



# Annual Report 2021



The Hague Academy for  
local governance



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## WE ARE ABLE!

You are about to read the first We are Able! annual report. We are Able! is a five-year-programme that helps people with a disability achieve a sustainable, fully-fledged place in their community, so that they have greater food security. The project is intended to run from 2021 until 2026. Six organisations are working together: ZOA, African Disability Forum, SeeYou, VNG International, The Hague Academy for Local Governance and Leprosy Mission International.

We focus on people with disabilities who do not have access to basic services: people who are excluded. We aim to strengthen their voices and resilience, so that they can stand up for themselves. We involve them in legislation and policy, and we work together with local organisations and Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs). To promote dialogue between people with disabilities and authorities, we work with formal and informal authorities at the national and international level.

We connect with initiatives in the Netherlands to learn from their experiences. Furthermore, all the organisations deploy their own expertise. They strengthen the capacity of organisations of people with disabilities, local inclusion advisors, and advocacy groups. The project is financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the Power of Voices partnerships for strengthening civil society.

## SUMMARY SHEET

PI:	XXX2101
Project title:	We are Able!
Overall objective:	By 2025, through engagement with public authorities, people with disabilities and other excluded groups are successfully influencing laws, policies, practices and norms for improved food security for all. This takes place in six fragile and conflict-affected African countries, through resilient and capable local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs).
Project period:	01/01/2021 – 31/12/2025
Reporting period:	01/01/2021 – 31/12/2021
Date of report submission:	01/06/2022

## 2. CHANGES IN CONTEXT

Several changes in context and risks have been reported by various country teams. Risks of delays related to the coronavirus pandemic as well as political changes and instability were mentioned in all six countries; however, most changes or risks are more country-context specific. What follows is a brief per-country overview of changes and risks that have affected, or might still affect, implementation of the We are Able! programme.



Apart from risks associated with the coronavirus pandemic, there are climate-related challenges in Burundi's Buganda district (Cibitoke province). Delayed rainfall impacted farmers' harvests. While the delayed precipitation did not affect planning, it will likely result in reduced food production and consumption.



In DR Congo, the instability of institutions at provincial and national levels led to a change in government representatives. This impacted implementation of activities because relations with officials had to be rebuilt. Additionally, climatic and meteorological challenges negatively impacted the programme. Torrential rains and poor road conditions created accessibility issues which prevented certain activities from being carried out on the Bunyakiri axis.





Ethiopia's 2021 national election contributed to greater political instability within the country. The armed conflict between TPLF and the Federal Government severely affected programme implementation mainly due to the inaccessibility of implementation areas. Furthermore, the agreement process between ZOA and the Addis Ababa City Administration took until the end of December, leading to significant delays. The unstable political situation is considered a significant risk for the next implementation period as well.<sup>1</sup> The coronavirus pandemic and an increase in living costs are seen as potential causes for conflict and instability as well.



In South Sudan, a few risks identified during the implementation period affected the areas of operation and beneficiaries. Flooding affected parts of Makuach Payam and Kolnyang. People were displaced and accessibility to the project sites was hampered. Dikes were built by community members in some locations, but this could not provide full protection from the water in all locations. Additionally, insecurity in Anyidi Payam is of grave concern. There is a troubling spike in intercommunal violence, such as the abduction of women and children and cattle raiding.

1. More detailed information about the situation in Ethiopia related to the ongoing conflict and political instability can be found in the Freedom House Report 2022, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/ethiopia/freedom-world/2022>, last visited on April 6, 2022.

 Large political and socio-economic changes have been a major contextual challenge in Sudan. A military coup took place in October 2021. Although it was followed by an agreement in November to reinstate a civilian government, the political situation remains fragile. This also directly impacts the programme. In Gedaref, for instance, new senior officials were installed at all line ministries and the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC). In quarter one, the consortium was pressured by HAC to change one of the local implementing partners.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the internal political situation, the influx of large numbers of Ethiopian refugees has resulted in tensions, mainly in Gedarif state. These tensions may lead to conflicts that could hamper programme implementation in this area.

 Uganda's January 2021 national elections and frequent pandemic-related lockdowns caused delays in the implementation of project activities. The pandemic also negatively impacted access to food and livelihoods given the limitation of movement due to a ban on private and public transport. Additionally, there were substantial unplanned costs for hand-washing items, including soap and sanitizers.



2. It was possible to replace the implementing partner by a partner that was already on ZOA's assessment list of local NGO's. In this way severe impact from this unexpected event could be prevented.

## 3. PROJECT RESULTS

### ACTIVITIES PER PATHWAY

This section provides an overview of activities implemented in 2021. It starts with a description of select activities carried out in all or almost all WaA! project countries. These activities provide a good representation of the project in its entirety and illustrate the harmonized approach that is being taken. Needless to say, there were also activities specific to the context of individual countries. Highlights of these activities and some of the results are presented in this section as well.

In the first year of implementation, a large number of activities focussed on awareness raising. This was done at all levels and on a diversity of subjects relating to each of the three Pathways of Change. In the beginning of the year, awareness raising about the WaA! project took place in all countries, mostly in the form of workshops, launch events or community meetings. In Uganda, for example, the team organized eight meetings at the subcounty level to inform the communities about the WaA! project and its objectives. This was an opportunity for people with disabilities to share challenges pertaining to disability. During these meetings, subcounty leaders acknowledged the plights of persons with disabilities and they committed to supporting the project.

There were also numerous awareness-raising activities around the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD). During a training on this topic in Burundi it became clear that public authorities of – as well as people with disabilities in – the four districts were unaware of this legal framework.

It was reported that, as a result of the training, people with disabilities can now claim their rights and hold public authorities accountable. Moreover, the public authorities expressed their commitment to increase accessibility and budget for people with disabilities. The results of the awareness-raising activities contributed to all three Pathways of Change.

