

# MAINSTREAMING AMBITION-VULNERABLE YOUTH IN BUSINESS PROJECTS IN UGANDA

## END OF PROJECT REPORT



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September 2022

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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BDS - Business Development Services

DIFs. - Disability Inclusion Facilitators

IEG. - Inclusive Enterprise Group

LFTW - Light For The World

MGLSD - Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development

FUE - Federation of Uganda Employers

PWDS - Persons with Disabilities

SMEs - Small and Medium Enterprises



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report gives a detailed account of the approaches and learnings from the Mainstreaming Ambition-Vulnerable Youth In Business Projects In Uganda. The main deliverables of the project include: carrying out Market research to guide the project's input; developing sector workbooks following the analysis from the market research; Disability Inclusion Facilitators (DIFs) training (Workbooks, Branding And Marketing, Technical Business Training); Inclusive Enterprise Group (IEG) training delivered by DIF with the supervision of Finding XY to cover the five sector workbooks including branding and Marketing and the Technical Business Training; and coordination of support from lead entrepreneurs for DIFs and Inclusive Enterprises Groups. The findings shared are based on the Light For The World (LFTW) programme objectives. Findings per deliverable, chronologically, were helpful in informing the implementation of the programme. The report recommends that development organisations, funds, civil society and other organisations that work with persons with disabilities (PWDs) should address the challenge of access to capital for PWDs, and engage in campaigns that encourage PWDs to venture into entrepreneurship to create more jobs and improve their livelihoods.

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

Light for the World (LFTW) is a Disability and Development organization with a focus on Eye Health, Inclusive Education and Economic Empowerment. The Mainstreaming Ambition – Vulnerable Youth in Business Project is a 3-year project that commenced on January 1, 2021, and is expected to run until December 31, 2023. It is implemented by LFTW as project lead together with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE), and Standard Chartered Bank. The project aims to generate decent work for vulnerable youth with a focus on young women and youth with disabilities through either waged employment or self-employment.

LFTW contracted Finding XY as a technical consultant for the Entrepreneurship on the Mainstreaming Ambition- Vulnerable Youth In Business Projects In Uganda. Finding XY is an Innovation Centre that creates and implements innovative projects that provide access to low-risk capital, capacity building and market-based research. Finding XY runs various internal and external programs supporting SMEs to position themselves for growth and investment. We provide Business advisory services (BDS) to SMEs through training, one on one coaching and technical assistance to bridge the gap between training and practice. We also work with external partners looking to implement similar programs by providing consulting services including research, scoping exercises, and program implementation support. Therefore, the project's purpose is to design a well-founded, impactful initiative to empower and support entrepreneurship among PWDs. The selection of target sectors and business opportunities was guided by market research. Based on this foundation, the project emphasizes delivering technical and business skills training to disability inclusion facilitators (DIFs) and inclusive enterprise groups (IEG). Both groups have an opportunity to better their livelihoods, and that of their families and subsequently contribute to the national economy through the program. The project provides practical solutions and contributes to the theory on climate change, environment conservation and the role of people with disabilities on Uganda's path to a green and inclusive economy.

## PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

By September 2023, the project is expected to have:

- Created self-employment for 560 vulnerable youth; at least 280 (50%) young women and 224 (40%) youth with disabilities;
- Matched 30 youth with disabilities; of whom 15 are women, with a decent waged job within an organisation or company; and,
- Improved 44 jobs; 14 jobs for Disability Inclusion Facilitators (DIFs) by expanding the service portfolio and 30 jobs on working conditions.

The project has achieved its objectives by enabling access to self-employment through group enterprises. Enterprise groups comprising 5 to 15 members were formed with specific attention to youth with disabilities (40%) and young women (50%). Support was provided from group formation, enterprise selection and enterprise start-up to ensure the groups' access to financing through YLP funds (up to a maximum of 12m UGX). This was to enable the enterprise groups to grow into viable businesses that provide decent work for these vulnerable youth.

