



# Analysis of Social Enterprise Opportunities for People with Disabilities in Uganda

**Mobility Worldwide**  
*& Pathways to Hope Africa*

**Final Report | Business Model**  
*EcoWorks Mobility*

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# 1. Executive Summary

People living with disabilities in Uganda experience severe social and economic marginalization due to limited access to basic services and opportunities. While Uganda has made strides in disability rights legislation, negative cultural attitudes, inadequate funding, inadequate training, and limited access to mobility devices remain barriers to inclusion.<sup>1</sup> Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like Mobility Worldwide (MWW) and Pathways to Hope Africa (PTHA) have increasingly been exploring public-private partnership models that offer innovative solutions to complex socio-economic problems, including social enterprise models that align purpose with sustainable profit.

The following business model was created based on research conducted by a Capstone Team from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) between November 2024 and April 2025. The team conducted a robust literature review of the social enterprise landscape and opportunities for disability inclusion across multiple value chains in Uganda, East Africa and beyond. Between January and April 2025, the team conducted more than 30 interviews with disability inclusion and social enterprise development experts. Most interviews took place in Kampala and Soroti during the team's research mission to Uganda in March 2025.

Based on the results of this study, the following social enterprise emerged as a unique opportunity to employ persons with disabilities (PWDs) and their caregivers across an integrated value chain spanning recycling and mobility cart production initiatives. Through innovative design and strategy, the business address both the lack of employment among PWDs in Uganda as well as the root causes of intergenerational poverty among this particularly vulnerable group.

As such, MWW and PTHA are requesting **USD 220,000** in seed funding to launch EcoWorks Mobility - a community-led social enterprise that recognizes PWDs as leaders, innovators, educators, and valuable employees and members of society. Using an inclusive, localized, integrated, sustainable, and scalable model, it hopes to create lasting change for PWD in Uganda and beyond.

## 2. Problem

Among the 5.9 million Ugandans living with a disability, nearly 50 percent live below the poverty line.<sup>2</sup> Poverty rates are 30 percent higher among households hosting a person with a disability,<sup>3</sup> largely due to their exclusion from traditional labour markets. Persons with disabilities account for 22 percent of all persons unemployed in Uganda, which is disproportionate to their representation among the total population (12 percent)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hanass-Hancock and Mitra, 2016.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284027763\\_Livelihoods\\_and\\_Disability\\_The\\_Complexities\\_of\\_Work\\_in\\_the\\_Global\\_South](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284027763_Livelihoods_and_Disability_The_Complexities_of_Work_in_the_Global_South)

<sup>2</sup> PeaceWomen, 2010. <https://www.peacewomen.org/content/uganda-link-between-poverty-and-disability-uganda>

<sup>3</sup> Udad-u, 2025. <https://www.udadu.org/the-vicious-cycle-poverty-and-disability-in-uganda-a-call-for-action/>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

Unemployment among PWDs in Uganda stems from both physical and social barriers. Physical barriers include limited access to assistive technology (AT) for PWD and the widespread lack of accessible infrastructure for disability accommodation.<sup>5</sup> However, the deeper issue lies in persistent social stigma and cultural attitudes that undervalue their potential.<sup>6</sup> Employers often view PWDs as liabilities, and exclusion begins early through limited access to education and training.<sup>7</sup> Addressing this requires more than policy; it demands a cultural shift that redefines inclusion, challenges stereotypes, and creates space for PWDs to thrive in employment and entrepreneurship.

Alongside and intertwined with the need for employment opportunities for PWD in Uganda is the need to create economic opportunities for their caregivers, who are currently excluded from the workforce due to their caregiving role.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, to effectively address the root cause of cyclical poverty among PWD in Uganda, an intergenerational approach is required. With one of the world's youngest populations, it is essential for Uganda to invest in the future of its children, including those with disabilities, via inclusive employment opportunities for those who care for them.

### 3. Solution

In response to the exclusion of PWD from the workforce, Mobility Worldwide (MWW) and Pathways to Hope Africa (PTHA) seek to launch a viable and inclusive social enterprise that creates gainful and sustainable employment opportunities for PWD and their caregivers, while promoting environmental sustainability, increasing access to assistive technology, and changing public perceptions of disability rights across the country.

EcoWorks Mobility is an integrated, community-led social enterprise that employs PWD and their caregivers across the recycling value chain in Uganda to locally produce mobility carts using recycled materials. EcoWorks Mobility also seeks to contribute to behavioral change through assistive technology and disability inclusion training for partner institutions.

The benefits of this model are five-fold, whereby it (i) employs persons with disabilities across an entire value chain, allowing people with different physical abilities and education levels to engage in roles that meet their unique needs, (ii) promotes the use of recycled materials, which contributes to environmental sustainability and the productive use of waste in high-density urban areas, (iii) increases the supply of assistive technology in Uganda, which is currently experiencing a widespread shortage, (iv) promotes local production of assistive technology, which increases access for those in need by reducing unit price and lead times associated with international procurement, and (v) advances public disability inclusion awareness and discussion across Uganda to combat the deeply rooted stigma and discrimination towards PWDs and their families.

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<sup>5</sup> Nyombi and Kibandama, 2014. <https://ecommons.cornell.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/89bf27ff-c7de-4bfd-af0e-16c6f8b5b9e4/content>

<sup>6</sup> Grischow & Mfoafo-M'Carthy, 2022. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv29mvsnx>

<sup>7</sup> Nyombi and Kibandama, 2014. <https://ecommons.cornell.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/89bf27ff-c7de-4bfd-af0e-16c6f8b5b9e4/content>

<sup>8</sup> Key Stakeholder Interviews. Uganda. 13-25 March 2025.

### 3.1 Theory of Change

This social enterprise addresses four key drivers of unemployment and cyclical poverty among PWD, including: (i) Economic exclusion of PWDs, (ii) Economic exclusion of caregivers, (iii) Stigma towards PWD because of cultural norms and misconceptions, and (iv) Lack of available, affordable, and locally produced assistive technology in Uganda.

EcoWorks Mobility believes that if it implements a locally led, inclusive, and eco-friendly social enterprise to employ PWD and their caregivers in Uganda, then those affected populations will experience less poverty and discrimination while enjoying enhanced social and economic mobility.

**Table 1: Theory of Change**

<b>Problem:</b>	<b>Chronic Unemployment &amp; Poverty Among PWD in Uganda</b>			
<i>Drivers:</i>	(i) <b>Economic exclusion of PWD:</b> Lack of employment opportunities for adults with disabilities	(ii) <b>Economic exclusion of caregivers of PWD:</b> Low household income of PWD due to the inability of their caregivers to work	(iii) <b>Stigma</b> towards PWD as a result of deeply rooted social and cultural beliefs	(iv) <b>Lack of Assistive Technology in Uganda</b> for PWD to improve their social and economic mobility
<i>Needs:</i>	(i) <b>Increased employment opportunities</b> for PWD	(ii) <b>Increased employment opportunities for the caregivers of PWD</b>	(iii) <b>Advocacy</b> for disability inclusion	(iv) <b>Increased access to Assistive Technology</b> for PWD in Uganda
<i>Solution:</i>	(i) <b>Provide employment for PWD</b> along the integrated value chain of recycling & mobility cart production	(ii) <b>Provide employment for the caregivers of PWD</b> along the integrated value chain of recycling & mobility cart production	(iii) <b>Conduct disability inclusion trainings</b> for partner institutions	(iv) <b>Produce Assistive Technology</b> for PWD in Uganda using recycled materials in-country to reduce cost & lead times associated with international procurement

<i>Outcome:</i>	<b>(i) Increased employment opportunities for PWD in Uganda</b>	<b>(ii) Increased employment opportunities for caregivers of PWD in Uganda</b>	<b>(iii) Increased awareness and education of disability rights and inclusion in Uganda</b>	<b>(iv) Increased access to affordable and sustainable Assistive Technology for PWD in Uganda</b>
<i>Impact:</i>	<b>(i) PWD are financially independent and socially integrated</b> as a result of gainful employment	<b>(ii) Cyclical poverty among PWD is reduced</b> due to the ability of caregivers to earn higher incomes and invest in the future of children with disabilities	<b>(iii) PWD experience less discrimination and greater social acceptance</b> in Uganda	<b>(iv) PWD enjoy greater social and economic mobility</b> as a result of improved physical mobility

## 4. Business Model

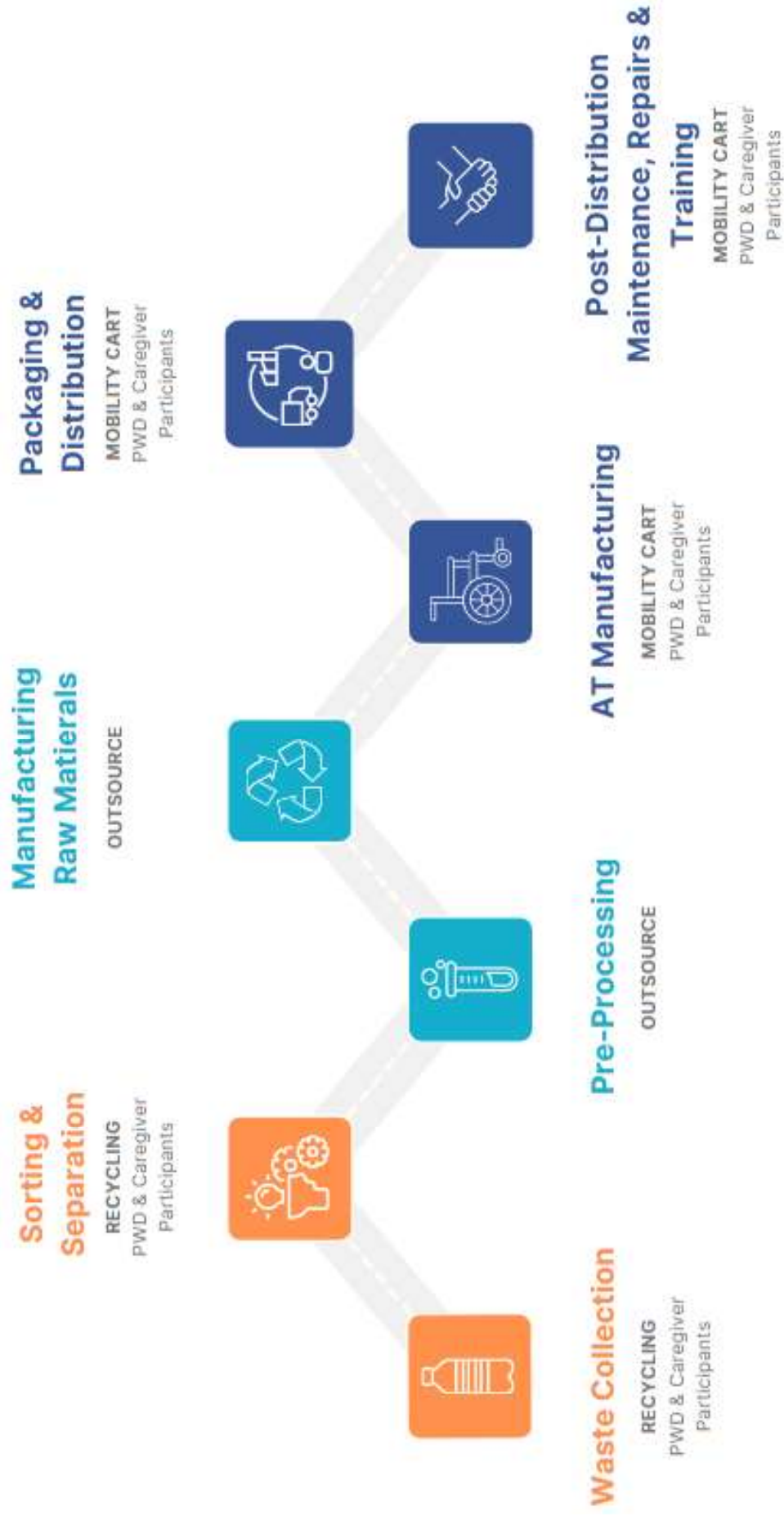
### 4.1 Activities Across an Integrated Value Chain

Established through a strategic partnership between MWW, PTHA and other socially responsible recycling partners in Uganda, EcoWorks Mobility uses a locally led, circular economy model to engage PWD, their caregivers, and the broader community across every step of an integrated recycling and mobility cart value chain, from waste collection to product distribution and advocacy. During the first year of operations, it aims to undertake the following activities, before considering options for expansion:

- ❖ **Activity 1:** Collect and prepare waste to be recycled
- ❖ **Activity 2:** Assemble mobility carts & other assistive technology using recycled materials for onward distribution
- ❖ **Activity 3:** Repair mobility carts and other assistive technology when needed
- ❖ **Activity 4:** Conduct disability-inclusion trainings for partner institutions

Below, Figure 1 illustrates these activities across the integrated value chain. Considering the high cost of **pre-processing waste** and **manufacturing raw materials**, EcoWorks Mobility plans to outsource these activities to local recycling partners that already have well established processing plants and equipment.

*Figure 1: Integrated Recycling Value Chain*



## 4.2 Implementation

### Phase 1: Community Consultations & Enterprise Design

#### ❖ **Objective:**

The objective of this startup social enterprise model and ideation phase is to center local voices of the community and to amplify the needs of persons with disabilities in Uganda. This phase sets the standard for localization and community building. Prioritizing lived experiences and local knowledge will assist with building a sustainable, inclusive business from the ground up.

#### ❖ **Step 1:**

The first step of this phase will be to utilize Mobility Worldwide (MWW) and Pathways to Hope Africa (PTHA) connects with mobility cart recipients and caregivers of PWDs to give their testimonies and lived experiences for investment proposals and stakeholder pitches to secure initial funding from impact investors, NGOs, and partners.

#### ❖ **Step 2:**

As initial investments start to accumulate, Mobility Worldwide and Pathways to Hope Africa will work with PWDs and caregivers in building partnerships with organizations such as Eco Brixx and WastePlus in the recycling business. It is key that MMW and PTHA in this social enterprise model continue to seek partnerships with other relevant social enterprises and enterprises that serve persons with mobility, visual, hearing, or cognitive disabilities. Prioritizing relationship building and trust with all stakeholders is important throughout this process.

#### ❖ **Step 3:**

Ensure the business is registered as a social enterprise, with company policies that align with Ugandan laws, regulations, and the Uganda Vision 2040 development goals. Implement a robust framework to prevent discrimination against PWDs, caregivers, women, and all employees, ensuring a safe, respectful, and thriving work environment.

A pre-existing Human Resources department should be in place within the organization, and deliberate consideration must be given to including PWDs and caregivers in HR roles to ensure representation and to facilitate smooth, inclusive operations. Conduct disability assessments to match individuals to value chain roles based on skill, interest, and accessibility requirements.

This approach offers **economic inclusion** at the very start of the value chain while reinforcing Uganda's circular economy goals. As the initiative gets underway, the initial investment will be used to provide fair wages to employees. **Fair compensation models will be implemented**, incorporating mobile payment tools designed to accommodate varying levels of literacy or cognitive ability. It will be essential for employers to help employees set up and manage these accounts. Finance personnel already existing within PTHA will take the lead in ensuring employees are fully supported throughout this process.

## Phase 2: Hiring & Employment Training

### ❖ **Step 1: Hiring**

Persons with disabilities (PWDs) are hired based on their skills and abilities, with roles tailored to individual strengths—such as assembling parts, managing inventory, or performing quality control. For example, individuals with fine motor skills contribute to precise assembly tasks, while those with visual impairments support quality control through tactile testing. Deaf workers thrive in focused assembly environments, and caregivers are present to assist workers with higher support needs. Hiring mechanisms will be based on existing processes within the Mobility Worldwide and Pathways to Hope Africa.

### ❖ **Step 2: Training**

Employment training workshops will be **universally accessible and inclusive across every position in the value chain**, featuring infrastructure and adaptive tools that support all individuals. A “train-the-trainer” model will be used, where those who are trained will go on to train others. To ensure that **inclusive accommodations are considered**, workshops will be designed with universal access in mind, including features such as wide aisles, Braille labels, and both visual and auditory cues. Peer mentorship and inclusive upskilling will be key components, ensuring long-term capacity growth and sustainability.

## Phase 3: Waste Collection

- ❖ Enterprise employees (PWD and caregivers) will collect recyclable materials from designated waste sites, including plastics, rubber, paper products, and metals. EcoWorks Mobility will emphasize safety and dignity through these formal employment roles to ensure equity and accessibility for those who wish to participate.

Caregivers can work in teams to support youth with disabilities or individuals with high support needs. This approach helps address the employment challenges many caregivers face, allowing them to earn a living while remaining present for their dependents.

## Phase 4: Sorting & Separation

- ❖ Secure a facility where PWD can separate and sort waste materials for onward distribution to partner processing plants (ie. Eco Brixs or WastePlus). Determining whether this first facility will be located in an urban center, or a rural area is an important decision that will be made by PTHA, guided by identifying which geographical area has the greatest need for mobility carts and the highest concentration of persons with disabilities (PWDs).
- ❖ At this recycling center or facility, **accessible collection points** will be established to ensure full participation by individuals with mobility, visual, or cognitive impairments. **Adaptive tools** - such as mobility-adapted push carts and color-coded bins will be provided to support inclusive work environments. These adaptive tools will be distributed at no cost

to PWDs who work at the facility or are involved with Mobility Worldwide, Pathways to Hope Africa, and other partners, as a way of practicing reinvestment into the community.

**Ensuring the infrastructure is accessible** is key to the success of the facility, and Pathways to Hope Africa will take the lead in monitoring and enforcing accessibility standards on the ground. All collection centers will be wheelchair-accessible and will utilize clear, visual signage to enhance usability and inclusivity for all.

#### Phase 5 & 6: Processing & Manufacturing Raw Materials

- ❖ Processing and manufacturing raw materials will be outsourced to partners such as Eco Brixs or WastePlus who have existing recycling plants in Uganda. EcoWorks Mobility will ensure that PWD are employed across partner agencies and provide disability inclusion training to them for added support. This partnership leverages pre-existing knowledge and infrastructure to support the creation of low-cost, yet high-quality end products for PWD.

#### Phase 7: Inclusive Production of Eco-Friendly Mobility Carts & Other Products

- ❖ **Step 1:**

Manufacture sustainable, low-cost mobility carts using recycled materials. All production decisions and workflows are centered around this core mission.

- ❖ **Step 2:**

Excess recycled parts - such as rubber grips and plastics - are repurposed into small components for assistive devices. Example outputs include handles for crutches, grips for walkers, and casings for Braille slates. These items are produced and sold in small quantities based on demand and the availability of surplus materials.

This use of surplus not only reduces waste but also provides low-cost, localized solutions for additional accessibility needs. Persons with disabilities (PWDs) are involved in crafting these components as side-stream roles, particularly when mobility cart production is at capacity or not a suitable fit for an individual's skills or preferences.

- ❖ Due to the unique challenges that caregivers of PWDs face, in terms of being unable to leave the home for economic activity due to their caregiving role, EcoWorks Mobility aims to have a flexible, accessible, and community-led production space, where caregivers can bring their children or other family members with disabilities. Those that can participate in EcoWorks Mobility activities are welcome to do so, while young children and those with high-care needs will be looked after by designated caregivers on a rotational basis. This model will allow PWD, including children with disabilities, to socialize with one another and allow their caregivers to engage in gainful employment.

## Phase 8: Packaging & Distribution

### ❖ **Step 1: Packaging & Marketing**

All branding materials, including product packaging, will be made using recycled paper and plastics to maximize the use of recycled materials and the sustainability of EcoWorks Mobility's products. PWD and caregivers will be involved in the design and physical packaging of all products for onward distribution.

PWD and caregivers, especially those with existing skillsets or education in business administration or related areas will be employed to manage EcoWorks Mobility social media accounts and other marketing tools to maximize its market reach.

### ❖ **Step 2: Distribution**

Distribute the mobility carts and provide training on use, care, and stigma reduction.

Government Partnership Model: Finished mobility carts are sold to Ugandan government bodies, including the ministries of health, education, and social services, as well as local governments across various cities and regions of the country. Government agencies are responsible for selecting recipient institutions—such as rural schools and NGOs—to receive and distribute the carts free of charge to persons with disabilities (PWDs) in need. This model ensures equitable, needs-based distribution at scale.

Establish distribution channels including health clinics, schools, churches, community centers, and NGOs. To support accessibility, educational materials are provided in formats such as sign language, large print, and pictorial guides.

PWDs play a key role by serving as ambassadors and educators, demonstrating how to use and maintain the mobility carts. Caregivers assist in outreach efforts within both rural and urban communities, and together, they conduct awareness workshops to combat stigma surrounding disability and promote inclusive practices.

## Phase 9: Post-Distribution Repairs and Training

### ❖ **Step 1: Distribution**

Distribute the mobility carts and provide training on use, care, and stigma reduction.

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❖ **Step 2: Inclusive Education & Awareness Training**

As part of each government sale contract, recipient institutions are required to host a 2-day training session facilitated by a person with a disability or a caregiver. These training sessions serve multiple objectives: (i) to demonstrate the proper use and basic maintenance of the mobility carts, (ii) to share the mission and vision of EcoWorks Mobility, and (iii) to conduct disability awareness sessions aimed at challenging stigma and shifting cultural norms toward greater inclusion and understanding.

This consultancy component will be responsible for coordinating trainers, standardizing the training curriculum, and reporting on training outcomes. Trainers will receive a share of each cart sale, ensuring they benefit from both the product and its broader impact. Persons with disabilities (PWDs) and caregivers are involved throughout the entire value chain from sourcing materials and manufacturing to distribution, education, and advocacy ensuring a fully inclusive and community-driven model.

Phase 10: Research, Development & Iterative Improvement

❖ **Objective:**

Refine the **design and performance of the mobility carts** using user feedback from PWDs and caregivers.

❖ **Step 1:**

PWDs test prototypes for durability, comfort, terrain navigation, and cultural appropriateness. Iterative improvements are based on feedback loops from users and communities, including features such as adjustable seating, terrain-ready wheels, reflective lights, and general lighting.

Research and Development (R&D) is focused squarely on mobility innovation - ensuring the carts evolve with the needs of Ugandan users. The output is mobility carts that are adapted for Ugandan terrain and everyday use, with culturally relevant design choices. R&D remains centered on mobility solutions rather than generalized assistive technology production.

❖ **Step 2:**

Ensure that there is a strong and continuous investment in R&D throughout all stages - from initial planning to development and into the growth phase - to ensure that the value chains, products, and services created are quality, impactful, low-cost, and profitable. This

profitability, in turn, supports the growth of enterprises that serve and empower persons with disabilities, caregivers, and other marginalized groups within various communities. The model also ensures the promotion of local, long-term economic and social mobility across different regions in Uganda.

### 4.3 Revenue Streams

EcoWorks Mobility plans to generate revenue across multiple streams to ensure economic viability and enterprise sustainability.

#### Revenue Stream 1: Mobility Cart Sales

- a. Mobility cart sales will be the primary source of revenue generation, based on the following cost model estimates:

<b>Mobility Cart Cost Model</b>	
Avg. Market Price (per unit)	US\$125.00
Est. Production Cost (per unit)	US\$86.90
Profit (per unit)	US\$38.1
Est. Profit Margin	44%

- b. Mobility carts can be sold to a variety of nation, regional, and international customers, including:

- i. **Sales to Government Entities and Targeted Distribution:**

The finished mobility carts can be sold directly to Ugandan government bodies (ex: Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Health). Who have a current budget and several commitments to persons with disabilities to provide assistive technology to persons with disabilities.

These government entities will be responsible for selecting recipient institutions such as rural schools, universities, NGOs, or local organizations—to distribute the carts free of charge to PWDs in need.

- ii. **Sales to Education Institutions and Targeted Distribution:**

The finished mobility carts can be sold to education institutions primary and secondary schools, special needs centers, and higher education institutions may use internal inclusion budgets, donor funding, or CSR partnerships to purchase carts for students with mobility challenges.

Field research revealed a consistent and troubling pattern: children with disabilities in Uganda face major barriers to attending school due to lack of assistive mobility

and social exclusion. This contributes to a cycle of poverty, dependence, and limited opportunity.

iii. **Sales to NGOS, Non-profits, and Global Development Institutions:**

The mobility carts can also be sold directly to NGOs, non-profit organizations, and global development institutions that are actively engaged in disability inclusion, education access, health services, or community development in Uganda and the broader East African region.

iv. **Mandatory Training and Inclusion Clause:**

As part of the government purchase agreement, each recipient institution will be required to host a mandatory 2-day training session facilitated by a person with a disability or a caregiver. These sessions will serve three key purposes: to educate participants on the mission and work of Mobility Worldwide, provide hands-on instruction on mobility cart usage and maintenance, and lead disability sensitization workshops aimed at challenging stigma and shifting cultural perceptions around disability.

This training component will be managed as a consultancy service under Pathways to Hope Africa, which will oversee the coordination of trainers, development of standardized curricula, and monitoring of impact. Trainers, whether PWDs or caregivers, will receive a percentage of the cart sale revenue as compensation, ensuring their inclusion not just in service delivery, but throughout the entire value chain, from production to education and advocacy.

Revenue Stream 2: Mobility Cart Repairs

- a. EcoWorks Mobility will offer repair services for existing customers free of charge under warranty, but for a fee after the warranty expires. Other PWD who are not recipients of EcoWorks Mobility products can also request repair services at their own expense.

Revenue Stream 3: The Sale of Other Assistive Technology

- a. EcoWorks Mobility intends to use recycled materials to manufacture additional assistive technology and products, such as crutches, canes, walkers, back braces, wrist-hand braces, among other items. These products will be marketed and sold to the existing customer base listed above.
- b. These products could be sold for the following, based on existing market prices:

Item	Avg. Market Price	Production Cost	Profit	Margin
<b>Crutches</b>	US\$82.00	US\$72.41	US\$9.59	13%
<b>Walkers</b>	US\$117.00	US\$86.90	US\$30.10	35%

<b>Back Braces<sup>9</sup></b>	US\$100.00	US\$72.41	US\$27.59	38%
<b>Wrist Braces</b>	US\$80.00	US\$62.07	US\$17.93	29%

- c. EcoWorks Mobility also hopes to produce braille-enhanced learning materials for classroom use to enhance accessibility for students with disabilities. These products would be primarily marketed towards the Ministry of Education, special needs and mainstream schools, as well as other regional and international educating bodies. Using recycled papers and plastics, products could include:
- ❖ Textbooks
  - ❖ Classroom posters and maps
  - ❖ Fiction and non-fiction reading materials
  - ❖ Flashcards (ie. ABCs, multiplication tables, etc.)

