Northern Uganda Community
Based Action for Children With Disabilities
P.O. Box 362
Kitgum

The phenomenon of disability in Uganda and indeed the whole of Africa to the genesis of humanity across the space. PWD’s are in most cases discriminated, isolated, neglected and stereotyped that unless otherwise subject to immense social economic and psychological problems.

Northern Uganda is even uniquely disadvantaged with long lasting insurgency has not only compounded the existing states returnees of the PWDs but has created a new form of disability. The abducted children who are rescued and returned home suffer from body deformation, psychological tortures and economic and social problems.

With specific reference to Kitgum District in Northern Uganda, the situation is even more alarming. Over 15% of the population is disabled in one way or the other. Northern Uganda Community Based Action For Children with Disabilities (NUCBACD) there stands a great impurity for PWDs for their education, sensitization of the community, advocacy for their rights, skills training, activities, mobility appliances, economic empowerment through education so that they can have a brighter future on self-reliance and self-employed through income generating activities on the communities and the country growth.

BACKGROUND

NUCBACD is a non-governmental organization started in Kitgum District to support children with disabilities and war victims (returnees) who are discriminated and neglected by their own communities. It’s the first and the only organization in Kitgum District and Northern Uganda at large that have come out to support the most vulnerable children as a result of disadvantage of war who are neglected by the community.

Daily observation and experiences tells us that though disabled and war affected victims (deformed bodies) are the most disadvantaged with respect to income generating and employment opportunities lacking let alone the social psychological outfit in their communities.

The prolong crisis and political desensitization for 20 years in Northern Uganda have entrenched poverty and destination in the community worsening the culture of the Acholi tribe on the rejection of the disabled children amongst youth war victims (returnees).

Majorities of the disabled children lack education and income generating activities forcing them service under difficult and horrible circumstances characterized by insecurity poor social services exposing them to various risk related practices to sex at
early age, gender and sexual abuse violence, lack acceptance by community and their rights shunned down.

NUCBACD intervention is to advocate for one rights of the disabled children which is ignored by their communities through sensitization that should be understanding advocacy that is the ministry of influence whose good is to empower and currently Kitgum District is having 264,000 disabled that cannot access care services such as educational support.

In this case there is real need of getting involved in programs that target children and youth living with disabilities in Kitgum District since there is not other NGO, CBO or government program implicated in dealing with these population under a holistic and comprehensive approach.

It is undeniably true that disabled and abduction is always punctuated with number of social psychological, physical and economic hardships that one way or the other affect their enjoyment of the basic necessities and as well hinder their ability of generation.

PROBLEMS ANALYSIS

The conflict in Northern Uganda in particular has waged for two decades, causing poverty and rejection by the community. Currently Kitgum District has 264,000 PWDs who are not accessing adequate care and support services according to a survey done by AUSI and the DEO Kitgum District.

The disabled children are discriminated in the community. They are considered as the community. They are consider as parasite, a burden, a misfortune and accursed in the society.

Their rights for education are ignored and economically very poor. They are most cases abuse sexually violating their rights and no one to stand for them. They suffer not only psychologically but also economically and socially, but the communities wish them bad luck so that they die away.

The assessment also points out that the highest vulnerability among the disabled is caused by poverty, lack of education and lack of economic activities. The deaf and the blind that are able to go to school are shunned down and marginalized by the community and society. This alarming neglect is so much witnessed in Kitgum District.

The conflict in Northern Uganda has waged for two decades causing rejection, neglect or disabled children and creating a new form of disability to the abductees leading the district to have PWDs, 264,000 with no education and support services.

The on-going conflict has disrupted the Acholi traditional solidarity and has affected the most vulnerable. Including the disabled. Some traditional beliefs have been exaggerated and parents who have children with disabilities feel they are a curse, in their culture and
society. These children are parasites since they are not productive and most of the time these children are neglected, given less food and attention and sometimes left hidden until they die without the society knowing to avoid humiliation.

The youth with disabilities also suffer the consequences of social rejection and lack of education. Therefore most of them depend on their parent’s involvement and the families see them as an extra weight for which they have no resources.

There is limited information about the disabled ability and their rights. Thousand and thousands of disabled children are sexually abused violently and nobody takes up the matter seriously to the local authorities. Their rights are not protected, more especially in Kitgum District that nobody thinks of a disabled child as a human being witnessed by a strategic program in the district.

PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE / GOAL

Every child with disability in Kitgum District is accepted provided with educational opportunities appropriate to their needs with their human rights respected and hope for a brighter future evident.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Advocacy for the rights of children with disability and their educational opportunities that are inclusive is increased throughout the district.
- Outreach training provided to parents of children with disabilities that focus on inclusion and acceptance by the community.
- Referred system for children with disabilities linking schools, communities and hospital established.
- Special needs educational (sign language), Braille (for the blind) and skills training provided to the most vulnerable children, in a residential setting.
- Home-based care be established and constant monitoring
- Information dissemination through print and radio programs on referral system provided to the child protection to the 19 sub-county in Kitgum District.
- Classes on innumeracy and literacy provided to children with disabilities.
- Individualized educational plan created for each child in the program.