### PATHWAY 1: COMMUNITY MOBILISATION

The training of Disability Inclusion Facilitators (DIFs) was mentioned in most of the country reports and is strongly related to the awareness-raising campaigns described above. DIFs are often deployed to provide basic support to create a targeted and effective awareness-raising campaign. In South Sudan, DIFs supported and formed self-help groups for the most marginalized people with disabilities. This was an opportunity for them to assist each other and to further develop themselves.

## PATHWAY 2: STRENGTHENING OPDS AND CSOS

Several activities relating to the strengthening of OPDs and CSOs were implemented in all six countries. Organisational assessments led to the identification of capacity gaps which inspired training in organisation management and financial management skills. In addition, significant energy was invested in training CSOs and OPDs in networking and association building. In October 2021, OPDs from Gedaref locality visited CSOs in the West Galabat locality in Sudan. This helped OPD members better understand how to create cooperative associations and networks. Members learned how to identify potential challenges and spot existing opportunities for creating such groups.

## PATHWAY 3: ENGAGEMENT OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

In order to draw attention to legal frameworks already in place but not yet adhered to, activities were created to further engage authorities and encourage adherence. The previously mentioned UNCRPD is a noteworthy example. Training in inclusive governance was conducted in all six countries, usually in the form of Training of Trainers (ToT) by VNG International or The Hague Academy. In Uganda, for example, 16 participants (10 women and 6 men) were selected to participate in the ToT programme. The participants represented different stakeholders, including consortium partners, CSOs, organisations for people with disabilities and public authorities.



*Honorable William Kuol (centre), Minister of Gender, Child and Social Welfare during the State Annual Reflection Day's "We are Able!" Programme in Bor - Jonglei State, South Sudan.*

The table below provides 2021 activity highlights including some of the results. The list is by no means exhaustive; however, it shows the kind of activities the country teams have been involved with throughout the year.

Country	Pathway 1: Community mobilization	Pathway 2: Strengthening OPDs and CSOs	Pathway 3: Engagement of Public Authorities
Burundi	<p>158 disability inclusion <b>model households</b> were formed, trained and deployed. Through peer education, they sensitized other households with people with disabilities. Now there are 629 households in the provinces of Makamba and Cibitoke that sensitize other households to support people with disabilities.</p> <p>In four villages in the province of Makamba and Cibitoke, 121 households were selected to become Innovating Farmers (PI). They were <b>trained in the inclusive PIP (Plan Intégré du Paysan) approach</b> and agricultural techniques. They developed their own PIP – an integrated farm plan.</p>	<p>42 members of 16 OPDs and 4 CSOs were <b>trained in organisational management</b>. As a result, they started to develop statutory documents in order to become more structured and recognized at the district level. The 8 new OPDs were also trained in this theme.</p> <p>There was a need to facilitate the <b>creation of new OPDs at the village level</b>. 158 households were trained in the importance of association and organisational management. As a result, 8 new OPDs were created. They will play key roles in promoting PWD inclusivity within their communities.</p> <p>26 participants (17 men and 9 women) were <b>trained in lobby &amp; advocacy</b>. Ten participants (5 men and 5 women) have a disability. Many concepts were new to the participants as they had very little knowledge of lobby, advocacy and disability inclusion.</p>	<p><b>Awareness raising</b> of public authorities on <b>UNCRPD</b> and the localization of it (VNGI).</p> <p>A <b>capacity assessment of authorities and OPDs</b> (VNGI) showed that capacities are low to medium. Capacities to mobilize resources (human and financial) for their objective is generally low. Also, district authorities, CSOs and OPDs work in isolation and leadership remains underdeveloped. Training in organisational capacities is needed.</p> <p>17 selected trainers received 4 days of immersive ToT (Training of Trainers) offered by The Hague Academy (THA). The ToT focussed on adult learning methods. These newly acquired skills will support the ToT participants in delivering effective training to various audiences, including audiences comprised of people with disabilities.</p>
DR Congo	<p><b>New DPOs</b> were formed for community mobilization.</p> <p><b>CBST</b> group session have been organised.</p>	<p><b>Capacity building plans</b> were developed by the CSOs and DPOs. These plans covered areas such as organisational skills, legal skills, technical skills, financial administrative skills.</p>	<p>4-day <b>ToT in adult learning methods (THA)</b> for selected trainers. The selected trainers acquired skills to support them in the delivery of training to different audiences, including audiences comprised of people with disabilities.</p>

Country	Pathway 1: Community mobilization	Pathway 2: Strengthening OPDs and CSOs	Pathway 3: Engagement of Public Authorities
Ethiopia	<p>As a result of <b>awareness-raising activities</b>, persons with disabilities in the intervention areas of Ethiopia have become better aware of what is known as a social model of disability. This means they realize more and more that disability is a societal problem rather than an individual one and that remedies must focus on reducing barriers and promoting social change rather than medical cures (medical model) and practical assistance (charity model). Also, people with disabilities are now actively participating in many local associations (Edir, Equb and Kebele). Their participation within these associations reduced discrimination against people with disabilities.</p>	<p><b>New organisations/associations of persons with disabilities have been formed</b> at WaA! project implementation sites.</p> <p>WaA! project intervention also resulted in the <b>formation of a Federation of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities</b> at the Zonal level. Organisations for People with Disabilities (OPDs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are currently forming other networks as well.</p> <p><b>Local inclusion agendas</b> were promoted more than ever before by OPDs and CSOs. Main priorities under discussion within these organisations include the availability of legal and policy frameworks in relation to people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Government offices have begun to mainstream disability inclusion in their programmes as a result of the WaA! project's <b>lobbying and advocacy efforts</b>. In addition, government offices have altered their plans to take legal and policy framework implementation into account. Some of their activities were reframed to fit in with the WaA! project's goals. Discussions about how to put the UNCRPD into practice have also commenced. In each woreda's Children, Women and Social Affairs Office, a focal person was assigned to oversee the WaA! programme's execution. These focal persons help to ensure that the WaA! project is carried out in accordance with the project's objectives. They are also permanent members of the WaA! project's monthly Task Force (TF) meeting. Some government offices have provided free office space for WaA! team members.</p>

