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IV. CHALLENGES

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS
AGR  Association des guides au Rwanda
CBR  Community Based rehabilitation
CEVs  Community education volunteers
COVID – 19  Corona Virus Diseases
CRPD  Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
EFA  Education For All
GA  General assembly
GS  Groupe Scolaire
IE  Inclusive education
IEP  Individual Education Plan
IZU  Inshuti z’umuryango (friends of families)
MINALOC  Ministry of Local government
MINEDUC  Ministry of education
NPC Rwanda  National Paralympic Committee
MoH  Ministry of Health
NSTI  National Strategy for Transformation
NUDOR  National Union of the Disability Organizations in Rwanda
OIPPA  Organization
PS  Primary school
PWDs  Persons with disabilities
REB  Rwanda education Board
RECORDO  Rwanda Ex-Combatants and other People with Disabilities’organization
RENCP  Rwanda Education NGOS Coordination Platform
RNUD  Rwanda National Union of the Deaf
RUB  Rwanda union of the Blind
RULP  Rwanda Union of Little People
SDGs  Sustainable Development Goals
TOT  Trainers of Trainers
THT  Troupe des Handicappés Tuzamurane
TV  Television
UNCRPD  United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
THE PROJECT’S RATIONALE

Education is a fundamental human right and essential for the exercise of all other human rights. It promotes individual freedom and empowerment and yields important development benefits. Nowadays, the world is committed to promoting inclusive education as a key strategy for the development of EFA. In the same vision, Rwanda is committed to promoting education of children with disabilities in the mainstream schools. The United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa, the Law Nº 01/2007 relating to Protection of Disabled Persons in General, the National Strategy for Transformation One (NST1), the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other numerous instruments highlight the necessity of considering children with disabilities education and they give government the obligation to honour their commitment to the citizens including those with disabilities and their families.

The right to education is protected by the legal instruments such as the Rwanda's Constitution of 2003 with Amendments through 2015 in its article 20 that stipulates that the every Rwandan has the right to education, freedom of learning, right to academic freedom, compulsory education and for free primary education in schools subsidized by the government. The article 51 of the same document stipulates that the government has the duty to establish special measures facilitating the education of persons with disabilities.

The National Union of the Disability Organizations in Rwanda (NUDOR) is established as a civil society umbrella of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities to advocate for their rights and specific needs. It undertook the implementation of this EFA Project to ideally promote basic education among children with disabilities in Rwanda by implementing a model of inclusive education with local partners but also to inform policy makers and provide some advice on how education of people with disability can effectively be improved and reflected into practice.

I. INTRODUCTION

This part intends to give an overview of the project.

1. **Project name:** Education For all
2. **Funding Partners:** Danish Ministry of Foreign affairs through Disabled People’s Organizations Denmark and Danish Scouts and Guides Association
3. **Start and end date** (per agreement): June 2016 to December 2021
4. **Beneficiaries:** In and out of schools children with disabilities and their immediate family members.

5. **Partners organizations to be involved** (Number and list): Association des guides au Rwanda (AGR), RENCP members, Ministry of education (MINEDUC)/ Rwanda education board (REB), Five districts (one per province), Rwanda Union of the Blind and Rwanda national union of the Deaf.

6. **Members Organizations involved:** All the members through steering committee except UNABU via Education Steering Committee, THT in awareness campaign matters, NPC in sport matters, RNUD, RUB and COLLECTIF TUBAKUNDE when it comes to deal with specific categories of deaf, blind and people with intellectual disability.

7. **Location/Geographic coverage:** Six schools in five districts of Rwanda namely: GS RUKINGU in RULINDO District, GS RUHANGO Catholique in RUHANGO Districts, GS RWISIRABO in NYAGATARE district, MURAMBA A and GITEGA PS in NGORORERO districts and GS BUREMA in NYARUGENGE District and National level.

8. **Overall objective:** Promote basic education among children with disabilities in Rwanda by implementing a model for inclusive education.

**II. ACHIEVEMENTS**

In June 2016, NUDOR under DPOD’s funds collaborated with different stakeholders to carry out awareness about the importance of including children with disabilities in nearby school. After some intensive community awareness activities, different children with disabilities were identified and some parents committed to send them to school. The teachers had no idea how to deal with some children with severe disabilities. To that end, a multidimensional approach was used to cater for every learner’s educational needs and learn at one’s pace as described here below.
2.1. Outcome One: Develop accessible model schools with equal opportunities for all learners, and effectively include children with special educational needs

This is in line with the article 9 of the UNCRPD which commits signatories to provide for full accessibility in their countries. It is in this regard that NUDOR has coordinated the process of developing a comprehensive accessibility package tool intended to guide the development and management of accessibility in Rwandan inclusive schools. Reference made to the above mentioned tool, much has been undertaken in the six schools of the project operation.

