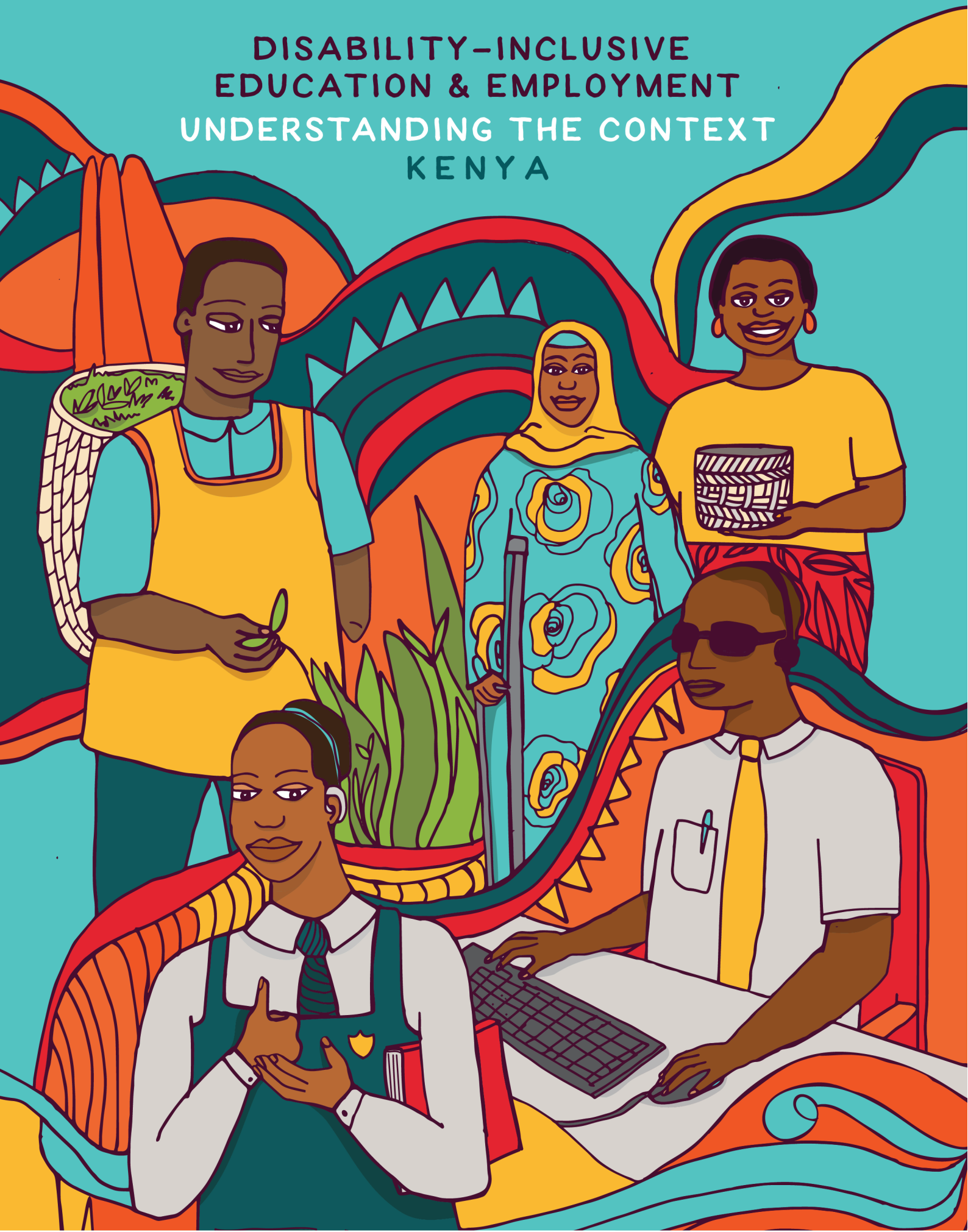


# DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT KENYA



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## About this report

This report was developed by the University of Nairobi, the International Centre for Evidence in Disability at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, and the Mastercard Foundation.

The report aims to inform Mastercard Foundation's disability and inclusion programming and strategy development. It draws on a literature review, as well as key informant interviews with relevant stakeholders, investigating the inclusion of youth with disabilities in education and employment in Kenya. The information in this report will be built on in the next phase of this research project, through in-depth interviews with young men and women with disabilities.

## Contributors



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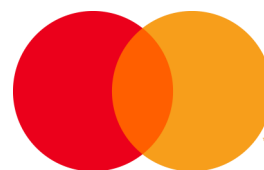
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The International Centre for Evidence in Disability (ICED) provides evidence to improve the wellbeing of people with disabilities globally.

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The Mastercard Foundation is one of the largest foundations in the world and has worked to advance financial inclusion and education in Africa and transform education and employment systems for Indigenous youth in Canada, improving the lives of more than 139 million people.

Their *Young Africa Works* strategy seeks to enable 30 million young women and men to secure dignified and fulfilling work by 2030.

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# Disability-Inclusive Education and Employment: Understanding the Context in Kenya

## About Disability

According to the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) people with disabilities include those who have: *“long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”* [1]

Estimates suggest that there are 1 billion people (15%) living with a disability globally [2]. People with disabilities often experience barriers to accessing education and employment and this can lead to an increased risk of poverty [2]. They may also face difficulties being included in other aspects of society [3].

Research in Sub-Saharan Africa shows that with the right support, people with disabilities can achieve economic success. Investing in education and employment for people with disabilities should be part of development efforts, as based on an economic rationale, as well as social justice [4].

## Executive Summary

- Kenyan policies and legislation highlight a rights-based approach and policy framework on disability inclusion in education and employment. However, people with disabilities continue to experience exclusion. Gaps in implementing, enforcing, and monitoring policy and programmes contribute to this exclusion.
- Implementation gaps and challenges in education include limited funding for tuition and assistive devices, lack of monitoring and accountability of education policies, and under-funding of Educational Assessment and Resource Centres (EARCs).
- Examples of innovative and promising practices in education include efforts toward more accessible communication in schools through the introduction of Augmentative and Alternative Communication, as well as teacher training and sensitisation.
- Implementation gaps and challenges in employment include failure to meet disability employment quotas in government, the under-representation of disability groups other than people with physical impairments, limited awareness of disability-inclusive employment policies, and financial constraints in agricultural activities.
- Examples of innovative and promising practices in employment include soft skills training, IT skills training, work placements, and support networks for youth with disabilities.
- Governments and programmes should partner more meaningfully with organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs), to ensure people with disabilities are included in government decision-making processes, and to establish monitoring systems and accountability mechanisms for disability-related policies.
- There is a need for further research on the lived experiences of youth with disabilities, perspectives and experiences of education providers, and evaluations on the impact of interventions and programmes relating to disability-inclusive education and employment.
- Disability disaggregated data on education and employment indicators are needed.







