

Disability-Inclusive Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response:

A guide for state institutions in Uganda

Supported by

The Republic of Uganda
Ministry of Gender, Labour
and Social Development



Sightsavers

vers

ssion

ernational
orking with
eloping
minate
ness and
f



Sightsavers promotes a disability-inclusive response to gender-based violence.

Contents

About this document	05
Using this guide	10
01 Attitudes and behaviours	15
02 Communication and Information	25
03 Accessible Services	29
04 Systems and Processes	37
Endnotes	44
More Information and Resources	45

About Sightsavers

Sightsavers is an international nongovernmental organisation based in the United Kingdom. Our vision is of a world where no one is blind from avoidable causes, and where persons with disabilities can participate equally in society.

www.sightsavers.org



Sightsavers gender-based violence workshop in Uganda, May, 2023.

About this document

Introduction

As part of our social inclusion strategy, Sightsavers is committed to working with partners to address gender-based violence (GBV). We focus particularly on ensuring that GBV prevention and response services are inclusive of women, girls, men and boys with disabilities in all their diversity to ensure gender-transformative change.¹

Women and girls with disabilities are at an increased risk of GBV and are less likely to report violations due to multiple barriers. These include negative stereotyping, stigma and discriminatory attitudes, economic costs, inaccessible communication and information, inaccessible public spaces and transport, and incomplete or ineffective **policy implementation**. Although 18% of women and girls have a disability,² women and girls with disabilities are often absent from laws, policies and programmes about GBV.

Sightsavers held a workshop in 2023 with a range of stakeholders involved in GBV prevention and response in Uganda where we learned about the barriers to accessing and providing disability-inclusive services. Workshop participants also **produced a set of recommendations** for addressing these barriers and shared the need for practical tools to support this work.

This guide has been designed to help state institutions ensure that their work on GBV prevention and response is inclusive of persons with disabilities in all their diversity. It is based on the recommendations that emerged from the stakeholder workshop and it has been validated by the women and girls with disabilities involved. In this guide, state institutions include Parliament, government ministries and departments, and the services they are responsible for, such as healthcare and law enforcement.

To find out more about increased risk of GBV visit tinyurl.com/3sb6f4v4

To find out more about the workshop visit tinyurl.com/4km2fjk8

Disability and gender-based violence

What is disability?

The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)** was created to improve attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities around the world. The convention moves away from historical attitudes towards persons with disabilities as “objects” of charity, medical treatment and social protection. Instead, it views persons with disabilities as “subjects” with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights, making their own decisions, and actively participating in society.³

The National Population and Housing Census 2016 by the Uganda Bureau of National Statistics (UBOS) shows that 12.4% of the population, or approximately 4.5 million Ugandans, lives with some form of disability.⁴ Uganda ratified the UNCRPD in 2008, meaning it is committed to harmonising domestic law in line with international human rights.

The **UNCRPD describes persons with disabilities** as “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.”⁵ This definition moves away from previous understandings of disability as a fixed, physical impairment located in an individual’s body. Instead, we now understand disability as the result of impairments **plus** attitudinal, environmental, and institutional barriers:

Impairment + Barriers = Disability

Becoming more disability inclusive means working to dismantle the barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from thriving as full and equal members of society. The National Disability Policy of Uganda states that disability is a permanent and substantial functional limitation in daily life activities caused by physical, mental or sensory impairment and environmental barriers resulting in limited participation.

To find out about the UNCRPD visit:
tinyurl.com/2cmyt65a

To find out more about disability definitions visit:
tinyurl.com/29xpt22w

What is gender-based violence?

The Ugandan national GBV policy is based on the WHO definition. The World Health Organization defines violence against women and girls as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.” Gender-based violence can take a variety of forms—physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, economic—and can include violence perpetrated by intimate partners, family members, caregivers, medical or other service providers, law enforcement, military personnel, educators, employers, and strangers.

Gender-based violence and disability

Gender-based violence (GBV) is the world’s most pervasive human rights violation, affecting more than one in three women and girls globally. GBV can be physical, sexual, economic, psychological, and emotional. It can take place in person and through the use of technology such as phone messaging apps or social media platforms. GBV is rooted in and perpetuates gender inequality. It is a barrier to the equal participation of women and girls with men and boys in social, economic, and political areas of life. GBV constitutes a violation of human rights, a threat to public health, and a fundamental obstacle to the achievement of gender equality and the **Sustainable Development Goals**.⁶ In Uganda, GBV is one of the most oppressive forms of gender inequality.⁷ According to the 2016 Uganda Demographic and Health Survey, half of women and girls aged 15-49 have experienced some form of physical violence since the age of 15.⁸

To find out more about the UN and GBV visit tinyurl.com/yc342m63

To find out more about SDGs visit tinyurl.com/yyk4keb5

Along with gender inequality, stigma and discrimination towards persons with disabilities is another widespread form of oppression. The combination, or intersection, of characteristics means that women and girls with disabilities are at particularly high risk of GBV. A recent study found that in some countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, women and girls with disabilities were nearly twice as likely to have been subject to GBV in the past year compared to women and girls without disabilities.⁹ Women and girls with disabilities are also more likely to be subjected to non-partner sexual violence and the violation of their sexual and reproductive health rights through forced sterilisation and contraception, female genital mutilation, and coerced abortion. Women and girls with disabilities are also at risk of specific forms of violence including the removal of assistive devices, over- and under-medication, and neglect.¹⁰

The risk of being subject to GBV increases for women and girls with more severe or complex disabilities.¹¹ For example, women and girls with sensory or intellectual disabilities who have challenges communicating are often presumed to be less likely to report GBV and may be specifically targeted by abusive men. GBV also increases during emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and women and girls with disabilities are again at higher risk.¹²



A recent study in the British Medical Journal (Global Health) found that in some countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, women and girls with disabilities were nearly twice as likely to have been subject to GBV in the past year compared to women and girls without disabilities.