2.1.1. Improved School accessibility to accommodate all learners’ needs

First of all, an “Accessibility Management Team” has been put in place in each school and then it has been requested to carry out the school accessibility assessment/audit and the following steps were followed: learning more about accessibility and what it means for people who have a disability (1); comparing the learnings with the current accessibility plan of the school to compile any further information (2); Creating the school accessibility checklist (3); The Accessibility Management Team used the School Accessibility Checklist to find out how accessible the school is for people who have a disability (4); Once the assessments have been completed, identifying if anything needs to be changed in the school to make it more accessible (5); making a list of the most important accessibility changes that need to be made in the school. These priorities have been included in the school Action Plan that will regularly be implemented and monitored (6).

Under this project intervention, the schools achieved to remove barriers in learners’ daily life and education as follow:

- **Physical Barriers** include such things as a narrow doorway that prevents a person who uses a...
wheelchair from entering a classroom.

- **Attitudinal Barriers** include the idea, opinion or thought that someone with a disability cannot do something because of the disability.
- **Technological/ didactical Barriers** including jaws in computers so that learners with visual impairment can follow learning like their peers.
- **Information and Communication Barriers** include the use of sign language at home and school.
- **Accessible recreational facilities** eg: Playgrounds, inclusive games and sports, drama, leisure like BOCCIA, athletics and sitting volley are taking place in the schools.
- **Accessible WASH services** (toilet, hand wash facilities).

### 2.1.2. Training of teachers on Inclusive pedagogical theories and practices

Two years alongside the project has started, a diversity of children with disabilities have been enrolled in schools but teachers had no idea how to accommodate that diversity and were claiming for being trained, equipped with knowledge in special need education. In 2018 twelve teachers from all the six schools together with two NUDOR Staff and twelve members of the NUDOR education Steering committee were invited and have completed the two weeks training at the University of Rwanda. The above mentioned team of TOTs have since managed to train 236 of their colleagues who are capable of applying inclusive practices at their respective schools. HARAGIRIMANA Frederic\(^1\) stressed well on the impact of the training in his testimony: "Trained teachers train their peers on how to plan their lessons, apply teaching aids and pedagogical methods to motivate and support students with different needs, and to establish constructive relationships between teachers and parents to children with disabilities. The in-house training is practice-oriented, focusing on applying inclusive practices in the classroom to ensure that every learner learns to the best of their ability."

### 2.1.2.1. Impact of engaging different stakeholders on learning outcome

#### 2.1.2.1.1. Level of changes about inclusive education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Categories of stakeholders engaged</th>
<th>Total numbers</th>
<th>Level of change about education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>REB Officials</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) HARAGIRIMANA Frederic, GS RUKINGU class teacher.
2.1.2.1.3. Number of CWDs enrolled in schools of intervention in 2021 in comparison with the baseline

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>District technical steering committees members</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Schools head teachers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td></td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Learners with and without disabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NUDOR Project Mid-term evaluation, 2019.

Source: NUDOR field monitoring visit report November 2021. In summary, the charts indicate that significant progress has been made at a very high level in 2021 compared to the baseline study in 2016. The number of enrolled children with disabilities increased from 118 to 365.

2.2. Outcome two: Create supportive Communities to actively identify and enrol of out of school CWDs and provide them with feasible local solutions

The above mentioned multidimensional approach to effectively implement inclusion of in and out of school children with disabilities has also embarked upon the community. The aim was to stimulate positive attitude towards people with disabilities and to school inclusion in the community around the schools and in schools themselves. Different groups made of influential persons namely community health workers, friends of family (IZU), parents of children with

disabilities, scouts and girls guides have been created in collaboration with school and local leaders to regularly support the school while responding to the children’s special educational needs.

2.2.1. Awareness rising towards the rights to education of children with disability as a pillar

The awareness campaigns at the national and local levels reached out to various community stakeholders like family members, people with disabilities, their neighbours, teachers, health professionals, local authorities, religious leaders, decisions makers, civil society organisations, and donors for people with disabilities to enjoy their rights and to participate in the community life fully. Public campaigns organised in and out of schools contributed to increased knowledge on the rights of children with disability to education whereby some schools authorities started physical accessibility actions with the support of the community through UMUGANDA. Around five thousand community members: local and school leaders, parents and students participated in different awareness sessions to promote inclusive education by removing existing barriers.