Country	Pathway 1: Community mobilization	Pathway 2: Strengthening OPDs and CSOs	Pathway 3: Engagement of Public Authorities
Sudan	<p><b>Three consultation workshops</b> were conducted in June 2021 (one in Khartoum and two in Gedarif) with key stakeholders. The main objectives were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Familiarize participants with the WaA! project.</li> <li>2. Learn from the experiences of stakeholders who implemented similar activities as WaA! such as lobby and advocacy, raising awareness of inclusion, food security, rights of PWDs and/or other disadvantaged groups.</li> <li>3. Based on outcomes of the baseline survey, identify priorities, target groups and strategies for awareness-raising activities.</li> <li>4. Tailor practical and context-sensitive package(s) for sensitizing the identified groups targeted by the project.</li> </ol> <p>The workshop was attended by 35 participants (13 women and 22 men) representing DPOs, CSOs, advocates, sponsoring ministry, state council for PWDs, local leaders, media (radio, TV and journalists), artists (poets, dramatists, singers and painters), local partner Action on Disability &amp; Development (ADD), ZOA and the Humanitarian Aid Committee (HAC).</p> <p><b>Awareness-raising campaigns</b> were based on the results of the above-mentioned workshops.</p>	<p>Two <b>awareness-raising sessions</b> focussing on <b>the registration and legalization of CSOs were conducted</b> in two targeted localities (Al-Fashaga and Eastern Galabat). The sessions were attended by 874 participants (567 men and 307 women. Notably, 111 participants were PWDs. These sessions were designed and facilitated to support the establishment of new CSOs and DPOs.</p> <p><b>Management training for OPDs</b> were conducted in order to empower these organisations to work in a more structured and effective way.</p> <p>In October 2021, a <b>Food Security &amp; Disability Inclusion training session</b> was held for Media Coalition members (27 participants, 14 women and 13 men). The goal was to increase the knowledge of media and art professionals in order to empower them to effectively advocate for the rights of PWDs to food security, nutrition and livelihoods.</p>	<p>In Q4, the team arranged <b>meetings with the six targeted Gedarif state localities</b>; the Director General of Local Authorities was involved in the meetings. These were open discussion meetings focussing on challenges and situation analysis. An integrated report was produced with recommendations to be considered at the local level.</p> <p>VNG International participated in the <b>International Day of Persons with Disabilities</b>. The Blind Center in Khartoum State organized activities that reflected our efforts in the areas of awareness raising, inclusion, community participation and building CSO programmes.</p>

Country	Pathway 1: Community mobilization	Pathway 2: Strengthening OPDs and CSOs	Pathway 3: Engagement of Public Authorities
South Sudan	<p><b>Disability inclusion workshops were created and conducted for staff.</b> This led to a better understanding of the bigger picture and the importance of their role within it.</p> <p><b>State level reflection meetings focussing on inclusive food security and livelihoods (FSL) were created and facilitated.</b> Participants reportedly experienced this as an eye opener. Meetings emphasized the need for wider sensitization of key stakeholders and government officials regarding inclusive FSL in Jonglei state.</p> <p><b>Radio talk shows / Inclusive Messaging and Citizen Rights and Responsibilities:</b> On December 3rd, 2021, a radio talk show was organized and broadcasted during International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The show highlighted the importance of disability inclusion and the participation of PWDs in public life and employment. Notably, Radio Jonglei has an estimated reach of 60,000 listeners.</p>	<p><b>We supported OPDs and CSOs with a focus on disability advocacy and disability inclusion at the state level. This was done on a quarterly basis.</b> In 2021, Light for the World (SeeYou) partnered with African Disability Forum (ADF) to conduct a disability inclusion campaign during International Day of Persons with Disabilities in Jonglei state. More than 3,000 PWDs (estimated 2,100 women and children and 900 men) were reached with messages promoting disability inclusion, freedom of speech, right to employment opportunities and other pertinent matters.</p> <p><b>We created and conducted an organisational capacity assessment and expanded the capacity of 5 OPDs.</b> Light for the World (SeeYou) and ADF organized a meeting with OPDs in order to show ways the umbrella Joint Donor Office can best be structured and strengthened. The aim was to create and support a strong network in Jonglei State and beyond and to lobby and advocate for - and with - PWDs within the community.</p>	<p><b>Political Economy Analysis:</b></p> <p>In Q3 of the project year, a Political Economy Analysis (PEA) was conducted. The assessment data collected targeted Public Authorities at the state level, local government, and potential local partners participating in project implementation. Findings of the PEA were incorporated in baseline part II.</p> <p><b>Conduct training needs analysis of public authorities, CSOs and DPOs.</b></p> <p>Two separate Training Needs Analysis (TNA) workshops were conducted. The first workshop targeted 9 Public Authority participants (8 male, 1 female) representing the state, county and payam level, while the second workshop trained 13 participants (10 male, 3 female) from project partners JCSN and JDO.</p> <p><b>4-day ToT focussed on adult learning methods (THA)</b> for 16 selected trainers who acquired skills that will support them in the delivery of trainings to different audiences, including people with disabilities (PWDs).</p>

