

2021

Annual Report

Celebrating **37 years** of changing lives



Protect. Educate. Empower.

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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 37 years, we've been making lasting change for children with disabilities in Africa, operating across Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Malawi and Zambia.

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.



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Welcome from our Chair



Jim Sellars
Chair

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to our 2021 Annual Report.

Undoubtedly, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has continued to be extremely challenging for ourselves, our partners, and, most pertinently, for the children we work with. But I am incredibly proud of the organisation and our partners who have continued their vital work to protect, educate, and empower children with disabilities during a most difficult period.

We work side-by-side with our six partners and their commitment, vision, and knowledge drive 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.

We have had some significant successes this year. As well as working with our existing partners in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda, we had the first full year of partnership with FEDOMA (Malawi) and ZAPCD (Zambia) and I am delighted to report an excellent start to these partnerships. In May 2021, we also launched the first Disability-inclusive Safeguarding Guidelines, in partnership with Save the Children. The guidelines and training will impact many children, including those beyond the reach of our existing partners.

Looking forward, 2022 marks the start of our next five-year strategy cycle. In preparation, we have launched a strategic review of Able Child Africa in conjunction with our partners and wider stakeholders. The new strategy aims to ensure that the organisation will support the children we work with in the best way possible over the long term and we look forward to sharing our new strategy in next year's Annual Report.

My heartfelt thanks 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; and never have we been more aware of the calibre and dedication of the team as during this challenging period. We are also indebted to the Board of Trustees, whose diverse skillsets and experiences have been crucial in navigating the challenges of the last 18 months. I am delighted to welcome two new Trustees to the main board, Miiro Michael and Maria Omare, who have first-class experience and will further strengthen the organisation. We also welcomed two new trustees to the US board as part of a strategy to increase our fundraising in the US.

Despite the organisation's continued growth, the external fundraising environment remains challenging. We do not underestimate the challenge ahead, and my final thanks are reserved for all our donors, whether individual, corporate or institutional, small and large. Your generosity 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 18-month period, 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.

60 million

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

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.

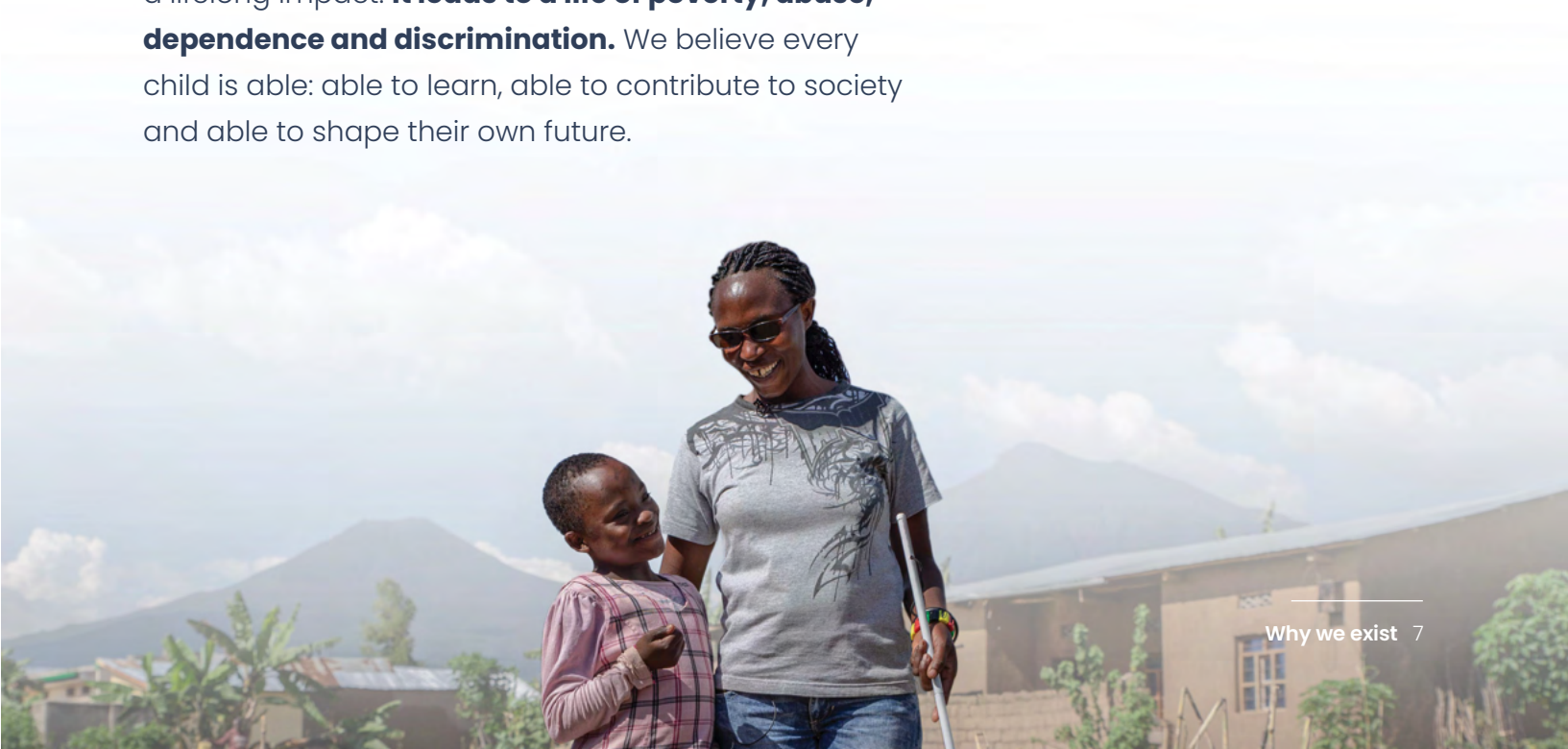
Only half of the children who begin go on to complete their primary education. Most drop out after a few months due to feelings of exclusion, isolation or stigma.