## THEORY OF CHANGE

Inputs

- The enterprise groups and DIFs will receive business training to help them navigate the start-up journey. This will include problem-solution creation, team management, 9 customer analysis, marketing and distribution, branding, creating business models, Pitching, financial management for start-ups etc.
- The DIFs and IEGs will get technical training in five different sectors where they will work with successful entrepreneurs to replicate their business models.

Output

- DIFs will have in hand a replicator workbook that they will use to train further IEGs. They will become certified Trainers of Trainers according to the SEED model of Business Development Support.
- A business using Finding XY training has a 95% survival rate. The enterprise groups will have the knowledge and skills to work as a team creating sustainable impact-driven enterprises with opportunities for further financing.

Outcome

- DIFs will have the ability to deliver similar training leading to more business development support opportunities.
- Inclusive enterprise groups will generate revenue from the business activities and raise further financing for the enterprises.

Impact

- Both DIFs and IEGs will have self-employment opportunities and skills
- Both Youth and women will earn decent jobs and income from the enterprises
- New jobs will be created for PWDs as enterprises grow.

## TECHNICAL APPROACH

Finding XY aimed at contributing to these objectives as a Technical Consultant on Entrepreneurship, with the main objective of providing technical support on entrepreneurship to partners and Disability Inclusion Facilitators (DIFs) to empower Youth Enterprise Groups to develop investment-ready business plans, and to develop their businesses sustainably. The assignment included the following components:

a) Applied Market Research. Employing a mixed methods approach to explore ongoing and most

feasible entrepreneurship business opportunities in the districts of Lira/Gulu, Arua, Moroto, Mukono or Wakiso among people with disabilities. Finding XY was tasked with providing a report analyzing the business activities and highlighting opportunities for Persons With Disabilities.

b) Developing a world-class enterprise training workbook for Persons with Disabilities. Practical, easy-to-use workbooks covering five sectors were to be developed to guide the enterprise training for entrepreneurs with disabilities.

c) Facilitating best-in-class advisory support/training of trainers: Finding XY was tasked with training DIFs to deliver high-quality, impactful business development support to Inclusive Enterprise Groups.

d) Coaching and mentorship following a defined advisory process: DIFs and IEGs were to receive business advisory support during the implementation process of the new businesses ensuring they apply the tools, produce quality products or services and can absorb external financing based on their investment plans

## DELIVERY METHODOLOGY

### Approach

Finding XY provided technical support on entrepreneurship to Light for the World partners and DIFs so that Youth Enterprise Groups can develop investment-ready business plans and sustainably develop their businesses.

The Assignment commenced with applied market research in four districts understanding the common business activities and their feasibility for entrepreneurs with disabilities. Workbooks covering 5 sectors were designed to train DIFs on best practice business advisory services.

The workbooks provided technical business training on selected business activities; successful entrepreneurs from these businesses provided training and mentorship to the DIFs and IEGs.

Finding XY supported the IEGs effectively by designing investment plans based on the business plans and positioning the groups for further financing. Each beneficiary group established their business readiness and status. Through training and follow-on mentorship, the founders or leaders were supported to improve their project ideas, business strategies and ability to fundraise. The DIFs and IEGs were equipped with market skills to progressively develop revenue models for their businesses.

Finding XY guided DIFs and IEGs in designing impact measurements for their business and defining their contribution to sustainable development. The triple bottom line approach created purpose beyond revenue for the trainees. An organization-centric design approach was used to support advisory work.

## DELIVERABLES

### Market research to guide the project's input

The market research was designed and dedicated to capturing the views of entrepreneurs with disabilities. The Market Feasibility Study was conducted between February and April 2021. The purpose of the study was to provide practical input for the development of 5 sector-specific workbooks that would support youth with disabilities in establishing climate-smart and inclusive businesses with sufficient profitability and wage margins. The study adopted a cross-sectional design combining qualitative and quantitative participatory data collection techniques.

