

**2020**

# Annual Review

Celebrating **36 years** of changing lives



Protect. Educate. Empower. Protect. Educate. Empower. Protect. Educate. Empower. Protect. Educate. Empower. **Empower.** Protect. Protect. Educate. Educate. Educate. Empower. Empower.

# We are **Able Child Africa**

The leading UK charity working solely to improve the lives of children and young people with disabilities in Africa.

> For over 36 years, we've been making lasting change for children with disabilities in Africa, operating across Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda.

We break down the barriers to inclusion for children with disabilities and empower them to fight for their rights. We create change on a national scale by influencing governments and other agencies.

We are a small charity making a big impact. We are uncompromising in our mission. We are experts in what we do and are passionate about the approach we take. We are bold and agile, with the courage to innovate and take disciplined risks.



# What's in this **report?**

<b>Welcome from our Chair</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>Why we exist</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>What we do</b>	<b>08</b>
Protect & Educate	<b>10</b>
Empower	<b>11</b>
<b>Our Impact</b>	<b>12</b>
Uganda	<b>14</b>
Kenya	<b>16</b>
Tanzania	<b>18</b>
Rwanda	<b>20</b>
<b>In Focus</b>	
Launching new partnerships	<b>22</b>
Impact of Covid-19	<b>23</b>
<b>Betty's Story</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Building Local Capacity</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Advocating for Change</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Financial Report</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Looking Forward</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Get Involved</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Celebrating You</b>	<b>31</b>

# Welcome from our Chair



**Jim Sellars**  
Chair

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to our 2020 Annual Review and my first as Chair. Without doubt the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been extremely challenging for ourselves, our partners and, most pertinently, for the children that we work with; and I am incredibly proud of the organisation and our partners who, during a most difficult year, have continued their vital work to protect, educate and empower children with disabilities.

This year, not only were we able to maintain the same level of impact as 2019 (a year when we reached more children than ever before) through the crisis, but we have also continued with our long-term strategy to increase our overall and geographical reach, and we are delighted to announce our expansion into Malawi and Zambia, with our new partners FEDOMA and ZAPCD.

We work side-by-side with our partners and remain convinced this approach is the most powerful and sustainable means of reaching children with disabilities. It is the commitment, vision and knowledge of our partners that drives the success of Able Child Africa; without whom none of our work would be possible. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our partners for everything they have done this year and throughout our many years of successful partnership.

My heartfelt thanks also go out to the entire Able Child Africa team. Karl, our CEO, provides both inspirational leadership to the whole organisation and drives the long term vision of Able Child Africa. Never have we been more aware of the calibre and dedication of the team as during this challenging year. They have been forced to adapt to unforeseen challenges but still delivered to their exceptionally high standards.

We are also indebted to the Board of Trustees, whose diverse skillsets and experiences have been crucial in navigating this year's challenges. My predecessor as Chair, Paul Harrison retired in March; Paul set the bar as a supporter, Trustee, vice-Chair and finally as Chair. His contribution will be sorely missed but his influence remains as our new Chair of Able Child Africa US.

My final thanks are reserved for all our donors whether individual, corporate or institutional, small and large. It is your generosity that is the lifeblood of the organisation and we remain indebted to your continued support. This has enabled Able Child Africa to deliver all the work described in the following pages and to continue our vital mission to improve the lives of children with disabilities and enable them to fulfil their potential.

While this has been a challenging year, the organisation remains well placed to flourish and ultimately support many more children who need our support. I am tremendously excited about the future and sincerely hope you will continue to feel moved to support us in our vital work.

Best wishes,  
**Jim Sellars**



## Fighting for rights & change for children in Africa.

Children and young people with disabilities are among the most marginalised in the world. Those living in poverty are disproportionately affected. Many continue to spend much or all of their lives in institutions, away from their families and are vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse. They are forgotten, hidden and have been systematically excluded.

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# 60 million

people with disabilities live in Africa, the vast majority of which are children.

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# Only 1 in 10 attend school



This impact is worsened for girls with disabilities.

Children with disabilities are **4 times** more likely to suffer abuse or violence



# Why we exist

Up to **80%** of children with disabilities from low-income countries will not live to be 5 years old. The children that do are four times more likely to suffer abuse and eight times less likely to go to school.

**Our vision is a world in which all children with disabilities are fully included as equal members of society.**

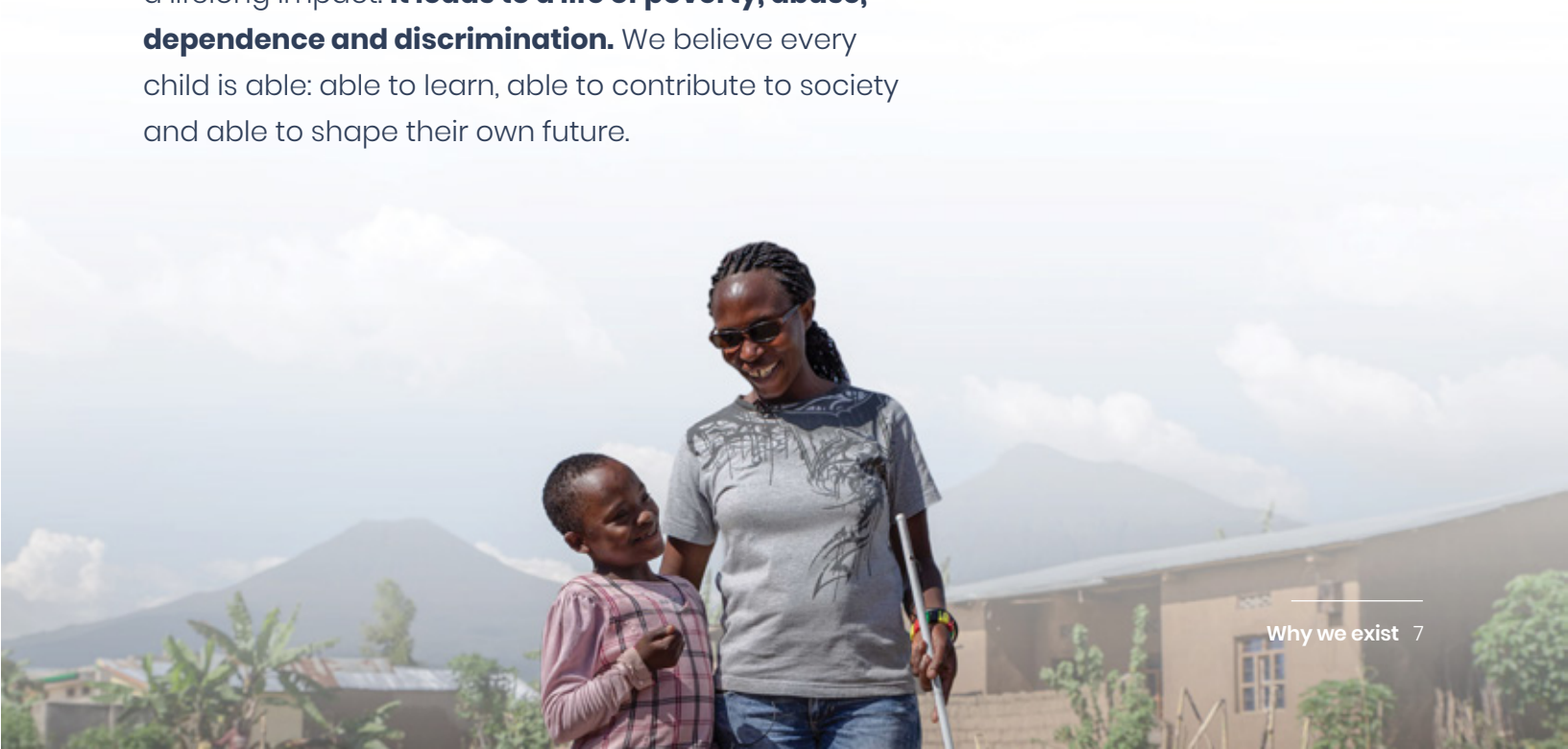
Only half of the children who begin go on to complete their primary education. Most drop out after a few months due to feelings of exclusion, isolation or stigma.