ACTIVITIES

NUCBACD therefore plans to carry out the following activities as shown below:

- Sensitize the schools, teachers, parent’s group and community members on the right of children with disabilities.
- Sensitize the parents and community on acceptance of the children with disabilities.
• Referral system documentary for children with disabilities and linkages between schools, community and hospital for orthopedic appliances.
• Organizing weekly radio talk shows on the human rights and protection for children with disabilities and printing pamphlets on different disabilities giving to the community, school, political, and leaders.
• Conducting special need education lesson on sign language and Braille.
• Skill training i.e. Tailoring, craft work, embroidering is provided for the most vulnerable youth in the centre.
• Providing innumeracy classes and literacy for mental retarded and disabled children in the centre.
• Monitoring constantly home-based care children with disabilities in the community and writing report
• Creating individual educational plan in the program with a long-term objective of inclusion and family community based care.
• Providing to the home based care disabled and their parents in the community.
• Organizing workshops with all the district officials on the rights and education of the disabled child

OUTPUT

• 19 sub-counties received information of the rights of children with disabilities and 185 schools be sensitized.
• 1467 teachers given workshops on child protection.
• Out reach trainings conducted in 19 sub counties for parents of children with disabilities.
• Referral system established between the school, community and hospital
• Radio programs on disabled child protection and on referral system
• Articles printed on referral system. Discussions held in schools on referral system, special needs education in residential setting existing for all disabilities.
• Inclusion programs established in 19 sub counties, skill training provided to children in special educational residential setting.
• Individualized educational plans created for every child with disabilities in 10 sub counties.

INPUT

In the good services be realized, the following should be done:

• Printing materials concerning the disabled
• Awareness material to be pushed
• Handbooks for parents, community and schools
• Radio talk shows
• Swing machines
• Manuel typewriters
• Braille machines
• Instructions book
• Skills materials and equipment
• Workshop materials
• Printing cost for referral system
• Transport / vehicle
• Water source
• Running cost
• Training cost
• Flue
• Personnel 15

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The purpose of the project is to protect the rights and access to educational opportunities for children and youth with disabilities in Kitgum District. To promote home based care and to improve family and community support through training and awareness programs. The project will also include advocacy on inclusion provided through workshops held with schools and community groups.

In 2004 when I arrived in Kitgum, I noticed the vast presence of disabled people, a great need in my heart. I started a journey of visits moving in all around the IDP camps to assess their conditions. Since then, I have been visiting and monitoring these children in the camps, encouraging their parents and linking them to hospitals and schools when possible. At that time I brought a girl from Omiayanyima Camp to my house and trained her in tailoring. I bought one machine and soon other girls joined her. Within two months I had 26, the most cripple student. At the moment they are 135 disabled children in the centre. The centre has been working since February 2005. I have been supported by some of my friends from Italy, World Food Program and other NGO such as NRC who are helping in constructing and Oxfam who gave non-food items like baskets, basins, soap, hand washing container.

In the 18 July of 2005, I registered the organization as a CBO named Northern Uganda Community Based Action for Children with disabilities (NUCBACD), PO Box 362, Kitgum, REG: 00470.

Due to the increasing number of disabled coming to our basic education skills training, sign language, Braille and parents bringing complicated cases of home based care, the organization is now unable to render adequate services needed in care and support of vulnerable children. This project when implemented, will continue building acceptance of children with disabilities in their communities and promoting their rights and educational opportunities.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION
NUCBACD is ready to support the school going age disabled in primary with scholastic materials, home based care with needs, skill training material, mobility appliance, linking them with the main hospital for physiotherapy and medical treatment.

SUSTAINABILITY

The project will sustain itself through sale of craft work carried out in the center:

- Sales of clothes made in the centre
- Agricultural produce
- Donation from well wishers
- Contribution from the communities
- Sale of goats and poultry keeping project
- Lobbying funds from external donors
- Establishing income generating activities in the center
- Avoiding extravagancy and employing qualified and experienced staff.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The methods of monitoring the project will include submission of report quarterly on the progress of the work done including the progress of the child in the school

Administration of NUCBACD will provide supervision during the program implementation in schools and in the community.

NUCBACD will also organize joint monitoring and follow up visit with donors. At the end of the project, a comprehensive report with the key indicators will be written disseminated. This will help develop some way forward for future partnership and relationship.

PROBLEMS THE ORGANIZATION IS ENCOUNTERING

The most challenging issues the organization is encountering and the most curtail urgent are:

- Water problem. The children go a long way for water
- No transport to take children to the hospital in case of sickness and even for functions in the district for change in environment
- Lack of sewing machines since the number of the children are increasing daily
- Lack of funds for staff and support staff salaries
- Lack of start up tools for IGA after their training
- Lack of educational support materials for those in secondary and primary
- Lack of power in the center. We are always in darkness thus security threats and mischief in darkness and no enjoyment of life in the centre
- Lack of funds for medical treatment for complicated cases
- Lack of instructional machines in the centre
- Lack of mobility materials, e.g. Wheel chairs, etc.
- Lack of counselors in the center
- Lack of manual typewriter or computer for proper writing, documentation and compiled records.