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

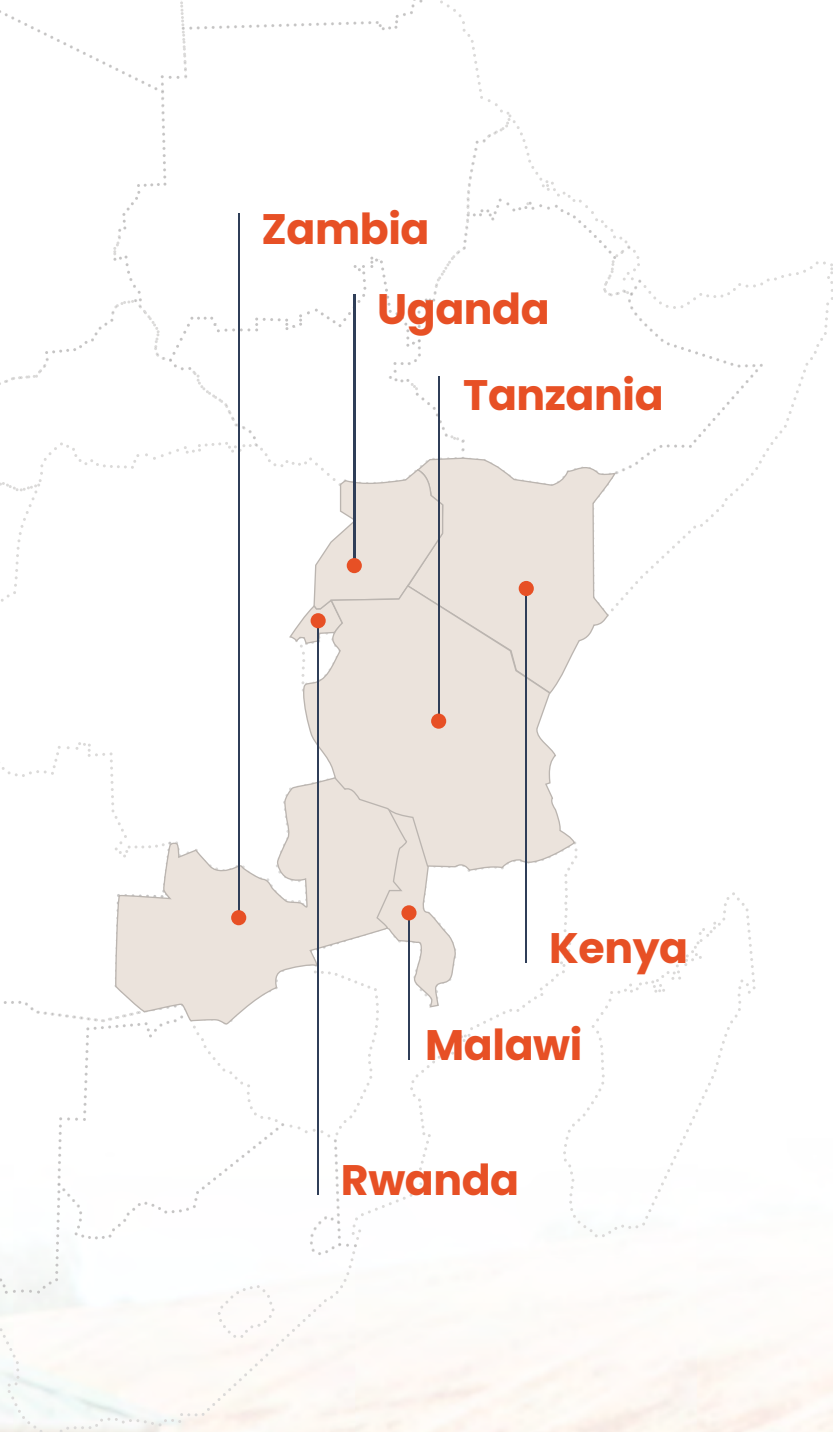
We fight for the rights of children with disabilities, creating change on a national scale by influencing governments and agencies.



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 **37 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 worked 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.

We worked with 27 schools across three districts (Lira, Adjumani and Nebbi) over 5 years, 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

Objective 1: Support African-led organisations to help children with disabilities and their families realise their full potential

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.



In 2020/21, we have been working with **six partners** across **six countries** in Africa to improve the lives of children with disabilities.

Children we directly supported

- Uganda:** 461 children & young people supported
- Kenya:** 180 children & young people supported
- Rwanda:** 623 children & young people supported
- Tanzania:** 370 children & young people supported
- Malawi:** 50 children & young people supported
- Zambia:** no stats available as yet

Total **1,684**



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:** 484 teachers trained
- Kenya:** 0 teachers trained
- Rwanda:** 24 teachers trained
- Tanzania:** 282 teachers trained
- Malawi:** 37 teachers trained
- Zambia:** no stats available as yet

Total **827**

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:** 853 parents supported
- Kenya:** 199 parents supported
- Rwanda:** 477 parents supported
- Tanzania:** 248 parents supported
- Malawi:** 150 parents supported
- Zambia:** no stats available as yet

Total **1,927**

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:** 47 government officials we worked with
- Kenya:** 14 government officials we worked with
- Rwanda:** 43 government officials we worked with
- Tanzania:** 24 government officials we worked with
- Malawi:** 27 government officials we worked with
- Zambia:** no stats available as yet

Total **155**

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 **Literacy and Adult Basic Education (LABE) in Uganda**. Together with inclusive education academics from Kyambogo University we are adapting LABE's home-based Early Childhood Development curriculum to make it disability inclusive. Once this adaptation is completed, we will have an inclusive curriculum that can be used to give children with disabilities in pre-primary education (ages 3 - 6 years) an equal start in life with their peers. We intend to use this adapted curriculum to open 18 Community Learning Centres (CLCs) in Northern Uganda that will provide free, inclusive early childhood education to children with and without disabilities, an opportunity that is currently denied most children due to poverty and stigma around disability.

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



Child to Child Inclusive Education in Uganda

In 2016 we teamed up with our partners Uganda Society for Disabled Children (USDC), to implement an inclusive education programme using an innovative Child to Child approach. In 2021 the first phase of this programme came to a successful end, having enrolled 1,716 children with disabilities into mainstream primary schools over 5 years, and with over 2,000 home visits conducted in the final year alone. The community-based approach brought these children into a safe, inclusive learning environment. The project helped these children tackle environmental, institutional and attitudinal barriers through Child Rights Clubs, teacher trainings, school infrastructure modifications and government advocacy around disability-inclusive policy change. With learnings informing the next phase of work at Early Childhood Education level, we're excited to support even more children with disabilities to access inclusive education from an early age.