Country	Pathway 1: Community mobilization	Pathway 2: Strengthening OPDs and CSOs	Pathway 3: Engagement of Public Authorities
Uganda	<p>In 24 parishes, NUDIPU <b>mobilised and strengthened communities with the iSave programme</b>, an Inclusive Economic Empowerment Model. A total of 880 participants (464 females and 416 males) attended these meetings. In 25 newly formed iSave groups, 390 participants (268 females and 122 males) were <b>trained in 5 core iSave modules</b>. The groups adopted their constitutions and are now fully <b>registered as CSOs</b> within their corresponding sub counties.</p> <p>Light for the World (SeeYou) <b>trained and certified 14 disability inclusion facilitators in a disability academy</b> for six months. These individuals will introduce and implement WaAI projects. The DIFs supported the mapping of over 140 CSOs, OPDs, land structures and local government units in West Nile and Acholi.</p>	<p><b>12 CSOs and OPDs received disability inclusion training</b> in both regions to encourage meaningful participation of PWDs in decision-making and livelihood activities.</p> <p>NUDIPU conducted a five-day training for 12 board members (7 males and 5 females) in the Omoro district from November 8th - 12th 2021. Participants were <b>trained in the roles of the district union (DU) executives</b>. <b>Training focussed on financial management</b>, record keeping, accountability and reporting, internal controls, and risk assessment tools.</p> <p>In order to strengthen OPDs, NUDIPU and consortium members organized <b>democratic elections</b> for PWDs in the 2 Districts. The general assemblies further enable <b>strong, legitimate and capable OPDs</b> to lead their own agenda for lobby and advocacy. The leadership of the District Union is composed of all categories of disabilities as per NUDIPU General Assembly guidelines.</p>	<p>4-day <b>ToT focussed on adult learning methods (THA)</b> for 17 selected trainers who acquired skills that will support them in the delivery of trainings to different audiences, including PWDs.</p> <p>As part of the initiative to raise awareness of national and international disability legislation, VNGI, in collaboration with NUDIPU and the District / City Unions of Arua, Yumbe and Nwoya, conducted a <b>3-day training for the local government</b>. <b>Training focussed on disability inclusion</b> and the government's obligation to localize the existing legal frameworks within their plans and budgets. Training focussed on understanding disability inclusion and the requirements for reasonable accommodations for PWDs within the existing legal frameworks. 63 participants (43 male and 20 female) aimed to increase district leader's, DPO's and CSO's understanding of the inclusion and application of legislation.</p>

## ACTIVITIES AT WORKING GROUP LEVEL

### MEAL AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUPS

The MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning) and KM (Knowledge Management) working groups have been collaborating on several topics and have held joint meetings throughout 2021. We are pleased to share the partnership's activity highlights and noteworthy achievements.

- During the first two quarters of the year, the MEAL working group organized and oversaw the implementation of the baseline study. This consumed a significant amount of the MEAL working group's time. However, it was viewed as time well spent, as MEAL working group developed guidelines for their alliance with the KM working group, the group responsible for creating the Nairobi knowledge event.
- Spearheaded by VNG International, KM working group supported the development of additional basket indicators specifically related to public authorities under pathway 3.
- The working group organised a regional learning and sharing event in Nairobi to ensure knowledge is shared within WaA! and between WaA! and its partners with the goal of strengthening partnerships and creating better development results.

### LOBBY ADVOCACY WORKING GROUP

We are pleased to share highlights of L&A (Lobby & Advocacy) working group's 2021 achievements and activities below.

- 4 internal workshops were organised to promote the exchange of information and to develop joint WaA! advocacy strategies.
- L&A workshops organized in 2021 include the following: an ADF workshop on Ratification of the African Disability Rights Protocol; two workshops educating local governments about We are Able!, PWDs and OPDs during an annual conference of VNGI's 'Iedereen doet mee'-programme; a series of exchange sessions on disability inclusion for the Strengthening Civil Society consortia; a presentation by SeeYou in Uganda on disability mainstreaming during Power of Voices' kick-off workshops by the Dutch embassy in Uganda early 2021.
- Active engagement, participation and presentation of We are Able! and local inclusion agenda at different events, forums and networks: the EUCord; The Food Systems Summit; the United Cities and Local Governments; the Adopt an SDG campaign by Building Change; the Leave No One Behind Platform of Partos; the gender and inclusion lobby of WO=MEN.
- Initiate contact and regular communication with key and relevant stakeholders: the African Union; Dutch municipalities; Presentation of Inclusive SDG2 'Zero hunger' to parliamentarian Jan Klink (VVD), MakeWay, Right2Grow, the Netherlands Food Partnership (NFP) and the Food4All network, MOFA and other Power of Voices consortiums.

The L&A working group's most important conclusion from the year 2021 is the need to start prioritizing L&A's focus on African Disability Rights Protocol. However, it is clear it will take quite some time to get municipalities to engage. Entry points for this are available (e.g., the World Urban Forum) and it is important that they are used. It has proven challenging to connect the different activities of the different partners and to really work together. However, the L&A working group is evolving as a coordinating mechanism.

## **COMMUNICATION WORKING GROUP & FINANCE WORKING GROUP**

The communication and finance working groups provided important support in 2021, each on their own topic. Guidelines were provided and hands-on assistance was delivered. The communication working group made important decisions about branding and developed a visual identity, including a website ([www.weareable.ngo](http://www.weareable.ngo)) and social media presence.

## **CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP**

The capacity working group has put great effort into getting the Shift of Power approach off the ground. After developing a Shift of Power tool, five of the six countries participated in a Shift of Power workshop. This resulted in preparations for an actual handover of power to be put on the agenda of the Alliance.