Every day, these children are facing barriers such as stigma and discrimination just for being who they are. They are some of the most vulnerable children in the world.

Local disability-focused organisations are severely underfunded and under-resourced, so Able Child Africa plays a key role in supporting local partners to protect, educate and empower children with disabilities so they are able to fulfil their potential.



Denying children with disabilities their equal rights has a lifelong impact. **It leads to a life of poverty, abuse, dependence and discrimination.** We believe every child is able: able to learn, able to contribute to society and able to shape their own future.



# What we do

We work with local partners to **protect, educate and empower** children with disabilities so they are able to fulfil their potential. We do this by...

## Delivering high quality programmes

We deliver high-quality programmes alongside local partners that break down the barriers to inclusion for children with disabilities.

## Strengthening local organisations

We strengthen local organisations on the ground which ensures they can deliver lasting change in the countries where we work.

## Fighting for rights & creating change

We fight for the rights of children with disabilities, creating change on a national scale by influencing governments and agencies.

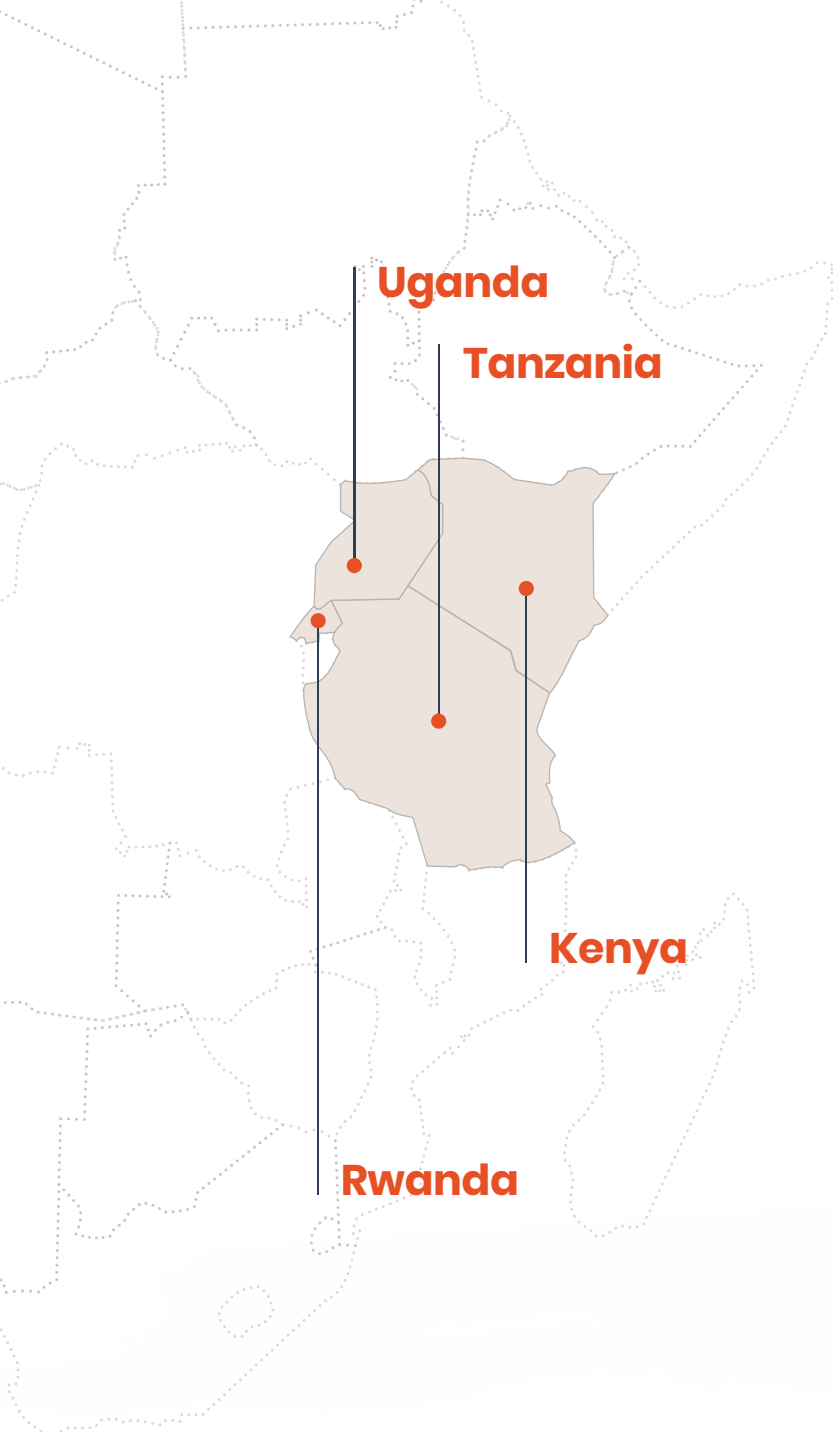


**Able Child Africa has benefited our work in so many areas, providing us with a valuable network where we have been able to learn from other organisations doing similar work.**

**Beneficiary** of our work in Tanzania







We have over **36 years'** experience working with local organisations across Africa to improve the lives of children with disabilities.