Revenue Stream 4: The Sale of Other Materials (ie. Housing Materials)

- a. EcoWorks Mobility aims to diversify its revenue by also producing other goods in high demand using recycled materials at its production center, based on research conducted by the University of Maryland in partnership with PTHA, KUBIK, and Impact Africa Services International. Such materials include eco-friendly bricks and other products for home construction to help combat Uganda’s housing crisis.<sup>10</sup>

**4.4 Opportunities for Expansion**

Once EcoWorks Mobility is operational and well-established in the production of goods listed above, it hopes to expand production into other markets, including Information Communication Technology (ICT) for digital assistive technology, such as the following:

- ❖ **AT for Visual Impairments**
  - Screen readers
  - Screen magnifiers
  - Braille displays & notetakers
  - Text-to-speech devices (or smartphones for app. Access)
- ❖ **AT for Hearing Impairments**
  - Real-time speech captioning software and technology
  - Hearing aids
  - Hearing aids with Bluetooth and digital integration
- ❖ **AT for Mobility**
  - Smart wheelchairs and other tools

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<sup>9</sup> Based on best estimates. Individual costs may vary as braces are typically custom-made.  
<sup>10</sup> Based on key informant discussions with the University of Maryland Capstone Team and research conducted by them in partnership with PTHA, KUBIK, and Impact Africa Services International.

- Prosthetics<sup>11</sup>

Uganda’s Vision 2040 and National Development Strategies identify ICT as a key investment priority based on its potential to drive economic growth and employment, and transform other leading sectors, like agriculture, health, tourism, finance, and public administration.<sup>12</sup> As such, the Government of Uganda plans to make Uganda a regional tech hub using its five-year [Digital Transformation Roadmap \(2023-2028\)](#), which aims to achieve 90 percent household internet connectivity, broadband coverage, and citizen access to e-services by 2040.<sup>13</sup>

Investment in the ICT sector is particularly relevant to Uganda’s demography, of which 78 percent is currently below the age of 35.<sup>14</sup> This youthful population is projected to double by 2050, revealing a unique opportunity for workforce development through digital innovation. While employment in tech development is a sector in its own, technological innovation is already being integrated into other employment sectors to maximize output and profit.

Therefore, there is significant justification for EcoWorks Mobility’s expansion into the production of digital assistive technology. Mainstreaming employment and leadership of PWD across this value chain poses a significant competitive advantage for EcoWorks Mobility.

#### ***4.5 Proposed Timeline***

EcoWorks Mobility plans to slowly build and scale its business over the course of 5 years, as illustrated below in **Figure 2**. However, this initial investment of US\$220,000 will support the first 2 years of enterprise development and a 1-year production pilot. During the pilot period, EcoWorks Mobility will focus on using recycled materials to produce mobility carts, while using leftover materials to produce other, small-batch mobility devices (ie. crutches, canes).

If the pilot phase succeeds, whereby the business breaks even and generates sufficient revenue, EcoWorks Mobility plans to reinvest its profit into digital product expansion, as described above. Once EcoWorks Mobility has a product portfolio and established production capacity, it aims to expand distribution to regional and international markets.

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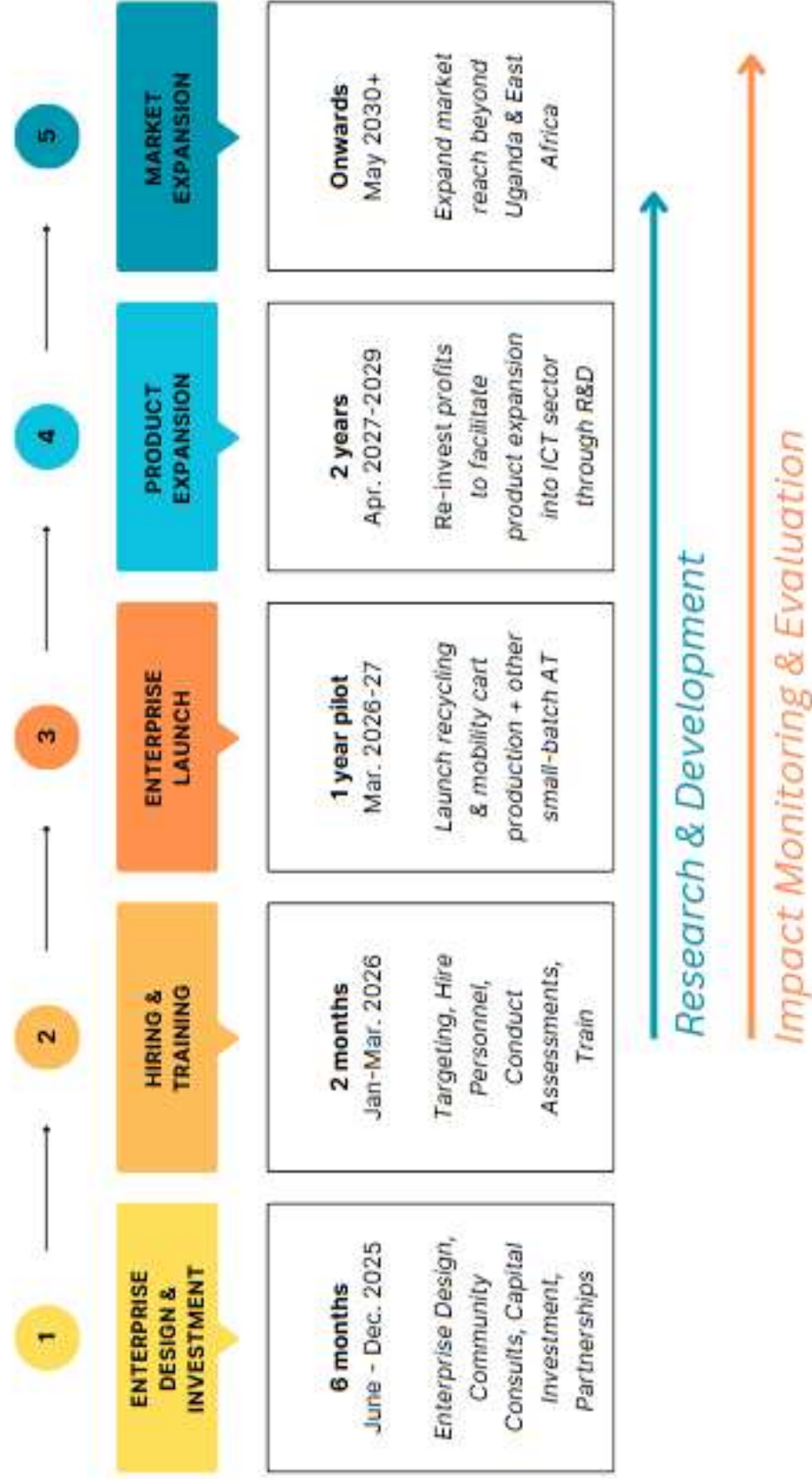
<sup>11</sup> Based on multiple community requests for prosthetics, especially among persons with missing limbs. Prosthetic production can be traditional or more advanced, depending on their cost model.

<sup>12</sup> Uganda Investment Authority, n.d. <https://www.ugandainvest.go.ug/why-uganda/opportunities/ict/>.

<sup>13</sup> UNDP. 2023. "Uganda’s digital transformation journey." *United Nations Development Programme*. <https://www.undp.org/uganda/blog/ugandas-digital-transformation-journey>.

<sup>14</sup> UNICEF Uganda. n.d. <https://www.unicef.org/uganda/what-we-do/u-report#:~:text=The%20situation,collaborative%20relationship%20with%20its%20citizens>.

Figure 2: Five-year implementation plan



## 5. Key Stakeholders

The direct beneficiaries of this initiative are persons with disabilities (PWD) and their caregivers, who will gain employment, training, income, and social recognition. They will have dignified, skilled roles across the recycling, production, and education processes. Broader communities will benefit from greater disability awareness, reduced stigma, cleaner environments, and local job creation.

Enterprise co-founders, Mobility Worldwide (MWW) and Pathways to Hope Africa (PTHA), stand to enhance their respective and collective missions, impact, community credibility, and sustainable profitability. More specifically:

- ❖ **Mobility Worldwide (MWW)** is a faith-based nonprofit organization founded in 1994 to empower individuals with disabilities in low-income countries by providing them with personal mobility devices. The organization believes everyone deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential, regardless of circumstance or ability.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, its primary intervention is to produce and distribute hand-cranked and push/pull mobility carts, designed for use in challenging terrains, which transform recipients' lives by improving their physical access to education, work, and community participation.<sup>16</sup> Headquartered in Columbia, Missouri, MWW coordinates the manufacturing and delivery of mobility carts through a network of 26 affiliates located across the United States and Africa. This process is supported by more than 700 volunteers who contribute hundreds of thousands of service hours annually.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, the organization collaborates with trusted international partners in Africa to facilitate the final delivery of mobility carts to recipients in need.

MWW benefits from this intervention by fulfilling its mission of expanding access to assistive technology while transitioning to a more sustainable and locally embedded distribution model. By partnering with local actors and using recycled materials, the organization enhances its global impact through climate-conscious, inclusive solutions.

- ❖ **Pathways to Hope Africa** is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering African communities to achieve lasting change. By partnering with grassroots organizations to address critical development issues such as food insecurity, inadequate healthcare, and limited access to education and employment opportunities, the organization aims to break the cycle of generational poverty among marginalized communities.<sup>18</sup> Its approach emphasizes cultural and behavioral shifts within communities, whereby members are encouraged to make the most of available resources and take ownership of their

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<sup>15</sup> Mobility Worldwide & Pathways to Hope Africa, 2024. (unpublished)

<sup>16</sup> Mobility Worldwide & Pathways to Hope Africa, 2024. (unpublished)

<sup>17</sup> Mobility Worldwide, 2024. <https://mobilityworldwide.org/our-work/logistics/>

<sup>18</sup> Pathways to Hope Africa, 2023. <https://www.pathwaystohopeafrica.org/who-we-are>.

challenges.<sup>19</sup> Initiatives aim to improve immediate conditions and foster resilience and independence, ensuring that African communities can chart their own paths to prosperity.<sup>20</sup>

Through this intervention, PTHA benefits from the opportunity to manage implementation of a community-driven production center and consultancy service that employs their target population and advances national advocacy for PWD by training institutions in disability awareness. This not only expands its programming but also strengthens its visibility, funding base, and regional leadership in inclusive development.

Overall, the initiative is deeply rooted in community-centered values, offering a practical, inclusive solution to poverty, unemployment, and social inequality.

The Ugandan government, especially agencies such as the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Health, and Local Government authorities, benefits from a scalable, public-private model that supports disability inclusion mandates, strengthens service delivery, and advances national development strategies. It also contributes to Uganda's progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those focused on equity, climate action, and decent work.

Below, **Tables 2 and 3** provide an overview of persons and entities that may be interested in or impacted by this intervention, including strategic partners and potential competitors. **Figures 2 and 3** visualize their potential engagement based on Impact and Influence.

- ❖ **Impact Level** shows how much a stakeholder is affected by the business. Those with Very High Impact are deeply connected to the success or failure of the project, potentially due to their own livelihood or core mission. High Impact stakeholders are still strongly affected, often through regular involvement or economic benefit, but they aren't at the heart of the business. Medium Impact means they feel the effects, but mostly indirectly or occasionally. Low Impact stakeholders are only slightly affected, with minimal or infrequent connection.<sup>21</sup>
- ❖ **Influence Level** describes how much power a stakeholder has over the project's success. A Very High Influence stakeholder can make or break the project—they control key decisions, policies, or funding. High Influence stakeholders bring valuable resources, expertise, or strong networks. Those with Medium Influence can shape outcomes through community engagement or operational support. Low Influence stakeholders play more of a supporting role, with little power to change the direction or outcomes.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Pathways to Hope Africa, 2023. <https://www.pathwaystohopeafrica.org/who-we-are>.

<sup>20</sup> Pathways to Hope Africa, 2023. <https://www.pathwaystohopeafrica.org/who-we-are>

<sup>21</sup> Rodgers, n.d. <https://simplystakeholders.com/stakeholder-matrix/>

<sup>22</sup> Rodgers, n.d. <https://simplystakeholders.com/stakeholder-matrix/>

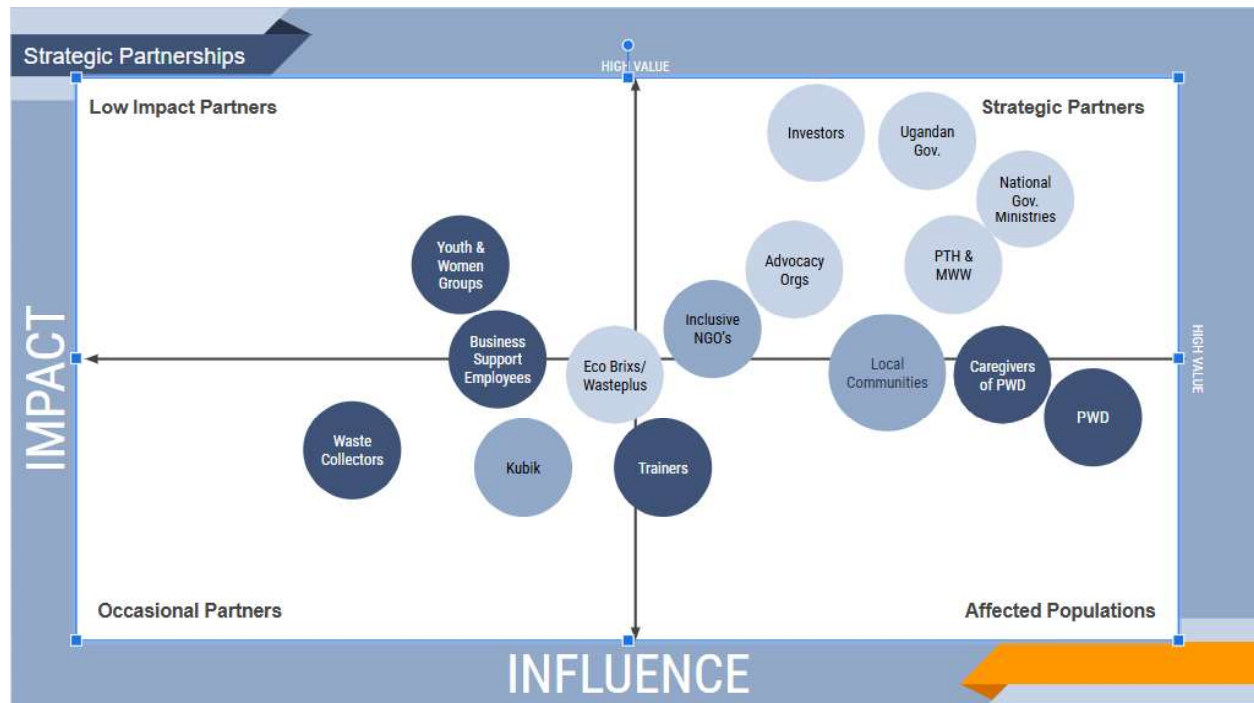
## 5.1 Strategic Partnerships

Considering the significant cost of a fully equipped recycling center that processes waste into recycled materials for further use across multiple manufacturing value chains, EcoWorks Mobility intends to approach existing, socially responsible enterprises that already have well-established recycling plants in Uganda, such as Eco Brixs and WastePlus, who are already employing PWDs.

- ❖ **Eco Brixs** is a Ugandan-based recycling enterprise already operating an effective system of collecting, processing, and repurposing recyclable goods.<sup>23</sup>
- ❖ **WastePlus** is a Uganda-based recycling company that combats plastic pollution by transforming collected plastics into recycled products, operating micro recycling pods, creating sustainable jobs, and promoting a circular economy through energy-efficient waste management solutions. It won Best Social Enterprise in Uganda in 2024.<sup>24</sup>

EcoWorks Mobility hopes to negotiate a cost-sharing agreement with such a partner whereby its employees can provide labor for recycled materials at a lower cost of purchase once processed. Partners like Eco Brixs and WastePlus would benefit from steady business growth and community engagement. By supplying materials and supporting PWD employment, they deepen their role in Uganda’s recycling economy while demonstrating how environmental and social goals can be advanced through an integrated enterprise.

**Figure 2: Strategic Partnerships Matrix**



<sup>23</sup> Eco Brixs, n.d. <https://www.ecobrixs.org/about-us>

<sup>24</sup> WastePlus, n.d. <https://www.wasteplus.org/>

Partner	Contribution	Why They're Valuable	How to Strengthen Relationship	Impact Level	Influence Level
Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)	Core beneficiaries and contributors in all stages of the value chain	Key stakeholders and participants in this social enterprise in terms of economic mobility and reinvestment beneficiaries	Provide employment, accessible workspaces, adaptive tools, affordable mobility, social dignity	Very High	High
Caregivers	Support PWDs and may be employed as micro-entrepreneurs or assistants	Key stakeholders and participants in this social enterprise in terms of economic mobility and reinvestment beneficiaries	Provide flexible work, income, ability to care while earning, training opportunities	Very High	High
Eco Brixx / WastePlus	Recycled material processing and supply	Core to sustainability mode	Long-term MOU, profit-sharing, visibility in product impact	High	High
PTHA & Mobility Worldwide	Training, cart design, local management	Deep inclusion and on-ground credibility	Shared decision-making, brand co-ownership	Very High	High
National Government Ministries	Purchase, policy support, infrastructure	Major distribution and scale enabler	Regular reporting, pilot programs, Vision 2040 alignment	Very High	Very High

Inclusive NGOs (e.g., Light for the World, NUDIPU, Kyaninga Child Development Centre)	Disability rights and community advocacy	Strengthen social license and visibility	Involve in planning, visibility, shared impact stories	Medium	Medium
Youth & Women's Groups	Workforce for recycling collection and awareness	Supports employment inclusion and outreach	Partnership in local campaigns and micro-entrepreneurship	High	High
Kubik	Expertise in recycling plastic waste into building materials; potential collaboration in material sourcing and product development.	Aligns with the enterprise's sustainability goals and offers innovative building solutions.	Explore joint projects, share knowledge on recycling technologies, and co-develop products tailored to local needs.	Medium	Medium
Ugandan Government (Local)	Buyers and distributors through local councils	Compliance, transparency, alignment with Vision 2040, disability inclusion.	Regular reporting, pilot programs, Vision 2040 alignment	Very High	Very High
Local Communities	Suppliers of recyclable materials and advocates for inclusion.	Community reinvestment, awareness, job creation	Community engagement initiatives, educational workshops	Very High	Very High
Health & Education Institutions	Recipients of carts; key training	Support in disability services,	Training sessions, feedback	Very High	Very High

	& distribution partners	smooth delivery, training integration	mechanisms, collaborative events		
Trainers (PWDs & Caregivers)	Educators and ambassadors for awareness and maintenance	Compensation, empowerment, recognition, structured curriculum	Inclusive training programs, support networks	Very High	Very High
Advocacy Orgs	Allies in awareness and implementation	Strengthen social license and visibility	Involve in planning, visibility, shared impact stories	High	High
Investors/Donors/Banks	Fund the enterprise startup and growth	Social impact, sustainability, ROI (if blended finance), scalability	Transparent reporting, impact assessments, regular updates	Very High	Very High
Diverse Employees with various skills (HR, Finance, Ops)	Day-to-day operation, coordination, and admin	Fair wages, inclusive HR, stable employment	Inclusive hiring practices, employee development programs	High	High
Local Entrepreneurs/ Micro-Collectors	Grassroots waste collectors supporting raw material collection	Fair payment, safe conditions, logistics support	Fair compensation models, capacity-building workshops	High	High

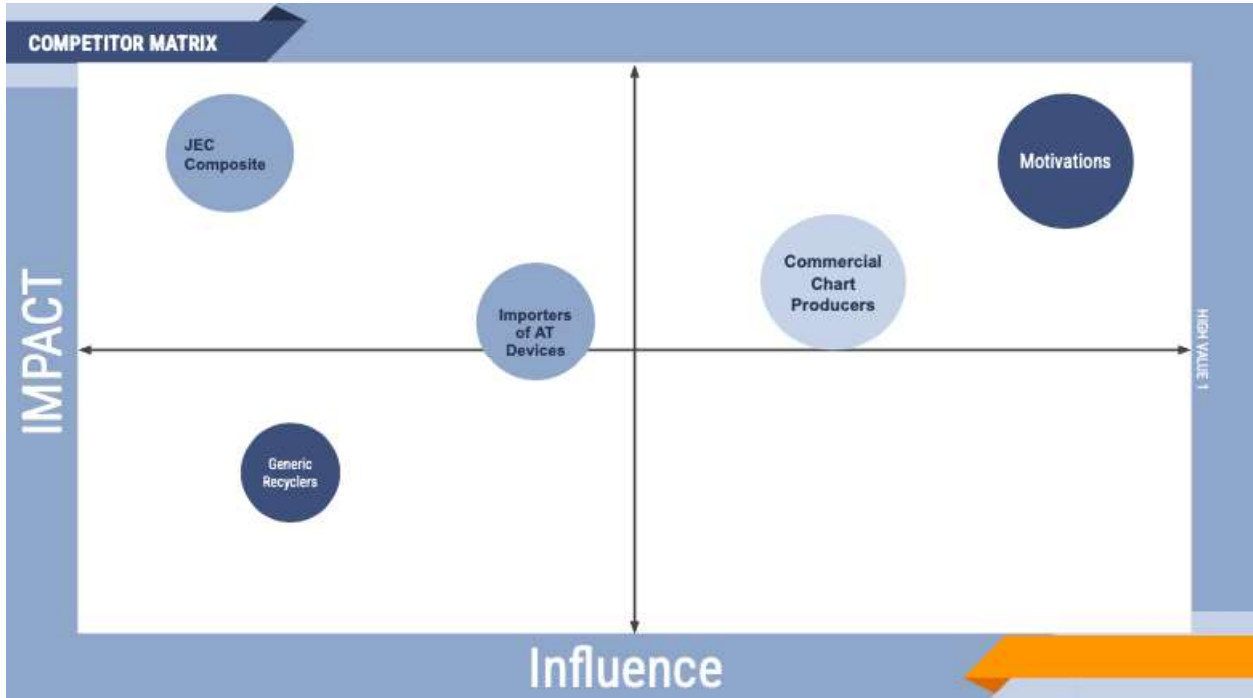
**5.2 Competitors**

While a significant market opportunity exists for the local production of mobility carts and other assistive technology in Uganda,<sup>25</sup> EcoWorks Mobility understands that it may face competition

<sup>25</sup> Key stakeholder interview, 17 April 2025.

across different stages of the value chain. Below Figure 3 and Table 3 outline key competitors, their competitive advantage, and opportunities for EcoWorks Mobility’s differentiation.

**Figure 3: Competitor Matrix**



**Table 3: Competitor Analysis**

Competitor	What They Offer	Stakeholder Relationship	Potential Issues	Opportunities for Differentiation	Impact Level	Influence Level
Commercial Cart Producers (non-social)	May produce cheaper or mass-market mobility devices	Compete for contracts, low-cost appeal	Less focus on inclusion, environmental impact, or local value	Highlight circular economy model, inclusion, and local reinvestment	Medium	High
JEC Composites	Lightweight, sustainable wheelchair seats using carbon fiber	Innovation-focused firm; currently partnered	Design May be too costly or difficult	Emphasize local manufacturing, recycled Ugandan	High	Medium

	and bio-based resin for developing countries	with NGO Motivation	to maintain in low-resource settings; lacks strong community integration.	materials, and full PWD inclusion from production to advocacy		
Motivation	Low-cost mobility aids user training, supported by a broad international NGO presence.	Potential future partner	Compete for sales	Imports may undercut local production; model centered more on distribution than economic empowerment	High	Medium
Generic Recyclers	Focus on raw material resale (not assistive tech)	Compete for recyclable materials	Might increase material costs or reduce availability	Build exclusive partnerships or offer stable buy-back pricing	Medium	Medium
Importers of AT devices	Bring in foreign-built assistive tech	Compete on technology or variety	Expensive, not terrain-adapted, lacks local context	Emphasize local, terrain-adapted, user-informed design	Medium	Medium

## 6. Risk Management

To ensure the success and sustainability of EcoWorks Mobility’s inclusive mobility cart enterprise, it has conducted a preliminary risk assessment that highlights the potential for several challenges, including supply chain reliability, cultural acceptance, government engagement, financial stability, and stakeholder coordination.

With a strong focus on accessibility, community trust, and adaptive design, EcoWorks Mobility believes it can prepare and address these potential challenges before they arise to ensure that the intervention delivers meaningful, long-term impact for persons with disabilities in Uganda.

The following section outlines potential risks and mitigation strategies that EcoWorks Mobility will undertake to minimize their likelihood and impact. This information is also visualized in **Annex 4: EcoWorks Mobility Risk Matrix**.

#### Exclusion of Certain Disability Groups:

- ❖ **Risk:** PWDs with higher support needs (e.g., severe mobility, visual, or cognitive impairments) may face barriers to participating in the value chain.
- ❖ **Mitigation:** Conduct individualized disability assessments to match workers with suitable roles. Integrate caregiver partnerships in collection, assembly, and training stages. Invest in adaptive infrastructure (e.g., universal design workshops, Braille labels, color-coded bins).

#### Cultural Resistance to Disability Inclusion:

- ❖ **Risk:** Social stigma and negative attitudes toward PWDs may limit training participation or undermine credibility of PWD-led sessions.
- ❖ **Mitigation:** Embed inclusion training as a mandatory clause in all government procurement contracts. Use trusted local leaders and past cart recipients as disability ambassadors to normalize and champion the model. Include powerful storytelling, testimonies, and interactive methods in workshops to personalize impact.
- ❖ **Risk:** PWD engaged in waste collection may face additional stigma.
- ❖ **Mitigation:** Work with local communities, participants, and business stakeholders to formalize the role of employees as much as possible (ie. Providing uniforms, benefits, etc.). Allow waste collectors to work in groups to mitigate the risk of potential harassment or targeting. Launch media campaigns to promote the work of PWD and frame the business as a means of achieving sustainable development for the entire community/country.

#### Government Partnership Procurement Delays or Bureaucratic Bottlenecks

- ❖ **Risk:** Slow decision-making, payment delays, or unclear procurement frameworks may delay government purchase and distribution of carts. Potential for government ministries to be uninterested in partnering with EcoWorks Mobility for product purchase.
- ❖ **Mitigation:** Target multiple ministries/agencies (e.g., Health, Education, Gender, Local Government) to diversify procurement avenues. Develop clear MOU templates and pilot projects with selected districts to demonstrate proof of concept. Engage public procurement officers early with capacity-building on social enterprise and inclusive procurement. Maintain close relationships with existing government networks and remain flexible on strategy and business model adaptation.

#### Financial Constraints to Scale:

- ❖ **Risk:** Lack of upfront capital for scaling operations, paying PWD workers, or sustaining R&D activities.

- ❖ **Mitigation:** Leverage initial testimonies and pilot data to attract impact investors, social enterprise accelerators, or development funders. Apply for grants aligned with disability rights, green growth, or SDG innovation (e.g., UNDP, D-Prize, Ashoka). Integrate a cost-recovery model through cart sales, consultancy services, and potential export opportunities.

#### Quality Control Risk:

- ❖ **Risk:** Poor quality design of mobility carts could damage trust and effectiveness of the initiative.
- ❖ **Mitigation:** Utilize PWD user-testing at every design stage. Employ a feedback loop for ongoing quality improvements based on terrain, durability, and cultural use cases. Establish internal standards and inspections across all assembly points.

#### Risk of Fragmented Stakeholder Coordination

- ❖ **Risk:** Multiple partners (MWW, PTHA, Eco Brixs, WastePlus) may experience miscommunication or unclear responsibilities.
- ❖ **Mitigation:** Set up a centralized Coordination Hub (potentially managed by Pathways to Hope Africa) with clear roles, timelines, and reporting structures. Host monthly partner sync meetings with shared KPIs. Use project management tools (e.g., Asana, Airtable, Trello) to ensure visibility and accountability across teams.