It was concluded after the discussion held at the Nairobi regional learning event that it is important to take voiced concerns and hesitations seriously. They have been listed and can be used as a monitoring and learning tool on Shift of Power. Furthermore, country coordinators need to be coached to increase knowledge and understanding of Shift of Power. This will enable them to translate it into an effective process with clear roadmaps which include how and when they can engage in a constructive discussion with and manage expectations of partners, OPDs and CSOs.

## BENEFICIARIES

Presented below are the overall numbers of planned and reached beneficiaries.

### PLANNED

Gender	Age 0-4	Age 5-17	Age 18-64	Age 65+	Total
Male	6	2,050	9,045	314	11,415
Female	3	1,907	7,609	454	9,973
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3,957</b>	<b>16,654</b>	<b>768</b>	<b>21,388</b>

### REACHED

Gender	Age 0-4	Age 5-17	Age 18-64	Age 65+	Total
Male	6	73	7,928	314	8,321
Female	3	61	6,402	454	6,921
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>14,331</b>	<b>768</b>	<b>15,242</b>

The difference between the two can for the most part be explained by the Ethiopia numbers. Numerous activities that were planned for 2021 have been postponed for implementation until 2022.

## A REVIEW OF PARTNERSHIPS

### BURUNDI

Collaboration with all partners has been good. UPHB and ZOA work closely together with the teams based at ZOA offices in the Makamba and Cibitoke provinces. When activities are organized by VNGI, for example, the staff helps with preparations by communicating the invitations. The Netherlands-based partners, TLM and THA, have smoothly and effectively organized activities with UPHB and VNGI, their partners in Burundi. The collaboration has been positive.

Communication between TLM, Enablement and UPHB was challenging initially, as the roles of each partner were not clear to everyone. Communication improved with TLM's and Enablement's visit to Burundi and additional meetings between TLM and the coordinators in Burundi. The Country Programme Steering Committee (CPSC) meets monthly, which helps with necessary communication on action plans and strategies. This ensures mutual learning and makes it easier to benefit from each other's expertise.

The relationship with the authorities is positive. In order to avoid a possible negative perception of the WaA! programme, it is important to involve the authorities in the training cycles and all other important events as well as communications.

## **DR CONGO**

The DRC team faced some challenges because of the late start of FENAPHACO (Fédération des associations des personnes handicapées du Congo) and difficult underlying relationships. Fortunately, over time, the situation improved. Most exchanges take place during coordination meetings; however, members also communicate outside of meetings to discuss timely issues regarding the implementation of complementary project activities.

Many activities are carried out jointly, especially those targeting the same outcome. Relations with the local authorities have been positive from the very start of the project. The relationship was made official by the signing of MOUs (memorandums of understanding) with the various decentralized entities which are the chiefdoms. These authorities are often present during activities carried out by members of the consortium at the level of the chiefdoms, territories and the province.

## **ETHIOPIA**

At the Harar field office (based on the agreement entered into with each co-implementing partner: ADF, TLM, VNGI and THA) the entire team works together and shares the same compound, office and logistics. This greatly enhances efficient collaboration.

The most important stakeholders have been identified in a stakeholder mapping exercise. Accordingly, they are involved throughout programme planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting phases. Both at Oromia and Addis Ababa areas, ZOA and all consortium partners have created a smooth relationship with the identified stakeholders. Monitoring and reflection workshops are conducted regularly with all programme signatory bodies. ZOA and all other WaA! consortium partners are actively participating in respective UN clusters, networks and other technical working groups both at woreda and zonal levels.

## **SOUTH SUDAN**

Under ZOA's leadership, all Consortium Partners have collaborated well. Each partner collaborated with more than three local partners in the implementation of project activities across the three Payams. Partnership assessments were conducted with each partner, focussing on their internal governance capacities and support structures. They were also assessed on their ability to deliver programmatic quality and on their financial systems. The assessments resulted in capacity-building plans. The consortium also maintains a close relationship with the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare. Coordination with other (FSL) partners for this project can be further improved.

## SUDAN

Collaboration among the implementing partners has been well established and all partners coordinate well with all project stakeholders. Nevertheless, it has been a struggle to convince local authorities to accept local implementing partners. Due to changes in the political and administrative structures, our two national implementing partners have faced challenges. Women with Disabilities Association (ADD) and Maan Organisation (ZOA) allegedly had members belonging to the Al-Bashir regime. ADD and ZOA were requested to replace these partners. After numerous meetings with the relevant parties, the issues were resolved. ZOA has agreed to work with Al-Twaki Organisation, a new local implementing partner, and ADD managed to convince the HAC commissioner that Women with Disabilities Association had no members belonging to the Al-Bashir regime.

## UGANDA

Overall, collaboration among the consortium partners has been good, especially during joint planning, reviewing activities and coordinating action in the field. The collaboration's key challenge revolves around communication gaps and the timely sharing of information and updates in the shared folder.

The Consortium Partners and District Unions of PWDs have continued to build their working relationship with the public authorities and government structures at the local and district level. Arua City and Yumbe District Local Government have positively engaged PWD representatives in their annual budget conferences 2022/23. Their participation in the training and awareness raising of district leaders on disability inclusion shows their commitment to growing partnership and political will.

## THE NETHERLANDS

The cooperation at HQ level is going well. We know where and how to find each other, and we share our successes and challenges. Staff turnover at HQ level particularly affected the communication working group. ADF is always present online while the other consortium members have the advantage of meeting each other in person. In the coming year, we would like to invest more in mutual relationships and meetings. Trust is the basis for good relationships and healthy cooperation. Together we have concluded that the governance structure is quite heavy, and we want to handle this differently in the coming years. It is a challenge to find an effective and efficient way of exchanging information between the countries and the working groups. After our meeting in Kenya, we now know how to find each other and how to better communicate with each other.

