



**DISABILITY INCLUSIVE COVID 19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY STRATEGY, 2021-
2022**

MARCH, 2021

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0: Introduction and Background

The National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) is a public institution established by Act of Parliament - (Persons with Disabilities Act 2020) as a monitoring and reporting mechanism for Disability issues in the country. The work of NCPD is guided by the international and national legal frameworks on human and disability rights. The NCPD is mandated to monitor and promote Disability inclusion, advocate for promotion and protection of rights of persons with Disabilities, carry out or commission surveys and investigations on violation of rights of persons with disabilities or non-compliance of implementation of disability inclusive laws, policies and programs among others. In 2020, the Council commissioned a study to understand the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihoods of Persons with Disabilities in Uganda and identify priority areas for inclusion of persons with disabilities in post COVID-19 recovery programs.

National Council for Persons with Disabilities in collaboration with Sense International Uganda conducted a rapid assessment on the effect of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities in Uganda was conducted between August to October 2020. The objectives of the assessment were; To examine factors affecting inclusion of persons with disabilities in COVID-19 response programs; TO identify the effect of COVID-19 Pandemic on the socio-economic welfare of persons with disabilities with focus on complex disabilities in Uganda; To identify ways to include persons with disabilities in COVID-19 response program; To identify priority areas for inclusion of persons with disabilities in post COVID-19 recovery programs.

1.1 National Context

Uganda registered its first COVID-19 patient in March 2020 and by 19th of October 2020; a total of 10,455 persons had contracted the virus with 96 deaths. The Government of Uganda implemented a series of vulnerability reduction and containment measures to curtail transmission of COVID-19. Some of the measures included: closure of international airport and border points for passengers; closure of schools and other high congregation points; freeze of public and private transport; ban of all mass gathering events, including places of worship, nightclubs and bars; overnight curfew; and a nationwide lock down (MOH-COVID-19 Preparedness and Response plan, 2020).

1.2 Good Practices in Covid 19 response and recovery programs

The Rapid assessment identified key best practices that indicates a positive gesture for disability inclusion by government and its development partners that included; Prioritising persons with disabilities during food distribution exercise; supply of essential drugs in homes of persons with disabilities surviving on essential drugs; studies have been conducted to establish social-economic impacts of covid 19 on persons with disabilities; MOH and telecommunication houses provided information on prevention from covid 19 to persons with disabilities; in some districts a representative of persons with Disabilities was nominated to represent on District Covid task force and lastly Kyambogo university trained teachers for special needs on how to handle learners with disabilities on re-opening of schools.

1.3 Factors affecting inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Response and Recovery programs

The rapid assessment established several factors that affect inclusion of persons with disabilities in response and recovery programs in the country that include; inaccessible information on Covid19; lack of representation or limited representation on COVID-19 task force; high costs of transport; hunger and malnutrition; lack of inclusion strategies; inadequate disaggregated data on disability; discrimination of returnees with disabilities under quarantine; limited affirmative action during food distribution; inaccessible

physical environment in quarantine and treatment centers; inadequate legal and policy framework to include persons with disabilities in response and recovery programs.

1.4: Effects of Covid 19 on lives of persons with Disabilities

The report further revealed that COVID-19 pandemic had adverse effects on persons with disabilities. Some of the effects included: ill health and relapses resulting from failure to access medical facilities; loss of lives; poverty due to loss of business; incomes and loss of property due to unpaid accumulated loans for those who were in business; closure of businesses mostly in markets; loss of education since learners with disabilities could not access e-learning and or hard copy materials provided by government; Sanitation and hygiene related diseases in markets for those who were sleeping in markets following the directives of the president for market vendors to sleep in the markets; risks of high school dropout among learners with disabilities due to the lock down of schools for a whole year without a clear plan for inclusive learning on line; drug stock outs; psychological torture and mental breakdowns; Hunger and malnutrition mostly to children with multiple disabilities and persons living in refugee settlements where food ratio reduced by 30%¹; Unwanted pregnancies resulting from sexual abuse against girls and women with Disabilities; unemployment due to downsizing in companies affecting majority of persons with disabilities employed in lower positions.