This triangulation aimed to verify each piece of information with at least two corroborative or complementary sources, to obtain data that match up and clarify differing perspectives. Data was collected through Key informant interviews, focus group discussions and surveys with business outlets across the different sectors.

Findings showed that most of the businesses had been tested by time and given the requisite capitalization can easily catapult into thriving enterprises. For example, a substantial majority of the businesses studied 55.8% had spanned at least between 2-5 years; 10.9% had spanned between 6-9 years; and, 20.4% had spent less than one year. Businesses that had spent ten or more years totalled up to 12.8%.

Most of the businesses were in the form of sole proprietorship. 104 (37.3%) respondents admitted to having no other employee under their management. Even in the cases where they had employees, they were below five with just about 11% of the businesses employing more than five employees.

Most businesses hardly employed Persons With Disabilities (PWD). Of the enterprises studied, 93.1% said they didn't have employees with disabilities. Besides, only a paltry number of business enterprises (16.4%) were owned by PWDs.

Youth and women were engaged in an array of businesses including utilities, finance and insurance. 2.6% of the respondents pronounced business amongst the youth to include trade (18.6); manufacturing and industry (18.2%); transport and storage (13.1%); agriculture forestry and fishing (11.3%); and, accommodation and food services (10.2%). The wide spread of the businesses demonstrates youth affinity for business and risk-taking.

It was generally observed that the more sophisticated and skill required the business was, the fewer PWDs ventured into it. The most popular business ventures amongst PWDs were retail shops at 26.2%, tailoring at 13% and restaurants at 10.5%. Businesses that required sophisticated skills like internet cafés, mixing feed for animals, construction, supermarket, bakery and pharmacies were less ventured in by women and youth with disabilities.

To create more opportunities, we further defined the businesses identified above by traits to highlight the sectors they belong. It is from these sectors that PWDs will explore other business opportunities that are sustainable and more impactful. These sectors are Agro-processing, Agriculture, Manufacturing, and Renewable energy (Clean cook-stoves and Solar Products).

Conclusively, the study identified sectors that Inclusive Enterprise Groups (IEGs) can explore to become self-employed. Dominant among these were businesses in trade and distribution, agribusinesses, and renewable energy. The research, therefore, recommended the target groups to start businesses in:

- Small-scale farming of sesame
- Bottom-Up solar Energy Innovations
- Beehives to Market
- Piggery
- Poultry Keeping

In terms of problems identified, Finding XY recommended developing a business training workbook adapted to PWD, conducting a Business Development Service Training of Trainers workshop for DIFs, creating a fund, or providing financing with strong social impact and less financial returns goals, and finally creating business hubs for persons with disabilities where they can access information and be incubated.



## **Developing sector workbooks following the analysis from the market research**

The workbook material was developed in collaboration with the SEED global, Finding XY and Light for the World. Five sector workbooks were developed featuring tools and technical processes for producing or providing a service in a selected sector.

The SEED Replicator Workbook shared examples of proven business models, including information on replicable elements of these business models and a range of success factors. The workbooks were intended to guide entrepreneurs on how to think about their business and which elements to have in place to incubate their ideas and turn them into revenue-generating businesses.

The workbooks guide entrepreneurs with disabilities through the process of business idea development. The SEED tools and hands-on exercises encourage a new way of thinking and help entrepreneurs understand abstract concepts better. The modularity makes the Workbook relevant for the different stages of an idea or enterprise.

The workbooks included: Smaller Holder Farming Business Models; Energy Saving Equipment; From Bees to Markets; Poultry Farming Marketing Model; and, Bottom Up Solar Innovations



## **Inclusive Enterprise Group (IEG) training delivered by DIFs with the supervision of Finding XY to cover the 5 sector workbooks including branding and Marketing and the Technical Business Training**