Our **mission** is to promote the realisation of equal rights for children and young people with disabilities in Africa and to facilitate their meaningful inclusion in all aspects of life.



# Protect.



## Ensuring the **protection** of children with disabilities in Africa.

Children with disabilities are at a higher risk of violence, abuse or exploitation due to the multiple barriers that prevent them from protecting themselves or reporting incidents of abuse. We work with all our partners to improve and support local safeguarding practices and ensure the protection of children in the areas where we work.

By supporting local families and organisations to break down the stigma and discrimination around disability, we ensure the **protection** and inclusion of children with disabilities within their communities. We have been working to do this in Kenya...

### Improving Child Safeguarding in Kenya

We have spent the last four years working with our partner **Action Network for the Disabled (ANDY)** in Kenya to build their capacity to safeguard children with disabilities. Much of ANDY's early work had focused on supporting young people, however, they were increasingly looking for ways to work with younger children with disabilities, as they identified large numbers of children who were out of school. ANDY sought Able Child Africa's support to include children with disabilities in their five-year strategy, and together we developed a new child protection and safeguarding policy for the organisation.

The full involvement of both ANDY and Able Child Africa in this process ensured that both national and international standards were considered. Crucially, we have been able to apply our extensive experience and knowledge of the considerations needed for inclusive safeguarding, specifically for children with disabilities.



# Educate.



## Changing the lives of children with disabilities through **education**.

Across the world, over 90% of children with disabilities do not attend formal school. To tackle this problem we have developed inclusive **education** projects that support children with disabilities to access mainstream education alongside their peers, improving their educational outcomes and ensuring they are able to fulfil their potential.

We have been working in Uganda to change the lives of children with disabilities through education...

### Child to Child Inclusive Education in Uganda

We teamed up with our partners **Uganda Society for Disabled Children (USDC)**, to implement an Inclusive Education Project using an innovative Child to Child approach. Together with teachers, they identify barriers to exclusion and work with schools and communities to ensure that children with disabilities are in education, and importantly stay in school.

Using the Child to Child approach, children already attending school are encouraged to identify and engage with out-of-school children with disabilities in their communities. Together with teachers, they identify barriers to exclusion, and work with schools and communities to ensure that children with disabilities are in education, and importantly stay in school.

In 2016, we scaled up the project and are now working with 27 schools across three districts (Lira, Adjumani and Nebbi) over the next 5 years. This scale-up, supported by Comic Relief, is enabling us and USDC to get over 1,500 children with disabilities into school.



## Empower.



### Empowering children with disabilities in Africa to fight for their rights.

For too long children with disabilities have been forgotten, hidden and systematically excluded. A key reason is that the children and their parents have been unaware of their rights and are disempowered in the fight for justice. By **empowering** children and young people with disabilities with knowledge of their rights, they are able to break down the barriers to their inclusion for themselves and their peers.

### Raising Aspirations in Rwanda

With funding from the UK Government, we joined the fight to 'leave no one behind' in Rwanda, partnering with UWEZO Youth Empowerment to empower children and young people with disabilities to demand inclusion within the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Alongside UWEZO, we developed and implemented a youth-led model, where we trained young people with disabilities to mentor and work with younger children with disabilities. Through this approach, we provided a platform to develop youth-led solutions for meaningful inclusion, where young people themselves become the key advocates for inclusion at the community and government level.

This has created new mechanisms and networks, where young people with disabilities are empowered to campaign for their inclusion across society.



# Our impact

**In 2019/20,** we have been working with **five partners** across **four countries** in Africa to improve the lives of children with disabilities.

We directly supported children and young people with disabilities through 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.



## Children we directly supported

**Uganda:** 503 children & young people supported

**Kenya:** 151 children & young people supported

**Tanzania:** 380 children & young people supported

**Rwanda:** 386 children & young people supported

Total

**1,420**



**We trained teachers in inclusive teaching methods**, providing the necessary training and tools to help teachers support all children in the classroom and ensuring children with disabilities can participate in lessons alongside their peers.



### Teachers we trained

**Uganda:** 379 teachers trained

**Kenya:** 68 teachers trained

**Tanzania:** 306 teachers trained

**Rwanda:** 32 teachers trained

Total **785**

**We supported parents of children with disabilities** through parent support groups or community events, giving parents the opportunity to discuss the challenges they face, support each other and work together to advocate for their children's inclusion.



### Parents we supported

**Uganda:** 1,618 parents supported

**Kenya:** 140 parents supported

**Tanzania:** 325 parents supported

**Rwanda:** 329 parents supported

Total **2,412**

**We worked with government officials and ministers** advocating for improvements in disability inclusion at a local and national level in key government services in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda.



### Government officials we worked with

**Uganda:** 29 government officials we worked with

**Kenya:** 12 government officials we worked with

**Tanzania:** 76 government officials we worked with

**Rwanda:** 49 government officials we worked with

Total **166**

# Uganda

We have been working in Uganda **since 1984** alongside our partner **USDC**, supporting children with disabilities and their families to break down the barriers to inclusion.

Many people living with disabilities in Uganda continue to face **stigma** and **discrimination**. In northern Uganda, where we work, 80% of people with disabilities have been identified as living in chronic poverty. Despite significant progress at a policy level in Uganda, there is an implementation gap. With a policy of Universal Primary Education, school enrolment has reached 90%. However, this is not the case for children with disabilities, where only 2% are graduating to secondary level.

## What we're proud of

We are very proud of our collaboration with the **Ministry of Education** and **UNICEF** in Uganda to develop a national teachers resource book for 'Inclusive Education in Uganda: The Child-to-Child Approach'. With our partner USDC, we have partnered with the Ugandan government to develop and test the guide in three northern Ugandan districts prior to a national roll-out.

Through this partnership, we have participated in high-level conversations on how the teacher's guide links to Uganda's wider inclusive education policy, particularly examining the existing gaps in early identification systems and outcomes of children with disabilities in school.

**Able Child Africa's support to my team and ongoing sharing of ideas has helped us come up with new ideas we would not have thought possible.**

**Dolorence Were, Director USDC**



### Advocating for Change in Uganda

Following on from our work with the government, we are looking to develop a national advocacy project that addresses disability-inclusive justice for children with disabilities.

For many children with disabilities in Uganda, the right to access basic services such as education, health and justice remains a challenge due to widespread discrimination and stigma. While Uganda has made significant advances in disability inclusion, reforms in the social welfare system have been slow as underdeveloped structures and weak legislation means children remain prone to abuse and exploitation. In northern Uganda alone, 60% of all children fall into a cycle of poverty, violence and crime, with children with disabilities disproportionately more at risk.

