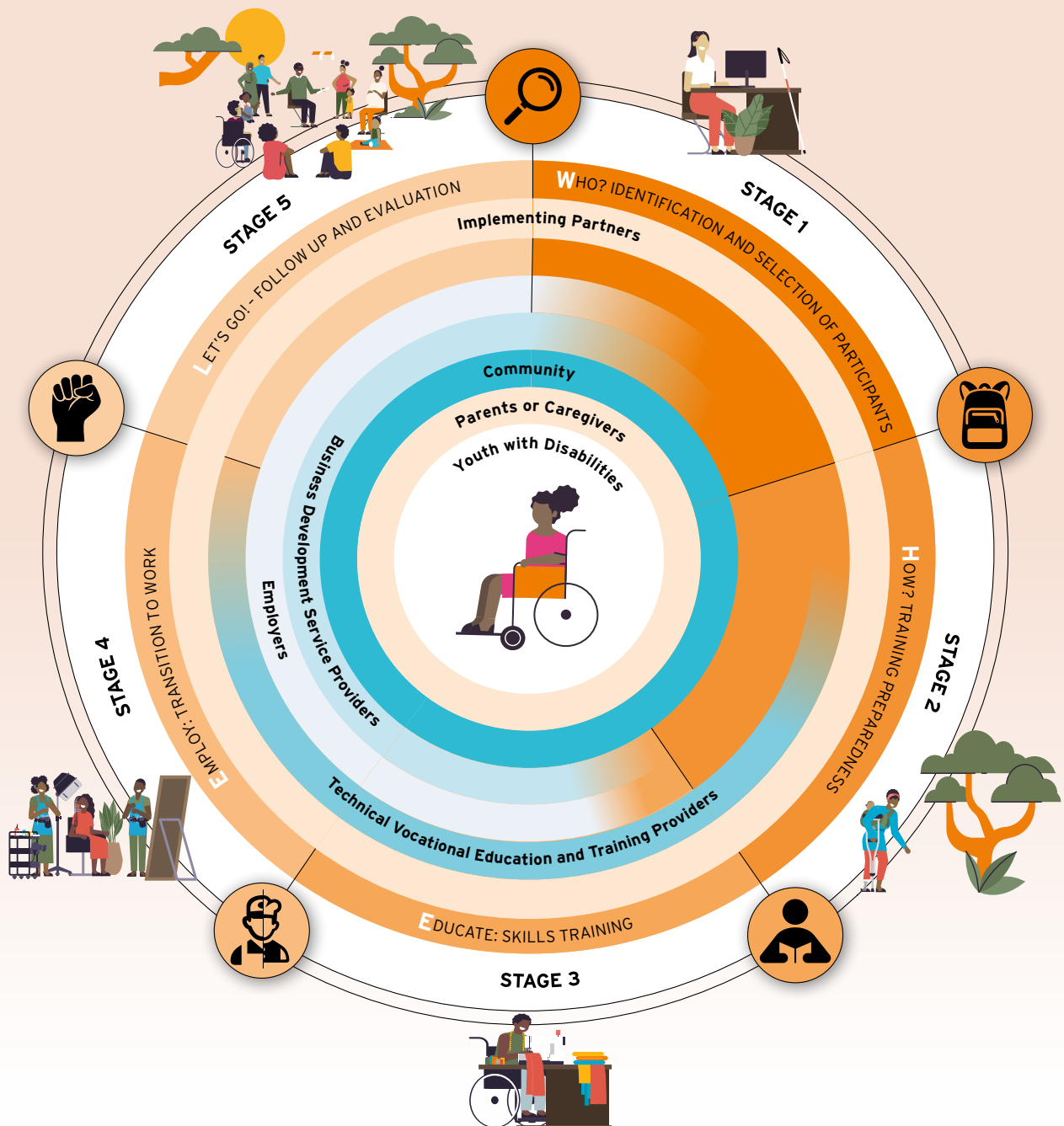


The Implementation Manual

WHEEL of Livelihoods



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The WHEEL of Livelihoods manual is the result of a collaborative effort to create a practical project cycle model and quality assurance tool that supports Youth with Disabilities (YWD) on their path from unemployment and exclusion to meaningful work and social inclusion.

Developed by Liliane Fonds in partnership with organizations delivering livelihoods projects in diverse settings, this tool reflects the insights, experiences, and best practices shared by our community of practice. We are grateful to our main partners: Cheshire Disability Services Kenya, NLR Indonesia, Research Center for Inclusion (RCI) Vietnam, Nicky's Foundation Cameroon, and NUDOR Rwanda.

Building on collective learning from inclusive livelihoods and Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) programs, this manual demonstrates our shared commitment to creating inclusive economic opportunities that empower youth with disabilities, tailored to their unique needs and goals.

We encourage users to share their experiences with the WHEEL of Livelihoods methodology to help improve and expand this work.

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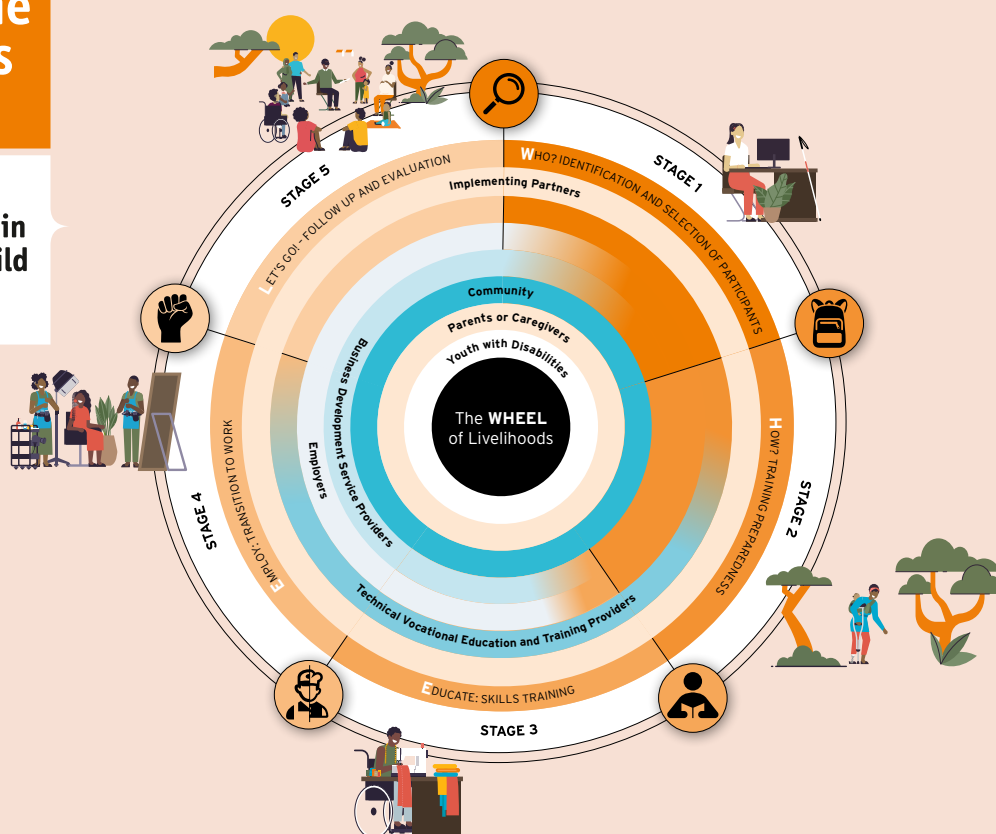
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INTRODUCTION

Introduction: Explaining the WHEEL of Livelihoods

WHAT IS THE WHEEL OF LIVELIHOODS?

The WHEEL of Livelihoods is a project cycle model and quality assurance tool to use for the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and learning of qualitative and inclusive livelihoods projects (or livelihoods components in Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) programmes) to accompany Youth with Disabilities (YWD) from a situation of unemployment and exclusion to meaningful work and inclusion based on their own specific goals. Based on best practices shared within a community of practice, the tool was developed by Liliane Fonds and its partners implementing livelihoods projects. The main contributing partners are Cheshire Disability Services Kenya, NLR Indonesia, Research Center for Inclusion (RCI) Vietnam, Nicky's Foundation in Cameroon, and NUDOR in Rwanda.

- ✓ What makes this model different from other project cycles in youth employment promotion? YWD are at the core of this WHEEL - the central axis around which the WHEEL turns; the Personal Professional Development Plan (PPDP) of each individual YWD informs the specifics of the intervention in relation to their personal vision for success, goals and milestones and supports them in identifying how they are making progress. This is then used in follow ups and PMEL. By doing so, each individual YWD has a customised pathway of skills development and transition according to their own interests and needs that is delivered in an enabling family, community, training, and work environment.

- ✓ Considering our target group there is a longer preparation phase included in the project cycle that allows for better results later on. It also contains specific activities catering specifically to the process of accompanying YWD in this transition from exclusion and unemployment through skills to work and inclusion in the different phases of the project cycle.
- ✓ This model visually represents all relevant stakeholders to be involved at the stage their role is most critical. This allows us to create an enabling environment that is conducive to individual transformation in knowledge, attitude/mindset, and skills and the resulting socio-economic outcomes.
 - In interventions this means that in the different phases activities happen at two levels - at the level of the YWD themselves and at the level of the enabling environment, and more specifically the different stakeholder groups identified in the model. This also means that training, employment and business environments are made accessible and inclusive for the YWD to achieve their skills, employment or entrepreneurship, and life outcomes.

WHY DO WE RECOMMEND USING THIS TOOL?

The WHEEL is a conceptual model and quality assurance tool that offers a roadmap to disability inclusion along the livelihoods project cycle in line with the latest thinking and best practices in disability inclusion in TVET, employment and entrepreneurship. This tool uses project cycle management applied to the phases typically included in livelihoods projects for YWD. It also integrates the bioecological model of Bronfenbrenner by highlighting the stakeholder groups (and environments) involved in this phase of the personal development of youth with disabilities as they navigate their transition from skills development to work. The main innovation is the youth-centred approach with custom learning pathways based on each individual YWD's interests and needs as captured in their PPDP. This best practice-based, innovative model is for mainstream and disability-specific organisations to design, plan for, implement and evaluate disability inclusion along the entire project cycle of livelihoods projects.

It is influenced by the social model of disability looking also at the enabling environment and the removal of barriers as well as the biopsychosocial model (like ICF) addressing accessibility, medication and more. This WHEEL model allows one to conceptualise both the training environment as well as the work environment and the individual factors involved. It empowers the

individual YWD to be at the steering wheel of their own socio-economic transformation - navigating the process with their individual PPDP as a compass. The model uses a human rights based approach, as well as a CBR approach towards Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID), and is strongly rooted in practice and learning from the field while working towards disability inclusive communities.

WHO IS IT FOR?

This is a tool for practitioners implementing disability inclusive livelihoods projects or specifically empowering YWD in livelihoods projects. A practitioner can be anyone working for a non-governmental organisation, a faith-based organisation, a public or private service provider, a government department, or a company as long as they are persons involved in designing, implementing, and/or evaluating the project.

WHEEL is an acronym identifying the five stages of the project life cycle and each letter will be described in the relevant section.

The first stage, the Identification and Selection of Participants stage (W - Who? What? Why?), is the stage in which project facilitators start preparing the enabling environment. Project facilitators map and identify stakeholders in the selected communities and prepare them to (help) identify and select YWD to support in the course of the livelihoods project. Community needs assessments, labour market surveys and broader context analyses can be part of this stage (or may have happened in the design stage prior to the start of the project). This stage corresponds to the inception phase and ends with the recruitment of the project participants, the YWD themselves.

The second stage, the Training Preparedness stage (H - How?), is where project facilitators ensure that Technical Vocational Education and Training Centres (TVET) and Community Based Training (CBT) providers are trained on disability inclusion and equity and supported to ensure the training (and boarding) facilities and methodologies are accessible and inclusive and TVET or CBT staff have been sensitised on disability inclusion and equity. The selected participants (YWD) are also prepared for training in the vocational area of their choice and necessary steps are taken to allow them to participate in the skills training, i.e. receiving assistive devices, ensuring they get the benefits associated with their disability status, addressing educational gaps, getting psycho-social support, (re)habilitation services or medication depending on their particular issues.

Social and emotional skills training or mentoring and learning how to learn can already start in this stage in order for the YWD to be ready to absorb the new technical and vocational skills in stage 3.

The third stage, the Skills Training stage

(E - Educate), is where the participants undergo inclusive technical vocational skills, business skills, and employability skills trainings so that they acquire the knowledge and skills needed for employment or for starting their own businesses. Industrial attachments and other forms of workplace learning are also part of this process to ensure the necessary attitudes for the work environment are developed. TVET providers receive ongoing support or technical assistance from the implementing partners to help them deliver disability inclusive TVET in accessible and inclusive training centres or workshops. In this stage, project facilitators start collaborating with employers to prepare for workplace learning (end of stage 3) and for employment in stage 4 or with BDS providers for YWD who want to start their own businesses.

The fourth stage, the Transition to Work phase

(E - Employ or Enterprise), is when the participants who have done industrial attachments or apprenticeships are accompanied to find work in employment or entrepreneurship. Employers are also sensitised on disability inclusion and how to provide reasonable accommodation to the YWD. Business Development Services (BDS) providers are also sensitised and coached in disability inclusion in this stage. Whereas the intensive collaboration has already started in stage 3, the technical assistance now continues to be available to support both employers and YWD as they navigate the first months of employment. The same goes for BDS providers and YWD as they launch and operate their businesses for the first months.

The final stage, the Follow-up stage (L - Let's Go!)

is where project facilitators continue follow-up and mentoring to ensure the sustainability of the transition to work. This stage also serves to evaluate the project, to complete the internal learning process, and to reflect on how to design the next livelihoods project cycle (preferably within a broader programmatic CBR or CBID approach). The community and parents or caregivers continue to support the YWD. YWD observe an improved situation in their economic life in the form of sustainable employment or a business that is viable. The assumption is that as work is also an important part of social life, they will therefore have better social outcomes in terms of feeling more respected, better networked, and more included in their communities.

This project cycle model for inclusive livelihoods projects, termed WHEEL of Livelihoods, and this best practices guide, aims to support practitioners or implementers of livelihoods projects for YWD throughout the process, with various best practices to consider for both the YWD as well as the stakeholders in the enabling environment at each stage. It is based on the learnings from the portfolio of livelihoods thematic projects implemented by the Liliane Fonds partners in Kenya, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cameroon, and Nigeria at the time of writing.



> PHOTO: JEFFRY CHANIAGO

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL AND PDF MANUAL

This online tool and PDF manual is also meant to empower you as a practitioner in whatever role you have in the design, implementation, and/or evaluation of livelihoods projects for youth with disabilities. We have seen the success of these practices from implementation in countries as far ranging as Indonesia, Cameroon, Kenya, and Vietnam, in (capital) cities as well as in isolated and rural areas and (at least) some examples and best practices listed here are likely to work in the specific context where you are implementing a livelihoods project.

This manual will help clarify which stakeholder groups to include at what stage and which types of activities to consider for supporting the YWD in their own personal professional development journey as they navigate their family, community, training, and work environments in this process. The manual lists a number of activities with both YWD and stakeholders in their enabling environment and their relevancy to the context, organisation and budget will determine which to include in your project.

As this is (partially) an online tool, it lends itself to periodic revisions and updates. You, the user, are invited to share feedback and inputs (i.e. best practices, success stories, quotes) as well as related tools to keep enriching it.

STRUCTURE OF THIS TOOL

The WHEEL of Livelihoods is an interactive online tool with a description of each stage of the WHEEL, main questions addressed in that stage and guiding principles per stage. Using the WHEEL, we follow the project life cycle with clickable icons from within the model and a side menu bar. In the PDF manual available upon request, each phase lists a number of possible or suggested activities to support YWD on their journey from unemployment and exclusion through skills developments to work and inclusion. This list offers possible activities to consider. The selection of relevant activities with YWD and with WHEEL of Livelihoods stakeholder groups will depend on the specifics of your context, available budget, and the type of intervention chosen (focus on wage employment or on entrepreneurship or both).

Although YWD with similar disabilities may participate in your project, it is our understanding that the severity and nature of their condition, personal history and own mindset will affect the extent to which something becomes a barrier or a motivation. For disability inclusion to work, it is our experience that a personal needs- and dreams-driven approach is needed, so YWD can take ownership over their own skills development and professional growth process with the relevant support from their own (existing or to be created) network of family, friends, and supporters in the community.

Below is a description of the different stakeholders in the enabling environment as well as the YWD themselves. It defines each stakeholder group and addresses some cross-cutting concerns that go beyond the specific stages of the WHEEL.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

At the outer ring of the WHEEL of Livelihoods, we find you, the reader and implementing partner. Whether you are working for an organisation of persons with disabilities (OPD) or a national or international non-governmental organisation (NGO), local government or for a religious organisation does not matter. You are responsible for designing, facilitating implementation and evaluating the livelihoods project for YWD.

Implementing Partner

The Liliane Fonds has long standing relationships with grassroots organisations in Africa and Asia (and previously in Latin America as well) that implement projects to support and empower CWD and/or YWD in their families and local communities using a CBR approach or specifically on one of the CBR thematic areas.

One of the key tips for practitioners in this process is to shift from a role of lead implementer to a role of lead facilitator, connector, and coordinator. Rather than solving problems for project participants, the focus should be on enabling people to come up with, implement and reflect on their own solutions to their problems. The process of discussing and exchanging ideas and coming up with a consensus (in a group setting) or reflecting, weighing options and taking a personal decision (in a one-on-one situation with a facilitator or alone) creates ownership for the decisions and the results of those decisions.

A facilitator needs to create a favourable learning environment with physical and psychological safety in a context of non-judgement, compassion, caring, etc. within the organisation and support the relevant stakeholders in the livelihoods project to do the same. In order for this to work, this behaviour of non-judgement, compassion, caring and psychological safety needs to be modelled by the project staff at the implementing partner level.

It is also important that implementing partners are empowered in their role as facilitators. It is advisable to integrate a process of self-reflection, personal and organisational learning into the project cycle to continue the learning process and knowledge production – of which this WHEEL model with PDF manual is an example.

TVET Providers

There are many types of formal institutions providing TVET or skills training such as vocational training centres, TVET colleges, TVET centres or polytechnic colleges for example. Other non-formal community-based training providers, often small and medium enterprises (SME) or master crafts people in the community can also provide the skills training. The latter may be a solution in the case of mobility challenges or other care related needs that require the YWD to get skills training close to their homes or in cases where boarding options are not available and the TVET provider is not nearby. It can also be a deliberate choice to have a more practical market-relevant skills training. Educational gaps may also limit access to formal TVET in which case working

with community-based training providers is a viable solution as well. Some of these community-based training providers might provide skills training according to national curricula leading to recognised certificates or diplomas. Some might be giving non-formal skills training which in some cases could still lead to nationally recognised certificates through recognition of prior learning (RPL) or recognition of current competence (RCC). Even if the skills training does not lead to formally recognised certificates, ultimately the competences required are most important. This can make the difference between acquiring a job or remaining unemployed and between generating a good or meagre income from one's own business.