## 4. PROGRESS TOWARDS TARGETS

### LESSONS LEARNED

The hotel in which the We are Able! learning event was organized was virtually inaccessible for persons in wheelchairs. Even though the owners of such venues may claim that their spaces are accessible, it is always preferable to assess this yourself, or even better, have it assessed by a person living with a disability. In this case, it was used as an opportunity to sensitize non-disabled participants about how unaware they often are about physical barriers leading to the inaccessibility of venues.

In South Sudan, it was reported that partners' unrealistic expectations, claims and demands to own the project led to the delay of project implementation. Negotiations took time for partners to enter into Partnership Funding agreements. In addition to causing delays, it also lowered morale and motivation for the implementing staff on the ground. Although this is not a new phenomenon, it was a reminder that expectation management is easy to overlook. Expectation management must be addressed in preparatory sessions with partners in a structured way.

Including both local authorities and persons with disabilities in trainings and meetings proved to be of greater value than anticipated: particularly in the informal moments of meetings (breaks, etc.). For example, (informal) meetings encouraged mutual understanding because they provided an opportunity to share experiences and discuss barriers. A lesson learned is that in such meetings ample time should be reserved for informal moments such as coffee/tea breaks and/or refreshers.

Identifying collective opportunities for different working groups, such as L&A and Communication WG, has been challenging. This has been particularly evident in terms of engagement on the use and sharing of the best available evidence, experiential knowledge to achieve higher quality operations and create greater visibility for WaA! projects. Through dialogue during the regional event, a promising coordinating/cooperation mechanism is evolving.

### PROGRESS ON THE QUANTITATIVE KEY INDICATORS AND QUALITATIVE MEASURES

#### HIGHLIGHTS OF PROGRESS ON INDICATORS 2021

In all countries a selection of the basket indicators was measured. Methodologically the same tools were used as during the baseline study. The values of basket indicators SCS5, 6 and 7 as well as WaA!5 are presented in a separate overview. It became clear that after one year of implementation there are already important outcomes, for instance the number of the of OPDs/CSOs that are now included in strategic partners' programmes have significantly increased. Nevertheless, it is realistic to say that the majority of the expected outcomes are likely to

materialize later on in the programme. During the Mid-Term Review all the basked indicators will be measured once more. It is anticipated that after the implementation of the MTR a more accurate picture will be provided about the progress towards the targets.

Similarly, values for output indicators were measured and reported in the IATI registry. These values show that much work has been done and important outputs have been reached. For example, in the DR Congo programme alone, 59 disabled persons, or representatives of households with persons with a disability, enrolled in a Community Based Socio Therapy group. In Ethiopia, 52 CSOs have been trained on lobbying and advocacy and 13 new for a were established for dialogue between government and CSOs. These outputs give confidence in the future of the program and are an indication that the outcome values will also increase in the coming years.

## 5. REFLECTIONS ON THE THEORY OF CHANGE

It is too early to make general statements about the validity of assumptions in the Theory of Change at the overall level. For many of the assumptions at the country level however, there is evidence that they are valid. In Burundi, for example, there is already evidence that awareness of the rights of persons with disability at the community leads to different behaviour. They have started to sensitize other actors. They have demanded a school director to allow children with disabilities in his school. In South Sudan it is reported that Public authorities have an interest in improving their performance, their governance mechanisms, norms and attitudes to increase their legitimacy. In other countries similar evidence is becoming available, leading to the conclusion that after the first year there is no adaptation of the Theory of Change needed.

## 6. CROSSCUTTING THEMES

In Burundi, the position of women in their households is – and will continue to be - strengthened with the PIP approach. As the vision and planning needs to be elaborated upon with all household members together, women provide their input as well. Often, they have a better idea of the needs of the households and as such their input is of great value. The same applies to youth as they are also included in the elaboration of the vision and planning of the household. Notably, youth with disabilities are also reached through this approach. Involvement of women from local authorities is more difficult as the selection is based on position. The same approach is used in DR Congo for the fight against climate change. Th PIP will include, among other things, the reforestation of household plots.

In Ethiopia, the programme has given more emphasise to youth with disabilities in order to get them full access to basic economic and socio-political activities/facilities in the programme

areas. Accordingly, the programme capacitates youth, especially IDPs, by organizing them into self-help groups for better livelihoods. Similar activities have been employed in Uganda, South Sudan and Sudan.

## 7. SUSTAINABILITY

### BURUNDI

An exit strategy has not been formulated for WaA! yet. This needs to receive attention. Fortunately, the following activities and approaches ensure a certain degree of sustainability. Firstly, the training of (local) trainers (ToT) contributes to the sustainability of the programme, as trainers can continue to sensitize and train other local actors. The same applies to the strengthening of capacities of OPDs and CSOs. However, to have a long-term effect, a strategy needs to be developed for the period after the project has ended.

The use of the PIP approach has proven itself to be a sustainable approach as households elaborate a long-term vision and plan for themselves. This has positive long-term effects on the development of these households. Lastly, sensitizing the public authorities and concretely working with them on the Local Inclusion Agenda will have a long-term effect as it changes mindsets and practices even after the project has ended.

### DRC

Solid foundations are established for the sustainability of project actions in the beneficiary communities. Stakeholders have been associated and involved in the whole process from the baseline analysis, the various studies and evaluations and in the implementation of the project. The annual evaluation provides guidelines to follow in order to correct deviations known so far.

### ETHIOPIA

To sustain positive impacts of the programme, participation of the local communities, target beneficiaries and other stakeholders are ensured at all levels. This is done during planning, implementation, monitoring and reflection/reporting processes that are also empowering the local capacity through time. Similarly, the programme has capacity-building interventions as a core component. Hence, the local government, target groups, CSOs and DPOs are becoming empowered through developing an ownership mentality to ensure sustainability.

