



# Economic empowerment of youth with disabilities in rural Uganda

Stevens Bechange, PhD



# Background

**12.4%**

of Ugandans live with a disability

**~2 million**

young women and men with disabilities are most vulnerable

Having to cope with neglect, exploitation and inequitable access to opportunities for employment and livelihoods



## National Population and Housing Census 2014



# Funded by EC – multi-year programme set out

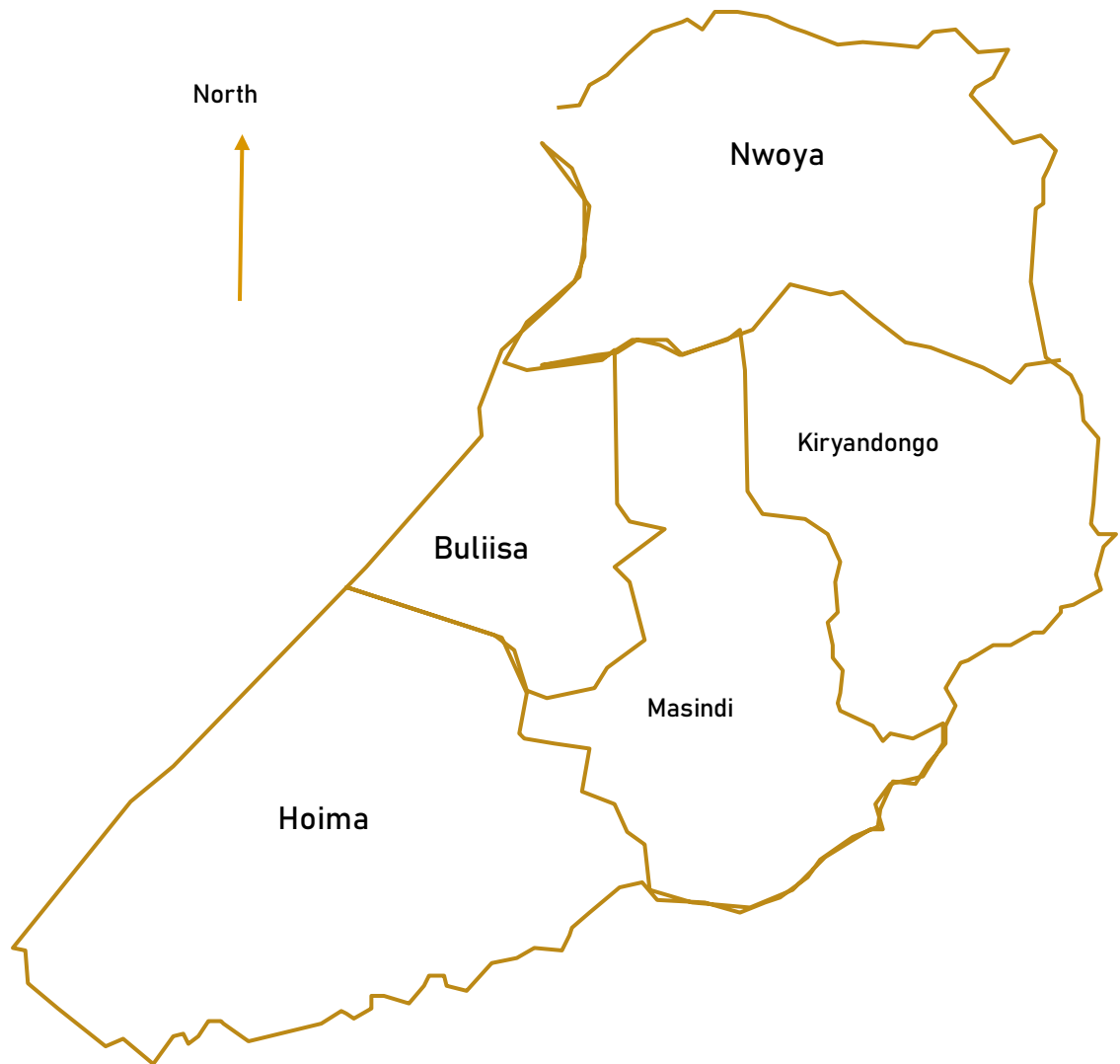
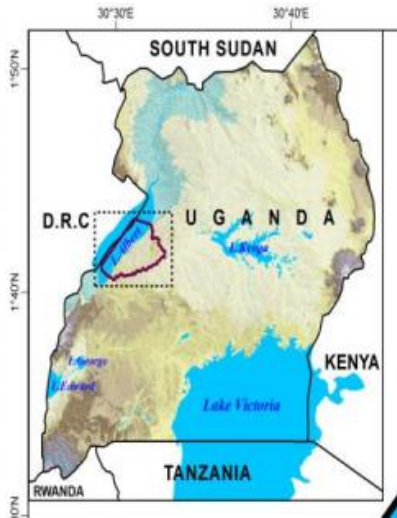