In the schools, Inclusive education clubs were also established to continue awareness among the school environment and to support new coming students with disabilities in schools to know their rights and to facilitate their inclusion.

2.2.2. Community members have improved understanding of the right to education of CWDs

The positive attitude improved the school attendance and retention of children with disability from 176 in 2016 to 386 in 2019. Awareness meetings increased positive attitude among various stakeholders towards people with a disability, and especially towards such children. Parents stopped hiding their children with a disability and assisted them to attend school. Other pupils became more
understanding and supportive of fellow pupils with disabilities. Teachers took up the responsibility to devise ways to support children with a disability to learn.

### 2.2.3. Joint follow up meetings and reporting well structured

Under this EFA Project, a team of 15 community education volunteers has put in place around each model inclusive school which makes a total of 90 CEVs around the schools of intervention. The work undertaken by community education volunteers at both community level for identification and enrolment of out of school children with disability and at school level for regular follow of attendance by the enrolled children continues long after the project has ended. With their support, the project achieved to establish a database for all in and out of school children with disabilities, challenges they encounter at daily basis and support needed is either provided or suggested to key right education key actors. The team meets monthly and compiles in a report issues in line with schooling of CWDs (what works well, difficulties encountered and some mitigation ways). A quarterly meeting to report back bringing together CEVs, School and local leaders is held and actions are taken accordingly to keep fostering education of learners with disabilities.

### 2.3. Outcome Three: Address rehabilitation barriers for children with disability to better fit the educational system

Activities under this thematic area included ensuring that after the identification of children with disabilities in the communities, the identified children were assessed to determine their needs to enable them to attend and succeed in school.

### 2.3.1. Educational assessment of learners’ special needs

This comes in response to three main questions here below to plan an effective teaching & learning process:

1. Are teachers teaching what they think they are teaching?
2. Are students learning what they are supposed to be learning?
3. Is the lesson plan elaborated accordingly?

Since the EFA project has been launched in all the six schools, a

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**Case Study: A teacher that addresses the needs of special needs learners**

Etienne MUNYAKAZI is a primary teacher at GS RUKINGU. Etienne is one of the teachers who received in-depth training on individual special needs and inclusive education provided by the University Of Rwanda College Of Education in collaboration with NUDOR. The training gave him the skill of ensuring that he reaches out to all the learners in his class. “The first thing I do before I start teaching is to identify learners with special needs that are in the class so that I can help every child based on the problem they have,” he said.
number of children with different special educational needs have been enrolled. These can range from temporary to more complex or long-term educational barriers. If a parent or a teacher has concerns or worries (a learner does not seem to be making progress, or needs a lot of extra help), at any time, that his/her child may have serious challenges in school, s/he should contact the teacher or any other professional working with them to establish educational needs with precision and details of educational support required by the learner with Special Educational Needs. Teachers actually assess learners for quite a range of different reasons: motivation, creating learning opportunities, to give feedback to learners, parents or any other stakeholders in education. Within EFA project schools of intervention, all the school personnel in general and members of Multidisciplinary team have been trained to be skilled at this practice.

2.3.2. Alternative educational placement and provision of assistive devices

36 teachers and members of the schools assessing multidisciplinary teams were trained. Cases of learners with special educational needs were identified, discussed about to purposely propose sort out encountered difficulties. The team finally comes up either decide on the learner’s alternative educational placement and/or refer them to specialists for deep medical treatment. It is in that regards that at the of 2021 a total number of 271 learners with disabilities have been educationally assessed, 59 learners were learning through IEP, 31 learners were referred to specialists for treatment and 3 learners were referred to vocational training.

Case Story: NIYOGISUBIZO Divine

She was in primary six p6, and from the beginning of that school year, she was running behind others. The educational assessment found out that she had visual difficulties and her eyes were hurting. She has been referred to KABGAYI special eye hospital, has been treated and quickly came back to school. Bright learner she has succeeded national examination and started S1 in APPEC – MURAMBI.