Sightsavers gender-based violence workshop in Uganda, May, 2023.

© Sightsavers/Nigel Kingston

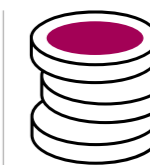
Gender-based violence prevention and response must be disability inclusive

Women and girls with disabilities are at higher risk of GBV. This risk is exacerbated when GBV prevention work and response services are not inclusive. If survivors cannot access information and support, they are denied the inclusive care and justice they are entitled to, and they are left at risk of ongoing violence.

Taking a human rights approach to GBV prevention and response means working with women and girls with disabilities, including GBV survivors, to spread awareness of their rights and their value as equal citizens. It also means ensuring that response services are disability-inclusive. GBV work must also take a gender-transformative approach, working to challenge and transform the unequal power dynamics between men and boys, and women and girls that condone and perpetuate violence. Working to activate and uphold the rights of citizens in all their diversity puts us on the road to an inclusive, equitable, and just society.

The economic cost of GBV

GBV in Uganda is estimated to carry an annual economic cost of more than \$20 billion US dollars.¹³ Service providers (including police, health centres, courts, and shelters) spend more than \$14 billion annually on GBV response work. While every year, GBV costs individuals \$5 billion in out-of-pocket expenditure. This includes the costs of seeking care and justice, and the money lost when survivors are unable to work.



\$20 billion

GBV in Uganda is estimated to carry an annual economic cost of more than \$20 billion US dollars.

Using this guide

A holistic approach is key to a disability-inclusive strategy for tackling GBV. This guide promotes actions on GBV response, but emphasises the equal importance of GBV prevention. The actions are organised under four themes:



01

Attitudes and Behaviours



02

Information and Communication



03

Accessible Services



04

Systems and Processes



Actions are suggested for different actors, according to the roles and responsibilities stated in the National Policy on the Elimination of GBV. Some actions are applicable to everyone and this is indicated in the tables below.

The actions are also linked to different time horizons: immediate actions, ongoing work, and the long-term goals this work is leading to.

Principles

This guide is informed by six key principles:

Respect

- Survivor-centred response: the experience and the best interests of survivors are at the heart of any action.
- The only person responsible for violence is the perpetrator. The survivor is never to blame.

Confidentiality

- Survivors must feel safe to share their experience in confidence. A survivor should never be pressured to share more than they are comfortable with, nor to move at a faster pace than they are comfortable with.
- Information about survivors must be protected and stored securely.

Safety and Security

- First do no harm: in every action taken or intended, no harm should be suffered by the survivor as a result.

Non-discrimination

- Survivors in all their diversity must be safe to report GBV and access the care and justice they are entitled to.

Inclusiveness

- This principal embraces the concept of intersectionality, recognising that individuals may experience overlapping forms of discrimination. For example, a woman with a disability may face unique challenges, and an inclusive approach addresses the intersection of gender and disability in GBV prevention and response.

Restoring hope

- This is a critical principle in GBV prevention and response work. It contributes to the holistic well-being of survivors and fosters a society that actively works towards the prevention and eradication of gender-based violence. This principle recognises the resilience of survivors and promotes a vision of a future free from violence

Legislative and policy environment

The **UNCRPD** acknowledges that women and girls with disabilities are subject to multiple discrimination. The UNCRPD includes a stand-alone article on women and girls with disabilities (Article 6). It also stipulates that governments should put in place effective legislation and policies with a focus on women and girls with disabilities to protect them from exploitation, violence, and abuse (Article 16, paragraph 5). **The UNCRPD General Comment No. 3, 2016** provides some strong recommendations to address multiple and intersectional discrimination against women and girls with disabilities.

In addition to the UNCRPD, another relevant international human rights instrument is the **UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**. CEDAW is an international legal instrument that requires countries to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in all areas and promotes women's and girls' equal rights. CEDAW recognises GBV against women and girls as "one of the fundamental social, political and economic means by which the subordinate position of women with respect to men and their stereotyped roles are perpetuated". It makes clear that GBV is a "critical obstacle" to the fulfilment of women's and girls' human rights and fundamental freedoms.¹⁴ Several CEDAW General Recommendations address the intersectional discrimination faced by women and girls with disabilities.

The Government of Uganda has ratified CEDAW and has committed to "exercise due diligence, to prevent, investigate and, in accordance with national legislation, punish acts of violence against women, whether those acts are perpetrated by the State or by private persons".¹⁵

To find out more about international law visit tinyurl.com/2p9y7y6w

To find out more about international guidance visit tinyurl.com/p4va98jf

To find out more about international law addressing women's and girls' rights visit tinyurl.com/bd58jr9a

© Sightsavers/Nigel Kingston



Sightsavers gender-based violence workshop in Uganda, May, 2023.

