ABOUT US

Equal rights for children with disabilities in Africa

The rights of children with disabilities in Africa have been systematically overlooked. While major advances have been made over recent decades in furthering children’s rights more broadly, children with disabilities have been allowed to slip through the net. For example, only one in every ten children with a disability in Africa has access to any form of schooling. This can’t be allowed to continue!

The team at AbleChildAfrica and our partners in Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya and Rwanda are passionate about working together with disabled children and young people and their communities to ensure their fundamental rights are recognised and essential services including education, healthcare and water and sanitation are made accessible.

Key ways in which we achieve this include dispelling damaging myths about disability, providing disability aids, modifications to school premises, training teachers in disability inclusive teaching methods and advocacy work to catalyse improvements in disability inclusion at a local, national and international scale.

Walking aids and other assistive devices can have a transformative impact on children’s ability to reach their potential when combined with modifications to school premises and the sensitising other students, the wider community and teachers on how best to include children with disabilities in all activities.
It has been a significant few months for the international disability and development sector in the UK. The 2018 Global Disability Summit brought together representatives from governments worldwide, charities, private sector organisations along with disability groups, focusing attention on the long-neglected issue of disability rights around the world. It was a real achievement for dedicated staff, campaigners and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to see progress in the commitments made towards people with disabilities across the globe.

We were proud to have had a significant voice during the summit advocating for the representation of children with disabilities, which demonstrates the growing impact our work has at a national and international level. It is this reputation that we are looking to build on in the future.

The need is still great. Local disability focussed organisations are severely underfunded and under-resourced. There are over 50 million children with disabilities living in Africa and estimates show over 90% of these will never receive schooling of any kind. While there has been substantial progress in access to education over recent decades, children with disabilities continue to fall through the net.

From my short time at AbleChildAfrica, I have seen how effective an organisation it is, making a tangible difference to the lives of children with disabilities who are facing some of the toughest challenges imaginable. But we have to do more. The charity must continually look for progressive, innovative, solutions to try and alleviate the problems children with disabilities face. While we are doing so we must work ever closer with our partners to ensure our projects are guided by the people on the ground and their needs.

AbleChildAfrica is playing a key role in addressing these barriers to inclusion, supporting local partners to grow their capacity to make real change. We will continue to do this so long as the need is there, building our knowledge and expertise with the aim of having a lasting impact on the well-being of children with disabilities in Africa.
Our key achievements in 2017-2018:

- We directly supported at least 2,473 children and youth with disabilities through work including enrolling out-of-school children into schools, providing disability aids, making school premises more accessible, establishing mentoring networks and activities to break down damaging myths about disability.

- We trained 901 teachers on inclusive teaching methods providing tools to help ensure all children can participate in lessons. This training benefits both children with disabilities and other children. Total student numbers in classes taught by newly trained teachers run into the tens of thousands in a single year and should also benefit additional cohorts of children in future academic years.

- We worked with 850 parents of children with disabilities over the year through parent support groups or community events. The support groups give parents opportunities to discuss the challenges they face, support each other and work together to advocate for their children’s inclusion against pervasive stigma.

- To extend the impact of our work we have undertaken advocacy work with 74 government officials over the year advocating for improvements in disability inclusion at a local and national level in government services in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda – work through which large numbers of children with disabilities stand to benefit.

- In Uganda we are excited to have been involved in the roll-out of a teacher training manual, developed during our child-to child inclusive education project, at a national level in collaboration with UNICEF and the Ministry of Education.

- In Tanzania we are supporting the development and implementation of a fully inclusive National Strategy for Inclusive Education (2017-2021) in consultation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Limits of the disability data available:
There are no robust figures available for the number of children with disabilities in Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda or Tanzania making it hard to provide an indication of the numbers who stand to benefit from our work to catalyse wider change at a local or national level. We continue to advocate for improvements in this area.
We have achieved great success in building a strong long-term partnership approach with local disability organisations, and trialling innovative models of intervention in challenging environments, overcoming multiple barriers to disability inclusion. But we cannot rest on our past successes.