#### Financial Sustainability Risk

- ❖ **Risk:** Reliance on one-time grants or donor funds may limit long-term impact.
- ❖ **Mitigation:** Design a blended finance model with revenue from:
  - Mobility cart sales to government, education institutions, NGOs, etc.
  - Consultancy income from trainings
  - Sale of additional AT and home building products

#### Community Engagement Risk/ Lack of Local Buy-In

- ❖ **Risk:** Communities may not trust or participate in the model if not properly engaged.
- ❖ **Mitigation:** Involve community leaders, local government, and faith-based organizations early in the startup phase. Conduct participatory co-design sessions with PWDs and caregivers before scaling. Launch community awareness campaigns highlighting local success stories.

## 7. Financials

MWW and PTHA are seeking **US\$220,000** in seed funding to launch a 1-year pilot of EcoWorks Mobility. If capital funding is received and the pilot succeeds, EcoWorks Mobility will use its revenue from years 1-2 to expand production and market reach in years 3 and 4.

The US\$220,000 cost breakdown shown in **Annex 3: EcoWorks Mobility Budget** is an estimate based on existing market prices and the initial goal of collecting 50 tons of waste per month. The budget also includes the US\$51,000 cost of equipping a new recycling facility for pre-processing and manufacturing raw materials; however, these activities will not be pursued during the pilot

phase, as they will be outsourced to existing recycling partners. Instead, a portion of the US\$51,000 will be used to purchase tools and equipment that may be required for mobility cart assembly.<sup>26</sup>

## 8. Conclusion

In response to prevalent underemployment and cyclical poverty among persons with disabilities (PWD) in Uganda, Mobility Worldwide (MWW) and Pathways to Hope Africa (PTHA) have created EcoWorks Mobility - an inclusive, community-driven, eco-friendly social enterprise based on a circular economy model. This business plan has outlined this enterprise's intended activities, avenues for revenue generation, implementation timeline, stakeholder analysis, risk matrix, and preliminary budget.

Closely aligned with Uganda Vision 2040 and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, this enterprise hopes to (i) create meaningful employment opportunities for PWD and their caregivers, (ii) increase access to assistive technology for PWD in Uganda, (iii) enhance disability inclusion through increased awareness and training; and (iv) contribute to environmental conservation through an eco-friendly, circular economy model.

Over the course of five years, and with an initial start-up investment of USD 220,000, EcoWorks Mobility hopes to build a sustainable and impactful intervention that transforms the lives of PWD and their families through enhanced social and economic mobility for those in Uganda and beyond.

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<sup>26</sup> Additional market research is required to ascertain specific costs and quantities needed for a certain level of production, depending on the capacity and preferences of MWW and PTHA.

## 9. Annexes

- ❖ *Annex 1: Literature Review*
- ❖ *Annex 2: Research Report*
- ❖ *Annex 3: EcoWorks Mobility Budget*
- ❖ *Annex 4: EcoWorks Mobility Risk Matrix*
- ❖ *Annex 5: Stories from Uganda*

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## 11. Acknowledgements

The SIPA Capstone Team would like to sincerely thank Mobility Worldwide and Pathways to Hope Africa for the opportunity to work on this exciting new project. We hope this preliminary analysis and business model advance your efforts to design and implement innovative and impactful interventions that meaningfully improve the lives of persons with disabilities in Uganda and beyond.

We would also like to thank the 30+ interview participants who graciously gave their time to meet with us.

Most importantly, we would like to thank the 100+ members of the Teso Community Cooperative for PWDs and their families in Soroti. Their insights, testimonies, and words of encouragement were invaluable.

- *SIPA Capstone Team*



# Annex 1

## Literature Review

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Executive summary

Like many developing countries across the Global South, Uganda has experienced a steady decline in Official Development Assistance (ODA) over the past 15 years, largely due to donor fatigue in response to the global increase in conflict and climate emergencies.<sup>1</sup> Recent events - specifically US President Donald Trump's Executive Order to dismantle USAID<sup>2</sup> - have further highlighted the urgent need for development actors, such as Mobility Worldwide (MWW) and Pathways to Hope Africa (PTHA) to adopt more sustainable and reliable funding streams to sustain social impact programs, including those that aim to advance the employment of people with disabilities across critical value chains.

Social enterprise and value chain models have emerged as potential alternatives to other innovative financing tools, such as microfinance, impact investing, and development impact bonds - which have largely failed to improve economic outcomes for the world's most vulnerable, including persons with disabilities in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, this literature review examines the use of social enterprise as a tool to promote disability inclusion along strategic value chains in Uganda while effectively creating organic revenue streams for populations typically excluded from traditional employment markets.

## 1.2 Scope and Focus

This literature review examines the following:

- 1. Disability Inclusion in Uganda**
  - a. The history of disability inclusion in Uganda
  - b. The barriers to inclusion that people with disabilities continue to face, in relation to education and employment
  - c. The importance of investing in human capital for sustainable development
- 2. Sustainable Finance Mechanisms to Support Development Programs**
  - a. Challenges posed by the decline in ODA
  - b. The pros and cons of alternative development financing mechanisms
- 3. Social Enterprise and Value-Chain Models as Solutions to Donor Dependency**
  - a. Social enterprise and value chain analysis as viable solutions to both aid dependency and the exclusion of persons with disabilities from traditional employment markets.
  - b. The social enterprise environment in Uganda and East Africa
  - c. Opportunities for future ventures to meaningfully engage persons with disabilities across value chains that simultaneously drive macroeconomic growth in line with Uganda's multi-year national development strategy.
- 4. Market-Driven Opportunities for Social Enterprise Investment in Uganda**

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<sup>1</sup> IMF, 2024. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/REO/SSA/Issues/2024/10/25/regional-economic-outlook-for-sub-saharan-africa-october-2024>

<sup>2</sup> Knickmeyer et al., 2025. <https://apnews.com/article/trump-usaid-foreign-aid-cuts-6292f48f8d4025bed0bf5c3e9d623c16>

<sup>3</sup> Johnston, 2020. [https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp\\_collection/3367](https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/3367)

- a. Agriculture and agri-food processing
- b. Textiles and Manufacturing
- c. Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

### ***1.3 Key Research Questions***

This literature seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Why are people with disabilities excluded from traditional economic development and value chain models in Uganda?
2. What alternative and innovative financing mechanisms exist for development projects beyond traditional ODA, and how do their advantages and limitations impact their effectiveness?
3. How can social enterprise and value chain models serve as sustainable alternatives to ODA? What opportunities and challenges do they present for disability inclusion in Uganda?
4. Which industries present viable opportunities to sustain the gainful employment of persons with disabilities in Uganda?

## **2. Disability Inclusion Policy & Practice in Uganda**

### ***2.1 The Global Disability Movement in Sub-Saharan Africa & Beyond***

People with disabilities make up 15 percent of the world’s population; however, 80 percent of them reside in the Global South.<sup>4</sup> This phenomenon is primarily attributed to inadequate access to affordable healthcare, particularly for women, the elderly, and those in rural areas, who experience elevated rates of disability as a result.<sup>5</sup> Conflict has also contributed to disproportionate disability rates in certain areas, as 16 percent of all disabilities worldwide are a direct result of armed conflict. Therefore, communities with a history of violent conflict are likely to have higher disability rates than those without.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the fact that 80 percent of people with disabilities live in the Global South, less than 20 percent of disability research has focused on developing countries, leaving significant gaps in data and literature for context-specific, evidence-based decision making.<sup>7</sup> While multilateral instruments, such as the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#),

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<sup>4</sup> Lamichhane, 2015. <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip&db=e091sww&AN=946357&site=ehost-live&scope=site>; Grischow and Mfoafo-M’Carthy, 2022. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv29mvsnx>

<sup>5</sup> World Bank, n.d (c). <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/reach>.

<sup>6</sup> CPWD, n.d. <https://cpwd.org/the-impact-of-armed-conflict-on-people-with-disabilities/#:~:text=Armed%20Conflict%20Causes%20Disability&text=According%20to%20the%20UN%2C%2016,z one%20are%20disabilities%20in%20themselves>; Muyinda, 2020. <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/epdf/10.1086/705391>

<sup>7</sup> Lamichhane, 2015. <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip&db=e091sww&AN=946357&site=ehost-live&scope=site>; Grischow and Mfoafo-M’Carthy, 2022. <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip&db=nlebk&AN=3149961&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

promote a global disability inclusion agenda,<sup>8</sup> they have been criticized for their “one size fits all” approach.<sup>9</sup> Grischow and Mfoafo-M’Carthy (2022) argue that, consequently, most disability-related policies and interventions are based on the Global North’s interpretation of disability and fail to account for, nor address the unique vulnerabilities of people with disabilities in developing states.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Lamichhane (2015) argues that contextually-biased assumptions have allowed the needs of persons with disabilities to be overlooked in the design and implementation of most international development efforts, to date.<sup>11</sup>

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was adopted by the United Nations in 2006 and came into effect in 2008. It was considered the first comprehensive, legally-binding, multilateral treaty to define, promote, and protect the rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities around the world.<sup>12</sup> Based on the Social Model of Disability – which states that people with disabilities do not participate in society due to exclusionary social attitudes and policies, and not because of their perceived inability to contribute<sup>13</sup> – the CRPD was considered a turning point in the global disability movement and a departure from previous models that focused solely on the passive medical and charitable needs of those with physical and cognitive impairments.<sup>14</sup>

The CRPD is often hailed for its success in mainstreaming discussions on non-discrimination, accessibility, inclusion, and equal participation policies.<sup>15</sup> Yet, scholars of grassroots development, like Lamichhane (2015) and Muyinda (2022), argue that the CRPD’s impact is often overstated, and that the convention’s top-down approach has not tangibly improved the rights, freedoms, and social inclusion of persons with disabilities on the ground.<sup>16</sup> This is especially true for disability communities across the Global South, notably in Sub-Saharan Africa where at least 300 million persons with disabilities reside.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> UN-DESA, n.d. <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/crpd/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-crpd>

<sup>9</sup> Grischow and Mfoafo-M’Carthy, 2022. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv29mvsnx>; Muyinda and Reynolds Whyte, 2022. <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip&db=nlebk&AN=3149961&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

<sup>10</sup> Grischow and Mfoafo-M’Carthy, 2022. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv29mvsnx>

<sup>11</sup> Lamichhane, 2015. <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip&db=e091sww&AN=946357&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

<sup>12</sup> Lamichhane, 2015. <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip&db=e091sww&AN=946357&site=ehost-live&scope=site>; Grischow and Mfoafo-M’Carthy, 2022. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv29mvsnx>

<sup>13</sup> Muyinda, 2020. <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/epdf/10.1086/705391>

<sup>14</sup> Lamichhane, 2015. <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip&db=e091sww&AN=946357&site=ehost-live&scope=site>; Grischow and Mfoafo-M’Carthy, 2022. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv29mvsnx>

<sup>15</sup> UN-DESA, n.d. <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/crpd/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-crpd>

<sup>16</sup> Lamichhane, 2015. <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip&db=e091sww&AN=946357&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

<sup>17</sup> Grischow and Mfoafo-M’Carthy, 2022. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv29mvsnx>

## 2.2 The Disability Landscape in Uganda

Uganda was one of seven African countries that participated in the CRPD's development, and officially ratified the convention in 2008.<sup>18</sup> However, the country's commitment to policies that protect the rights and welfare of persons with disabilities began in 1995 with the adoption of its current [Constitution](#), which prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities.<sup>19</sup>

Subsequent policies - including the [Persons with Disabilities Act of 2006](#), later replaced by the [Persons with Disabilities Act of 2020](#) - helped mainstream disability rights across the country. Other legislation helped institutionalize disability governance and guaranteed inclusive representation of persons with disabilities in all levels of government. Notably, the [Parliamentary Elections Statute of 1997](#) mandated that five parliamentary positions be reserved for persons with disabilities at the national level, while the [Local Government Act of 1997](#) ensured that two seats on each local council - from village to district level - would be reserved for persons with disabilities; one seat for a female and one seat for a male.<sup>20</sup> As a result, approximately 47,000 people with disabilities are represented across all tiers of government in Uganda, making it one of the world's largest groups of its kind.<sup>21</sup>

The Ugandan government has implemented several initiatives to support persons with disabilities beyond constitutional provisions and policies. The [National Council for Disability \(NCD\)](#) is a public institution mandated to promote and monitor the implementation of programs and policies for people with disabilities, alongside the [National Union of Women with Disabilities in Uganda \(NUWODU\)](#).<sup>22</sup>

In the education sector, the government supports inclusive education through [Special Needs Education \(SNE\)](#) programs, including special schools, resource centers, and teacher training in special needs education.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, the Special Grant for Persons with Disabilities (PWD Grant), managed by the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, provides funds to disability groups for income-generating activities, fostering economic empowerment and improved livelihoods. Affirmative action policies in education and employment offer extra points for people with disabilities in university admissions and encourage employment quotas to enhance their participation in the workforce.<sup>24</sup>

To improve accessibility, laws and guidelines have been introduced to ensure public buildings and transportation systems are accessible. [Community-Based Rehabilitation \(CBR\)](#) programs, implemented in partnership with organizations, provide rehabilitation services at the community

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<sup>18</sup> Grischow and Mfoafo-M'Carthy, 2022. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv29mvsnx>

<sup>19</sup> ULII. 2005. <https://ulii.org/akn/ug/act/statute/1995/constitution/eng%402018-01-05>

<sup>20</sup> Muyinda and Reynolds Whyte, 2022; <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip&db=nlebk&AN=3149961&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> ILO. n.d. <https://natlex.ilo.org/dyn/natlex2/r/natlex/fe>

<sup>23</sup> Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development. 2002. <https://mglsd.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/MOG-FINAL-GUIDELINE-BOOK-1.pdf>.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

level.<sup>25</sup> Health services have also been enhanced, with initiatives focusing on accessible healthcare, assistive devices, disability-friendly health facilities, and disability-inclusive HIV/AIDS programs.<sup>26</sup> Social protection initiatives, such as the [Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment \(SAGE\)](#), provide direct financial support to vulnerable persons with disabilities.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, employment and skills development programs offer vocational training opportunities to enhance employability and economic inclusion for the disability community across Uganda.<sup>28</sup>

However, despite the Government's high-level efforts to acknowledge the social barriers faced by people with disabilities, it has been criticized for failing to implement effective, inclusive, and sustainable programs that support the socio-economic development and independence of people with disabilities in both rural and urban areas across the country.<sup>29</sup> For example, scholars Muyinda and Reynolds Whyte say that progressive policies have not led to an increase in household income or livelihood opportunities for people with disabilities in Uganda. Further, public services and spaces are delivered without accommodations such as accessible infrastructure and sign language. There remains a lack of assistive technology for people with disabilities in Uganda. Particularly concerning is the high drop-out rate among children and youth with disabilities as a result of their school's inability to afford or unwillingness to accommodate unique needs.<sup>30</sup>

While authorities often cite a lack of resources to implement disability programs in Uganda, Muyinda and Reynolds Whyte say that social and cultural beliefs, as well as party politics, also play a significant role.<sup>31</sup> In Uganda, particularly in rural areas, many people believe that disabilities are a product of witchcraft, or that people with disabilities have been possessed. Consequently, they are often ostracized or abused at the community-level.<sup>32</sup>

Government disability assistance programs have been criticized for being highly politicized in Uganda and "subject to corruption and elitism."<sup>33</sup> Most support services are provided by members of the ruling party, the National Resistance Movement (NRM), and were originally born out of their time governing under a one-party system. Muyinda and Reynolds Whyte argue that this dynamic has contributed to further ostracization of people with disabilities, as they are often perceived by their peers to be unwavering supporters of the NRM. Furthermore, many people with disabilities feel that they are unable to complain about the assistance they receive for fear of being deemed "ungrateful" or having their benefits rescinded. Overall, the Ugandan Government's

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<sup>25</sup> Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, 2022. <https://mglsd.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/MOG-FINAL-GUIDELINE-BOOK-1.pdf>.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Muyinda and Reynolds Whyte, 2022. <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip&db=nlebk&AN=3149961&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

<sup>30</sup> Muyinda and Reynolds Whyte, 2022. <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip&db=nlebk&AN=3149961&site=ehost-live&scope=site>; World Bank. n.d (c). <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/reach>.

<sup>31</sup> Muyinda and Reynolds Whyte, 2022. <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip&db=nlebk&AN=3149961&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

eagerness to promote disability-friendly policies is criticized by many as more of a political ploy to garner votes and protect the country's image, rather than a strategy to substantially improve the lives of affected populations.<sup>34</sup>

In Uganda and across Sub-Saharan Africa more broadly, Grischow and Mfafo-M'Carthy argue that government authorities have failed to implement effective assistance models for people with disabilities due to inadequate knowledge and training among politicians, who's actions have inadvertently reinforced disability-related stigma.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, Lamichhane (2015) argues that despite the CRPD's progressive narrative, assistance schemes for people with disabilities across Sub-Saharan Africa continue to be based on the Charitable Model of Disability, whereby they focus on meeting the basic, short-term needs of households hosting people with disabilities, instead of investing in more sustainable, long-term solutions that promote social mobility, education, employment, and financial independence for individuals with disabilities.<sup>36</sup>

Against this backdrop, the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has become increasingly important to the provision of effective social programs that invest in human capital development for people with disabilities at the grassroots level.

### ***2.3 Human Capital Development & Investment***

Human Capital refers to the labor productivity of a population or workforce, with the development of such leading to increased labor and output, and in turn, more sustainable macroeconomic growth. At the microeconomic level, education acts as a key determinant of one's ability to become employed, earn a living wage and contribute to the growth of society. Therefore, education and employment are intrinsically linked to long-term development goals and poverty reduction.<sup>37</sup>

Lamichhane (2015) says that human capital development through education and employment creation are among the most critical factors that contribute to social inclusion, economic empowerment and poverty reduction for people with disabilities. When education and employment opportunities are made available to marginalized populations, they not only improve the socio-economic status of recipients, but also improve that of their families and communities.<sup>38</sup>

In order to achieve this, human capital development requires human capital investment, preferably in the form of socially responsible models that prioritize social benefits over financial return.<sup>39</sup> In the context of disability inclusion, the unique skills, perspectives, and contributions to society that people with disabilities have to offer should be viewed as a high-value return on human capital investment because of the potential to achieve better micro- and macro-economic outcomes for

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> Grischow and Mfafo-M'Carthy, 2022. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv29mvsnx>

<sup>36</sup> Lamichhane, 2015. <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip&db=e091sww&AN=946357&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

<sup>37</sup> Son, 2010. <https://doi.org/10.1142/S0116110510500083>.

<sup>38</sup> Lamichhane, 2015. <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip&db=e091sww&AN=946357&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

developing communities across the Global South.<sup>40</sup> However, disability inclusion has not traditionally been regarded as an investment priority, largely due to a lack of awareness surrounding its potential.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, people with disabilities largely remain an untapped workforce due to significant social barriers to education and meaningful employment.

While many NGOs understand the importance and potential of investing in long-term solutions that promote economic empowerment of people with disabilities, their ability to implement such programs has been hindered by a chronic lack of reliable, multi-year funding - largely as a result of their over-reliance on Official Development Assistance (ODA). The following section examines the history of ODA in Uganda and the alternative financing mechanisms that NGOs have used in an attempt to self-finance development operations.

### 3. Official Development Assistance & Alternative Financing Mechanisms

Official Development Assistance (ODA) is foreign aid typically provided by high-income countries to support the development and welfare of developing states. It is provided in the form of concessional financial flows, including grants and low-interest loans, from official agencies and governments.<sup>42</sup> The use of ODA dates back to colonial and post-war development efforts that fostered optimism about aiding poorer nations through external assistance.<sup>43</sup> Since its designation as the benchmark for foreign aid by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in 1969, ODA has served as the primary financial mechanism for international development assistance.<sup>44</sup>

The scope of ODA extends beyond economic aid, incorporating social, environmental, and governance aspects with the aim of promoting comprehensive, sustainable development through bilateral or multilateral assistance. Bilateral aid refers to government-to-government financial assistance, while multilateral aid involves contributions from governments to international organizations that implement development programs, like UN agencies and NGOs.<sup>45</sup> However, the effectiveness of ODA in development has been a subject of debate for centuries. Scholars like Sachs argue that aid can be highly impactful and advocate for a significant increase in its flow,<sup>46</sup> while others, such as Easterly, are more skeptical.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Lamichhane, 2015. <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip&db=e091sww&AN=946357&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

<sup>41</sup> Ibid

<sup>42</sup> OECD, n.d. <https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/policy-issues/official-development-assistance-oda.html>

<sup>43</sup> OECD, 1994. [https://one.oecd.org/document/OCDE/GD\(94\)67/en/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/OCDE/GD(94)67/en/pdf)

<sup>44</sup> OECD, n.d. <https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/policy-issues/official-development-assistance-oda.html>

<sup>45</sup> OECD, 2024. <https://www.oecd.org/en/data/insights/data-explainers/2024/07/frequently-asked-questions-on-official-development-assistance-oda.html>

<sup>46</sup> Sachs, 2005.

[http://www.economia.unam.mx/cedrus/pdf/jeffrey\\_sachs\\_the\\_end\\_of\\_poverty\\_economic\\_possibilities\\_for\\_our\\_time\\_2006.pdf](http://www.economia.unam.mx/cedrus/pdf/jeffrey_sachs_the_end_of_poverty_economic_possibilities_for_our_time_2006.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> Easterly, 2007. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jiel/jgm018>

In recent years, ODA has come under increased scrutiny, as the gap between international needs and funds provided has grown larger instead of smaller. While ODA contributions have steadily increased over time, the number of people in need of humanitarian and development assistance has grown exponentially and is currently at the highest level it has ever been, largely due to an increase in conflict and the effects of climate change. Many people have begun to question whether ODA is achieving what it is meant to and whether the traditional approach to foreign aid is sustainable.<sup>48</sup>

### ***3.1 ODA Challenges in Uganda***

At the macro-economic level, Uganda has received significant amounts of foreign assistance over the past five years, including US\$4.38 billion from the World Bank, £95 million annually from the UK, and US\$1 billion annually from the United States.<sup>49</sup> Overall, foreign aid accounted for 20 percent of Uganda's national budget in the 2023/24 fiscal year.<sup>50</sup> Due to the uncertainty and irregularity of foreign aid contributions, Uganda's level of ODA dependence raises significant concerns about what would happen to the country's economy if foreign aid were to decrease or cease completely due to changes in the political or economic situation of donors.

Scholars argue that ODA dependency can contribute to suboptimal development outcomes due to aid fragmentation and donor proliferation.<sup>51</sup> These phenomena are defined by the OECD as "aid that comes in too many small slices from too many donors, creating high transaction costs and making it difficult for partner countries to effectively manage".<sup>52</sup> Nunnenkamp et al. (2015) argue that since 2006, foreign assistance to Uganda has become more fragmented, with increased duplication of efforts observed among major donors, rather than better coordination or specialization at the district and sector levels.<sup>53</sup>

Similarly, NGOs have traditionally relied almost exclusively on bilateral donor contributions to fund their operations in countries like Uganda. Due to the unreliable and often conditional nature of donor funds, NGOs struggle to adequately respond to the ever-changing needs of vulnerable populations in the long-term.<sup>54</sup>

Overall, ODA dependence, coupled with the challenges of aid fragmentation and coordination, creates long-term fiscal and development uncertainties for Uganda as a country, as well as for the NGOs that operate within it. Mounting pressure in response to US President Donald Trump's return to office and his [Executive Order](#) to suspend USAID further highlights the need for

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<sup>48</sup> Johnston, 2020. [https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp\\_collection/3367/](https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/3367/)

<sup>49</sup> Kidamba, 2023. <https://observer.ug/news/world-bank-fallout-can-uganda-survive-without-foreign-assistance/#:~:text=This%20brought%20the%20total%20foreign,is%20dependent%20on%20foreign%20aid.>

<sup>50</sup> Ibid

<sup>51</sup> Johnston, 2020. [https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp\\_collection/3367/](https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/3367/)

<sup>52</sup> OECD, 2009. <https://doi.org/10.1787/dcr-2009-en>

<sup>53</sup> Nunnenkamp et al., 2015. <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/110973/1/827017731.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> Funds for NGOs, n.d. <https://www2.fundsforngos.org/articles-searching-grants-and-donors/the-impact-of-donor-dependency-on-ngo-growth/#:~:text=The%20Challenges%20of%20Donor%20Dependency,Members%20Miss%2070%25%20of%20Grants.>

alternative and sustainable financing models that effectively reduce the Global South's reliance on foreign assistance.

### ***3.2 Alternative Financing Mechanisms***

As traditional ODA and donor-funded programs face increasing scrutiny, alternative and innovative financing mechanisms have gained prominence in development efforts, offering new ways to mobilize resources and drive impact. This section examines some of the most popular alternatives, including microfinance, blended finance, impact investing, development impact bonds (DIBs), results-based financing (RBF), and venture philanthropy. The following outlines the pros and cons of each, as well as examples of how they have been used in Uganda, which are also summarized in Table 1.