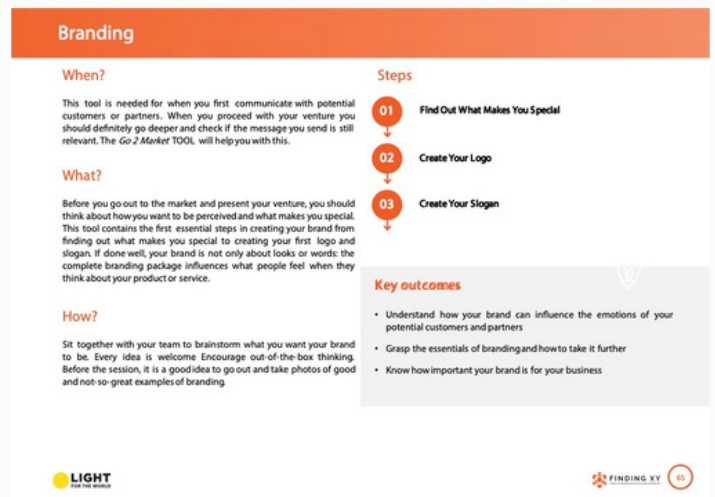
Finding XY carried out assessments in Gulu on the Ribbe Aye Teko group at St. Joe cell village; God parish, Bardege Layibi division; and, on Lubanga Mamiyo PWD Health group at Akwii village, Pawel parish, Patiko Sub County. The Ribbe Aye Teko Group, composing of eight members chose to undertake piggery farming as their business idea. The group in Akwii Village comprised seven members including four women and three men.

In Lira, assessments were conducted on the Note En Teko group of Akure village, Akure cell Onyakere ward, Amach town council; Ngwalo Dag Awaka Youth group in Ayomet cell village, Telella-ward parish, Ngetta City East division; and, Obanga Omaro Wa PWD Youth group in Te-Gomola village, Angolo com parish, Agweng sub-county. The En Teko group of Akure village group comprised eight youth members, two of whom are female. The group chose to undertake goat rearing as their business idea under the LFTW program.

The Ngwalo Dag Awaka Youth group comprising 10 youth members, four of whom were female, chose to undertake local poultry rearing as their business idea. The Obanga Omaro Wa PWD Youth group composed of 10 members, five of whom are female. The group took on piggery farming as their business idea.

In Mukono, the assessment was done on Hope Youth Group with Disability group in Kikeera village, Mpunge sub-county. The group has 10 members including four women and six men





**Above:** Images displaying the layout of the Five sector workbooks developed

In Wakiso District, assessment was done on Rays of Hope Disability Foundation in Nabweeru village, Nansana Municipality. The group has 10 PWDs members. They make soap and liquid detergent.

In Arua, assessment was done on two groups that rear kuroiler chicken in Arivu Sub County and Ajia Sub County respectively. Another group in Logiri Sub County wants to start honey production.

In Moroto, assessment was done on a group in Loktuk Sub County Headquarters, Rupa Sub County Headquarters, and Katuketile Sub County Headquarters. These three groups want to start a cereal bulking business. Assessment was also done at Tapac Sub County Headquarters on a group that wants to start a goat buying and selling business.

From these assessments, the Finding XY team generally observed that the facilitators were confident and with practice, they will be in a better position to conduct facilitation of PWDs on their own. They (DIFs) also demonstrated an understanding of the proper tools of training and shared relevant examples with the PWDs.

It is worth noting that the DIFs need to be supported with resources to conduct the set activities, less of which affects the morale and the general mood of the training.

Conclusively, the DIFs demonstrated talent and a potential to do great. Disability Inclusion Facilitators (DIFs) have talent and potential to successfully train IEGs. Through regular coaching and mentoring, they can achieve transformation objectives.





Highlights from the Inclusive Enterprise Group (IEG) training delivered by DIFs



**Left:** PWDS during a Training in Lira. **Right:** A DIF facilitating a training in Moroto



**Left:** PWDS during a Training in Mukono. **Right:** A DIF facilitating a training in Wakiso



**Left:** DIFs facilitating a training in Gulu. **Right:** A DIF facilitating a training in Arua



## **Coordination of support from lead entrepreneurs for DIFs and Inclusive Enterprises Groups**

Workshops training was scheduled and a training schedule and materials were designed for the PWDs. The purpose of the engagement was to:

- i. Provide technical training to IEG representatives in Moroto, Lira, Gulu and Arua districts.
- ii. Provide practical business and financial training to the IEG representatives.
- iii. Provide training manuals to the groups.
- iv. Provide follow-up technical advisory to the groups after the Agromax inclusive training programs.