2.4. Outcome four: Provide evidence-based and collective advocacy for the implementation of inclusive education

All the EFA project was targeting is the change towards effective implementation of inclusion of persons with disabilities in schools. Additionally, the outcome meant to strengthen inclusive education partnership and coordination mechanisms among NUDOR Members and its stakeholders. Even though there is still a way to go, a number of activities have been undertaken and NUDOR achieved a lot as described in the following line.
2.4.1. Collection of evidences around education of children with disabilities

It consisted of gathering evidence on what works well and what constituted barriers to effectively include learners with disabilities while implementing EFA project. To make this happen, NUDOR has collaborated with allies from its education network including Education steering committee, National council of persons with disabilities (NCPD), Member of Parliament representing persons with disability, Education Sector Working Group, Rwanda Education NGOs Coordination Platform members, Inclusive Education Technical Working Group, Equity and Inclusion Working Group, Joint Review of Education Sector platform and Rwanda Media houses. Joint monitoring visits of the project implementation were carried out and in different meetings reports were shared, discussed about to finally come up with key messages to be used to convince different Ministries including the Ministry of Education to commit to set guidelines towards the promotion of education of children with disabilities both in inclusive setting and special education as appropriate.

2.4.2. Engaging with duties bearers

NUDOR tried to reach its target audience using evidence gathered from the field well packaged either in a report, a position paper submitted to relevant bodies especially the MINEDUC or lobby meetings or evening sessions are organized and the media is involved. Evidence under EFA project intervention have been hot issues and some are listed here below:

- Availability of exact data of school age children with disabilities in and out schools;
- Educational assessment of/for learning by learners with disabilities in schools;
- Equipment of schools with accessible teaching and learning materials;
- Additional teachers to support learners with special educational needs;
- Ownership of inclusive education projects achievements by the governments and its different institution and their replication;
- Alternative education of children with psycho-social, intellectual disabilities and provision of related support;
- Dissemination of Special needs and inclusive education policy and its implementation;
- Etc…
2.4.3. New practices are being applied /systemic changes

Thanks to a joint advocacy of NUDOR and its different partners a number of systemic changes are taking place under the ministry of education coordination and the following can be listed:

i. Having in place a well-developed and adopted policy on special needs and inclusive education due to the NUDOR advocacy in collaboration with its education stakeholders;

ii. Having in place a ratified Marrakesh treaty due to the NUDOR’s advocacy in collaboration with RUB and NCPD,

iii. Having in place an adapted curriculum on the education of children with intellectual disabilities due to the expertise and advocacy of NUDOR in collaboration with its stakeholders in education;

2.5. Organizational development - Strengthening the Disability movement

Key initiatives have also been done under DPOD’s funds to support member organizations and strengthen NUDOR’s organisational capacity for the implementation of advocacy related to UNCRPD and/or to strengthen the collaboration within the disability movement. The list is long and the major ones are: Training of 8 NUDOR staff and 5 representatives of NUDOR members on Washington Group of Questionnaires (1); Training of 9 NUDOR staff on Result Based Management, development of NUDOR standard method for strategically collecting, analyzing and packing evidence and the trained staff achieved to collect, analyze and pack evidences on four best practices around EFA Project to be used in the near future and beyond purposely to identify and engage with relevant duty-bearers (2); Capacity organization of NUDOR small organizations such NOUSPR to re-establish of leadership organs, COLLECTIF TUBAKUNDE, OIPPA, RULP and RECOPDO and provision of financial support to organize the GA, Use of Quick book,... (3), conducting an assessment on education of children with intellectual disabilities in schools, gaps are identified and recommendations to decisions makers and to stakeholders formulated and compiled in a report (4); Dissemination of accessible information around COVID – 19 to PWDS and individuals of NUDOR MOs (5); participation in different meetings to discuss about a new four years NUDOR&DPOD partnership agreement and Elaboration of new DPOD funded project; Training of NUDOR MOs audit committees on responsibilities and roles; Conduct Different National advocacy campaigns through media (Radio & Television talk show) together with MOs and key stakeholders like different Ministries
Officials; Finalization of 2021 -2024 NUDOR strategic plan, approved by members and an operational plan is drafted.

III. Main results

3.1. Organizational development - strengthening the disability umbrella organization

- Our work to strengthen our role as an umbrella organization in the past year

First of all gaps that hinder NUDOR to quickly achieve its mission and vision were sorted out and a plan to overcome them was set out accordingly, this work consisted of both reviewing the NUDOR Strategic plan with focus to its different areas of intervention, its strategic aims and effectively work with partners while developing projects and implementing them purposely to achieve the set goals and objectives.

3.1.1. What was the most important change?

From 2018-2021, NUDOR staff have improved their knowledge on UNCRP, SDGs and Rwanda National legal framework and NUDOR used its staff to facilitate internal training for its staff, member organizations and elsewhere countrywide it is called upon alongside a its harmonized and coordinated day to day advocacy work.

