to its use, the MSC tool will be translated into relevant languages, and additional training materials will be developed and shared with the countries. We will also organise trainings and provide support as the countries carry out the MSC for the first time during the endline.

Another significant achievement in 2022 was the continued rollout of the Routine Monitoring tool, with new countries adopting and using it to populate data after relevant activities, trainings, and meetings. With more countries utilising the tool, accessing detailed information throughout the year on the reach of the TOFI programme, disaggregated by types of disabilities, has become easier. Using the same data collection approach and database allows countries to better track progress against implementation plans and expected targets.

With the rollout of the Routine Monitoring tool and registered users in each TOFI country, the secretariat has received valuable feedback on how to improve the tool. Users have helped detect errors in the tool, and highlighted what they see as shortcomings as well as sharing concrete suggestions for improving the tool or for adding new features. Such feedback is crucial for the tool's development and will be utilised by the technical team to implement changes in 2023. Countries have also expressed the need for more capacity building, particularly related to M&E and the use of the Routine Monitoring tool and the Atlas secretariat will use this feedback to guide their planning and allocation of resources for capacity building activities and M&E.

Research plays a pivotal role in understanding the situation of persons with disabilities and designing relevant programmes and projects. Therefore, we have supported various research endeavours throughout 2022. One noteworthy study, partly financed by funds from the TOFI programme and conducted by Fafo, focuses on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on children with disabilities compared to their non-disabled peers in Niger. The study includes interviews with a group of children conducted before and after the pandemic, along with additional qualitative interviews with children with disabilities who fared better than their peers in terms of staying in school and managing through the Covid-19 crisis. The findings from these interviews will contribute to our understanding of the key factors that enable children with disabilities to cope with crises and lead improved lives. Mapping out such differences may facilitate replication in other countries when working with children with disabilities.

With the MERL activities carried out and a wealth of input and lessons learned from partners in 2022, we are well-equipped to continue and improve our work in 2023.

Anti-Corruption and Risk Management

The Atlas Alliance projects are situated in high-risk countries. Corruption is the risk type that we are investing most heavily in preventing and mitigating. However, the risk appetite is significantly lower in cases concerning the safety and safeguarding of our staff and target group.

Risk Appetite

The risk that the Atlas Alliance organisations and our local partners is willing to accept varies greatly depending on the type of risk. When starting new projects, establishing new partnerships, or experimenting with new methods, organisations generally accept relatively high risks related to results achievement. We also accept a relatively high level of external risks in our projects, where there are external factors outside of our control that might affect the ability to achieve project goals.

The appetite for corruption risk is somewhat lower, but not very low. The Atlas Alliance has a zero tolerance for corruption and implement measures to reduce corruption risk. However, we support several small organisations with limited capacity regarding organisational development and financial management. Strengthening DPOs, which are often small and operationally weak organisations, is even considered an important part of our work and mandate. We also fund organisations in some of the most corrupt countries in the world. By doing this we are accepting a higher risk of corruption.

The risk appetite regarding human safety is low, and we prioritise the safety of staff, volunteers, and beneficiaries. If the security risk is considered too high, we will try and introduce risk reducing measures, and if this is not sufficient, we will postpone, move, change, or cancel activities.

Corruption Risk

Through our internal whistleblowing channels, we receive several cases of suspected fraud and / or corruption each year. Most of these are not reason for serious concerns and are therefore not reported to Norad as corruption cases. Some experiences from these cases are however used to improve routines and internal controls. Anti-corruption remains a prioritised area in the Atlas Alliance.

Corruption is seen as a risk for several reasons. The most pressing consequence is that it can be damaging to the involved organisations, and negatively affect the results for the target group. It is often costly and hampers the ability to achieve other goals. In serious cases, an organisation might lose all funding and cease to exist because of a corruption case. In addition, corruption constitutes a risk for not reaching project goals. Lastly, corruption in the project might harm the society and surroundings in project areas.

In Norway and throughout the value chain

Anti-Corruption Policy and Anti-Corruption Action Plans

In 2023, the Atlas Alliance secretariat updated and finalised our Anti-Corruption policy and Anti-Corruption Action Plan. The policy sets out guiding principles for the Atlas Alliance anti-corruption work, defines roles, responsibilities, and accountability, and details the different elements of the anti-corruption work. The Anti-Corruption action plan lists new anti-corruption measures that will be prioritised in 2023 and 2024. The plan outlines concrete tasks for both the secretariat and the Norwegian organisations. The secretariat has 10 concrete tasks in the plan, among them compiling information for assessing corruption risk, supporting Norwegian organisations on corruption risk management, assessing the anti-corruption efforts of the Norwegian organisations. The Norwegian organisations have seven concrete tasks in the plan, including ensuring implementing partners has anti-corruption plans, training of staff on anti-corruption, assessing corruption risk management, and donor coordination.

Partner Assessments

The Atlas Alliance has a set of assessment tools used for assessing implementing partners. These include Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT), Due Diligence and Financial Checklist. In addition to these, we are systematically using the findings in management letters from regular audits.