CEDAW also recognises that most countries now have domestic legislation intended to eradicate GBV, but that implementation often falls short. In Uganda, the **National Policy on Elimination of Gender Based Violence 2016** aims to integrate the rights and commitments now enshrined in the **Persons with Disabilities Act 2020**. The policy when implemented fully and effectively will ensure that GBV prevention and response work is inclusive of persons with disabilities in all their diversity. This guide is designed to support that work.

Uganda has also passed other forms of legislation that are relevant for GBV prevention and response. This guide can also be used to help ensure that these policies are implemented in a way that is inclusive of persons with disabilities.

For more information about policies and legislation relevant to disability-inclusive GBV prevention and response in Uganda. To read the Sightsavers' report, visit tinyurl.com/5n7v2by6

To find out more about Ugandan national policy on GBV visit tinyurl.com/3xkdudzt

To find out more about Ugandan national policy on disability visit tinyurl.com/56kdt2s

To find out more about the Sightsavers workshop visit tinyurl.com/5xubmdsa

01 Attitudes and Behaviours



Negative attitudes and discrimination put women and girls with disabilities at higher risk of GBV and prevent survivors with disabilities seeking and receiving the inclusive care and justice they are entitled to.



All State Institutions



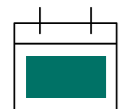
Immediate Actions

- Work with partners to organise disability inclusion training for everyone working in your department or organisation, with a focus on GBV prevention and response.
- Build relationships and work with Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.
- Build relationships and work with National Council for Persons with Disability.
- All staff should be trained, including reception staff, security staff, drivers, etc.



Ongoing Actions

- Build relationships with organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) and organisations promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities, to learn from their expertise. They should be consulted on ways to ensure that GBV prevention and response work is disability inclusive.
- Foster a culture of monitoring and accountability with a specific focus on disability inclusion. Seek advice from partners about how to incorporate disability inclusion into your monitoring and evaluation frameworks.



Long-term Goals

- Everyone in your department or organisation has been trained in disability inclusion. Disability inclusion champions lead on best practice.
- Social norms are addressed by reducing negative attitudes and discrimination towards persons with disabilities in all ministries and state institutions.
- Awareness of the high risk of GBV for persons with disabilities is increased.
- Disability inclusion is integrated into core practice as a responsibility shared by all staff. You have strong consultative relationships with OPDs. You use data and evidence to continually improve disability-inclusive GBV response services.

Parliament



Immediate Actions

- Build relationships with organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities, with a view to learning and collaborating around more inclusive GBV policy and legislation.



Ongoing Actions

- Ensure that disability rights and inclusion are part of mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing laws addressing GBV. Share this information as part of awareness campaigns coordinated by Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.



Long-term Goals

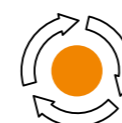
- Government commitment to the monitoring and enforcing of disability rights has a positive impact on social norms and on the confidence of persons with disabilities to claim those rights.

Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development



Immediate Actions

- Build relationships with organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities, with a view to learning and collaborating around education and awareness campaigns.



Ongoing Actions

- Coordinate national and local education and awareness campaigns to combat negative attitudes and discrimination towards persons with disabilities and raise awareness of higher GBV risk. These campaigns should be designed in consultation with OPDs, especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities, and survivors with disabilities. They should be communicated in accessible formats across print media, radio, television, and social media. Click here for guidance about inclusive communication: tinyurl.com/2wczw7ps



Long-term Goals

- Social norms are addressed by reducing negative attitudes and discrimination towards persons with disabilities.
- Awareness of the high risk of GBV for persons with disabilities is increased.
- Persons know how to contact GBV support services for themselves or others.
- Service providers are more aware of persons with disabilities being at high risk of GBV. This knowledge is incorporated into prevention and response strategies.
- Survivors feel more confident reporting GBV and claiming their rights to justice and inclusive response services.

Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development



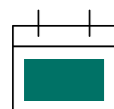
Immediate Actions

- Plan specific disability inclusion budgets for GBV and disability awareness training, campaigns, service provision, and related programming.



Ongoing Actions

- Ensure the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in development programmes, particularly those focused on economic empowerment, as part of GBV prevention strategies. (Seek expert advice on risk management where women's and girls' greater independence may increase the immediate risk of GBV.)



Long-term Goals

- Women and girls with disabilities are more financially independent. They can decide in their own best interest, including accessing inclusive GBV services and leaving abusive relationships.

Ministry of Education and Sports



Immediate Actions

- Work with partners to develop training programmes for teachers to equip them with the knowledge and skills to educate learners about GBV, and provide support for survivors, with a focus on disability inclusion.



Ongoing Actions

- Work with Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to ensure education and awareness campaigns are shared through schools and places of learning. This should include campaigns designed to combat negative attitudes and discrimination towards persons with disabilities and raise awareness of higher GBV risk.
- Ensure disability inclusion is integrated into curricula development around GBV and that teachers are trained to provide education, and support for survivors.
- Support more research into GBV and disability.