- Why was it important?

As per NUDOR Human resource assessment, gaps on legal framework (UNCRPD, SDGs,..) are demonstrated which may have an impact in one way or another on NUDOR’s daily interventions as far as disability is our concern. Before NUDOR used to look for outsider facilitators to capacitate the NUDOR’s staff and Member organizations but in collaboration with DPOD and other partners the NUDOR Staff knowledge has significantly increased and NUDOR is no longer waiting for outsider facilitators. Consequently, NUDOR has extended its areas of intervention and the number of beneficiaries has increased.

- How was it achieved?

Reference made to five days training on National and international legal framework to all NUDOR staff, the latter are equipped with knowledge. Follow up exchanges of experience, challenges, best practices are regularly taking place and serve as a guiding package during carrying
out the daily advocacy work, implementation of NUDOR’s Projects but also empowering MOs that NUDOR is representing.

3.1.2. What was the most important outcome?
In 2021, NUDOR staffs are able to collect, document and pack projects best practices to purposely engage with duty bearers within NUDOR advocacy work Rwanda countrywide and outside.

- **Why was it important?**
NUDOR EFA Project (2016 -2021) has undertaken a lot towards modeling effective school inclusion of children with disabilities but a standard method for collecting and documenting achievements for further use was still a gap whereas advocacy was intended to influence duty bearers for ownership and replication of the best practice in educating learners with disabilities.

- **How was it achieved?**
Nine NUDOR Staff attended a very participatory five days training on RBM that was organized and facilitated by DPOD. Materials for the training were taken from EFA project field reports and practice was organized at GS RUKINGU to collect best practices from interviewees. The trained staffs are equipped with knowledge to use the developed tool around EFA and beyond in the future.

3.2. OD - Strengthening the disability movement

- **NUDOR’s work to strengthen the capacity of your member organizations and/or the collaboration within the disability movement**
To strengthen the capacity of NUDOR member organizations a number of activities have been undertaken: Involvement of different member organizations during implementation of different projects (EFA, a DPOD funded project, CBR and Make Way Liliane Foundation funded Projects…) (1); Financially support MOs to organize GA meeting and solve hot issues hindering the organization progress (NOUSPR, UWEZO, COLLECTIF TUBAKUNDE) (2); Organizational capacity assessment of different NUDOR MOs and joint planning of actions to bridge gaps (3); Represent NUDOR Members Organizations in different circumstances and report back (4).
3.2.1. **What was the most important outcome?**

In 2021, NUDOR MOs and respective individual members are inclusively represented in the responsive and participatory decision-making vis-à-vis the promotion and protection of rights of Persons with disability at all levels in Rwanda.

- **Why was it important?**
  NUDOR MOs are given equal chance and opportunities within the advocacy work NUDOR is undertaking as a voice of persons with disabilities.

- **How was it achieved (your contribution)?**
  NUDOR has put in place different committees: Steering committees, advocacy committees, District platforms and assigned to them ….

3.3. **Empowerment of persons with disabilities and / or their immediate family**

- **NUDOR's work to create lasting improvements for persons with disabilities and / or their immediate families**
  Towards the empowerment of persons with disabilities and / or their immediate families, NUDOR focuses on building a collective understanding, and promote respect for people who have a disability trough awareness campaigns, Radio & TV talk show, training on disability rights,…

3.3.1. **What was the most important change?**

From 2018 – 2021, in Rwanda, PWDs who are members of NUDOR MOs or not, were systematically and consistently included in and benefited from national policies, and therefore improved their lives and participate in the society like other citizens (rights promotion/protection, education and employment).

- **Why was it important?**
  Even though different policies with specific consideration of disability markers were there, some gaps were also identified, hindering rights of persons with disabilities such as rights to education, public transport, sexual reproduction, banking,…

- **How was it achieved (your contribution)?**
  NUDOR through its four areas of interventions, contributed to change lives of PWDs in a positive way. It has been done through policies analysis and identification of gaps and development of policy position to line ministries for information and action. It has also been
done through awareness campaigns on disability rights and disability inclusion in collaboration with community volunteers. The community understanding which uses to consider disability as a burden to society/county is changing and is considered as an issue that requires special attention/support so that persons with disability can fully participate. People with disabilities are first of all identified, their specific needs are known and NUDOR projects are developed and implemented in response to the identified needs. For Example, PWDS’ rehabilitation barriers are addressed, they are brought together in Villages of savings, loans associations for making money, they are enrolled in schools,...