# Introduction

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## Disability in Kenya

According to the 2019 Population and Housing Census, the prevalence of disability in Kenya, among people 5 years and older, is 2.2% (2.5% among women and 1.9% among men) [5]. Note that this is likely a low estimate, given that the World Report on Disability estimated 15% prevalence [6]. Up-to-date disability-disaggregated data on education and employment indicators in Kenya are lacking. However, available evidence suggests that people with disabilities are more likely to face exclusion in these areas, with barriers including negative community attitudes towards disability, inaccessible facilities, limited assistive devices and accessible learning materials, lack of funding, lack of skilled and trained personnel, and ineffective enforcement of laws [1-3; 7-9]

## Disability policy context

In 2003, the Government of Kenya adopted the Persons with Disabilities Act, and in 2008, Kenya ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Article 54 of the Constitution, updated in 2010, provides people with disabilities with the right to: be treated with dignity and respect, have access to educational institutions and facilities integrated into society, and have reasonable access to all places, public transport, and information. The Persons with Disabilities Act (2003) has recently been repealed and is in the process of being replaced by the Persons with Disabilities Bill (2021), to ensure the law is consistent with the UNCRPD and the Constitution, and to promote a rights-based approach to disability-inclusion. The new Bill is currently under review by Parliament. The Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Development have the mandate to promote and protect the rights of people with disabilities, while the National Council for Persons with Disabilities is responsible for follow-up and enforcement of the law, ensuring that each government ministry mainstream disability inclusion in their policies and services.

Over the past decade, the government has established a National Development Fund for Persons with Disabilities (NDFPWD) and the Cash Transfer for Persons with Severe Disabilities (PWSD-CT) to increase access to employment, education, training, and rehabilitation services. The annual budget of the NDFPWD is approximately KES 259 million (2.1 million dollars) and for the PWSD-CT, approximately KES 1.2 billion (97 million dollars). Detailed information on how these funds have been spent since 2016, can be found in the report on 'Government funding to support disability inclusion in Kenya' listed in the references [13]. Consistent budget data and lack of programme outcome data limit the scope of analysis.

## Employment focus for this research: agriculture and digital

The agricultural sector is the predominant sector of Kenya's economy, accounting for 54% of those in employment and 80% of the rural workforce [4]. Agriculture and the wider value chain further account for 60% of Gross Domestic Product and 69% of export earnings. Despite the importance of agriculture, there is limited evidence available on the experiences of people with disabilities in this vital sector.



## About this study

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This research aimed to assess the policy landscape relating to inclusion in education and employment for young men and women with disabilities in Kenya, with particular focus on secondary, tertiary and vocational education, and employment in agriculture and tourism. Using the Policy Triangle framework [12], this study highlights:

- Key policies, programmes, and evidence on the situation for people with disabilities
- Key stakeholders and policy processes
- Policy implementation, gaps and challenges, and contextual influences
- Examples of innovation and promising practise to foster greater inclusion

This research involved a literature review and 16 key informant interviews (KIIs) with key stakeholders in Kenya. Key informants (KIs) included representatives from organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs), government bodies, education providers, local and international NGOs, and private employers.

## Findings

The findings of the study are organised in four parts: (1) education; (2) employment; (3) social and political context; and (4) opportunities.



# 1. Education

## 1.1. Policies and programmes

Up-to-date national survey data, comparing education for youth with and without disabilities, is lacking. Data on disability was collected as part of the 2019 Housing and Population Census, [7] so these indicators may become available in future. Data from the 2009 Population and Housing census, analysed for the Disability Data Portal on-line [14], found people with disabilities were less likely to have completed primary and secondary school compared to their peers without disabilities (primary school: 44% versus 60%; secondary school: 17% versus 27%).

Table 1. Notable provisions in Kenya policy and legislation related to disability-inclusive education

Notable provisions	Policy/law
Every person has a right to education, and people with disabilities are entitled to access educational institutions and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· 2010 Constitution</li><li>· Persons with Disabilities Act 2003 (the Persons with Disabilities Bill 2021 is currently under review)</li></ul>
Children with disabilities have a right to basic education and must not be discriminated against based on disability status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Children's Act 2001</li></ul>
Access to education for children with disabilities must be improved, along with the quality of education they receive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Basic Education Act 2013</li></ul>
Inclusive education strategies must be adopted at all levels of education, including university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities 2018</li><li>· 2013-18 education strategic plan</li></ul>

A full list of programmes promoting disability inclusion in education implemented in Kenya within the past 5 years is provided in Appendix B.



## Education

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The right to education for all citizens is guaranteed in the Kenya Constitution (2010). Within the Ministry of Education, the Directorate of Special Needs Education is charged with the responsibility of coordinating the provision of education services for learners with disabilities. The directorate offers technical guidance and advises on policy relating to the education needs of learners with disabilities.

Various policies are in place to guide education delivery in Kenya. Following the review of the Special Needs Education Policy in 2018, the Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities was developed to improve education delivery to those with disabilities. The policy is based on the Kenya Constitution (2010), the Basic Education Act (2013), and Sustainable Development Goal No. 4, and thus focuses on the adoption of equitable and inclusive education strategies for all learners. Unlike the previous policy, the Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities has clear implementation guidelines and captures the aspirations of stakeholders, including people with disabilities.

The policy was developed in response to gaps in the National Special Needs Education Policy (2009). After introducing the Constitution in 2010, there was recognition of the need for a new policy to address these gaps. A technical working group was formed, with representatives from OPDs, universities, teachers, school administrators, education officers, quality assurance officers, curriculum developers, specialised training institutions, and civil society organisations. This group led the development of the new policy, under the Directorate of Special Needs Education and the Directorate of Policy. According to KIs, one of the challenges in developing the new policy was managing stakeholder expectations.