Long-term Goals

- Young persons' attitudes and behaviours towards persons with disabilities improve, and their awareness of GBV risk increases. This has a positive impact on the future of society.
- Young persons know how to contact GBV support services on behalf of themselves or others.
- Learning environments are safer and more inclusive of young persons with disabilities in all their diversity.
- Research evidence is used to inform GBV prevention and response strategies.

Ministry of Health (including healthcare service providers)



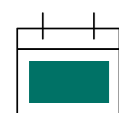
Immediate Actions

- During interactions at health services, prioritise the safety of the survivor and the confidentiality of your interaction.
- Inform the survivor of their rights to inclusive care and justice. Assure them that you are a disability-inclusive organisation and demonstrate this by taking time to ask how you can best support them. Be patient if survivors find it challenging to communicate.
- Build relationships with organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities, with a view to learning and collaborating around more inclusive GBV healthcare services.



Ongoing Actions

- Following disability inclusion training, ensure that every health centre has a disability inclusion champion who leads best practice and works to foster a culture of inclusion.
- Lead awareness campaigns about GBV as a public health issue. Work with OPDs, especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities, and survivors with disabilities to raise awareness of the increased risk of GBV. Click here for guidance about inclusive communication: tinyurl.com/2wczw7ps



Long-term Goals

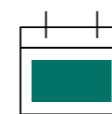
- Survivors with disabilities feel confident that they will receive respectful and inclusive care from healthcare providers. More survivors with disabilities seek help thanks to this greater confidence and improved experience.

Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs; the Judiciary; Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions



Immediate Actions

- During interactions with survivors, prioritise the safety of the survivor and the confidentiality of your interaction.
- Inform the survivor of their rights to inclusive care and justice. Assure them that you are a disability-inclusive organisation and demonstrate this by taking time to ask how you can best support them. Be patient if survivors find it challenging to communicate.
- Build relationships with organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities, with a view to learning and collaborating around more inclusive judicial processes in response to GBV.



Long-term Goals

- Survivors with disabilities feel confident that they will receive a respectful and inclusive response from the justice system. More survivors with disabilities seek help thanks to this greater confidence and improved experience.

Ministry of Public Service



Immediate Actions

- Build relationships with organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities. Do this with a view to integrating disability inclusion into the GBV prevention and response training modules at the Civil Service College and the National Leadership Training Institute.



Ongoing Actions

- Roll-out updated disability-inclusive GBV prevention and response training modules at the Civil Service College and the National Leadership Training Institute.



Long-term Goals

- Graduates of the Civil Service College and the National Leadership Training Institute are trained in disability-inclusive GBV prevention and response. They take this knowledge with them and have a positive impact on embedding disability inclusion into GBV prevention strategies and response service delivery.

Police Force



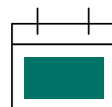
Immediate Actions

- During interactions with survivors, prioritise the safety of the survivor and the confidentiality of your interaction.
- Inform the survivor of their rights to inclusive care and justice. Assure them that you are a disability-inclusive organisation and demonstrate this by taking time to ask how you can best support them. Be patient if survivors find it challenging to communicate.
- Build relationships with organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities, with a view to learning and collaboration around inclusive GBV response services by the police.



Ongoing Actions

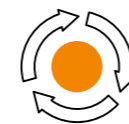
- Emphasise a survivor-centred approach to investigations and support services, ensuring that survivors with disabilities are treated with respect and care in all interactions with the police.
- Develop and implement comprehensive standard operating procedures for disability-inclusive GBV response services by the police.
- Work to increase the number of persons with disabilities in the police force.



Long-term Goals

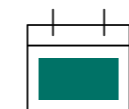
- Survivors with disabilities feel confident that they will receive a respectful and inclusive service from the police. More survivors with disabilities seek help thanks to this greater confidence and improved experience.
- The police force steadily becomes a more informed, diverse, and ultimately inclusive institution, with a positive impact on the GBV reporting experience of survivors with disabilities.

Equal Opportunities Commission and Human Rights Commission



Ongoing Actions

- Work with OPDs, especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities, and survivors with disabilities. Do this to increase public awareness of the rights and commitments stated in the Persons with Disabilities Act 2020 and the importance of inclusion in all public services, including those related to GBV. Click here for guidance about inclusive communication: tinyurl.com/2wczw7ps



Long-term Goals

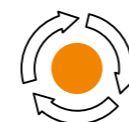
- Persons are more aware of the equal rights of persons with disabilities, and the importance of inclusion, with a positive impact on social norms.

Local Government



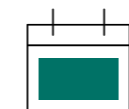
Immediate Actions

- Build relationships with local organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities, with a view to learning and collaborating for community awareness programmes.



Ongoing Actions

- Work with local partners on the dissemination of national awareness campaigns, adapting these to local contexts where possible. Click here for guidance about inclusive communication: tinyurl.com/2wczw7ps
- Work with local OPDs, especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities, and civil society groups. Do this to incorporate education about disability rights and GBV prevention and response into community gatherings and events.



Long-term Goals

- Social norms are addressed and persons with disabilities experience a positive impact in their local areas and everyday lives. Survivors with disabilities feel more confident to report their experiences and seek the inclusive care and justice they are entitled to.