Current skills trainings are usually competency based, that is, they lead to specific competences and general competences that can be assessed (with theoretical and practical components depending on the competence). Such competences have a knowledge, a skill, and an attitude component(s). The latter being most difficult to transfer in a school-based setting. Therefore, it is important to integrate work-based learning (WBL)¹ into the skills training program. Through WBL learners are exposed to actual work environments and can build social skills and attitudes for example in working within teams and communicating with customers or experience with handling money and building business acumen. When designing a livelihoods project, you will need to select the TVET providers to work with. This means you will look at different geographical locations, the course offering (trades, duration, cost), public vs. private TVET schools, formal vs. non-formal TVET, the levels of TVET offered, whether they are inclusive mainstream TVETs (or willing to become inclusive) or special TVET centres (possibly in the process of becoming inclusive TVET centres as well), or both in a mutually reinforcing network, etc.

Our preference goes to including YWD in mainstream TVET rather than isolating them as a separate group in special TVET. That said, getting the expertise and the exchange between special and mainstream TVETs can also be beneficial, as special TVET centres have specific experience and resources to work with YWD. We also recommend looking at the community context and the context of the specific YWD to decide whether or not to also work with a number of community based training providers.



> PHOTO: CHESHIRE DISABILITY SERVICES KENYA

Employers

Not every local context has (good) enough employment options and not every youth wants to work in (formal) employment. Employers are a very important stakeholder when working on projects that aim for waged employment. Some projects are specifically concerned with entrepreneurship, which is also covered in the fourth phase of the WHEEL. This stakeholder importantly covers private and public organisations that offer paid positions in the specific geographical area. When it comes to private companies, there is also a varied landscape going from SMEs to multinationals and everything in between. In some geographical areas employer federations are also strong and can be considered as partners in the project as well. During stage 1, which is also the inception phase, all stakeholders including employers are mapped.

Labour market surveys are recommended to identify promising economic sectors for employment and reaching out to employers during this exercise of studying the labour market and mapping relevant stakeholders is recommended. Although in this model most activities with the employers really take off in Stage 3 - Educate: skills training, it is very important to design the intervention with sustainable employment in mind.

Therefore prior to determining the criteria for the selection of YWD as project participants, a labour market assessment or at least a scan of the local opportunities on the labour market should be done. Whether this is a formal activity in the first stage of the project, is part of a broader context analysis done (not long) before, or is an informal inquiry conducted by project staff and TVET providers, it is important to do this to ensure that the skills training is demand-driven and a matching can be carried out between the local labour market opportunities, the local training opportunities and the interests of the YWD who are selected as project participants.

¹ Also called Work Place Learning (WPL)

Curiosity is an important driver for learning and ensuring a good match between the natural interests of the YWD and the needs of the labour market in the local community is particularly key. Most employers will not be used to having employees with a disability and many are likely to have uninformed opinions, prejudices and biases. Therefore they also need to be prepared to accept the idea that a YWD could be a suitable employee for them and to be mentored or coached through the practicalities of providing an internship, attachment, apprenticeship or a job to a YWD. Working hand-in-hand with employers will not only allow them to learn and change their mindset and actions in this area and lead to actual employment of YWD, it will also have a wider impact on other employers in the community as they see that employing people with disabilities (PWD) is possible and desirable. Having YWD actively participate in the world of work will ultimately change the way disability is viewed in these communities and be beneficial to the overall inclusion of and participation of PWD in society.



› PHOTO: JEFFRY CHANIAGO

Business Development Service (BDS) providers

This group is of most concern to projects that target entrepreneurship for YWD. However, some actors under this category can be of concern for all YWD, as we also count Financial Institutions (FI) and notably Micro Finance Institutions (MFI) here. Examples of topics that are relevant for all and link to this group of stakeholders are financial literacy, the opening of bank accounts and learning about saving and repaying loans. So what do we mean when we use the term BDS providers besides banks and MFIs? Well, this is a very broad range of actors involved in stimulating entrepreneurship in a given context. This can range from (local) government departments that educate, stimulate or support entrepreneurs, and investors, to NGOs specialised on entrepreneurship development, private companies offering services and short, industry-based trainings to entrepreneurs, chambers of commerce and industry-specific membership organisations, as well as business

incubation hubs or business accelerator programmes and the like. Many countries have measures in place to support entrepreneurs as they launch and grow their businesses in light of the importance of MSMEs for a healthy economy. Usually such services and measures that favour private sector development ignore disability. PWD are much more likely to be considered in more social and health related sectors compared to business and entrepreneurship. However, running their own businesses alone or with others with and without disabilities can give YWD opportunities for significant improvements in their livelihoods, their socio-economic inclusion and their overall wellbeing. With that in mind, it is important to work with BDS providers to make their offering disability inclusive and to connect YWD in entrepreneurship to available opportunities.

Community

This is a very diverse group of stakeholders at community level. It is important to identify (potential) enablers, influential groups and persons in the local communities that are relevant to the project activities and outcomes. Some OPDs could fall under this category, for example if they are not the ones implementing the project (under implementing partner) but are key stakeholders in mobilising and informing relevant stakeholders or potential project participants in a given community. Some local government officials who are not directly implementing the project themselves but are relevant to skills and employment of YWD, can fall under this category as well. The same goes for other influential persons or groups, such as traditional leaders, religious leaders, educators, organisations with an important stake in key sectors, but also large cooperatives in a related economic activity, relevant Village Savings and Loans Organisations (VSLAs) or SACCOs (Savings and Credit Co-Operative Society), parent support groups, youth groups or youth unions, neighbour groups, those in charge of local transportation or local market places, etc. There might be clinics or grassroots NGOs in a given community that can be partners in terms of referrals or support services such as offering occupational therapy, assistive devices or medication. Depending on the context and specific goals and selection criteria of participants, it can be decided who among all these possible persons and groups are critical to be engaged for community ownership of the process and ultimately, for successful project outcomes.

An important group that should not be overlooked are former project participants from earlier disability inclusive livelihoods interventions. Their success can motivate other YWD or parents of CYWD to participate in such projects. Depending on the use of social media - relevant online channels and influencers could also be

important to project outcomes in terms of educating and sensitising on disability equity and disability inclusion in skills, work and community life as a whole. Social media influencers or social media communication channels of implementing partners and stakeholders could spread the word of the opportunity to the target group of YWD and could also be used in sharing project successes. Of course, practical concerns will require one to limit the scope and to determine in the stakeholder mapping those considered to be key players in the community (and in the other groups), based on their relative power and interest. Some groups that are listed here such as SACCOs could also be considered BDS providers. Who are specifically engaged and how - meaning in which category - depends on the specifics of each project and local context.

It is good to engage the key community actors identified in the project governance from the first stage of the WHEEL cycle for maximum engagement, ownership and impact. If this is done, such key community actors can stay a supporting factor for the YWD in their communities long after the project lifetime. The project should not take over responsibilities of the different key actors in the community, but reinforce them in their roles towards the inclusion of YWD in skills, employment or entrepreneurship, and in their communities in general. In each geographical zone where the project is being implemented one could consider setting up a local advisory committee (decentralized) connecting these key community stakeholders to each other and to the parents or caregivers and the YWD themselves as well as to the local TVETs, local employers and BDS providers.

A community-based, grassroots approach is key to the success of LF and its partners in reaching sustainable outcomes for CYWD. This community-based, grassroots approach is also key in the WHEEL process and model. This inclusive project management cycle of livelihoods projects for YWD should also reflect this strong embeddedness in the local community with the goal of reinforcing what is already working well at community level and addressing what is not, in a locally-led and empowering way. This is why the community is listed as a key stakeholder in all five phases of the WHEEL of livelihoods, just like the parents or caregivers, and ultimately, the youth with disabilities themselves who are at the heart of it all - the central axis of the wheel. A cohesive and united community can provide a safety net for vulnerable families and individuals. Because disability is often misunderstood through prejudices and superstitions it often leads to exclusion of CYWD and their families from the community, this further isolates CYWD and their families and makes them more vulnerable to poverty and shocks (conflict, climate, etc.).

It is so important to work with the community to limit the dangers of abuse, violence and isolation and to instead turn the community into a safety net and support system for CYWD in which they and all community members can thrive.

Parents or caregivers

Parents, like the key community actors, should be involved throughout the project cycle, from the first phase until the last. The project is not replacing parental responsibility, but supporting the parents in their role, while at the same time supporting the child to become more and more autonomous in their socio-economic capacity. There are different ways of engaging parents and inviting them to participate and contribute in the intervention to support their child. Starting like this will prove critical for ultimate project success and also have an important (side) effect of empowering the parents and allowing them to be restored or more embedded in their own role in the community. Parents have so many roles, but they are usually also the first role model for their own child. Therefore, it is important that the process of implementing this project also empowers them (in their own role) as parents, because empowered people empower others and children ultimately learn from their parents' example.



> PHOTO: JEFFRY CHANIAGO

In some cases the CWD/YWD will always remain dependent on their parents due to severe and multiple impairments, in that case it can also be decided to provide skills training and entrepreneurship support or job placements to parents or caregivers of CYWD or to both parents or caregivers and the YWD in their care. In such a case, the parent should be seen as a direct project participant like the YWD. This can also be the case in specific livelihoods projects targeting extremely poor households of CWD, where the poverty barrier needs to be addressed in order to get satisfactory health, education, etc. outcomes for CWD. It is also applicable to situations whereby the YWD has severe

and multiple disabilities and will need to work with a parent or caregiver supporting them, if at all. In a case where parents of CYWD are targeted directly by the intervention, it is advisable to also educate and mentor them on parenting CYWD besides the skills and livelihoods-related activities.

Just like the community can be a source of loving support and empowerment or of disempowerment, limitations and abuse, the same goes for the parents or caregivers. It is important to identify those family members, sometimes neighbours, or others who love, provide for and care for the YWD. These are the ones to work with.

CENTRE OF THE WHEEL OF LIVELIHOODS

Youth with disabilities

At the centre of the circle or the central axis of the WHEEL, we find the YWD themselves. Although we have described the project participants and stakeholders along the WHEEL from the outside in - starting with the outer ring of the circle of relevant actors and working our way to the heart of the intervention, the YWD themselves, the YWD are the starting and end point of the intervention and their own interests and needs are guiding. The empowerment of the YWD is not only a project outcome, but also needs to be practiced in the way the project is facilitated. Ultimately no one can “develop” or “empower” the youth, it is an inside job - a mindset shift leading to them telling a different story, using different words and doing different things or perhaps doing things differently. Ultimately this inner transformation will lead to tangible results in skills, paid work and participation and leadership in their communities. To allow this process to occur, the project creates an enabling and safe environment in which this transformation can work hand in hand with skills training, industrial attachments, job matching and support in the YWD’ transition to employment or entrepreneurship. That is why the project staff themselves, TVET providers, employers, community and parents all need to be sensitised, educated, coached and mentored to know the what, why and how of disability inclusion and equity in skills and work and to learn about it in practice with support from the project staff.

Who do we consider as a youth with disability?

There are different types of disabilities, each person’s abilities are unique and different, and we recommend being inclusive and working with youths with different types of disabilities together. There are youth with mobility/physical disabilities, spinal cord (SCI), head injuries (traumatic or acquired brain injuries),

vision impairments, hearing impairments, cognitive/ learning disabilities, psychological disabilities, a combination of the aforementioned, and invisible disabilities according to the broad categories listed on <https://www.disabled-world.com/disability/types/>.

In some cases (partial) employment may not be possible. However, it is important to look at the will of the YWD and the possibilities within their own context and not to jump to conclusions in case of doubt.

In this guide we also share best practices of training parent and child teams in, for example, small livestock rearing as a solution for increased autonomy and participation of for example youth with Down syndrome in income generating activities together with their parent or caregiver (as practiced in an LF supported project in Cameroon). Although it may appear to be efficient to train people with a certain disability together instead of having a lot of diversity, we do not recommend this as it is not the best preparation for life and work in society. It is important not to give up on people and see the strength in each YWD.

It is also important to note that some disabilities are present from birth, whereas other disabilities result from accidents, injuries or violence. In livelihoods projects for YWD you will find this range of diversity as well. Some will have fresh trauma of having become disabled while others have known this situation from birth. Some are (or have become) socially isolated, whereas others have loving caregivers, parents or friends in their lives. All of these factors need a closer understanding, hence the importance of the first two stages of the WHEEL. A proper skills development and transition to work trajectory will be one that suits their individual situation.

Beyond the diversity of type of disability, it is also important to look at intersecting vulnerabilities and how they affect the YWD, such as gender, socio-economic status, rural or urban context, sexual orientation, ethnic or religious affiliation, but also other factors such as their status as a single parent responsible for their own children or for other siblings. Together such factors influence the context and vulnerability of the YWD. In order to be sensitive to specific barriers, it is important to look at the whole person in context. This is further discussed in the first stage of the WHEEL, as these are among the factors to consider in the identification and selection process.

Disability is still a topic that often evokes stigma, prejudices, misconceptions and superstitions. Often the discovery of having given birth to a biological child with a disability can cause one of the parents to abandon

the other or even for the child to be abandoned by both. The same can happen at community level with the families of CWD being excluded from community life and socio-economic opportunities for example. All of this affects the self-image of the child and causes trauma. Beyond the impairment and resulting medical issues, this can also lead to mental health or psycho-social issues. As such it is important to consider the role of trauma healing and mental health in livelihoods projects targeting YWD for successful outcomes. The first two

stages of the WHEEL also give the necessary preparation time to go through the unpacking of societal labels and preconceived notions, the addressing of traumas in the form of trapped emotions and fears, to allow the YWD to be ready to absorb new information and see themselves from a different perspective. Although these activities might seem like another type of intervention, they are important supporting activities for ultimate success in sustainable livelihoods with this group of project participants.

INTERFACING AREAS WITH OTHER CBR THEMES: SRHR, REHABILITATION/HEALTH, EDUCATION

Specific livelihoods projects will always have intersecting activities or interfaces with the other thematic focus areas of the CBR model such as health, education or social empowerment (including SRHR). For this reason, it is important to link this intervention and its design, implementation and evaluation to the bigger context analysis and CBR stakeholder mapping. For example, if the YWD requires occupational therapy, medication, or assistive products for their functioning (not specific to the trade they are learning), this can be a crucial factor for success, yet not the main function of a livelihoods project. In this case it is important to map the needs in the first two stages and ensure the relevant partnerships and referral models are in place for continuous support. It is also important to look at the funding: what can be covered by other partners in the CBR network, by health insurance or by available funds of government, religious organisations or other NGOs in the identified communities?

The same goes for education. Often CWD drop out of mainstream schools during the course of their primary education (or some may not have had basic education at all) and have significant gaps in literacy, numeracy, etc. Such gaps (may) need to be addressed for the skills training to be successful. For this, it might be desirable or even necessary to enter into partnerships with inclusive educational organisations or schools, where

the youth can brush up on certain skills. If the gaps are very significant, this will affect the available options in terms of skills training and livelihoods. Therefore quality disability inclusive education is a continuous concern for better livelihoods outcomes.

Social empowerment and economic empowerment are closely linked. LF focuses its social empowerment portfolio specifically on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). Due to the age group as well as the vulnerability of YWD, it is important to address SRHR for YWD to make informed and conscious decisions in the area of for example family life, partnerships, and sexual health. Many YWD experience sexual abuse and other forms of gender based violence (GBV), for example among hearing impaired young women and girls or youth with very low IQs. Educating YWD on exercising their rights is very important for their protection and their physical, emotional, psychological, social, and economic wellbeing. The socio-economic empowerment of YWD is also important as additional financial means allow them the freedom to make better choices.

It is our sincere wish that this WHEEL of Livelihoods model supports you, the practitioner and user of this tool, in developing and implementing more relevant and impactful livelihoods projects for youth with disabilities.



CHAPTER 1

Phase One – Identification and Selection of Participants

INTRODUCTION TO STAGE 1 – WHO? IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

An excellent inclusive livelihood project keeps the youth with disabilities (YWD) and their interests, goals, and aspirations at the centre of all activities. At the end of the project, the YWD should leave feeling empowered, motivated, and continue their livelihoods journey in a more inclusive environment. By involving actors in the community, from family, neighbours and friends, educational and employment institutions, to the government, the YWD benefit from an enabling environment in which they can empower themselves and be well-equipped to make their own living.

This stage describes the identification and selection of participants in livelihoods projects geared at youth with disabilities. In general, this process consists of

the identification of needs in the labour market, identifying and mapping stakeholders to be involved in the identification of youth with disabilities and their parents or caregivers, the elaboration of the selection criteria, home visits and on-site interviews of potential youth participants, the sensitisation about the project opportunity to the targeted population through the stakeholders, the more in-depth assessment of motivation, vocational interests and required support (reasonable accommodation), and more. Labour market studies and career guidance are topics addressed in this first phase of the WHEEL process. Personal motivation and ambitions of the youth with disabilities, combined with the offering of the local service providers, and the market opportunities in the local communities will

determine the specific path and vocation. We want to find out what success looks like for each YWD and how they will know whether they are on track towards realising their vision of success and achieving their goals.

Questions in this phase centre around:

- ✓ **Who do we want to empower through this intervention? (identification of potential project participants)**
- ✓ **Who do we need to involve to create an enabling and safe environment for project participants throughout this intervention? (identification of stakeholders)**
- ✓ **What do the identified youth with disabilities want to achieve - what livelihood do they want? (final selection of project participants)**

Guiding principles

- The identification and selection of YWD to participate in the livelihoods projects requires the involvement of many stakeholders from the local communities who know the community members well;
- The career guidance of the youth should not be (overly) influenced by parents, teachers, project facilitators or others, but based on the YWD's own career aspirations (intrinsic motivation) for maximum ownership;
- It is important to directly engage YWD in the project design, yet without setting expectations (as in a design phase there may be uncertainty regarding funding). Recommendation: consult previous project participants (those from the previous project cycle).

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR STAGE 1 OF THE LIVELIHOODS PROJECT CYCLE

Below is a list of proposed activities to be conducted by the implementing parties ((Local) government departments, DPOs, NGOs, etc.). Which particular activities you select will depend on your context and what has been done already for this particular group (YWD) in this particular intervention zone (geographic area) and the focus of the intervention (i.e. waged employment, entrepreneurship, both, including or not including social protection and skills training). As the

leader of the disability inclusive livelihoods cycle, the implementing party will be responsible for executing the activities suggested below. However, for ultimate project success and lasting transformation in the lives of the YWD, it is important that the relevant stakeholder groups from the enabling environment are turned into project partners from their identification in this first phase onwards.

| ACTIVITY CATEGORIES | ACTIVITIES FOR YWD | ACTIVITIES FOR THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Contextual Analysis and Stakeholder Engagement | Not yet identified | Stakeholder mapping |
| | | Labour market survey and market study of the local economy |
| | | Community needs assessment |
| | | Setting the selection criteria for project participants |
| 2. Project governance | Establish YWD participation in project governance | Establish project governance |
| 3. Awareness raising | Awareness raising campaigns and events | Awareness raising campaigns and events |
| 4. Identification and Selection | Screening and identification | Screening and identification |
| | Intake and selection | Intake and selection |
| 5. Career orientation and mentorship | Workshop, labour market information and role models | Organise and share labour market relevant information |
| | | Training of facilitators |
| | Mentorship | Mentorship Structure Setup |
| | Complete PPDP with guidance | Coach mentors |
| 6. Peer learning | Participate in peer learning groups | Set up peer learning groups |
| 7. CBR support | Referrals or direct support | Referrals or direct support |

Activity Category 1: Contextual Analysis and Stakeholder Engagement

A thorough context analysis pinpointing specific livelihood problems of YWD that the project will address and the proposed solutions it will implement, is the starting point of any project. The context analysis is usually carried out at a higher level (covering all thematic areas from the CBR matrix) and for a longer period and is thus not described here. This is an important precondition that informs who the targeted group(s) of project participants are and the relevant stakeholders to be involved. The context analysis on livelihoods should look at the legal and policy context, the economic or market context (demand side of the economy) as well as the supply side in terms of skills (skills training offering) and human resources (population of working age, in this case YWD and/or parents or caregivers of CYWD). A solid problem analysis and solution analysis specific to the targeted project participants should be conducted and to be as relevant as possible it should include surveys of and focus group discussions with the previous project participants, youth groups representing YWD, DPOs, peer support groups supporting YWD and/or parents or caregivers of CYWD, etc. Interviews or focus group discussions with representatives of all stakeholder groups from the WHEEL of Livelihoods are recommended to be included in the contextual analysis.