The one-day practical learning and exposure were intended to equip beneficiaries with skills and knowledge to replicate in their existing businesses or start up new ventures in the value chains. The training employed guiding principles that enabled effective delivery to the vulnerable beneficiaries. These included: Learning Environment and Facilities; Special Needs and Inclusivity; Practical Approaches; and, Take Home Manuals to the DIFs. The training was delivered based on developed manuals by actors in the agricultural value chains that are active and of interest to the beneficiaries.

The main training subjects which were delivered included: Apiary, Poultry, Fruit and Vegetable Production, Goat Farming and Rabbitry, Cereal Banking and Post-harvest management, Nursery management for Seedling Production, piggyery, fish farming and bar soap - making. Participants in groups or cohorts of eight were trained in cross-cutting areas such as: starting up and managing a business, agriculture as a business, and basic record keeping.

## **Practical Approaches**

The delivery mode was practical, with hands-on training by expert trainers. The participants were encouraged to engage in some of the activities such as animal feeding, handling, chicken and chicks warming management, rabbitry bed making, etc. Learning by doing was more impactful.

## **Take Home Manuals to the DIFs**

The DIFs of the respective groups were handed soft copies of easily readable and manageable manuals to enable further practice and management of their respective enterprises. The DIFs will lead the groups, and with the support of partners such as Agromax, the implementation will be followed up.

### *Apiary*

The training was based on the curriculum approved by both the Ministry of Education-Department of Industrial Training and the Uganda National Apiculture Development Organization (TUNADO). A copy of the manual is attached to this report as an Appendix. A soft copy of the Curriculum and manual to assist the training of trainers (ToTs) have been provided.

### *Poultry*

Poultry was taught based on the small-scale poultry management techniques which can or may be applied to the local setting and not the commercial poultry which requires heavy investment. Simple and practical set-up and management technology with basic tools and equipment that is easy to operate for PWDs were adopted as an applicable model. The Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries released a Poultry manual which was utilized for this training.



Coordination of support from lead entrepreneurs for DIFs and Inclusive Enterprises Groups in Apiary, Poultry, Fruit and Vegetable Production, Goat Farming and Rabbitry, Cereal Banking and Post-harvest management, Nursery management for Seedling Production, piggery, fish farming and bar soap - making (above) and Soap-making (Below)



### *Fruit and Vegetable Production*

Vegetable production is considered a very applicable farm practice for PWDs. This is because it is not labour intensive, requires less manual work and gives results almost immediately. Vegetables such as doodo (Amaranthus), Sukuma wiki, onions, tomatoes and cabbages can be grown on small pieces of land, yet yield enough income to sustain a household. The content for this module is very wide and could not be completed in the time allocated. However, the training manual was developed by SNV with support from DANIDA. It is appended for the Trainers reference and further training.

### *Goat Farming and Rabbitry*

The participants who picked interest in rabbitry and goat rearing were equipped with practical skills in both zero-grazed goat keeping and mixed-range goat rearing (Lira and Kampala teams).

### *Fish Farming*

Basic skills of pond fish farming were taught through practical demonstration in Gulu and Lira. Beneficiaries learnt a few basic skills on how to manage fish ponds and appropriate feeding of fish at different stages. They can get inputs for the startup of fish farms on small scale.

### *Piggery*

This area of farming has particularly proved to be lucrative in Northern Uganda because of the large demand for pork. It is particularly significant to understand how to feed, manage the weight and size of pigs, and understand the different fast-maturing pigs.