Advocating for Change in Uganda

Following on from our work with the government to **help improve the quality of inclusive education for children with disabilities**, we are now working on a new innovative pilot project with government. This new project looks at combining and piloting an individualised learning plan (ILP) and disability screening tool for use by teachers and education officials. The combined tool will help ensure children with disabilities get the support they need to learn and play on an equal basis with their peers. From the learnings collected from testing the new tool with our partner USDC, we will then work with government to build the evidence needed to take up the model more widely and ensure children with disabilities across Uganda have tailored support, helping to combat widening educational inequalities nationally.



The ILP and disability screening tool will help **ensure** children with disabilities **get the support they need** to learn and play on an **equal basis with their peers**.

Through our current projects



We conducted **2,094** home visits

to vulnerable children with disabilities during the pandemic



We registered **853** parents

of children with disabilities into parent support groups



We trained **484** teachers

in Child-to-Child approaches for disability-inclusive learning

Kenya

We have worked in Kenya **since 2009** with our partners **ANDY** 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 ANDY is based, and home to an estimated **100,000** people with disabilities.

What we're proud of

As part of our Comic Relief funded inclusive education programme with ANDY in Kenya, we're delighted about the development of an individualised education plan (IEP) guide and an inclusive play programme (IPP) guide for teachers. The IEP guide has been developed to help teachers provide bespoke educational support for individual children with disabilities to help them reach educational goals more easily than they would without this support. Recognising the importance of play for all children's physical, cognitive, social and emotional development in their early years, the IPP sets out practical advice and guidance for teachers on how to deliver an inclusive play programme that equally benefits all children with disabilities. Teachers have received specialist trainings on both tools, and we're excited to monitor the effectiveness of these approaches, with these learnings informing adaptations later in the project.

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

Beneficiary of our work in Kenya



Improving access to early years education for children with disabilities

Despite children being eligible to enrol in pre-primary education from the age of 3, assessments in Kenya are only conducted with children from the age of 5. This means that children who need additional support in their early years are missed at this crucial stage in their life, resulting in lower enrolment, retention and attainment numbers among children with disabilities. Together with our partner ANDY in Kenya, and with funding from the British & Foreign Schools Society, we have developed two 'Early Years Child Functioning Assessment Tools', one for children aged 2 to 4 years and the other for children aged 5 to 17 years. Adapted from the Washington Group on child functioning, the assessment tools have been developed for use by government education officials and teachers to assess different functional domains of individual children such as vision, hearing, mobility, learning, communication, dexterity and playing, and emotions. The full involvement of both ANDY and Able Child Africa in this process ensured that both national and international standards were considered, whilst a situational analysis with Ministry of Education officials, schools, children with and without disabilities and parents of children with disabilities has ensured its suitability. Crucially, we have been able to apply our extensive experience and knowledge of the considerations needed for inclusive education, specifically for children with disabilities at pre-primary level.



The effect of Covid-19 on Alfred and his family



The effect of Covid-19 was felt by Alfred's family in a big way, especially the loss of income for his parents. It was difficult for Alfred's mother, Ruth, to provide the basic needs for the Alfred and his siblings. Alfred's parents noticed a regression in his progress. Before schools closed, Alfred was able to communicate well with others and complete simple school activities such as colouring. He had acclimatised to a regular schedule, going to school during the week and church on the weekends. But this routine was greatly disrupted because of Covid-19. It has been difficult for Ruth to explain to Alfred why schools were closed, why children were staying at home, and why he could not play with other children. It has been especially challenging to explain the importance of social distancing and why and how to wash your hands effectively and regularly.

Ruth was part of the home-based care training that we set up in November 2020. The training outlined how to support the early childhood development of children with disabilities in their homes, with topics on early identification and interventions, nutrition and health, and inclusive learning. Ruth incorporated these teachings, preparing activities such as ball games, colouring and reading exercises, and cooking healthy and nutritious meals. Despite the challenges that Covid-19 brought, Ruth did her best to support Alfred and with schools now open again in Kenya, **Alfred has been enrolled in a day-care nursery and is back on track with his education at a nearby school.**



Ruth incorporated these teachings, preparing activities such as **ball games, colouring and reading exercises**, and **cooking** healthy and nutritious meals.

Through our current projects



We educated **38,814** community members

on the importance of early childhood development for children with disabilities



We trained **199** 'parent champions'

of children with disabilities into parent support groups



We advocated for the rights of children with disabilities with

14 government officials

Tanzania

We have been working in Tanzania **since 2007** alongside our partners **Child Support Tanzania (CST)** to change the lives of children and young people with disabilities through inclusive 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

We are very excited that the second phase of building CST's brand new **inclusive Early Childhood Education centre** is drawing to a close after experiencing delays due to Covid-19 and other factors, and that the **next phase of work is now underway**. To date, CST's new school has two fully accessible classrooms, an accessible toilet block and a multi-functional assembly hall. The next phase of work will realise the construction of another accessible classroom and a physiotherapy room to ensure children with disabilities have access to the necessary support they need to stay in school. CST's school currently hosts just under 200 children with and without disabilities, and we're extremely proud that this fully accessible early learning centre has been commended by the Tanzanian government as a beacon for inclusive education.

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



Take All My Friends To School

This year we brought our five-year inclusive education 'Take All My Friends To School' project to an end with our partner Child Support Tanzania (CST). This project was one of our largest to date and enabled us to work actively with government to increase the access, quality, and quantity of inclusive education provision in Tanzania through the project's work with 8 primary schools in Mbeya area.

This project supported 370 previously out-of-school children with disabilities to enrol into inclusive mainstream education, giving them the support they need to develop academically, socially and emotionally. Wrapped around this work within schools was a focused advocacy campaign with CST working in consortium with other civil society organisations to help government to adapt its policies to ensure quality inclusive education for children across Tanzania.