*“There was a bit of a trade-off, gives and takes, because at some point you want everything in the policy. And then you do a reality check and realise that you cannot put everything in that policy. The education of learners with a disability can be a very good controversial topic and there are people that had extreme views.”* (Representative from government)





## Education

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Although this policy is in place, there is an issue with implementation. As a result of limited awareness of disability inclusion and the devolved system of government, cascading policy goals across the country present a challenge.

*“It requires quite a bit of resources, and I do not think the government or the Ministry have worked policy intention with adequate resources, to ensure it is implemented...The levels of awareness regarding disability in this country are still wanting. And because of that, those who make decisions, especially regarding budgetary allocations, may not have a good understanding of what inclusion entails, and that is why they don't allocate adequate resources.”* (Representative from government)

To overcome these challenges and limited resources, KIs reported increased funding from the Ministry of Education in recent years. The government is providing training programmes and funding schemes to support youth with disabilities in accessing tertiary institutions, with the aim of increasing employability. Government was said to be investing in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to meet the learning needs of youth with disabilities.

*“And of late, we have seen persons with disabilities allocated more resources than those without a disability, in those training institutes. You will find that government capitation [i.e. funding per person] for persons with disabilities in schools is higher because of their needs.”* (Representative from government)

The number of youth with disabilities progressing through primary and secondary education was reported to have increased over recent years. Despite this, few were reported to be transitioning to tertiary institutions, and very few benefitting from the opportunities at TVET institutions. Although, we were unable to find recent published national estimates on education attendance and completion by disability status.

KIs also told us that education curriculum is increasingly becoming more inclusive and responsive to needs of diverse learners. One such milestone is the competency-based curriculum (CBC) that has a “stage-based” learning pathway, as opposed to an “age-based” approach, which seldom meets the learning needs of those with intellectual disabilities.

*“From the year 2000-2003, KICD [Kenya Institute for Curriculum Development] has started getting more responsive to the development of curriculum areas for these learners. The biggest leap has been when we went into the competency-based curriculum. We must commend the government, the Ministry of Education, and of course KICD, because now a policy was adopted whereby as the rest of the education is addressed, special education including those with intellectual disabilities would not be left behind. So at every stage consideration is made.”* (Special needs education expert)

# Education

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## 1.2. Implementation gaps and challenges

Interviews with KIs highlighted a number of factors that impact education policy implementation.

### i) Financial challenges and limited funding

Although there is a government scheme, to which they pay around KES 14,300 (115.6 USD) of the 56,000 (452.7 USD) learners' annual tuition fees at tertiary institutions and secondary schools, many youth with disabilities and their families find meeting the difference a major challenge.

Further, KIs reported that government investment was insufficient for schools and education institutions to acquire necessary accessible learning materials, or assistive products, to help students with disabilities learn. This leaves the financial burden of procuring assistive devices and other accessible learning materials on students and parents.

### ii) Weak and under-funded Educational Assessment and Resource Centres

Educational Assessment and Resource Centres (EARCs) were established to identify, assess, and place students with disabilities in appropriate learning institutions and levels. However, according to KIs, many EARCs do not have the capacity, funding, and resources to deliver this mandate. While these centres are meant to hire staff from various disciplines with an understanding of diverse disability needs, this was not the case.

*"There is a lot that has changed and I think this needs to be relooked at. When these assessment centres were set up, and you know in the assessment of learners with disabilities we always talk of a multi-disciplinary approach, and I can say today this is completely out and this draws a question on the staffing. When I worked there, we could have people from the medical field such as occupational therapist, physiotherapists, social workers, special education teachers. The special education were staffed in such a way that you had a teacher who'd specialised in an area of disability. For instance, we had four main disabilities: that is intellectual, teacher of the visually impaired, a teacher of the physically impaired, and then a teacher for the hearing impaired, such that any child who was brought there could have somebody relevant to address their needs."* (Special needs education expert)

In most cases, special needs teachers now singularly run the EARCs. KIs lamented that although these special needs teachers have, by the nature of their training, been introduced to different types of disabilities, they may not be adequately equipped (in terms of training and resources) to assess and place learners with disabilities. This points to a gap in policy specifically regarding the assessment centres.

*"There should be some very clear policy framework on what we want to do in the assessment centres, the running of the centres. And I think this matter of multi-disciplinary approaches has not been adequately addressed, such that policymakers have not given it a lot of weight whereas it is so important."* (Special needs education expert)

## Education

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### iii) Lack of monitoring systems

Although inclusive education policies exist, including the Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities (2018), monitoring of policy implementation is lacking. Without an appropriate monitoring system in place, KIs reported that accountability is low. Many institutions have not bought into policies and feel they can ignore the law, as their actions are not monitored. Some KIs felt that the Ministry of Education should be held accountable by national courts for widespread non-compliance with these policies.

KIs called for a clear monitoring and reporting system, and a clear focal-point in government to manage this process. KIs recommended strengthening the capacity and funding of OPDs to research and report on progress made in schools, as well as strengthening the capacity and funding of the National Council for Persons with Disabilities.

KIs also noted that although the Educational Assessment and Resource Centres (EARCs) aim to assess and place learners with disabilities in appropriate educational institutions, there is a lack of follow-up mechanisms to assess their experiences and adaptability in these education institutions.

*“The other thing that needs to be strengthened in regular schools, since we are talking about inclusion especially for those that can be placed there, is follow-up. And follow-up should be given all the resources necessary.” (Special needs education expert)*



Source: Florente A. / ILO



# Education

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## 1.3. Examples of innovative and promising practices

KIs did not discuss specific education programmes for youth with disabilities. It is unclear if this is because there is a dearth of such programmes, or if they are just unknown to the KIs interviewed.

One notable effort to increase access to education, particularly for those with intellectual disabilities, is the introduction of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) in the country. Through stakeholders interested in learning needs of people with intellectual disabilities, the Society of Augmentative and Alternative Learning was registered in 2019. AAC aims to fill the gap for learners with no form of accessible communication, such as sign language, due to the specific needs of their impairment. Though in a formative stage, according to KIs, AAC is gaining ground in schools.

*“The other thing that needs to be strengthened in regular schools, since we are talking about inclusion especially for those that can be placed there, is follow-up. And follow-up should be given all the resources necessary.” (Special needs education expert)*

In Nakuru County, where this initiative was mooted, 13 teachers have been trained on the program and they will become a “trainer-of-trainers.” The 13 teachers were drawn from two schools, Pangani Special Needs School and Nakuru Special School, that are model schools. Though with limited resources, 40 teachers in 10 selected schools in the country have now been sensitised on AAC. Additional resources and funding are needed for wider sensitisation and adoption of this approach.