3.3.2. What was the most important change?

In 2021, Persons with disabilities, learners with disabilities in schools, individual members of NUDOR MOs like other Rwandan citizens keep participating in daily activities in accordance with the measures against COVID -19 as set up by the government of Rwanda.

- Why was it important?

With the onset of Covid-19, the most of daily activities in Rwanda were closed to avoid the spread of this pandemic. Despite this wise and comprehensive decision to save lives of its population, Some People with disability in accordance with their level of the disability didn’t benefit from this decision because the government didn’t clearly define how this category of persons will keep surviving at home with respect of special support services that are usually used to enhance them to live like others without disability.

- How was it achieved (your contribution)?

To respond to that problem, NUDOR in collaboration with different partners including DPOD and in collaboration with development partners and CSOs supported in different ways such as: Procuring and distributing radio posts, flash disks containing delivered lessons, transcribing lessons script into Braille to be offered to learners with visual impairment, translating TV lessons in sign language. NUDOR through education project funded by Disabled People’s organization of Denmark (DPOD) conducted a study entitled; “THE GOVERNMENT OF RWANDA RESPONSE TO COVID-19 WITH INCLUSIVE LEARNING FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY” to inquire about the impact of COVID-19 on the education of children with different types of disability and the Rwandan government response that were put in place to ensure the decrease of effects of this crisis to education of persons with disability. Gaps were identified and recommendations to different stakeholders formulated and shared for information and actions.
Moreover, a Communication Officer in NUDOR was recruited under DPOD’s support purposely to disseminate information around covid-19 in accessible format to reach individuals with disabilities via their respective Organizations.

3.4. CRPD process

- **NUDOR engagement in our country’s CRPD process** – either in the reporting, examination or follow up process.

The CRPD is for sure the guiding tool while implementing and following up all NUDOR project and related activities.

3.4.1. What was the most important progress?

From 2019 – 2021, NUDOR has improved its cooperation and collaboration with key Government institutions towards adoptions of proposed commitments in line with the promotion of human rights taking into consideration people with disabilities, their social inclusion and anti-discrimination practices.

- **Why was it important?**

Before government programs did not consider inclusion of persons with disabilities while planning and implementing these programs and Persons with disabilities were sometimes struggling to run behind others without disabilities or were completely left behind and did not benefit from their rights like other citizens.

- **How did you contribute to the change?**

It is a long process but mainly in 2019, 2020 and 2021, much has been done and under DPOD’s support, NUDOR staff and its MOs organizations staff were trained on UNCRPD and within NUDOR the CRPD is taken as guiding document while developing. Implementing and evaluating project. Much awareness campaigns on disability rights were organized to the benefit of the community members, social service providers and public officials.

- **NUDOR’s collaboration with other organizations within or outside the disability movement**

NUDOR to achieve the above mentioned outcome has collaborated with other organizations within and outside the disability movement as described below:

In collaboration with National Council of Persons with Disabilities, a road map setting up activities and responsible stakeholders was elaborated, an assessment of implementation of the GDS commitments was organized and carries out, a shadow report stating the level of
implementation was produced and an advocacy meeting was organized bringing together different decisions makers.

MyRight Rwanda has been involved and in addition to provide funds for implementing education Project, it also contributed a lot to facilitate trainings to NUDOR MOs audit committees about respective roles and responsibilities.

SOMA UMENYE, Save the children international, Soma Rwanda, Humanity and Inclusion,… have also been involved in different activities and meeting but specifically they were intervened to develop a position paper to MINEDUC to purposely influence the review of Education Sector Review so that Inclusive education and education of PWDs are effectively taken into consideration. Joint field visits, lobby meetings have always been carried out in Joint collaboration with RWANDA Basic Education Board, University of Rwanda/college of Education with the objective to share best practices and advocate for the replication of those best practices.

- **DPOD's contribution to the process**
  DPOD contributed a lot not only by providing financial support but also by providing NUDOR and its MOs with technical assistance facilitating trainings and regular follow up during implementation of activities.

### 2.5. Other advocacy

- **NUDOR engagement in advocacy to influence decision-makers, officials or service providers at either local or national level, other than in relation to our country's CRPD**:
  NUDOR conducts research for evidence generation to feeds its advocacy work and it is in line with its beneficiaries need Assessments, Studies, Desk review focusing on hot issues regarding persons with disabilities, Policy analysis and findings are communicated through Policy paper submission, Policy memorandum etc.