We are working hard this year to build the foundations within the organisation that will allow us to grow and expand over the coming years, reaching more children and families and helping to bring about the societal changes that are needed. It is an exciting time for the organisation and the sector as a whole and we want to push the boundaries of what is possible.

Our plans:

1. **We plan to expand our work, to new countries and new partners – identifying where support is needed most.** We want to grow our network of organisations working with children with disabilities, creating strong support networks for our partners working in the disability sector across countries that facilitate learning.

2. **We plan to upskill children and young people with disabilities so they are ready for work, providing them with the confidence to make the transition into employment.** Children with disabilities are often lost through the cracks as they approach adulthood, many daunted by fears about how they might sustain their own livelihoods. We aim to support them so they can reach their full potential.

3. **We plan to strengthen the sustainability of our work by building the capacity of our local partners.** We believe in our long-term partnerships model. These partnerships are complex and require a lot of love and attention to succeed. We want to build longer-term plans with our partners alongside their strategic planning so we align ourselves to their objectives and development.

4. **We plan to catalyse further improvements in the inclusion of children with disabilities at a national scale.** We want to build on our track record in this area and ensure that even modestly sized projects are providing information and resources that will enable us to have a big impact.

5. **We plan to innovate, testing new approaches to inclusion and sharing knowledge.** Our local partners on the ground are innovative by nature and so we are we. We aim to increasingly promote innovation through our projects, sharing successful approaches amongst local organisations across borders through African Partner Meetings; and testing out technologies that can be used sustainably in resource poor contexts.

6. **And finally, we want to bring you with us.** Having our supporters closer to the cause and making sure you feel fully informed, learning more about global disability rights issues, is essential for our success. So come and join us!
"I love being in school because I want to be able to depend on myself. I want to prepare for my future life....I am an active Inclusive Education Ambassador. I teach my fellow students that they should not ignore children with disabilities. Having a disability doesn't mean life is over. We are happy to be ourselves."
AbleChildAfrica’s longest standing partner, the Ugandan Society for Disabled Children (USDC), is an important player in the movement to promote disability inclusion. Now in its second year, our project working with children, parents, schools and governments to promote inclusive education has enabled 685 out-of-school children with disabilities to enrol in local schools, which will have profound implications for their long-term well-being.

Making education more accessible

Our child-to-child model empowers children with and without disabilities to identify children with disabilities who have either never enrolled or dropped out of school in their communities. Work is then done with the children, their parents and local schools in order to ensure that education is made more accessible. The children are also working together to support each other’s formal and informal learning, in 27 schools across three districts.

- 689 parent support group members have been supported to lobby for improved educational and health services for children with disabilities. They have also been involved in income generation activities so they have the resources to support their children’s studies.

- A new child-to-child inclusive education teacher’s guide to be disseminated nationally has been developed, drawing on materials generated through this project. This work has been done in partnership with the Ministry of Education, UNICEF, USDC and other stakeholders.

- 419 teachers have received training enabling them to make their classrooms more welcoming for children with disabilities. Through 1-2-1 mentoring and the creation of individualised learning plans, teachers in Lira are now better equipped to monitor the progress of the reading, writing and confidence of children with disabilities both in the classroom and at home.

- We have been able to ensure children with more complex and lesser known disabilities get the support they need early enough to perform well and be happy in school thanks to funding from Ineke Feitz Stichting.

- A new tool addressing the challenges of monitoring learning outcomes of children with disabilities in school has been piloted with funding from the Marr Munning Trust. Lessons learned will be applied to our continued work in Rwanda but also in other East African countries where we are active.

FUTURE PLANS

AbleChildAfrica and USDC want to expand our successful child-to-child model to new fields such as health, as it has proven to be such a powerful approach to reaching the most vulnerable. We also plan additional work to improve the early identification of children with disabilities in school, including those with lesser known disabilities, and are keen to use the fruits of our experience in this field to better inform wider discussions on this issue in the sector.
In partnership with the Action Network for the Disabled (ANDY), AbleChildAfrica has continued to strengthen its presence in Kenya to promote disability inclusion for children across the country. Together we have used the power of sport to help out-of-school children with disabilities to access education for the first time in disability friendly learning environments.