James' Story

James was one part of the first cohort of children with disabilities enrolled in one of the target primary schools back in 2017. His enrolment came about as the result of the work of the Parent Support Group (PSG) set up with the school. James acquired a disability following birth complications, making his parents worried about their son. Before joining the PSG, they were facing challenges supporting their child. When James first enrolled in school, he could not communicate through verbal or write methods easily. However, with the right support from his teacher, who had been trained in inclusive education teaching methods and disability rights and friends in his Child Rights Club (CRC), James has **been able to cope** and **break down disabling barriers** to education and social inclusion. James attends physiotherapy once a month and his mental and physical health is improving greatly. James is now one of the best pupils in his class, acting as a **trailblazer for children with disabilities** and showing his **undeniable talent and potential**.

Advocacy/ influencing in the country:

Our partner CST was selected by the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST) to be among the panel of drafting the new National Strategy of Inclusive Education (NSIE) 2022. This has demonstrated CST's developing role as a trusted advisor to government in the development and implementation of inclusive education policy. This involvement will build on CST's previous co-ordination of the national NGO Director's Forum, which helped lobby for the national implementation of the previous strategy.

Through our current projects



367 children were educated

on their rights through Child Rights Clubs (CRCs) at their school



288 teacher home visits

to children with disabilities to help parents with early education and childhood development guidance



We trained **282** teachers

on Child-to-Child teaching practices

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 and access inclusive education.

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. As they grow older, these inequities remain; Rwandan youth with disabilities are far less likely to participate in the workforce, with less than 1% in employment. While Rwanda has a good track record of inclusive policies and has taken many strides towards better inclusion of its population, many children with disabilities are still unable to access basic services and face stigma and discrimination.

What we're proud of

This year saw the conclusion of two of our big projects in Rwanda. In our Raising Aspirations project, funded by the UK government, we empowered 80 young people with disabilities to become national advocates for disability inclusion and mentors for younger children with disabilities. This project targeted children with disabilities, their communities and Rwandan government to work together to ensure that the Sustainable Development Goals were made a reality in Rwanda. We also saw the conclusion of our youth-led Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) project, funded by Jersey Overseas Aid, in Musanze, northern Rwanda. 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. We created a more accessible environment so that inaccessible facilities and information sharing are not the reasons why girls with disabilities are not in school. We trained teachers on



inclusive teaching methods and educated the girls about good hygiene and reproductive health practices. We also trained a group of 12 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.

Covid-19 Rapid Response

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. We secured additional funding from the UK Government for a Covid-19 Rapid Response project, which aimed 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 undertook home mentoring visits to children with disabilities to help support their mental wellbeing during the pandemic and ensure they received the support they need. As part of this funding we also created 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

Elizabeth is a 15-year-old girl with a physical impairment. She used to frequently miss classes in her lower primary years due to several health issues, which meant that she was often having to go into hospital for treatment. Because of this, Elizabeth did not start primary school until she was 11 years old, alongside classmates who were 6 or 7 years old. Despite her late start to education, Elizabeth's teachers frequently said she was one of the best-behaved students and she excelled in her studies. However, by the time Elizabeth was in Primary 3 class, she was already a teenager and dealing with her body changing, whereas most of her classmates were not, and she became increasingly isolated. After being identified to take part in our inclusive WASH project, funded by Jersey Overseas Aid, Elizabeth began receiving group mentoring as part of the school health clubs. This provided Elizabeth with the opportunity to speak openly about her experiences among peers, and receive crucial information about water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and sexual reproductive health. All the information shared was done so in a disability inclusive way, meaning that for the first time the conversation was relevant and sensitive to Elizabeth's experiences.

The open and honest conversations around hygiene and sexual reproductive health have **increased her confidence** and **removed much of the stigma** that she previously felt. Furthermore, she was given materials as well as education on how to use them correctly, which has allowed her to manage her hygiene safely and effectively. In turn, this has all led to her **spending more time with her classmates** and feeling more included in her class. Elizabeth now visits other girls with disabilities who are currently out of school, helping them to understand the importance of good hygiene practices. She loves her role as a WASH 'hero', saying that she hopes every girl with disabilities can get a chance to access the training in the same way she has. She says, "I want to become a health worker when I grow up so that I get to teach other people about inclusive practices. I know this would also make my mother very proud of me."

Through our current projects



We provided **135** children with disabilities

with emergency hygiene supplies and psychosocial support during COVID-19



We registered **477** parents

of children with disabilities into parent support groups



We trained **24** teachers

in Child-to-Child approaches for disability-inclusive learning

Malawi

We began working in Malawi in 2020 with one of our **newest** partners, **Federation of Disability Organisations in Malawi** (FEDOMA), following an extensive partnership call and partnership process, with FEDOMA chosen as a partner organisation who can help us further our collective mission and add value to each other's work.

Malawi has an extremely young population, with children under 18 accounting for more than 50% of the total population. 63% of these youth live in multidimensional poverty where education, nutrition and health are scarce. Affecting disability prevalence rates, Malawi also has one of the highest pre-term birth rates globally, with many of Malawi's large populace of young people living with disabilities. To support its young population, Malawi's government has taken significant strides forward in provision of Early Childhood Education, including a 20% allocation of the national budget to education and the innovative implementation of community-based early years' services. Despite these efforts, disability inclusion remains largely unconsidered in these service provisions, with the specific support considerations of young children with disabilities often left out of these plans.

We value the partnership with Able Child Africa as it goes beyond project implementation, to support organisational development and build our capacity

Chris, FEDOMA Project Manager



What we're proud of

We are proud to support FEDOMA in their national advocacy activities, with several activities targeting key government changemakers. This includes a meeting with the Minister of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare to lobby his support for the recognition of a link between disability and poverty. As a result, the Minister agreed to engage the Ministry of Health who took part in the World Health Assembly to deliver the message during the assembly including writing a letter to the WHO regional director and Malawi UN representative, stating the link between poverty and disability. This was a significant step in ensuring the government recognise the additional support that children with disabilities and their families need, especially during a pandemic. Furthermore, the national Malawian police service has pledged its support and dedication to work with FEDOMA to raise awareness on the protection and safeguarding of children with disabilities through joint media campaigns, an ongoing collaboration.