02 Communication and Information



Without information and guidance, survivors with disabilities cannot report GBV or seek the support they are entitled to. It is essential that information about GBV risk and prevention, reporting processes and response services, is shared with persons with disabilities in a range of accessible formats.

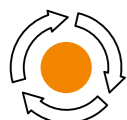


All State Institutions



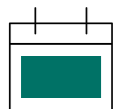
Immediate Actions

- Build relationships with organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities, and relevant civil society organisations. Do this with a view to collaborating on the creation and distribution of accessible resources about the rights of survivors with disabilities, and about how the response services that you are responsible for work.
- Build relationships and work with Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.
- Build relationships and work with National Council for Persons with Disability.



Ongoing Actions

- Collaborate with OPDs, especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities, organisations promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, and survivors with disabilities. Do this to create and distribute accessible resources about the rights of survivors with disabilities, and how the response services you are responsible for work.
- Resources should include step-by-step guidance about reporting processes and support services in accessible formats including visual depictions, plain language, and audio recordings. You can see an example of accessible guidance materials at tinyurl.com/bp57evbf and find a toolkit for inclusive communications at tinyurl.com/56s7wyre
- Work with civil society networks, including community, faith-based and cultural organisations, as well as women's and girls' rights organisations and OPDs, especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities, as communication channels for sharing these accessible resources.
- Work with partners to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of inclusive communication strategies for rights awareness and more inclusive GBV response.



Long-term Goals

- Persons with disabilities, especially women and girls, are included in all efforts to share information about GBV response services and how to access them. Survivors with disabilities in all their diversity are aware of how to report GBV and they are confident that the support they receive will be accessible, inclusive, and safe.

Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development



Ongoing Actions

- Coordinate GBV awareness and information campaigns across state institutions. Work with OPDs, especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities, to ensure that all resources are shared in accessible formats and reach persons with disabilities. You can see an example of accessible guidance materials at tinyurl.com/bp57evbf and find a toolkit for inclusive communications at tinyurl.com/56s7wyre

Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development



Immediate Actions

- Allocate and release resources for the specific purpose of ensuring all GBV awareness resources are produced and shared in accessible ways.



Long-term Goals

- Funding for disability-inclusive campaigns and resources is protected and guaranteed.

Ministry of Education and Sports



Ongoing Actions

- Ensure that all education modules about GBV education include information about persons with disabilities being at higher risk, and about the importance of prevention and response being disability inclusive. Ensure all materials are accessible for learners with disabilities. Click here for guidance about inclusive communication: tinyurl.com/2wczw7ps



Long-term Goals

- Young persons are informed about disability rights and GBV prevention and response. This has a positive impact on the future of society through greater disability inclusion and the reduction, and eventual elimination, of GBV.

Local Government



Ongoing Actions

- Work with local civil society networks, including community, faith-based and cultural organisations, as well as women's and girls' rights organisations and OPDs, especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities, to distribute accessible resources at a local level.



Long-term Goals

- Everyone, particularly persons with disabilities and persons living beyond urban areas, is more informed about: the rights of persons with disabilities; the higher risk of GBV for persons with disabilities; how to report GBV; and how response services work.
- Survivors with disabilities in all their diversity are confident that they will receive accessible, inclusive, and safe response services. As a result, reporting rates increase and GBV incidences eventually decline.

03 Accessible Services



Inaccessible transport and spaces are a major barrier that prevent survivors with disabilities reporting violence and receiving the inclusive care and justice they are entitled to. GBV response and support services must be accessible to survivors in all their diversity.



All State Institutions



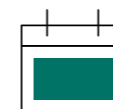
Immediate Actions

- Work with organisation of persons with disabilities (ODP) partners and organisations promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities. Do this to conduct a disability- and gender-sensitive accessibility audit of your physical premises, and the services you provide or are responsible for. This should include communication methods. Click here for guidance about inclusive communication: tinyurl.com/2wczw7ps
- Where long-term changes are required, plan for short-term adaptations where possible. For example:
 - If your building is not accessible for wheelchair users, arrange an alternative space where you can meet with survivors who use wheelchairs or other mobility aids.
 - If bathrooms are inaccessible, ensure a private accessible space is available where a support worker or companion can help a survivor with intimate care.
 - Build relationships with OPDs, especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities, who can provide expertise about the access needs of survivors with specific disabilities. For example, arrange to have a sign language interpreter on call for work with Deaf survivors.
 - Explore collaborating with civil society organisations to provide free, safe and accessible transport for survivors.
- Build relationships and work with Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.
- Build relationships and work with National Council for Persons with Disability.



Ongoing Actions

- Work with partners to develop an achievable action plan for improving the accessibility of your services over time. Include practical and realistic adaptations to the physical environment; training or recruitment of sign language interpreters; the availability of support staff; arrangements to use alternative spaces or conduct home visits where safe.
- Where relevant, work with OPDs, especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities, organisations promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, and civil society partners to develop mobile services and disability-inclusive outreach programmes. Consider remote services using mobile phone case management, WhatsApp messaging, video conferencing, and the use of panic alarms.¹⁶
- Establish feedback mechanisms for survivors with disabilities to report accessibility issues and suggest improvements.
- Ensure - or advocate for - the full and effective implementation of legislation that mandates accessible infrastructure for persons with disabilities.
- Ensure - or advocate for - adequate funding to uphold legislation and implement disability-inclusive GBV response services. This could include the provision of free, safe and accessible transport for survivors.