*“To arrive at the 10 schools, we divided the country into two, that is the schools east of Nairobi and those to the west. So from the west we picked a school from Kisumu called Lutheran, a school in Kaimosi, a school in Eldoret, Kisii and a school in Nakuru. To the east of Nairobi, we took Tom Mboya a special school for Cerebral Palsy, a school in Mombasa, Karatina, a school from Kitui and Nile Road in Nairobi and another from Thika.” (Special needs education expert)*

Leonard Cheshire, working closely with government, implemented a project in the Lake Region of Kenya to increase educational and vocational opportunities of girls with disabilities, with a focus on improving transition through education pathways [15]. With schools, project activities included developing disability-inclusive learning materials, training teachers and school management boards on inclusive education, establishing school clubs to encourage leadership and social inclusion for girls with disabilities and school accessibility audits. The project also supported improved quality standards for EARCs. Project evaluations indicate a positive impact including on school attendance for girls with disabilities, improved quality of disability-inclusive teaching in mainstream schools and increased transitions through school pathways and to vocational training [16].







## 2. Employment

Up-to-date reliable disability-disaggregated data on employment in Kenya is lacking. Data on disability was collected as part of the 2019 Housing and Population Census, so these indicators may become available in future. Data from the 2009 Population and Housing census, analysed for the Disability Data Portal on-line [14], found a slightly higher proportion of youth with disabilities were not in education, employment or training (20%) compared to youth without disabilities (15%). The 2015/2016 Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey reported that over half of people with disabilities had 'difficulties engaging in economic activities' [17].

### 2.1. Policies and programmes

Table 2. Notable provisions in Kenya policy and legislation related to disability-inclusive employment

Notable provisions	Policy/law
People with disabilities have a right to employment, free from discrimination in public or private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitution</li> <li>• Persons with Disabilities Act 2003 (the Persons with Disabilities Bill 2021 is currently under review)</li> <li>• National Employment Authority Act 2016</li> <li>• Public Officers' Ethics Act 2003</li> </ul>
At least 5% of the workforce should be people with disabilities in all "casual, emergency and contractual positions in public and private sectors"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persons with Disabilities Act 2003 (the Persons with Disabilities Bill 2021 is currently under review)</li> <li>• Disability Policy and Guidelines for the Public Service 2018</li> </ul>
People with disabilities may apply to be exempt from income tax, if their annual income falls within a specified amount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persons with Disabilities Act 2003 (the Persons with Disabilities Bill 2021 is currently under review)</li> </ul>
Private employers who employ people with disabilities may apply to receive tax deductions linked to disabled employees' salaries and cost of modifications made	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persons with Disabilities Act 2003 and 2012 (the Persons with Disabilities Bill 2021 is currently under review)</li> </ul>
30% of government procurement contracts may be split between youth, women, and people with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Procurement and Disposal Act 2015</li> </ul>
People with mental or physical disabilities, when their impairment prohibits them from working and meeting basic needs, are entitled to social assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Assistance Act 2013</li> </ul>

A full list of programmes promoting disability inclusion in employment implemented in Kenya within the past 5 years is provided in Appendix B.



# Employment

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The Kenya Persons with Disabilities Act (2012) stipulates a 5% quota of employment opportunities, in both the private and public sector, to go to people with disabilities. However, KIs reported that this goal is yet to be realised. Although the law is clear, most employers are reluctant to hire people with disabilities. Employers may lack awareness on disability inclusion, whilst others believe they cannot afford the cost of reasonable accommodations. Further, although there are provisions for tax rebates and deductions for organisations that employ people with disabilities, there are no guidelines on how to meet the standards and access these incentives.

There were reports from KIs of efforts by some employers to encourage people with disabilities to apply for jobs, including the posting of advertisements targeting applicants with disabilities. However, KIs reported that even when individuals with disabilities are invited to interview, rarely do they get hired. The KIs further noted that the type and severity of disability often dictates access and adaptability in the employment sector. People with intellectual disabilities are often particularly excluded. KIs noted that there are efforts to equip people with intellectual disabilities with skills, but the transition to the labour market remains a challenge. According to one KI currently working with people with intellectual disabilities:

*“Firstly, they are people who will always require someone to guide them. Secondly, employers are so much concerned about productivity and what the end product is, and they wouldn’t be ready for anybody who is going to give them some challenges in terms of optimal production that they require. Therefore, job placement becomes rather difficult for them.”* (Special needs education expert)

For this reason, efforts to meet the employment needs of people with disabilities, especially those with intellectual disabilities, often take the traditional form of sheltered workshops. This was evident in a group in Nakuru – the Nakuru Eagles Services Network for Persons with Intellectual and Related Disabilities (NESNID). NESNID provides a space where people with disabilities are trained in handiwork to produce items for sale and proceeds shared.

## Employment in agriculture

As with education and general employment, KIs believed that the agricultural sector possessed good policies. However, implementation is a challenge and there are no specific strategies to target youth with disabilities. While there are various programmes targeting youth in agribusiness, there are no attempts to ensure that youth with disabilities are involved:

*“We as a ministry, we don’t really target youths living with a disability as a distinct existing group. We target youths, but now in terms of targeting a specific group, we have a Youth Department within the county that has a special targeting for such categories, but for agriculture is just general.”* (Representative from government)

## Employment

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Some KIs working in agribusiness said there would be lots of roles suitable for people with disabilities along the value chain, particularly those that do not involve manual labour. There was a clear willingness among people in agribusiness to support people with disabilities, but they, and people with disabilities themselves, need training and information on how to make this a reality.

*“Gone are days where we had the stigma and...we felt that we should sympathise, we should not involve people with a disability. This time we need to empower them. And...it's clear that now people with a disability have enormous potential. They can do a lot of things. It's just to empower them.”* (Representative from agricultural sector)

To stimulate entry into agriculture, the National Fund for the Disabled of Kenya (NFDK) was allocated to agriculture for the financial year 2020-2021. The aim was to strengthen the capacity of the people with disabilities in the sector, but the impact of this was unclear among KIs.