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Stakeholder mapping

The inception of the project needs to include a mapping of relevant stakeholders in the local community. If this was done prior to the project start, it needs to be updated. The inclusion of all relevant stakeholders from the onset of the project is critical for their ownership of the goal and outcomes as well as the ultimate success of the project. Engaging relevant stakeholders as partners takes considerable time and effort in project inception, but ultimately it allows for smooth implementation and a sustainable project impact.

All stakeholder groups from the WHEEL of livelihoods model need to be covered in the stakeholder mapping and relevant partners selected. These groups include:

TVET Providers: These can be public and/or private vocational training centres and polytechnic colleges as well as community based training providers such as crafts people or MSMEs in the local area agreeing to provide skills training to WD in accordance with the mutually agreed guidelines.

Employers: This mainly concerns local employers in the communities where the YWD are based. These are typically MSMEs, larger companies or possibly local government departments or institutions. Collaboration with (local representation of) employers federations and chambers can also help identify potential employers that are interested in collaborating with the project. Such groups can also be beneficial in communication and sensitising a larger number of companies and professionals on disability inclusion in the world of work.

Business Development Service Providers:

If entrepreneurship for YWD is a pathway offered to participating YWD, then actors involved in providing support to (starting) businesses need to be included as partners in the project. These can be business incubators or accelerators, they can be financial service providers and/or public offices or private service providers that support businesses in starting, running, and growing their operations. These can also be networks of entrepreneurs, chambers and so on.

"In my experience, employer engagement should start at stage 1. This creates rapport and secures positions for the YWD not only for attachments or internships, but also for job opportunities and even possible funding for businesses." - Maren Nkuraiyia, Livelihoods Project Officer, Cheshire Disability Services Kenya (CDSK)

Community: This concerns community groups and leaders. Community groups can be different groups such as political, religious, peer support groups, cooperatives or VSLAs, etc. The most relevant ones are selected. Community groups should also include social protection structures at community level. Relevant leaders at the local level can also be rallied around the objectives of the project. Identify who needs to be involved as influential persons in the local community to help the project reach its intended outcomes for YWD and/or parents or caregivers of CYWD. DPOs and youth groups are also counted here, if they are not the main implementers of the project.

At this step in stage 1 the project participants have not yet been selected, but once they are it is important to include YWD and/or parents or caregivers of CYWD in the project governance. For the contextual analysis and stakeholder mapping it can be useful to speak to previous project participants and their parents or caregivers.

All the parents and/or caregivers (if they (can) play a positive role in the lives of the YWD supported by the project) should be involved as project partners immediately after the selection of project participants. YWD can decide whether or not to involve a next of kin and whether this is the parent or caregiver or another family member or trusted person.

All the YWD supported by the project are included here and involved in the MEL and represented in the project governance from their selection onwards.

Labour market survey and market study of the local economy

Depending on whether or not this has recently been done in the particular geographic intervention zone, you can choose whether or not to conduct a labour market survey, a community needs assessment or a market study. Such studies can help identify where the opportunities in terms of waged employment and/or entrepreneurship are within a specific geographic setting. Project participants need relevant and up-to-date information on the local economy and the local labour market in order to make informed decisions on their skills training and future (self)employment. Personal interests and intrinsic motivation of the YWD who are selected as project participants determine the exact nature of the training and employment services and accompaniment to the work that they receive (i.e. in terms of choice of trade or occupation and in terms of orientation towards wage employment or entrepreneurship). However, having information on the

labour market, local economy and experiences of other PWD in skills and work, can help YWD make informed and conscious decisions.

Project partners also need this information to provide appropriate services to the project participants. Involve economic actors in this activity. This includes chambers, employer federations, selected companies and craftspeople, banks and other financial institutions, other business development service providers, labour unions (if local chapters exist), PWD running successful businesses, government services in charge of private sector development and labour, local companies employing a lot of people in the geographical intervention zone, etc.

Community needs assessment

A clear idea of the needs and the opportunities for PWD in the local area is important in the project setup and implementation stage. A mapping of the type of medical, rehabilitation, psycho-social and other support that is locally available in case of specific referrals that are linked to the ability of YWD to be active in wage employment or entrepreneurship is required. Disability-related information is needed and the relevant parties to involve here are DPOs, local clinics, community health workers, rehabilitation specialists, (I)NGOs, relevant religious organisations, relevant government services and officers. This activity is not a core livelihoods related activity. It links to the CBR stakeholder mapping and may not be necessary if a larger CBR programme is running concurrently or if the livelihoods activities are part of a larger CBR programme.

Setting the selection criteria for project participants

Based on the context and problem analyses, opportunities in the local labour market and the skills training offering, selection criteria needs to be determined. This should also be compliant with donor requirements, such as possible age requirements, socio-economic criteria, gender, ethnic and other diversity criteria. LF prefers including youth with different types of disability, whenever possible, rather than projects serving only youth with one type of disability. Based on the particulars of the community actors involved, they may need some training or relevant persons to participate in the identification process so that they are able to identify whether or not the YWD meet the criteria of the project. Although the implementing party is coordinating this identification exercise, community actors trained on the identification process and criteria are the ones conducting most of these activities.

Activity Category 2: Project Governance

Establish project governance

Ensure that a decentralised governance structure is set up for maximum local ownership, community participation and shared responsibility. Inputs from and accountability to the local communities in which the project is implemented or from which project participants originate are thus ensured. The advisory and steering committees that make up the project governance should contain representatives from all stakeholder groups from the WHEEL at community level in addition to representatives of the project participants (YWD) themselves. The governance structure, MEL setup, and budget need to be in line with the chosen approach, intended outcomes and values – for a coherent and effective project that delivers on the outcomes it sets out to achieve.

Establish YWD participation in project governance

To ensure meaningful youth engagement in the project governance beyond their representation in advisory and/or steering committees, an additional organ such as a youth council representing participating YWD can be established.

Activity Category 3: Awareness Raising

An awareness raising campaign can run through local churches, radio, community meetings, DPOs, and other

relevant community groups and actors in order to sensitize the YWD in the community on the livelihoods project opportunity. Alternatively, the awareness campaign can be done online or via social media depending on the local context and through which online and/or offline channels the specific target group can be best reached. Using the right channels of communication is critical in order for this opportunity to reach suitable potential candidates. Working with partner organisations, DPOs and youth groups as well as other important stakeholders in the local community such as civil society organisations, religious organisations or local government officials can help spread the word. Although the campaign may be primarily aimed at informing YWD about this opportunity to acquire additional vocational and employability skills and guidance in their transition to (self)employment, it is also an important opportunity to sensitise the communities in the intervention zone on the rights of PWD and the importance of disability inclusion in skills development and work (employment or entrepreneurship). Awareness raising events for example on December 3rd or other relevant dates or career days featuring PWD role models who are successful in employment or business, champion employers and inclusive BDS providers can also help inspire and educate the community at large and YWD in particular.

Tip: Work with role models

Many of the organisations consulted in the process of developing this tool work with role models from the local communities to inspire youth and to demonstrate what is possible for a person with a disability in work and life. Role models offer relatable examples of what is possible and as such help in shifting the perspective of YWD from feeling helpless and dependent to considering new possibilities and having a new outlook on (working) life.



> PHOTO: CHESHIRE DISABILITY SERVICES KENYA

Role models can be used in different ways and contexts. First, the role model can directly interact with the YWD during seminars and workshops. The role model could lead the seminar or workshop in their career field or give more general advice on how they overcame challenges with their disability. For example, a role model in Vietnam is a manager, a steering committee member of the Vietnam Federation of People with a Disability, and a teacher who is also hearing impaired. After attending a session with youths with a hearing impairment, he encouraged students to be more confident in sharing their strengths and weaknesses, overcoming challenges, developing soft skills, building relationships, and spreading motivation in the community of the hearing impaired. Role models show a lived experience that breaks with negative stereotypes and can advocate for the rights of people with disabilities in their society. Having role models share their own story can spread disability inclusion awareness and positively affect the attitudes and beliefs in the local community.

Activity Category 4: Identification and Selection

Identification and screening

Initial screening serves to verify the background, the motivation, the dreams, the needs and barriers of each candidate and to also ascertain whether or not they meet the selection criteria. To ensure that the project participants actually meet the selection criteria, run background checks to verify their disability status, their socio-economic, living and family situation, their specific needs, and whether or not they have already benefited from or are currently benefiting from other support. Facilitate the trained community actors to do the initial screening and identification: this may require certain



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Methods of Identification

Identification needs to be done inclusively and in an accessible manner. Some ways of identifying participants include passing through partner networks such as DPOs, working with local government services and organisations (faith based or civil society) active in local communities, going door-to-door with community health workers or similar groups, social media, radio and television advertisements, online surveys and more. One example of inclusive advertising stems from the Vietnam Research Centre for Inclusion on their Inclusive Employment - Inclusive Youth with Disabilities Project. To find participants, RCI Vietnam made videos of an enrolment call with sign language and advertised the videos on different channels to reach a range of potential participants and not exclude those with a hearing impairment. Furthermore, confidentiality and safeguarding are important concerns in the identification process. Safeguarding and privacy guidelines should be in place and those involved need to be trained on their use.

budget lines in order to cover the transportation and communication costs involved in the identification process. Coordination, logistical and possibly financial support from the implementing party are needed to conduct the identification process correctly. Involving community stakeholders in this process and transparently communicating the final decisions and criteria used is important for the ownership of and buy-in from community stakeholders and, ultimately, for successful project outcomes. Based on this preparatory work a shortlist of candidate project participants is produced.

Involving Governmental Organisations in Identification

Depending on the country context, local governmental organisations and authorities (GOs) from various, relevant departments of the country, district or county, or village can play a role in the livelihoods of the YWD. Some GOs have resources and skills that can be pivotal in ensuring the success of a livelihoods project. Furthermore, GOs may have data on the YWD in their area, which can quicken the identification and selection process. They could be aware of the number of YWD in the area, who they are, where they may be located (if their births were registered), their level of education if they possess a disability card and their impairment. Further, they will likely know if the youths have access to certain governmental benefits, disability services, medications and healthcare, as well as assistive devices. Additionally, involving GOs in this stage could be wise as they may have resources or a budget for youth/people with disabilities. Further, they can give further insight into what specific areas require extra attention to become more inclusive towards YWD. When choosing the individuals from the different stakeholder groups (including GOs) to collaborate with, look for interested people with shared values, openness to exchange and a commitment to (learn more about) disability inclusion. Finally, GOs have the legislative power to ensure that the rights of the YWD are respected. While policies can create a suitable political climate to support PWD, GOs can also promote correct policy implementation. Therefore, collaborating with GOs is a recommended practice if the political climate in the country allows for it.

Intake and selection

Conduct in-depth interviews with the shortlisted candidates. Often there are many more candidates than the project can support and these interviews are critical to the final selection. In order for the WHEEL intervention to work as designed it is important to work with stakeholders from the local community. Therefore, project participants should be drawn from the (geographic) intervention zone of the project to allow for the twin-track approach of working with both YWD and the relevant stakeholder groups from the enabling environment. Supporting the project candidates directly (*specific empowerment*) as well as making the training, work, and business environments disability inclusive (*mainstreaming disability inclusion*), potentially enables many more YWD in the same area to succeed in skills development and work. The final selection of project participants considers the motivation of the candidates, their specific dreams and goals as well as the measures needed to accommodate for their individual needs.

Activity Category 5: Career Orientation and Mentoring

Workshop, labour market information and role models

Career guidance is an iterative process between offering information on relevant employment and market opportunities in the local geographic area and local skills training opportunities, as well as facilitating the YWD to engage in a process of self-inquiry to identify their own interests and curiosity. Labour market information is provided, role model testimonies shared and personal awareness is fostered for the YWD to identify what they are truly passionate about in order to tap into their intrinsic motivation. Career guidance starts towards the end of the first stage of the WHEEL of Livelihoods, as it is critical in the identification of the appropriate project participants with ambitions in line with the skills training and labour market opportunities identified. It is also important to have an idea of the employment outcome the YWD is aiming for – based on their personal goals, passions, and strengths – in order to guide the different phases in the process including the preparation for skills training and employability. It is also good to determine whether the vision of success in terms of employment outcome is waged employment or a successful business. This will determine whether the WHEEL cycle is oriented towards wage employment or entrepreneurship and thus which stakeholders need to be involved and which types of activities conducted in which stage. During the career guidance activity (see below), the initial parts of the personal professional development plan (PPDP) are completed. It is an important guiding document as it will include the

goals/vision of success for the YWD and customise the intervention during the subsequent stages of the project life cycle to their personal goals and needs. The PPDP will also be the basis for ongoing mentoring of each YWD throughout the project cycle. Based on the vision for success, goals, milestones and indicators formulated in their PPDP, YWD are also guided and encouraged to engage in self-reflection throughout the project life cycle.

Mentorship structure and coaching of mentors

A cascading mentorship structure can be put in place to ensure an individual follow-up of each YWD engaging in a personal professional development trajectory from being unemployed and unskilled through skills acquisition to being employed or running their own business. It is unlikely that implementing partners will have enough human resources and budget to conduct the individual mentoring of each YWD on their own. Therefore, a few facilitators can be trained at the level of the implementing partners while the facilitators can train and follow-up with mentors from the enabling environment. Facilitators are trained on using appropriate tools and facilitation guidelines and they pass over this knowledge to the mentors. Trained facilitators train the mentors on using the PPDP as a basis for follow-up conversations and logging the main topics of discussion and decisions as well as on how to conduct mentoring conversations. Facilitators can conduct periodic peer learning and exchange groups (i.e. InterVision approach) of mentors, where mentors can share what is working well and the issues they are facing and get suggestions and tips from each other. Facilitators keep an eye on the PPDPs/ PPDP updates and ensure that any concerns are flagged and appropriate actions taken.

Complete the PPDP with mentor

Whether already fully completed during a career guidance workshop or still requiring some work to complete, YWD will complete the PPDP with their mentor during their first mentoring session. The mentors can be assigned or chosen by the YWD depending on the project context. However, each YWD will have a final say in accepting the assigned mentor or requesting a change. It is advisable to work with mentors from the stakeholder groups in the enabling environment. Mentors could be another PWD, for example from a DPO. They can also be small business owners, TVET trainers, or engaged parents, caregivers, or stakeholders from the community. Of course, safeguarding considerations need to be kept in mind and some rules established in terms of regularity of meetings, venue for meetings, etc. in addition to the mentors' training and peer exchanges discussed above.

Activity Category 6: Peer Learning

YWD peer learning groups

In previous livelihoods interventions such as Work and Respect implemented by CDSK in Kenya, the importance of social and emotional skills was noted and shown to be stronger among YWD involved in youth-led action research and other participatory approaches. It was noted that telling their own disability stories and learning from each other was critical for their personal growth and emotional wellbeing. Peer learning approaches, especially around social and emotional skills, are therefore recommended. Liliane Fonds has developed a facilitator manual with peer learning session content based on the CASEL framework for social and emotional learning (SEL) and its core competences that caters to young people with disabilities. The facilitators at the level of the implementing partners are trained on the use of the training modules and facilitation guidelines for peer learning in social and emotional skills. They organize the YWD in peer learning groups of max. 20 YWD per group. Smaller groups are also possible and it may be useful (especially for some topics and in some contexts) to have separate groups for female YWD and male YWD (or only some sessions depending on the topic). YWD are supported to be able to access and fully participate in these peer learning exchanges.



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Activity Category 7: CBR Support

Depending on the nature of the implementing party, as well as on the nature of the project design, certain medical, rehabilitation, psychological, and other costs may not be covered by the livelihoods project. Depending on the identified needs and available budget, choices and decisions need to be made on how to ensure that additional costs relating to other CBR areas that are important for ultimate success are covered by partners and through referrals or whether some need to come out of a budget line for direct support within the disability inclusive livelihoods project. Referrals can also be made for those who were identified, but not selected. They are likely to have some needs or meet the criteria for other forms of support by either government services or for other projects run by (I)NGOs for example.

Regarding assistive devices, distinguishing between the assistive devices that YWD require to function and those that they require to learn and to work may help in deciding which ones are covered by whom and under which budget lines. In the identification and selection stage, some youth may not have the assistive devices needed to function, such as a wheelchair, crutches, prosthetics, hearing aids, etc. Additionally, they might need further medical aid (i.e. medication to suppress epileptic episodes or perhaps (minor) surgery), which is why developing comprehensive relationships with healthcare providers and social protection services as part of one's existing CBR network is especially important. It is advisable that qualified professionals do additional medical and educational assessments before the participants begin their skills training to pre-empt any issues that may, if not considered in advance, cause a participant to drop out during the project lifetime. This needs to be done (as all other project activities, in line with safeguarding, protection and confidentiality standards and policies). Assistive Products (AP) needed to support the youth in the vocational areas of their choice is discussed in Stage 2.

Some of the lessons learned from partner organisations of Liliane Fonds running livelihoods projects specifically targeting YWD:

- ✓ Start sensitising and engaging relevant stakeholders identified in stage 1 from this initial phase onwards for ultimate project success. This increases their ownership of project outcomes, their support to the project participants and gives them time to learn more about disability inclusion in skills and work. Early engagement and onboarding of relevant stakeholders in the enabling environment allows them to become promoters of the participation of YWD in the social and economic life of their communities.
- ✓ Be intentional and transparent in the identification and selection process and provide the necessary training and guidance to those involved.
- ✓ Include (child/youth) safeguarding risk assessment in the design and monitor throughout the implementation of the project.
- ✓ Start with the end in mind:
 - **Wage employment:** the initial stage needs to include a labour market survey to identify promising sectors for employment of YWD. It is recommended to find employers willing to hire YWD from the start. Then there is enough time to prepare the partnering employers (DIET, disability inclusion self-assessment

tool from the ILO), have them make some accessibility adjustments and prepare for reasonable accommodation while the YWD receive their vocational skills training.

- **Entrepreneurship:** the initial stage can include an analysis of the local economy to determine the local market demand of products and services; the project cycle may start with a business idea competition or pitch and an analysis of the viability of entrepreneurial ideas by relevant stakeholders (i.e. business incubators/ accelerators, MFIs, private sector development specialists) and then a coaching period with starting up the business and targeted coaching, as well as support and follow-up throughout the project duration. For successful outcomes, business registration should not happen at the end of the project, but in the first half (or third) of the project to allow on-the-job coaching in running a micro- or small business.