This work will build on our extensive experience in advocating for inclusive policy implementation with local and national governments, with demands for strengthened inclusive community-based services.



## Improving early identification for children with disabilities

Unfortunately, many children with disabilities are left unidentified and untreated – unable to access the medical assessments that will allow them to receive the support they need.

This was true for many of the children we came across in our inclusive education work. To tackle this problem, we partnered with USDC to launch a new project in Nebbi, northern Uganda. We developed a low-cost disability screening tool that better identifies children who need professional medical assessments and assistive devices.

This project ensures children with disabilities are identified and **protected**. It facilitates long-term access to healthcare services by training teachers to use the tool during in-school assessments, working with local stakeholders to improve the referral systems and supporting parents to get their children screened.



Due to the **success** of this project, we have worked closely with the **national government** to create a tool for adoption in all schools across the country for the effective inclusion of all children with disabilities.

## Through our current projects



We enrolled **503** children

with disabilities into mainstream inclusive education



We registered **1,618** parents

of children with disabilities into parent support groups



We trained **379** teachers

in Child to Child approaches for disability-inclusive learning

# Kenya

We have worked in Kenya **since 2009** with our partners **ANDY** and **Little Rock** supporting children and young people with disabilities to be included in all aspects of their lives.

While Kenya has a system of free primary education, the curriculum requires basic skills that most children with disabilities do not have. Very few have accessed early education, meaning young people with disabilities are less likely to be employed, and more likely to be living in poverty. With limited access to education or health care, these young people continue to face injustice, stigma and sometimes abuse and violence. This is magnified in Kibera, Africa's largest slum where both ANDY and Little Rock are based, and home to **100,000** people with disabilities.

## What we're proud of

We are extremely excited of the **National Civil Society Coalition** we have set up together with ANDY in Kenya. The coalition, consisting of 49 organisations across 8 counties, advocates for the inclusion of children with disabilities. This network has had huge successes with government advocacy, increasing the number of officials appointed as **County Disability Directorates** across Kenya. The network has also successfully influenced the local education officials, demonstrating the importance of the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream education, with increased numbers of children placed into mainstream schools as opposed to special schools as a result.

**I love being in school because I am learning to depend on myself. I am no longer isolated.**

**Beneficiary** of our work in Kenya



### Our response to Covid-19 in Kenya

Covid-19 has created a unique set of challenges for children and young people with disabilities. Their lack of self-autonomy and vulnerability, together with their disability, puts them at a significant disadvantage. The risk of them being excluded from any Covid-19 response has therefore been high, with schools closed and children more isolated.

In Kenya, with our partners ANDY we were successful in shifting towards a home-based early childhood development (ECD) model while the schools remain closed. 180 parent champions were trained to take a leading role in showing other parents how to care for their children, including how to provide occupational and physiotherapy support while not in school.

We began identifying very young children with disabilities and parents to create a cohort of families to be supported for the duration of our activities, as funds were shifted from planned activities to emergency needs. Recognising the adverse impact of Covid-19 on children with disabilities, our partner ANDY ran a campaign focused on inclusive hygiene with inclusive remote education methods, including radio broadcasts, to ensure that children with disabilities received inclusive guidance on how to remain safe during the pandemic.





**A new journey with Little Rock**

After 13 years of full partnership, this year saw a **changing relationship** between Able Child Africa and Little Rock.

Little Rock was founded to offer a better start for children with disabilities. Originally operating out of a single room, we embarked on a journey with them to build an Inclusive Development Centre in the heart of Kibera. With long-term support from Euromoney, the school was completed in 2013 and is now home to over 400 children, one-third of which have a disability. We have continued to support Little Rock's organisational development, improving their financial and operational systems, and investing in their staff and therapy units to future proof the organisation.

The development in Little Rock over this period has been incredible and they are now in a position where both organisations feel we can move beyond the support of a full partnership and work together as part of a network. So while you will hear less about Little Rock and their amazing success on a day-to-day basis, we will still be with them as part of a wider network of organisations across Africa trying to share best practice in improving the lives of children with disabilities.



We are looking forward to **continue our work** with Able Child Africa as part of their network **supporting children with disabilities.**

**Through our current projects**



We enrolled **151** children

with disabilities into mainstream inclusive education



We registered **140** parents

of children with disabilities into parent support groups



We trained **68** teachers

in Child to Child approaches for disability-inclusive learning

# Tanzania

We have been working in Tanzania **since 2007** alongside our partners **Child Support Tanzania** changing the lives of children and young people with disabilities through education.

Many children and families in Mbeya are living in poverty, often exacerbated by **disability**, HIV/AIDS and **high mortality rates**. Here, services for children with disabilities are severely lacking and poorly resourced. Although primary education is free in Tanzania, children with disabilities often do not develop the basic early learning skills needed to succeed in this environment and are continually left behind when it comes to accessing primary education.

## What we're proud of

On the back of our **Inclusive Education** project in Mbeya, we have been working as part of a national consortium with the Tanzanian government to input into the National Strategy for Inclusive Education. Specifically, our focus has been on ensuring that the Child to Child approach is included in the strategy.

To ensure this inclusion, and in consultation with the Ministry of Education, we have designed a Child to Child inclusive education teacher's guide working with local and international inclusive education experts. Once signed off by the national government, we aim to scale the implementation of this guide across Tanzania.

**My daughter has brought great changes in her community. She has taught us to see that children with disabilities can achieve great things.**

**Mother** of a beneficiary of our work



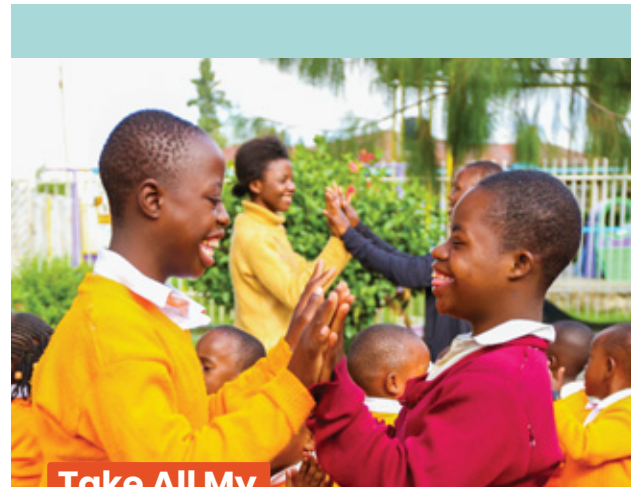
### Protecting Children in Tanzania

We are working with CST on the development of a project that reviews current child protection standards for the inclusion of children with disabilities in Tanzania, putting children at the heart of our work.