- ❖ **Microfinance** is one of the most widely used development financing mechanisms, providing small loans and financial services to low-income individuals and communities excluded from mainstream banking systems.<sup>55</sup> While it promotes financial independence, supports entrepreneurship, and extends services to remote areas, it can also burden recipients with high interest rates and may not always lead to significant improvements in recipient income.<sup>56</sup>

A notable success story is **BRAC Uganda**. They operated a group-based microfinance program that addressed the financial needs of low-income individuals, especially targeting women, by facilitating collective loan guarantees to enhance access to credit and foster a sense of community and mutual support among borrowers.<sup>57</sup> As of 2022, BRAC Uganda served over 160,000 active borrowers, with women making up more than 90 percent of its client base.<sup>58</sup> They provided savings products alongside individual loans, helping low-income households build financial security and resilience against unexpected hardships.<sup>59</sup> Namuyonga et al found that BRAC's microfinance project had positive impacts on recipients' economic well-being and quality of life.<sup>60</sup>

However, the use of microfinance has been criticized for setting vulnerable populations up to fail with high-interest loans that they are unable to pay back, thus contributing to a cycle of debt and further perpetuating poverty.<sup>61</sup> In Northern Uganda, where conflict-related disabilities are prevalent due to violence perpetrated by the Lord's Resistance Army since

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<sup>55</sup> FINCA International, n.d. <https://finca.org/our-work/microfinance>

<sup>56</sup> Corporate Finance Institute, n.d. <https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/commercial-lending/microfinance/>

<sup>57</sup> Polycarp et al., 2023.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371742802\\_The\\_effect\\_of\\_loan\\_defaults\\_on\\_profitability\\_of\\_financial\\_institutions\\_in\\_Uganda\\_a\\_case\\_study\\_of\\_post\\_bank\\_Anaka\\_branch\\_Nwoyam\\_district\\_1\\_Kilama\\_Polycarp\\_2Dr\\_Ariyo\\_Gracious\\_Kazaara\\_3\\_Asiimwe](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371742802_The_effect_of_loan_defaults_on_profitability_of_financial_institutions_in_Uganda_a_case_study_of_post_bank_Anaka_branch_Nwoyam_district_1_Kilama_Polycarp_2Dr_Ariyo_Gracious_Kazaara_3_Asiimwe)

<sup>58</sup> Turyatamba and Turyasingura, 2024. <http://ijeais.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/4/IJAPR240405.pdf>

<sup>59</sup> Sarah and Audrey, 2024.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385096751\\_Corporate\\_Social\\_Responsibility\\_and\\_its\\_Influence\\_on\\_Firm\\_Reputation\\_and\\_Financial\\_Performance\\_A\\_Case\\_Study\\_of\\_Equity\\_Bank\\_Wandegaya](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385096751_Corporate_Social_Responsibility_and_its_Influence_on_Firm_Reputation_and_Financial_Performance_A_Case_Study_of_Equity_Bank_Wandegaya)

<sup>60</sup> Namuyonga et al., 2024.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385168393\\_Microfinance\\_Services\\_and\\_Poverty\\_Reduction\\_A\\_Case\\_Study\\_of\\_BRAC\\_Uganda](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385168393_Microfinance_Services_and_Poverty_Reduction_A_Case_Study_of_BRAC_Uganda)

<sup>61</sup> Watala, 2010. <https://allafrica.com/stories/201007300382.html>

1986, several microfinance organizations have refused to lend money to people with disabilities because they do not believe that the funds will be paid back. Private lenders have reportedly expressed that “disability rehabilitation [is] not a good investment,” while others have ignored the needs of persons with disabilities, believing that they all received adequate assistance from the government.<sup>62</sup>

Other cases of microfinance use in Uganda have highlighted issues of financial mismanagement, lack of regulation, and under-capitalization. For example, the [Microfinance Support Centre \(MSC\)](#), an organization that delivers microcredit and grants for development initiatives, failed to utilize UGX 21.2 billion allocated for the [Emyooga](#) program in 2021, raising concerns about the program’s effectiveness and MSC’s capacity to disburse funds appropriately.<sup>63</sup> Another example is [EFC Uganda Limited](#), which was established with international stakeholders as a microfinance deposit-taking institution, but the Bank of Uganda revoked its license due to under-capitalization and non-compliance with licensing terms, leading to its closure and liquidation.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, the *Global Trust Bank* which was founded with significant investment from a Nigerian insurance company was liquidated by the Bank of Uganda due to substantial financial losses and inaccuracies in information provided to the government.<sup>65</sup>

- ❖ **Blended finance** is increasingly used for development projects that combine public and private sector funds. It involves mixing concessional public ODA with private or other public resources to mobilize development finance.<sup>66</sup> In Uganda, blended finance most commonly appears in the form of public-private partnerships (PPPs), concessional loans, grants, guarantees, and technical support to specific sectors that incentivize the private sector.<sup>67</sup> While blended finance can attract investment, enhance financial sustainability, and scale projects, it also risks prioritizing profit over social impact, creating unequal access to resources and potential market distortions.<sup>68</sup>

Uganda has experienced challenges with the use of blended finance. The World Bank’s US\$17.3 million [Uganda Reproductive Health Voucher Project](#), designed to improve maternal health services, failed to reach the poorest women due to unaffordable voucher fees, as highlighted by the [Initiative for Social and Economic Rights](#).<sup>69</sup> Cases such as this one demonstrates that while blended finance can attract diverse funding sources, its success

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<sup>62</sup> Muyinda and Reynolds Whyte, 2022. <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip&db=nlebk&AN=3149961&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

<sup>63</sup> Byemboijana, 2023. <https://softpower.ug/microfinance-support-centre-faulted-for-failure-to-disburse-ugx-21-2-billion-emyooga-funds/>

<sup>64</sup> Monitor Reporter, 2024. <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/bou-closes-efc-uganda-limited--4496730>.

<sup>65</sup> Kyatusiimire, 2020. <https://chimpreports.com/bou-concludes-liquidation-of-global-trust-bank/>.

<sup>66</sup> Pereira, 2017. <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620186/rr-blended-finance-130217-en.pdf>

<sup>67</sup> Kasirye and Lakal, 2019. <https://southernvoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/OPS-45-Uganda.pdf>.

<sup>68</sup> Pereira, 2017. <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620186/rr-blended-finance-130217-en.pdf>

<sup>69</sup> Kembabazi, 2020. <https://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/2020/10/world-bank-funded-17-3-million-uganda-reproductive-health-voucher-ppp-fails-to-reach-the-poorest-women/>

hinges on aligning financial interests with sustainability goals and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable populations.

- ❖ **Impact Investing** refers to investments that intend to generate measurable social or environmental impact alongside financial return.<sup>70</sup> While it allows investors to align investments with their values and can yield positive returns, impact investments may offer lower profit margins over a longer period of time than traditional investments.<sup>71</sup> Uganda is the second-largest Impact Investing market in East Africa, with more than 80 impact investors actively engaged in some 119 investment vehicles, as of 2020. Key priority areas include agriculture and financial inclusion, each of which account for 40 percent of all impact investing deals in Uganda, while financial inclusion accounts for 50 percent of all investment deals with Development Financing Institutions (DFIs).<sup>72</sup>

In Uganda, [INUA Impact Fund](#) invests in women-led social enterprises to reduce the gender gap that exists in the private sector and in traditional access to capital.<sup>73</sup> Through 10-year investments in early stage and high-growth Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) across Uganda, INUA positively contributes to multiple development initiatives alongside economic inclusion for women, including food security, systems, and livelihoods.<sup>74</sup> In contrast, [Trees for Global Benefit \(TGB\)](#), a carbon offset program run by the [Environmental Conservation Trust of Uganda \(ECOTRUST\)](#) and facilitated by [Plan Vivos](#), faced criticism for enabling corporate greenwashing,<sup>75</sup> perpetuating inequality, and failing to deliver real climate benefits, while favoring companies over local farmers.<sup>76</sup>

Such cases highlight how impact investing schemes can drive positive change while still generating financial return if designed and implemented properly. Yet, they also reveal the risks of market-driven approaches that often prioritize investors over local communities.

- ❖ **Development Impact Bonds (DIBs)** are a form of impact investing where private investors fund development programs and receive returns from a third-party donor if predefined, independently verified outcomes are achieved.<sup>77</sup> DIBs offer benefits such as aligning stakeholder incentives, transferring risk from donors to investors, and enhancing efficiency in development programs; however, they also face challenges such as high transaction costs, complex structuring, difficulties in measuring outcomes, limited scalability, and a narrow focus on quantifiable results.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> GIIN, n.d. <https://thegiin.org/publication/post/about-impact-investing/#what-is-impact-investing>

<sup>71</sup> Paces Ferry Wealth Advisors, n.d. <https://pacesferrywealth.com/impact-investing-pros-and-cons/>

<sup>72</sup> Siemens, 2020. <https://www.siemens-stiftung.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/studie-socialenterprisesasjobcreatorsinafrica-part2-siemensstiftung.pdf>

<sup>73</sup> EDFI. 2023. "Inua Impact Fund." EDFI. <https://edfimc.eu/project/inua-impact-fund/>

<sup>74</sup> Ibid

<sup>75</sup> Greenwashing refers to the act of making false or misleading statements about the environmental benefits of a product or practice. Source: Lindwall, 2023. <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/what-greenwashing>.

<sup>76</sup> Kureeba and Kamukama, 2022. <https://globalforestcoalition.org/uganda-offsetting-case-study/>.

<sup>77</sup> Center for Global Development, n.d. <https://www.cgdev.org/topics/development-impact-bonds>

<sup>78</sup> Tamplin, 2023. <https://www.financestrategists.com/wealth-management/bonds/development-impact-bonds-dibs/>

DIBs are a relatively new approach; therefore, not many development projects in Africa have used this approach. However, Africa’s first DIB project, a “poverty graduation” program implemented by [Village Enterprise](#), supported small groups of “ultra-poor” community members in launching microenterprises by offering training, an initial US\$100 grant, and an additional grant for successful businesses to help them grow their assets and savings.<sup>79</sup> This DIB demonstrated resilience by successfully adapting to COVID-19 challenges by shifting to digital operations, renegotiating contracts, and maintaining stakeholder commitment, while similar results-based financing models were abandoned or altered.<sup>80</sup> While this example is promising, further exploration of the DIB model is needed in the context of Uganda and Sub-Saharan Africa more broadly.

- ❖ **Results-Based Financing (RBF)** is a performance-driven approach that rewards individuals or institutions only after verified outcomes are achieved, promoting accountability, local solutions, and strengthened impact measurement.<sup>81</sup> Development Impact Bonds (DIBs) are a form of RBF, which offers a structured way to measure and incentivize development outcomes. However, in practice, RBF faces several challenges including misaligned incentives and difficulties achieving verifiable results, especially in countries with weak governance.<sup>82</sup>

There have been a number of both successful and unsuccessful cases of RBF for development in Uganda. One successful example is an RBF project implemented by [Living Goods](#) in partnership with [Instiglio](#), [Innovations for Poverty Action \(IPA\)](#), and [Global Development Incubator](#). This project built on a successful 2018 pilot by refining a RBF model to enhance the performance of 1,165 community health workers across six districts, with funding linked to the verification of quality care through Living Goods’ Smart Health app, and ensured that community health workers could continue delivering essential healthcare safely and effectively amid the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>83</sup> Through this initiative, it was learned that complex RBF models are challenging in community health contexts due to external, uncontrollable factors compared to more stable conditions in established health facility settings; thus using a simplified RBF model is essential in community health contexts to ensure cost-effectiveness and prevent payment reductions.<sup>84</sup>

Another successful example is the [Uganda Reproductive, Maternal, and Child Health Improvement Project \(URMCHIP\)](#), co-funded by the Government of Uganda, the World Bank’s [Global Financing Facility](#), and the [Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency](#). This intervention used performance-based incentives to encourage the use of essential health services within target districts, particularly those related to

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<sup>79</sup> Saldinger, 2022. <https://www.devex.com/news/development-impact-bond-in-uganda-kenya-hits-targets-despite-covid-19-102670>

<sup>80</sup> Ibid

<sup>81</sup> World Bank. n.d (c). <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/reach>

<sup>82</sup> Klingebiel, 2011. [https://www.idos-research.de/uploads/media/BP\\_17.2011.pdf](https://www.idos-research.de/uploads/media/BP_17.2011.pdf)

<sup>83</sup> Living Goods, 2023. <https://livinggoods.org/media/results-based-financing-testing-an-innovative-outcome-focused-approach/>.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid

reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health.<sup>85</sup> A ThinkWell report concluded that RBF provided much-needed flexible funding to health centers, improving service delivery.<sup>86</sup>

On the contrary, the DFID-funded RBF program in Northern Uganda had mixed results. This project aimed to improve healthcare in post-conflict Acholi communities by providing performance-based funding to 21 private-not-for-profit (PNFP) health facilities, while also comparing its impact to input-based financing (IBF) in 10 PNFP facilities in the Lango sub-region.<sup>87</sup> The project experienced challenges that highlighted the need to improve planning, local capacity building, and financial management process to maximize the benefits of RBF.<sup>88</sup> These examples show that while RBF has shown potential to improve service delivery in certain contexts, its success depends on careful design, strong governance, and local capacity to ensure that financial incentives align with desired outcomes.

- ❖ **Venture Philanthropy** applies traditional venture capital principles to philanthropic efforts, specifically those that support charitable startups, green companies, or B corporations. Venture philanthropy offers long-term investment opportunities and capacity-building support to nonprofits to foster innovation and measurable social impact.<sup>89</sup> Unlike impact investing, Venture Philanthropy does not put as much emphasis on financial return. However, the model has been criticized by some for potentially forcing non-profits to adopt high-risk, for-profit models.<sup>90</sup>

In Uganda, **Yunus Social Business** invests in early-stage social enterprises across sectors like healthcare, agriculture, education, and renewable energy,<sup>91</sup> while **FINCA Ventures** provides patient capital and strategic support to early-stage enterprises focused on financial inclusion, healthcare, education, and energy access.<sup>92</sup> While these initiatives have operated successfully, others have faced challenges, including the *Uganda Youth Venture Capital Fund (UYVCF)*. Created to address youth unemployment by providing accessible capital through commercial banks, the Fund struggled due to a focus on low-employment sectors, limited access for women and rural youth, collateral requirements, lack of mentorship, and weak monitoring.<sup>93</sup> Similarly, the *Graduate Venture Capital Fund* failed to launch due to

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<sup>85</sup> World Bank, n.d (d). <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P155186>.

<sup>86</sup> Nakyanzi et al., 2024. <https://thinkwell.global/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Results-based-financing-and-local-health-system-performance.pdf>.

<sup>87</sup> Valadez et al., 2015. <https://www.gprba.org/>

<sup>88</sup> Ibid

<sup>89</sup> Hayes, 2022. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/v/venture-philanthropy.asp>

<sup>90</sup> Davis and Etchart, 2017. <https://www.iadb.org/en/news/venture-philanthropy-panacea-or-snake-oil>

<sup>91</sup> Yunus Social Business, 2024. <https://www.yunusb.com/about>.

<sup>92</sup> FINCA Ventures, 2024. <https://fincaventures.com/>.

<sup>93</sup> Beckline et al., 2025.

[https://www.academia.edu/121211450/Promoting\\_self\\_employment\\_through\\_entrepreneurship\\_finance\\_lessons\\_from\\_the\\_Uganda\\_Youth\\_Venture\\_Capital\\_Fund](https://www.academia.edu/121211450/Promoting_self_employment_through_entrepreneurship_finance_lessons_from_the_Uganda_Youth_Venture_Capital_Fund)

insufficient government funding and faced similar challenges, including restrictive bank requirements, limited job creation potential, and inadequate entrepreneurial training.<sup>94</sup>

**Table 1: A Comparison of Innovative Development Financing Mechanisms**

Mechanism	Key Features	Benefits	Challenges
<b>Microfinance</b>	Small loans for low-income individuals or communities excluded from mainstream banking.	Promotes financial independence, supports entrepreneurship, provides access to services in remote areas.	High interest rates, potential exploitation, limited long-term income impact.
<b>Blended Finance</b>	Combines public concessional ODA with private or additional public funds to mobilize development finance.	Attracts private investment, improves financial sustainability, scales development projects.	Prioritizes profit over social outcomes, risks unequal access, potential market distortions.
<b>Impact Investing</b>	Investments aiming for both financial returns and measurable social or environmental impact.	Aligns investments with values, offers positive social impact and financial returns, fosters innovation.	Lower returns compared to traditional investments, requires long-term commitment, and careful research.
<b>Development Impact Bonds (DIBs)</b>	Private investors fund development programs and receive returns from donors if outcomes are achieved.	Aligns stakeholder incentives, promotes innovation, enhances program efficiency.	High transaction costs, complex structuring, limited scalability, focus on quantifiable results, reliant on willing investors and donors.
<b>Results-Based Financing (RBF)</b>	Performance-driven, rewarding after verified outcomes.	Promotes accountability, local solutions, improves measurement in education systems.	Misaligned incentives, limited experience, difficult to measure results in weak governance contexts.
<b>Venture Philanthropy</b>	Applies venture capital principles to philanthropic efforts,	Long-term investments, capacity-building support,	Forces non-profits to adopt for-profit models, carries high

<sup>94</sup> Beckline et al., 2025.

[https://www.academia.edu/121211450/Promoting\\_self\\_employment\\_through\\_entrepreneurship\\_financing\\_Lessons\\_from\\_the\\_Uganda\\_Youth\\_Venture\\_Capital\\_Fund](https://www.academia.edu/121211450/Promoting_self_employment_through_entrepreneurship_financing_Lessons_from_the_Uganda_Youth_Venture_Capital_Fund)

	focusing on startups or social enterprises.	fosters innovation, measurable social impact.	risks, uncertain returns.
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Overall, this analysis highlights four key challenges with the use of alternative financing mechanisms, including (a) financial sustainability; (b) misalignment of profit and impact; (c) scalability and efficiency; and (d) local adaptability.

- (a) **Financial sustainability:** Both microfinance and venture philanthropy face instability due to reliance on external funding.<sup>95</sup> Microfinance can trap borrowers in debt through high-interest rates, while venture philanthropy depends heavily on donor contributions, limiting long-term independence.<sup>96</sup>
- (b) **Misalignment of profit and impact:** While blended finance and impact investing attract private sector investment into development projects, they risk prioritizing financial returns over social outcomes. Investors may favor more profitable ventures over those addressing urgent development needs.<sup>97</sup>
- (c) **Scalability and efficiency:** Development Impact Bonds (DIBs) and Results-Based Financing (RBF) face structural challenges. DIBs require complex arrangements, extensive monitoring, and high transaction costs, making large-scale implementation difficult.<sup>98</sup> RBF’s focus on measurable outcomes can lead to short-term priorities over long-term development.<sup>99</sup>
- (d) **Local adaptability:** RBF and venture philanthropy may struggle with contextual relevance. RBF often imposes external performance metrics that fail to reflect the nuanced challenges faced by communities,<sup>100</sup> while venture philanthropy may push non-profits toward for-profit models that do not align with their missions.<sup>101</sup>

Overall, despite the broad array of alternative financing mechanisms available, most do not translate well to benefit the world’s poorest and most marginalized populations, specifically in complex socio-economic contexts across Sub-Saharan Africa. Amidst the current global financial crisis and the decline in ODA, social enterprise has emerged as a more sustainable and locally appropriate alternative that overcomes the major limitations of other approaches.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Corporate Finance Institute, n.d. <https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/commercial-lending/microfinance/>  
<sup>96</sup> Davis and Etchart, 2017. <https://www.iadb.org/en/news/venture-philanthropy-panacea-or-snake-oil>  
<sup>97</sup> Paces Ferry Wealth Advisors, n.d. <https://pacesferrywealth.com/impact-investing-pros-and-cons/>; Pereira, 2017. <https://oxfamlibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620186/rr-blended-finance-130217-en.pdf>  
<sup>98</sup> Tamplin, 2023. <https://www.financestrategists.com/wealth-management/bonds/development-impact-bonds-dibs/>  
<sup>99</sup> Klingebiel, 2011. [https://www.idos-research.de/uploads/media/BP\\_17.2011.pdf](https://www.idos-research.de/uploads/media/BP_17.2011.pdf)  
<sup>100</sup> Klingebiel, 2011. [https://www.idos-research.de/uploads/media/BP\\_17.2011.pdf](https://www.idos-research.de/uploads/media/BP_17.2011.pdf)  
<sup>101</sup> Davis and Etchart, 2017. <https://www.iadb.org/en/news/venture-philanthropy-panacea-or-snake-oil>  
<sup>102</sup> WACSI. 2023. <https://wacsi.org/who-we-are/>; Investopedia, 2024. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/social-enterprise.asp>

## 4. Social Enterprise & Value Chain Solutions

### 4.1 Social Enterprise: Key Concepts & Benefits

Most experts and practitioners believe that there is no common, universally adopted, definition of Social Enterprise. Rather, it is more of a concept that has emerged at the intersection of profit and impact, whereby entities use for-profit business models to generate revenue while also driving positive socio-economic or environmental change through its operations.<sup>103</sup> Lumpkin et al. (2013) define social enterprise as “the process of creating social value in which resources are combined with innovative ideas to meet social needs,” while Morales et al. (2021) argue that there are different forms of social entrepreneurship including nonprofit and for-profit, yet all aim to “maximize profits while providing solutions to community-based problems.”<sup>104</sup>

In their review of the social enterprise landscape in Uganda, Turyakira et al. (2024) identified several unique functions of the model, including to:

- Supplement government efforts to improve the socio-economic conditions of marginalized populations, primarily through education and employment.
- Improve the well-being of all persons in Uganda through interventions across health, education, and environmental protection.<sup>105</sup>

Common activities undertaken by social entrepreneurs in Uganda include training, agricultural value addition, financial support through cooperative savings groups, business marketing to promote products primarily through social media, and reforestation through tree-planting. Their analysis was based on the inclusion of women and girls in value chains, but did not include persons with disabilities as a marginalized group.<sup>106</sup> However, their qualitative research concluded that social enterprise is playing an effective role in advancing the sustainable development goals for all people in Uganda.<sup>107</sup>

The West African Civil Society Institute (WACSI) argues that an entity must meet the following four criterion to be considered a social enterprise:<sup>108</sup>

1. The primary objective is to create positive **social and/or environmental impact**
2. Built upon a **for-profit** business model that promotes entrepreneurship
3. The enterprise structure is **participatory** and democratic in nature
4. At least a portion of **profits are reinvested** into the entity’s operations

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<sup>103</sup> Investopedia, 2024. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/social-enterprise.asp>

<sup>104</sup> Turyakira et al., 2024. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/jwam-02-2023-0011/full/html>

<sup>105</sup> Ibid

<sup>106</sup> Ibid

<sup>107</sup> Ibid

<sup>108</sup> WACSI, 2023. <https://wacsi.org/who-we-are/>

Further, WACSI identifies five core “Building Blocks of Social Entrepreneurship”, which include:<sup>109</sup>

1. **Beneficiary Group:** Defined as the individuals or larger populations that benefits from the social and/or environmental value created through the enterprise. While products or services may be the obvious answer, social enterprises can create value through their existence by offering education and/or employment opportunities to people who would otherwise not have them, no matter what the enterprise’s end product or service is.<sup>110</sup>
2. **Customer Group:** The group of people willing to pay for a product or service created by the enterprise. They may, in some cases, also be a part of the beneficiary group.<sup>111</sup>
3. **Revenue Model:** A self-sustaining stream of income generated through enterprise activities, including products and services. Revenue should exist outside of direct financial contributions from donors. Much like a private business, the only exception to this rule would be start-up capital or investment.<sup>112</sup>
4. **Intentional Positive Impact:** The enterprise must state and measure the impact it intends to achieve in relation to the beneficiary group. While traditional for-profit business models typically focus on maximizing financial value, social enterprises also value the measurable impact that their operations have.<sup>113</sup>
5. **Innovation:** The enterprise must seek to be innovative, actively use new strategies that improve operations and/or outputs, including creating value with the same or fewer resources.<sup>114</sup>

Many practitioners believe that innovation is the key to a successful social enterprise and argue that it exists at the intersection of the enterprise’s desirability, viability, and feasibility - all of which must be met for a social enterprise to thrive.<sup>115</sup>

- ❖ **Desirability:** Refers to how desirable, or needed, the enterprise is. Do people want this product or service? To what extent are the offering(s) in demand?
- ❖ **Viability:** Refers to how sustainable the business model is. Will the enterprise be profitable, whereby revenue exceeds costs? How likely is it that the enterprise will have a positive impact on target communities? Is this idea financially worth investing in?
- ❖ **Feasibility:** Refers to the technical capacity of an enterprise to deliver. Does it have the resources it needs to implement what it intends to? Can the enterprise reach its target population?

Before launching a social enterprise, it is critical for founders to ask questions such as those listed above to ensure that their business model and operational concept can withstand the many

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid

<sup>110</sup> Ibid

<sup>111</sup> Ibid

<sup>112</sup> Ibid

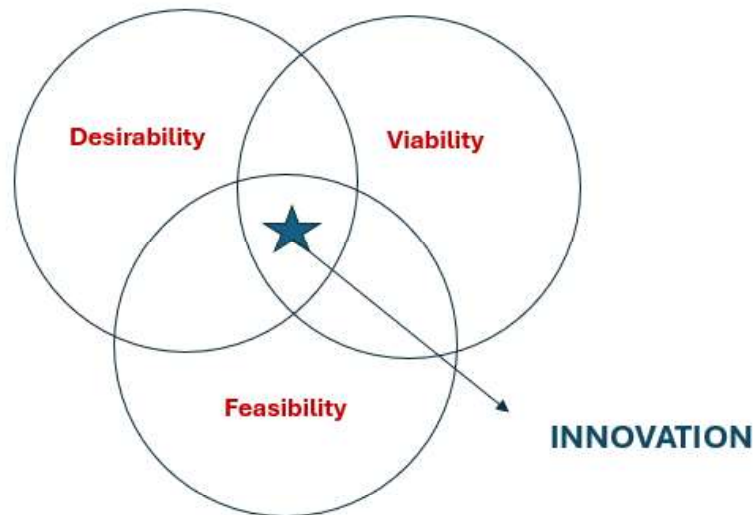
<sup>113</sup> Ibid

<sup>114</sup> Ibid

<sup>115</sup> Ibid

challenges it may face. Doing this as early as possible, ideally during the design phase, allows enterprise founders to anticipate and mitigate risks associated with implementation and scaling.

**Figure 1:** Innovation at the center of desirability, viability, and feasibility<sup>116</sup>



While innovation often appears at the center of social entrepreneurship, Michael Boyles (2022) cautions against the model becoming nothing more than a buzzword. Boyles says that ideas which are truly innovative are new and creative – but more importantly, they are also useful.<sup>117</sup> Therefore, innovative strategies should be leveraged to help enterprises achieve very specific goals, such as enhancing existing processes or technologies to improve an end product or disrupting the status quo by creating new markets or market segments.<sup>118</sup> Overall, innovation fosters enterprise growth, promotes adaptability, and effectively separates a business from its competitors<sup>119</sup> - all of which are goals shared by many NGOs currently navigating a challenging geopolitical environment.

Competitive advantage is among the most important benefits of adopting a social enterprise model, particularly for NGOs that seek to engage persons with disabilities across their supply chains. The following advantages have been identified by experts who argue that actively engaging people with disabilities is good for business:

- ❖ **Unique Market Access:** People with disabilities are experts in their own needs and therefore can offer valuable perspectives on the design, production, distribution, and/or marketing of a product or service, to appeal to a broader consumer base. Disability inclusion can, therefore, help businesses identify and enter into new markets that they otherwise may not have explored.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid

<sup>117</sup> Boyles, 2022. <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/importance-of-innovation-in-business>

<sup>118</sup> Ibid

<sup>119</sup> Ibid

<sup>120</sup> Nasir et al., n.d. <https://www.disabilityinnovation.com/blog/investing-in-inclusion>; Alemany and Vermeulen, 2023. <https://hbr.org/2023/07/disability-as-a-source-of-competitive-advantage>

- ❖ **Brand Loyalty Among People with Disabilities:** Disability inclusion along the value chain is considered a socially responsible act that can, alongside accessibility branding, boost brand loyalty among consumers, particularly those who identify as part of the disability community, themselves.<sup>121</sup> Globally, persons with disabilities are estimated to make up a consumer market comparable to the size of China, much of which is not strategically tapped into by mainstream enterprises.<sup>122</sup>
- ❖ **Untapped Talent Pool:** People with disabilities are uniquely skilled yet 75 percent of them are unemployed. Therefore, the disability community remains an untapped economic resource that should be utilized through engagement and inclusion to further increase production, output, and profit.<sup>123</sup>

According to the World Economic Forum, social enterprises are creating 200 million jobs globally across various sectors, including agriculture and financial services; therefore, they are proven to promote sustainable employment and income streams for millions of people in vulnerable communities across the Global South.<sup>124</sup>

Overall, social enterprise models ensure that financial success and development outcomes are achieved together by integrating social impact into their core business strategy to create economic and social value through decent work opportunities that also reduce poverty and levels of inequality over the long term.<sup>125</sup> By adopting a business model driven by market demand, social enterprises are less financially and politically vulnerable to donor preferences, ultimately allowing them to operate independently and scale organically without external intervention.<sup>126</sup> For those reasons, social enterprise is a viable solution to the current ODA crisis facing many NGOs and is particularly relevant to those seeking to improve socio-economic opportunities for human capital development.

