



FINAL EVALUATION – Executive Summary

Education, Equality and Empowerment (EEE)
in Gakenke, Musanze and Nyabihu Districts
2013-2016



Acknowledgements:

Thanks are due to the amazing team that supported the evaluation process and all the patience and help they gave in exploring the ways in which the EEE project had impacted on CwDs. As an evaluator of inclusive education programming, I see many teams working in difficult circumstances with CwDs. The team (Felicien Turatsinze, Jean Damascene Maniradufasha, Jaqueline Mukandayisenga, Longin Nzeyumuremyi, Seth Rugabire Ngabire and Adrien Habiyaremye) deserve special recognition for the professional attitude, humility and ability to keep the child at the centre of all their work, all of their planning and all of their focus. It was truly a memorable learning experience for me. Also, the team could not have operated with such dedication without the support of Louis Ngabonziza and Katie Fowler who helped steer the project through extremely challenging circumstances. Together they have delivered real and meaningful change for CwDs in northern Rwanda.

Thanks are also due to Mark Smith and Dr Rafael Mitchell for all their support in the production of this report.

All writing and views expressed in this report are from the evaluation process carried out by Emma Sarton (Enable – Ed Consulting) during February 2017, and as such, she takes full responsibility for the work here. Throughout the report, she is referred to as the evaluator.

Abbreviations

CfC Chance for Childhood

CwD Children with Disabilities

CwoD Children without Disabilities

DDMO District Disability Mobilisation Officer

DEO District Education Officer

DoS Director of Studies

ECD Empowering Children with Disabilities

EEE Education, Equality and Empowerment Project

FCYF Fair Children Youth Foundation

IE Inclusive Education

LSA Learning Support Assistant

NCPD National Council for Persons with Disabilities

OOSC Out of School Children

OVC Orphan and vulnerable children

PSG Parent Support Groups

ToR Terms of Reference

VSLA Village Savings and Loans Association

Executive Summary

The purpose of this evaluation was to independently verify the progress made by Chance for Childhood (CfC) and their partner Empowering Children with Disabilities (ECD) in delivering on a 4-year Comic Relief funded total grant of £600,418 which aimed to promote inclusive education for disabled children in Rwanda. This was carried out in two phases on a rolling basis throughout three districts in Northern Rwanda. The first phase was to carry out extensive mapping (hitherto never been done before) to identify children with disabilities (CwD) from 3 -25 years of age in all districts. The second phase was to use this mapping data to identify CwD (mild to moderate communication disabilities) and facilitate them to participate in education and succeed in their learning through the use of a learning support assistant (LSA) or a trained teacher. In addition to the evaluation reporting on the outcomes as stated in the project documentation, CfC were particularly interested in:

1. Exploring whether inclusive education can be enhanced by the participation of community volunteers acting as LSAs in mainstream schools.
2. Exploring whether the LSA model is particularly effective at reducing stigma and negative community attitudes and how this impacts on the educational experience of children with disabilities.

Also the evaluation aimed to assess the value for money of the project and make recommendations as to how to develop the project further.

The project worked in 3 districts in Rwanda and with approximately 48 mainstream schools in each district. Also, the project also worked with special education centres and schools and attempted to create and enhance networks that support the inclusion of CwDs and their communities. This was carried out through advocacy work aimed at engaging communities and enhancing (in some cases establishing) networks of support for CwDs in the health, economic and education sectors.

The results achieved by the project in both phases, mapping and LSA model implementation, are notable. In particular the mapping was unique, not seen before in Rwanda and indeed extremely rare in sub Saharan Africa. It had a huge impact on the way in which local agencies could plan and resource needs and on communities themselves, raising awareness and generating discussion on attitudes towards marginalised and vulnerable groups. The LSA model is a first of its kind innovative model in Rwanda and in the region, which has enabled CwDs to not only access schooling but experience quality education that has concrete learning outcome for them.

The key successes that have been achieved by project include:

- Extensive mapping of three districts, finding 23,396 people living with disability, with on average 34% between the ages of 3 -25.
- Revealed counter-evidence which indicated that children and young people with disabilities in Rwanda have an equal opportunity to go to school. On average 70% of the parents/caregivers of the children with disabilities expressed that their child does have the same opportunity as other children to attend school. Between 46% to 53% of CwDs were found not to be attending school.
- Supported 154 CwD (88 males and 66 females) with an LSA to access and experience meaningful education in the three districts (Muzanze 45, Gakenke 53 and Nyabihu 65) overachieving on the target by 214%.

- Responding to mapping results by developing innovative communication camps for children with severe and profound disabilities.

From the perception of the evaluator and stakeholders, the chief cause of these positive changes was the empowerment of stakeholders through the mapping process, providing the impetus for change. This resulted in developing the ability of parents, schools, children and officials to enable access and meaningful learning for CwDs.

The presence of CwDs in school engenders attitudinal change; it allows teachers and children alike the chance for experiential learning and many stakeholders were able to articulate how their attitudes and behaviours had shifted throughout the course of the project. There is a clear impact of the training that stakeholders received and the introduction of the LSA that had both an educational and social work role. There is a positive reinforcement cycle from CwDs enjoying school and achieving, reporting this at home to parents, so they have a positive experience, the relationship between parents, children and siblings is improved, improving the self-esteem of the CwDs themselves which is then taken back into schools. At the same time, the self-esteem and pride parents feel for their children is seen in local communities and this in itself is positively reinforced by the acceptance that communities demonstrate.