Our experience has demonstrated that children with disabilities' access and achievement in education are significantly impacted by the real threat of violence and abuse they experience. For many children with disabilities, this includes neglect or the risk of abuse from parents, caregivers, teachers or even peers in their classroom.

Due to their marginalisation and a lack of personal and sexual education, children with disabilities are often unaware they are being abused. Child-friendly spaces to discuss issues remain underdeveloped, and with a lack of support and inclusive systems to report, cases of abuse often go unreported.

We want to change this.



### Take All My Friends to School

For the last 4 years, we have been working with Child Support Tanzania to run the community campaign 'Take All My Friends to School'. This campaign aims to make education a reality for all children with disabilities across Mbeya. Using a child-led approach, children already attending school are encouraged to identify and engage with out-of-school children with disabilities in their communities to help support them to go to school.

With support from **Comic Relief**, we have been able to launch a scaled-up version of this campaign and build on the success we had. The 4-year project is working with 8 government primary schools and early childhood centres in Mbeya to identify children with disabilities who are out of school in the surrounding communities and supports them to enrol into mainstream government schools.

Excitingly, this takes a child-led approach we first developed and implemented in Uganda, facilitating information and best practice sharing across our partner network.



'Take All My Friends to School' aims to make education a **reality** for all children with disabilities across Mbeya.

## Through our current projects



We enrolled **380** children

with disabilities into mainstream inclusive education



We registered **325** parents

of children with disabilities into parent support groups



We trained **306** teachers

in Child to Child approaches for disability-inclusive learning

# Rwanda

We have been working in Rwanda **since 2016** alongside our partners **UWEZO** Youth Empowerment, empowering children and young people with disabilities to fight for their rights.

Nearly half of all people with disabilities in Rwanda are under 35. Two-thirds are not in education or employment and over **90%** fall below the national poverty line. Children with disabilities comprise less than 1% of all primary school students, and this rate drops further at secondary level. While Rwanda has a good track record of inclusive policies, many children with disabilities are still unable to access basic services and face stigma and discrimination.

## What we're proud of

We have been supporting UWEZO to develop improved mechanisms for **Disabled Person's Organisations** (DPO's) to be recognised and heard by the government; and this success has extended into our programmatic work where we have seen an improved engagement between young people with disabilities and government officials.

From our Raising Aspirations project with UWEZO, 20 of our youth disability advocates have organised a national youth group and attended several meetings with government forums to advocate for the implementation of disability-inclusive policies, ensuring the voices of young people with disabilities are heard in key decisions that affect their lives.

**We have been able to build a national network of advocates; young people with disabilities empowered to campaign for their rights.**

**Youth Mentor and Advocate in Rwanda**



### Our response to Covid-19 in Rwanda

Acting early, Rwanda was one of the first countries in East Africa to impose a strict lockdown. While this helped them avoid the worst results of Covid-19, the impact of the lockdown had severe consequences for children with disabilities.

With our partner UWEZO Youth Empowerment we secured funding from the UK Government for a Covid-19 Rapid Response project which aims to keep children with disabilities safe, happy and clean during the pandemic. Working with our established Youth Disability Advocates from our existing projects, we developed a home mentoring package to support children isolated by the lockdown. The advocates were trained in mental health and wellbeing support techniques, in addition to their disability inclusive hygiene training. They are undertaking home mentoring visits to children with disabilities to help support their mental wellbeing during the pandemic and ensure they receive the support they need.

As part of this funding we are also creating inclusive child-friendly materials with vital Covid-19 hygiene information to be distributed to children with disabilities as part of the project.



## Female Sanitation and Hygiene

A major challenge for young girls with disabilities attending school is having confidence in managing their own sanitation and hygiene. These fears mean girls with disabilities are often not in school, and when they are, they are not included in learning about hygiene, health and reproductive practices.

With funding from **Jersey Overseas Aid** and in partnership with **UWEZO**, we have developed a youth-led project to advance the inclusion of girls with disabilities in education in Musanze, northern Rwanda.

We are working to create a more accessible environment so that inaccessible facilities are not the reasons why girls with disabilities are not in school. We are training teachers on inclusive teaching methods and are educating the girls about good hygiene and reproductive health practices.

We have also trained a group of young women with disabilities to become peer mentors, providing individual support for those out of school; and group mentoring for those who are in school.



We are working to create a more **accessible** environment, so that inaccessible facilities are not the reasons why girls with disabilities are not in school.

## Through our current projects



We enrolled **386** children

with disabilities into mainstream inclusive education



We registered **329** parents

of children with disabilities into parent support groups



We trained **32** teachers

in Child to Child approaches for disability-inclusive learning

# In Focus:



## Launching new partnerships in **Malawi** and **Zambia**

We are delighted to announce that Able Child Africa is expanding its work into Zambia and Malawi.

We have been working hard over the past 18 months to secure our expansion into new countries as we look to expand our geographical and overall reach. Following a thorough needs assessment, we are delighted to officially launch our expansion into Malawi and Zambia in 2020.

Through an extensive partnership call and partnership process, we have confirmed two fantastic partners who will help us further our mission and with whom we feel, we are able to add value.

We are delighted to announce the start of those partnerships here and we look forward to reporting our early successes over the coming years.

### FEDOMA

FEDOMA was established in 1999 as a Federation of Disability Organisations in Malawi. It currently has a membership of 12 Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs). FEDOMA has a specific mandate as the voice of people with disabilities throughout Malawi and act on their behalf to ensure that people with disabilities have access to the same necessary services and support that the rest of the community do. FEDOMA approached us about a possible partnership as none of their members currently works with children and they aim to develop their impact for children with disabilities in Malawi.

### ZAPCD

The Zambia Association of Parents for Children with Disabilities (ZAPCD) are a network of Parent Support Groups across Zambia. They are thoroughly representative of those they seek to support as an organisation and have delivered projects on youth empowerment, parent capacity building and inclusive education. ZAPCD are passionate about broadening their delivery directly with children and young people with disabilities and solidifying themselves as an organisation to increase their impact.



# In Focus:

## Impact of **Covid-19** on children with disabilities in Africa

It has become increasingly clear that people with disabilities are disproportionately affected by Covid-19. Many people with disabilities in Africa live in poverty, suffer from complex medical conditions, experience widespread discrimination, and face multiple barriers to accessing basic health care or social services.

Within this group, children and young people with disabilities are experiencing a unique set of challenges. Their lack of self-autonomy and their vulnerability, together with their disability, puts them at a further disadvantage. Through evidence collated across our partnership network in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Malawi and Zambia, we have identified six main ways in which children and young people with disabilities in Africa are particularly affected by COVID-19.

