Making Vocational and Educational Training Accessible

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Rural Development

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Background of the organization and project

Initiatives for economic empowerment of people with disabilities very limited.

Vocational training inaccessible → high unemployment rates.

EU-funded programme (2015-2019) to address this issue:

- **Light for the World**: international inclusive development organization with office in Moz.
- **Young Africa**: vocational training and employment in Mozambique and other countries
Objectives and key actions of the project

• **Making vocational training centres inclusive and accessible:** creating accessible hostels and adapting the centres; accessibility audits; education of staff on inclusion of persons with disabilities, sign language training etc.

• **Ensuring cooperation** between Disabled People’s Organizations and Young Africa: referral of young persons with disabilities from the communities to Young Africa training centres.

• **Advocating for inclusion in the labour market** and towards businesses: to foster employment opportunities of persons with disabilities and support self-employment initiatives for the graduates.
Innovation aspects of the project

**Cross-collaboration:** mainstream organization Young Africa - inclusive development expert Light for the World – Disabled People’s Organizations in the communities – businesses – local government:

- Working together to make vocational training accessible and inclusive.

**Accessibility features:**

- Accessible cafeteria, dormitories and classrooms (adapted furniture, lowered door locks and light switches, adapted work tools), accessible lavatories, library computers with Jaws software, sign language for all trainers, ramps.

- Accessibility audits to ensure compliance with accessibility standards and to monitor progress
Impact

• 182 persons with disabilities trained in industrial and agricultural courses;
• 13 individuals (self-)employed;
• 47 students with disabilities interning in 16 companies Beira;
• 30 Young Africa staff and trainers trained in sign language;
• >60 companies sensitized on disability-inclusion in the job market through two big events (Skills Fair of persons with disabilities; 10-Year-Conference of Young Africa).
Finance and sustainability

**Funding partners** for current project: European Union (€1.5 million), Austrian Development Agency (€85,000), Light for the World itself (€10,000).

**How to sustain the good practice:**

- Light for the World will replicate this initiative to other training centres and countries.
- All new project proposals of Young Africa now include a disability component (scholarships, trainings, etc.) and accessible centres enable future intake of youth with disabilities.
- Cooperation between Disabled People’s Organizations and Young Africa will be maintained to ensure good referral of persons with disabilities.
Challenges faced by the project

• Education challenges: Low level of education and literacy among youths with disabilities (institutional and social barriers in their access to school) makes access to vocational training more difficult.

• Financial crisis in Mozambique (2900 companies had to declare bankruptcy): companies cannot hire a lot due to financial strains, effecting job opportunities for the Young Africa graduates as well.
Next Steps

• Identify potential foundations and companies to support income generation activities for more than 150 youths who graduated in Young Africa centres;
• Provide training to 100 companies in Beira on how to include persons with disabilities in business;
• Focus on literacy courses to improve reading and writing skills of persons with disabilities to prepare them for vocational training at Young Africa.