Long-term Goals

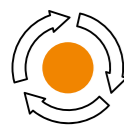
- All state institutions responsible for GBV response and support services are accessible. They are equipped to respond to the needs of survivors with disabilities in all their diversity.
- The full referral pathway for GBV prevention and response is inclusive of persons with disabilities in all their diversity.

Parliament



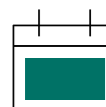
Immediate Actions

- Ensure that mechanisms established to monitor the enforcement of GBV legislation are adapted to also monitor disability inclusion within GBV policies.



Ongoing Actions

- Use monitoring data to hold the government to account for implementing the Persons with Disabilities Act 2020 and its integration with the National Policy on the Elimination of GBV 2016.
- Enforce the funding and implementation of legislation that mandates accessible infrastructure for persons with disabilities.
- Enforce the allocation of funding to uphold legislation and implement disability-inclusive GBV response services, including the provision of free, safe and accessible transport for survivors.



Long-term Goals

- Legislation designed to address GBV is fully inclusive of persons with disabilities in all their diversity. Monitoring and evaluation data shows that more survivors with disabilities are seeking care and justice thanks to greater awareness among providers and greater accessibility of services.

Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD)



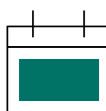
Immediate Actions

- Conduct a disability- and gender-sensitive accessibility audit of your physical premises, and the services you provide or are responsible for and plan necessary adaptations (see above).



Ongoing Actions

- Advocate for the necessary funding to ensure that GBV prevention and response policies are disability inclusive.
- Advocate for the full and effective implementation of legislation that mandates accessible infrastructure for persons with disabilities.



Long-term Goals

- Funding for all GBV prevention and response work includes protected provision for disability inclusion as standard.

Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development



Immediate Actions

- Allocate immediate funding for disability- and gender-sensitive accessibility audits of all state institutions involved with GBV prevention and response work.



Ongoing Actions

- Work to provide and protect sustainable funding for the full and effective implementation of legislation that mandates accessible infrastructure for persons with disabilities.
- Work to provide and protect sustainable funding to ensure that GBV prevention and response policies are disability inclusive. This includes creating inclusion budgets to use for accessibility adaptations, e.g. safe, and accessible transport for survivors.



Long-term Goals

- Protected funding ensures that the Persons with Disabilities Act and the National Policy on the Elimination of GBV are implemented in a joined-up way, ensuring that survivors with disabilities have sustainable access to the inclusive care and justice they are entitled to.

Ministry of Health (and healthcare service providers)



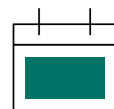
Immediate Actions

- Conduct a disability- and gender-sensitive accessibility audit of your physical premises, and the services you provide or are responsible for. Plan necessary adaptations (see above).



Ongoing Actions

- Work with partners to build the capacity of healthcare professionals to provide appropriate care in accessible settings to GBV survivors with disabilities in all their diversity.
- Ensure that any resources allocated for GBV interventions in the health sector include the necessary funds for ensuring those interventions are inclusive of persons with disabilities.



Long-term Goals

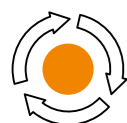
- Survivors with disabilities receive respectful and inclusive care from healthcare professionals in accessible settings. This encourages more survivors to seek help in future.

Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs; the Judiciary; Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions



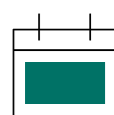
Immediate Actions

- Conduct a disability- and gender-sensitive accessibility audit of your physical premises, and the services you provide or are responsible for. Plan necessary adaptations (see above).



Ongoing Actions

- Conduct a disability- and gender-sensitive accessibility audit of your physical premises, and the services you provide or are responsible for. Plan necessary adaptations (see above).



Long-term Goals

- Disability inclusion and accessibility become standard practice in all GBV policies and legislation.

Uganda Police Force



Immediate Actions

- Conduct a disability- and gender-sensitive accessibility audit of your physical premises, and the services you provide or are responsible for. Plan necessary adaptations (see above).

Equal Opportunities Commission and Human Rights Commission



Ongoing Actions

- Ensure that information about the rights of persons with disabilities enshrined in the Persons with Disabilities Act is shared in accessible formats through OPDs and civil society networks. Click here for guidance about inclusive communication: tinyurl.com/2wczw7ps (See Communication and Information above.)

04 Systems and Processes



Disconnected services and a lack of financial and emotional support prevent survivors with disabilities from accessing the inclusive care and justice they are entitled to.

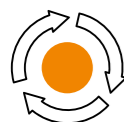


Parliament



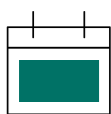
Immediate Actions

- Work with ODP partners and organisations promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities. Do this to review existing laws and policies to ensure they explicitly incorporate a disability-inclusive approach to GBV prevention and response. Begin the process of amending laws and policies where necessary.



Ongoing Actions

- Monitor and enforce the full, effective, and integrated implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act and the National Policy on the Elimination of GBV.



Long-term Goals

- All laws and policies about GBV prevention and response are inclusive of the rights of persons with disabilities and are accessible by survivors in all their diversity.

Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD)



Immediate Actions

- Build relationships with organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities, and survivors with disabilities. Do this with a view to learning, and implementing closer collaboration, around inclusive and joined-up GBV response and support services.
- Support organisations of women and girls with disabilities to join the National GBV Reference Group, to amplify their voices and influence disability inclusion in GBV prevention and response strategies.



Ongoing Actions

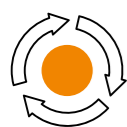
- Lead a collaborative mapping exercise, working with partners to map all the existing GBV service providers and support services around the country.
- Establish specialised multi-disciplinary teams of healthcare providers, legal experts, social workers, civil society actors, and OPD representatives, especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities. Do this to work toward the closer integration and greater inclusiveness of GBV response and support services.
- Ensure the National GBV Database captures data about disability and uses it for reporting and continual improvement of disability-inclusive services.
- Work with partners towards the coordination of data management for disability-inclusive GBV services throughout the referral and response pathway.
- Advocate for the allocation of sustainable funding for disability-inclusive GBV prevention and response work, including a survivors' support forum to facilitate access to essential response and support services: transport, healthcare, police response, psychosocial support, temporary accommodation.¹⁷



Long-term Goals

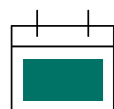
- GBV prevention, referral, and response work shares a common approach to disability inclusion. Monitoring data is used for continual improvement and upholding standards across the sector, and for advocating for greater resource allocation to disability-inclusive GBV prevention and response.
- GBV prevention and response strategies are collaborative, joined-up and co-produced with OPD partners, especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities, and survivors with disabilities.
- GBV survivors with disabilities have access to comprehensive and coordinated care, support, and justice. One stop centres are established where GBV survivors are provided with emergency support and resources through a survivors' support forum. They are matched with a support worker who helps them navigate disability-inclusive services from healthcare and psychosocial support, to police response and judicial processes. GBV survivors with disabilities in all their diversity feel confident that when they seek help they will receive the inclusive care and justice they are entitled to.

Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development



Ongoing Actions

- Allocate sustainable funding for the disability-inclusive GBV prevention and response work outlined above.



Long-term Goals

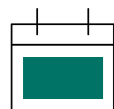
- Survivors are not deterred from reporting GBV by discrimination, financial cost, inaccessible transport, a lack of emotional support, or uncertainty about how to navigate the referral pathway. Reporting increases as a result and GBV incidences eventually decline.

Ministry of Education and Sports



Ongoing Actions

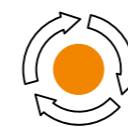
- Embed inclusive education about disability rights and GBV prevention and response into the national curriculum.



Long-term Goals

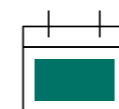
- Young persons are informed about disability rights and GBV prevention and response. This has a positive impact on the future of society through improved disability inclusion and the reduction, and eventual elimination, of GBV.

Ministry of Health (and healthcare service providers)



Ongoing Actions

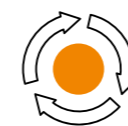
- Integrate disability data into GBV incident and case management data collection in Health Management Information System (HMIS). This is to ensure disability inclusion strategies are informed by data and evidence.



Long-term Goals

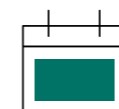
- Data is available to inform advocacy for the greater allocation of resources to ensure that survivors with disabilities have access to the inclusive healthcare they are entitled to.
- Decision makers can use disability-disaggregated data to inform strategies and resource allocation for a more disability-inclusive healthcare response to GBV survivors.

Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs; the Judiciary; Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions



Ongoing Actions

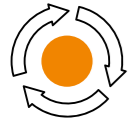
- Work with partners to ensure that all legal frameworks that address GBV are inclusive of persons with disabilities and their rights. Continue to review and amend as necessary.
- Expand survivor and witness support services and legal aid for survivors with disabilities.
- Ensure that prosecution statistics also capture data about disability, with the consent of the survivor.



Long-term Goals

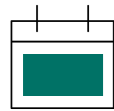
- Survivors with disabilities in all their diversity receive the support and justice that they are entitled to in a safe and inclusive way.
- Data is available to inform advocacy for the greater allocation of resources to disability-inclusive GBV prevention and response work. This is to ensure that survivors with disabilities have access to the justice they are entitled to.

Uganda Police Force



Ongoing Actions

- Embed learning from disability inclusion training across your work, including the integration of disability inclusion into the community policing strategy.
- Advocate for the removal of any financial cost to survivors associated with reporting GBV to the police.
- With the consent of survivors, integrate disability data into routine data capture during crime reporting and investigation.



Long-term Goals

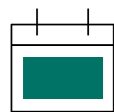
- A disability-inclusive culture is embedded across the police force. GBV survivors are confident they will receive an inclusive and respectful response when they seek help.
- Survivors are not deterred from reporting GBV by the financial cost involved.
- Reliable data is available about GBV reporting by survivors with disabilities and can be used for continual improvement of services and greater allocation of resources.

Equal Opportunities Commission and Human Rights Commission



Ongoing Actions

- Ensure that complaint management and investigation procedures also seek and capture experiences from survivors with disabilities. Work with OPDs, especially organisations of women and girls with disabilities, to ensure that survivors with disabilities are aware of these mechanisms and that they are accessible.