Through our current projects



We enrolled **50** young children with disabilities

into early childhood education



We enrolled **150** parents

of children with disabilities into parent support groups



We trained **37** teachers

(CBCC workers) in disability inclusive teaching methods

Improving access to early childhood development in Malawi

In September 2020, we launched a new and exciting project with our partner FEDOMA. Together, we are delivering a new three-year project to **improve access to early childhood development (ECD) services for young children with disabilities (aged 3-5 years old) through quality community-based inclusive early childhood interventions.**

In the project's first year we have worked with ten community childhood centres to ensure that the services they offer are inclusive of all children, including those with disabilities. We have made the centres more accessible, trained staff on disability inclusion, and have identified several children with disabilities who were out of school to be enrolled in the centres. We have also screened several children with disabilities to ensure that they receive any assistive devices that they need to ensure their equitable inclusion and continued attendance to school. We have also been working with a number of actors responsible for the early years' development of children with disabilities, including government, communities and parents of children with disabilities. Through targeting all these groups simultaneously, we have seen exciting cooperation and enthusiasm to achieve the project's aims and ensure long-term systemic change.

We are really proud of the success that we have already seen in the project's first year and are looking forward to continuing this.

Zambia

As one of our newest partners, we began working in Zambia with **Zambia Association of Parents for Children with Disabilities** (ZAPCD) last year, with ZAPCD chosen as a partner organisation who can help us further our collective mission and add value to each other's work.

In Zambia, it is estimated that there are just over 1 million people with disabilities, which equates to 7.2% of the population. Lack of access to services are cited as one of the main barriers people with disabilities face. For children with disabilities, no inclusive education policy or statements that outline the need for inclusive education at any level exists in Zambia. As few as 22% of children with disabilities are in Early Childhood Education (ECE), 52% in primary education and only 12% are recorded as having completed secondary education. The needs of children with disabilities are not fully considered in government plans, with national data and evidence desperately needed to inform and influence the government to address the ECE needs of children with disabilities in Zambia. Recognising that education starts at pre-primary level, focusing on efforts to improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of ECE for children with disabilities offers a real opportunity to give children the best start possible to progress through their educational journey.

With Able Child Africa's support we have been able to begin our national review of Early Childhood Education, with input from different stakeholders across the country.
Charity, ZAPCD



What we're proud of

Earlier this year, Able Child Africa and ZAPCD received funding from Vitol Foundation to begin delivery of our very first project together. We are currently conducting a national review of the availability and accessibility of Early Childhood Education (ECE) services for children with disabilities in Zambia. The review will identify barriers children with disabilities face, what successful approaches for inclusive early childhood education in Zambia already exist, and what are perceived to be the most sustainable solutions for furthering inclusive early childhood education in the current context. Through consultations with children with disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, community leaders, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), government officials, teachers, and other education professionals, the review will help produce a detailed evidence paper and clear project outline for a multi-year inclusive ECE programme we hope to begin delivering together next year.



Challenge of Covid-19 on our partnerships

Our partner model is fundamental to the way we work, as we believe **the most effective way to support children with disabilities is to partner with organisations in the countries where we work**. We build long term partnerships that go beyond any funding relationship, as we invest in the long term growth of an organisation to ensure they remain able to support and fight for the rights of children with disabilities.

The Covid-19 pandemic however, has placed great challenges on our ability to maintain and manage our partnerships, particularly our new partnerships with ZAPCD in Zambia and FEDOMA in Malawi. We have been working hard to support both organisations remotely through this time and secure funding for their work. We have been identifying areas of organisational development where we can support to improve their capacity to do their work.



We are delighted by the investment of both **ZAPCD** and **FEDOMA** into this process and look forward to be able to **visit them in person** over the next year to progress our partnerships.



In Focus:

Impact of **Covid-19**

The impact of Covid-19 on the countries where we work has been severe, even though the spread of the virus and the response in each country has differed. One thing that has been consistent across all countries, is the disproportionate impact on people and children with disabilities. Worryingly, over the last year it has become clear that children with disabilities have been routinely forgotten, ignored and abused, falling even further behind. Over the last year we have therefore adapted and redirected our programmatic delivery to ensure we have been flexible and responsive to these challenges, supporting children and their families as effectively as possible.

But we have also seen an increased demand on services from our partners, alongside a shortfall in funding and a lack of support for delivery. This has been a particular challenge for Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) who work with children and young people with disabilities, as these organisations tend to be underfunded, smaller and therefore more fragile organisations. We recognise the vital role that OPDs play in supporting children with disabilities and have therefore provided one-off unrestricted grants to our partner organisations that have enabled them to pay staff and overheads and continue to provide the crucial support for children with disabilities.

In 2020 we collated evidence from across our partnership network in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Malawi and Zambia which identified five main ways in which children and young people with disabilities in Africa are specifically impacted by Covid-19.

Lack of disability and child-friendly resources and equipment

There has been an obvious lack of disability-inclusive and child friendly information on Covid-19, including health updates, hygiene advice and social distancing guidance. In addition, 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. We have worked with partners in Rwanda and Tanzania to advocate for the provision of disability and child-friendly hygiene facilities providing training and guidance to schools, communities and local government.

Children and young people 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. We have worked with our partners in Uganda, Kenya and Malawi to train parents on Home Based Care (HBC), teaching parents to provide physiotherapy and occupational therapy, while working with local health providers to adapt services so that children with disabilities and their families can access them.

Increased financial pressure on families of children with disabilities.

Parents of children with disabilities are usually engaged in informal, unreliable employment. Continued restrictions on movement, and therefore paid work, has meant many families of children with disabilities are on the brink of starvation. In Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya we have provided emergency packages of essential food items and hygiene equipment for families of children with disabilities and have been working with local governments to ensure Covid-19 response funds are directed towards these families.

Inaccessible education for children and young people with disabilities

Global gains made in inclusive education have been cut short by the current pandemic. Global school closures have seen a rise in alternative education being used to support remote learning, most of which are not disability inclusive. Across our education portfolio we have been working with partners to train parents in home-based schooling and set up Covid-safe, low-cost community learning hubs. We have also been supporting partners to advocate to governments for accessible home-based education methodologies including radio broadcast and adaptations of education materials.

Increased safeguarding risks for children and young people with disabilities

The context of the current pandemic has put many children with disabilities at additional risk. The closures of schools and increased time spent at home has meant children with disabilities are more likely to experience physical or psychological abuse or sexual assault in their homes and are more likely to be abused by those who care for them.