#### ***4.2 Value Chain Analysis & Disability Inclusion***

Social enterprises can positively impact persons with disabilities through the products and services they provide; however, a more sustainable approach identifies the ways in which people with disabilities can participate in every step of the production process to boost economic mobility and value for them through employment creation. A value chain analysis can be used to determine the role and value of persons with disabilities at every stage and level of the production process. The Value Chain diagram below illustrates an analytical framework that distinguishes between primary and secondary enterprise activities:

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<sup>121</sup> Alemany and Vermeulen, 2023. <https://hbr.org/2023/07/disability-as-a-source-of-competitive-advantage>

<sup>122</sup> Alexiou, 2022. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/gusalexiou/2022/06/30/retailers-lose-billions-by-not-signposting-product-accessibility--new-report/?sh=1a1223854b07>

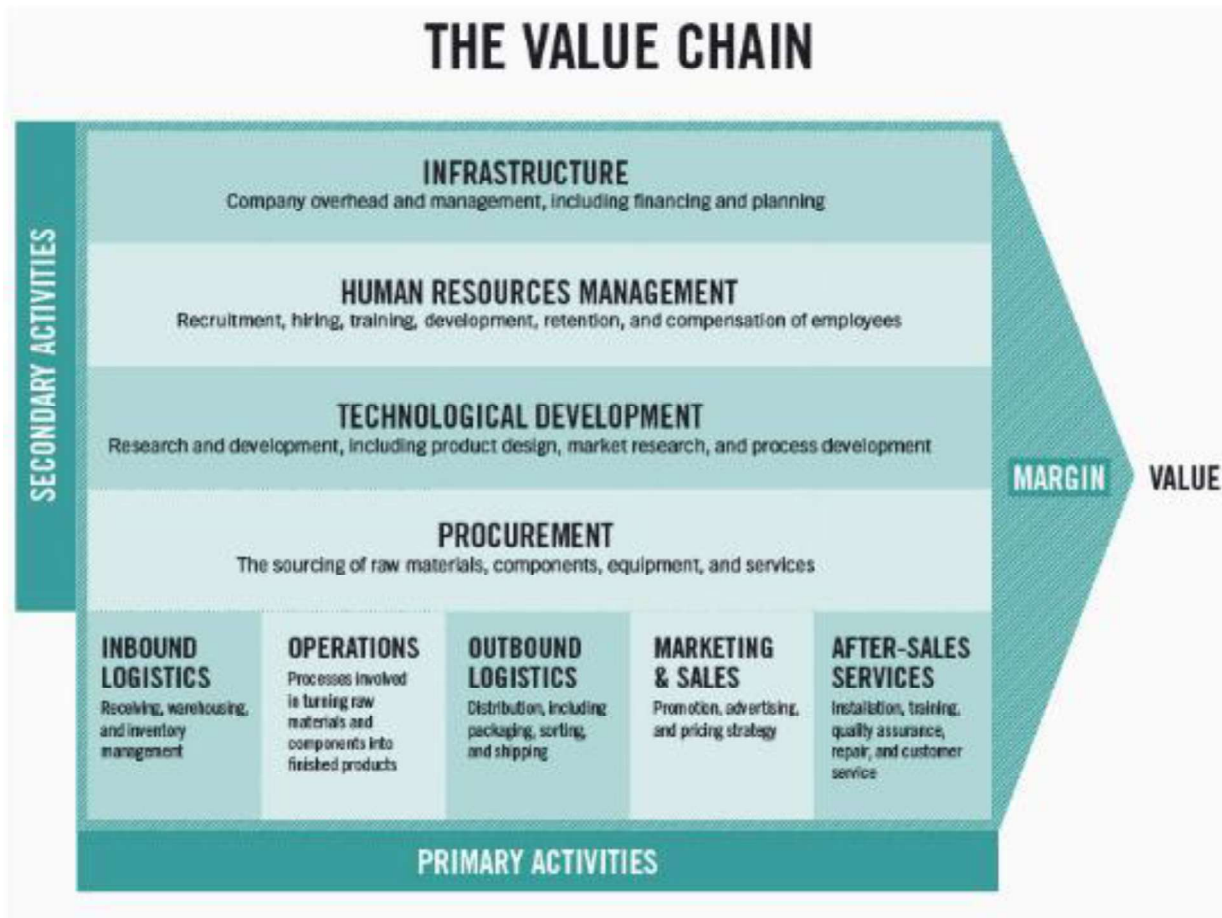
<sup>123</sup> Nasir et al., n.d. <https://www.disabilityinnovation.com/blog/investing-in-inclusion>

<sup>124</sup> World Economic Forum. (n.d.). <https://initiatives.weforum.org/global-alliance-for-social-entrepreneurship/state-of-the-sector>

<sup>125</sup> Bonnici, 2024. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/worldeconomicforum/2024/01/15/social-enterprises-impacted-more-than-891-million-lives-over-the-past-25-years>

<sup>126</sup> Soken-Huberty, n.d. <https://www.humanrightscareers.com/issues/features-of-a-social-enterprise/>

Figure 2: The value chain framework<sup>127</sup>



Primary activities refer to the stages of service or product development, including Inbound Logistics, Operations, Outbound Logistics, Marketing and Sales, and After-Sales Services. In an agricultural value chain, for example, these activities may be better understood as:

- I. **Inbound Logistics:** land cultivation, planting;
- II. **Operations:** crop production, harvest, storage, and processing;
- III. **Outbound Logistics:** Packing, shipping, and delivery;
- IV. **Marketing and Sales:** Branding, product advertising;
- V. **After-Sales Services:** Quality assurance, customer service, etc.

Secondary activities refer to processes that support primary activities, including enterprise Infrastructure, Human Resources, Technological and Knowledge Development, and Procurement. While these activities are spread across the enterprise, they can all be applied directly to each primary activity. Again, using an agricultural value chain as an example, secondary activities could include the following:

- I. **Infrastructure:** Arable land, water, access to productive seed varieties, farming tools, storage and processing facilities, transportation, functioning roadways, etc.

<sup>127</sup> Stobierski, 2020. <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/what-is-value-chain-analysis>

- II. **Human Resources:** Farmers, physical laborers, factory workers, delivery drivers, marketing professionals, etc.
- III. **Technological and Knowledge Development:** Tractors, improved seed varieties, commercial irrigation systems, industrial processing and packaging facilities, market research, etc.
- IV. **Procurement:** Reliable and cost-effective suppliers, supply chain contingency measures, etc.

Business development experts like Tim Stobierski say that performance improvements in at least one of four secondary activities will benefit at least one primary activity, leading to more efficient or cost-effective output that increases product value. Writing for Harvard Business Review, Stobierski says a value chain analysis should be conducted using the following steps:<sup>128</sup>

1. Identify all value chain activities (either across an industry or a specific organization)
2. Determine each activity's respective value and costs
3. Identify opportunities that improve processes, value and competitive advantage

Businesses analyze value chains for many reasons, including to improve supply chain management, improve customer satisfaction, make strategic decisions, and identify opportunities for innovation and social impact.<sup>129</sup> Therefore, this framework can be used to increase both the financial and social value of an enterprise that seeks to engage persons with disabilities across various value chains.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), through its SPARK initiative, created a step-by-step guide to Disability Inclusive Value Chain Development, as illustrated below. Of note is the need for enterprises to continuously analyze their activities, engage stakeholders, learn from experience, and effectively adapt to changes in their operating environment.<sup>130</sup> Therefore, leveraging disability inclusion as a means of adding value to products, services, processes, and industry requires regular monitoring, evaluation, and strategic revision.

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<sup>128</sup> Stobierski, 2020. <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/what-is-value-chain-analysis>

<sup>129</sup> Ibid

<sup>130</sup> SPARK. n.d. <https://sparkinclusion.org/disability-inclusive-value-chain-development/>

**Figure 5: Steps to Disability Inclusive Value Chain Development<sup>131</sup>**



### **4.3 Lessons from East Africa**

Social enterprise has emerged as a strategic avenue for addressing social and economic challenges in Kenya, particularly in sectors like agriculture and healthcare.<sup>132</sup> However, the growth of social enterprises in the country is constrained by limited access to finance, weak regulatory frameworks, and market barriers.<sup>133</sup>

One of the primary barriers to social enterprise expansion in Kenya is access to finance. The study by Smith and Darko (2014) found that while Kenya has a relatively strong presence of impact

<sup>131</sup> Ibid

<sup>132</sup> Smith and Darko, 2014. <https://odi.cdn.ngo/media/documents/8877.pdf>

<sup>133</sup> Ibid

investors and lenders, financing remains difficult for early-stage and mid-growth enterprises.<sup>134</sup> The research highlights that most social enterprises rely on internal resources and grants, as commercial lenders often favor established and commercially viable enterprises over startups or organizations with lower profit margins. Furthermore, impact investors in Kenya typically fund enterprises that are already profitable, making it difficult for smaller, high-impact ventures to secure capital. This financial gap limits the ability of social enterprises to scale, particularly in sectors requiring high initial investments, such as agriculture and healthcare.<sup>135</sup>

Smith and Darko (2014) also highlight that Kenya's regulatory framework for social enterprises remains underdeveloped, which presents both challenges and opportunities. While Kenya's government has taken a market-driven approach, encouraging private sector solutions to social issues, the lack of legal recognition for social enterprises has led to uncertainties regarding taxation, investment eligibility, and operational regulations.<sup>136</sup> Many social enterprises register as either NGOs or private companies, but neither category fully captures their hybrid nature, making it difficult for them to access targeted policy support.<sup>137</sup>

Another study conducted by Moellmann and Thomas (2019) analyzed social enterprise manufacturing initiatives in Kenya, which they argue have emerged as key drivers of economic and social transformation, particularly in sectors like renewable energy, agriculture, and healthcare.<sup>138</sup> Their research highlights the advantages of localizing production to minimize supply chain costs, particularly that of international transportation which often amounts to more than 50 percent of the total unit cost for products imported to East Africa.<sup>139</sup> The study's analysis of a solar cooker manufacturing enterprise found that producing locally in Nairobi reduced unit costs by 65% compared to manufacturing in the United States or China.<sup>140</sup>

The study also found that leveraging regional supply chains significantly reduced operational risks and costs, including foreign exchange rates, customs delays, and high import duties.<sup>141</sup> Further, establishing manufacturing facilities in proximity to demand centers, such as urban hubs and refugee settlements, was found to enhance market access and distribution efficiency, particularly for products designed to serve low-income and rural populations.<sup>142</sup> Overall, Moellmann and Thomas (2019) found that local manufacturing fosters economic development beyond product cost reduction. Rather, it contributes to job creation, the transfer of technical skills, and supports local industry expansion.<sup>143</sup>

The social enterprise landscape in Kenya largely mirrors that of Uganda, as both appear to be characterized by a lack of formal regulation and access to financing. Therefore, MWW and PTHA

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<sup>134</sup> Smith and Darko, 2014. <https://odi.cdn.ngo/media/documents/8877.pdf>

<sup>135</sup> Ibid

<sup>136</sup> Smith and Darko, 2014. <https://odi.cdn.ngo/media/documents/8877.pdf>.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid

<sup>138</sup> Moellmann and Thomas, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.seps.2019.02.009>

<sup>139</sup> Ibid

<sup>140</sup> The study's analysis of a solar cooker manufacturing enterprise found that producing locally in Nairobi reduced unit costs by 65% compared to manufacturing in the United States or China

<sup>141</sup> Moellmann and Thomas, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.seps.2019.02.009>

<sup>142</sup> Ibid

<sup>143</sup> Ibid

should take note of key lessons learned, including investor behavior, which seems to favor larger, more profitable enterprises. It is promising to see that manufacturing has succeeded as a key sector for social enterprise in Kenya, and that regional markets and supply chains have maximized their efficiency. Learning from Kenya, MWW and PTHA should consider centering their own social enterprise in an urban or peri-urban area, considering the findings that such a location better serves low-income populations.

## 5. Social Enterprise in Uganda

As of 2020, an estimated 27,400 social enterprises were already operating across Uganda and directly employing 62,300 people. By 2030, the number of people employed via social enterprise in Uganda is projected to be nearly 87,000.<sup>144</sup> This growth is expected to be driven by additional support from development partners and the Government of Uganda, which in recent years has introduced policies and tax exemptions to incentivize social entrepreneurship across the country. However, most government policies promoting business development, including the [Uganda Vision 2040](#),<sup>145</sup> primarily target Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), which benefit social enterprises to some extent, but do not adequately meet all of their needs.<sup>146</sup> These issues are further compounded by the absence of a dedicated government body to advocate for public policies and private sector collaboration that encourages social enterprise growth.<sup>147</sup>

Uganda's social enterprise landscape is largely concentrated in Kampala, where 68 percent of entrepreneurs belong to peer networking groups that promote collaboration and improve access to professional training, shared office space, and seed investment. These resources are not available to entrepreneurs outside the capital city, and therefore present an urban bias.<sup>148</sup> Overall, social entrepreneurship in Uganda faces several key challenges, including access to affordable financing, pre-investment training, and insufficient government support, which hinder the growth of the sector despite its potential to address socio-economic issues such as unemployment, poverty, and disability inclusion.<sup>149</sup>

The Government of Uganda has long been encouraged to increase attention and investment in social enterprise development by both private and civil society actors.<sup>150</sup> Currently, the social

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<sup>144</sup> Siemens, 2020. <https://www.siemens-stiftung.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/studie-socialenterprisesasjobcreatorsinafrica-part2-siemensstiftung.pdf>

<sup>145</sup> National Planning Authority 2013. <https://www.greenpolicyplatform.org/sites/default/files/downloads/policy-database/UGANDA%29%20Vision%202040.pdf>

<sup>146</sup> Siemens, 2020. <https://www.siemens-stiftung.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/studie-socialenterprisesasjobcreatorsinafrica-part2-siemensstiftung.pdf>

<sup>147</sup> Siemens, 2020. <https://www.siemens-stiftung.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/studie-socialenterprisesasjobcreatorsinafrica-part2-siemensstiftung.pdf>; National Planning Authority, 2013. <https://www.greenpolicyplatform.org/sites/default/files/downloads/policy-database/UGANDA%29%20Vision%202040.pdf>

<sup>148</sup> Siemens, 2020. <https://www.siemens-stiftung.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/studie-socialenterprisesasjobcreatorsinafrica-part2-siemensstiftung.pdf>

<sup>149</sup> Capital Solutions Ltd., 2020. <https://capitalsolutionsug.com/the-status-of-social-entrepreneurship-in-uganda/>; Siemens, 2020. <https://www.siemens-stiftung.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/studie-socialenterprisesasjobcreatorsinafrica-part2-siemensstiftung.pdf>

<sup>150</sup> Muhimba, 2024. <https://allafrica.com/stories/202412160090.html>.

enterprise landscape in Uganda is hindered by the lack of a specific government ministry or department dedicated to advancing the work of social entrepreneurs. With this, comes a lack of specific governing policies and funding for social innovation projects that limit opportunities for relationship building, networking, and information sharing between people in the industry.<sup>151</sup>

One area of reform that would encourage more entities to undertake social enterprise initiatives is taxation. Currently, social enterprise interventions that pursue both profit and purpose are categorized as private businesses and do not qualify for tax-exemptions that value-driven nonprofit organizations do.<sup>152</sup> In order to qualify for a charitable tax exemption, organizations must prove that its beneficiaries are not required to pay for services or “anything rendered by it”, and that activities do not intend to make profit.<sup>153</sup>

Despite these challenges, many successful social enterprises that aim to serve marginalized communities have been established in Uganda and are described in more detail below. Their ability to thrive is proof that this hybrid model can be used to provide education and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in ways that both the public and private sectors have historically struggled to do.<sup>154</sup>

### ***5.1 Existing Social Enterprises in Uganda***

In Uganda, social enterprises such as [era92 Group](#), [Social Innovation Academy \(SINA\)](#), [Eco Brixs](#), and [Akaboxi](#) have been established to address challenges related to poverty, employment, and social inclusion among marginalized communities, including persons with disabilities. To date, their interventions have focused on providing vocational skills training for disadvantaged youth, improving financial inclusion through digitized savings schemes, promoting environmental sustainability and employment for people with disabilities through recycling initiatives.

- ❖ **era92 Group** is a conglomerate social enterprise that equips youth in slums across Kampala with digital skills to prepare them for Africa’s growing digital economy.<sup>155</sup> The organization has created over 2,000 jobs for disadvantaged youth, contributing to poverty alleviation and economic empowerment.<sup>156</sup> One of its key initiatives, *92 Cafe*, launched in 2024, is a social enterprise designed to create job opportunities for young women in hospitality.<sup>157</sup> Another innovation, the *Elevate Booths*, converts shipping containers into digital classrooms to bring education to underserved communities. These booths have been launched in Jinja and Gulu, each impacting over 110 students at a time.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Muhimba, 2024. <https://allafrica.com/stories/202412160090.html>.

<sup>152</sup> TASLAF Advocates, 2022. <https://taslafadvocates.com/social-enterprise-taxation-in-uganda-defining-a-charitable-institution-for-purposes-of-exemption-from-income-tax/>.

<sup>153</sup> TASLAF Advocates, 2022. <https://taslafadvocates.com/social-enterprise-taxation-in-uganda-defining-a-charitable-institution-for-purposes-of-exemption-from-income-tax/>.

<sup>154</sup> Turyakira et al., 2024. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/jwam-02-2023-0011/full/html>

<sup>155</sup> Era92 Group, n.d (d). <https://era92.com/>

<sup>156</sup> Era29 Group, n.d (b). <https://era92.com/impact/>

<sup>157</sup> Era29 Group, n.d (c). <https://era92.com/the-year-of-unlocking-brilliance-amidst-chaos/>

<sup>158</sup> Era29 Group, n.d (a). <https://era92.com/breaking-barriers-to-employment-for-youth-in-slums-across-uganda/>

- ❖ **Eco Brixs** is a social enterprise dedicated to combating plastic waste while creating employment opportunities for marginalized populations, including people with disabilities, through recycling initiatives.<sup>159</sup> The organization has provided jobs to over 4,600 people, 50 percent of which are people with disabilities who otherwise struggle to enter the job market, and has recycled more than 1,803 tons of plastic.<sup>160</sup>
- ❖ **Akaboxi** is a social enterprise that enhances financial inclusion by digitizing community savings and credit schemes in rural Uganda while including persons with disabilities.<sup>161</sup> Akaboxi provides digital banking platforms that link community savings groups to financial institutions, digital financial training literacy for people with disabilities,, and provides mobile technology for real-time transaction tracking to replace traditional cash-in-hand models.<sup>162</sup> This digitization has enabled thousands of rural Ugandans to access safer and more transparent financial services, further promoting economic independence.<sup>163</sup>
- ❖ **Social Innovation Academy (SINA)** is a non-governmental organization that invests in young social entrepreneurs as they develop and scale their own social enterprises.<sup>164</sup> This organization fosters self-organized learning spaces where disadvantaged youth learn to become social entrepreneurs. SINA’s academy in the Congo targets youth with disabilities.<sup>165</sup> To date, more than 100 individuals have launched social ventures in renewable energy, education, and other sectors, as a result of SINA’s unique Freeresponsible Education Model, which encourages self-reliance and creativity to address unemployment.<sup>166</sup> The model has successfully scaled to 6 countries across Africa.<sup>167</sup>

In addition to the social enterprises that have already been established in Uganda, a number of non-profit organizations, such as those highlighted below, exist to support social enterprise development and entrepreneurship for people with disabilities across the country.

- ❖ **United Persons with Disabilities Uganda (UPDU)** is a non-profit organization that advocates for the employment and social inclusion of people with disabilities. Through training and policy advocacy, UPDU works to create job opportunities for those typically excluded from employment markets. Notably, the organization has pushed for a Disability Employment Quota to ensure a fixed percentage of jobs in both public and private sectors are held by people with disabilities.<sup>168</sup> This idea has been proposed to the government, but

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<sup>159</sup> Eco Brixs, 2021.

<https://reachvolunteering.org.uk/sites/default/files/Eco%20Brixs%202021%20Summary%20%287%29.pdf>

<sup>160</sup> Eco Brixs, n.d. <https://www.ecobrixs.org/impact>

<sup>161</sup> Akaboxi, 2023. <http://www.akaboxii.com/akaboxi-competitors/>

<sup>162</sup> Ibid

<sup>163</sup> Response Innovation Lab, n.d. <https://www.responseinnovationlab.com/innovations-marketplace/akaboxi>

<sup>164</sup> SINA, n.d. <https://socialinnovationacademy.org/our-vision/>

<sup>165</sup> SINA. 2021. “Congo Innovation Academy.” *Social Innovation Academy*.

<https://socialinnovationacademy.org/congo-innovation-academy/>

<sup>166</sup> Business Ecosystem Alliance, n.d. <https://business-ecosystem-alliance.org/2024/11/18/sina/>

<sup>167</sup> Ibid

<sup>168</sup> ULII, 2020. <https://ulii.org/akn/ug/act/2020/3/eng%402020-02-14>

no commitments have been made yet as of December 2024.<sup>169</sup> The organization has also developed an Employment-First Policy Course that educates employers and policymakers on inclusive hiring practices.<sup>170</sup> Employment-First Policy Course measure for impact data is non-existent due to the lack of commitment from the government.<sup>171</sup> Further, UPDU's [Twezimbe Project for Inclusion](#) supports employment cooperatives for people with disabilities by providing microcredit and business training to foster economic empowerment.<sup>172</sup>

- ❖ **Eliezah Foundation Initiative Uganda (EFI)** is a non-profit organization that seeks to empower women, including those with disabilities, through social entrepreneurship and gender-based violence prevention programs. The foundation provides shelter, legal aid, and business training to vulnerable women.<sup>173</sup> Its [Community Business Incubator](#) offers mentorship and market access to women entrepreneurs. Recognizing the importance of technology, EFI has introduced a Digital Literacy Program to equip women with essential business-related digital skills.<sup>174</sup> Additionally, the organization offers Emergency Gender-Based Violence Services, such as offering counseling, medical care, and safe spaces to ensure that vulnerable women receive the necessary support to participate in economic activities safely.<sup>175</sup>
- ❖ **F6S** is a comprehensive online platform that connects social enterprises in Uganda with valuable resources, networks, and funding opportunities. It features detailed listings of companies focused on social impact, allowing entrepreneurs and organizations in Uganda to gain visibility and access support programs.<sup>176</sup> Users can explore a wide range of social enterprises addressing issues like education, healthcare, environmental sustainability, and poverty alleviation. The platform also offers tools for discovering funding options, mentorship, and networking opportunities, helping to foster growth and scalability for social enterprises. Additionally, F6S serves as a bridge for investors and stakeholders interested in supporting initiatives that create positive change in Uganda, promoting collaboration and driving the growth of impactful businesses across the country.<sup>177</sup>

## 5.2 Aligning Social Enterprise Interventions with Uganda's National Development Strategy

In 2007, Uganda released [Vision 2040](#) - a long-term, national development strategy designed to foster economic growth and attract foreign investment. Its Vision Statement was, "*A transformed Ugandan society from a peasant to a modern and prosperous country within 30 years,*" to be achieved through the implementation of six 5-year National Development Plans (NDPs) and

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<sup>169</sup> Enuru, 2024. <https://nilepost.co.ug/news/230466>

<sup>170</sup> United Persons with Disabilities Uganda, n.d. <https://upds-uganda.org/employment-first-policy-practice-course/>

<sup>171</sup> ULII, 2020. <https://ulii.org/akn/ug/act/2020/3/eng%402020-02-14>

<sup>172</sup> Beyond Uganda, n.d. <https://beyonduganda.org/index.php/twezimbe-project/>

<sup>173</sup> efiug.org, n.d (b). <https://efiug.org/our-work/>

<sup>174</sup> efiug.org, n.d (a). "Digital Literacy Program." Employment for Inclusive Uganda. <https://efiug.org/our-work/promote-learning/digital-literacy-program/>

<sup>175</sup> efiug.org, 2024. <https://efiug.org/our-commitment-to-protect-women-girls/>

<sup>176</sup> F6S, 2025. <https://www.f6s.com/companies/social-enterprise/uganda/co>

<sup>177</sup> Ibid

similar strategies for sector-specific investment and local government.<sup>178</sup> Overall, Vision 2040 identified the following key priority areas for strengthened investment and development:

- ❖ Natural Resource Extraction; oil and gas, minerals (phosphate and iron ore), and water.
- ❖ Tourism
- ❖ Information Communication and Technology (ICT)
- ❖ Agriculture
- ❖ Urban Development
- ❖ Peace, Security and Defense

Vision 2040 identified **five regional cities** (Gulu, Mbale, Kampala, Mbarara, Arua) and **five strategic cities** (Hoima, Nakasongola, Forportal, Moroto, Jinja) to urbanize as hubs of industry and development, along with four international airports, national high-speed train networks, and “globally competitive skills development centers,” among other projects.<sup>179</sup> Overall, Uganda’s goal is to become an upper-middle-income country by 2040.

### 5.2.1 2020-2024: The Third National Development Plan

The third NDP iteration was launched in 2020, covering a five-year period through 2024. Its goal was “to increase household incomes and improve [the] quality of life of Ugandans,” under the overall theme of “Sustainable industrialization for inclusive growth, employment, and sustainable wealth creation.”<sup>180</sup> The plan’s primary objectives included the following:

1. Enhance value addition in key growth opportunities;
2. Strengthen the private sector to create jobs;
3. Consolidate and increase the stock and quality of productive infrastructure;
4. Enhance the productivity and social wellbeing of the population;
5. Strengthen the role of the state in guiding and facilitating development.

Additionally, the NDP laid out sector-specific priorities, many of which are relevant to this project, including the following:

1. **Agro-processing:** Uganda's agricultural strategy focuses on transforming the sector into a productive and competitive industry, primarily by shifting away from subsistence farming and towards commercial agriculture. The plan identifies significant potential for agro-processing as an industry that will create jobs, boost exports, and improve food security in the region.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> National Planning Authority, 2013. <https://www.greenpolicyplatform.org/sites/default/files/downloads/policy-database/UGANDA%29%20Vision%202040.pdf>

<sup>179</sup> Ibid

<sup>180</sup> National Planning Authority, 2020. [https://www.npa.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/NDPIII-Finale\\_Compresed.pdf](https://www.npa.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/NDPIII-Finale_Compresed.pdf)

<sup>181</sup> National Planning Authority, 2013. <https://www.greenpolicyplatform.org/sites/default/files/downloads/policy-database/UGANDA%29%20Vision%202040.pdf>; National Planning Authority, 2020. [https://www.npa.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/NDPIII-Finale\\_Compresed.pdf](https://www.npa.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/NDPIII-Finale_Compresed.pdf)

2. **Tourism:** Further development with the goal of making Uganda a preferred tourist destination, particularly in comparison to other countries in the region. Through increased investment, Uganda hopes to achieve a boost in tourist arrivals, increased revenue, and increased employment opportunities within the sector.<sup>182</sup>
3. **Manufacturing:** Through increased investment and workforce participation, Uganda aims to increase the range and scale of goods produced domestically to ultimately lessen the country's own reliance on imports. The country aims to see a growth in the proportion of GDP generated by the industrial manufacturing sector, along with a greater proportion of the workforce employed through its activities.<sup>183</sup>
4. **Human Capital Development:** Uganda aims to increase the productivity of its population as a means of driving competitive advantage and improving quality of life for its citizens. Through increased investment, it aims to see an increase in years of schooling, a greater proportion of the labor force transitioning to gainful employment, improved child and maternal health outcomes, greater life expectancy, greater access to safe water and sanitation, and better access to social protection services. Disability inclusion was only briefly mentioned.