### 3.5.1. What was the most important progress / change?

In 2020 /21 officials of the Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB), an institution under the Ministry of Education, took action on disability rights when it put in place a directorate of Special needs and inclusive education and, for the first time, started the recruitment of disability specialists to work for REB. Now two specialists have been hired, one in braille- and one sign
language, with the aim of identifying the challenges students with visual- and hearing-, disabilities face in education.

- **Why was it important?**
Before the recruitment of disability specialists within REB there was not an in-house specialist knowledge able to supervise and implement the Inclusive Education policy. The disability specialists are now advising the Rwanda Basic Education Board and the schools in Rwanda on accessible material, and providing teachers with knowledge to better include students with disabilities. This is done through the specialist advising the schools on which learning material the different students with disabilities need in order to succeed

- **How did you contribute to the change?**
NUDOR has implemented its Education for All Project in six schools in five districts. Here NUDOR has through a variety of interventions and activities strived to make these six schools model schools for inclusive education. Through these interventions and activities NUDOR has been gathering documentation and evidence of both best practice and the challenges students with disabilities face in Rwanda since 2016. This knowledge has been utilised in ongoing lobby meetings from 2016-2021 where government officials and representatives from Rwanda Basic Education Board have participated. Most recently in 2021 NUDOR conducted three such meetings.

The first being with representatives from local government, from REB, and from the ministry of local government, ministry of finance, ministry of education, and other stakeholders from civil society. When NUDOR was about to close the project REB participated in the closing meeting of the project where the schools were sharing their achievements, challenges and commitments to keep with inclusive education. NUDOR and REB officials in charge of inclusive education was on a radio and a TV-talk show presenting the achievements of the Education for All project and also advocating for more commitment from REB to ensure inclusive education.

- **NUDOR collaboration with other organisations**
Yes. As NUDOR is member of RENCP, we collaborated with other organizations intervening in education of children with disabilities like Save the children international, SOMA UMENYE a USAID funded project, World Bank, UNICEF where the latter were convened in lobby, follow up, evaluation meetings to push and steadily assess the progress and formulate new recommendations towards reaching the above mentioned change.
3.5.2. What was the most important outcome?
From 2016 - 2021, six models inclusive schools in NYARUGENGE, RULINDO, RUHANGO, NGORORERO and NYAGATARE Districts under NUDOR EFA project funded by DPOD achieved to enroll and retain 365 children with disabilities.

- **Why was it important?**
Children with special educational needs including children with disabilities were likely to drop out of the school even mostly left behind, hidden in their home and not benefiting from their rights to education like their peers without disabilities. It is tremendous to see the above mentioned number of learners with disabilities retaining in school because the school has been interesting, barrier free, friendly and the school caters for all those needs. The retention of 365 CWDs implies that both children and parents have been satisfied by the school and learning it offers.

- **How was it achieved?**
NUDOR has implemented its Education for All projects in six schools in five districts. Here NUDOR has through a variety of interventions and activities strived to make these six schools model schools for inclusive education. To achieve this, a holistic approach has been used to purposely make the school viable for children with special needs. It is making schools more accessible physically, communication, lesson delivery through teachers’ capacity building, involving the community in the learning process. Challenges encountered in the learning process at Decision making level, services and community levels have been tackled and alleviated.

3.5.3. What was the most important progress / change?
In 2021, District officials used some of the 236 Inclusive education trained teachers, from NUDOR’s Education for All-project, implemented in six model schools, to organise and conduct in-house training of teachers in inclusive education in other schools, across five districts (NYARUGENGE, RULINDO, RUHANGO; NGORORERO, and NYAGATARE districts).

- **Why was it important?**
Before 2021, very few teachers were educated or trained, in providing inclusive education in the five districts, where NUDORs Education for All project were implemented - except for the six model -schools.
Before 2021, NUDOR under the ‘Education for All’-project had been giving two teachers each from six schools a course in inclusive education through the University of Rwanda. These 12 teachers were utilised to train their colleagues within their schools (in-house training) in inclusive education. Now district officials are utilising the 236 teachers from the 6 schools, to train teachers from other schools within the districts - with the aim of spreading best practice to schools across the five districts. In the other district schools the teachers did not receive sufficient / adequate training on inclusive education methodologies, now this is changing with more and more teachers being trained, based on this model.