**Changing the game**

Building on the successes of last year, we have continued to see the impact from our ‘Changing the Game’ project bringing out-of-school children with disabilities into a learning environment for the first time through sport.

- **148 out-of-school children with disabilities now regularly participate in weekly sports and child rights clubs.** These have enabled both children with and without disabilities to develop their physical, social and academic skills through stimulating inclusive games and drama. Children with disabilities demonstrate have been able to demonstrate their skills on a national level, competing in sitting netball, football and other inclusive games performing exceptionally well, significantly increasing their self-confidence.
- **Over 450 community members attended the annual sports days,** witnessing the achievements of these children, and helping to change attitudes towards disability.
- **125 active members in the Parent Support Groups are championing child rights in the wider community and generating income to support their children’s education.**
- **Currently, eight disabled people’s organisations from across three counties have been identified to build a strong coalition of organisations working in the disability sector** to advocate for change and lead the small but growing disability rights movement in the country. They have received training in child and disability rights and protection. As the coalition continues to grow, we will work closely with government officials and children to facilitate joint interventions and strategies to improve the lives of children with disabilities in Kenya.

“Before I jointed the Parent Support Group my daughter, who has a disability, had not had any access to training – but from the income I have received through the group’s income generating activities I have now been able to pay for her to learn skills that will enable her to get a job.”

**FUTURE PLANS**

As the Kenyan government steadily becomes more supportive of children and youth with disability inclusion in education, AbleChildAfrica and ANDY are seeking to build on experience of using the power of sport as a mechanism for positive change by addressing the gaps during the transitional periods of a child’s educational career. By scaling up the existing projects, we will be able to support more children with disabilities at pre-primary age, as well as youth with disabilities who are ready to embark on their next stage in life.
AbleChildAfrica works in Rwanda with our partner UWEZO Youth Empowerment. UWEZO, which means ‘ability’, is a Rwandan youth-led Disabled Persons Organisation founded by young disability rights advocates with a mission to enable children and youth with disabilities to actively participate in society through skills development and social integration.

Raising Aspirations

We are in the second year of our ‘Raising Aspirations’ project funded by the British and Foreign Schools Society, which has created a network of 30 disabled youth mentors in Musanze, a rural district in the northern province of Rwanda. These mentors have been specially trained to provide practical and emotional support to some of the most vulnerable children with disabilities to tackle poor educational outcomes.

Through weekly home and school visits, the mentors have acted as role models to children with disabilities and their families, boosting their social confidence and improving both their attendance and performance at school.

This year we published the impact report for this project which revealed significant successes including:

- 100% of children with disabilities in the project enrolling into local schools.
- 97% of the children demonstrating an increased level of school attendance.
- 73% successfully passing examinations and transitioning to the next class.
- Seven children with disabilities underwent free government funded medical treatment following advocacy activities led by youth with disabilities.
- All children were offered extra in-school tutoring at no extra cost to their families.
- The findings of the impact report have been widely shared with government stakeholders and civil society organisations in Rwanda so that lessons can be learned and disability inclusion improved beyond the immediate project area.

Future Plans

We are keen to roll out learning from our ‘Raising Aspirations’ project by creating a national network of Youth with Disability Networks who will use a mentoring approach to combat various barriers to inclusion and press for meaningful and inclusive national policy implementation for youth with disabilities in Rwanda.
Our Work in Africa

TANZANIA

Our ever-strengthening partnership with Child Support Tanzania (CST), a disability and child-focused NGO based in Mbeya, continues to drive forward our pioneering work making inclusive education a reality. Our project building a new fully disability inclusive early childhood centre, the first of its kind in Tanzania, has completed its technical design phase, with its replicable design potentially becoming a model for inclusive school design nationwide.