Currently, DPOs are institutionalized by forming their own 'Federation' at zonal level which is now enabling them to have power and strong influence to voice issues of the voiceless persons with disabilities at higher levels. Likewise, gender and climate-sensitive activities are planned and implemented with the full engagement of respective government bodies and targeted community groups to ensure sustainability mechanisms.

## **SOUTH SUDAN**

The selection of the Disability Inclusion Facilitators (DIFs) in the project locations of Anyidi, Kolnyang and Makuach is a clear indication of project sustainability and institutionalisation. Since DIFs are members of their communities they are empowered to lobby and advocate on behalf of PWDs.

The formation of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) out of the good will of the caregivers/parents of the PWDs allows humble space for the group members to continue to advocate on behalf of - and lobby for - PWDs within their communities. This will shape the image of PWDs within communities since their caregivers will share positive things about them and encourage them to participate in community affairs regarding issues that concern them.

Successful collaboration with the State ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare enforces formulation of laws and policies that support PWDs in the communities.

## **UGANDA**

The sustainability strategy is embedded within the approaches to support the targeted beneficiaries. These include the iSave model, the Integrated farm approach and the Shift of Power concept. During 2021, a number of activities utilised these approaches. These will be further consolidated with time as local structures are strengthened and capacity is created to support their implementation. The iSave model is a good example of a sustainability strategy for PWDs and their families. The existence of DU structures is one of the key aspects that is essential for the sustainability of the knowledge to guide with the continuity of the partnerships established as part of the consortium. Enhanced capacity of local leaders with disabilities, such as elected PWDs councillors, is another positive aspect that will influence the development process to adopt participation of PWDs, accountability, non-discrimination and application of legal frameworks to enhance inclusion.

The offer of the land in Omoro and Nwoya District will help to maintain visibility and coordinate disability interventions in the districts. This calls for all consortium partners to come together and support fundraising initiatives for the development of the land offered by the district leadership.

## **8. REVIEW OF THE LEARNING PLAN**

In collaboration with country coordination teams in Ethiopia, Uganda and DRC, the Knowledge Management working group supported the design and implementation of scoping studies aimed at exploring the different notions/assumptions/theories of change that guide intervention practices. Together with local consultants and the lead consultant from Radboud University, KM working group drafted a policy brief highlighting issues requiring further research to strengthen the learning plan and We are Able! intervention practices.

For the full version and summary of the policy brief, see [www.weareable.ngo/en/publicaties](http://www.weareable.ngo/en/publicaties)



## 9. STORIES

### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ODUPED IN UGANDA

*Christopher Ojok, Chairman of the Board of ODUPeD, shares:*



ODUPeD is conducting community sensitization in Omoro.

“In September 2021, NUDIPU supported PWDs in Omoro district by helping them form a District Union (DU). ODUPeD was legally constituted in a General Assembly Meeting and is now fully registered with the Omoro DLG. It has the mandate to coordinate interventions targeting PWDs at local and national levels and to advocate for the rights of PWDs in Omoro. The district gave the DU

2 acres of land to construct offices and to run income-generating activities. The sub counties in which we have iSave groups have committed to prioritizing iSave groups within Parish Development Model activities and Disability Grants.”

“The Omoro DU conducted 10 parish dissemination meetings to inform PWDs and local leaders of iSave methodology, in which 493 participants (273 females, 220 males) were reached and 12 iSave groups were formed. PWDs will now be able to address income poverty and food insecurity. The ODUPeD board was trained in financial management, leading to the development of Accounting Policy and Procedure Manual. Board members were trained in disability inclusion as well as legal and policy frameworks supporting the rights of PWDs. The Union also participated in profiling PWDs with disabilities in Omoro. The DU has 7 staff, office space and a motorbike to reach the villages. The board can reach out to many PWDs, engage more often with the district and other CSOs to ensure that the rights of PWDs are respected and promoted in all sectors.”

### THE STORY OF IMANI CHRISTIAN, VILLAGE HEMBE À BITALE (KALEHE)

*Imani Christian from Village Hembe à Bitale (Kalehe, DR Congo), shares:*

“My name is Christian Imani, and I am 30 years old. I am married to Ombeni Cizungu and we have three children. I was born without a disability. My problems started when I fell from a tree around the age of 14. Indeed, my family being poor, my father could not bear my illness and he left us in 2006. My mother could not therefore offer me quality care or pay my school fees.



I opened a shop that helps me take care of my family and I participate in community meetings with others. This prompted me to apply when my village was called upon to appoint community leaders responsible for raising awareness of Rehabilitation in Community Base (RCB) and the community trusted me. Since September 2021, I have had the opportunity to participate in a training course organized by TLM on RCB. This is how I educate people with disabilities so they understand that their condition should not prevent them from participating like others in community life and that improving the living conditions of People Living with Disabilities (PLWD) depends upon the personal commitment of PLWDs and the community.”

## **THE BIRTH OF OPDS FEDERATION AT EAST-HARARGHE OROMIA ZONE**

East Haraghe Oromia zone is one of the zones of Oromia region with a total population number of 3.8 million. The zone has 22 woredas (districts) and two city administrations having a total of 10,956 persons with disabilities (6,484 male and 4,472 female) registered and identified as member of 62 associations of Persons Living with Disabilities. Although there is a federation at regional level (in Oromia) with a high number of PLWDs and a vast geographical area, it was difficult for PLWDs to make their voices heard.

As a result, the representation of PLWDs in the zonal level was difficult when compared to areas in the eastern part of the country such as Harari region and Dire Dawa city administration with relatively small populations and OPDs. The WaA! programme made remarkable efforts on initiating the establishment of the federation and supporting its process through engaging all implementing partners and stakeholders on the ground.

