

NUDIPU CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

The National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda on 14th November 2007 marked 20 years of her existence. The organization which started from a humble beginning has grown to be nationally and internationally recognized as an advocacy organization for the rights of persons with disabilities. The rationale of forming NUDIPU was to have a unified voice for people with disabilities in Uganda and to embark on a systematic struggle to free persons with disabilities from bondage that reduced them to sub-humans

Key milestones

- § November 14th 1987 NUDIPU was formally launched at a meeting/seminar of 17 associations of PWDs with various disabilities that gathered at Mbarara-Tukole Invalids' school.
- § In 1994, NUDIPU lobbied successfully to have a representative of PWDs in the Constituency Assembly. The Late Eliphazi Mazima played a key role in the promulgation of the 1995 constitution of the republic of Uganda. The Constitution of Uganda recognizes the rights of PWDs and clearly guarantees the parliament of Uganda to enact laws aimed at promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. NUDIPU is now recognized in various legislative instruments or Acts of parliament like the Local Government Act 1997, UNISE Act 1998, Parliamentary Elections Act 2001 and many others
- § In 1996, 5 members of parliament representing PWDs were elected. This marked a beginning of a serious struggle to influence laws and policies in favour of PWDs. Since then, the struggle has yielded disability friendly legislations the challenge that lies ahead is ensuring that they are fully implemented.
- § In 1996, massive mobilization of PWDs was done with support from Disabled Persons Organization-Denmark that culminated into a comprehensive structure of NUDIPU consisting of the District Unions, Sub-County Associations and Parish Association. As an advocacy organization, NUDIPU requested to have representation of PWDs at all levels but many critics capitalized on inexistence of structures of PWDs at district and lower local levels. The mobilization of PWDs to form Associations and district unions provided structures through which the representatives of PWDs were elected. As we talk now, PWDs are represented at all levels of the local government structures to influence policies and service provision. A number of achievements have been registered as a result of these representation
- § On 7th June 1999, NUDIPU officially entered her own office located on plot 530 Kisasi Road-Bukoto. No more payment of office rent and migration from one location to another.
- § In 2006 the Disability Policy and Act were passed. These are important documents in the mainstreaming of disability in government, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

Challenges

Despite her achievements, NUDIPU continue to face a number of challenges

- § Continuous creation of new districts which requires formation of new District Union.
- § Enormous demands from membership (Expectations from members very high). NUDIPU is looked at as a funder or Donor agency by the membership. NUDIPU continuously receives requests from members like sponsorship for school fees, Loans to start their businesses etc
- § With regular election of Union members, it means that NUDIPU has to continuously train newly elected executive committees to build their capacity which is very expensive.
- § How to empower PWDs economically to overcome poverty. Supporting our members to access jobs not only in formal but also informal sectors
- § Society's negative attitude towards people with disabilities.

Current and future priorities

In order to champion the cause for disability, NUDIPU has prioritized the following as strategic areas for the next five years:

- § Economic empowerment

- § Disability and Human rights
- § Disability and HIV/AIDS
- § Networking and Coordination.
- § Institutional Capacity Strengthening