Provide basic vocational skills training, start-up kits and linkage to local businesses and entrepreneurs for apprenticeships and job opportunities



Start: 2012

# Catchment area



# Intervention logic

Vocational skills training, start up kits and apprenticeships opportunities for young men and women with disabilities will improve their employment prospects, make their business more sustainable, improve their livelihoods and decrease economic dependency

**A nested mixed methods study longitudinally examines this proposition**

# Data presented

Are from an ongoing programme in which several cohorts of youth with disability have been enrolled

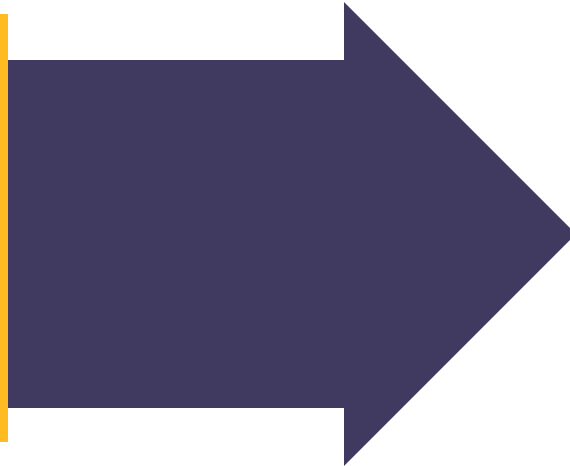
Qualitative data was collected from the pilot cohort enrolled between August 2012 and March 2015

Quantitative data was collected from two later cohorts enrolled between December 2016 and April 2018

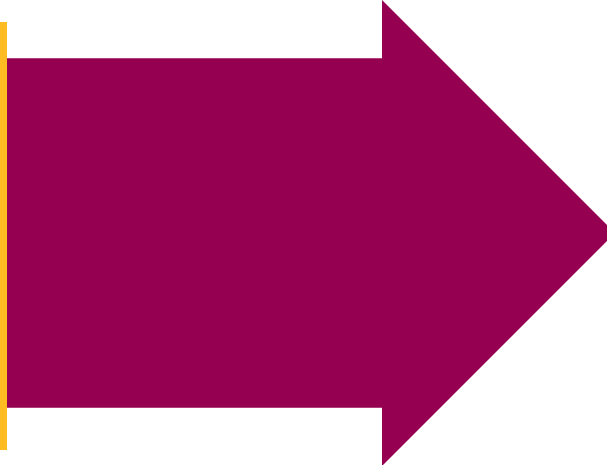


# How – peer researchers main actors

**Pre/post  
survey of a  
cohort of  
project  
participants**



**Qualitative**



# Data and analyses

Survey electronic data collection. Collected socio-demographic variables, livelihoods and employment history

Qualitative interviews: focused on experiences of participation in the project, audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim

Quantitative data analysed using STATA V 14.2

Qualitative data analysed thematically during a participatory workshop



# Baseline characteristics, N=334

Selected variables	N (%)
Female	172 (52%)
Median age, years (range)	22 (15-35)
No school	132 (40%)
Primary school	107 (33%)
Post primary school	87 (27%)
Married	87 (26%)
Remote rural residence	201 (60%)

# To sustain a livelihood, N=252

Categories	Baseline		12-months	
	n	%	n	%
Agriculture	131	52	56	22
Dependent	41	16	9	4
Business/trade	43	17	68	27
Wage/salaried	20	8	13	5
Other	17	8	106	42

# Livelihoods outcomes, N=252

Outcome	Baseline	12-mo	AOR (95%CI)
Getting a job	36%	64%	3.5 (2.5, 4.9)***
Access to finance	20%	80%	6.2 (3.8, 10.0)***
Family support	48%	52%	1.6 (1.0, 2.4)*
Collapse of a business	41%	59%	2.1 (1.6, 2.9)***
Community discrimination	49%	51%	1.2 (0.9, 1.7)
Not enough money for food	49%	51%	1.3 (0.9, 1.8)

# Qualitative analyses reveal

## Positive experiences

Feeling creative and positive about their future

Some started savings

Feeling more empowered and independent

Appreciating new knowledge and skills

**“From what I get I am able to feed myself and also save. I save weekly...”**

Feeling they were respected and listened to

**“Now my friends are respecting me...Now I do not beg..”**

## Negative experiences

Remote rural locations had limited number of customers

Some had very high expectations of the programme and financial security it can bring. Often these expectations remained unmet.