1.5 Recommendations

Several recommendations were made to support the advocacy for an inclusive covid 19 response and recovery programs as follows; collection and dissemination of disability desegregated data in accessible formats; representation of persons with disabilities on COVID-19 task forces at all levels; provision of psychological support to all persons with disabilities; capacity building of all service providers with disability inclusion tips; development of a comprehensive strategy for disability inclusion in COVID-19 response and recovery programs; provision of affirmative action for complex disabilities like deaf

¹ Humanity and Inclusion (2020); Rapid Impact Assessment of COVID-19 on HI Beneficiaries in Refugee Settlements in Uganda, Kampala, Uganda.

blind and persons with multiple disabilities; building universal social protection systems; provision of COVID-19 related information in accessible formats; inclusion of organizations coordination and working with persons with disabilities in planning and implementation of recovery and response programs; provision of regular supply of all essential drugs for persons with disabilities; Development of disability specific policy and strategies for inclusion in COVID-19 response and recovery programs; capacity building of care takers of persons with disabilities on COVID-19 SOPs and recovery programs. Others include empowerment of health workers, social workers, Village health teams on disability inclusion; increment of food rations distributed to persons with disabilities and other vulnerable persons; enhancement of the private sector capacity on disability inclusion; empowerment of council for persons with disabilities to play its coordination, monitoring and evaluation roles; promotion of collection of scientific studies and innovations to provide evidence on persons with disabilities and COVID-19 response and recovery programs; development of a Disability Management information system (DMIS) by NCPD and MGLSD for effective planning and inclusive development.

SECTION TWO: STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

2.1 Purpose

The strategy is aimed at guiding Government and its development partners to meaningfully include persons with disabilities in Covid 19 response and recovery Programs.

2.2 Guiding principles

1. Diversity in disability embraced to enrich and strengthen disability inclusion
2. All persons with different needs and abilities equally valued, respected and considered
3. All Ugandans enabled to fulfill their potential by taking into account individual requirements and needs
4. Inclusive Covid 19 response and recovery through self-representation to promote meaningful inclusion.

2.3 Goal

To enhance inclusion of all persons with disabilities in Covid 19 response and recovery programs in Uganda

2.4 Objectives

1. To promote inclusion of persons with Disabilities in Covid 19 response programs
2. To Increase the number of persons with disabilities benefiting from Covid 19 recovery programs
3. To promote provision of accessible Covid 19 prevention messages

2.5 Strategies and Actions

Objective one: To promote inclusion of persons with disabilities in Covid 19 response and recovery programs

Outcome 1 indicator: A policy and its Action plan developed by government to guide inclusion of persons with disabilities in the response and recovery programs

This will be achieved through advocacy and lobby through dialogue meetings between government line ministries. The process will start with a formal call for action at Uganda media centre for purposes of raising awareness through the media and inform government and general public the findings of the assessment and its

recommendations. NCPD will coordinate the process and invite all organizations working for and with persons with disabilities to implement the strategy.

Subsequently, dialogue meetings shall be held with line ministries like MGLSD to lobby for the policy and its guidelines and inclusion of Women entrepreneurship program, youth livelihood and green jobs by implementing affirmative action policy; dialogue with Expanding social protection to lobby for special consideration of persons with disabilities while dispatching cash- transfers and support lobbying for increased funding of the special grant for persons with Disabilities. The expected result of this objective is effective inclusion of all persons with disabilities putting in consideration of the multiple disabilities that are highly affected by the pandemic like deaf blind in the policy and guidelines.

Table 1: Strategic Actions, targeted institutions, outcome indicators and Expected results

Action	Targeted institution/Persons	Outcome Indicator	Expected results
Hold press conference at media centre to disseminate the Covid 19 assessment report and strategy	MDAS, Development partners, CSOs, OPD Media and general public	10% of general population to receive the information on disability inclusion strategies	Enhanced knowledge on needs ,services for effective inclusion of persons with Disabilities
Hold dialogue meetings with Covid Service providers and policy implementers	National task force, MGLSD, MOH, ESP,MOF,MOES, BANKS, PRIVATE	Increased budget to cater for disability inclusion Revised policy and plans to include	Implementation of inclusive plans that promote inclusion of persons with disabilities and

	SECTOR INSTITUTIONS (business and telecommunication	persons with Disabilities Policies and guidelines developed 5 meetings will be help in a year	support inclusive recovery programs. Enhance financial inclusion for all. Support sharing of information on Covid 19 in accessible formats
Hold dialogue meetings with advocates and service providers outside Government	CSOs and OPDs	Four meetings will be held, one per quarter.	Increased funds and opportunities for socio-economic support to persons with disabilities
Conduct media radio programs to Popularise the research findings and the strategy	General public	Hold 5 radio talks and three months spot messages run in five languages on different radio stations	Increased awareness on the need for inclusion of persons with disabilities in covid 19 response and recovery programs