### **Lack of disability and child-friendly resources on Covid-19**

There is a lack of disability inclusive information, including health updates, hygiene advice and social distancing guidance. There are even fewer examples of this information being offered in a disability inclusive and child-friendly format.

### **Children and youth with disabilities are unable to access vital healthcare**

There have been several reports from our partners describing how many children and young people with disabilities with complex and life-threatening conditions have been unable to

access the vital healthcare they need. Many children depend on peer networks, schools and other community structures to access these services and lock down measures, particularly the closure of schools, has made this especially difficult for children with disabilities to attend medical appointments and collect prescriptions.

### **Hygiene facilities and emergency health packages are not accessible for children and youth with disabilities**

Many of the hand-basins, sinks and communal water pumps people are expected to use for handwashing during the pandemic are inaccessible and only provided in adult sizes. In Zambia, our partner reflected that many children with disabilities are unable to wear the government-provided face masks as they are too big or are easily removed by children with disabilities who do not understand their purpose.

### **Increased financial pressure on families of children with disabilities**

The families of children with disabilities tend to be among the poorest in the communities we work. Parents of children with disabilities are usually engaged in informal, unreliable employment and live with just enough for the basic and immediate necessities. The restrictions on movement, and consequently paid work, has therefore meant that many families of children with disabilities are on the brink of starvation. The closure of schools has only exacerbated this crisis, as many children with disabilities depend on school feeding programmes run by parent support groups that are no longer running.

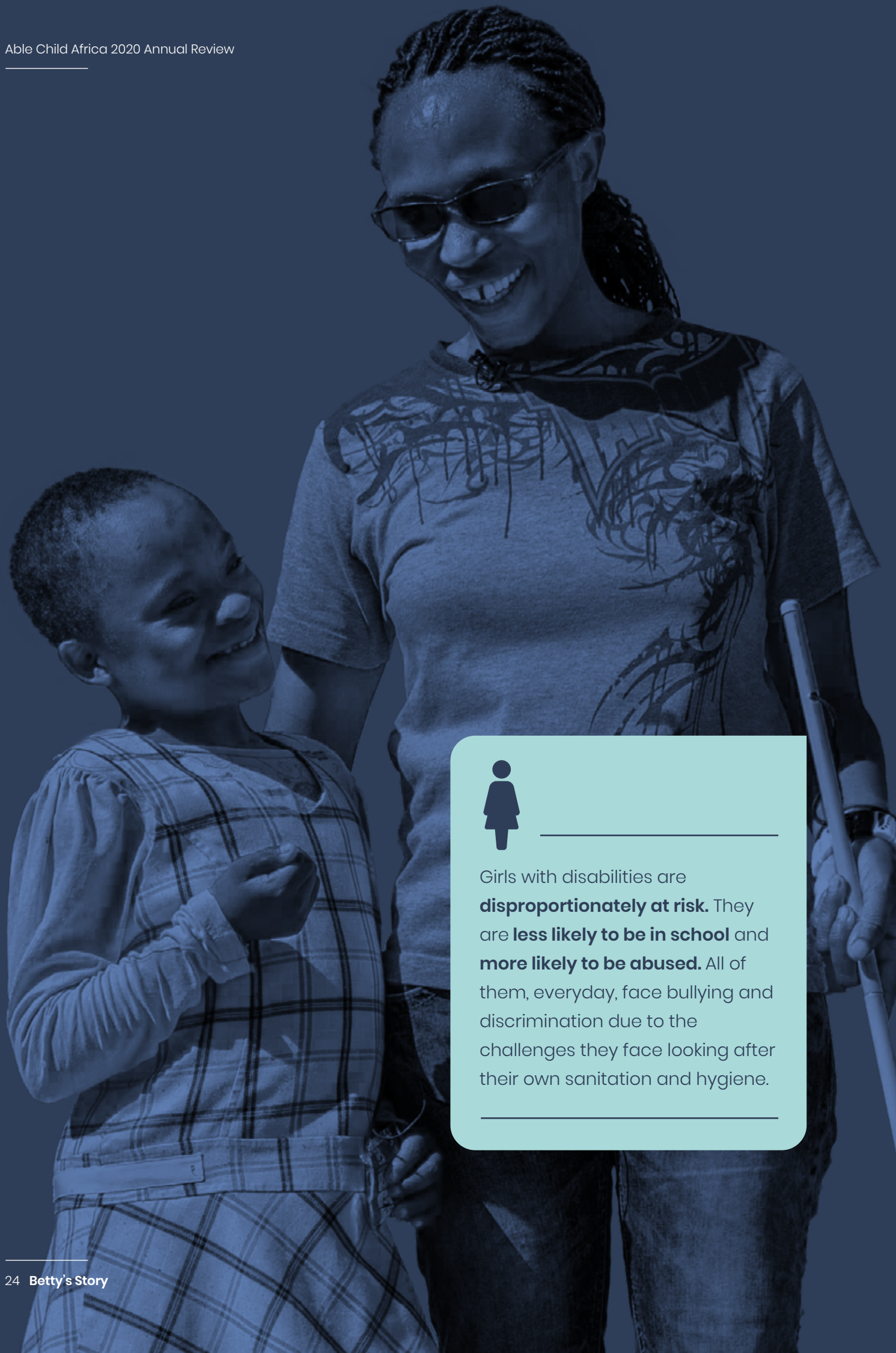
### **Inaccessible education for children and youth with disabilities**

Global gains made in inclusive education are being threatened by the current pandemic. Global school closures have seen a rise in alternative education being used to support remote learning, most of which is not disability inclusive. In our education projects, most children with disabilities are provided with individualised learning plans adapted to suit their needs, and therefore generic content provided during the pandemic is failing to address their specific learning requirements.

### **Increased safeguarding risks for children and youth with disabilities**

Children with disabilities are at a higher risk of all types of abuse, neglect and harm. The context of the current pandemic has put many children with disabilities at further risk. The children we support are most likely to experience abuse or sexual assault in their homes and are more likely to be abused by those who care for them. The closure of schools has given perpetrators more opportunity to abuse children with disabilities and shield instances of abuse due to lockdown measures.





Girls with disabilities are **disproportionately at risk**. They are **less likely to be in school** and **more likely to be abused**. All of them, everyday, face bullying and discrimination due to the challenges they face looking after their own sanitation and hygiene.



# Betty's story

Take Betty. Betty is a **bright and friendly 10 year-old girl**. She also has Down Syndrome and can sometimes struggle to communicate and understand things.