In the 2016 National Plan of Action on the implementation of the UNCRPD, the government recognises that ownership of land, housing, and property is a fundamental human right for people with disabilities to realise their security, self-reliance, and livelihood on an equal basis with other citizens. However, KIs in this study, reported that many people with disabilities do not have access to land, because of negative attitudes in society regarding their right to own, inherit, or manage land. This may even be the perception of parents and family members. As a result, while people with disabilities may benefit from agriculture and agribusiness, they are struggling to access land, materials, and opportunity. This exclusion from agriculture was said to exacerbate poverty and food insecurity for people with disabilities and their households.

Moreover, for some, agriculture is considered unclean, dirty, and suitable employment for those with no education or for older people. Many parents expect their children to be employed in the formal sector after completion of school, a notion that is equally shared by young people themselves. This view is often held by parents of youth with disabilities, who may not allow their child to work in the sector.

*“Parents have not allowed youths with a disability to participate in agriculture, as they believe that when a youth is educated, it is better to look for employment, rather than coming back to compete in agriculture with them.”* (Representative from an OPD)

There were notable efforts from Sightsavers to link farmers with disabilities with East Africa breweries to plant barley for their product. With the support of these stakeholders, the farmers received training and seedlings to plant the crop, and they were given an assured market and pre-negotiated price. Similarly, the Nakuru Agricultural Training Institute is offering training and agricultural extension services to farmers in the Nakuru County across various value chains. This included acting as intermediaries for youth with disabilities, linking them to professional services.

The institute made efforts to create an inclusive environment for people with disabilities, including accessible pathways through gardens. For the first time, the Ustadi Foundation is now implementing a similar programme for youth with disabilities, using lessons learned from the Nakuru Agricultural Training Institutes' activities.

# Employment

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## Digital technology

Aligned to the Kenya Constitution (2010) and the Vision 2030 development agenda, the 2020 National Information Communications and Technology Policy (ICT), recognises the central role of access and utilisation of ICT in realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In order to be all-inclusive, the policy mandates the provision of an inclusive ICT environment that allows for gender equality and accessibility for people with disabilities. Through this policy, the government aims to ensure people with disabilities have full access to ICT services and innovative technologies.

*"We partner with other organisations to support us, so persons with disabilities are not to be left behind in ICT and to ensure that in programs various gadgets are accessible."*  
(Representative from government)

It was noted that the government was working with various entities in the private sector to increase digital accessibility for people with disabilities. Through the Ministry of Labour, and in collaboration with the private sector, various efforts were ongoing to provide ICT and digital skills to youth with disabilities to increase their employability in the labour market. One such initiative was with SightSavers in collaboration with the Safaricom and NITA.

*"I have seen organisations like Sightsavers partnering with NITA to offer something they were calling CISCO, it is an ICT program or training to enable persons with disability to be employable in the ICT industry."* (Representative from government)

However, it was noted that despite the importance digitisation in increasing opportunities for employment, it is an expensive venture when it comes to disability-inclusive technology, thus requiring a multi-sectoral approach to funding and implementation.

*"These programs are to be installed in phones, in their laptops, in computers, for them to be accessible to persons with disabilities. And some of those programs are a bit expensive."*  
(Representative from government)



# Employment

## 2.2. Implementation gaps and challenges

Analysis of the data highlighted several gaps and challenges in implementing policies and programmes on disability inclusion in employment.

### i) Failure to meet the 5% disability employment quota in government

The government has failed to institute the 5% representation of people with disabilities in appointive and elective positions at the government level, as provided for in the Constitution. This lack of representation has emboldened private and public employers' exclusion of people with disabilities and their own failure to meet the 5% quota. This lack of representation also means that the voices of people with disabilities remain unheard in decision-making processes.

*"The representation is not there. In Parliament there is a gap. I would say that out of the whole of Kenya, from 47 counties there were 17 that did not nominate any person living with a disability, 20 counties nominated partially...Only 10 counties followed the law." (Representative from an OPD)*

There were further calls to increase representation of people with disabilities in planning committees related specifically to agriculture, so that people with disabilities can articulate the priorities of the community.

### ii) People with physical impairments prioritised over others

Although there are efforts to ensure that youth with disabilities gain skills to prepare them for the labour market, those with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities are largely excluded, and to a lesser extent, people with a sensory impairment. People with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities are often seen by society as unemployable. There is also a perception that they require substantial accommodations in the workplace, for which companies need financial support from external organisations. If this support is not funded or if the funding is withdrawn, then the person with an intellectual or psychosocial disability goes unsupported in the workplace or, more likely, remains unemployed. Similarly, many employers choose not to hire deaf or blind people, because they do not believe they can afford an interpreter or accessible materials to support their employment. Often employers will hire people with a physical impairment to fill their quota and leave others behind.

*"We have had some employers who are very selective and will tell you, 'for now we are only able to admit this type of disability,' and that is already exclusion. Within our programme, that response is not in the spirit of inclusion. To be able to convince the employer not to narrow down, we encourage them to look at the support needs of the persons they are targeting first. Unfortunately, then you can have an employer saying 'for now, we can only take a person with a physical disability, because we do not have an interpreter.' ...What we also ask them to consider is training some of their employees in sign language or to hire staff that have sign language as an added skill. So that kind of broader thinking on what is inclusion and how it can be achieved, instead of having one way of looking at it. This is what is challenging." (Representative from an OPD)*

# Employment

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## iii) Limited awareness on disability-inclusive employment

KIs in the private and public sector expressed limited understanding on how to support people with disabilities into their workplace. Partnerships with OPDs were said to support more inclusive practices, and there were calls for training and awareness-raising for employers to promote support for disability-inclusive employment, reasonable accommodations in the workplace, etc.

*“That [including people with disabilities] is a unique space, and to be honest, we have not been intentional about it. It is an area we are willing to learn ... I do not understand the challenges people with disabilities face and we accept partnerships because we do not know everything.”* (Representative from private sector)

UDPK, for example, run trainings for county departments on disability-inclusion. They work with the departments to identify current programmes and those planned for the next five years. They ask the departments to document the challenges to providing a disability-inclusive programmes. They then discuss with the departments and other OPDs how to overcome these challenges. From there, they will work with the departments to develop joint action plans that involve people with disabilities.

## iv) Difficulties financing agricultural activities

Unlike traditional farming practices, current agricultural land practices demand capital investment for land preparation, buying agricultural inputs, and other value additions. However, accessing loans from a bank is difficult for people with disabilities, as most do not own collateral. The government has funding mechanisms in place for youth in agriculture, including Youth Enterprise Development and the Uwezo Fund, but youth with disabilities rarely know of or access these schemes.