#### 5.2.2 2025-2030: The Fourth National Development Plan

The next five-year NDP is currently awaiting approval to be implemented between 2025 and 2030. Its goal is to “Achieve higher household incomes, full monetization of the economy and employment for sustainable socio-economic transformation,” under the theme of “Sustainable Industrialization for Inclusive Growth, Employment, and Wealth Creation.”<sup>184</sup> The plan's five strategic objectives include:

1. Sustainably increase production, productivity and value addition in agriculture, industry, minerals, oil and gas, tourism, ICT and financial services;
2. Enhance human capital development along the entire life cycle;
3. Support the private sector to drive growth and create jobs;
4. Build and maintain strategic sustainable infrastructure in transport, housing, energy, water, industry and ICT;
5. Strengthen good governance, security, and the role of the State in development.

This strategy is expected to cost an estimated 593,646 billion UGX, of which 69.6 percent will be absorbed by the Government of Uganda, while the remaining 30.4 percent will be financed by the private sector, indicating a national push and appetite for public-private partnerships to drive national development.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> National Planning Authority, 2020. [https://www.npa.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/NDPIII-Finale\\_Compressed.pdf](https://www.npa.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/NDPIII-Finale_Compressed.pdf)

<sup>183</sup> Ibid

<sup>184</sup> National Planning Authority, 2024. <https://parliamentwatch.ug/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/PDF-FINAL-NDPIV-for-Parliament-Approval-13122024-1.pdf>

<sup>185</sup> Ibid

Overall, the NDPs and Vision 2040 highlight the strategic priorities that the Government of Uganda is willing to support and invest in over the short- to mid-term. While investing in the human capital development of persons with disabilities has not been explicitly mentioned as a national priority, the following thematic areas have been: human capital development of the entire population, increased education and employment opportunities for all, increased household income and economic empowerment, private sector growth, and strengthened social protection schemes. As such, there is immense opportunity for the integration of people with disabilities within these priority areas, particularly through employment across key value chains in Uganda’s strategic sectors including agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, and ICT development.

## 6. Market-led Opportunities for Investment

This section outlines some of the most prominent employment sectors in Uganda where persons with disabilities have successfully been employed across their respective value chains, including agriculture and agri-food processing, textiles and manufacturing, and information communication technology (ICT). These employment sectors were chosen for analysis based on their relevance to existing industry and their alignment with Uganda’s National Development Strategy.

### 6.1 Agriculture and Agri-food Processing

Turyakira et al (2024) say that agriculture is “the backbone” of Uganda’s economy.<sup>186</sup> It employs roughly 73 percent of the country’s workforce<sup>187</sup> and accounts for 21 percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP).<sup>188</sup> Uganda is a leading producer of coffee and bananas, with most smallholder farmers engaged in crop production, forestry, horticulture, fishing, and livestock rearing.<sup>189</sup> Before 2040, the Government of Uganda aims to expand the agricultural sector away from smallholder farming and towards industrial production so that the country can become a competitive exporter to regional and global markets.<sup>190</sup> In order to increase both the quantity and quality of produce, the government plans to prioritize investment in agricultural technology, including machinery, large-scale irrigation systems, seed varieties, and low-cost fertilizer.<sup>191</sup>

The African Union High-Level Panel on Emerging Technologies (APET) identified three major barriers for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in agriculture across Sub-Saharan Africa, including (i) systemic, (ii) attitudinal, and (iii) environmental.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Turyakira et al., 2025. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/jwam-02-2023-0011/full/html>

<sup>187</sup> World Bank, n.d (a). <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/uganda/publication/uganda-economic-update-jobs-key-to-prosperity#:~:text=to%20improving%20productivity.-,Agriculture%20is%20the%20core%20of%20the%20economy%20and%20the%20primary,primarily%20in%20the%20rural%20area>

<sup>188</sup> National Planning Authority, 2013. <https://www.greenpolicyplatform.org/sites/default/files/downloads/policy-database/UGANDA%29%20Vision%202040.pdf>

<sup>189</sup> Ibid

<sup>190</sup> Ibid

<sup>191</sup> Ibid

<sup>192</sup> Ambali et al., 2023. <https://www.nepad.org/blog/inclusive-pathways-enhancing-participation-of-farmers-disability-agriculture>

- **Systemic barriers** consist of procedures, policies, and practices that overlook the needs of farmers with disabilities, resulting in their exclusion from meaningful participation in value chain activities, which is exacerbated by agribusinesses and government programs that fail to prioritize disability inclusion in agriculture.<sup>193</sup> A study in Northern Nigeria, conducted by Sango et al (2022) found that many disabled farmers encounter significant challenges in accessing savings, credit, and banking services, limiting their ability to invest in their farms; notably, 68% of these farmers lacked bank accounts due to insufficient savings.<sup>194</sup> Abdulsamad et al (2013) found that inadequate institutional support prevents smallholder farmers with disabilities from accessing crucial technological resources, further hindering their inclusion.<sup>195</sup>
- **Attitudinal barriers** refer to discriminatory behaviors and perceptions from communities and organizations that hinder the ability of farmers with disabilities to communicate, negotiate, and sell their products, while pervasive stigma and misconceptions lead many to believe that their products are of lower quality.<sup>196</sup> In Uganda, farmers with disabilities typically possess fewer assets than their peers without disabilities due to social stigma and discrimination.<sup>197</sup>
- **Environmental barriers** refer to the infrastructural limitations, both physical and digital, that hinder individuals with disabilities from engaging in agricultural activities, such as the absence of accessible facilities for training, transportation, storage, and marketing, as well as a lack of adaptive tools for various farming tasks and barriers to digital inclusion.<sup>198</sup> Most striking is their lack of access to mechanized farming tools, which forces them to rely on physically demanding manual labor.<sup>199</sup> Overall, the economic success of farmers with disabilities often relies on strong family and community support, which can be inconsistent and unreliable.<sup>200</sup>

A study by the Economic Policy Research Centre and the International Growth Centre highlighted agro-processing and horticulture as key sectors offering significant employment opportunities for the youth. According to the study, **agro-processing** dominates Uganda’s manufacturing sector, accounting for 60 percent of its output.<sup>201</sup> The study showed that with rising demand for high-value products in regional markets, the sector has potential for growth in exports and product

<sup>193</sup> Ambali et al., 2023. <https://www.nepad.org/blog/inclusive-pathways-enhancing-participation-of-farmers-disability-agriculture>

<sup>194</sup> Sango et al., 2022. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v11i0.897>

<sup>195</sup> Abdulsamad et al., 2013.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314505945\\_Realizing\\_the\\_Potential\\_of\\_African\\_Agriculture\\_Innovations\\_and\\_Market\\_Access\\_for\\_Smallholder\\_Farmers](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314505945_Realizing_the_Potential_of_African_Agriculture_Innovations_and_Market_Access_for_Smallholder_Farmers)

<sup>196</sup> Ambali et al., 2023. <https://www.nepad.org/blog/inclusive-pathways-enhancing-participation-of-farmers-disability-agriculture>

<sup>197</sup> Ghore, Y. (2016). “Participatory livelihoods mapping with persons with disabilities in Uganda.” IDS.

[https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/articles/online\\_resource/Participatory\\_Livelihoods\\_Mapping\\_with\\_Persons\\_with\\_Disabilities\\_in\\_Uganda/26479312?file=48253150](https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/articles/online_resource/Participatory_Livelihoods_Mapping_with_Persons_with_Disabilities_in_Uganda/26479312?file=48253150)

<sup>198</sup> Ambali et al., 2023. <https://www.nepad.org/blog/inclusive-pathways-enhancing-participation-of-farmers-disability-agriculture>

<sup>199</sup> Sango et al., 2022. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v11i0.897>

<sup>200</sup> Ibid

<sup>201</sup> Mwesigwa, 2021. <https://eprcug.org/eprc-highlights/which-sectors-can-be-large-scale-job-creators-for-uganda/#:~:text=Agro%2Dprocessing,-According%20to%20the&text=Such%20sub%2Dsectors%20as%20food,and%20the%20youths%20in%20particular.>

diversification, including food processing, tobacco, and sawmilling.<sup>202</sup> **Horticulture**, consisting of floriculture and fresh fruit and vegetable production, was reported to be rapidly growing.<sup>203</sup> According to the study, floriculture has become Uganda's sixth largest non-traditional export, generating US\$61 million in foreign exchange in 2018, while employing over 9,000 rural workers, 70 percent of whom are women. Meanwhile, the fruits and vegetables sub-sector, which produces 5.3 million tons annually, was reported to be one of the fastest growing in the country, providing substantial employment in its labor-intensive cultivation process.<sup>204</sup> Finally, youth engagement, training, and employment across agricultural value chains will be critical to the future of agriculture in Uganda.<sup>205</sup>

Based on this review, MWW and PTHA may wish to consider the following if and when they design a social enterprise related to agricultural value chains:

- **Access to adaptive machinery** is critical for ensuring that persons with disabilities can physically participate in the production process and in skills training. Investing in assistive technologies and mechanized farming tools designed for people with disabilities would allow them to work more efficiently.<sup>206</sup>
- **Broader policy reforms** are also necessary to combat systemic discrimination and improve market access for farmers with disabilities.<sup>207</sup> A combination of financial support, technological adaptation, education, and inclusive policy changes is essential to ensuring that people with disabilities are fully integrated into agricultural value chains.
- **Agro-processing and horticulture** are industries that should be seriously considered due to their labor demand and potential for economic growth.
- **Invest in youth with disabilities** across agricultural value chains to ensure that they are trained to become critical members of Uganda's future workforce.

## 6.2 Manufacturing and Textiles

Industrial manufacturing in Uganda dates back to the 1960s, when state-owned factories were built to process cotton, steel, and rubber. An industry that could have set Uganda on a path to prosperity collapsed under Idi Amin's rule in the 1970s.<sup>208</sup> Since then, Uganda's lack of industrial policy has led to underinvestment in the manufacturing industry, resulting in the over-reliance on cheap imports. Today, only a small number of informal, unregistered, and unregulated factories are owned and operated by Ugandans, while most industrial factories are foreign-owned and

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<sup>202</sup> Mwesigwa, 2021. <https://eprcug.org/eprc-highlights/which-sectors-can-be-large-scale-job-creators-for-uganda/#:~:text=Agro%2Dprocessing,-According%20to%20the&text=Such%20sub%2Dsectors%20as%20food,and%20the%20youths%20in%20particular.>

<sup>203</sup> Ibid

<sup>204</sup> Ibid

<sup>205</sup> Guloba et al., 2021. <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/21.08.02-Uganda-IWOSS.pdf>

<sup>206</sup> Arhin, 2023. <https://uir.unisa.ac.za/items/818a6599-aba7-4072-b38d-19669e3f0d67>

<sup>207</sup> Ghore, Y. 2016. "Participatory livelihoods mapping with persons with disabilities in Uganda." IDS. [https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/articles/online\\_resource/Participatory\\_Livelihoods\\_Mapping\\_with\\_Persons\\_with\\_Disabilities\\_in\\_Uganda/26479312?file=48253150](https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/articles/online_resource/Participatory_Livelihoods_Mapping_with_Persons_with_Disabilities_in_Uganda/26479312?file=48253150)

<sup>208</sup> Shinyakwa et al., 2016. <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/32310/1/612770.pdf#page=224>

concentrated in Kampala, minimizing job opportunities for people in other parts of the country.<sup>209</sup> Today, the manufacturing sector contributes approximately 16 percent of Uganda's GDP.<sup>210</sup>

Construction materials, such as cement and steel, account for 61 percent of industrial activity in Uganda. Formal manufacturing of everyday goods, such as sugar, soap, and beverages, accounts for 20 percent, followed by electricity and water supply (19 percent).<sup>211</sup>

A review of sub-industries conducted by Calabrese et al. (2019) found that between 2010 and 2014, the production of textiles and clothing dropped by 11 percent, largely due to the influx of secondhand clothing from Western countries, as is the case across many Sub-Saharan economies.<sup>212</sup> Globally, many vocational skills and employment development programs have focused on textiles as a key entry point, especially for women, largely due to cultural norms and the simplicity of skills training that allow NGOs to maximize the number of participants reached.<sup>213</sup> However, market data shows that the textiles industry is not a suitable choice for a small scale social enterprise investment in Uganda, due to low revenue potential, saturated local and regional markets, as well as difficulty accessing profitable global markets.<sup>214</sup>

However, the same review by Calabrese et al. (2019) found that agri-food processing increased by 8 percent during the same period, suggesting higher market demand for agricultural byproducts.<sup>215</sup> As such, if MWW and PTHA consider a social enterprise that revolves around manufacturing, value-added food products appear to be among the most sustainable and profitable choices. Other products may also be considered if their value-add is unique, cost-efficient, and locally relevant.

### **6.3 Information Communication Technology (ICT)**

Uganda's Vision 2040 and National Development Strategies identify ICT as a key investment priority based on its potential to drive economic growth and employment, and transform other leading sectors, like agriculture, health, tourism, finance, and public administration.<sup>216</sup> As such, the Government of Uganda plans to make Uganda a regional tech hub using its five-year [Digital Transformation Roadmap \(2023-2028\)](#), which aims to achieve 90 percent household internet connectivity, broadband coverage, and citizen access to e-services by 2040.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Shinyakwa et al., 2016. <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/32310/1/612770.pdf#page=224>

<sup>210</sup> World Bank, n.d (b). <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.IND.MANF.ZS>

<sup>211</sup> Shinyakwa et al., 2016. <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/32310/1/612770.pdf#page=224>

<sup>212</sup> Calabrese et al. (2019). [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Linda-Calabrese/publication/341297907\\_Industrial\\_development\\_in\\_Uganda\\_An\\_assessment\\_of\\_the\\_policy\\_framework/links/5eb9c6d7a6fdcc1f1dd2ccaf/Industrial-development-in-Uganda-An-assessment-of-the-policy-framework.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Linda-Calabrese/publication/341297907_Industrial_development_in_Uganda_An_assessment_of_the_policy_framework/links/5eb9c6d7a6fdcc1f1dd2ccaf/Industrial-development-in-Uganda-An-assessment-of-the-policy-framework.pdf)

<sup>213</sup> Vijayarasa and Liu, 2024. <https://genderpolicyreport.umn.edu/from-fast-to-gender-just-fashion/#:~:text=Women%20%E2%80%93%20and%20often%20migrant%20women,unsafe%20and%20under%20Dunionized%20workplaces.>

<sup>214</sup> Calabrese et al. (2019). [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Linda-Calabrese/publication/341297907\\_Industrial\\_development\\_in\\_Uganda\\_An\\_assessment\\_of\\_the\\_policy\\_framework/links/5eb9c6d7a6fdcc1f1dd2ccaf/Industrial-development-in-Uganda-An-assessment-of-the-policy-framework.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Linda-Calabrese/publication/341297907_Industrial_development_in_Uganda_An_assessment_of_the_policy_framework/links/5eb9c6d7a6fdcc1f1dd2ccaf/Industrial-development-in-Uganda-An-assessment-of-the-policy-framework.pdf)

<sup>215</sup> Ibid

<sup>216</sup> Uganda Investment Authority, n.d. [https://www.ugandainvest.go.ug/why-uganda/opportunities/ict/.](https://www.ugandainvest.go.ug/why-uganda/opportunities/ict/)

<sup>217</sup> UNDP. 2023. "Uganda's digital transformation journey." *United Nations Development Programme*. <https://www.undp.org/uganda/blog/ugandas-digital-transformation-journey>.

Telecommunications hardware is particularly important, with the following products in high demand: cellular and wireless telephone systems, data transmission equipment, fiber optic equipment, trunked mobile phone systems, switches and routers, wireless access equipment, construction of ICT/BPO park, voice over internet telephone, VSAT, computers, and peripherals.<sup>218</sup>

Investment in the ICT sector is particularly relevant to Uganda's demography, of which 78 percent is currently below the age of 35.<sup>219</sup> This youthful population is projected to double by 2050, revealing a unique opportunity for workforce development through digital innovation. While employment in tech development is a sector in its own, technological innovation is already being integrated into other employment sectors to maximize output and profit.

This is true in agriculture where Uganda's ICT for Agriculture programme has resulted in increased smartphone use among farmers aiming to improve agricultural productivity, efficiency, and access to training.<sup>220</sup> In health, Uganda has embraced the use of e-Health and m-Health applications as a way to improve the delivery of primary care services.<sup>221</sup> Technology has proven particularly useful for disease surveillance, control and prevention.<sup>222</sup> Going forward, there is a need to use technology to improve health data management in Uganda, which is currently plagued by a lack of digitization, poor data quality, lack of standardized systems, and a lack of data governance policies. The incorporation of ICT can improve health information systems to enable better management of patient records, medicine stocks, and disease surveillance.<sup>223</sup> Finally, ICT has played a crucial role in advancing financial inclusion across Uganda, primarily via mobile money platforms. In 2023, the number of registered mobile money customers in Uganda reached 42.9 million, a 11.4 percent increase from the previous year.<sup>224</sup> Regulatory frameworks have evolved in recent years to accommodate the shifting landscape, with a greater emphasis on mobile money and open-ended financial regulations. This flexibility has supported innovation and growth in the fintech sector.<sup>225</sup>

However, despite its progress, ICT development faces several barriers in Uganda, including inadequate infrastructure, high cost of internet and devices, and low rates of digital literacy, which are particularly poor in some rural areas.<sup>226</sup> While these challenges can be overcome in the long-term, they may pose challenges for small start-up projects in the interim.

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<sup>218</sup> International Trade Administration USA, 2023. <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/uganda-information-and-communications-technology>.

<sup>219</sup> UNICEF Uganda. n.d. <https://www.unicef.org/uganda/what-we-do/u-report#:~:text=The%20situation,collaborative%20relationship%20with%20its%20citizens>.

<sup>220</sup> UCC. 2023. <https://www.ucc.co.ug/ucusaf/ict-for-agriculture/>.

<sup>221</sup> Kiberu et al., 2017. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28582996/>.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid

<sup>223</sup> Cummings and Rees, 2023. <https://academic.oup.com/oodh/article/doi/10.1093/oodh/oqad015/7277358>.

<sup>224</sup> New Vision. 2023. [https://www.newvision.co.ug/category/education/93-of-mobile-money-transactions-dont-exceed-s-NV\\_172833](https://www.newvision.co.ug/category/education/93-of-mobile-money-transactions-dont-exceed-s-NV_172833)

<sup>225</sup> Santosdiaz, 2025. [https://thefintechtimes.com/fintech-overview-of-uganda-in-2024/#:~:text=In%20the%20realm%20of%20remittances,\(offering%20asset%20finance%20solutions\)](https://thefintechtimes.com/fintech-overview-of-uganda-in-2024/#:~:text=In%20the%20realm%20of%20remittances,(offering%20asset%20finance%20solutions)).

<sup>226</sup> Muhame et al., 2023. <https://www.unCDF.org/article/8113/using-a-digital-literacy-toolkit-to-narrow-the-digital-skills-gap-for-women-and-smallholder-farmers-in-uganda#:~:text=Similarly%2C%20a%20study%20carried%20out,complete%20mobile%20digital%20transactions%20independently>

The further advancement of ICT has the potential to transform the lives of persons with disabilities in Uganda, most prominently through increased access to advanced assistive technology (AT), such as screen readers and magnifiers, cognitive assistance tools, adaptive utensils and grips, in addition to more traditional devices like wheelchairs and crutches. However, in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, most people that need these technologies do not have access to them because of financial constraints or are not even aware that these technologies exist.<sup>227</sup>

A study conducted by Bagarukayo and Kalema (2015) in South Africa showed that 60 percent of students with visual impairments were aware of e-learning platforms, but most had not utilized them due to financial or informational barriers, suggesting a need for targeted training and access to more affordable technology.<sup>228</sup> Increasing access to low-cost AT for persons with disabilities would help them better integrate into existing education and employment value chains, subsequently supporting equity in social and economic mobility.

Based on this review, MWW and PTHA may wish to consider the following if and when they choose to design a social enterprise related to agricultural value chains:

- The manufacturing of ICT technology is in high demand; however, it may be difficult to pursue this on a smaller scale in competition with large, foreign-owned factories.
- The manufacturing of assistive technology is in high demand, but creating a low-cost model to increase access for persons with disabilities is crucial for success.
- Training students and professionals on the use of digital assistive technology may be a strategic entry point. Doing so may also serve an advocacy role by educating not only persons with disabilities, but able-bodied individuals on adaptive technologies and workforce accommodations.

## 7. Conclusion

This preliminary literature review examined the history of disability related programming in Uganda and discussed major challenges to implementation, including the decline of foreign assistance and the emergence of social enterprise models as a potential solution.

Section 2 provided an overview of the disability landscape in Uganda, including governance structure, national disability-focused policies and programs, and key critiques of their implementation. This section also highlighted the importance of human capital investment to long-term economic development, especially for people with disabilities. Overall, while Uganda has made notable progress in adopting policies that promote disability inclusion, many people argue that they have failed to substantially improve the lives of persons with disabilities on the ground. Thus, nonprofit organizations have played a significant role in supporting the disability community.

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<sup>227</sup> Kalemera, Ashnah. 2018. "Promoting Accessible ICT in Uganda." CIPESA. <https://cipesa.org/2018/12/promoting-accessible-ict-in-uganda/>

<sup>228</sup> Bagarukayo and Kalema, 2015. <https://doaj.org/article/a719f20ad2f045539ed0839b48ba78bd>

Recognizing the role that Official Development Assistance (ODA) has historically played in funding nonprofit activities across the Global South, Section 3 examined the pros and cons of alternative financing models that have emerged amidst the decline in foreign aid. While many alternatives are available, most of them are not suitable for development initiatives that target the world's most vulnerable populations. With social enterprise emerging as a potential solution, Section 4 examined the theory behind the model and conditions necessary for its success, including desirability, feasibility, and viability - at the intersection of which lies innovation. This section also outlined a framework for value chain analysis, which will be used to examine employment opportunities for people with disabilities across relevant sectors.

Section 5 examined the Social Enterprise landscape in Uganda, including challenges, opportunities, and success stories, which Pathways to Hope Africa and Mobility Worldwide may find useful to learn from during the development of their own venture. Finally, Section 6 discussed the ways in which social enterprise can be used to strategically integrate persons with disabilities across specific value chains that align with Uganda's Vision 2040 and subsequent National Development Plans, including agri-processing, manufacturing, and ICT. Priority sectors identified include agriculture/agro-processing, tourism, manufacturing, and ICT development. Additional research and analysis on the inclusion of persons with disabilities across financially viable value chains is needed to determine which sector provides optimal social and economic benefits.

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Annex 2

Research Report

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## 1.0 Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of primary research conducted by the SIPA Capstone Team in New York and Uganda between January and April 2025. A total of 30 key informant interviews were conducted with experts in disability inclusion, social enterprise design, government, and nonprofit management, as well as mobility cart recipients, to inform the analysis of social enterprise opportunities for people with disabilities (PWDs) along strategic employment value chains in Uganda.

Key findings indicate that PWDs in Uganda face significant challenges in accessing education, healthcare, and employment, often compounded by poverty, stigma, and a lack of assistive technology. Discrepancies between government policy and lived experiences emerged, especially regarding the effectiveness of social protection programs for vulnerable populations across the country. Many experts emphasized the importance of family support, inclusive program design, and access to inputs beyond training, to the professional success of PWDs in Uganda. Furthermore, barriers to financial inclusion for the caregivers of PWDs emerged as a key driver of cyclical poverty among households hosting PWDs.

Sector-based research revealed that the sustainability of any social enterprise hinges on the alignment between market and labor demand. In Uganda, agri-food processing, information communication technology (ICT), and recycling value chains emerged as the most economically viable, feasible, and socially desirable sectors for future investment. Based on these findings, the team designed a preliminary social enterprise model that leverages a cross-sectoral approach to employ PWDs along the recycling value chain to sustainably manufacture parts for local mobility cart production.

The benefits of this model are four-fold, whereby it (i) employs persons with disabilities across an entire value chain, allowing people with different physical abilities and education levels to engage in roles that meet their unique needs, (ii) promotes the use of recycled materials, which contributes to environmental sustainability and the productive use of waste in high-density urban areas, (iii) increases the supply of assistive technology in Uganda, which is currently experiencing a widespread shortage, and (iv) promotes local production of assistive technology, which increases access for those in need by reducing unit price and lead times associated with international procurement.

The following report provides an overview of Research Objectives (Section 2), Methodology (Section 3), Summary of Interviews in Uganda (Section 4), Summary of Interviews from New York (Section 5), Recommendations (Section 6).

## 2.0 Research Objectives

Considering the recent decline in Official Development Assistance (ODA) from leading donor agencies like USAID, this project sought to identify viable enterprise models that would generate sustainable revenue for Mobility Worldwide (MWW) and Pathways to Hope Africa (PTHA) to

support the continued production of mobility carts while addressing the systematic exclusion of persons with disabilities from employment value chains in Uganda. As such, this project aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- ❖ **Conduct a Landscape Analysis of Social Enterprise Models** that prioritize disability inclusion along employment value chains and contribute to the sustainable production of mobility devices in Uganda and East Africa.
- ❖ **Assess the Feasibility of Social Enterprise Models** that employ persons with disabilities and support mobility cart production in Uganda.
- ❖ **Provide Locally Relevant Recommendations** for the development of a social enterprise that effectively meets the employment needs of persons with disabilities in Uganda and supports sustainable mobility cart production, based on the findings from the landscape analysis and expert interviews.

## 3.0 Methodology

### 3.1 Research Questions

Based on its objectives, this project was guided by the following research questions:

- ❖ What are the most effective social enterprise models available to employ persons with disabilities in Uganda?
- ❖ Which employment value chains offer the most sustainable and economically viable opportunities for persons with disabilities in Uganda?
- ❖ How can MWW and PTHA leverage the employment of persons with disabilities across these value chains to support local production and distribution of mobility carts?

### 3.2 Methods for Data Collection & Analysis

Following a comprehensive literature review<sup>1</sup> of disability inclusion policy and social enterprise development in Uganda, the SIPA Capstone Team conducted primary research using semi-structured expert interviews to better understand the experiences of persons with disabilities in Uganda, their unique barriers to employment, and potential opportunities for inclusive social enterprise.

A total of 30 key informant interviews with experts in disability inclusion, social enterprise design, government, and nonprofit management were conducted between January and April 2025. Most interviews (22) were conducted during the team's field mission to Uganda between 13-25 March 2025, while the remaining 8 interviews were conducted remotely from New York City.