Based on collective efforts made by ZOA, its co-partners and the Labor and Social Affairs office of East-Hararghe Oromia zone, the OPDs federation was established on November 11, 2021. It was a good opportunity to lead and organize the work of documenting quality data of persons with disabilities and to balance the relationship between government stakeholders and NGOs working on the issue. During the establishment of the federation, OPDs selected their representatives. This was the first step to exercise the concept of accountable leadership. Also, PLWDs had unprecedented access to see each other and to network among existing and newly formed OPDs during the workshop.

In addition, the process of selecting leaders of the OPDs Federation was an empowering event where candidates presented their vision and strategic plan for the OPDs federation. Workshop participants valued the experience tremendously and enjoyed learning from one another. Currently, the OPDs federation is fully participating in monthly task force meetings by representing the four woredas of the WaA! project site. We are pleased to report they now have full legality to represent and be the collective voice of the East-Hararghe Oromia Zone PLWDs.

## 10. FINANCES

We are 33 per cent behind our budget (actuals 5M, budget 7.6M) due to the late start of activities. The coronavirus pandemic played a role, as well as the war in Ethiopia and a coup in Sudan. In the last quarter, expenditures were almost at budget level, indicating the programme is now running at full power. Furthermore, our consortium partner African Disability Forum (ADF), enhanced their capacity quickly; however, they were not operating at their maximum ability until the end of the year. They performed activities in Burundi, DR Congo, Ethiopia and Uganda, but did not succeed in appointing an ADF-Member in Sudan and South Sudan until the end of the year. Although the under expenditure was 54 per cent, we were able to successfully create a Capacity Development Plan. This will enable ADF to become a stable and mature organisation capable of sustaining the WaA! programme.

### ANNEX I: TEMPLATE FOR REPORTING ON BASKET INDICATORS

Code	Indicator	Baseline value <sup>3</sup>	Value 2021	Target 2021	Overall target	Remarks
SCS2	The number of laws, policies and norms/attitudes blocked, adopted, or improved for sustainable and inclusive development.		N/A for 2021			
SCS3	The number of times OPDs/CSOs succeeded in creating space for CSO demands and positions through agenda setting, influencing the debate and/or creating space to engage.		N/A for 2021			
SCS4	The number of advocacy initiatives carried out by OPDs/CSOs for, by or with their membership/constituency.		N/A for 2021			
SCS5	The number of OPDs/CSOs with increased Lobby and Advocacy capacities.	0	10			
SCS6	The number of OPDs/CSOs included in Strategic Partner's programmes.	38	44			
SCS7	The number of OPDs/CSOs with improved links to constituencies.	0	11			
SCS8	The percentage of surveyed women and girls who reported improved social inclusion in their communities.		N/A for 2021 <sup>4</sup>			
WaA!5	Reduced percentage households with a Food Consumption Score (WFP-indicator) < 35* in households with persons with disabilities.		14,9%			
WaA!6	Proportion of total adult population with disabilities with secure tenure rights to land (a) with legally recognized documentation, and (b) who perceive their rights to land as secure by sex and type of tenure.		N/A for 2021			
WaA!7	The number of Public Authorities with an improved LIA-score.					

<sup>3</sup> Baseline value can be copied from the Table on p. 11 of the final baseline report.

<sup>4</sup> N/A for 2021 means that the values are only measured at mid-term and end-term.

## ANNEX II: FINANCE REPORT

### BuZa Annual Financial Progress Report 2021

#### 1. Annual report by Budgetline

Country	(All)			
Category	Budgetlines BuZa	Budget 2021	Actual 2021	Actual/Budget %
<b>I. Direct staff costs</b>	I-A Staff costs	469,864	465,233	99%
	I-B. Local staff costs	1,386,757	1,092,409	79%
	I-C. Consultants and advisers	139,240	91,866	66%
<b>I. Direct staff costs-Total</b>		<b>1,995,861</b>	<b>1,649,508</b>	<b>83%</b>
<b>II. Other direct programme costs</b>	II-A. Activity costs	3,506,079	1,901,202	54%
	II-B. Costs of consortium partners	206,508	192,961	93%
	II-C. Activity-related travel costs	299,512	213,767	71%
	II-D. Project office costs (if applicable)	345,102	233,416	68%
	II-E. Equipment and investment costs	442,358	372,647	84%
	II-F. Monitoring, evaluation and auditing	377,377	235,192	62%
<b>II. Other direct programme costs-Total</b>		<b>5,176,936</b>	<b>3,149,184</b>	<b>61%</b>
<b>III. Overheads/indirect costs</b>		416,063	302,225	73%
<b>IV. Contingency</b>		25,036	0	0%
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>7,613,895</b>	<b>5,100,917</b>	<b>67%</b>

#### 2. Annual report by Country

Country	Budget 2021	Actual 2021	Actual/Budget%
BDI	834,988	558,317	67%
DRC	1,214,102	975,251	80%
ETH	1,282,839	824,950	64%
SDN	1,176,469	711,500	60%
SSD	992,760	557,126	56%
UGD	1,144,730	778,181	68%
NLD	968,007	695,592	72%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7,613,895</b>	<b>5,100,917</b>	<b>67%</b>

#### 3. Annual Report by Pathway

Budgetlines BuZa	II-A. Activity Country		
Sub-budget-lines consortium	Budget 2021	Actual 2021	Actual/Budget%
II-A.1 Pathway 1 Community Mobilization	707,146	483,075	68%
II-A.2 Pathway 2 Strengthening CSOs and D	768,075	357,929	47%
II-A.3 Pathway 3 Engaged Public Authorities	2,030,857	1,060,198	52%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3,506,079</b>	<b>1,901,202</b>	<b>54%</b>

nb: allocating all other budgetlines over the pathways would be a mathematical prorata allocation exercise which would not give more insight into the pathways performance, so we prefer to show the Activity budgetline only.