Building Local Capacity



Building the capacity of our local partners is a core part of the work we deliver and **central to our impact strategy.**

It is a distinct objective in our strategy and outlines a commitment to provide focused and measured organisational development support to each of the organisations we work with. We only work with organisations where both parties feel they can add value to each other, and we ensure that a willingness to take part in this reciprocal capacity building is considered in the selection of new partners.

Objective 2: Build the capacity of a network of African-led disability organisations, both individually and collectively, to maximise the impact and sustainability of their work

This year marked a new partnership cycle for our overseas partners and ourselves. We signed new partnership agreements with all partners, who selected their top three capacity building priorities in areas where they would like to strengthen their organisational development. These priorities have been structured into delivery plans involving trainings, mentorship and workshops aimed at helping our partners sustainably develop their organisations over the next three years.

In Uganda, we supported USDC to develop a set of inclusive education tools aimed at supporting children with disabilities through early identification processes and supporting them to follow individualised learning plans (ILP). This innovative, combined tool is now going to be piloted by USDC in our new project to see if the model is suitable for scaling across Uganda's primary school system on a national level.

In Kenya, we worked with ANDY to develop a number of programmatic tools for use by teachers and education officials, including a new inclusive play programme guide, an individualised education plan guide, a child functioning assessment tool and a handbook for teachers on disability inclusive sexual and reproductive health for girls with disabilities. Collectively, these tools have strengthened our combined ability to create long-lasting change for children with disabilities in Kenya.

In Tanzania, we continued to support Child Support Tanzania (CST) to improve their financial management and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) capacity, supporting their finance team and Board of Trustees to operationalise their rolling set of management accounts to improve financial tracking. We also worked with CST to improve their MEL capacity and MEL culture within the organisation

by supporting them to conduct their first external final evaluation following the conclusion of our four-year inclusive education project this year.

In Rwanda, we supported UWEZO to strengthen their capacity to deliver disability inclusive trainings, supporting them as they took over the delivery of multiple trainings on sanitation and hygiene, disability inclusion and advocacy to their youth with disabilities network, based on trainings we had previously held with UWEZO staff. We also worked with UWEZO to expand their MEL capacity by supporting them to conduct two final evaluations of our two major multiyear projects, which both concluded this year.

In Malawi, we worked with our new partner FEDOMA to strengthen their financial and governance systems, supporting them through an in-depth organisation policy audit, as well as writing a new constitution and new finance and governance policies. We supported FEDOMA to hold an extraordinary General Assembly to launch their new governance policies and are assisting them to recruit new Trustees. We also worked with project staff to build their capacity in financial management and MEL through a series of trainings, supporting them as they implemented their project baseline study.

In Zambia, we worked with our new partner ZAPCD to build their knowledge and capacity to design an initial theory of change for an inclusive early childhood education (ECE) project for children with disabilities. Through a series of workshops and meetings we worked with ZAPCD to develop problem statements, design outcomes and activities that respond to the barriers identified. ZAPCD are now testing this theory of change by conducting a national review of ECE provision in Zambia and consulting with organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) across four provinces of Zambia.



Luke's story

Luke was born blind, and for the first 5 years of his life **never left his mother's side.**

- He was completely dependent and attached and couldn't develop any communication skills. He didn't even have the confidence to walk on his own. He was left isolated from other children his age and his parents didn't believe he would be able to have a positive future.



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

As soon as he was enrolled in school through our Child-to-Child Inclusive Education Project, however, Luke's prospects completely turned around. The teachers at Luke's school had been trained in inclusive education and worked hard with him to develop his communication skills. Fantastically he can now signal to his friends and teachers whenever he needs anything, and his social skills are growing daily.

The project has provided Luke with a white cane, meaning he is finally able to **enjoy independence, walk around and navigate his environment on his own**, and most importantly, **make friends**. Luke's parents are thrilled and amazed.

His parents' outlook has completely changed, and they now have **really positive hopes for Luke's future**. They have even joined the local parent's group, supporting other parents of children with disabilities in their community.

“

We can't believe what **Luke can now do on his own**. We're so grateful for all the work the teachers have done with him.

– Grace

Advocating for Change

We are committed to raise awareness of the unique barriers that children with disabilities face and **actively advocate for recognition of their rights** and the **funding associated with their inclusion.**



We believe our partners are best placed to advocate locally and seek to strengthen their capacity to influence change. As such we work primarily through our partners to advocate for the inclusion of children with disabilities in local policies, procedures and budgets. We stand alongside them to hold their Governments to account for their stated obligations and commitments as outlined in national charters, constitutions and international frameworks and ensure it is them, not Able Child Africa who are recognised for projects that deliver local advocacy. We also work with partners to deliver local community level campaigns and awareness raising strategies to ensure children with disabilities grow up in supportive unprejudiced environments.

Objective 3: Effect positive changes in the realisation of the rights of children with disabilities through strengthened policies, improved budgeting and expanded opportunities for child and youth participation.

This year

This year, our partners have we have had some significant success in influencing and strengthening national level policies.

In **Uganda**, as a result of strong relationships developed with government departments through our inclusive education programme, our partner USDC received special permissions to conduct activities during periods of lockdown to ensure children with disabilities continued to be supported despite schools remaining closed.

In **Kenya**, through engagement with government officials in newly established Community Based Rehabilitation groups we have seen a significant increase in the number of children with disabilities receiving individual support, such as access to bursaries and assistive devices to enable children to have improved access to primary and secondary education.

In **Tanzania**, CST continued advocacy to the National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA) to secure inclusive adaptations to school examinations that enable children with disabilities to be assessed on an equitable basis to their peers. This year CST secured modified examination concessions for 121 children with disabilities for examinations. This is a vital step in reducing educational inequalities and ensuring children with disabilities have the support they need to thrive in education.

In **Rwanda**, as our result of our work funded by Jersey Overseas Aid, there has been a notable improvement in the provision of disability-inclusive water, sanitation and hygiene support by the Rwandan government, including sustained provision of hygiene kits to girls with disabilities, and commitments to ensuring that future school structures are built to support children with disabilities in an inclusive and dignified way.

In **Malawi**, our project has enabled sustained engagement with local and national decisionmakers, including meetings with Minister of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare. These meetings have resulted in additional commitments from the government to promote disability inclusive ECD delivery such as a monthly stipend for caregivers. FEDOMA have also been working closely with the national police, who as a result have pledged to work with FEDOMA to raise awareness nationally on the protection and safeguarding of children with disabilities through joint media campaigns.