Take all my Friends to School

Whilst the Tanzanian government is increasing its efforts to provide disability inclusive primary education, 98% of children with disabilities still remain shut out of school. This year, our innovative ‘Take all my Friends to School’ project funded by Comic Relief has placed children at the centre of our disability rights work, themselves becoming advocates and future inclusive education leaders. Work has included:

- **Supporting 156 children with disabilities to enrol** and achieve in mainstream schools.
- **Raising the awareness of over 1,000 community members and officials** on disability and educational rights through child-led events.
- **Training 280 local teachers** in inclusive teaching methods

**Tanzania’s first fully inclusive early childhood centre**

In response to CST’s growing influence and demand for their services, we are also proud to have begun work on our inclusive early childhood centre construction project thanks to funding from the Guernsey Overseas Aid Commission and Aberdeen Standard Investments Charitable Foundation.

Designed with and for children with disabilities, the new inclusive early childhood centre will amplify CST’s reach and impact by accommodating over 200 children of all abilities to ensure they access their right to education.

With a focus on ethical construction, community-led initiatives and the principles of universal design, we are excited to be taking the lead in building the first purpose-built, fully disability inclusive early childhood education centre in Tanzania, sharing our designs with the government and removing a fundamental physical barrier to children with disabilities’ educational inclusion.

**FUTURE PLANS**

Alongside the sustained development of our school construction project, our future plans in partnership with CST will build on our strong evidence base of child-led interventions in Tanzania. We will seek to expand our child-to-child model into new areas, such as water, sanitation and hygiene, to continue to tackle the barriers which prevent children with disabilities’ equal participation in society.
Impact for the Long Term

ADVOCACY

Our influencing work in the UK and on an international stage is a core part of our approach. We believe AbleChildAfrica has a responsibility to share the lessons we have learned over more than 30 years of working in the disability and development sector.

Over the last year we have provided bespoke disability-mainstreaming programming and child protection training for staff from other NGOs.

We are also extremely proud of our Youth Ambassador Anthony Ford-Shubrook who has been a UN Young Leader since early 2017 after being selected from over 18,000 candidates. In this role Anthony was invited to attend the One Young World summit in Colombia, the largest event of its kind that brings together young people from all over the world who are committed to effecting positive change. During this Anthony was able to advocate for the inclusion of Youth and Children with disabilities in mainstream development practice to an audience of over 1,400 influential attendees.

Our relationship with the Department of International Development continues to strengthen and this year the Director for Department for International Development (DFID) Kenya, Mr Pete Vowles, along with Members of Parliament from the International Development Parliamentary Committee Pauline Latham OBE, Dr Lisa Cameron MP and Mr Nigel Evans MP visited our partner school in Kenya, Little Rock, to see a model example of inclusive education.

Through our civil society networks in the UK, we have worked with the Department of International Development to help plan the Global Disability Summit co-hosted by DFID, the Kenyan government and the International Disability Alliance.

We advocated for the voices of children and youth with disabilities to be included in summit and Anthony was invited to give a speech and represent the voice of young people with disabilities at this landmark event.

Our influencing work in the UK and on an international stage is a core part of our approach. We believe AbleChildAfrica has a responsibility to share the lessons we have learned over more than 30 years of working in the disability and development sector.

Youth Council

Over the last year Youth Council has continued to strengthen and grown to a representative body of eight highly enthusiastic and active members, the majority of whom have lived experience of disability and/or are from diaspora communities. In December, Harry Chikasamba, a founding member was invited by the Commonwealth Youth Council in conjunction with the government of Antigua and Barbuda to attend the ‘I Am Able Conference’, the first ever disability rights campaign in the Caribbean region. The conference aimed to assist Antigua and Barbuda in completing its new disability strategy and Harry spoke about the importance of the work we do and how children and youth with disabilities are too often forgotten in international policy.

AbleChildAfrica’s Youth Ambassador, Anthony Ford-Shubrook, has pressed for the voices of young disabled people to be heard at key national and international events over the year.