*“Finance, in as much as people with a disability want to do some activities in agriculture, farm inputs are very expensive. Like today, if you want to do horticulture you cannot plant kales, you cannot plant tomatoes. Fertilisers and pesticides are so expensive.”* (Representative from an OPD)

## v) Limited skills among people with disabilities

Many people with disabilities have not been afforded opportunities in education, which can contribute to inadequate skills and job readiness. Even when employment programmes are put in place, many people with disabilities do not have the necessary skills with which to take on a role. Key to any employment project is first developing skills and job readiness among people with disabilities, through vocational and other skills training.

Some KIs also said that people with disabilities would benefit from support in finding opportunities, as most are unaware of the opportunities available. It would be beneficial to provide youth with disabilities with support to find jobs, prepare applications, and develop their readiness for entry into the workplace.

# Employment

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In order to identify those in need of support and training, KIs recommended a substantial mapping exercise, collecting information on youth with disabilities in each county. Ideally, KIs would like to have an available database of youth with disabilities, with whom they can connect and inform of opportunities.

## 2.3. Examples of innovative and promising practices

KI interviews highlighted several examples of promising practices to improve access to employment for young people with disabilities.

Since 2019, Sightsavers and a consortium of organisations have implemented the Inclusion Works programme. The programme, which ended in June 2022, was aimed at building the capacity of youth with disabilities to access formal employment. To prepare the youth for the labour market, various programs were offered:

- **Soft skills training:** This activity was offered through the Accenture Skills to Succeed Online Academy (<https://www.accenture.com>). The programme contained 12 mandatory modules, which provided the learners with soft skills relevant to the labour market. These skills included developing a CV, preparing for an interview, presenting well in an interview, and how to build relationships at work, among others. To complement the online learning modules, an in-person classroom component was provided by Yusudi, an organisation supporting youth into employment. These sessions included practical elements, such as role-play.
- **IT skills training:** Based on the CISCO Networking Academy curriculum, this training was offered in partnership with the IT Bridge Academy and UDPK. 40 youth with disabilities were trained in cyber security over a 9-month period. Trainees qualified as CISCO networking associates and certified technicians. Of the 40 trainees, three are now employed by Safaricom and 33 are interns. Partnership with UDPK and other OPDs throughout the design and implementation of this activity has been beneficial to creating a disability-inclusive and appropriate training programme.
- **Work placements:** A selected number of youth with disabilities were placed within the Coca Cola and Kenya Breweries to receive on-the-job experience in a workplace environment, building on the skills developed in the soft skills training. The programme also allowed these youth the opportunity to engage with the partner organisations on supporting employees with disabilities in the workplace and making reasonable accommodations.

*“That helps the employers understand that young people with a disability can undertake these careers. We also have OPDs within the process and of course we have the donors. So, looking at the importance of getting this ecosystem for learners with a disability is important in improving accessibility to training programmes and work. If they were to just go with CISCO training institutions out there, they would not have this enabling ecosystem.”* (Representative from an OPD)



## Employment

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- **Kenya business and disability network:** Private sector companies who are committed to disability inclusion were brought together under the Kenya Business and Disability Network, in order to share experiences on disability-inclusive employment. These organisations then partnered with the National Council for Persons with Disabilities to identify potential applicants for open job roles.
- **Global Labour Programme:** Building on this work, USAID recently funded the \$6 million USD project, Global Labour Program, running from 2021-2026. The activities within this five-year programme were not known, but it aims to build on previous work in the Inclusive Futures (Inclusion Works) programme, funded by FCDO. Part of the project is improving labour rights for people with disabilities, and this will include developing toolkits for government and employers.

In addition to these programmes, there are examples of promising digital and technological innovations including:

- **The Orbit Reader 20**, by the Kilimanjaro Blind Trust Africa (KBTA), is a digital device that enables users to easily and instantly switch between modes that include book-reader, note-taker, and braille display. Initially introduced to learners in 2018, 500 units have been distributed to grade three and four learners taking the new Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). Additionally, over 100 class teachers and school-based technicians have been trained on its use and basic repair maintenance.
- **The Braille Smart Watch** was launched by Safaricom in 2018. The watch enables visually-impaired people to use M-Pesa, a mobile banking service that allows users to store and transfer funds through their mobile phone, without third party assistance.
- **Livio AI**, introduced in Kenya 2019 by Starkey Hearing Technologies, is a device that connects to Apple and Android smartphones to enhance listening experiences, detect falls, ask questions, track device location, monitor heart rate, and reduce sounds from the environment. It uses integrated sensors and AI to redefine solutions to hearing problems.

### 3. Social and political context

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The data highlighted contextual factors that shape the access and utilisation of education and employment opportunities for young people with disabilities in Kenya. KIs noted growing political goodwill following the promulgation of the Kenya Constitution (2010), which under Article 54 stipulates the rights of people with disabilities as provided in the UNCRPD. While advocacy has contributed to increased awareness of the rights of people with disabilities, several contextual factors continue to be a challenge.

#### i) Negative attitudes and discrimination

KIs observed that stigma and discrimination remain a barrier in addressing the education and employment needs of people with disabilities. Driven by culture and household poverty, children with disabilities are often left out when it comes to allocating resources.

*“Culture is also a challenge in that when a person has a child with disability, they tend to put more focus on the other children, leaving this particular one out, because they perceive that he or she has no value in the future.”* (Representative from an OPD)

#### ii) Support in business enterprise

The KIs noted the Government’s efforts to promote and grow businesses run by people with disabilities. One such effort is Access to Government Procurement (AGPO) instituted in the Kenya Constitution Article 227 on the fair, equitable, transparent and cost effective public procurement of goods and services; and Article 55 on affirmative action. Under this provision, 30% Government procurement goes to women, youth, and people with disabilities. While this initiative was perceived as positive, it was not clear what percentage of the total 30% was allotted to people with disabilities.

*“Tendering is also an issue, and there is this issue of women, youths, and persons living with disability. This is a blanket statement, then they say they are given 30%. We are advocating for this thing to be clear. It should be 10% for each if 30% is there. Because what happens is that the women almost take all of it and then persons living with disabilities are left without anything.”* (Representative from an OPD)

KIs also lamented the lack of level playing ground in the awarding of tenders to people with disabilities, indicating they were often not profitable.