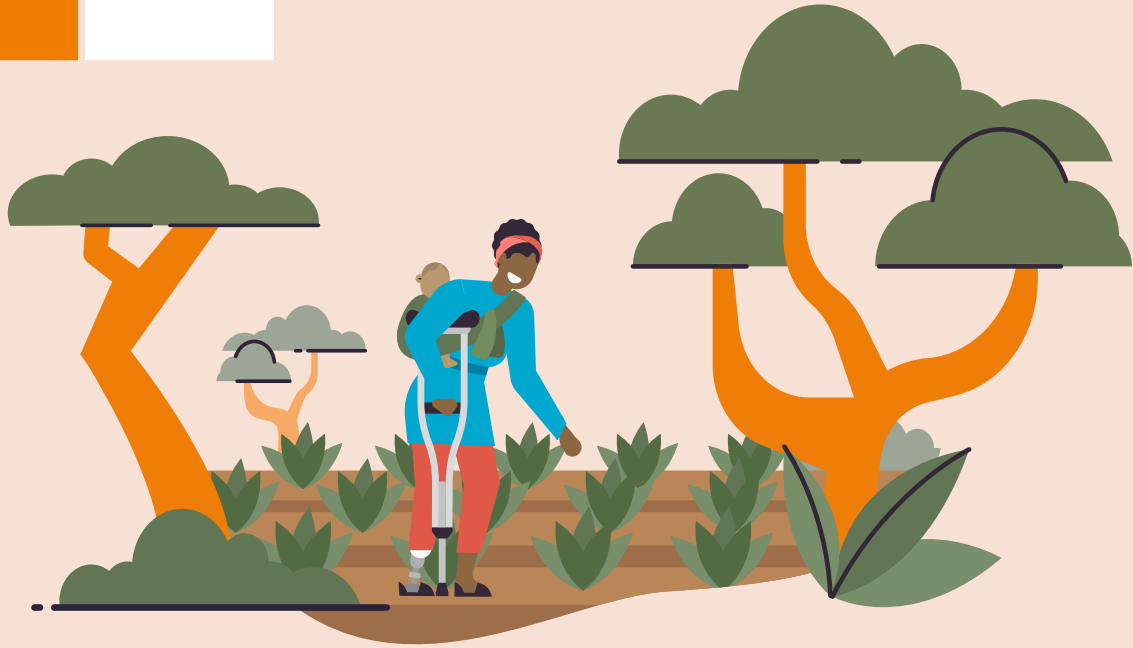
- ✓ Make use of existing CBR networks to ensure that additional medical, rehabilitation and other needs are covered either by the project or through referrals and partnership agreements to allow the YWD to get all the support they need to be healthy and able to engage in their personal professional development.
- ✓ Match the individual interests, passion or curiosity of the YWD to opportunities in terms of employment or entrepreneurship and work with their own dreams for intrinsic motivation and commitment to the livelihoods outcome they are targeting. The disability should not determine the choice of career, instead the individual dreams and interests should. Subsequently, the disability needs to be considered to see which barriers exist and how they can be addressed. Support the YWD to complete the personal professional development plan (PPDP) which will list the desired social and professional outcomes or goals of each YWD (their vision of success) and how to track progress. Use this PPDP for periodic self-assessments and to inform follow-up visits and conversations.
- ✓ The intake should also look at the psycho-social wellbeing (mental health) of the YWD and SRHR and relevant support should be given throughout the project cycle.
- ✓ Many livelihood project facilitators have observed the positive impact of working with parents as partners throughout the project cycle. This can improve the relationship between parents and YWD, while

contributing to the psychosocial wellbeing of the YWD. It also empowers parents in their role and solicits enthusiasm to invest time, energy, and whatever they can into supporting their child in this socio-economic transformation. Working with parents is also needed to transform the daily living context of the child into an enabling and supportive environment.

- ✓ Verbal and/or written commitment of each YWD and a parent or tutor can be beneficial. Whether there is a small financial contribution or a learning contract that is signed depends on the specific project. The biodata and disability-related information of the selected participants is gathered and entered in the first section of the personal professional development plan (PPDP) which will be further completed during the career guidance activity. It is important to get commitment from the YWD and at least one of their parents or caregivers from the start of this transformation process and that the document includes a box for signatures.

RCI good practice of involvement of parents

Parents are involved in Inclusive Employment - Inclusive Young People with disabilities project to participate in training on awareness raising around the capability of their children to work and be employed. Meanwhile, young people with disabilities are also trained on soft skills such as self-protection from sexual violence and abuse at the workplace and on how to interact with colleagues. Timewise, the training of parents and the training of youth with disabilities are organised concurrently, which can save time and is cost-effective in terms of travel. The training for parents is scheduled to end half a day earlier, so they have an opportunity to observe the training of their children. Parents witness how their children participate, present their ideas and perform their interaction with other peers. Once the training is completed, a fun session with games, outdoor activities and dinner is organised to allow youth with disabilities and their parents to better understand and get closer to each other. This is especially helpful for the hearing impaired for whom some private sessions are organised for YWD to communicate with their parents with the help of a sign language interpreter to clarify some misunderstandings due to communication difficulties in their families.



CHAPTER 2

Phase Two - Training Preparedness

INTRODUCTION - HOW? TRAINING PREPAREDNESS

The second stage of the WHEEL, or the Training Preparedness stage, refers to the readiness of school, work and community environments to accommodate the youth with disabilities participating in the project. Training preparedness is taking the necessary steps for the youth to access and benefit from the vocational (and other) skills training.

These steps include: facilitating access to required medications, assistive devices, and/ or psychosocial support possibly through collaboration with other stakeholders within a CBR model and other accommodating measures. The youth with disabilities may also have gaps in literacy, numeracy, digital literacy

and/or and disability-specific communication skills needs (sign language, braille, etc.) or other communication skills that must be addressed. In this stage we also work with TVET centres or other vocational training providers, community based training providers (i.e. small business owners, crafts people), workplaces that offer internships or apprenticeships for project participants as well as the local communities to become more inclusive of youth with disabilities. Specific sensitisation workshops include the Disability Inclusion and Equity Training (DIET). Tools such as the Disability Inclusion Score Card (DISC) and others are used to prepare the training providers to become more disability inclusive.

Questions answered in this stage

- ✓ **How do we get started? (preparedness - both of youth and of training provider and host communities)**
- ✓ **Which barriers need to be addressed in order for the project participants to access the skills training and to be employable?**
- ✓ **What can be done by stakeholders to create an enabling environment in which youth with disabilities are able to successfully acquire vocational and other labor market relevant skills?**



› PHOTO: CHESHIRE DISABILITY SERVICES KENYA

Guiding principles

- Focus on preparing for the core activities in a livelihoods project such as disability inclusiveness (including but not limited to accessibility) of skills training providers and workplaces, while ensuring to map other needs (medication, assistive products, rehabilitation, SRHR, (social) protection, counselling) and formalise relevant partnerships for referral and support with these important services
- Prepare the ground by involving relevant stakeholders and taking the time to inform them about disability inclusion and equity: this requires an important amount of time investment in the beginning but ensures smooth and quality implementation in the later stages
- Set up a governance structure that fosters accountability and involvement of local stakeholders to ensure a strong embeddedness in the local community and ownership of the project goals by the relevant persons and stakeholders

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR STAGE 2 OF THE LIVELIHOODS PROJECT CYCLE

Below is a list of proposed activities to be conducted by the implementing parties ((Local) government departments, DPOs, NGOs, etc.). Which particular activities you select will depend on your context and the specifics of your livelihoods project for YWD: for example are you preparing YWD to join TVET centres,

community based training with local businesses or are they preparing to start and run their own micro or small enterprises? Such particulars will affect the relevant activities and stakeholders from the enabling environment to be engaged in stage 2.

| ACTIVITY CATEGORIES | ACTIVITIES FOR YWD | ACTIVITIES FOR THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Develop custom learning path | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPDP review meeting • Individual mentoring talks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPDP review meetings • Facilitators follow-up on individual PPDPs • Engage stakeholders relevant to PPDP |
| 2. Prepare for the skills training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual needs assessment • Individual accommodations • Support on other issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Inclusion Training and support for reasonable accommodation • Sensitising and preparing the parents or caregivers and relevant community members: • Assessment or DISC (Disability Inclusion Score Card) of accessibility and inclusiveness of TVET providers, employers and BDS providers |
| 3. Social and emotional readiness and (psychological) safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer learning on SEL • Individual reflection using WHEEL of Livelihoods logbook | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability inclusive child safeguarding (* not specific to WHEEL model) • Train Facilitators of SEL peer learning • Community of Practice for facilitators; community of practice for mentors facilitated by facilitators as well • Facilitate YWD peer learning |

Activity Category 1: Develop Custom Learning Path

PPDP review meeting

In stage 1 YWD were identified and selected to take part in the livelihoods project and they received career guidance and completed their Personal Professional Development Plan (PPDP). That was done in a group setting with a lot of new information for them. Now the YWD get to discuss their PPDP (individually) with their mentor and the facilitator from the implementing partner. All parties commit to support the custom path chosen by each YWD. Based on the goals and the identified skills gaps, specific skills training and employment opportunities are identified.

Facilitators at the implementing partner organisation review all individual PPDPs and plan individual meetings to discuss the PPDPs with the mentors and the YWD. Facilitators prepare by reviewing which training providers/options from the stakeholder mapping and contextual analysis correspond to the YWD's vision and goals. If not yet established in stage one, relevant partnerships are sought for skills training in TVET schools or on-the-job with employers (companies or crafts people). In the case of an entrepreneurship pathway, needs in terms of skills, network, market information, etc. are looked at and partnerships with business incubators, micro financial institutions, etc. sought. Detailed schedules and training programs are developed to prepare for the training in stage three.

Individual mentoring talks

Periodic follow-ups on the PPDP and individual social and emotional wellbeing need to be planned between the YWD and their mentor. Facilitators need to ensure all mentors and all YWD have their individual meetings and that all of their conversations are logged. If there are any issues, facilitators need to make sure they are flagged by mentors and, if needed, project staff can ensure that referrals are made. A certain level of mental health and motivation are needed to ensure that skills training and employment are feasible. If any issues or red flags occur during the course of project implementation, they need to be noted and appropriate care provided to ensure recovery of the project participant(s). If it is a more permanent state, then referral to another program may be necessary for the best possible outcome for the individual in question.

Facilitators follow-up on individual PPDP mentoring

Facilitators need to backstop mentors to ensure each YWD gets individual follow-up (at least 2 times per month) and that an update is logged. It is quite possible that mentors have limited time or limited capabilities for reporting. Facilitators need to agree with mentors how follow-ups are logged (while ensuring the privacy and

confidentiality of these conversations): are logbooks printed out on paper and completed in handwriting? Or are conversations recorded and sent via WhatsApp or similar apps or through text messages? Whatever the agreement is, facilitators need to follow-up and ensure that these conversations are planned and happening and be aware of the general content to ensure that none of the YWD get stuck along the way and that additional support is provided to YWD and mentors when needed.

Engage stakeholders relevant to PPDP

If any stakeholders relevant to the individual PPDPs were not approached and engaged in stage 1, they now need to be onboarded. Ensure that the TVET provider and BDS provider(s), and/or employer(s) relevant to the individual PPDPs, are sensitised on disability inclusion and prepared for the skills training and employment of the individual participants and included in the next steps in this stage. This includes the disability inclusion training, the DISC/ audit or assessment, and that they are supported (technically and/or financially) to provide the required individual accommodations. Doing so ensures that the ground for later success is prepared.

Activity Category 2: Prepare For The Skills Training

Individual needs assessment

This is a follow-up on the screening in stage 1 (and links to individual CBR plans) to ensure that the YWD have the assistive products, medication, etc. needed to participate in the skills training. Depending on the project, the individual needs assessment of the selected YWD may have taken place at the end of stage 1 or they take place at the beginning of stage 2. In-depth interviews by way of an individual needs assessment need to be done by trained professionals – project staff possibly together with CBR specialists, P&O advisors – that can examine the barriers that the individual YWD face and the requirements they have to partake in the training and work activities they opted for.

By way of example this individual needs assessment was done by project facilitators in the KUBIK project in Indonesia after selecting the youth. Mapping the needs for training, their profile, educational background, literacy level, barriers when participating in online activities, transportation needs, accommodation, assistive devices, training needs, and specific medication required by the YWD.

It is also important to gauge the mental health of the participants using the available tools or questionnaires to ensure that there is emotional wellbeing and readiness (willingness, motivation, etc.) to absorb new information and acquire new skills. If this is not (yet) the case, then referrals for psychiatric or psychosocial support are

needed. That said, all YWD should receive social and emotional learning from stage 2 of the WHEEL, but for severe cases of poor mental health, referrals are needed prior to envisaging them being included in a livelihoods project.

Individual accommodations

Based on the above assessments, assistive devices and accommodation for individual project participants can be provided. For example, project participants may require a wheelchair, prosthetics, adapted transportation or more facilities to get to the training destination. Provide the necessary assistive products, medication, and other accommodations needed for each individual YWD to be able to participate in the skills acquisition and in employment or entrepreneurship. The source of where these devices may come from vary per community, accessibility of resources, county or district, country, and more. During identification and selection, the community needs assessment and/or the existing CBR network mapping should give insights into where the project can source assistive devices or which parties can be approached to organise the required transportation or accommodation. Ideally, the health insurance of the YWD and/or the employers or TVET providers could provide these.



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However, it is very likely that additional support is needed or that the YWD does not have any health coverage (or the health coverage does not include such medication or assistive products). Any project that intends to provide skills training and accompany PWD to employment, needs to ensure that budget and support are foreseen for such medical/rehabilitation support or that a partnership is sought with those that can provide this so the PWD are able to participate to their full ability. Furthermore, there is a distinction to be made between assistive products that YWD need for general life quality and others that may additionally be needed related to the vocational area they will be trained in and work in. For example, someone with a sight impairment

may require a device or application like a Screen Reader for using a laptop computer or other ICT device. Sourcing these assistive products should be done through the relevant channels depending on the country with the relevant expert advisory service. In some countries, these are clinics or NGOs supported by LF. The individual accommodations can also include some infrastructural adjustments or an adjustment in working schedule or teaching venue (i.e. on the ground floor instead of an upper floor to include someone with reduced mobility). Considering the YWD's specific needs and the TVET program or job that they are going to do, in a dialogue with the YWD in question specific accommodations can be agreed upon. This is what is called the *accommodation principle* and is part of their right to work (article 27 in the UNCRPD). There are also some general infrastructural and other measures to be taken to enhance the disability inclusiveness of the institution as a whole which are discussed under the section on the DISC and the resulting improvement plan.

Preparing the YWD for skills acquisition and support on other issues

Depending on the age group of YWD and the local circumstances (as well as the available expertise and project budget), it may be relevant to support participating YWD on other issues to ensure inclusion for all. Such support can range from providing information around family planning, GBV prevention, (sexual) harassment at work, etc. Female YWD may require products for their menstrual hygiene and in the case of YWD participants who are already parents or heads of household, they may require support with child care for their own children or for their siblings. Such matters are included in the intake and the accommodations or ensure equality of opportunities and tailored support for full participation. This is where the *intersectionality* principle comes in: looking at each individual YWD in context helps to identify individual obstacles or barriers to address as well as strengths and support to build on. The WHEEL of Livelihoods model of using each individual's PPDP as directional guidance, allows for such a customised and tailored trajectory and outcome that is fully in line with each individual's goals and needs. To ensure that it fully delivers on better outcomes and more qualitative interventions, it is important to get enough information on the personal circumstances and environment to allow for this tailored support and custom learning path involving key stakeholders in an enabling way.

Disability Inclusion Training and Support for Reasonable Accommodation

The implementing partners train stakeholders on disability inclusion and provide TVET providers,

employers and BDS providers technical assistance to make an improvement plan and start the implementation thereof. There is very little general awareness and knowledge on the rights of people with disabilities and on disability inclusion. A disability inclusion training is therefore always an important first step in preparing the stakeholders to best play their role in the enabling environment. This is relevant for all WHEEL of Livelihoods stakeholder groups, parents and caregivers, community (incl. OPDs), TVET providers, employers, and BDS providers (all of these groups can include local government officials or representatives of relevant line ministries). Which stakeholder groups are trained together and which are trained separately depends on the particular context, the demographics and power dynamics between (and within) the groups, and the availability of the different stakeholder groups. Implementing partners can decide on the optimal approach to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are sensitised or educated on disability inclusion. Technical assistance and sometimes financial support can be provided to ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to ensure that the individual YWD can participate in the training and work process. General measures to make the training environments, the work environments and the business environments more accessible and inclusive are discussed in the context of the improvement plan mentioned below.

Most trainers and project facilitators are trained in two different areas: firstly, how to conduct themselves and support YWD, and secondly, in adapting the course material of the program to make it disability inclusive and/or to deliver the modules/curriculum using disability inclusive pedagogy. For employers and their staff the DIET trainings could start later, depending on when YWD will be placed in their organisations: if YWD will be trained on the job (i.e. in an apprenticeship or community based training setting) this can be done in stage 2 as well, if the placement will be much later it can be decided to organise these sessions a little closer to the actual placement period to ensure the knowledge is still

in the employers' active memory. If wage employment is the desired outcome for individual YWD, it is important to engage employers from the earlier stages of the project and keep them engaged throughout. In terms of training preparation, in the case of KUBIK Indonesia, disability inclusive modules for teaching entrepreneurship and business were first developed by a consultant. They also trained local facilitators on Disability Inclusion and Equity for them to learn how to offer business skills training to YWD, including using different methods, media, games and other ways of delivering the materials. Project facilitators also received training on communicating with people with different types of disability. Furthermore, the Indonesian project facilitators came from various backgrounds and had some experience in running small businesses, but they wanted to ensure the same understanding and skill level among the team. The training focused on assisting small businesses to develop and prosper. Another example was found in Mamfe, Cameroon, where the vocational trainers recruited in the project did not have previous experience teaching YWD. These vocational trainers were accompanied and instructed on how to create an accommodating learning environment for YWD.

Sensitising and preparing the parents or caregivers and relevant community members

It is important that parents and caregivers, if they play an important role in the lives of the selected YWD, are on board throughout the project cycle. They have their own experiences, trauma, and also some misconceptions around disability and the ability of PWD to be engaged in work. Therefore it is important to organise sensitisation meetings and/or a DIET from the parents and caregivers as well. For local understanding and embedding the project in the local community, relevant community members and groups can be invited to participate alongside the parents for improved understanding and community support. It is advisable to address cross-cutting topics such as intersectionality and gender. Sexual and reproductive health can be included in such sensitisation efforts and make use of positive role models by way of disproving certain biases and raising awareness.

It is also advised to meet with the parents of the youth at this stage to discuss the following:

- their role;
- their child's needs;
- medications;
- to motivate them;
- participate in the networking and;
- to manage the expectations of the parents or caregivers.



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The same goes for some important community groups and community leaders, as the community will be important in solving certain problems as they arise, in creating a disability inclusive environment, and at a later stage in linking YWD to work and economic and social opportunities within the community. This also prevents possible resistance to or misconceptions about the livelihoods project for YWD taking place in their community.