The OCAT is a guided self-assessment of implementing partners, using a process where a wide range of employees participate. The Due Diligence and the Financial Checklist are tools where the representatives from the Norwegian organisations assess the implementing partner based on discussions with key staff (including financial staff) and document review. The financial checklist is conducted by staff or consultants with relevant financial expertise. The Management Letters are lists of weaknesses and inadequate internal control reported by the external auditor. The Due Diligence is conducted every five years, as part of preparations for the framework agreement application to Norad. The OCAT is conducted at baseline and endline of each framework agreement, the financial checklist is conducted minimum every second year, and management letters are compiled every year.

In most cases the findings in the assessments are not dramatic, and the project can go on according to plan. The findings do however guide capacity building efforts throughout the year. In some cases, more serious weaknesses in internal control are discovered. In these cases, implementation of planned projects might be paused, projects might be changed, and capacity building and the improvement of internal controls are often prioritised higher than originally planned.

Management Information Systems

In 2022 the Atlas Alliance rolled out a digital management information system – Metis – first established in 2021. The system makes key information more streamlined and more accessible. In this system staff of both the Atlas

secretariat, Norwegian organisations and implementing organisations have access and can view the same information. This increases transparency throughout the value chain, enables better overview and increases possibilities to detect errors and suspicious activities. Automated consolidation of financial numbers frees up time and allows a more detailed analysis of management letters – including following up on inadequate internal controls.

The Atlas alliance assessment tools – OCAT, Due Diligence, Financial Checklist and management letters – were integrated into Metis in 2022. Metis works as a database of recorded data and has a task tracker that enables the creation of tasks based on findings in the assessments. If weak internal routines are discovered during an assessment, a task can be created for improvements to be made. The findings and the task tacker are available for staff of the Atlas Alliance secretariat, Norwegian organisations and implementing partners. The task tracker enables staff in the Norwegian organisations to assign tasks to coworkers in their own organisation, or to staff in implementing organisations. The digitalisation of the assessment tools enables improved analysis and follow up of findings. This helps organisations prioritise capacity strengthening of local partners. It also makes is easier to evaluate if the implementing organisation's ability to carry out projects and activities as planned. Digitalisation of the assessment tools has also made performing the different assessments more efficient and less time-consuming, since information, comments and uploaded procedures from previous assessments are easily accessible.

The Atlas alliance has also built an online M&E tool where data is gathered and managed throughout the value chain. This means all organisations see the same information about the implementation of projects. This has increased oversight and transparency and is therefore reducing corruption risk. When information in the system is discovered, that is difficult to understand, this is followed up with the right person.

Financial Management

The Norwegian organisations are continuously following up with their local partners to ensure that the financial management is of sufficient quality. The Atlas Alliance secretariat consolidates accounts and budgets for the entire organisation. The secretariat also keeps track of all management letter findings in the management letters from the Norwegian organisations. As per instructions sent to Norwegian auditors, these management letters shall include important findings from implementing partners. This is important for tracing the flow of money, and making sure money are spent according to plan. The Norwegian organisations follows up with their local partners regarding the findings in their management letters. The status of these findings is reported to the secretariat regularly.

In Implementing Organisations

The various implementing organisations differ greatly with regards to risk management and anti-corruption efforts. Some organisations are large, some are small, some are quite recently formed, and some are more experienced. The

different organisations' location and types of projects also expose them to different levels of risk, and different types of risk. This variance is reflected in the different anti-corruption and risk management efforts of the individual organisations.

Below is a list of examples of anti-corruption efforts by our local partners in 2022:

1. Implementing organisations are expected to have clear policies and guidelines on governance, procurement, financial management, anti-corruption and other key topics. The existence and quality of these documents are controlled by Norwegian organisations through the assessment tools. For example, **NFDN** has developed different policies and guidelines including **good governance policy, Gender policy, financial rules and regulations, Child protection policy**, a constitution, and a **Board code of conduct**. These policies and guidelines are guiding the daily operation of the organisations.
2. Regular staff capacity building on anti-corruption, financial management and accountability compliance enforcement. In June 2022 the **NAD** organised a conference on anti-corruption and risk management for implementing partners, country office staff and Norway based staff. The conference gathered participants from several countries. The topics of the seminar was both general anti-corruption management for organisations in Africa, and an introduction to risk management. Specific topics from the work was shared, and new connections were established between persons in different organisations and countries.
3. Whistle-blower policy to facilitate reporting of any form of corruption and misconduct. **SAFOD** and FFO collaborates on whistleblowing procedures, and SAFOD. This is established in SAFODs ethical guidelines.
4. Improved and digitalised financial systems. The **MECP-Z** financial system underwent a transformation from a manual to an online system, establishing segregation of duties where several internal and external people are involved in the authorisation before any payment is made. The system enabled the organisation to move from cheque issuance to online payment. With this new system, the bank accounts can now be monitored 24 hours.
5. Complaints handling mechanisms in form of toll-free lines, whistle-blower channels and rapid responses have been developed by **NUDIPU** and communicated to partners, stakeholders and iSAVE groups as part of the routine information dissemination in the programme.
6. Safeguarding policies: In 2022, **NAB** formulated a new safeguarding policy named "Policy on Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH)" with the support of Disability Rights Fund (DRF). Every board member and staff have signed the commitment and declaration form of the policy, and thereby accepting to abide by it. Among the new measures introduced is an improved complaints handling mechanism.