➤ Betty was one of the lucky ones. Her parents had been able to get her into school but as she got older, the harassment and abuse she faced increased. As the discrimination got to her, her behaviour became erratic out of frustration and she was expelled, for being "too much trouble", "a distraction", and "never clean."

She became largely invisible outside her home, hidden away, and lost the confidence to interact with any of her peers.



**This is where  
Able Child Africa  
came in.**

With our partner UWEZO Youth Empowerment, we are training **young women with disabilities to become mentors to children like Betty**. We introduced Betty to Valentina, a young blind woman, who was able to devote precious time to her. Valentina could relate to Betty and was able to teach her simple hygiene practices like washing herself and keeping clean. And crucially she was able to challenge the stigma around disability in the community, so Betty could go back to school. Their bond has changed Betty's life.

Our work in northern Rwanda, not only supports children like Betty to enrol and stay in school, but we are also providing personal kits to empower girls to take charge of their own hygiene, training teachers in inclusive hygiene practices and we are working with parents, so they know how best to support their children.

This work is continuing throughout the current pandemic, but life has become harder and we must all ensure that Betty and other children like her do not become invisible.

We believe that every child like Betty, is **able**. Able to learn. Able to contribute. Able to shape their own future. Now, more than ever children with disabilities in Africa need your help. So help us break the vicious cycle of inequality and poverty and keep young girls with disabilities safe.

# Building Local Capacity



We firmly believe in local-led solutions to local challenges, and we are committed to a **long-term partnership** model and capacity building approach.

Alongside our delivery of services, we play a key role in building the capacity of our partners and supporting their organisational development to ensure they become independently sustainable, high impact organisations.

Working with organisations over a sustained period of time, we are able to contribute to our partner's long term plans, improving their capacity in self-identified areas. By supplying specialist support, we provide much needed professional expertise in a systematic and strategic way that is aligned with each organisation's own strategic plans.

In **Uganda**, we supported USDC to develop monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) tools to measure their organisational impact. Working with their programmes team we identified indicators that could be used at a project and organisational level and framed these into an organisational impact framework that USDC can take forward in their strategic planning.

In **Kenya**, we worked with ANDY to strengthen their full cost recovery approach when applying for restricted funds. Working with their finance team and CEO, we facilitated a deeper understanding of international expectations of staff and overhead costs in large grants.

In **Tanzania**, we continued to support Child Support Tanzania (CST) to improve their financial management. This included support with the development of their annual budget and management accounts. This work was supported by regular mentoring from one of our Trustees, and by our Chair and CEO who visited CST to provide in-country governance support and strategy development.

In **Rwanda**, we delivered advocacy training for UWEZO focused on ensuring young people with disabilities have the knowledge, skills and confidence to create sustained change. We also trained their staff and youth disability network on disability inclusive safeguarding, in partnership with Save the Children Rwanda as well as delivering a number of MEL workshops to the programmes team.



# Advocating for Change

As the leading organisation working principally for the protection, education and empowerment of children with disabilities in Africa, we play a key role in **advocating** for change to improve their lives.

## We do this by...

- **Advocating for change** in the UK and on an international level, working as part of larger networks to support governments and donors to improve existing services and increase opportunities for children and young people with disabilities.
- **Strengthening the capacity** of our partners to do advocacy work; and we support them to strengthen policy and legal frameworks, so they better meet and fulfil the rights of children and young people with disabilities.
- **Working to ensure** there is greater engagement of children and young people with disabilities in the policy arena, ensuring their voices are heard and they are able to contribute to decisions that affect them.

## This year

This year, our partners have had some significant success in influencing and strengthening national level policies in all the countries where we work:

In **Uganda**, after a year-long consultation process with USDC (with Able Child Africa as key contributors), the Ministry of Education and Sports formally approved the 'National Learning Needs Identification Tool' and accompanying Teacher's guide, with content developed directly through our funded work.

In **Kenya**, with support from the Commonwealth Foundation, our partner ANDY successfully managed to put themselves forward for the Sustainable Development Goals Committee in Kenya and is currently awaiting the next steps in the Voluntary National Review process, due to commence July 2020.

In **Tanzania**, CST continued to work with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to influence the delivery and financing of the National Inclusive Education Strategy. CST have also been selected as a member of the East African Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI) to provide advice and expertise on inclusive education public expenditure tracking.

In **Rwanda**, as a result of our work funded by the UK government or UK Aid Direct from the UK government, there has been a notable improvement across government structures at every level in ensuring the inclusion of children with disabilities in the Sustainable Development Goals delivery. This is testament to the project's strategy to find youth-led solutions for meaningful inclusion.

## In the UK

In the UK, we increase understanding of the barriers faced by children with disabilities by influencing larger non-disability focused organisations with a wider reach to mainstream disability across their projects. We do this through UK and international networks we are part of, including the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) and the Bond Disability and Development Group. We recognise that this is a growing area of our work as our reputation in the sector as a leader in the inclusion of children with disability strengthens.

This year we have focused on ensuring our voice and the voice of children with disabilities has been heard through various influential platforms. We were successfully voted in as a Co-Chair of the Bond Disability and Development Group and continue to sit on the Bond Child Rights Working Group and Steering Group. In both roles we have ensured that intersectionality of childhood and disability is represented in position papers and evidence given to policy makers on disability inclusive development.

We have led the way this year in disability inclusive safeguarding. We are now co-chairing an Inclusive Safeguarding Task Group in the International Development and Disability Consortium and have been selected as one of 12 advisors to the DFID Safeguarding Resources and Support Hub. In these roles we have become a sector expert on disability inclusive safeguarding and have been tasked to develop UK-wide Disability Inclusive Safeguarding Practitioner Guidelines, due to be launched in December 2020.

# Financial Report

## Overview

**Able Child Africa's total income this year was £987,332, which represents a growth of 24% from the previous financial year.** This comprised £559,562 in restricted income and £427,770 in unrestricted flexible funding.

Total expenditure for the year was £774,937, almost identical to expenditure during the last financial year.

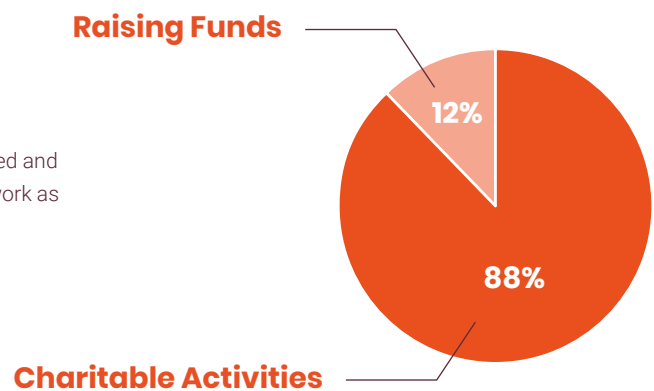
## Income and Expenditure

Income and Expenditure	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
Income	£427,770	£559,562	£987,332
Expenditure	£257,948	£516,989	£774,937
Net Income (Expenditure)	(£42,573)	£169,822	£212,395

## Spending on Charitable Activities

Expenditure Split	Charitable Activities	Raising Funds	Total Expenditure
Total	£685,682	£89,255	£774,937

Expenditure on charitable activities amounts to **88p for every pound** raised and comprises costs of our projects in Africa, our advocacy and influencing work as well as related support and governance costs.