*“Another thing we are saying about the tenders is that, the values of the tenders should be looked into because persons living with disabilities are not meant just to supply newspapers. If the value of the tenders says 200 million, then they should say how much is reserved for people with disabilities, like 30% of 200 million. We are not in that position yet. They select what should be given to persons living with disabilities like supplying of bottles of drinking water, newspapers, and other things of that kind.”* (Representative from an OPD)

## Social and political context

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Additionally, it was observed that lack of collateral and guarantors often becomes a barrier for youth with disabilities benefiting from AGPO.

*“You find that the challenges that persons living with disabilities are facing are more or less the same to those that the youth and women are facing...the youths also experience challenges when it comes to security for loans as most of them don't have guarantors or land.” (Representative from an OPD)*

### iii) Funding challenges

Although limited in scope, there were various funding mechanisms to support youth with disabilities access education or start businesses. At the national level, through the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, the Government was providing education funds, as well as assistive devices to registered members. Meeting the council's mandate remains a challenge due to funding.

*“If there are funds, you give them forms and the funds will be disbursed to groups. For education, they do the same and there will be cheques to be sent to schools. But at the moment, Kenya does not have money, and you and I know that, so even that National Council doesn't have money to support its agendas completely. They are even using money that they are not supposed to use in paying salaries.” (Representative from an OPD)*

Aside from the funding through the National Council for Disability, there are other forms of funding to the county governments, such as the Disability Fund and the Constituency Development Funds. These funds were said to support education, pay for assistive devices, and provide start-up capital for small businesses.

### iv) Representation in public service

The KIs noted that although the law provides for representation of people with disabilities in public service boards and parliamentary nominations, this requirement was far from being realised. Giving an example of the past government, of the 47 counties only 30 had nominated people with disabilities into the county assemblies, a move that affects the advocacy agenda.

It was observed that there was a growing of presence of OPDs to push for representation of people with disabilities, but most OPDs did not have a clear mandate, lacked human resource capacity, and are not well-funded.

*“DPOs need to come together and I have always said that we need to come together and talk as a group. Then we have those leaders that can at least feel anybody and tell a story but most of our DPOs leaders they have a problem. If you go to an office and you are given a lunch of 5,000 (50 USD). You feel comfortable and go away. That is what is happening with most of us.” (Representative from an OPD)*



## Social and political context

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In spite of the funding and capacity challenges, some OPDs were actively engaged in policy advocacy and lobbying for representation, as was the case in Bungoma County.

*"We have made a number of achievements, in the recent appointment out of 336 village administrators at the county level, we have 14 employed as village administrators. We almost managed to get 5% of the total number of the administrators in the county."* (Representative from an OPD)

Laxity by the county governments to enact the Disability Act was seen to be a major hindrance in progressing the agenda of people with disabilities locally.

*"In Nakuru County, we still don't have the Disability Act, this Act hasn't been adopted at the county level, but we are talking of the 5% representation at all levels being appointed, elected, part of the board members, and awarded tenders."* (Representative from an OPD)



Source: LWF/ C. Kästner

## 4. Opportunities

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To enhance the involvement of people with disabilities and OPDs in decision-making processes across the country, the United Disabled Persons of Kenya (UDPK) provide training for the leaders of the individual OPDs under their umbrella. This includes training on how the national government operates, the different departments and their roles, how the policy development process should unfold, and how budgets are allocated; as well as how to proactively get involved with government, local authorities, and sector working groups. They aim to support these leaders to engage in County Assembly Committees and other discussions that address people with disabilities. A number of OPDs have been involved in developing memorandums with government, petitions and policies, and they leverage this to enable peer-learning between OPDs.

In Nakuru County, for instance, the Persons with Disability Network and Development, a local OPD focusing on economic and social rights advocacy for people with disabilities, successfully campaigned for the development of a disability fund with a yearly budget allocation in which each ward received a sum of KES 500,000 (5000 USD). In Bungoma County, the Disability Empowerment Network, a local OPD, lobbied for inclusive employment for people with disabilities in both the private and public sector. Through petitions to the county government, 14 of the 336 village administrators recruited were people with disabilities. These efforts were also evident in the representation in schools' management boards.

UDPK take the lead in mobilising people with disabilities, OPDs, and other stakeholders at the national level. Supporting them and other OPDs to do so will continue growing disability representation across Kenya.



Source: SIM East Africa

## Programme and policy recommendations

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This section outlines key recommendations to strengthen the inclusion of young people with disabilities in education and employment. Focus is given to policy, programming, and future research.

### For policy developers

- Establish a system of monitoring the implementation of disability-related policies. Provide clarity on roles and functions.
- Increase funding for disability-inclusive programmes, including capacity-building for the National Council of Persons with Disabilities and OPDs, who are well-placed to support policy implementation and monitoring.
- Integrate people with disabilities into government-level decision-making positions, to ensure their voices are represented, and continue collaboration with OPDs in policy development practices.
- Collect, analyse, and make available, reliable disability-disaggregated data on education and employment to assess extent of disability-inclusion.

### For programmes and policy implementers

- Improve awareness on disability-inclusive education and employment practices. Include training for service providers, education institutions, employers, and people with disabilities themselves. Develop and grow disability support networks, such as the Kenya Business and Disability Network, to encourage peer-learning and support.
- Work with employers and organisations of people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities to improve access to employment opportunities.
- Provide sensitisation training about the value people with disabilities bring to the workplace, including stories of success and exposure to disability role models.
- Implement skills training for people with disabilities. Include opportunities for mentorship and work-based placements.
- Increase access of people with disabilities to agricultural funds and opportunities, including land ownership, seed and fertiliser, and where possible, guaranteed markets