Assessment or DISC (Disability Inclusion Score Card) of accessibility and inclusiveness of TVET providers, employers and BDS providers and action planning to make improvements

a) An audit or self-assessment of disability inclusiveness and accessibility of the training environment and/or workplace environment is conducted or facilitated by the implementing partner. Depending on the project budget and the available staff, the number of organisations to audit is established. They are taken through the assessment process so they also learn how to periodically do this themselves. This means they can start tracking their progress on improving disability inclusion within their organisation.

b) Based on the audit or assessment (i.e. DISC), an improvement plan (or action plan) is developed to address the priority issues coming out of the audit or DISC. The project staff can help the stakeholders to identify quick wins and big projects and organise all of these actions in the improvement process using, for example, an action/priority matrix tool that looks at the actions in terms of impact versus effort. Such tools will allow them to identify key areas for improvement in order to quickly see some major improvements in terms of disability inclusion.

c) Support for implementing the action plan. An action plan is only useful when it is actually implemented. The project can support key stakeholders in taking the first steps of the improvement plan by giving guidance, doing follow-up and with some targeted technical and/or financial support. In so doing, the stakeholders gain confidence and the experience is that some even become centres of excellence on disability inclusion or champions of disability inclusion during the course of such a project. Experience and confidence come from conscious action. Therefore, executing (or starting the execution of) the improvement plan is key to get the ball rolling. Integrating organisational learning into the implementation, will help you learn from the experience and improve along the way.

Accessibility of the skills training, work or business environment

Under activity 1 the Disability Inclusion Score Card was mentioned (DISC) to assess the disability inclusiveness of the training institution. It is very likely that some infrastructural modifications will need to be made to make the premises, buildings, classrooms, workshops, bathrooms, dormitories, etc. accessible for people with different types of disabilities. Such modifications often require budget allocations and so they are mentioned under this separate activity. For YWD that will be trained in CBT settings, similar modifications may be required in these (small) businesses where they will be getting their industry-based training. Future employers also need to be prepared for accommodating and hiring YWD and these modifications and the overall disability inclusion sensitisation of their teams need to happen prior to the industrial attachments and job placements of YWD in their workplaces. This activity for employers can start by the end of stage 2 or at the beginning of stage 3 and should not be overlooked, as it will be important for successful placements of YWD in their companies. For

employers, the ILO disability inclusion self-assessment for companies can be used in a similar fashion as the DISC mentioned above.

Accommodation to YWD includes removing physical barriers to training centres, educational facilities, and workplaces. This also includes social accommodation, such as sensitising relevant groups in the community (educational, work or business environments) as a means of decreasing the stigma and discrimination that YWD can face. When a YWD has mobility challenges, organising home visits and making arrangements for either training at or near their homes or arranging for suitable transportation and/or boarding facilities is required. In the case of the Inclusive Livelihoods project in Cameroon, previously trained and vetted Community Health Workers carried out this activity visiting the participants' homes and carrying out needs assessments, drafting and implementing individual rehabilitation plans and personal professional development plans.

Project Facilitators will commonly start by going to the TVET centres to discuss the project, the role of the organisation, and their own role in the project. Furthermore, project facilitators will identify gaps in disability inclusion, such as accessibility of the buildings, specifically:

- Having ramps for wheelchair accessibility;
- Making bathrooms accessible;
- Ensuring courses are taught in classrooms on the ground floor;
- Accessible dormitories, preferably on the ground floor (or, if not, with a solution for people with mobility challenges), and qualified, vetted staff for providing care and support during evenings and, if needed, weekends. For this and all other activities involving staff directly interacting with YWD, the necessary code of conduct needs to be known and signed and this and other safeguarding measures adhered to;²
- Setting up a disability inclusion resource room for learners with disability and those caregivers and family members supporting them or others

interested in supporting YWD from the community. Such a room could have accessible reading and learning materials (braille and large print books, e-books, audiobooks) and be used to teach sign language interpretation, reading/ transcribing braille, or to produce class handouts or syllabi in braille using an embossing machine, etc.;

- Depending on the selected YWD, their disabilities and related barriers and their chosen vocational area, it may be necessary to ensure that sign language interpretation is available at the institution (in certain trades).



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Activity Category 3: Social and Emotional Readiness and (Psychological) Safety

Peer learning on SEL

The YWD need to be actively engaged, prepared in self-reflection, storytelling, and goalsetting to allow them to make the most of this opportunity and to be able to voice their needs. Social and emotional skills are needed for employability as well as for the successful acquisition of skills, and overall wellbeing. Such skills are best transferred interactively through peer learning approaches in peer groups of YWD. Peer learning on social and emotional skills can continue throughout the project life cycle, but is best started prior to the vocational skills training for YWD to be ready to acquire new skills. As the WHEEL of Livelihoods methodology depends on the individual aspirations and goals to inform the intervention, a certain level of self-awareness and social awareness is needed for them to successfully engage in this process. It is therefore important to start SEL as soon as the project participants are identified and the facilitators and mentors have been identified and trained.

Individual reflection using WHEEL of Livelihoods logbook

In tandem with the SEL in peer learning groups, individual logbooks can be distributed that the YWD can use to keep track of their wellbeing and reflect on their personal growth as they go about implementing their PPDP. This is not an absolute must, as the same topics will be addressed in the peer learning groups with the facilitators and in the individual mentoring conversation between each YWD and their mentor. However, for those interested in and able to continue this self-reflection process, logbooks can be made available for personal reflection on the PPDP content. Such logbooks or journals are private for YWD to keep track their own progress on goals, as well as their own social and emotional wellbeing along the project lifecycle. Depending on project budgets and expertise, logbooks could be made available in other formats (i.e. audio or video or braille-supported) in line with the disability and needs.

² Institutions should adhere to the Code of Conduct of the project or have their own Code of Conduct. Staff should sign the Code of Conduct.

Separate dormitories should be available for boys and girls. Supporting and trained staff should be available at all times. Medical care needs to be available, depending on the needs of the YWD. Facilities should be in place for reporting incidents and responding.

Preparing the YWD for learning in a TVET, CBT or on-the-job training

Just as the enabling environment needs to be prepared, the YWD also need to be prepared with the right mindset for learning. If possible, prior learning gaps can be addressed or the skills training adapted to the educational level of the selected YWD (the TVET offering and required educational level are part of the selection criteria; the TVET offering (level) should be adapted to the specifics of the demographics of the YWD that the project is focusing on). During the above activities, the YWD will have also been provided with the required assistive products or accommodation needed to start their vocational skills training.

Elements involved in the preparation of the youth can be:

- In-depth interviews: to determine background, psycho-social wellbeing, disability status and needs in terms of accommodation, specific challenges/barriers, personal strengths, interests, aspirations, etc. (likely already conducted under activity 3);
- Group peer social and emotional learning (SEL) sessions: YWD area likely to have internalised some myths and stigma around disability. Use group sessions to sensitise them on their human rights and disability inclusion and equity. Disabilities may be accompanied by trauma, thus it may be useful to express emotions through storytelling, peer exchange, music and performing arts. Visual arts can be accessible context specific methods that encourage confidence and healing; Severe cases need to be referred to psychology professionals through the CBR network and partnerships. Setting up small peer groups among the YWD as well as connecting YWD to student buddies of their choice can create a safe environment for the YWD to take some risks, learn, grow, and build their social abilities;
- Self-reflection: formulating a personal vision of success; reflecting on personal goals, how to measure progress and interactive exchange with facilitators about career options in the local area as well as personal interests to fine-tune the personal professional development plan (PPDP), which can become the tool for periodic self-reflection and follow-up conversations with the YWD mentor.

Regarding the youth, the types of questions that can be asked during this phase could have the goal of encouraging reflection on their beliefs about themselves and their capabilities, where they would like to go, what they need to get started, and how they get started in their careers (See Tool 1: Questions for the youth to ask themselves in Phase 2).

An essential starting point is doing an education and communication assessment of the youth to gain insights into their educational background and communication levels and abilities. Depending on the duration and budget of the project and the required literacy and numeracy for the skills training, (personalised) remediation courses could be arranged to get YWD at the level needed for them to start their vocational skills training program. A common occurrence in livelihoods projects in the Global South is that the project participants may not know how to communicate in ways specific to their disabilities (e.g. sign language, braille, and more). In this case, extra courses in communication would need to be provided before they embark on the project. Additional technical classes may also be necessary depending on the direction they would like to follow. For example, the Inclusive Livelihood Centre in Cameroon provided general courses in English and Mathematics.

A key aspect of training preparedness is choosing which courses and TVETs will be included in the project. This should be informed by the individual Personal Professional Development Plans (PPDP) of the participating YWD. Livelihood projects can consist of a broader range of quality education and courses that interest the project participants. It is also valuable to have classes relevant to the current market demands of the community/country to increase the likelihood of finding a job, as well as skills linked to the job search itself, also called employability skills. For example, Masai Technical Training Institute in Kenya introduced Business and Financial Management and computer skills as standard modules for all students. In some cases, there is the possibility to offer vocational skills trainings to YWD in a company setting as well, as was the case in the Work and Respect project in Kenya, Rwanda, and Ethiopia where youth with disabilities had the option to get their skills training at a community based training provider, that the project supported in providing disability inclusive vocational skills training.

Disability inclusive child safeguarding

(* not specific to WHEEL model)

Ensure project staff and key partners and stakeholders are trained on disability inclusive child safeguarding. Ensure policies and reporting mechanisms are in place and known. This is a general requirement for projects supporting CYWD and not specific to the WHEEL of Livelihoods. However, project coordinators should ensure that those in close interaction with CYWD have been trained on this topic and aware of internal policies in this matter, including reporting mechanisms and follow-up.

Train Facilitators of SEL peer learning

Facilitators of peer learning (project/ partner staff) need to be trained on facilitation of peer learning and on the Social and Emotion Learning content using the SEL Facilitator Manual. The WHEEL of Livelihoods includes SEL and recommends delivering such content through peer learning in groups of 20 YWD maximum. Facilitators thus need to be trained in their role as facilitators as well as in the general content of the SEL using available tools.

Community of Practice for facilitators; Optionally, also a community of practice for mentors

Implementing partners set up a community of practice for trained facilitators where they can share the issues they are running into and the successes they have had in facilitating the YWD peer learning groups on social and emotional skills. The same goes for mentors, they need to receive periodic training, so they can be good mentors to the YWD in the project. To coordinate and support the mentors in their practice, it is recommended that facilitators group mentors in InterVision groups for their own peer learning. Of course, this requires a certain level of time commitment from mentors and what is feasible needs to be seen in any given context.

Facilitate YWD peer learning

Trained facilitators use social and emotional skills training curriculum and facilitation guidelines to facilitate YWD in peer learning. There are a lot of open source materials on social and emotional learning. LF is also in the process of developing a facilitator's manual to guide facilitators to facilitate peer learning on social and emotional skills in groups of up to 20 YWD. The material is organised in 20 sessions to be conducted over a 10-month period.

Well-being and health of the YWD

One best practice that can be done throughout the livelihoods project is conducting regular follow-ups with the participants. Doing this practice can allow project facilitators to become aware of gaps and weaker points in the project and adjust accordingly. Regular follow-ups can give insights into the following:

- If the participants enjoy their chosen trade/ course, and if not, if they would like to switch;
- Are the courses sufficient in teaching them what they need to know;
- How they are feeling at the institution and if they feel that they are being treated differently or unfairly, and what solution do they envision could solve the issue;
- Do they receive enough support from trainees, trainers, their communities, etc.?

The health and medical needs of the youth are another vital aspect. Project facilitators in KUBIK Indonesia interview the participants to discover their health needs and provide reminders to bring their medication. They also offer vitamins and supplements. Further, the Work and Respect Project in Kenya conducted a medical assessment of the youth to search for hidden disabilities as they can manifest as the project continues. In order to address individual follow-ups better and more sustainably and to create allies in their local communities, a mentoring model is recommended.



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Some of the lessons learned through experience of partner organisations of
Liliane Fonds running livelihoods projects specifically targeting YWD:

- ✓ During this stage it is important to forge relationships and formalise partnerships, for example through Memoranda of Understanding (MoU). The context analysis and stakeholder mapping done prior to the project or during stage 1 can serve as guidance towards relevant partners to involve. Having partnerships with government line ministries can help with provision of sign language interpreters, tools of trade, etc. It also allows them to learn from good practices and have them integrate these into government policies and scale them to other geographic areas.
 - ✓ Sensitising all of the parties involved in the livelihoods project cycle on disability inclusion in skills and work is very important in regard to the ownership of the project goals by all involved and ultimately to reaching the project's goal and outcomes. Stage 2 is particularly key in getting this community involvement and ownership.
 - ✓ Personal professional development of the YWD is an ongoing process that needs to be initiated in stage 1 and 2 and be central to the direction and specific activities of the livelihoods transformation process.
- Take time to work on self-reflection and interpersonal skills with the YWD. Encourage them to use their PPDP as a tool for direction and tracking their progress on the path to reaching their own goals.
- ✓ Bring partners together in the local governance structure, i.e. local advisory committees, to be part of the solution to addressing some of the barriers and problems YWD may face as they prepare for their skills training or workplace learning and throughout the project cycle.
 - ✓ Stage 2 is also the time for stakeholders and YWD (different groups in their different settings) to ensure safeguarding, privacy and protection concerns are addressed and that codes of conduct are agreed upon and signed.



CHAPTER 3

Phase Three - Skills Training

INTRODUCTION

The third stage of the WHEEL, the educate or skills training stage, ensures that the youth acquire the skills and education necessary to succeed in their chosen trade or vocation. These skills include technical and vocational skills. They also cover other skills relevant to the chosen occupation or income generating activity such as business skills, communications skills, digital skills, and other relevant skills needed on the labour market.

The skills training of the participants can cater to those interested in waged employment or entrepreneurship. Thus, participants who aim to start a business can also be equipped with relevant skills such as business plan development, accounting, sales and (digital) marketing.

Furthermore, the engagement of parents in the learning process is encouraged for the broader support of the participants and in some cases parents or caregivers are trained together with youth with severe disabilities. Depending on the project this can either be through formal Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), or through non-formal TVET, for example modernised apprenticeships or what we call community based training with local SMEs or crafts people. Some larger projects offer both options for skills training depending on the educational profile of the YWD and their own dreams and goals. Some projects are more focused on entrepreneurship development through business competitions, individual and group business coaching and short courses.



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There are numerous options available to practitioners to respond to the skills needs from the individual personal professional development plans. The most important thing is to really listen to the wishes and needs of the YWD and work from the vision for success of each individual as concretised in their Personal Professional Development Plan (PPDP). Once this has been clarified, solutions should be found to address the individual barriers YWD face in their particular circumstances when it comes to their desired socio-economic outcomes.

The questions this stage aims to answer are:

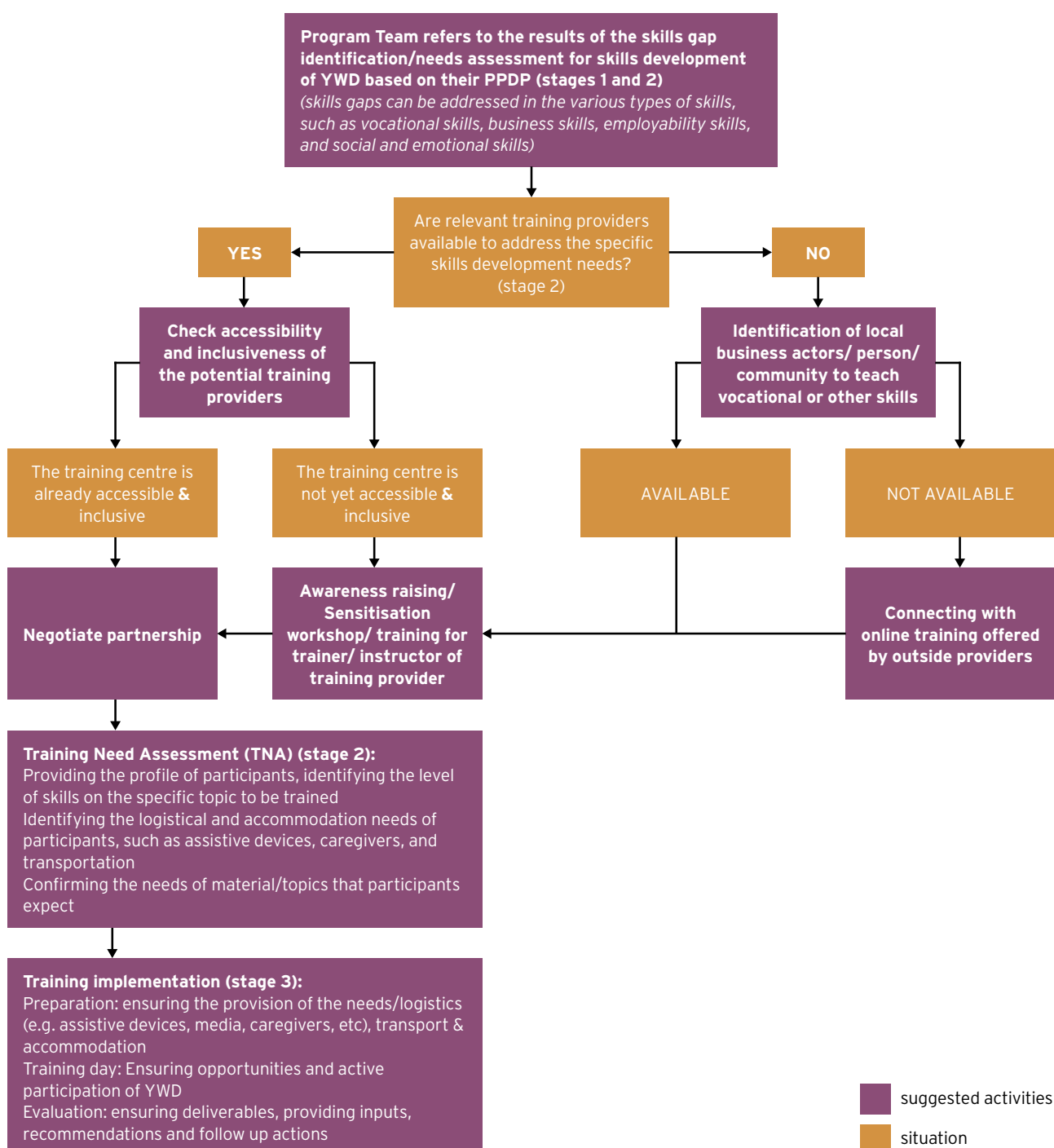
- ✓ **What are the best practices in making TVETs and educational facilities disability inclusive?**
- ✓ **How can inclusive workplace learning be provided to youth with disabilities?**
- ✓ **How are learners with disabilities best supported in their skills training?**

Guiding principles

- Listen to YWD themselves. Provide them with relevant information on the labour market and the local economy in order for them to make informed and conscious decisions about the type of livelihood they desire and the most suitable skills training.
- The type of skills training offered will depend on the profiles of the selected YWD. Are the educational gaps too big for them to meet the requirements of formal TVET? Are they not interested in a skills training that has a long duration? If so, then industry-based short courses or non-formal TVET in a workplace setting could be an option. Are the certificates important to them or are they more interested in acquiring certain competences for income generation? Such aspects need to be considered when advising the YWD on a suitable skills training for (self)employment.
- Placing YWD in specific TVET centres and/or community based training providers like crafts people and SMEs for skills training, offer such skills training providers the opportunity to apply their disability inclusion learnings through first-hand experience. This increases their confidence in becoming disability inclusive. Coach them through this process and successes can be shared to inspire other skills training providers to do the same.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR STAGE 3 OF THE LIVELIHOODS PROJECT CYCLE

Below is a list of proposed activities to be implemented by the implementing partners and/or by the TVET providers along with coordination and engagement with the other stakeholders from the WHEEL of Livelihoods model. Prior to highlighting different suggested activities, you can find a flow chart here concerning some different choices to be made by implementing partners concerning the format (and venue) in which the skills training will be done. It is recommended that the decision-making process relating to this flowchart is done in the project design and then referred to later on during the implementation of the project.



| ACTIVITY CATEGORIES | ACTIVITIES FOR YWD | ACTIVITIES FOR THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Vocational skills training implementation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant vocational skills acquisition (in line with PPDP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills training implementation and observation • DISC follow-up |
| 2. Social and emotional skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer learning • Individual follow-up and mentoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of Facilitators • Coordinating CoPs of facilitators and mentors |
| 3. Workplace learning and employability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employability skills • Workplace learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employability skills provided • Workplace learning opportunities provided during the skills training • Employer readiness |

Suggested activities and activity categories based on the chart in relation to stage 3 (educate – skills training).