Cases of Corruption, Theft, and Financial Mismanagement Closed in 2022

Based on internal routines, YGlobal performed a financial review of Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) in South Sudan and disclosed irregularities. Inflated vouchers, errors in purchasing routines and weaknesses in the accounts were uncovered. Atlas has only financed a part of YGlobal's support to the YWCA, and YGlobal did most of the follow-up directly with Norad. Based on the report covering the years 2021 and 2022, Norad concluded that USD 32,298 should be repaid. As weak internal controls are not considered a major issue, the amount could be paid back to the project, and the repayment of funds has been executed. YGlobal is putting on hold financial support to the YWCA South Sudan but aims to continue a number of projects in South Sudan with other partners.

NFU's partner in Ethiopia, Federation of Ethiopian Associations of Persons with Disabilities (FEAPD), defaulted on funds, among other things by paying out too much meeting allowance and for insufficient and missing documentation on hotel and transport costs. An external review was carried out. NOK196,776 of Norad funds has been defaulted. As the lacking internal controls is not considered a major issue, Norad has concluded that the money can be repaid to the project. NFU has ended their collaboration with FEAPD has ended. Key tasks previously performed by FEAPD will be taken over by Fikir - Ethiopian National Association on Intellectual Disabilities (FENAID). However, as FEAPD has a central position in the disabled people's movement in Ethiopia, the end of the project may have negative consequences for other parts of the country programme.

In SOS Childrens Villages in Zambia, embezzlement of money that should have been paid to the tax authorities for income tax has been discovered. SOS Children's Villages in Norway has ended the collaboration with. The funding from the Atlas Alliance was part of small grants agreement, for an initiative with a duration of one year (August 2020 to July 2021). There were no plans for further funding from the Atlas Alliance. In total, mismanagement of Atlas contracted Norad funds of NOK29,279 has been uncovered. NOK29,279 has been repaid to Norad. The case was closed by Norad on 24 March 2023.

In SHA-U, cash was not handled in line with established routines. An amount equivalent to NOK17 000 disappeared when an employee withdrew money from the bank. Organisation routines states that cash shall not be handled by any person alone, but this was not complied to. The case has been reported to the police. SHA-U has subsequently improved its procedures. NOK17 000 has been paid back to Norad.

Other Risks in 2022

Disruptions Caused by Government Dependency

Four out of six country programmes (all except Ethiopia) reported problems stemming from the programmes being dependent on national or local

government. In Mozambique there were significant delays in waiting for approval to implement parts of the Inclusive Education project. This is still not resolved. In Niger the sustainability of results achieved in primary school is threatened by the fact that children with disabilities are often not allowed enrolment in secondary school. The implementation in Somalia met some issues with the fact that the national government showed a limited will and ability to support inclusive education. Uganda saw slow implementation in parts of the programme caused by limited participation from the government.

Turnover of Staff and Trained Teachers

Staff turnover is generally not an issue, but in some cases the loss of key staff or high turnover causes issues. In Ethiopia, Mozambique, South Sudan and Uganda the loss of key staff caused delays and disruptions. In Niger and Uganda, the transfer of teachers training in the programme to other schools meant setbacks for project impact.

Exchange Rates and Inflation

The Norwegian krone depreciated significantly during 2022 against currencies in project countries. In addition, there were high inflation across project countries. This reduced the ability to fund activities as planned. Several projects scaled down or cancelled activities, which hampered results achievement. This happened across all types of projects.

Partner Governance Issues

The implementation of programmes is heavily dependent on local partners, and issues at local partner can have serious consequences. In Ethiopia the above-mentioned corruption case caused disruptions for the entire land programme, since it affected the umbrella organisation for disabled persons organisations and this organisation also maintained the position as country coordinator for the TOFI land programme. Also, in South-Sudan mismanagement of funds (read more about this under the section of closed cases) caused delays in implementation of planned activities.

Extreme Weather and Food Insecurity

In Mozambique a cyclone interrupted and increased cost of one training and forced another training to be moved. In Niger, food insecurity among person with disabilities reduced possibilities for target community to benefit from programme. In South Sudan flooding and food insecurity limited the ability to reach target communities.

Insecurity

In Niger internal displacement increased number of learners in school, exacerbating challenges of child protection and quality education. In addition, insecurity concerns hindered travel and close follow up of projects. In Somalia, political tension and conflict reduced both beneficiaries' possibilities of participating in project, and project staff of traveling effectively. In addition, internal displacement caused influx of new children in schools creating

challenges. In South Sudan conflict disrupted activities, hindered staff from reaching project areas, and increased travel cost.