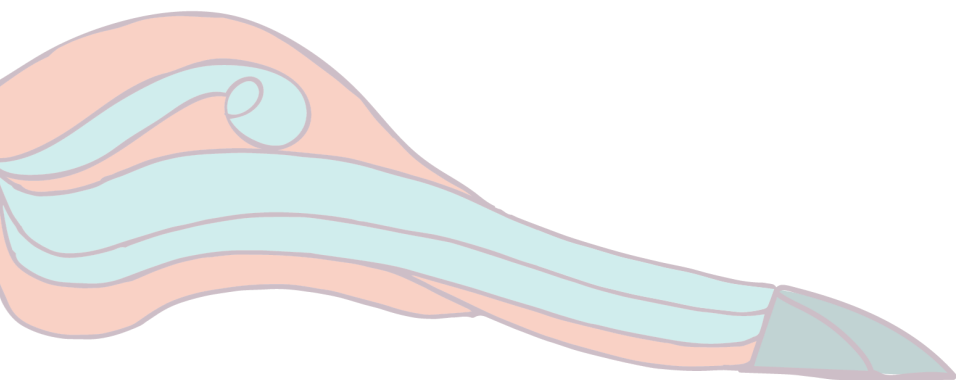


# Programme and policy recommendations

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## For researchers

1. **Explore lived experiences of youth with disabilities**
  - From the perspective of youth with disabilities, investigate the challenges, enablers, agency, and aspirations relating to education and work in Kenya. Specifically:
    - Experiences in skills training, mentorship, and other support to encourage readiness and participation in education and employment.
    - Access to assistive technology and digital skills as enablers to education and work
    - Transition through education pathways (e.g. from primary and secondary schools to vocational and tertiary education) and from education into employment.
    - Participation across the agricultural value chain, including acquiring capital and land.
    - Specific individual, institution, and system level challenges faced by girls/women with disabilities and youth with intellectual disabilities in accessing and progressing through education.
    - Experiences of participation in the development of programmes and policies.
2. **Explore experiences and perspectives of education providers and employers**
  - Explore perspectives and provisions on disability inclusion among teachers and management in mainstream secondary and tertiary education (including the extent and nature of training on disability inclusion within teacher training curriculum and continuing professional development) and employers.
3. **Evaluate the impact of interventions and programmes**
  - Provide evidence on 'what works' for strengthening livelihoods, education inclusion and to improve attitudes and reduce stigma towards disability
  - Rigorous outcome and process evaluations on the impact of programmes and interventions in these areas are needed. Priority interventions/programmes to evaluate should be determined collaboratively with OPDs, NGOs, and policymakers.



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## Appendix A: Methodology

This report drew from two main sources of data. First, a rapid on-line literature review was undertaken to identify relevant policy and programmes regarding disability and inclusion of youth with disabilities in education and employment in Kenya.

Next, in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with sixteen key informants to gain insights into the process, context and actors involved in selected policies and programmes as well as identify challenges, gaps, opportunities, and examples of best practise in relation to education and employment for young people with disabilities. In Kenya, the research had a particular focus on the sectors of agriculture and technology, selected in discussion with Mastercard Foundation.

Relevant key informants were identified through the document review and input from local partners, as well as through purposive sampling. Table 1 below provides a breakdown of participant characteristics.

**Table A1. Sample of Key Informants**

Key informant type	n
Government	4
Organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs)	4
NGOs	1
INGOs	3
Education providers	2
Employers	1
Total	15

Interviews were conducted in English by Emily Nyariki and Adrian Sakwa during May-June 2022. Topic guides for the interviews were developed in discussion with the wider project team, Mastercard Foundation and two Advisory groups comprising youth with disabilities based in Uganda and in Ghana. Prior to data collection, researchers participated in training workshops (jointly with other country teams) covering ethical protocols, interview techniques, maintaining data quality, and in-depth discussion of topic guides. These were pilot-tested, and researchers participated in feedback workshops after conducting at least one pilot interview.

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine as well as the Kenyatta National Hospital-University of Nairobi (KNH-UoN) [ERC-Ref P7/01/2022]. All participants were provided information about the study, and informed consent obtained (either signed or verbal recording) prior to the interview.

Interviews lasted between 40 and 60 minutes. Interviews were conducted face-to-face [12] or via phone/zoom [3] as convenient for the participant. All interviews were audio-recorded where consent was given.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim into English language for analysis. Researchers participated in an analysis workshop (jointly with other country teams) to discuss approach to coding and analysis. A coding scheme and codebook was developed based on study objectives and emerging themes. Transcripts were coded manually and analysed thematically.



## Appendix B: Table of employment and education programmes in Kenya

Programme	Implementers & Funders	Category and type of work	Target group	Region	Further details
Inclusion Works (2019 – 2022)	Sightsavers  Funded by FCDO	<p>Livelihoods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Aims to test models of inclusive employment practice and generate robust evidence. Includes the InBusiness project that supports micro-entrepreneurs through training, advocacy, and linking with business opportunities</li> <li>· Included in Kenya are soft skills training, IT skills development, work placement and the development of a disability business network</li> </ul>	<p>All Impairment types</p> <p>Working age</p>	National (also in Bangladesh, Kenya, Uganda)	Details <a href="#">here</a>
Innovation to inclusion: i2i (2019-2022)	Leonard Cheshire  Funded by FCDO	<p>Livelihoods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Aims to understand ‘what works’ to increase access for people with disabilities to get jobs in the private sector, and explore how social protection systems can better support this</li> </ul>	<p>All Impairment types</p> <p>Working age</p>	National (also in Bangladesh)	Details <a href="#">here</a>
Girls Education Challenge (2017-2022 )	Leonard Cheshire  Funded by FCDO	<p>Education:</p> <p>Aims to increase the educational and vocational opportunities of 2,260 girls with disabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Developing literacy and numeracy video learning materials adapted for children with disabilities to reach 5,000 children in 50 schools</li> <li>· Running 50 children’s clubs, reaching around 20,000 children, which encourage leadership and the sharing of experiences of girls with disabilities</li> <li>· Providing transportation and assistive learning devices to allow girls to attend school</li> <li>· Providing health assessments and psycho-social support to beneficiary girls</li> <li>· Assisting with school-going costs while also providing income generating activities to encourage households to be economically self-sufficient</li> <li>· Creating positive attitudes towards disability through community activities and parent support groups</li> <li>· Working groups with key government ministries to contribute to inclusive policies</li> </ul>	Girls with disabilities	Five counties within Lake Region: Kisumu East, Siaya, Homa Bay, Migori and Kuria East in the Lake Region	Detailed <a href="#">here</a>
The Global Labour Program – Inclusive Futures (2021 – 2026)	Collaboration of eight Kenyan and global organisations  Funded by USAID	<p>Livelihoods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Builds on UKAID funded Inclusive Futures work (part of Inclusion Works programme)</li> <li>· Aims to improve inclusion and labour rights for people working across supply and distribution chains</li> </ul>	<p>All Impairment types</p> <p>Focus particularly on women</p>	Unclear	Detailed <a href="#">here</a>

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