FUTURE PLANS

Knowledge about how to ensure development programmes are fully inclusive should not be left to ourselves. We plan to actively disseminate information about disability mainstreaming and inclusive safeguarding to more international NGOs in order to maximise our impact.
Impact for the Long Term

CHANGING LIVES

Juliet is a bright, feisty 13 year old. She also has hydrocephalus, combined with low sight. Her parents initially found it very hard to come to terms with their daughter’s disability. Often the birth of a child with disabilities is associated with some sort of curse on the family or the mother. Disability comes with a stigma that can be difficult to bear. It is also often presumed that a child with disabilities will be a burden for the rest of their lives and their education is frequently not seen as a priority.

At seven Juliet had still never been to school. Her family was contacted by children and young people with disabilities, who had been trained through an AbleChildAfrica funded project to identify other children with disabilities who are not attending school.

Following outreach work with the family, Juliet’s father and mother joined the parent support group, and through this received counselling and were introduced with children with severe disabilities who had gone on to thrive, including a pair of conjoined twins who were going to university. They were inspired and registered her at a local school.

“I love being in school because I want to be able to depend on myself” says Juliet. “I want to prepare for my future life. I don’t experience any isolation at school because we are all taught together in an inclusive setting. Our teachers treat us fairly and value us, they also give training to parents and community members.”

“I have friends who help me to read during classes because I have low vision problems.”

“Our school has children with various disabilities for example the deaf, and us with low vision. We need to start early using equipment that can help us so that we prevent the issue of having a much bigger problem when we reach secondary level.”

Juliet has excelled and become a powerful and vocal advocate for disability rights and has personally helped bring about very tangible changes in the lives of other children with disabilities.

She recently spoke up on behalf of a small girl in her school who didn’t have crutches. Her friends had been carrying her around but she was getting too heavy. There was another older girl who had crutches that were too small for her. Juliet suggested that the older girls’ crutches should be passed to her friend and pushed for a larger set of crutches to be found.

Juliet also complained to the Special Educational Officer that there were no accessible toilets in her school, which led to them being changed and now they are a beacon of accessible sanitation in the community.

Juliet now trains other children on child rights, responsibilities and child protection. She is also on the project steering committee of a project reaching out into eight schools where she participates on equal terms with the Regional and District Education Coordinators who take her views seriously. She is not afraid to air those views or ask searching questions to those in authority!

“I am an active Inclusive Education Ambassador. I teach my fellow students that they should not ignore children with disabilities. Having a disability doesn’t mean life is over. We are happy to be ourselves.”

“I want the Minister of Education to stress to the community how they should not lock children with disabilities indoors.”

Juliet’s parents are now very proud of her achievements and talent for persuasion. Her mother, Alice, says:

“My daughter Juliet has brought great changes in our community, she has motivated us to see children with disabilities can achieve great things. I want my child to pass her message of motivation and advocacy to Members of Parliament, the President and at a higher national level.”

“My message is that I want to encourage parents and the community in large they should not lock up children with disabilities. All children should be given an equal chance of getting an education regardless of their disability.”

“I love being in school because I want to be able to depend on myself.”
the biggest was Nicky and Hannah’s eight
day husky sled challenge around mountains
and forests in Norway, Sweden and Finland,
camping on ice at -20°C! They raised a
fantastic £1,400.

The London Marathon
A huge thank you to the 24 fantastic runners
who battled record-breaking heat in this
year’s London marathon. We had a close knit
team who supported each other and it was
wonderful getting to know each and every
one of you along your marathon training and
fundraising journey. Together you raised over
£40,000 to support our work. We’re so
grateful that you chose AbleChildAfrica to be
part of your London Marathon experience.
Thank you!

A lasting legacy
This year we’ve been fortunate enough
to receive a charitable legacy from a loyal
supporter who has supported the charity
since its inception. The bequest of £30,000
will help many more children with disabilities
access education, having a truly transformative
and lasting impact on their lives, a fitting
memorial to a wonderful woman.