Organisationally the project faced challenges of partnership change, lack of previously agreed on support from specialists, changing conditions on the ground and unexpected results from the mapping that required a rethinking of provision. The project team managed these challenges extremely well, responding to changes and were not afraid to make hard decisions. They were all committed to delivering the best quality project outcomes and consistently kept the experience of the beneficiaries (CwDs) as the focus of their work.

In terms of value for money the evaluator primarily used a 'pound plus' model which aimed to measure additional income generated by providers over and above core income from the main donor budget (Comic Relief). The evaluator found that for **every £1 spent of Comic Relief money £1.26 in addition was leveraged**. This reflects the good value for money achieved by the project. What was equally impressive was also the range of sources of this additional funding, the strength of partnerships the project has developed and indeed possible future funding.

The evaluation makes a number of possible recommendations with regard to the future and other CfC inclusive education programming. These areas include:

1. Officials and Networks

There is much to share from the project and avenues to be explored to advocate on the behalf of CwDs. The evaluator recommends exploring opportunities for collaborative research with other NGOs in this area both in Rwanda and internationally, for example sharing the mapping process/LSA model at conferences and forums as it is unique and is of interest to many. Within Rwanda cementing links with NGOs, government officials and disability organisations and networks will mean greater exposure of the LSA programme and the results of mapping.

Finding a way to capitalise on the existing mapping and enabling districts to continue with the process will mean that the huge data collection exercise will be sustainable and provide added value to planning.

2. Identification of CwDs

Mapping was one of the huge successes of the project, with hitherto unseen detail in Rwanda and in many other SSA countries. However this process flagged up the common issue regarding knowledge on identification of CwDs.

To ensure accurate identification, not only is training required but also discussions at a higher level on what inclusion means and definitions of disability type need to be confirmed so all stakeholders have a common understanding.

3. M+E and Tools

Identify areas for M+E development and implement more training to develop capacity in M+E.

Improve effectiveness of working as a team at a distance though joint training and setting up of M+E frameworks collaboratively.

Explore the best methods by which learning can be captured, minimising the tools needed.

4. Data and indicators

Exploring what quantitative data in particular can be collected to demonstrate change.

Create a central store/database or utilisation of a data management system (like Kobo) for data capture, organised by project outcomes so that the whole team can access it.

Utilise additional rigorous methodologies to measure impact. The use of semi-experimental methods may be of use, for example using control groups to measure impact.

5. Organisation and management

The decentralised nature of roles means that communication can be tricky. For example liaising between Rwanda, Uganda and UK, can result in greater delays and lack of awareness on what others are working. In terms of moving forward with the current partnership clear lines of communication and decision making need to be transparent to all.

6. Advocacy

Greater advocacy is needed to support the project in achieving its aims of scale up and replicability. However, there are additional activities that need to be designed and implemented to develop advocacy goals, for example, engendering greater collaboration between District education officials, health and social protection bodies.

Building on the advocacy already done and capitalising on the positive opinion of stakeholders is necessary as is ensuring a future advocacy strategy and plan is developed.

7. Mapping Process

One of the huge successes of this project was the mapping process, which was appreciated by all stakeholders and the wider IE community. It would be a shame to lose the momentum made by the mapping process. Engage officials to discuss the idea of capitalising on the data collection already carried out by the mapping and take it further to include mapping the last few years with a plan to continue on in the future.

Explore provision for the 10 -15 age range. These individuals did not come under the remit of the project so represent a gap in provision. Additionally they are not catered for in society either as they (under law) should be in school and have no vocational provision when this might be a viable option for them.

8. Parents and School Clubs

The evaluation process revealed the power that parents have over the success of a programme like this, and while the team know this, it needs to be formalised and built into future programming and monitoring and evaluation. The school clubs were also interesting drivers for change with children demonstrating a desire to join and project staff attesting to their impact. More formal evaluation is needed to build on the limited data collection from this evaluation.

9. Assumptions

A number of assumptions were made either by the project or the stakeholders that need to be challenged or considered in future programming.

- a) The '*poor mindsets*'¹ of parents could be influencing provision and attitude of local government. The project has done much to engage parents but future programme could challenge these perceptions through project and research work.
- b) The initial LSA model of training used imported European methods/terminology so may not have been wholly suitable to Rwandan context. In particular the issue with identification of CwDs that became apparent throughout implementation. The project team recognises that stakeholders need more orientation around disability, its identification and the definitions associated with IE.
- c) With regard to stigma, reported change is not always real, lasting change. Stakeholders and consultants spoken to support the view that it is easy to have surface level change but that does not mean that on a deeper societal level there is attitudinal change. Future programming needs to continue to capitalise on these changes and embed them further.
- d) The lack of infrastructure in schools has not helped CwDs settle into schools and has meant that the LSAs impact may have been reduced., for example, physical infrastructure and resources for both CwD and LSAs. This obviously has funding implications for future programming but if addressed will cement gains already made and help to maximise the impact that CwDs will get in the future.

Throughout the evaluation, the evaluator sought to support both CfC and ECD by providing work beyond the initial scope of the evaluation. These are summarised:

- 1) Developing an organisational audit of both partners with feedback
- 2) Developing with partners a progression matrix in inclusive education to support monitoring and evaluation in the Comic Relief Project
- 3) Supporting ECD with tools to assess changes in attitudes

¹ This phrase was commonly used by stakeholders when talking about parent's attitudes and ideas and behaviours.