Suggested Activity Category 1: Vocational Skills Training Implementation

Once the accessibility modifications and the preparation of TVET academic and administrative staff has happened in stage 2 and the TVET provider is implementing its plan to improve its inclusiveness towards learners and staff with disabilities, the vocational skills training can take off. TVET providers have also made the necessary accommodations for the specific YWD that will start their training in these TVET centres or other venues for the skills training. In the previous stage, it was made sure that the choice of trade for the skills training is aligned to the personal professional development plan of each YWD and based on their personal preference.



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Having agency in their choice of trade is important for the YWD, as successful outcomes are much more likely when one can build on the intrinsic motivation of project participants. It can also mean that for some YWD personal assistants need to be present throughout the training period or that sign language interpretation is needed. It can also mean that assistive products are needed throughout the training period. Teaching and learning materials also need to be accessible for those with different abilities. All of this had been identified during stage 2 and is now available during the skills

training. If any gaps remain or further improvements in accessibility or inclusion are needed, they need to be addressed as soon as possible in the order of importance. Furthermore, TVET trainers may need coaching and support to ensure their session delivery is more inclusive of YWD and relevant project staff or partners should reserve some time for this in-service coaching (or have a kind of help desk for questions) for TVET trainers on their disability inclusiveness. They can also sit in on some skills training sessions to observe the TVET Trainer and give feedback afterwards. This can be done in collaboration with in-service teacher training coaches or as a separate project activity depending on the context.

During stage 3, the project team ensures that opportunities are provided fairly to YWD and ensures their active participation throughout the training process. Mentors follow-up with YWD on their progress with their vocational training according to the goals in their PPDP and share this information with the project team. Regular visits and follow-ups with TVET providers are recommended. The same goes for community based training providers who need technical and some financial support to cover the time and consumables (and possible modifications) needed to provide the skills training to YWD. Regular follow-ups are needed to ensure the wellbeing of the YWD is ensured and the acquisition of competences is smooth. Possible conflicts or miscommunication can also be more easily addressed if they are unearthed soon enough. A powerful incentive for CBT providers to participate can be the recognition of prior learning (RPL or recognition of current competence) of such craftspeople as well as the recognition of the competences of the YWD they have trained. If participating TVET providers do not have the budget for sign language interpretation, an inclusive livelihoods project can offer this service and place a sign language interpreter in a specific location to support one or more TVET providers in training YWD

who require this accommodation. For interested TVET staff this can also be a topic for capacity strengthening – acquiring competences in the local sign language for them to provide inclusive skills training for people with hearing impairments.

When working with larger TVET providers, it can be interesting to offer YWD the possibility of switching trade or skills training type within the first month or two. This is particularly useful if they find that the trade is not to their liking or is difficult to do with their particular disability. It might be difficult for YWD to know what they can or cannot do and sometimes they just need to try a certain trade to see if it is possible for them to do. This is a service that was offered by participating TVET centres in the Work and Respect Project in Kenya and it worked well.

The recommendation is to provide skills training to YWD in mixed groups and mainstream TVET centres whenever possible in a given context, as it prepares YWD to work in regular workplaces. YWD who receive their skills training in special needs schools or in a class with only YWD (even if it is in a mainstream TVET centre) often present lower self-esteem and confidence as opposed to those who are used to communicating and collaborating with other students and trainers without disabilities.

Following up on the DISC and the TVET providers' disability inclusion improvement plans: now that YWD are placed in the institutions, TVET providers get the opportunity to see if their disability accessibility and inclusion improvements meet the needs of YWD themselves. They seek their inputs to make adjustments as they implement their plans. TVET providers can make it a periodic process to self-assess their disability inclusiveness using the DISC or equivalent tool. This practice of implementation and monitoring will lead to successes, failures, and learning or insights. To allow such learning to occur it is important that there is an ongoing system in place for peer learning i.e. through *InterVision* groups (or mastermind groups) or a community of practice within the TVET provider stakeholder group. Regular internal monitoring of the implementation status of the disability inclusion action plan at the institutional level is needed and this can then also be an important tool for the follow-up visits and calls as well as technical advisory by project staff from the implementing partners. It is possible that a peer support and peer learning mechanism for the other stakeholders groups, such as the parents and caregivers of participating YWD and engaged community members can be set up. Such groups, however, can operate throughout the livelihoods project cycle and



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are not specific to stage 3. The community of practice or *InterVision* group at the level of TVET providers can also bring forth role models in disability inclusion in TVET, i.e. school principals or TVET trainers. These role models can be school principals who want to share the message of disability inclusion in TVET and build on their knowledge to turn their institutions into centres of excellence for disability inclusion in skills provision. They can be TVET trainers who model disability inclusive classrooms or workshops, disability inclusive pedagogy in skills provision (i.e. different pace or process to accommodate for different types of disabilities or learn sign language to be able to include hearing impaired students) or disability inclusive teaching and learning materials (i.e. braille or audio; or visual materials with adapted font size). Different activities could be developed for selected stakeholders who are interested in going further (beyond the general awareness and peer learning) in terms of disability inclusion to become role models and advocates for disability inclusion in their area of responsibility.

Suggested Activity Category 2: Strengthening Social and Emotional Skills

It is important that YWD become more aware of their emotions and are able to voice what they feel and what they need. Often there is internalised self-stigma and a lack of self-acceptance which renders it difficult for many to experience emotional wellbeing and connection to themselves and to other people in their immediate family and community environments. A very negative self-image can also affect YWD's ability to absorb new information in the learning process. For this reason, peer learning on social-emotional skills is recommended to start during stage 2 and continue in stage 3 alongside the vocational skills training. The WHEEL of Livelihoods comes with peer learning sample sessions for facilitators to use. The model recommends facilitating these sessions in peer groups of approx. 20 YWD and over 20 sessions of materials for peer learning on social and emotional skills are available.



Personal reflection on progress towards the goals in the PPDP and intermediate milestones is important. This self-reflection can also have a section on emotional and social wellbeing besides the acquisition of skills and the attainment of goals, as emotional and social wellbeing is a necessary foundation from which to grow and achieve professional results. Peer groups and opportunities to share experiences and learn from each other in a safe and supportive environment are also very instrumental in building this strong foundation. Certain creative outlets such as art therapy, music, dance, and storytelling can be used for healing, emotional wellbeing and personal and social confidence building. While this will not be the main focus of the livelihoods project, such activities often prove to be particularly key in the social and emotional wellbeing and motivation of participants and thus very helpful in attaining other project results. Another important aspect of this is working on self-reflection and group reflection using different tools, learning non-violent communication techniques and more. Self-expression, a positive self-image, emotional wellbeing and the ability to interact with others in a constructive manner will be key in reaching the learning and employment outcomes foreseen. To this end, such activities should not be considered 'nice to have', but integrated into the core of the learning activities.

communicate with customers. Such skills include communication skills, teamwork skills, organisation and planning skills, creative problem solving skills, self-discipline, self-management, learning how to learn (self-development skills), digital skills and more. What is covered can be informed by the local (working) culture and needs, although certain aspects such as emotional self-regulation, learning how to learn, etc. will be common for different country contexts.

Suggested Activity Category 3: Workplace Learning and Employability

savings and loans association (VSLA) or similar group (or start a new one with other project participants or community members). For those seeking wage employment, it is important they learn job search skills such as how to write a CV, how to network and talk to potential employers, how to conduct oneself during a job interview and how the application processes usually work in their country including their rights as a PWD such as reasonable accommodation. In some cases job search skills are also called employability skills, but employability skills are usually broader (see above).



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Those YWD who want to start their own business after (or during) the skills training need courses on, for example, business, writing and using their business plan, sales, marketing, and strategy. This is not necessarily taught in the TVET centre and thus collaboration with business development service providers such as (micro) financial institutions, business incubators or accelerators, government services or private services for MSMEs is necessary to ensure that such skills are transferred. To ensure that this is done in an inclusive manner, such BDS providers may need training and coaching to make their skills training and service offering inclusive of PWD. In specific disability inclusive livelihoods projects that are targeting entrepreneurship, a business idea competition may have taken place in the previous stages and at this stage they may already be implementing their business plan and receiving targeted short courses, mentoring or coaching during the initial phases of running their business. The continuous involvement of community stakeholders and the ensuing network will also help to identify role models and possible business mentors to be involved in this stage.

Meaningful Youth Participation and Leadership

Whether disabled or not, we are all born with certain talents - certain skills we easily acquire without much effort. The training period is also a period to discover or build on one's existing talents, whether it be in sports or cultural activities for example. Some may be natural storytellers or artists, others might be really good at a certain sport. To allow YWD to get a taste of being really good at something and doing something just for the fun of it, it is a great idea to offer such opportunities. The availability of opportunities will largely depend on what is offered in the partnering TVET centres or on what other organisations/NGOs offer in the geographical zone in which the project is being implemented. In the partner mapping of stage 1, it is important to map this so as to be able to offer such activities in stage 3. Certain activities such as youth-led action research and leadership development can also be integrated into the design of the project and executed at this point. An example of this was the Emancipatory Disability Research (EDR) pilot integrated into the Work and Respect project activities in Kenya with very positive feedback from the participating YWD themselves. In many countries schools and TVET centres also allow students to self-organise into student clubs. This may also be an option to integrate such activities in terms of leadership development into the project and also allow meaningful youth engagement, as this typically would be an area in which they take the lead and organise their own initiatives.

[Diana Cherotich Koros telling her disability story during the EDR training session she received.](#)

Working on youth-led action research, community initiative and leadership development can also prepare future leaders of the disability movement. In the meantime, it would be an opportunity for practitioners to apply the adage "nothing about us without us" by allowing YWD to shape the research and political agenda with issues they find important in their lived experience. INGOs and NGOs, as well as government stakeholders and international organisations can then invite such youth leaders to speak on behalf of the issues and groups they represent.

Certain aspects of work are only learned in the workplace itself, such as how to interact with customers, how to handle money, and how to work in a team. For quality skills training, it is therefore imperative to heavily align with the needs of the labour market and to ensure there is plenty of practical and workplace learning integrated into the skills training programme. To this effect, in many countries industrial attachment is made mandatory in TVET programmes. Whether the skills training in the inclusive livelihoods project is formal or non-formal, integrating workplace learning into the skills training is key for the employability of the YWD. This need not necessarily be an industrial attachment or internship, it could also be a modernised apprenticeship or even company visits, job shadowing and more. For better results though, it is recommended that some competences from the curriculum of the skills training programme are delivered in the workplace. The fact that workplace learning is included in the skills training programme curriculum also stimulates TVET providers to liaise more with the private sector in the surrounding area to secure industrial attachments for their students (or even staff) and reduces the distance between the supply and demand sides of the local labour market. Working with community based training providers, often local craftspeople or local businesses, also further

reduces the distance between the supply and demand on the local labour market and engages the private sector in providing skills training. This can be a solution for YWD who often experience barriers when it comes to mobility and travel between their home and the place of training, as these are businesses in their direct vicinity. It also ensures that they get more practical exposure to actual businesses and workplaces. Early engagement with employers either through workplace learning, but also by informing them of the profiles of the candidates graduating soon and sensitising them on disability inclusion and giving them technical assistance to become (more inclusive), can help prepare the ground for the transition of YWD to the workplace in the next stage.

Some of the lessons learned from the experiences of partner organisations of Liliane Fonds running livelihoods projects specifically targeting YWD:

- ✓ It is quite difficult for stakeholders and even YWD themselves to know what will be possible in terms of their disability and their preferred trades. Therefore, building in some more flexibility for them to try a certain TVET trade during one or two months before making a final decision on their preferred trade was a practice used in Work and Respect in Kenya (for those that went to public TVETs) that worked well for the YWD. It allowed them to make more informed choices about their preferred trade and also opened the eyes of all involved to what is possible. Often career guidance may orient YWD in a certain way because of their particular disability (i.e. negative choice based on the limitations). This approach helped YWD go for their preferred choices based on their own interest (positive choice) and make the adaptations required and, if the YWD found it too difficult in their particular situation or did not appreciate the trade as much as expected, they still had the opportunity to switch to their second preferred trade.
- ✓ As is widely known, but also confirmed by the partners running LF livelihoods projects, workplace learning in the form of industrial attachments, internships or in-company training is a good stepping stone towards employment. It allows YWD and the internship or training providing company to get to know each other and often this can lead to eventual employment or collaboration (i.e. continued apprenticeships or YWD making use of the same workshops to run their own businesses from). It also helps dispel myths as these are not sheltered workplaces and these regular employers, their staff and customers, change their perceptions on disability and work from their direct experience with YWD in the workplace.



> PHOTO: JEFFRY CHANIAGO

- ✓ The twin-track approach of using the disability inclusion scorecard approach (and similar tools) with TVET providers to work on their overall accessibility and inclusiveness of people with disabilities and then have specific YWD placed in their institutions, allows for TVET providers to apply their lessons with real-life scenarios and with actual YWD. It then becomes a much more practical exercise rather than an intellectual pursuit. Having learners with disabilities in their institutions allows them to get feedback and to learn from it.
- ✓ Important challenges such as school fees that are often too high for certain groups of learners, including many youth with disabilities, need to be properly addressed during stage 2 of the WHEEL (training preparedness) to prevent YWD having to drop out during the TVET training period or having to deal with additional costs. It is also an important topic to include in lobby and advocacy activities geared at inclusive TVET.
- ✓ Sign Language Interpretation was a key success factor in LF supported livelihoods projects such as Work and Respect in Kenya or the livelihoods project run by RCI in Vietnam. It is a key activity to ensure inclusion for the hearing impaired and often the persons doing the SLI become persons of trust that YWD can come to for support, advice and also to address certain grievances. This also highlights the more broader aspect of personal assistants that may be required for some and how to integrate them into the process for maximum support to YWD in their journey from unemployment through skills to work.

Jennifer's Story

Jennifer was a student of Computer Adaptive Technology at Maasai Technical in Kenya. As a blind student, she used an assistive device that helped her to use the computer. After finishing her studies, she now teaches computer adaptive technology to other blind students.

[Watch Jennifer's story](#)



CHAPTER 4

Phase Four – Transition to Work

INTRODUCTION

The fourth stage, or the Transition to Work stage, considers the start of the participants' careers through job matching, support to job placements, advisory services to employers to become inclusive, provision of inclusive business development services to youth with disabilities in entrepreneurship, apprenticeships, post-training internships, job shadowing, and more. This phase encompasses the transition from skills training and TVET to waged employment or entrepreneurship.

In the case of entrepreneurship, participants start implementing their business plans and are supported to access tools of trade, credit facilities, investments and/or other private or public support to start-ups depending on the specific offering of each livelihoods project. Sensitisation and advocacy efforts will support further inclusiveness of such (public) services.



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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR STAGE 4 OF THE LIVELIHOODS PROJECT CYCLE

Below is a list of proposed activities to be implemented by the implementing partners and/or by the employers or BDS providers with coordination and engagement with the other stakeholders from the WHEEL of Livelihoods model. The suggested activities for this stage are described in further detail below. First, take a look at the flow chart concerning some different choices to be made by implementing partners in regard to the pathway to work and the relevant activities for each YWD in this stage. It is recommended that the decision making process relating to this flowchart is done in the project design phase and then used later on during the implementation of the project.

This stage aims to answer the following questions:

- ✓ **How can project participants be sustainably employed or self-employed?**
- ✓ **How can employers or business service providers become more disability inclusive?**

Guiding principles

- If possible for the particular YWD in question, Liliane Fonds prefers disability inclusive mainstream workplaces to sheltered workplaces. Youth with disabilities are capable of much more than is often thought when it comes to work and livelihoods and there are many benefits to having a disability inclusive workplace.
- Even though some YWD will not be able to be fully autonomous socio-economically, there is a spectrum between unemployment and full employment and innovative solutions can be found for YWD with a strong desire to be economically active.
- Provide support, information and examples to employers and business development service providers on becoming (more) disability inclusive. Becoming a leader in disability inclusion in the workplace is also possible for smaller businesses and workshops with the motivation to do so.

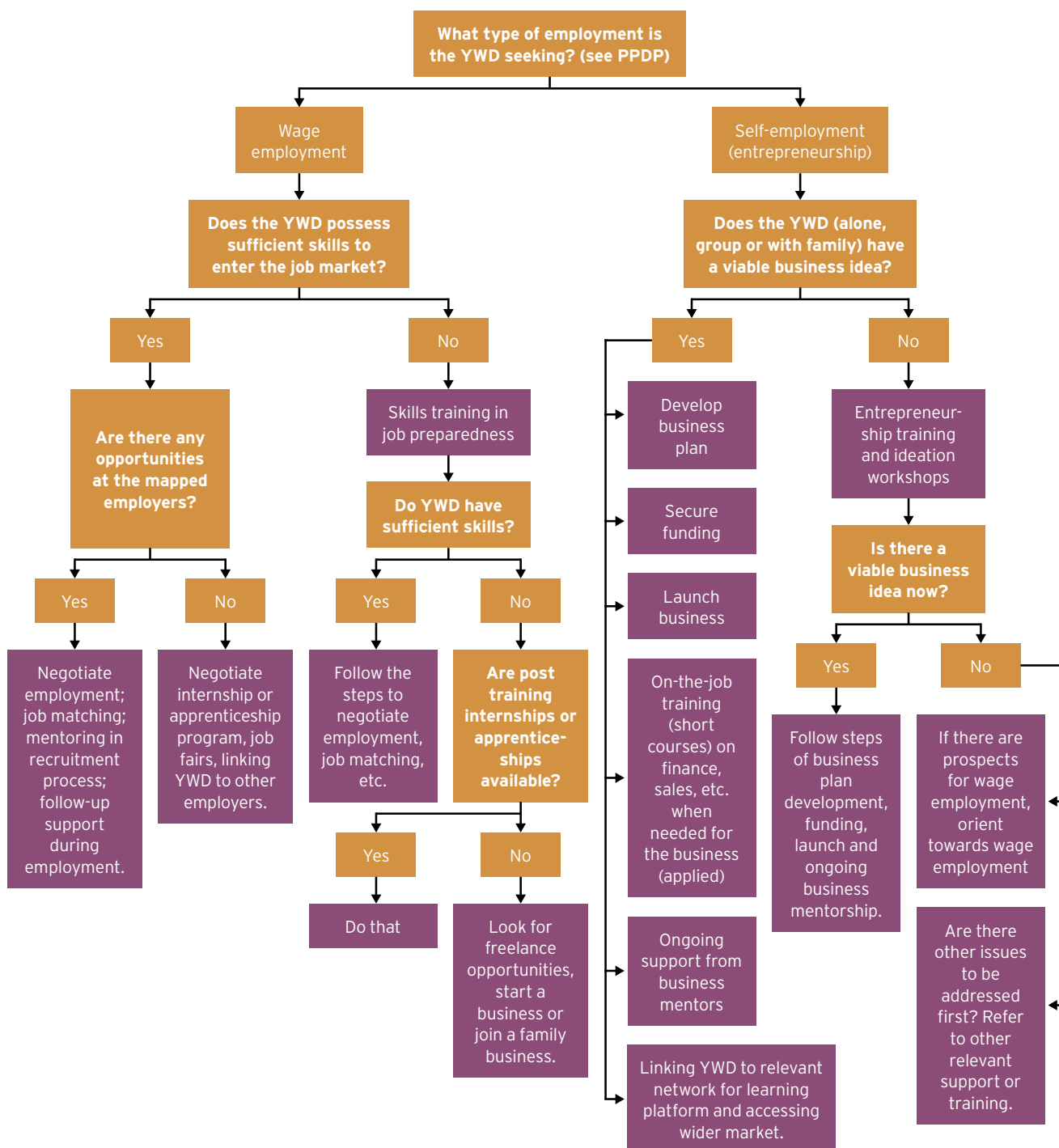


Figure: flowchart for deciding on the appropriate pathway towards work for YWD (can be used in project design and inception and referred to during the implementation)

As becomes clear from the above flowchart, there are two distinct pathways towards work for YWD: the pathway that is oriented towards wage employment and the pathway that is oriented towards entrepreneurship. The pathway of choice depends on the individual preference as concretised in the Personal Professional Development Plan (PPDP). As the suggested activities will differ for each of these two alternative pathways, they will be listed separately. This logic is also visible in the stakeholder groups – the category named ‘Employers’ belonging to the wage employment pathway and the category named ‘BDS Providers’ belonging to the entrepreneurship pathway. As is visible from the above diagram, if YWD are not successful in their preferred pathway they can still be oriented to self-employment (for those with a preference of wage employment) as a backup option or towards wage employment for those

who tried but were unsuccessful in entrepreneurship. That said, it is important to stop referring the YWD back and forth between the two pathways, so an exit scenario (further discussed in stage 5) is also important with a clear scope of where the project support starts and ends and where the YWD themselves and the relevant stakeholders take their own responsibilities for the successful skills and livelihoods outcomes.