## Reserves

**We ended the year with unrestricted reserves of £225,113**, thanks in part to a significant legacy donation. This meant we ended the year above our 6-months reserves target and, in a position to navigate the impact caused by the global pandemic in 2020.

*Our full report and accounts are available online on the Charity Commission website.*

# Looking Forward



**Karl Hankinson**  
Chief Executive Officer

It's hard to sum up the last year in a few words. As a small organisation in the UK, we have not been immune to the financial, logistical and health challenges Covid-19 has placed on us all. It has been a tough year and I am so proud at how everyone across the organisation has pulled together, made sacrifices and put in an incredible amount of work to get to where we are today. So, I want to say a huge thank you to all the staff, trustees and supporters for their commitment this year when we needed it the most. Because of this support, we have been able to navigate the crisis this year, and I am confident that we are well-equipped to tackle whatever challenges are thrown at us over the next 18 months. But throughout this time our focus has remained on the impact this crisis is having on the partners we work with and the children we support.

We know from experience it is the most disadvantaged who suffer through any crisis. The likelihood of abuse and violence to vulnerable children increase, and yet the structures that protect children with disabilities barely exist in the communities where we work. Our focus through this year has been on ensuring that systems to safeguard children are developed and maintained so that the children and young people with disabilities most at risk are protected. This support will remain essential if we are to ensure that children with disabilities will not end up further isolated and more vulnerable as a result of this crisis.

Going forward, we also know that Covid-19 poses an existential threat to the survival of local organisations who are essential if the rights of children and young people with disabilities are to be realised. The disability movements in the countries where we work are young, and organisations that focus on children with disabilities are few. The economic impact of this crisis will mean that funding and support will be diverted away from complex inequalities to other more immediate areas of focus, and yet it is vital that the organisations that we work with, are able to navigate this crisis. We therefore remain committed to support our partners through this period, ensuring they are able to continue their desperately needed work.

Covid-19 will erode the fragile social structures that protect children and young people with disabilities. Gains that have been made in disability inclusion for children will be lost and so the need for us to continue our work, in partnership with local organisations, is more important than ever.

We need you all there with us, fighting for the rights of every child with a disability, to ensure that no child is left behind.

Many thanks

**Karl Hankinson**  
Chief Executive Officer

# Get Involved



We rely on a community of **individual givers** who support our work and help us to improve the lives of children with disabilities in Africa.

By becoming a new supporter, you can provide long term stability for our work, allowing us to plan for the future and most importantly, you will help us support more children.

**Giving £10 a month, will help us improve the lives of some of the world's most vulnerable children.**

## Get your company involved

Involving your company in what we do can significantly grow the impact you have with us, as well as helping your company achieve their charitable objectives. Promote Able Child Africa in your workplace and with your colleagues, and your contribution will start to multiply.

## Leave a lasting legacy

Only one in ten children with disabilities have access to schooling of any kind. This is simply wrong and has to change. You can be part of this change by leaving a bequest in your will to Able Child Africa and help to leave a better world to future generations.

## Fundraise or take on a challenge

Run the London Marathon, join us for our Charity Golf Day, or attend our Annual Gala. Or if you want to go it alone, why not climb Kilimanjaro or do a bake sale. Whatever it is, big or small, your contribution will support more children with disabilities in Africa.



# Celebrating You

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Nothing we do would be possible without the many people who support or fund us, complete challenges for us or provide in-kind support. So, to all of you, a massive thank you!

## Lasting Legacies

This year we have been fortunate enough to receive an incredibly generous charitable legacy from the will of Jean Guthman. Jean supported Able Child Africa's work from the very beginning and her contribution of £173,000 will be completely transformable in improving the lives of children with disabilities.

## Lockdown Challenges

We want to say a huge thank you to everyone who took on a challenge with a difference this year. With the London Marathon cancelled in its original format, so many of you took to online fundraising to raise some money through challenges of your own. With our 2.6 Challenge in April and our 4.0 Challenge and Virtual Marathon in October, together with some individual challenges throughout the year, including triathlons, sponsored silences, half marathons, and full ones, we have raised over £45,000! A huge thank you and huge congratulations to everyone who got involved.

## Annual Gala

Thank you to everyone who made our record-breaking 9th Annual Gala at the end of 2019 such a success. Hosted in the Millennium Gloucester Hotel in Kensington, it was a night to remember, raising over £85,000 to support our work. We would like to make special thanks to our sponsors Katy Rose, Dan Sheriff, Dom Kloiber from TXF and Azad Ayub for their incredible support as ever. Thank you also to the many other invaluable contributors including our patron Keith Nethercott, Vijay Parikh, Monic Chaabria, Paul Sellars, Bharat Mehta and ATR Travel as well as everyone who donated an auction prize. Thank you also to our MC Ed Rising, Daliso Chaponda and Ben Audu for entertainment, Kunle Fagbenro for donating the decoration, Anne Wafula Strike MBE for her speech and to all our incredible event volunteers who ran the event so professionally.

## Our New Brand

We want to say a huge thank you to Raihan Islam, Bakhtiyar Islam, and everyone else at iirth who launched our new brand and website with us at the end of 2019. A lot of time, thought and attention went in to making sure our brand translated our mission, vision and personality as an organisation as naturally and powerfully as possible, and we are thrilled with our end result. iirth was and still is an absolute pleasure to work with.

## We would like to thank the following donors for their support in 2020

Aberdeen Asset Management Charitable Foundation

Aletheia

American Century Investments

Azad Ayub Ltd

Barclays Charitable Trust

Cargill

Comic Relief

Department for International Development (now FCDO)

Euromoney Institutional Investor PLC

Guernsey Overseas Aid and Development Commission

Ineke Feitz-Stichting

Jersey Overseas Aid Commission

Linklaters

Mishcon de Reya LLP

Network for Social Change

PenCarrie Limited

The British and Foreign School Society

The Commonwealth Foundation

The Marr-Munning Trust

TXF Ltd

Vascroft Foundation



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