A true partnership
We say a huge thank you to TXF this year
for their continued support and
partnership. They have sponsored our gala,
hosted us at their conferences with a
proportion of the conference delegate fees
coming to the charity, donated fantastic
prizes for our auctions, offered staff
support at our events and have been a pillar
of support in the planning of
AbleChildAfrica’s future. Thank you Katy,
Dan, Dom and the team for everything!

An incredible challenge
Some fantastic people have taken on some
amazing challenges for us this year. Perhaps
phenomenal generosity from our guests. We
give special thanks to our Gala Committee
who advised and supported us throughout:
Azad Ayub, Francine Bates, Taha Coburn-
Kutay, Harmindar Dhalival, Bea McCarthy,
James Moon, Vijay Parikh, Katy Rose, Vimal
Shah and Steve Smith. Finally, the evening
simply could not have happened if it wasn’t
for all the wonderful volunteers who helped
on the night; thank you everyone!

An in-kind support
We thank everyone who has provided
pro-bono support for us this year:
Dave Xania Photography, Mark Campbell
from Office Furniture in London,
Jennifer Rose Design

Interns and volunteers
A huge thank you to our wonderful interns
who have done some great work with us over
the last year: Georgie Cockerill, Jonathan
Douglas, Julia Rosell Jackson and Hannah
Fletcher. Also to all our event volunteers!

We thank the following donors for
their support this year

- British & Foreign School Society
- The Marr-Munning Trust
- The Clara E Burgess Charity
- The Tula Trust Ltd
- PenCarrie Limited
- TXF Ltd
- Ocean Partners UK Limited
- Aberdeen Standard
- Ineke Feitz-Stichting
- CAF America
- The Northern Trust
- Commonwealth Foundation
- Guernsey Overseas Aid Commission
- Comic Relief
- Euromoney
- The Grace Trust
- Comic Relief
- The Sterry Family Foundation
**GET INVOLVED**

**Make a donation**
Your support whether small or large, regular or one off can have a significant impact on the life of a child with disabilities in Africa.
ablechildafrica.org.uk/donate

**Tackle a challenge**
London marathon on your bucket list? Or climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. Or maybe people would sponsor you not to smoke or drink for a week? Taking on a sponsored challenge is an amazing way to make a big difference.
ablechildafrica.org.uk/individual

**Leave a lasting legacy**
Only one in ten children with disabilities have access to schooling of any kind. This is wrong and has to change. You can be part of this change by leaving a bequest in your will to AbleChildAfrica. Leave a better world to future generations.
ablechildafrica.org.uk/individual/legacy

**Get your company involved**
Promote AbleChildAfrica in your work-place and combine a good dose of fund with helping your company achieve its corporate social responsibility objectives.
ablechildafrica.org/corporate

**Community unite**
Get your school, university, church, mosque, temple or synagogue or other community group to support AbleChildAfrica and have fun doing a fundraising event together.
ablechildafrica.org.uk/individual

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**Thank You!**

Please get in touch:
info@ablechildafrica.org.uk
T. 020 7793 4144

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**Financial**

**SUMMARY**

**INCOME & EXPENDITURE**

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**EXPENDITURE SPLIT**

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**Get involved**

**Reserves:**
We ended the financial year with unrestricted reserves of £78,906, in excess of our target of £40,000 thanks to a charitable legacy. The Trustees are assured our reserves are sufficient to meet our current obligations. We are aiming for reserves in the region of £50,000 at the end of the next financial year.

Our full report and accounts are available online on the Charity Commission website.
AbleChildAfrica's Who's Who

Patrons:
Anne Wafula Strike MBE
Keith Nethercot
Dame Evelyn Glennie CBE DH

Trustees:
Clare Adam
Abubakar Askira
Catherine Brownlee
Chloé Chik
Paul Harrison
Jim Sellars
James Moon
Claire Reichenbach
Clare Shaw
Catherine Turner
Chief Executive Officer:
Karl Hankinson

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