Preferably the YWD themselves can choose between both pathways – either wage employment or entrepreneurship. In some livelihoods projects and contexts it can, however, be decided to only offer one pathway due to the expertise of the implementing partners and/or due to the context of the intervention zone (i.e. rural areas with few formal wage employment options). Both pathways are described separately below.

STAGE 4A: THE WAGE EMPLOYMENT PATHWAY

| STAGE | SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR YWD | SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR ENABLING ENVIRONMENT |
|----------------|---|--|
| Job matching | Mentoring YWD in applying job search skills | Follow-up with mapped employers |
| Recruitment | Mentoring YWD in the recruitment process | Ensuring accessibility and disability inclusion in the recruitment process |
| Employ | Follow-up support for YWD during a certain period | Ensuring accessibility and disability inclusion in the workplace |
| Re-orientation | Find other options or re-orient YWD that have been hard to place in formal employment | Engage the parents or caregivers |

Suggested Activity Category 1: Job Matching

During stage 1 two important activities took place: stakeholder mapping and the labour market survey. Both needed to be specific to the local intervention zone and recent, preferably done during stage 1 of the project cycle or stage 5 of the previous project cycle. Based on this, relevant company contacts were established and engaged in disability inclusion sensitisation, as well as prepared for possible employment of YWD. Ensure that



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the pool of potential employers is sufficiently large in the relevant fields according to the PPDPs of the YWD being supported by the project. Use information from relevant local government services, chambers and employers federations and go to the different business areas in the intervention zone to visit companies and talk to potential employers. A record of such visits and information is best kept for future reference. This activity is meant to keep these contacts warm and get up-to-date information on available positions for YWD. Regular contacts with interested employers also prepares and reminds them of their commitment to employ YWD.

To provide a working environment that is disability inclusive, employers need to be given information on the rights of people with disabilities and in particular their right to work, policy and legal requirements from their country, and on how to accommodate someone with a disability in the workplace. Ideally, disability inclusion and equity sensitisation sessions and a self-assessment were already done in the previous stages and they are already implementing some

actions from their action plan to improve their disability inclusiveness. If this is not the case, it is important that they get this information in whichever way works for them given their availability. It can be a session for a group of employers where they get this information collectively or they can be individual visits to partnering companies. It may be helpful to provide an information brief document or a similar document for them to refer to at later stages and to share with relevant colleagues and/or an email summarising the information discussed. Involving YWD or PWD in this exercise is important to ensure that what is shared with employers is coming from lived experience and to also allow for meaningful participation of YWD in the different project activities. It is an opportunity to educate the companies that are willing to hire or provide internships to YWD on disability inclusion for optimal circumstances to get positive outcomes.

During the matching process between YWD with relevant profiles and employers, project staff and relevant local government departments or organisations involved in staffing and job placements can be involved. Project staff can ensure that disability inclusive practices are used and can play the role here of connector. YWD can be accompanied and prepped by the facilitators at partner organisations or by career coaches and mentors depending on the specific design of the livelihoods project. If the TVET centres where the YWD were trained have career coaches on their payroll, these can also be involved in this matching process, provided they have been trained on disability inclusion.

Based on the up-to-date employer mapping, project staff, partners or relevant stakeholders can match YWD to employment opportunities. It is important that project staff as well as TVET providers liaise with employers in the relevant sectors, as well as with employers' federations, chambers of commerce or industry-based membership organisations as well as career guidance counsellors from government departments or from the educational system. Personal networks of engaged stakeholders including parents, caregivers, community members and groups such as OPDs can share potential job opportunities for YWD. Information shared among YWD currently in training or in alumni networks are also sources of information on job opportunities with different employers. Additionally, there are online platforms to watch and engage with.

Within the project it is important that someone is responsible for coordinating the gathering of such information and the sharing of the information with suitable candidates, as well as keeping a record of what was shared with whom and if successful matches were

made. YWD can be supported to apply themselves or a shortlist of candidates among skilled YWD can be shared with partnering employers. Additionally, certain events can be organised to bring YWD seeking jobs and employers offering positions to YWD together such as job fairs for these groups to meet and network, online platforms can be set up if needed or available platforms can be made disability inclusive. It is important that someone is in touch with both the YWD and employers to ensure that follow-up actions are taken. Project staff can also support employers in making it possible in terms of cost-effective accommodations and addressing possible fears or misconceptions on both ends. This requires follow-up visits, calls, and some individual attention. Public sector employers may have additional quota to respect or incentives to hire people with disabilities (PWD) so they need to also be counted among potential employers to engage with. To ensure that government offices and state-owned enterprises follow national policies and legislation in terms of disability quota and other affirmative action measures, it is important to include this topic in the lobby agenda of the implementing partners.

Suggested Activity Category 2: Recruitment

Prior to their placement in partnering companies, YWD were trained on job search skills as described in stage 3. As they prepare to apply for jobs, they get coached on applying these skills by for example CV and letter writing, online job applications, practicing relevant communication skills (i.e. to present oneself, to do an elevator pitch), role play to simulate job interviews, etc. Ideally, YWD will take the initiative to find their own jobs and ask for the mentoring or coaching support they need. This is encouraged but project staff also match YWD with employers if they see opportunities resulting from the mapping exercise and their resulting professional relationships with employers. Employers that are engaged through successful job searches of the YWD themselves also need to be briefed on disability inclusion and provided with technical assistance from project staff if they or the YWD have questions around reasonable accommodation. Providing labour market information, information on inclusive job sites, memberships to inclusive platforms where job vacancies are shared, opportunities to participate in inclusive career fairs, open days, and being on the lookout for suitable jobs for the trained YWD are all linked to this activity. Organising YWD in peer networks such as social media groups to share job opportunities and tips in the job search, is also a great way of staying connected with trained YWD and allowing them to learn from each other and share opportunities amongst themselves.

Now during the recruitment process YWD can get support from the project staff, if needed. Mentoring or coaching in the actual recruitment process may be necessary as YWD may not be familiar with certain aspects, i.e. salary negotiations, contracts. Similarly, technical assistance is provided to interested employers to ensure that the recruitment process goes smoothly, that the company is able to provide reasonable accommodations to the YWD and that efforts are made for disability inclusion to be improved within the company or organisation as a whole. For example, changing some company policies, training company staff on disability inclusion in the workplace, etc. Project staff can play an important role in the recruitment process to ensure that communication flows smoothly and important issues are addressed in order for the YWD to be able to succeed in their new role and organisation.

Suggested Activity Category 3: Employ

To ensure a successful placement some follow-up support is needed to both the employee as well as the employer during a certain time period. Project staff can advise both parties on dealing with certain issues as they arise and function as a trusted person for YWD to share concerns they have in adjusting to working life and for employers as they learn how to support the YWD to be able to work and contribute to the employer's mission in a barrier-free environment. Many barriers may only become apparent once employers actually start hiring PWD. Therefore, for sustainable employment it is advisable for projects to continue supporting employers and employees during a certain follow-up period after the YWD is hired. This follow-up can continue for some months and then be phased out or transferred to other informal or community networks, peer support groups or employee resource groups (ERGs) in larger companies. Follow-up support to companies can also include some technical assistance as they implement their disability inclusion action plan (based on the DISC assessment). This may be useful to do for a few more months as disability inclusion action plans remain quite theoretical if there are no PWD on the payroll. Once PWD are being hired, some practical issues may arise, and priorities may shift and require new actions and changes to the action plan. The implementation of the plan will now be important and how PWD in the company are engaged and included will be critical.

Suggested Activity Category 4: Re-orient

After a certain period of job search and placement efforts, some YWD may still not have been placed. In order for them to not return to the situation prior to the project's intervention, it is advisable to find alternative solutions for them to use their skills and contribute to the socio-economic life of their households and

communities. The PPDP should offer some different options to consider and the identification and selection of YWD in stage 1 should be realistic in the sense that those with little to no motivation to work or with mental health issues such as severe depression are referred to other types of support prior to enrolling them in a livelihoods project. In some cases of a YWD with severe and multiple disabilities, they can be trained together with a family member and receive support to establish a family business or join an existing family business with the necessary adaptation and support. In some cases, even this - due to the severity of the disability or disabilities or the age of the CYWD - may not be possible, some projects can also decide to support parents or caregivers of CYWD in a livelihoods project.



> PHOTO: JEFFRY CHANIAGO

In that case it is important to monitor whether increased household earnings also improve the situation of the CYWD in their care through regular follow-ups by Community Health Workers (CHWs) for example. Some YWD may have been seeking employment and have too little upfront capital or funds to start their own businesses. Alternatively, they could take a longer-term apprenticeship with a small business owner as they build their savings (individually or collectively through VSLAs or similar groups) to eventually start their own businesses. Consider also linking YWD that are struggling to allies - i.e. successful peers or other community members or groups to mentor them. Creating an inclusive mentor community as is being done in Medan city, North Sumatra, in the KUBIK project in Indonesia can be very interesting in this regard.

STAGE 4B: THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP PATHWAY

| STAGE | SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR YWD | SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR ENABLING ENVIRONMENT |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Business Ideation | Provide information | Engage BDS |
| Business Plan Development | Provide post-training mentoring to develop business plan | Engage BDS to provide input |
| Access to Finance | Stimulus fund or other means of access to finance | Disability Inclusive Financial Services |
| Business Action | Accompany YWD in launch and operation | Technical advisory on disability inclusion to the BDS providers or relevant partners coaching the YWD in running their businesses |
| Networking | Facilitate the participation of YWD in business networks and groups, access market information, and participate in peer learning and support groups for YWD in business Follow-up support for YWD and referrals for other services | Sensitisation Sessions and Materials |
| Re-orientation | Find other options or re-orient YWD that have been unsuccessful on their own in an apprenticeship model where they can continue learning the trade as well as earn money under the guidance of a small business owner | |

Suggested Activity Category 1: Business Ideation

The business ideation process can be carried out by targeting YWD who already run businesses but need support to innovate and scale up their businesses, or by targeting those who are new to entrepreneurship. For the latter group, project staff need to prepare reference information that they can access to help them find rough ideas. Business ideas refinement can be done in the next training session when they commit to fully participate in the entrepreneurship program. If a local labour market survey was done, the findings can be useful to the YWD reflecting on viable business ideas. Bringing in other successful business owners with and without disabilities to share about their business and their journey (role models) can also inspire YWD to believe that they can be business owners and help them come up with their own business ideas.

Implementing (disability-specific) partners need to ensure that the relevant business related expertise (through business coaches, trainers or mentors, but also micro-finance institutions, business incubators, etc.) is available to support YWD in entrepreneurship. This can be through partnerships and a consortium with a relevant partner that has a specific focus on entrepreneurship, through contracting a service provider or consultant in this area or engaging a business development partner through a formalised partnership. This activity of business ideation and the selection of viable business ideas is normally done towards the end of stage 1 or in stage 2. The selection of

YWD in the entrepreneurship track or entrepreneurship specific livelihoods project can be done on the basis of viable business ideas (ideally), if there is already a viable idea at the start. However, it is also likely that the YWD will need support to better understand what makes up a viable business idea and be accompanied through the ideation and refinement of their business ideas. The partner with this expertise will facilitate the YWD in this process and relevant experts running successful business will support in the selection of viable business ideas. The implementing partner with disability expertise will ensure that this is done in an inclusive manner and that the stakeholders with entrepreneurship expertise are sensitised on disability inclusion.

Suggested Activity Category 2: Business Plan Development

As with most other activities in the entrepreneurship track, project staff may not be best placed to do this. In this activity, the partner responsible for the entrepreneurship track (entrepreneurship skills training and coaching, etc.) coaches the YWD through the process of developing the business plan for their business and acquiring the necessary funding. Ideally, the business plan was completed and funding arranged in stage 3. In addition to all the business criteria for the business idea to be viable, the startup costs and period should also be feasible within the scope of the project and the context of the specific YWD. A clear idea of where the necessary initial funding could come from and support in acquiring this funding needs to be provided.

It is recommended to start early and start small to ensure that the business idea is tested with actual customers and is proven viable in the marketplace before expanding the product and service offering and making additional investments. It will also allow the entrepreneur to get a better understanding of actual needs and what would be good investments to provide more value for their customers and to achieve higher earnings.

Suggested Activity Category 3: Access to Finance

Provision of loans or tools of trade in line with the business plan can be provided here to prepare for the official launch of the business. This can also be done incrementally, if doing so will allow the YWD to start their businesses quicker and get a better understanding of the type of investments that would really help them grow. Stakeholders to engage here include MFIs or FIs and possibly (angel) investors. Project staff need to ensure that financial service providers in the intervention areas are capable of providing financial services (including access to loans) that are accessible and inclusive for YWD. This could include technical assistance to partnering financial service providers for making their offering disability inclusive.

The project could put funds into a guarantee fund with a Micro Finance Institute (MFI) or other financial institution against which YWD could take out small loans for their businesses. Or a stimulus fund could be set up from which to provide small grants to support YWD in the startup of their business. An example of a project that used a stimulus fund, was the KUBIK project in Indonesia. Ensuring there is some level of commitment through a personal contribution and then a project top-up or through a shared group commitment/ guarantee can further support the likelihood of the YWD engaging and committing to repaying the business loans. Such considerations will be very context and project specific.

Suggested Activity Category 4: Business Action

As with most other activities under the entrepreneurship track, this activity should be guided by the partner with business expertise who is responsible for the entrepreneurship track of the livelihoods project for YWD. Project staff with disability expertise are to ensure that the necessary adaptations/ accommodations are made for disability accessibility and inclusion. At this stage, the legal form of the business is chosen and its registration is done. YWD are accompanied in this process with a legal form and taxation basis that is appropriate for their business. Project staff support YWD to apply for certain benefits or specific measures for PWD (if applicable, in the national context) is ensured (or lobbied for). In some Liliane Fonds supported projects,

the implementing partner lobbied with local authorities for accessible places of business operation for supported YWD to ensure the removal of some physical barriers in accessing (potential) customers with their products or services. In Work and Respect Kenya, parents and community members in the Keringet community (Molo) organised through the SEMA support group and the SEMA parent group of parents of CYWD support for two young women with disabilities in establishing their tailoring business by paying three months' worth of rent of their shop, buying them a sewing machine and having a community member with accounting experience review their bookkeeping regularly and mentor them in this aspect of the business. The WHEEL of Livelihoods model identifies different stakeholder groups including parents or caregivers and community. This example shows the importance of early community and parental engagement for sustainable support for YWD as they navigate this transition to working life, for example in this case in starting up their own small business. Project staff with disability expertise make sure that the business development services that the YWD receive are inclusive. They also provide technical assistance to BDS providers to mainstream disability inclusion and take specific measures as needed in the business action.



› PHOTO: CHESHIRE DISABILITY SERVICES KENYA

Suggested Activity Category 5: Networking

YWD need access to the right people and information to succeed in finding market opportunities and selling their products or services. Project staff and stakeholders can use their networks and influence to help YWD to know about and access opportunities. Project activities to support access to business information and networks are best included in the project design and project staff can see to their implementation. As allies, the stakeholders can encourage and facilitate YWD to access arising opportunities. Through their access to relevant business networks or groups, YWD could also get business mentors and allies without disabilities to support and engage with them. This may also boost their confidence and expose them to market information and insights.

As described above, this activity includes support for YWD to become members of strategic networks or groups, as well as the set up (and initial facilitation) of peer mastermind or InterVision groups for the YWD to learn from and support each other. If set up under the right conditions, such groups could continue to be a source of strength for YWD long after the project ends.

Suggested Activity Category 6: Re-orientation

Some businesses require some upfront investment to get started or need a longer period to break even. If such a risk is identified or if the business does not take off in the timelines foreseen, project staff and BDS providers can help think of alternative solutions such as finding a business owner whose workshop the YWD can have a longer-term apprenticeship in before being fully independent in business. Also, in some cases (i.e. severe and multiple disabilities) the PPDP may orient certain YWD to be in business with a parent or caregiver or join a family business. This should normally have

been identified in the intake period and end of stage 1 or the preparation period in stage 2. However, it remains difficult to fully anticipate what a YWD will be capable of with the appropriate support from an enabling environment. Therefore, continuous follow up and guidance is needed and alternative solutions found when some insurmountable obstacles are encountered or if the YWD really fails to take off during a certain period. Sometimes a longer period of apprenticeship or internship under a more experienced craftsman or business owner may be enough. During the intake and in the PPDP a clear picture should be drawn on the available support in the family and community environment and possibly they can be integrated into a family business or a sheltered workplace (if such facilities are available in the country). Also, it may appear that there are other underlying issues, i.e. in mental health that may be undermining their success and thus referral to other services or projects may also be needed.

Some of the lessons learned from the experiences of partner organisations of Liliane Fonds running livelihoods projects specifically targeting YWD:

- ✓ It is important that a personal professional development plan (PPDP) is developed and used to guide the intervention for several reasons: it makes it easier to determine when one is successful and allows for tracking progress. This also allows customisation of the support each YWD gets to their specific goals and needs. The foundation of the support in such a livelihoods project is based on the individual vision of success that each YWD has, and the goals and milestones derived from it. This is also the reason the YWD are at the centre of the WHEEL of Livelihoods model.
- ✓ The second reason why a PPDP developed during an in-depth intake and selection (stage 1) and preparation (stage 2) phase is important, is that the track or path to be followed is quite different for those seeking formal employment to the track for those seeking to run their own businesses. The stakeholders are different, the activities are different even the sequence or timing is different. For example, if one seeks employment, it is appropriate to acquire the relevant vocational and employability skills first before applying for a job. However, if one has a specific business idea it is more appropriate to work out the business idea into a business plan and launch the business quickly and be coached through the start-up and operation phases. Business opportunities and momentum might change, if these entrepreneurs are first required to take a one-year (or more) skills training programme.