### *Bar Soap Making*

The training was intended to help participants acquire skills in making bar soap using the hot process; this was so because the process is beginner friendly and has a faster turnaround.

The participants were introduced to soap-making safety gear equipment (safety goggles, rubber gloves, apron, overcoat etc) and guided on bar soap packaging and marketing strategies, the latter being guided by the 4ps; Place, Price, Product and Promotion. The training lasted a total of 2 days from 18-20 June 2022.

The training and discussion sessions on the concept of bar soap making were done by the qualified team from Harvolite Initiative Group who provided all participants with production safety gear and pre-requisite learning materials. After the training, findings from a survey of participants were that the newly trained team can successfully train other members in their communities since they were equipped with knowledge on:

- Types, sources and quantity of ingredients/materials are needed for both white and brown soap.
- Soap-making production process from initiation to packaging.
- Soap pricing concerning the cost price of a bar/box and ideal marketing strategy



## PROJECT LEARNINGS

The market research showed that most businesses were in form of sole proprietorship. Even in the cases where they had employees, they were below five with just about 11% of the businesses employing more than five employees. The study also showed that most businesses hardly employed Persons With Disabilities (PWD) and only a paltry number of business enterprises (16.4%) were owned by PWDs.

It was also discovered that women and youth with disabilities have a high affinity toward entrepreneurship and investments. This is, notwithstanding the lack of business capital, the lack of market information and the failure to meet financial institution requirements. Youth and women were engaged in an array of businesses such as transport and storage, manufacturing, agriculture, forestry and fishing, among others.

The study further identified the sectors that Inclusive Enterprise Groups (IEGs) can explore to become self-employed. Dominant among these were businesses in trade and distribution, agribusinesses, and renewable energy. These impactful activities include animal feeding, handling, chicken and chicks warming management, and rabbitry bed making. Vegetable production was identified as a very applicable farm practice for PWDs because it is not labour intensive, requires less manual work and gives results almost immediately.

With the need to address the impact of climate change, there has been an increased demand for seedlings. It was noted during the workshops that the PWDs can manage nurseries on a small scale. Other businesses that seem lucrative include, piggery, fish farming and poultry.

## CONCLUSION

PWDs have the affinity and interest to own and successfully run their businesses, if availed with the right tools (such as following training manuals on different businesses). Additionally, with persistent learnings by the DIFs benchmarking on the workbooks provided, the DIFs are in a position to further walk the business journeys with the PWDs. We identified that Inclusive Enterprise Groups can explore becoming self-employed through small-scale businesses such as small-scale farming, Bottom-Up solar Energy Innovations, Beehives to Market, Piggery, Poultry Keeping and bar soap making. With both financial and non-financial business support, vulnerable persons can own and sustain businesses to improve their livelihoods.





## RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the challenge of access to finance or PWDs SMEs, impact investors and funders should consider setting up a revolving fund to finance youth enterprises at zero or below market rates; work with a fund manager to fundraise and invest in enterprises established by persons with disabilities; and, design a facility that guarantees financial institutions to lend to entrepreneurs with disabilities as a first loss cover for financing made to the enterprises. The approach considered should be biased towards social and environmental impact returns than financial gains.

PWDs should be encouraged to venture into entrepreneurship to create more jobs and improve their livelihoods. Charity organizations, civil society organizations, impact investors and business advisory firms should explore incubation centres or hubs with the local government and communities to provide the necessary support as a long-term strategy.

The DIFs muster the skills required for the successful accomplishment of all tasks associated with the chosen small-scale enterprise to be established in a rural area. These skills and tasks vary from one business to another. For PWDs, certain techniques may be needed to replace the "conventional way" of doing things. For example, using the feet or mouth instead of hands has proven very efficient. Certain aiding tools and devices (wheelchairs) can also be adapted to a person's physical disability.

In addition to training, it's imperative that DIFs counsel the PWDs to build their self-esteem and have a positive mindset. PWDs have the ability to confront and surmount problems through open-minded interactions among themselves and in addition, through meditation, reflection and physical exercises.