**“Income wise... things are worse now. Worse than it was before. I had resigned from the job where I was earning some money. Someone else has taken it. Currently, I have no employment..”**

The equipment and materials provided after the training were in some cases insufficient in number or of inappropriate quality

Broken equipment required finances for repair

## **In addition**

Some reported having serious health issues, sometimes exacerbated by working conditions and resulting in frequent hospital visits and subsequent business losses

For others, training was very basic with limited practical exposure

Difficulty to enter the market as a new business, difficulties in gaining customers and reputation and high competition with other businesses

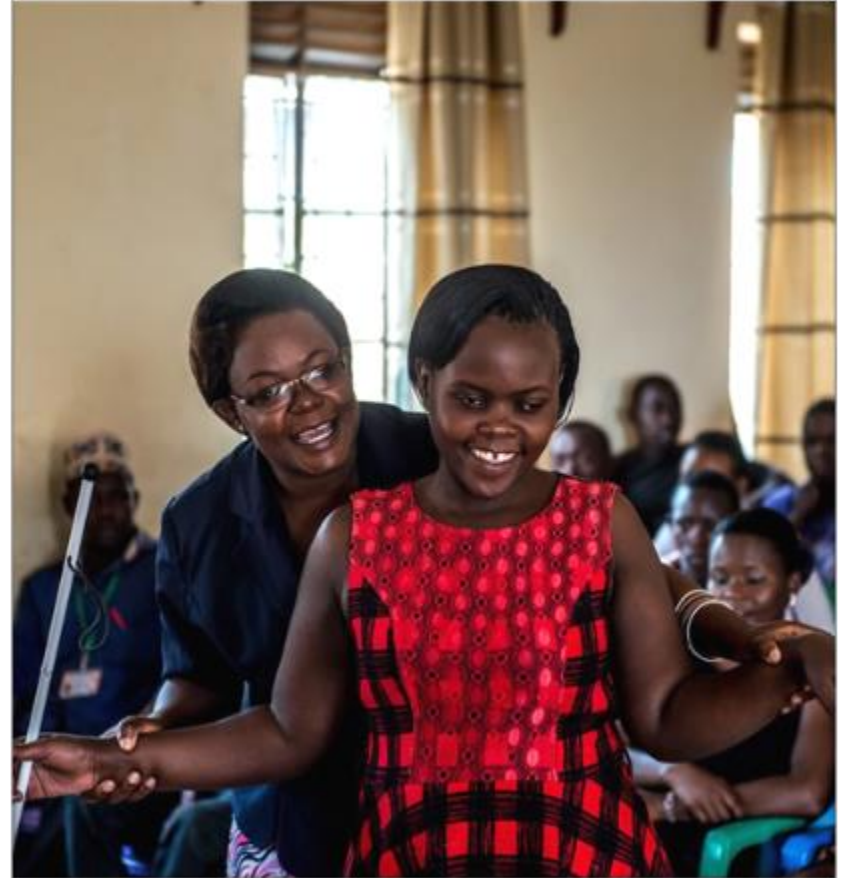
Inaccessible training and or work placements made learning harder for some



# Conclusions

Vocational skills training, apprenticeships scheme and a start-up kit can bring positive outcomes for young people with disabilities

More youth with disabilities can get a job or open their business and fewer are dependent on others



# Conclusions

The benefits are not universal or optimal. Many youth with disabilities continue being vulnerable to business failure and for many their income is still insufficient to meet their basic needs

Progress was enabled or constrained by multiple programme and systemic actors such as: accessibility, nature and competitiveness of market, type and quality of training, health status

# Next steps

We continue to analyse the data from the cohorts – as this is an ongoing project

As our cohort grows, we will undertake analysis that disaggregates data by participant demographics to identify factors associated with success and failure

Need more rigorous studies from other settings with larger samples and comparison groups to better understand who benefits from such interventions and who does not and why

Longer-term approaches to monitoring and evaluation are needed

# Research Partners

## Peer Researchers

### Kyambogo University

- Dr. Winnie Kyosaba
- Dr. Paul Emong
- Dr. Eron Laurence



# Thank you

For more information:

Visit: **[research.sightsavers.org](https://research.sightsavers.org)**