Ongoing Follow-up Support and Referrals through the CBR Network

It takes some time to break even and to get a business to a stage where it is possible to derive a recurring stream of income from it. Therefore, a certain follow-up period during which YWD get coaching and support by the partner providing the BDS and by project staff in general is strongly recommended. It is also likely that recurring health issues need to be addressed or other services are still needed for the YWD to continue to thrive in business and in life. Ensuring the YWD can access such services during and after the project remains important and therefore a link to the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) mapping of partners is important. Is such a mapping in place? Do YWD and their parents know where to go for such services? Are they benefiting from the social protection or insurance schemes that they are entitled to? If there is no insurance or social protection, is there a community savings and loans association the YWD and/or their parents can join as an added safety net? Do YWD have medication needs or do they have SRHR related needs such as birth control or information on sexual health and GBV prevention? Again, through a mapping of referral partners YWD can be linked to such services.

- ✓ The twin-track approach of mainstreaming disability inclusion in the workplace (through targeted sensitisation, disability inclusion assessment and action planning tools) as well as specific empowerment measures by placing certain YWD with partnering employers, will allow for employers to deepen their understanding of disability inclusion through practice.
- ✓ In the KUBIK project in Indonesia, the intervention started with the development of inclusive entrepreneurship training modules and capacity strengthening of relevant service providers on providing their BDS in a way that is inclusive of PWD. The selection of youthpreneurs to support was done through a business idea competition in which the viability of the business ideas was assessed prior to the final selection (end of stage 1, beginning of stage 2) and targeted entrepreneurship skills trainings (stage 3) started. This is a method that was useful as it allowed for working with entrepreneurs who have thought their ideas through and are really committed and motivated to run these particular businesses.
- ✓ It is rare to find implementing organisations that have both the expertise on disability inclusion as well as on entrepreneurship or business development. Therefore, partnerships are needed in order to implement the suggested activities under stage 4, especially the entrepreneurship track. Disability

experts often have a background in rehabilitation or education, business experts often don't know much about disability and have little to no experience working with YWD. Therefore, disability expert organisations can partner with BDS providers or NGOs or government departments focused on supporting entrepreneurship and private sector development to ensure they provide services to YWD that are accessible and inclusive and catered to their specific goals and needs.

- ✓ The WHEEL of Livelihoods stresses the importance of identifying all of the mentioned stakeholder groups upfront (in stage 1) and engaging them throughout. The stakeholder mapping and labour market surveys done in stage one serve this purpose. They are opportunities to have early engagement with willing employers, as are the engagement of (small) businesses as community-based training providers during stages 2 and 3 and of other employers for industrial attachments or internships during or shortly after the training period (stage 3). One of the lessons from the Work and Respect project in Kenya, was that this engagement should have started earlier (as soon as stages 1 and 2) as described above. According to this experience it takes time to meet and discuss employers' concerns and it is very difficult to place YWD quickly after their training, if employers were not engaged earlier on in the process.



CHAPTER 5

Phase Five – Let's Go! Follow-up and Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

This final stage of the WHEEL of Livelihoods covers two aspects: ensuring that youth with disabilities are sustainably employed or self-employed and have skills and confidence to find new employment opportunities when the need arises in the future. Secondly it covers the aspects involved in closing a project cycle such as evaluating and learning from the project cycle that is coming to an end and preparing for a possible new project cycle (for example within a larger programme).

Stage five considers the sustainability of the project results and impact, in this case, in terms of employment or entrepreneurship of the project participants. Through follow-up visits, calls, video calls, etc., as part of a mentoring or coaching process, the project participants are supported in the initial phase of their post-training

working life. The support will vary depending on the need and so will the form it takes: from connecting participants to potential business opportunities, professional contacts, role models, or mentors to mentoring participants directly or connecting them to each other in self-led alumni networks. The focus here is on making the change a lasting transformation in the lives of the project participants. In a project, this would also be the stage in which you wrap up, evaluate the intervention, draw lessons, and identify remaining or new needs for future livelihood projects. Most importantly, of course, is that this reflection is done with and by the project participants themselves. It is our understanding that all the stages in the 5-stage WHEEL are conducted with the meaningful participation of and driven by the needs of the youth with disabilities

themselves and it is important to also complete the cycle in this manner. In this way “nothing about us without us” becomes more than a slogan, but a way of working towards sustainable livelihoods for youth with disabilities. This way youth with disabilities are at the steering wheel of their own livelihoods journey.

Key questions addressed in this stage:

- ✓ **What was the most significant change each participant experienced due to this intervention**
- ✓ **How can the impact of this change be made sustainable?**
- ✓ **What can we all learn from completing this 5-stage cycle and how do we take it forward?**

Guiding principles

- The focus should be on making the livelihoods change sustainable: from change to lasting transformation in the social and economic lives of YWD;
- Youth with disabilities are at the centre of the WHEEL of Livelihoods approach, the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) tools and procedures including the final evaluation should reflect this;
- Start with the end in mind, design your first phase in the next project cycle with the vision of the outcome in mind: this vision should be broad enough to encompass the dreams and visions the YWD have for themselves.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR STAGE 5 OF THE LIVELIHOODS PROJECT CYCLE

Below is a list of proposed activities to be implemented by the implementing partners and/or by relevant stakeholder groups. Stage 5 has two main functions: a) the sustainable transformation (exit strategy) for the YWD and involved stakeholders; and b) the PMEL related functions in terms of learning and evaluating results and possibly preparing for a new project cycle based on the learnings and the achieved results and still to be achieved results.

The WHEEL of Livelihoods is a project life cycle and the first stage is also the inception stage where the design is finalised (i.e. stakeholder mapping and finalisation of selection criteria for YWD) and the baseline study is conducted. Values for indicators will be determined and monitored by the project staff. Preferably such indicators are flexible and participatory and draw on the content of the PPDP while measuring the level of achievement of individual PPDPs according to the project participants (YWD) themselves, such as the % of PPDPs for which at least one goal has been reached at a given time.

Depending on the project duration and budget, an optional mid-term evaluation can be conducted towards the end of stage 3 of the WHEEL of Livelihoods project cycle. Stage 5 ends the PMEL activities with an endline survey or final evaluation. This will allow for the project to measure its impact and the growth achieved for all indicators. Due to the customised and youth-centred and participatory approach of the WHEEL of Livelihoods project, it is important that participatory methods (interviews, focus group discussions, some of which may be co-facilitated or even led by YWD and stakeholders)

are used and qualitative as well as quantitative methods applied. The Personal Professional Development Plan (PPDP) and the extent to which the short-term and mid-term goals are reached and how these are linked to the long-term vision of success of YWD are important in measuring project success as mentioned above.

In terms of YWD and stakeholders, it is important that changes demonstrate lasting transformation instead of temporary changes that are easily undone. The way the project is set up and the whole model is based on achieving the transformation that YWD have described in their vision for success and the goals from their PPDP. This final stage is important as it will reveal whether changes are indeed proving to be transformational (sustainable) rather than cosmetic. The inclusion of the transformed YWD in their micro and meso environments that have also transformed into enabling environments will be crucial for lasting impact. This is why the WHEEL model works with the identified stakeholders from these different environments - family environment, community environment, skills training/TVET environment, work (employment and/or business) environment - all along the project life cycle.

The suggested activities for these two functions of the last stage will be discussed separately. See below an overview of suggested activities in terms of sustainable transformation for YWD and involved stakeholders (function A).

STAGE 5A: LASTING TRANSFORMATION FOR YWD AND INVOLVED STAKEHOLDERS

| ACTIVITY CLUSTER | SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR YWD | SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR ENABLING ENVIRONMENT |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Individual mentoring | Individual Reflection Conversation | Mentors (with support from facilitators) plan, conduct and log individual reflection conversations with YWD |
| 2. Peer learning | Group Reflection Session | Facilitators plan and facilitate group reflection session |
| 3. Exit interviews | Exit interviews for each YWD with their own chosen allies (from the stakeholder groups) | Planned and facilitated by the project facilitators in collaboration with the mentors |
| 4. Official closing | Let's Go! Ceremony | Official closing ceremony with YWD and stakeholders |
| 5. Exit support | Seeding success | Individual exit support from the project |

Suggested Activity 1: Individual Reflection Conversation

Throughout the WHEEL of Livelihoods Project Cycle, the PPDP which captures each YWD's vision for success and personal goals, milestones, and progress has been the basis for ongoing self-reflection and a series of follow-up conversations with their trusted mentor. In stage 5 this process draws to a close and a final (guided) self-assessment is done on the basis of the PPDP and reflecting back on the journey taken, all the skills acquired, and the results achieved. This self-assessment is discussed with (and/or done with the guidance of) the personal mentor in an individual reflection conversation to conclude the mentoring process.



> PHOTO: JEFFRY CHANIAGO

Each YWD has their own PPDP with personal, social and professional goals and milestones specific to them and therefore these conversations are individual - between the YWD and their mentor (possibly with the facilitator from the partner organisation joining). Using an indicator based on the percentage of achievement of goals from the PPDP of individual YWD will allow for comparison. This conversation will have a backward looking component, but also a forward looking component: what is the YWD's new outlook on

work and income and which allies are to be engaged by the mentor in the exit conversation as a personalised support system for the YWD going forward? All follow-up conversations need to be logged in a logbook, also this important final one.

Suggested Activity 2: Group Reflection Session

Another important activity is conducting a group reflection with the supported YWD in a given location together. The same groups that were formed for the peer learning on social and emotional skills can be used for this group reflection session. The peer exchange allows them to learn from each other's learning journey in this change process from unemployment through skills to work. It will spark insights and put their own challenges and opportunities into a broader perspective. Project staff (facilitators) are to facilitate this in a psychologically safe and empowering manner. For certain topics it may be desirable to make groups of only female YWD and only male YWD and for other, more general topics they may be combined depending on the local culture and context. The purpose of this activity is peer learning and joint assessment of their own journey and of the project support as well.

Suggested Activity 3: Exit Interviews For Each YWD With Their Own Chosen Allies

This activity serves to give the YWD support as they prepare for their life after the project and to do so by engaging the close allies identified by each YWD from the different stakeholder groups. The exit conversation is done with individual YWD, their mentor, and chosen allies with support from project staff. It serves to show these stakeholders what was achieved by the YWD during the project, but also to engage them for the next phase in the lives of the YWD (after the project lifetime) and give them some guidance on how best to continue supporting the YWD in an empowering manner on a

needs basis and as per the personal needs and wishes [of the YWD]. The purpose here is to create a safety net for the YWD and to ensure that they support the YWD in a way that fosters their increased autonomy and personal agency (rather than dependency).

Suggested Activity 4: Official Closing Ceremony

To mark the official end of the project life cycle and to recognise the transformation achieved by the YWD themselves with support from the stakeholders and the project, it is advisable to organise an official closing ceremony. During such a ceremony individual YWD and stakeholders can be recognised for their efforts and certificates handed over to the YWD who have acquired certain competences or achieved their goals and milestones (or have participated actively). This is usually very important to YWD and parents, community members and other stakeholders and is an official way to acknowledge the YWD and what they have achieved and to thank all the people who played key roles in the successful outcomes. Such a closing ceremony can also be used as a final event to sensitise the local community and important stakeholders on the importance of including YWD in skills and work. Audiovisual materials from the event can also be shared more broadly in provincial or national media and on social media to prolong the duration and extend the reach of the sensitisation efforts. Depending on the project budget and the nature of the knowledge products produced,

this activity could be combined with the sharing of some final knowledge products (see stage 5B). However, if many of the knowledge products are speaking to a different audience, i.e. policymakers and practitioners then possibly a separate knowledge sharing conference, symposium or webinar may be more appropriate (see second part of this chapter).

Suggested Activity 5: Seeding Success

It can be useful to reserve some funds for seed money to support YWD in getting off to a good start or solidifying (or topping up) their efforts in savings or investing where relevant to making their new livelihoods more sustainable. In collective savings groups with shares there is an annual sharing of interest and part of the saved amount can be used as a guarantee against which members can take out loans. It can also be interesting to support collective savings and loans groups – possibly as a matching of saved amounts to support promising groups for long-term sustainability and resilience or setting up a guarantee fund that can continue to support YWD in entrepreneurship. Such an activity (supporting VLSAs of project participants and/or setting up a guarantee fund to support loans for YWD's businesses) can be foreseen in the project design as a sustainability measure for a smooth exit. Therefore it is important that the exit in stage 5 is also taken into account in the project design phase prior to and during stage 1 (inception).

STAGE 5B: FINAL EVALUATION AND LEARNING

| ACTIVITY CLUSTER | SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR YWD | SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR ENABLING ENVIRONMENT |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Final evaluation | Individual interviews; focus group discussions; quantitative data collection and analysis, etc. | Individual stakeholder interviews; focus group discussions with selected stakeholders, quantitative data collection, and analysis |
| 2. Knowledge products | (Online) Publication of Knowledge Products with youth participation | (Online) Publication of Knowledge Products |
| 3. Knowledge sharing event | Meaningful Youth Participation (MYP) in Knowledge Sharing Conference or Event | Knowledge sharing conference or event to use experiences to share knowledge and inform policy and action |

Under 5A an exit and the sustainability of results for YWD and their stakeholders were discussed. Under 5B project evaluation and learning considerations for implementing partners running the inclusive livelihoods project are discussed. In stage 5 it is important to conduct an endline survey to assess the project's immediate achievements and their attribution. The self-assessments and monitoring of the PPDP tool will allow for tracking certain indicators across all such plans to get a sense of the level of progress towards the YWD's personal goals. The DISC tool and scoring can also show

the progress and end situation in terms of the training and work environments and community-based activities conducted. For further qualitative inquiries, certain key stakeholders and participants can be interviewed and focus groups discussions on certain topics conducted.

Suggested Activity 1: Final Evaluation

In order to track progress against the expected outcomes and values from the baseline and targeted values at the end of the project lifetime a final evaluation is recommended. This can be done as per the guidelines

of the donor whether organised using an external third-party evaluator or an internal evaluator. Besides measuring the final values of all indicators, it can also investigate whether the assumptions underpinning the theory of change proved to be correct. Project tools such as the PPDP are (to be) set up in such a way that they can also allow for flexible PMEL that uses project tools to track the percentage of progress against, for example, the goals and milestones in the PPDP of each individual YWD or the progress in



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implementing the actions from the DISC based action plan of TVET providers, employers and BDS providers. Focus group discussions with the YWD and representatives from the different stakeholder groups from the WHEEL can help gather additional qualitative data. In order to find out what the project's impact was in the lives of individual YWD and stakeholders, the Most Significant Change method can be applied. Whatever modalities and methods, it is recommended to do a final evaluation to capture the extent of the change or transformation achieved and to draw relevant lessons for future programming and joint learning.

Suggested Activity 2: Publication of Knowledge Products

Throughout the life cycle of the project, the implementing partners ensured that knowledge exchange processes were ongoing through a community or communities of practice. As the YWD may have been directly engaged in action research themselves, at these different levels of implementation learning and reflection happened and it is up to the implementing partners to ensure that this is documented in order to be captured in Knowledge Products. Some of such knowledge products will be for other implementing partners and more technical, while others can be sharing of direct experience by YWD or stakeholders themselves by vlogging about their experiences and insights, for example. In order to harvest this knowledge and to ensure that there is enough learning documented to publish knowledge products in stage 5, implementing partners coordinate this process throughout the project life cycle. These knowledge products can be shared as they are finalised and ready, but they can also be shared in a bigger event for example a knowledge sharing seminar or conference during stage 5 (see next activity). The burden of the

coordination and publication is with the implementing partners, but the YWD and stakeholders groups will find more value in the process if they are consulted and engaged and also participating in knowledge production at their level and the quality of the products will be higher if it speaks to the direct experience of people in similar groups.

Suggested Activity 3: Knowledge Sharing Conference

In order to officially share the knowledge products with a wide audience of relevant stakeholders such as government officials, practitioners in international development and any private sector or public sector partners involved in (disability inclusive) skills development, youth employment and/or entrepreneurship and also to give a platform to YWD and stakeholders who have a message to share, towards the end of the project life cycle a knowledge sharing event can be organised. Whether this is a conference, a seminar or even a webinar depends on the budget and local circumstances. The venue and target audience should also be carefully selected. It is also possible to organise more grassroots events in which YWD and community stakeholders take a lead in the organisation and delivery of the programme. Or a combination of such events such as a high-level conference for policy makers and practitioners and community events for YWD and community stakeholders can be thought of. Such decisions can be made in a participative manner using the relevant organs of the governance structure such as local advisory or steering committees. The donor may also have certain requirements to take into consideration. Coupling such an in-person or online event with a larger sensitisation campaign can be an opportunity to share the message more widely.

Here are some of the lessons learned from the experiences of partner organisations of Liliane Fonds running livelihoods projects specifically targeting YWD:

- ✓ Ensure that the changes in the lives of participating YWD are reinforced by designing the intervention for sustainable change or transformation and building a supporting community environment and strong skills as well as a resilient mindset for YWD to fall back on.
- ✓ Reserve enough time, budget and effort to ensure that the work situations of YWD are stable and significantly better than their starting situations.
- ✓ The PMEL process and execution needs to be as empowering and participative as the rest of the WHEEL of Livelihoods approach.
- ✓ Proper exit interviews and the engagement of a few supporting stakeholders for each YWD in their continued professional development journey are important and an opportunity to ensure lasting change for the YWD.
- ✓ It is preferred that project tools for follow-up can also serve PMEL uses in order to not overload project staff with different tools and to ensure regular monitoring of progress.
- ✓ It is important that the methodology and tools are the same for baseline, mid-term and final evaluations based on a clear and coherent results framework and indicators; invest in comprehensive, yet easy-to-use tools, and train project staff on the usage of these tools.
- ✓ If possible, working with the same team of consultants for the baseline, possible mid-term and endline evaluation and briefing them on the correct usage of tools and a correct comprehension of the indicators is important.
- ✓ Measure what is necessary in order to document the transformation and the results, don't over ask project participants and have them share all sorts of personal data that are not needed for the service delivery to them nor for the measurement of results.
- ✓ Ensure that the participative methodology of the WHEEL also extends to the process of evaluating results and sharing the findings from the final evaluation. Where possible engage YWD as researchers, advisors and, of course, as respondents. The same goes for the stakeholders.
- ✓ Recognising the knowledge acquisition and sharing at all levels is an important and empowering process for YWD and the stakeholders ensuring knowledge production at all levels is thus an important aspect.

Driving Success:

Youth with Disabilities at the Steering Wheel of their Lives

Unlock the potential of youth with disabilities (YWD) through the WHEEL of Livelihoods, a model by Liliane Fonds and partners that helps YWD transition from unemployment and exclusion to work and inclusion. Using a youth centred approach with custom learning pathways, this manual guides practitioners through the inclusive livelihoods project cycle.

The WHEEL of Livelihoods uses a twin track approach of empowering YWD and working with stakeholders to create enabling skills training, work, and community environments for an inclusive and empowering process leading to sustainable results.

Who is this manual for?

NGO staff, government actors, training institutions, and private sector stakeholders supporting inclusive livelihoods for youth with disabilities.

- Step-by-step guidance
- Practical tools & real examples
- Links to an online tool

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