Long-term Goals

- Information captured through complaint and investigation procedures is used to inform the continual improvement of GBV prevention and response services for survivors with disabilities in all their diversity.
- Survivors with disabilities feel heard and witness a positive change to systems, increasing their confidence to report GBV.

Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS)



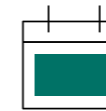
Immediate Actions

- With consent, begin to capture disability data as part of the GBV survey modules.



Ongoing Actions

- As well as gender data, disability data in relation to GBV is also collected, analysed, and disseminated.



Long-term Goals

- A growing body of data about persons with disabilities and their experiences of GBV is available to decision-makers and researchers. This data is used to inform future GBV prevention and response strategies, which become more inclusive of persons with disabilities in all their diversity. This leads, eventually, to a decline in GBV across the country.

Local Government



Ongoing Actions

- Incorporate disability inclusion into the GBV prevention and response performance measure for local governments.



Long-term Goals

- Disability-inclusive practice becomes standard across local governments.

Endnotes

- 1 Diversity includes indigenous persons; refugee, migrant, asylum-seeking and internally displaced persons; those in detention (hospitals, residential institutions, juvenile or correctional facilities, and prisons); persons living in poverty; persons from different ethnic, religious and racial backgrounds; persons with multiple disabilities and high levels of support; and persons with albinism. The diversity of persons with disabilities also includes all types of impairments, or in other words physical, psychosocial, intellectual, or sensory conditions that may or may not come with functional limitations.
- 2 Sightsavers' Disability Rights webpage: tinyurl.com/4mbt8t6x
- 3 UN Convention On The Rights Of Persons With Disabilities: tinyurl.com/4bbyvyak
- 4 Uganda's National Population and Housing Census: tinyurl.com/42rwwbpn
- 5 Frequently Asked Questions regarding the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: tinyurl.com/mwkc4dw
- 6 Social Development Direct's Rapid Review on Disability-Inclusive VAWG Programming: tinyurl.com/mpckh9mx
- 7 Human Rights Watch report - Discrimination and violence against women with disabilities in northern Uganda: tinyurl.com/t2mt2hwh
- 8 Uganda 2016 Demographic and Health Survey - Key Findings: tinyurl.com/mb62j9ss
- 9 Intimate Partner Violence among Women with and without Disabilities - A Pooled Analysis of Baseline Data from Seven Violence-Prevention Programmes: tinyurl.com/bdd74k9c
- 10 Social Development Direct's Rapid Review on Disability-Inclusive VAWG Programming: tinyurl.com/mpckh9mx
- 11 Intimate Partner Violence among Women with and without Disabilities - A Pooled Analysis of Baseline Data from Seven Violence-Prevention Programmes: tinyurl.com/bdd74k9c
- 12 The Impact of COVID-19 on Women and Girls with Disabilities - A global assessment and case studies on sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence, and related rights: tinyurl.com/2fpm5bkz
- 13 CEDOVIP Report on The Economic Costs of Domestic Violence in Uganda: tinyurl.com/2p99wvxf
- 14 Launch of CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating General Recommendation No. 19: tinyurl.com/3bb6dn4k
- 15 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women: tinyurl.com/mdncvz6
- 16 Social Development Direct's Rapid Review on Disability-Inclusive VAWG Programming: tinyurl.com/mpckh9mx
- 17 Reflections from Implementation at District and Community Level: tinyurl.com/yz4utehj

More Information and Resources

Legislation and policies

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: tinyurl.com/4bbyvyak

UNCRPD General Comment No.3, 2016, on Article 6 - Women and Girls with Disabilities: tinyurl.com/p4va98jf

Easy-read summary of the UNCRPD: tinyurl.com/4cyhddm9

Summary of Uganda Persons with Disabilities Act 2020: tinyurl.com/56kdt2s

The National Policy on the Elimination of GBV in Uganda 2016: tinyurl.com/3xkdudzt

The impact of GBV

CEDOVIP Report on The Economic Costs of Domestic Violence in Uganda: tinyurl.com/2p99wvxf

Rapid Review on Disability-Inclusive Violence Against Women and Girls Programming: tinyurl.com/mpckh9mx

Intimate Partner Violence among Women with and without Disabilities - A Pooled Analysis of Baseline Data from Seven Violence-Prevention Programmes: tinyurl.com/bdd74k9c

The Impact of COVID-19 on Women and Girls with Disabilities - A global assessment and case studies on sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence, and related rights: tinyurl.com/2fpm5bkz

Sightsavers report - Empowering change: A stakeholder analysis for inclusive gender-based violence services for women with disabilities in Uganda: tinyurl.com/yzm9scfe

Inclusive practice guides and toolkits

Sightsavers accessibility standards and audit pack: tinyurl.com/5n6nj9wd

Sightsavers inclusive communications pack: tinyurl.com/2wczw7ps

Example of an inclusive referral pathway information posters and discussion guidance: tinyurl.com/56s7wyre

International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) Inclusive Safeguarding Statement: tinyurl.com/5dj8ssf7

We work with partners in low and middle income countries to eliminate avoidable blindness and promote equal opportunities for persons with disabilities.

www.sightsavers.org