In **Zambia**, we have been able to capitalise on consultations with government officials as part of our national review, to secure buy-in for a multi-year inclusive Early Childhood Education programme for children with disabilities in Zambia that we hope to begin next year.

In the UK

In the UK, we work to advocate for children with disabilities by providing training and facilitating workshops for mainstream organisations and donors on child-led disability inclusion. We believe that by influencing larger mainstream organisations with a wider reach across their projects, we create a cost-effective and efficient way of reaching larger numbers of children and their families.



We have continued in our leadership role as a Co-Chair of the UK Bond Disability and Development Group and continue to sit on the Bond Child Rights Working Group Steering Group. This year we have focused on working with the UK INGO sector to oppose the UK Aid budget cuts from 0.7% GNI to 0.5% GNI and advocated for the continued need for the UK government to support children with disabilities. We have also used these platforms to promote the adoption of our disability-inclusive child safeguarding guidelines and continue to ensure that intersectionality of childhood and disability is represented in position papers and evidence given to policy makers on disability inclusive development.

Disability Inclusive Child Safeguarding - We have continued to lead the way this year in disability-inclusive child safeguarding. We have continued to co-coordinate an Inclusive Safeguarding Task Group in the International Development and Disability Consortium and have continued to act as an advisor to the FCDO Safeguarding Resources and Support Hub on issues relating to disability inclusive safeguarding. We have also developed and published the first Disability-inclusive Child Safeguarding Guidelines in partnership with Save the Children, with an accompanying Toolkit and practitioner video for organisations in the sector. We launched the guidelines and toolkit in May 2021 with over 500 attendees from 125 organisations. A podcast spotlighting the guidelines was also released in July by the FCDO Resource and Support Hub. The guidelines and the toolkit

provide advice on how to plan for disability-inclusive child safeguarding, with tangible steps for organisations and practitioners working across the development and humanitarian sectors on how to include children with disabilities in each step of the process.

Momentum Panel Series - This year we launched a new series of public talks on different aspects of our work called 'Momentum.' The events provide a unique platform for the children and young people with disabilities to discuss the programmatic approaches that work for them. The panel series also bring together the experience of academics and practitioners on delivery approaches that are specifically designed for children and young people with disabilities. The events are free to attend and are intended to share learnings with the wider sector on some of the key approaches taken in our work. The first panel in March focused on the health and social protection impact of Covid-19 for children with disabilities, with the second panel conversation in July looking at disability inclusive water, sanitation and hygiene for girls with disabilities. The third panel, due later in the year will focus on inclusive sports and play for children with disabilities.

Training and Knowledge Sharing - This year we have provided several trainings and webinars for organisations across the sector. Working with organisations such as Plan International, Right to Play and CBM international, we have delivered sessions on disability-inclusive programming techniques for children with disability, as well as disability-inclusive child safeguarding training. We have also provided support for organisations reviewing their internal child safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure they are disability inclusive.

Recognising that Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) or grassroots civil society organisations that work with children are sometimes excluded from professional trainings due to cost, we also put on a series of three free webinars on disability-inclusive child safeguarding for OPDs. The sessions started in September this year and are based on the recent Disability-inclusive Child Safeguarding Guidelines and Toolkit published in partnership with Save the Children.



Financial Report

Overview

Able Child Africa's total income this year was £957,430 which represents a reduction of 3% from the previous financial year. This is comprised of £675,305 in restricted funding (including grants) and £282,125 in unrestricted flexible funding.

Total expenditure this year was £909,713, which is a 17% growth from the previous financial year.

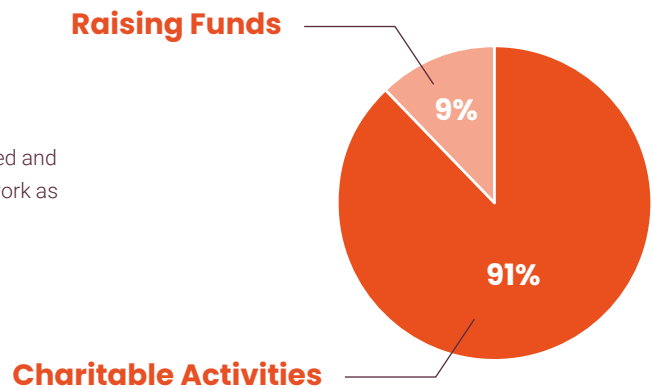
Income and Expenditure

Income and Expenditure	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
Income	£282,125	£675,305	£957,430
Expenditure	£196,223	£713,490	£909,713
Net Income (Expenditure)	£85,902	-£38,185	£47,717

Spending on Charitable Activities

Expenditure Split	Charitable Activities	Raising Funds	Total Expenditure
Total	£826,652	£83,061	£909,713

Expenditure on charitable activities amounts to **91p 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 March 2021 with £311,015 of unrestricted reserves. This included £85,000 of designated funds, resulting in a net unrestricted reserves figure of £226,015, well above our target of £140,000. This strong level of unrestricted reserves has allowed us to navigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic over the last 18-months and left us in a strong position for 2021/22.

Our full report and accounts are available at the back of this document.

Celebrating You

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 estate of Irma Skeeles. The legacy, which we are putting towards the inclusive school build in Tanzania, will make a huge improvement to the lives of children with disabilities in Tanzania and will be a lasting legacy to Irma's life.

Virtual Events

Covid-19 has placed an unprecedented challenge on our ability to bring money in, with the cancellation of many of our vital events. While we were not able to stage our in-person Gala, we were so humbled by all the support we received for our virtual gala in 2020. A big thank you to Theo and Gary from Kujenga for their in-kind donation of the digital platform and tech support that allowed us to put all the income we received towards our work. A big thank you also to Daliso Chaponda for hosting the event and to Chris McCausland for joining us for our virtual Who Wants to be a Millionaire game. We were also incredibly privileged to have two special performances on the night from our patron Emeli Sande and from Annie Lennox, who made the night extra special.

We were also very thankful to Damian Lewis for agreeing to put on an event for his new book launch and donate the proceeds of the event to our work. So a big thank you to Damian and to Kate Adie as well for chairing the successful and interesting event.