- **NUDOR collaboration with other organisations**

NUDOR in collaboration with University of Rwanda College of Education facilitated the TOT training of 12 teachers (from 6 model schools) and two representatives from each of NUDOR 12 member organisations in inclusive education. The 12 trained teachers then provided in-house training of their colleagues from the end of 2018 into 2021 - facilitated and organised by NUDOR, and paid for by DPOD. This was done through workshops where member organisations also where deployed to assist the 12 trained teachers in the inclusive education training at the six model schools. As a result, 236 teachers were trained within the six model schools, and have now received skills making the district officials able to utilise the teachers to train others in the district.

**3.5.4. What was the most important progress / change?**

In 2021, the headmasters in each of NUDOR six model schools under the NUDOR Education for All-project, have adopted a practice of having a multidisciplinary assessment team, assessing children with educational needs, including children with disabilities, whereby they identify challenges and strengths of students with disabilities, with the aim of planning for a better/proper educational placement and support during their education.

- **Why was it important?**

Before NUDOR started working with these schools, the children’s educational needs were neither identified nor were they educationally assessed for learning, which is crucial if the schools were to accommodate all learners’ special educational needs. Children with disabilities were brought in together with their peers without disabilities and without special needs and adapted them to the same teaching and learning pace, instead of catering for them according to their specific needs, which resulted in disproportionately huge drop-out rates for students with disabilities compared to students without disabilities.
**NUDOR's collaboration with other organisations**

In 2019, NUDOR facilitated, together with the University of Rwanda / College of Education, a TOT-training of 12 teachers leading to 236 teachers being equipped with knowledge about special needs and inclusive teaching methods in NUDOR's 6 project schools.

NUDOR supported and initiated the establishment of a multidisciplinary assessment team in each of the schools, consisting of Inclusive Education-trained teachers, the Head teachers and parents to the individual child to be assessed and, supported by different health professionals depending on the need.

Such a collaboration and assessment, did not take place prior to NUDOR's intervention. Now it has become practice within the six model schools of NUDOR's project - after the project ended and without NUDOR's support. The Head teachers still organise and regularly conduct assessment and evaluation of needy children with disabilities.

**IV. ENCOUNTERED CHALLENGES**

Even though a number of successes have been achieved and recorded, some challenges were also identified. The major ones were the following:

i. Negative mind-set/ignorance of the community members about disability rights and social inclusion of PWDS;

ii. Inaccessibility of school facilities mainly due to Rwanda geographical location;

iii. Insufficient or lack of skills in Sign Language and Braille;

iv. Lack of adequate referral and support services;

v. Increased population size in classroom;

vi. Onset of COVID -19 and related consequences such as antagonism between apply preventive measures against COVID – 19 and learning e.g wearing a mask and lips reading, transfers of learners from model inclusive schools to the neighbouring ones so as to minimize the class size which leads to the lack of adequate support by teachers.
V. SUGGESTIONS
To bridge gaps and to overcome challenges identified during implementation of NUDOR EFA Project, the following are suggested in terms of recommendations to MINEDUC and its different institutions like REB, Colleges and schools, NGOs intervening in education:

- Availing special support services: Braille Rwandan Sign Language, adapted teaching and learning material, physical accessibility of schools…., continuous pre and in-service training of teachers is be strengthened;

- Organizing and Conducting regular monitoring of implementation of special needs and inclusive educations among stakeholders in education for the availability of consolidate report on implementation of National and international commitments (GDS, Marrakesh treaty);

- Extending Inclusive education Projects to other schools/Using pilot schools experience and best practices and Strengthening coordination, network and synergy for inclusive education (MINEDUC, MINALOC, MoH, RHA) to advance inclusion education;

- Appoint an extra teacher to serve as SNE mentor in school, sector and Districts and sectors; Organize and formalize in-house training using ToTs to train more teachers in Inclusive education Practice and technical tips;

VI. CONCLUSION
The government of Rwanda has made a lot towards improving the education of children with disabilities, especially when developing policies and including disability inclusion as cross-cutting issues. NUDOR under DPOD funds has also shown successful model for inclusive education within Rwanda that can be built upon and expanded to support all children, regardless of type or severity of the disability. However significant work remains, the latter is related to providing inclusive education with trained teachers, appropriate tools, provision of reasonable accommodations throughout the country. In addition, some best practices especially related to identification and access to curriculum, provision of additional teachers to support learners with special educational needs, organization of in-house trainings of teachers, general school accessibility improvement,… need to be revised and strengthened to ensure effective implementation of inclusion of learners with disabilities.