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<sup>1</sup> Conducted between January and March 2024. Results available in Annex I: Literature Review.

All interviews were conducted with informed consent, and participants had the option to remain anonymous to ensure confidentiality.<sup>2</sup> The team also kept detailed field notes, reflecting on personal observations and lessons learned throughout the research process.

These notes and audio recordings were manually coded and analyzed using tools like [Taguette](#), which identified recurring themes and categorized interview content into areas such as key challenges experienced by PWD, barriers to employment, and opportunities for market-led interventions. Prominent keywords were visually represented using frequency tables and word clouds, as shown below in Sections 4 and 5. Prominent themes were further analyzed using a qualitative heatmap to highlight shared concerns and divergent perspectives across different stakeholder groups (PWDs, NGOs, government officials, etc.).

Once a list of prominent social enterprise sectors was established, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis was conducted to determine which enterprise warranted further research and development. As discussed in Section 6, this analysis considered factors such as market demand, supply chain logistics, pricing models, and community engagement to identify which enterprise sector and model would likely be the most desirable, feasible, and viable for implementation in Uganda.

Based on these findings, a series of recommendations were made for MWW and PTHA's consideration, along with a preliminary business plan for one enterprise idea that the organization can pitch to potential investors.

### ***3.3 Limitations***

Due to time and capacity constraints, the research provided herein has several limitations.

Firstly, interviews conducted during the team's field mission to Uganda were primarily focused on understanding the needs and challenges of PWDs. While all interviewee perspectives were extremely valuable, the team had limited engagement with social enterprises operating in Uganda. This limited the team's ability to fully analyze factors for success and challenges faced by social entrepreneurs on the ground. The team attempted to supplement this gap by arranging remote interviews with social enterprise founders in Uganda, however, most of the people we contacted for an interview did not respond. Therefore, additional context-specific research on social enterprise operations may need to be conducted before project implementation.

Secondly, most expert interviews with populations in need and government officials were conducted in Soroti, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other areas of the country. It is the team's understanding that PTHA intends to launch a social enterprise in Mbale, which may require further analysis of the community's makeup and unique challenges, if any.

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<sup>2</sup> Each participant was asked to sign a consent form that clearly stated their comfortability level with audio recordings, photos, and the use of direct quotes or other content for research purposes. The form also provided written information on the research project as well as contact information for the team in case participants wanted to withdraw their participation at any time.

Thirdly, some interviews, particularly with members of the Community Cooperative in Soroti, required translation between English and local languages. While the team trusted the interpretation provided by local staff, some nuance may have been lost in translation.

Fourthly, this study relied solely on qualitative data, which allowed for in-depth, contextual insights but limited the team's ability to substantially quantify trends or compare findings across different demographics. This lack of numerical data presents challenges in making evidence-based recommendations, particularly for policymakers and donors who often require more robust quantitative indicators to inform decisions. If time and additional resources allowed the team would have liked to use additional data collection methods, such as community and investor surveys across larger sample populations, to further justify its recommendations.

Fifth and finally, the recycling value chain was identified as a viable opportunity only after the conclusion of in-country fieldwork, leaving the team with limited time to take a deep dive into the technical aspects of this value chain. The team was unable to engage directly with many stakeholders in that sector; therefore, findings related to recycling are largely based on secondary research.

## **4.0 Summary of Interviews in Uganda**

### ***4.1 Interviews Conducted | Uganda***

All four members of the SIPA Capstone Team traveled to Uganda from 13-23 March 2025, with two members extending their stay under 25 March 2025. The aim of this field research was to gather firsthand insights into the challenges faced by PWDs in Uganda, particularly in relation to employment and social inclusion. Additionally, the research sought to identify viable industries or social enterprise opportunities that could potentially support the sustainable integration of PWDs into its workforce. The mission itinerary was organized by PTHA.

The team conducted a total of 22 expert interviews in Uganda. The majority of interviews were conducted in Soroti, with representatives from the following entities:

- ❖ Mr. Peter Pex Paak - Resident City Commissioner, Soroti
- ❖ Ms. Juliet Agonyo - Speaker, Soroti City Council
- ❖ Mr. Frank Tumwimbize - Deputy Speaker & PWD Representative, Soroti City Council
- ❖ Mr. Joshua Edogu - Mayor, Soroti City Council
- ❖ Mr. Martin Okwera - Teso Community Cooperative for Persons with Disabilities, Soroti
- ❖ Mr. James - Teso Community Cooperative for Persons with Disabilities, Soroti
- ❖ 8+ Mobility Cart Recipients & Non-Recipients - Teso Community Cooperative for Persons with Disabilities, Soroti

The remaining interviews were conducted in Kampala, with representatives from the following entities:

- ❖ Ms. Esther Kyozira - CEO, National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU)
- ❖ Mr. Michael Miiro - Danish Association of the Physically Disabled (DHF)

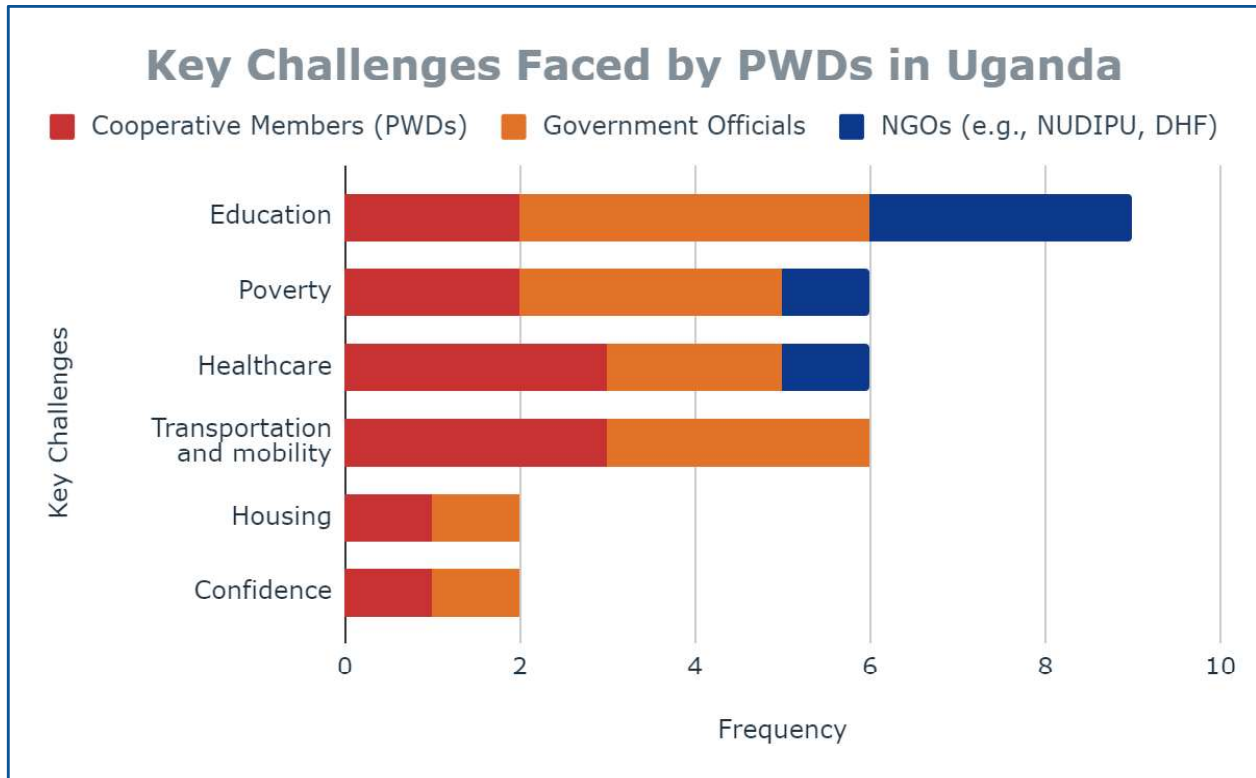
Additionally, the team was able to sit in on Parliament's Gender Committee Conferences, which focused on the design of a National Child Disability Benefit.

## 4.2 Findings

### 4.2.1 Key Challenges for PWDs in Uganda

Based on expert interviews conducted in Uganda, the following challenges for persons with disabilities (PWD) emerged as the most prominent, as illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1:** Key challenges faced by PWDs in Uganda



**Education** emerged as the most frequently cited challenge. PWDs face significant barriers to accessing education, mainly due to financial constraints, limited availability of special needs schools in Uganda, insufficient support for students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms, and lack of access to assistive technology to support physical mobility and learning. Many children with severe disabilities never attend school, and those who do often start late, and/or struggle without the necessary resources, trained teachers, or assistive technologies. Many children with disabilities drop out of school due to these constraints and other social barriers, such as being bullied.<sup>3</sup>

**Poverty** and **healthcare** were also identified as critical challenges across all stakeholder groups, including cooperative members, government officials, and NGOs. **Poverty** is especially severe among households with PWDs, with over half living in extreme poverty due to restricted access

<sup>3</sup> Key informant interviews, Uganda. 13-25 March 2025.

to education and the high costs of acquiring skills. This creates a cycle of intergenerational poverty that is difficult to break.<sup>4</sup>

Access to **healthcare** is often the result of high service costs, limited access to medication and specialized care, and a broader public health crisis across Sub-Saharan Africa, which is both a cause and consequence of disability. Many PWDs require expensive assistive devices and rehabilitation services that are either unavailable or unaffordable.<sup>5</sup>

**Transportation and mobility** were also commonly raised, particularly by government officials, likely due to their direct involvement in infrastructure and service provision. Limited access to mobility aids and accessible transport systems restrict PWDs from attending school, accessing services, and participating in their communities, often leaving them isolated and placing additional strain on caregivers and/or families.

Though mentioned less frequently, **housing** and **confidence** were found to be important. Many PWDs live in substandard housing, such as grass-thatched homes that lack basic safety and accessibility features.<sup>6</sup> Providing durable materials and inclusive designs could significantly improve their quality of life. Lastly, a lack of confidence, often driven by internalized stigma, can prevent PWDs from pursuing opportunities, even if they were to become more available to them.<sup>7</sup> Interview participants emphasized that building self-esteem is just as vital as economic support in empowering individuals to thrive.<sup>8</sup>

While these key challenges were broadly acknowledged across stakeholder groups, the **perspectives** of government officials and those of NGOs and PWDs differed greatly in terms of policies and social awareness. Below, Table 1 summarizes the significant gap between policy intentions by the government and lived experiences of PWDs in Uganda.

- ❖ While government representatives emphasized the existence of social protection programs, inclusive policies, and improved representation, NGOs and PWDs shared experiences of major shortcomings in implementation, accessibility, and impact.
- ❖ Grants and economic support were widely viewed as insufficient and inconsistently distributed, with many programs failing to reach the most marginalized.
- ❖ Despite formal representation and legal frameworks, structural barriers, discrimination, and stigma continue to hinder meaningful participation.
- ❖ Awareness efforts and inclusive education are acknowledged by officials, yet NGOs and PWDs reported ongoing cultural stigma, neglect, and a lack of specialized support, particularly for children.
- ❖ Additionally, accessibility improvements were limited, with enforcement challenges and infrastructure gaps still prevalent.
- ❖ Overall, while progress was acknowledged, NGOs and PWDs voiced a critical need for more effective implementation, accountability, and community-level transformation.

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<sup>4</sup> Key informant interviews, Uganda. 13-25 March 2025.

<sup>5</sup> Key informant interviews, Uganda. 13-25 March 2025.

<sup>6</sup> Key informant interviews, Uganda. 13-25 March 2025.

<sup>7</sup> Key informant interviews, Uganda. 13-25 March 2025.

<sup>8</sup> Key informant interviews, Uganda. 13-25 March 2025.

**Table 1: Differing stakeholder perspectives on challenges facing PWDs**

Topic	Government Officials' Perspective	NGOs & PWDs' Perspective
<b>Social Protection &amp; Economic Empowerment</b>		
<b>Social Protection &amp; Grants</b>	The government provides support in many ways, including social security support including the Senior Citizen's Grant (direct income support) , social insurance, and complementary programs such as the Special Grant for People with Disabilities (SGPWD) and the Presidential Initiative on Wealth and Job Creation (Emyooga).	The Special Grant for People with Disabilities (SGPWD) amounts are too small (e.g., 1 million UGX), offered only once, and difficult to access. Programs often fail, are poorly communicated, and do not meet the demand.
<b>Program Implementation &amp; Effectiveness</b>	Emphasis on availability, adequacy, and accessibility of programs. Government claims strong structure, support from Organizations of People with Disabilities (OPDs) and NGOs.	Programs often exist “only on paper.” <sup>1</sup> Poor implementation, lack of follow-up, little enforcement. Vision 2040 fails to plan effectively for the inclusion of PWDs.
<b>Success Narratives</b>	Positive shift: PWDs now engage in education, employment, and public life. Affirmative action and policies are cited as successes.	Success stories are rare and unsustainable. Businesses started with grants often fail. Poverty, stigma, and lack of long-term support are key barriers.
<b>Political &amp; Structural Inclusion</b>		
<b>Representation &amp; Participation</b>	PWDs are represented at all levels of government (village to national). Affirmative action ensures inclusion in decision-making structures.	Representation doesn't always lead to real impact. Inclusion is often tokenistic, and systemic change is lacking.
<b>Employment &amp; Inclusion</b>	Inclusive policies ensure PWDs are employed across sectors. No discrimination in education or work environments due to policy progress.	Structural barriers remain. Discrimination persists, especially in employment. Lack of opportunity, stigma, and social biases continue to exclude PWDs.
<b>Accessibility &amp; Infrastructure</b>	New buildings are mandated to be accessible. Legal structures exist to support PWD. Disability is considered in city planning.	Many old or private buildings are inaccessible. Enforcement is weak. Planning fails to address practical accessibility issues. Personal homes are not covered by law.
<b>Awareness, Attitudes &amp; Cultural Perceptions</b>		
<b>Awareness &amp; Attitudes</b>	Community sensitization is done by Community Development Officers and NGOs (like NUDIPU). Society is becoming more accepting.	Sensitization is insufficient and mostly NGO-driven. Government efforts don't reach the broader public. Stigma and neglect persist, especially in rural and poor families.

#### 4.2.2 Barriers to Employment for PWDs in Uganda

Different stakeholders identified different barriers to employment for PWDs in Uganda. Many issues were mentioned multiple times by different interviewees. Below, Table 2 illustrates a heat map of barriers to employment. Each issue was rated from Low to Extremely High based on the frequency of which was mentioned by interviewees, with higher ratings given to issues mentioned by more participants. Even if an issue was not explicitly mentioned by the interviewee, it was counted if their organization was actively engaged in work related to the issue.

**Table 2:** Heat map of barriers to employment of PWDs

	Key Barriers	PWDs	NGOs	Government
<b>Formal</b>	Social stigma	HIGH	HIGH	-
	Non-enforcement of legal protections	MEDIUM	LOW	MEDIUM
	Lack of inclusive hiring practices	MEDIUM	HIGH	-
<b>Informal</b>	Vocational training and skills	HIGH	MEDIUM	HIGH
	Lack of capital	EXTREMELY HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW

Different stakeholder groups identified different **barriers to formal employment** for PWDs. PWDs and NGOs frequently cited social stigma, such as being rejected or disqualified due to their disability, as a key challenge, which was a concern not acknowledged by government representatives. Similarly, the lack of inclusive hiring practices and employers' unwillingness to accommodate specific needs were issues highlighted by NGOs and echoed by PWDs that were unrecognized by the government. NGOs emphasized the complexity of disability, noting that diverse categories and individual experiences must be taken into account. The non-enforcement of legal protections was raised by PWDs and acknowledged by the government as a concern.<sup>9</sup>

There was also a disconnect in understanding the **barriers to informal employment**. Government officials emphasized the need for vocational training and business support. However, for many PWDs, the more pressing issue was the lack of financial capital to start or expand their businesses. While some PWDs expressed a desire for access to vocational training or skills development, many already possessed the necessary skills. Instead, they reported lacking the tools, machinery, and funding required to operate or grow their businesses. Few government officials recognized the

<sup>9</sup> Key informant interviews, Uganda. 13-25 March 2025.

importance of economic integration after skills acquisition, and some even assumed that critical resources, such as land, were universally accessible.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4.2.3 Broader Social Context

The table below summarizes social challenges experienced by PWD in Uganda. Each issue is rated based on how many people mentioned it when interviewed.

**Table 3: Frequency Table of Social Challenges for PWDs in Uganda**

Mentions	Key Themes	Notes
<b>VERY FREQUENTLY</b>	Caregiving for family members with disabilities	Caregiving places emotional and financial strain on families, especially women, with little support for independence.
<b>VERY FREQUENTLY</b>	Stigma and discrimination	PWDs face lifelong stigma that limits education, employment, and social inclusion, despite qualifications.
<b>FREQUENTLY</b>	Child abuse, neglect, and abandonment	Children with disabilities are often neglected or abandoned due to stigma, lack of resources, or caregiver stress.
<b>FREQUENTLY</b>	Gender inequality	Women, particularly mothers of disabled children, face abandonment, poverty, and greater caregiving burdens.
<b>COMMONLY</b>	Lack of assistive technology	Limited access to inclusive education and assistive technology due to poor implementation and corruption.
<b>COMMONLY</b>	Families as a determinant of success	Supportive families greatly improve PWD outcomes, often more than financial resources alone.

The team found that **caregiving for children and adults with disabilities** places a significant emotional and economic burden on families, particularly women, who often sacrifice their

<sup>10</sup> Key informant interviews, Uganda. 13-25 March 2025.

livelihoods and personal freedom to provide constant care, with limited support or opportunities for independence. Despite physical growth and age, many PWDs remain reliant on caregivers throughout their lifetime due to the severity of their disabilities. This was the most commonly cited social issue by the PWDs interviewed, and it was also mentioned at the government level.<sup>11</sup>

The second frequently cited was **stigma and discrimination**. Deeply rooted stigma and discrimination against PWDs in Uganda persist across all stages of life, limiting access to education, employment, and social inclusion, even for highly qualified individuals. PWDs are often perceived as incapable or burdensome, facing exclusion from certain professions, dismissal by employers, bullying in schools, and societal judgment that impacts their personal and professional development.<sup>12</sup>

**Child abuse, neglect, and abandonment** was the third frequently mentioned social issue. Many children with disabilities in Uganda face severe neglect, abandonment, and even abuse within their own families, often due to stigma, lack of resources, or parental inability to cope. While a few caregivers step up out of love and responsibility, others hide or mistreat their children, with some families even misusing support funds meant for PWDs.<sup>13</sup>

Another frequently mentioned and observed issue was **gender inequality**, which made women more vulnerable to gender-based violence and neglect. It was learned that women with disabilities, particularly those who birth or care for children with disabilities, often face abandonment and financial hardship, with little to no support from their partners or communities. Gender inequality and deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes further compound their vulnerability, leaving many to navigate caregiving and survival alone under immense economic and emotional strain.<sup>14</sup>

While relatively less frequently mentioned, **lack of assistive technology** was seen to be a common issue. Access to quality education for PWDs remains limited, with special needs schools seen as vital yet under-resourced and often inaccessible. While there is a government budget for assistive technology and inclusive education, systemic issues like corruption and poor implementation hinder progress, prompting organizations such as NUDIPU to push for better teacher training and early integration in mainstream schools.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, another commonly mentioned topic was the importance of **families as a determinant of success**. Family support was stated as being a crucial determinant of success for persons with disabilities, often more influential than financial means. Some successful PWDs shared stories of having supportive families, such as parents encouraging their independence and having mobility support from their siblings.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Key informant interviews, Uganda. 13-25 March 2025.

<sup>12</sup> Key informant interviews, Uganda. 13-25 March 2025.

<sup>13</sup> Key informant interviews, Uganda. 13-25 March 2025.

<sup>14</sup> Key informant interviews, Uganda. 13-25 March 2025.

<sup>15</sup> Key informant interviews, Uganda. 13-25 March 2025.

<sup>16</sup> Key informant interviews, Uganda. 13-25 March 2025.

#### *4.2.4 Mobility Cart Findings*

During a two-day visit to Soroti, the team met with a group of over 100 PWDs. Many of them were mobility cart recipients who had received assistive technology from MWW last year. While this was not the primary focus of the team's research, mobility cart recipients provided valuable feedback on how the carts have since changed their lives.

Recipients reported that mobility carts have opened up meaningful **opportunities**, particularly in terms of economic and social inclusion. With improved mobility, many individuals have been able to start or expand small businesses, using the carts to transport goods to local markets. The carts have also enhanced social engagement, allowing recipients to attend community events, visit friends and family, and participate more fully in daily life. This increased independence has eased the burden on caregivers and contributed to recipients' emotional well-being by reducing isolation and promoting dignity.<sup>17</sup>

However, several **challenges** limit the long-term impact of the carts. Because they are not motorized, they require significant physical effort to operate, making commuting especially difficult in poor weather or over long distances. Design flaws and structural fragility often result in damage or breakdowns, and users have little access to spare parts or repair services. The lack of a maintenance plan further undermines sustainability. Additionally, the current supply does not meet demand, with many recipients facing long wait times, and the carts' uncomfortable design can make everyday use difficult.<sup>18</sup>

#### *4.2.5 Social Enterprise & Employment Sectors*

Stakeholder interviews provided some insight on several income-generating activities that create meaningful employment for PWDs and their communities. The word cloud below visually represents the sectors identified during the interviews, with the size of each word corresponding to the frequency with which it was mentioned by participants.

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<sup>17</sup> Key informant interviews, Uganda. 13-25 March 2025.

<sup>18</sup> Key informant interviews, Uganda. 13-25 March 2025.

*Figure 2: Prevalence of social enterprise opportunities by sector*



Among the various sectors mentioned, **production** stood out as the most frequently cited. Within this category, baking was the most prominent, followed by shoemaking and tailoring. Carpentry and mechanics were mentioned less often but were still notable, while fewer respondents referred to knitting, manufacturing, and leatherwork. Many respondents already had relevant skills but lacked the capital needed to start or grow their businesses, such as tools, machines, and materials. Baking and shoemaking were seen as having strong market demand, while tailoring was valued for its potential to train others. Programs involving local artisans training PWDs were viewed as effective models for economic empowerment and skill development.

**Agriculture** was the second most frequently mentioned category. Livestock farming, particularly the rearing of sheep and goats, was the most prominent, due to low costs, accessible land, and strong market demand. Agro-processing, especially of products like cassava, beans, and coffee were also valued for their potential in local processing and income generation, but lack of capital, and physical demand were raised as challenges. Poultry was mentioned by a few individuals, but disease risks were noted. One person also mentioned timber processing.

With proper support, including training and group-based models, respondents believed PWDs could successfully engage in agriculture.

**Technical and engineering services** emerged as the third most mentioned category among respondents, with particular emphasis on construction, repair work, and electronics maintenance. Skills such as phone repair, welding, and brickmaking were also noted, alongside innovative ideas like recycling and the mobility cart value chain. Despite strong interest, many participants cited a lack of capital and tools as barriers to starting or expanding these activities. Some respondents

expressed a desire to gain further training, especially in repair. This suggests a potential to train and employ PWDs in the maintenance and repair of mobility carts.

ICT was also frequently mentioned. Within this category, one person specifically identified mobile money services as a promising opportunity. Some respondents expressed a need for ICT training centers to develop computer skills, while others noted they already possess ICT skills but lack the initial capital to start a business. There were also concerns that technical ventures require significant investment and may not be widely successful. While some youths are interested in ICT, it was suggested that it is not yet popular across the broader population. Nevertheless, the ability to work from home was highlighted as a positive aspect of ICT-related work.

Another frequently mentioned activity was resale and small-scale trading, particularly among the recipients of mobility carts. Respondents shared that the carts enabled them to travel to trading centers, where they could run their own businesses, participate in activities, and sell goods like fish. Other less frequently noted but important sectors included counselling, education services, journalism and media, business administration, hairdressing, and creative arts such as music and photography. Consulting, event management, medical services, and retail services were also mentioned. It was noted that activities with high competition, such as hairdressing, and those requiring significant capital, like education services, may encounter difficulties. In contrast, event management and retail were suggested as more viable alternatives.

## **5.0 Summary of Expert Interviews**

### ***5.1 List of Interviews Conducted | New York***

The SIPA Capstone Team conducted a total of 8 expert interviews remotely from New York with representatives from the following entities:

- Mr. Ambrose Murangira – Thematic Director, Disability Inclusion, Light for the World
- Mr. Arnold Mugagga – Founder, Zetu Africa
- Ms. Connie E. Cheren – President/Founder, Partners for Care
- Mr. Jon Diaz – Design Fellow, TA Design for Social Innovation
- Ms. Sarah Holloway – Professor/Faculty, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University
- Ms. Shona McDonald – Founder/Director, Shonaquip Social Enterprise
- Mr. Steven Leonard Williams – Founder, Kyaninga Child Development Centre and Kyaninga Forest Foundation
- Mr. Andy Bownds – Founder and CEO, Eco Brixs

Additionally, a meeting was held with the University of Maryland undergraduate capstone project team. Their project is conducted in collaboration with Impact Africa Services International and Kubik Inc. and focuses on assessing the plastic value chain in Kampala, Uganda, to evaluate the feasibility of implementing Kubik’s manufacturing process in the region.

## 5.2 Key Findings

### 5.2.1 From Disability Experts

Disability experts interviewed in New York echoed themes from field interviews, particularly around **stigma and the need to support families of PWDs**. Organizations were working to reduce bias through self-reflection initiatives, family education, community dialogues involving businesses and service providers, and supporting families, especially mothers. There were programs which offer disability-specific education and business training to help families launch home-based microenterprises. Experts stressed that the integration of PWDs and caregivers is encouraged across all program levels, from board leadership to employment in sectors like manufacturing, education, and recycling.

In terms of **employment**, it was learned that PWDs are engaged in a wide range of activities and can contribute across many sectors when given the opportunity, which also echoed the field findings. Experts mentioned that training programs in sewing, computer literacy, and basic education open pathways to jobs in tailoring, digital work, and more. PWDs already contribute in manufacturing, assembly, education, outreach, and management. While some agricultural work requires adaptation, small-scale farming and livestock keeping remain feasible. One organization mentioned that the Disability Inclusion Facilitator (DIF) model empowers young PWDs to become trainers and advocates, helping organizations become more inclusive. With proper tools, training, and respect for individuality, PWDs can thrive in any industry.

Regarding **mobility carts**, the importance of personalized wheelchair provision and design was emphasized to avoid secondary health risks. There was a growing focus on professional wheelchair services, including maintenance and early childhood inclusion. One organization noted that pricing is subsidized and determined through informal, context-specific assessments, a process that requires skilled staff and presents challenges in ensuring fair contributions from families. The benefits of mobility carts were also mentioned, such as enabling PWDs to sell goods or services.

Finally, it was learned that **financial sustainability** remains a major concern for disability-focused NGOs. Funding typically comes from individual donations, foundation grants, and program contracts, with little reliance on commercial revenue. Many NGOs pursue small-donor strategies and rely on founder or board member networks for fundraising. However, this creates challenges such as over-dependence on internal networks, low visibility-to-donation conversion, and limited fundraising capacity. Donors increasingly demand clear evidence of impact, especially in regions with limited visible progress. Successful organizations maintain transparent reporting, lean operations (often volunteer-based), and collaborative outreach to grow and sustain funding.