Our patrons

We are lucky to have some amazing patrons who continue to support our work. A big thank you to long standing patrons Anne Wafula-Strike and Keith Nethercot for all their support over many years. And to our new patrons, Emeli Sande and Ellie Robinson. We are very excited to have them on board and look forward to working together to further our work.

Corporate and individual supporters

We are very fortunate to have some amazing corporate partners, whose continued support during a challenging period have been so vital. To the Exile Group (formerly TXF), a big thank you for continuing to be friends of the charity and understanding the challenges we face. The Exile Group have also offered us a free office space from November 2021, which means more of our funds will be able to go towards our activities with children with disabilities, so a big thank you to Dan, Katy, Dom and all the team for their support.

To Azad Ayub Ltd for his sponsorship of our events, and generosity to the cause. To PenCarrie and Clare Persey both for their donation to our work and for their support of what we do.

To American Century and Paul Harrison for their regular donation and matched donations from the U and to Cargill and Juwon Sofola for their amazing donation each year.

We would also like to thank the Trusts and Foundations that supported us this year. To Vascroft Foundation for their continued support and to the Ashla Charitable Trust for their donation.

This year we also secured two new corporate donors, Hassell Inclusion and Dogemoon. We are delighted that they have come on board to support our work and are very grateful for their support. We look forward to a long and impactful partnership.

We would also like to thank Iirth for their continued support with our brand and design and We Are Penelope for their essential IT support during a very challenging time. And to Patricia Balogun for your amazing work with our finances. We think of you all as part of the team.

We would like to thank the following donors for their support in 2021

Aberdeen Asset Management Charitable Foundation
Aletheia Foundation
American Century Investments
Ashla Charitable Trust
Azad Ayub Ltd
Barclays Charitable Trust
Cargill
Comic Relief
Department for International Development (now FCDO)
Euromoney Institutional Investor PLC
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Jersey Overseas Aid Commission
Laureus Sport for Good Foundation
Network for Social Change
PenCarrie Limited
The British and Foreign School Society
The Commonwealth Foundation
The Exile Group – TXF and Kujenga
The Marr-Munning Trust
Vascroft Foundation

Looking Forward



Karl Hankinson
Chief Executive Officer

The last 18-months has been somewhat of a perfect storm for our sector. While the impact of Covid-19 placed unprecedented challenges on all charities, the merger of the Department for International Development (DFID) with the FCO, along with the severe cuts to funding across the sector has left many organisations under threat. While we have been able to navigate the period in a strong position, we do not underestimate the challenges ahead, and understand that we may need to change to remain both sustainable and relevant.

However, it is not just organisations in the UK that have been affected. Cuts to UK aid budgets and programmes have had a significant impact on all of our partners across Africa, who have suddenly lost funding or found themselves unable to secure new funds. There is an existential threat to the survival of these organisations, who are essential if we are to maintain the fragile social structures that protect children and young people with disabilities across Africa and so we remain committed to support our partners, ensuring they are here to continue their vital work.

The true impact of Covid-19 on children with disabilities across the world is not yet known but we know from experience it is the most disadvantaged who suffer through any crisis. The likelihood of abuse and violence to vulnerable children increases, and yet the structures that protect children with disabilities barely exist in the communities where we work. Disability movements are young, and organisations that focus on children with disabilities are few and so the need for us to continue our work, in partnership with local organisations, is more important than ever.

But going forward, it is likely to be a changing role. As we enter a new strategic planning period, we are consulting with a wide range of stakeholders, including our partners to understand where we add most value. Through this process I believe we are brave enough to be self-critical and take the required decisions to ensure that Able Child Africa can thrive and continue to make a vital difference for children with disabilities in Africa.

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. So once again, I would like to thank everyone for continuing to support us this year and I look forward to what we can achieve together over the next year.

Many thanks

Karl Hankinson
Chief Executive Officer

Strategic Priorities

We have **four key strategic priorities** outlined over the next 12-months.



1. New strategy development

We are coming to the end of our latest strategic period, with our current strategy running to March 2022. After our two most successful years to date, our year-on-year growth that we have seen over the last seven years is expected to be affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, alongside the significant changes we are seeing within the sector. This process was evident prior to Covid-19, but it has been accelerated by the changes we have seen recently. With that firmly in mind, we had already begun a comprehensive review of the organisation, formulating ideas of how we might need to change over the next strategic period to remain impactful and resilient. Over the next year, this will be our focus as we undergo extensive consultation both internally and externally to plan out our next steps forward, with a new strategy expected in place by June 2022. This work is going on alongside a drive to improve diversity and representation from a governance perspective to ensure we remain fit for purpose and accountable to the people that we work with.

2. Impact through advocacy

During and following a global crisis it is inevitably the poorest and most marginalised who will suffer the most. So, our role in raising the voice of children with disabilities is as important as ever. It is vital that the needs of children with disability and the progress that has been made over the last 30 years is not lost through Covid-19. We will therefore continue to advocate for the inclusion of children with disabilities in local policies, procedures and budgets both here in the UK and alongside our partners in Africa. We will take on a larger role in international networks ensuring that the rights of children with disabilities are considered in all decision making.

3. Disability-inclusive child safeguarding

We are looking to build on the expertise we have developed, particularly in the area of inclusive safeguarding, as we continue to position ourselves as experts in our field. We have already shown that we add value to large mainstream organisations, and we want to continue to show that we add value across the sector. We will continue our strategy to position ourselves as thought leaders on the issues surrounding children with disabilities, particularly around inclusive safeguarding and continue our work developing products and tools that assist other organisations to include children with disabilities in their work. This positioning will be vital if we are to be in a position to effectively advocate for the inclusion of children and young people with disabilities.

4. Diversifying income portfolios

The impact of Covid-19 and the widespread cuts across the sector will have a significant impact on our organisation that is expected to last for the next few years. While we expect most of our fundraising events to return to normal over the next 18-months, the need to diversify our income portfolios remains to make us more resilient to change. This is particularly true when we look at our historic grant-based funding. The last 12-months has seen a significant drop in large multi-year funding opportunities, meaning all organisations are having to consider how they continue to bring funds in. We are not immune to this and will be looking at how we maintain funding for projects with partners by building



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