### 5.2.2 From Social Enterprise Experts

Through interviews with social enterprise experts, it was learned that social enterprises face a range of **challenges**, including overcoming a dependency mentality where beneficiaries expect donations rather than becoming paying customers, which can devalue products. High local production and logistics costs, fragmented trade systems, and regulatory complexities, especially in government funding and cross-border standards, also hinder operations. Additionally, market entry missteps, such as positioning offerings as charity, flawed feedback loops, and straying too far from the core

mission can limit scale and impact. Early-stage struggles often involve product design, governance, and managing growth without compromising quality.

On the other hand, there were some **opportunities** for social enterprise activities, especially in the energy sector. An expert shared that Uganda's limited electricity access, where 80% of the population is off the grid, presents a major opportunity for social enterprises in decentralized solar energy. Expanding renewable power can significantly boost grassroots digital connectivity and economic growth.

In terms of **financial sustainability**, social enterprises often used hybrid revenue models that blend commercial activity with social impact, such as "Buy One, Give One" initiatives, to subsidize outreach through market sales. Diversifying income through product sales, training fees, grants, and contracts helps reduce dependence on a single funding source and supports scalable growth. Some ventures were also moving toward fully market-driven models, like exporting recycled materials or entering plastic credit markets, to enhance sustainability. Flexible, subsidized pricing based on clients' ability to pay helps balance equity with cost recovery, though it poses challenges in payment collection and pricing accuracy. Key success factors include revenue diversification, strategic partnerships, and early investment in operational capacity.

Overall, it was learned that operating a successful social enterprise requires deep market understanding, continuous product iteration, and a focus on long-term sustainability. According to the interviews, **keys to a successful social enterprise** include designing for purchase rather than charity; engaging communities early to validate product-market fit; and building supportive ecosystems around the product, including infrastructure, feedback, and financing. Enterprises must adapt to local contexts, invest in governance and execution, and ensure their models can scale and endure beyond the founder's involvement. Avoiding early mistakes, such as lacking a sustainability plan or overengineering products is critical, as is grounding operations in demand-driven, inclusive production linked to social impact.

## 6.0 Key Findings

### 6.1 Leading Employment Sectors

Drawing on the research outlined above, the SIPA Capstone Team identified several employment sectors that presented promising opportunities for a social enterprise benefitting persons with disabilities in Uganda. The following outlines the pros and cons of each opportunity.

- ❖ **Agriculture** offers accessible entry points like poultry and livestock rearing but faces high input costs and disease management issues.
- ❖ **Manufacturing** value chains like tailoring and baking are accessible but limited by machinery and funding needs.
- ❖ **Recycling** presents a promising dual solution to Uganda's plastic waste crisis and demand for assistive devices, though infrastructure and high start-up costs remain a barrier.
- ❖ **Investing in parents of children with disabilities** through hybrid employment models could offer long-term, intergenerational impact, yet the need for home-based work and scalability are limiting factors.

- ❖ **ICT** offers future-proof, high-impact opportunities for persons with disabilities, but barriers like cost, digital access, and training persist.
- ❖ **Disability inclusion training consultancies** addressing disability stigma can drive systemic change, though mindset shifts and funding for trainers are long-term investments.
- ❖ **Mobility cart production** can empower PWDs as contributors, though both require significant upfront investment and systemic support.

## ***6.2 Cross-Cutting Considerations***

Regardless of the sector chosen for intervention, several key takeaways should be applied to any social enterprise that MWW or PTHA chooses to develop, considering the unique challenges and opportunities present in Uganda. Failure to take these points into consideration may jeopardize the success of an enterprise, no matter how much potential it is perceived to hold.

- ❖ **Targeting Criteria and Disability Inclusion:** Considering the broad range of disabilities experienced by people in Uganda, it is important for MWW and PTHA to choose a value chain that has multiple entry points for people with various needs and abilities. However, workforce development models should avoid categorizing jobs by disability type. Rather, individual needs assessments should be conducted for each participant to determine their unique skills and where they best fit along the value chain.
- ❖ **Targeting Criteria and Education Level:** Similarly, PWDs in need of gainful employment have varying levels of education and skills. Therefore, a broad value chain with multiple entry points should be prioritized to maximize participation. A training of trainers model may be useful at a later stage, when the enterprise is up and running.
- ❖ **Alignment of Market Demand and Labor Supply:** In order to ensure the sustainability of any social enterprise, its model must be market driven. Products or services provided must be desirable and affordable, with an opportunity for repeat customers. Simultaneously, PWDs must fill an existing labor gap to prevent a shortage of opportunities.
- ❖ **Risk of Local Market Entry:** Robust market research and risk assessments must be conducted prior to the implementation of any social enterprise. It is important to identify, quantify, and mitigate potential risks to existing market actors that may be economically or socially vulnerable, including PWDs. If such risks emerge, a plan to absorb or compensate vulnerable market actors should be established to minimize harm.
- ❖ **Enterprise Trade-Offs:** No one social enterprise will offer a sustainable, profitable, scalable, low-cost, and inclusive model without risks or trade-offs. Therefore, it is important for MWW and PTHA to align their strategic priorities and choose an enterprise that maximizes those benefits. An integrated model that incorporates components of various sectors may be particularly beneficial.

## ***6.3 Essential Components of Enterprise Design***

Furthermore, due to the unique environment for persons with disabilities in Uganda, the following components - or strategic outcomes - should be incorporated into any social enterprise model that is developed:

- ❖ **Employment for Persons with Disabilities:** The primary goal of any enterprise should be to create gainful and sustainable employment opportunities for PWD in Uganda, who are otherwise marginalized from the traditional workforce.
- ❖ **Sustainable Revenue Generation:** Enterprise activities that engage PWDs should generate a reliable and sustainable source of revenue that limits the need for external grants or funding beyond start-up capital. Preference should be given to sectors and interventions that offer adequate room for growth and expansion because of forward-looking market demand and labor gaps.
- ❖ **National Disability Inclusion Advocacy:** Due to the prevailing issue of deeply rooted stigma against PWDs in Uganda and the lack of any national sensitization campaign for behavioral change amongst the public, MWW and PTHA should ensure that a portion of their enterprise helps advance disability awareness and discussion across all levels of society and governance.
- ❖ **Mainstream the Unique Needs of Women, Girls and Caregivers:** Considering the double stigma that women with disabilities face, because of gender inequality in Uganda, it is important that MWW and PTHA adequately address the unique needs of women and girls across all components of the enterprise. Furthermore, due to the economic barriers that caregiving presents for family members that care for PWDs, social enterprises should attempt to incorporate caregivers into its value chain to combat cyclical poverty among PWDs in Uganda.

## 7.0 Recommendation

### 7.1 Integrated Value Chain

In Uganda, agri-food processing, information communication technology (ICT), and recycling value chains emerged as the most economically viable, feasible, and socially desirable sectors for future investment.

While poultry production was considered as a potential value chain, multiple stakeholders advised against it, citing the potential for failure due to the high risk of disease among birds, particularly chickens, and the high cost of preventative treatments.<sup>19</sup> The risk of disease is higher in hotter temperatures, making it a potentially unsustainable enterprise in the long-term as temperatures continue to rise in Uganda and worldwide, due to global warming.<sup>20</sup> If MWW and PTHA do consider a poultry value chain, it will be important for them to diversify the breeds of poultry they produce beyond just chickens, to include duck, guinea fowl, and turkey.<sup>21</sup>

Based on a comprehensive analysis of all research findings, the team designed a preliminary social enterprise model that leverages a cross-functional approach to employ PWDs and their caregivers along the **recycling value chain** to sustainably **manufacture** parts for locally produced mobility carts and other assistive technology, using recycled materials.

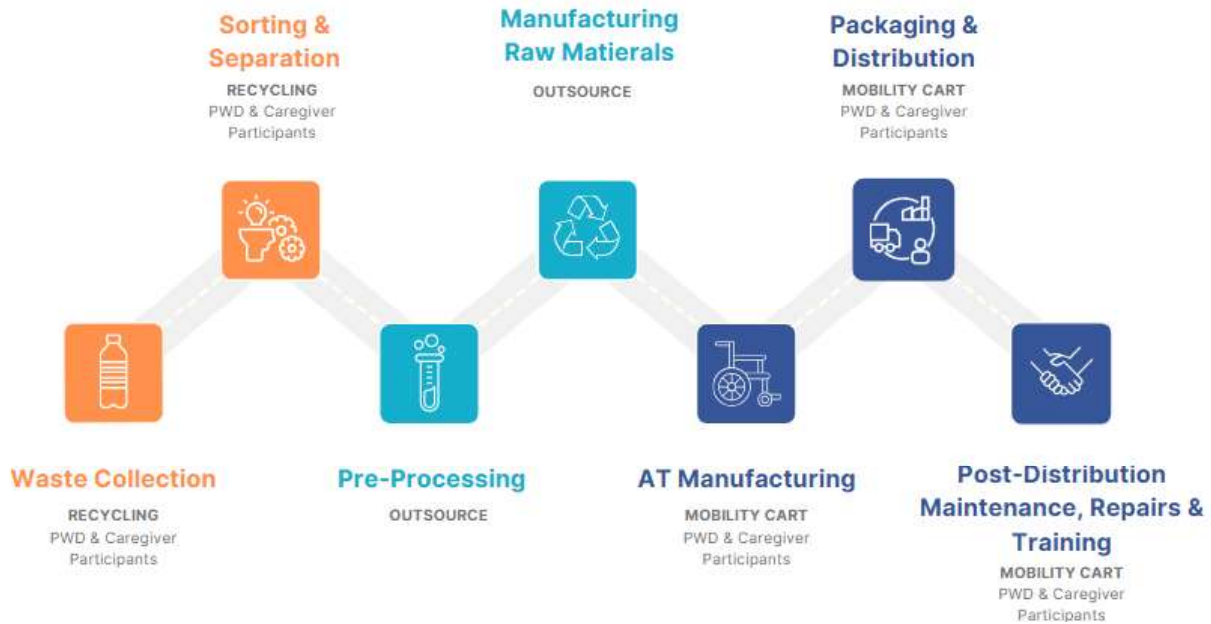
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<sup>19</sup> Key informant interviews, Uganda. 13-25 March 2025.

<sup>20</sup> Key informant interviews, Uganda. 13-25 March 2025.

<sup>21</sup> Key informant interviews, Uganda. 13-25 March 2025.

**Figure 3: Integrated Value Chain**



As shown in Figure 3, the enterprise would conduct the following activities:

- ❖ **Activity 1:** Collect and prepare waste to be recycled
- ❖ **Activity 2:** Assemble mobility carts & other assistive technology using recycled materials for onward distribution
- ❖ **Activity 3:** Repair mobility carts and other assistive technology when needed
- ❖ **Activity 4:** Conduct disability-inclusion trainings for partner institutions

Considering the high cost of **pre-processing** waste and **manufacturing raw materials**, the enterprise would outsource these activities to local recycling partners that already have well established processing plants and equipment.

The benefits of this model are five-fold, whereby it (i) employs persons with disabilities across an entire value chain, allowing people with different physical abilities and education levels to engage in roles that meet their unique needs, (ii) promotes the use of recycled materials, which contributes to environmental sustainability and the productive use of waste in high-density urban areas, (iii) increases the supply of assistive technology in Uganda, which is currently experiencing a widespread shortage, (iv) promotes local production of assistive technology, which increases access for those in need by reducing unit price and lead times associated with international procurement, and (v) advances public disability inclusion awareness and discussion across Uganda to combat the deeply rooted stigma and discrimination towards PWDs and their families.

Further, this approach would address existing maintenance challenges experienced by mobility cart recipients, which we witnessed during our visit to Uganda. Based on requests for custom-made mobility devices and motorized iterations, there is an opportunity to pursue community-led

research and development for innovative design alongside production. Lastly, the model offers opportunities for participants to be engaged in business administration, project management, and product marketing, further embedding local ownership within the program structure.<sup>22</sup>

Additional details regarding the design and implementation of this social enterprise is available in the main body of this report, titled *Business Plan*.

## 7.2 SWOT Analysis

Below, Table 4 highlights the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) associated with the recommended value chain that MWW and PTHA should consider before implementation.

**Table 4: SWOT Analysis of Integrated Recycling Value Chain**

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Large national market opportunity for local assistive technology production (in-country shortage).</p> <p>Unique competitive advantage using an integrated model.</p> <p>Broad range of entry points for both low-skill and high-skill labor.</p> <p>Enables PWD to lead the design and development of tools that assist their own community (ie. expert knowledge, user-centered design).</p> <p>Integrated value chain that targets both PWDs and caregivers, addressing multiple social challenges</p>	<p>Limited technical knowledge and market research conducted on recycling. Requires further feasibility assessment.</p> <p>Costly start-up for expansion across the full value-chain (ie. machinery). Will likely require multiple investors.</p>	<p>Strategic partnership opportunity with existing enterprises along the recycling value chain (ie. Eco Brixs).</p> <p>Strategic opportunity to merge existing projects across the recycling value chain, in collaboration with the University of Maryland.</p> <p>Opportunity for strategic government partnerships (ie. end-product customer, national distributor, partner in advocacy).</p>	<p>Potential for political push-back or interference (ie. taking credit for MWW &amp; PTHA’s work or politicizing assistance for PWDs in the lead up to the next national election).</p> <p>Potential for further stigma towards PWDs who are involved in waste/recycling collection and sorting.</p>

<sup>22</sup> Key informant interviews, Uganda. 13-25 March 2025.

through operations.			
Diversified output (ie. products and services).			
Opportunity for further expansion and growth.			

Despite potential weaknesses and threats, this model poses many benefits key stakeholders, including PWDs, MWW, PTHA, and the Government of Uganda.

*Table 5: Stakeholder Benefits*

<b>1. Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)</b>
<p><b>Economic Empowerment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Direct income opportunities through collection of recyclables, cart assembly, and training facilitation.</li> <li>b. Involvement in multiple stages of the business value chain creates long-term, dignified work.</li> </ul> <p><b>Social Inclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Active participation shifts the narrative from dependency to empowerment.</li> <li>b. Engagement in public training helps PWDs become visible advocates and leaders in disability inclusion.</li> </ul> <p><b>Mobility Access</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. More PWDs will receive free, sustainable mobility carts, increasing access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Capacity Building</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Skills gained through recycling, assembly, and public speaking contribute to professional growth and self-confidence.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Mobility Worldwide (MWW)</b>
<p><b>Mission Alignment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Advances their core mission of providing mobility to underserved populations through an innovative, sustainable model.</li> </ul> <p><b>Expanded Reach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Local partnership model scales up distribution across Uganda while integrating into government, educational institutions, NGO/non-profit procurement systems.</li> </ul> <p><b>Sustainable Impact</b></p>

- a. Reduces reliance on imported or donor-funded materials by utilizing locally sourced, recycled goods.

**Revenue Generation**

- a. Reliable funding generated through the sale of mobility carts and other assistive technology to government ministries and other customer bases.
- b. Reduces reliance on once-off donor funding.

**Brand Visibility**

- a. Enhanced reputation through collaboration with government, grassroots organizations, and environmentally conscious brands.

**3. Pathways to Hope Africa (PTHA)**

**Diversified Program Expansion**

- a. Establishes multiple new, integrated initiatives, including mobility cart manufacturing and a training consultancy to advance disability inclusion awareness in Uganda.

**Local and Regional Innovation Leadership**

- a. Positions Pathways to Hope Africa as a regional leader in disability inclusion and social enterprise through sustainable innovation and consultancy practice.

**4. Government of Uganda**

**Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development**

- a. Supports national disability inclusion goals and social protection initiatives. Helps meet obligations under the *Persons with Disabilities Act* and Uganda’s commitment to the UNCRPD.

**Ministry of Education and Sports**

- a. Enables rural schools and universities to support PWD students through accessible mobility.
- b. Increases school attendance and retention for students with disabilities.

**Ministry of Health**

- a. Reduces health burdens by providing quality mobility devices that prevent secondary complications from lack of movement.
- b. Promotes physical rehabilitation and community-based health support.

**Ministry of Local Government**

- a. Empowers local governments to address mobility challenges through sustainable, inclusive solutions.
- b. Fosters public-private partnerships at the grassroots level.

**Government of Uganda**

- a. Advances progress towards Uganda Vision 2040 strategic priorities, including investment in human capital development, manufacturing for regional export, ICT development, regional design and innovation hub.

- b. Demonstrates innovation in inclusive development and green growth. Creates measurable social return on investment (SROI) through disability empowerment and waste reduction.
- c. Enhances Uganda’s profile in meeting **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**— notably SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

### 5. Recycling Partners (Eco Brixs/WastePlus)

#### **Business Growth**

- a. Gains a new client (Mobility Worldwide) and revenue stream through high-volume procurement of recycled goods.

#### **Community Engagement**

- a. Strengthens community ties by hiring local collectors, including PWDs and caretakers, as part of their value chain.

#### **Environmental Impact**

- a. Expands its recycling footprint and promotes circular economy practices in Uganda.

#### **Brand Differentiation**

- a. Stands out as a social enterprise that not only protects the environment but also uplifts marginalized communities.

## 8.0 Conclusion

This field study highlighted the urgent need for more inclusive and effectively implemented policies to support PWDs in Uganda. While government frameworks exist to promote accessibility and economic empowerment, the findings revealed a persistent gap between policy and practice, compounded by underfunded programs, social stigma, and limited infrastructure to support disability inclusion. By amplifying the voices of PWDs and stakeholders, this research showed the importance of designing solutions that are community-led, context-specific, and grounded in the lived realities of those most affected. Although the study was limited by its qualitative scope, geographic focus on Soroti, and limited engagement with social enterprises in the field, it offered valuable insights into systemic barriers and emerging opportunities for social innovation across a number of emerging sectors.

## Annex 3: EcoWorks Mobility Budget

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4-25-2025



### Annual Startup Budget

Prepared For: MWW & PTHA

Description	Category	QTY	Price/kg (US Amount)		Frequency	Annual
<b>Raw Material Sourcing (Recycled Materials Type)</b>						
	Raw Material	Volume (kg)				
PET Plastic (Seat frames, panels)	Raw Material	20,000	\$0.50	\$10,000.00	1	\$10,000.00
HDPE Plastic (Wheels, durable casings)	Raw Material	15,000	\$0.45	\$6,750.00	1	\$6,750.00
Aluminum (Structural frames, axles)	Raw Material	7500	\$1.20	\$9,000.00	1	\$9,000.00
Bamboo (Armrests, footrests (eco-design))	Raw Material	5000	\$0.50	\$2,500.00	1	\$2,500.00
Rubber (Tires)	Raw Material	2500	\$1.50	\$3,750.00	1	\$3,750.00
<b>Facility Setup &amp; Equipment</b>				\$0.00		\$0.00
Cold Wash Flake Line (Cleaning plastics)	Equipment	1	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	1	\$15,000.00
Crushers (Crushers)	Equipment	1	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	1	\$10,000.00
Screw Loaders (Material feeding)	Equipment	1	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	1	\$5,000.00
Float Wash Tanks (Sorting plastics (density))	Equipment	1	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00	1	\$7,000.00
Dryers (Removing moisture post-wash)	Equipment	1	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00	1	\$8,000.00
Silos (Storing processed flakes)	Equipment	1	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	1	\$6,000.00
<b>Employees &amp; Staff</b>				\$0.00		\$0.00
Facility Workers	Employee	10	\$261.00	\$2,610.00	12	\$31,320.00
Technicians	Employee	5	\$261.00	\$1,305.00	12	\$15,660.00
Admin/Finance	Employee	3	\$261.00	\$783.00	12	\$9,396.00
Drivers	Employee	2	\$261.00	\$522.00	12	\$6,264.00
<b>Electricity Cost</b>				\$0.00		\$0.00
Consumption	Utility	5000	\$0.13	\$625.00	12	\$7,500.00

<b>Training &amp; Awareness</b>					\$0.00		\$0.00
Disability Sensitization	Training	1	\$500.00	\$500.00	12	\$6,000.00	
<b>Transportation &amp; Collection Vehicles</b>					\$0.00		\$0.00
Garbage Collection Vehicle (small truck) <i>one time co</i>	Transportation	3	\$6,000.00	\$18,000.00	1	\$18,000.00	
Fuel + Maintenance	Transportation	1	\$400.00	\$400.00	3	\$1,200.00	
Delivery Van	Transportation	1	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	1	\$15,000.00	
Fuel + Maintenance	Transportation	1	\$300.00	\$300.00	3	\$900.00	
<b>Research &amp; Development (R&amp;D)</b>					\$0.00		\$0.00
Cart ergonomics & material R&D	Research	1	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	1	\$5,000.00	
<b>Inclusive Procurement &amp; Community Collection</b>					\$0.00		\$0.00
Garbage Collection Vehicle (small truck) <i>one time co</i>	Maintenance	3	\$6,000.00	\$18,000.00	1	\$18,000.00	

**EXPENSE TOTAL**

**\$217,240.00**

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Category	Sum of Annual	Profit
Employee	62640	(\$62,640.00)
Equipment	51000	(\$51,000.00)
Transportation	35100	(\$35,100.00)
Raw Material	32000	(\$32,000.00)
Maintenance	18000	(\$18,000.00)
Utility	7500	(\$7,500.00)
Training	6000	(\$6,000.00)
Research	5000	(\$5,000.00)
(blank)	0	\$0.00
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>217240</b>	<b>(\$217,240.00)</b>

Quantity WC produced	2,500.00	Quantity back braces produced	3,000.00
Cost per Wheel Chair	<b>\$86.90</b>	Cost per back braces	<b>\$72.41</b>
Market Price/Selling price	<b>\$125.00</b>	Market Price/Selling price	<b>\$100.00</b>
<b>Total Sold Amount</b>	<b>\$312,500.00</b>	<b>Total Sold Amount</b>	<b>\$300,000.00</b>
Total Cost	\$ 217,240.00	Total Cost	\$ 217,240.00
<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>\$95,260.00</b>	<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>\$82,760.00</b>
Margin	44%	Margin	38%

Quantity Crutches produced	3,000.00	Quantity wrist-hand braces produc	3,500.00
Cost per Crutches	<b>\$72.41</b>	Cost per wrist-hand braces	<b>\$62.07</b>
Market Price/Selling price	<b>\$82.00</b>	Market Price/Selling price	<b>\$80.00</b>
<b>Total Sold Amount</b>	<b>\$246,000.00</b>	<b>Total Sold Amount</b>	<b>\$280,000.00</b>
Total Cost	\$ 217,240.00	Total Cost	\$ 217,240.00
<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>\$28,760.00</b>	<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>\$62,760.00</b>
Margin	13%	Margin	29%

Quantity walkers produced	2,500.00
Cost per walkers	<b>\$86.90</b>
Market Price/Selling price	<b>\$117.00</b>
<b>Total Sold Amount</b>	<b>\$292,500.00</b>
Total Cost	\$ 217,240.00
<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>\$75,260.00</b>
Margin	35%

## Annex 4: EcoWorks Mobility Risk Matrix

	Risk Title	Risk Category	Description of Risk	Probability	Impact	Overall	Indicators	Mitigation Measure
1	<b>Exclusion of Certain Disability Groups</b>	Operational	PWDs with higher support needs (e.g., severe mobility, visual, or cognitive impairments) may face barriers to participating in the value chain.	Possible	Moderate	Moderate	Pre-launch partner discussions	Conduct individualized disability assessments to match workers with suitable roles. Integrate caregiver partnerships in collection, assembly, and training stages. Invest in adaptive infrastructure (e.g., universal design workshops, Braille labels, color-coded bins).
2	<b>Cultural Resistance to Disability Inclusion</b>	Operational	Social stigma and negative attitudes toward PWDs may limit training participation or undermine credibility of PWD-led sessions.  PWD may experience increased stigma and discrimination due to their association with waste collection	Possible	Moderate	Moderate	Pre-launch discussions	Embed inclusion training as a mandatory clause in all government procurement contracts. Use trusted local leaders and past cart recipients as disability ambassadors to normalize and champion the model. Include powerful storytelling, testimonies, and interactive methods in workshops to personalize impact.  Work with local communities, participants, and business stakeholders to formalize the role of employees as much as possible (ie. Providing uniforms, benefits, etc.). Allow waste collectors to work in groups to mitigate the risk of potential harassment or targeting. Launch media campaigns to promote the work of PWD and frame the business as a means of achieving sustainable development for the entire community/country.
3	<b>Government Partnership Procurement Delays or Bureaucratic Bottlenecks</b>	Reputational	Slow decision-making, payment delays, or unclear procurement frameworks may delay government purchase and distribution of carts.	Possible	Major	Major	Supply chain development is slow	Target multiple ministries/agencies (e.g., Health, Education, Gender, Local Government) to diversify procurement avenues. Develop clear MOU templates and pilot projects with selected districts to demonstrate proof of concept. Engage public procurement officers early with capacity-building on social enterprise and inclusive procurement.
4	<b>Lack of Government Buy-In/Partnership</b>	Operational	National ministries do not agree to purchase mobility devices from EcoWorks Mobility for onward distribution to institutions and individuals in need	Possible	Major	Major	Lack of interest	Invest in strong relationships with government ministries and work to align partnership interests for all parties. EcoWorks Mobility may need to adjust its strategy or business model, if needed.
5	<b>Financial Constraints to Scale</b>	Financial	Lack of upfront capital for scaling operations, paying PWD workers, or sustaining R&D activities.	Possible	Moderate	Moderate	Lack of VC/ investor support	Leverage initial testimonies and pilot data to attract impact investors, social enterprise accelerators, or development funders. Apply for grants aligned with disability rights, green growth, or SDG innovation (e.g., UNDP, D-Prize, Ashoka). Integrate a cost-recovery model through cart sales, consultancy services, and potential export opportunities.
6	<b>Quality Control Risk</b>	Reputational / Operational	Poor quality design of mobility carts could damage trust and effectiveness of the initiative.	Possible	Major	Major	During product or prototype testing if participants report	Utilize PWD user-testing at every design stage. Employ a feedback loop for ongoing quality improvements based on terrain, durability, and cultural use cases. Establish internal standards and inspections across all assembly points.
7	<b>Risk of Fragmented Stakeholder Coordination</b>	Communication / Production	Multiple partners (MWW, PTHA, Eco Brixs, WastePlus) may experience miscommunication or unclear responsibilities.	Possible	Moderate	Moderate	During product or prototype development stage	Set up a centralized Coordination Hub (potentially managed by Pathways to Hope Africa) with clear roles, timelines, and reporting structures. Host monthly partner sync meetings with shared KPIs. Use project management tools (e.g., Asana, Airtable, Trello) to ensure visibility and accountability across teams.
8	<b>Financial Sustainability Risk</b>	Financial	Reliance on one-time grants or donor funds may limit long-term impact.	Possible	Major	Major	Generating self-sustaining revenue at end of pilot period indicates success	Design a blended finance model with revenue from: - Mobility cart sales to government, education institutions, NGOs, etc. - Consultancy income from trainings - Sale of additional AT and home building products
9	<b>Community Engagement Risk/ Lack of Local Buy-In</b>	Reputational	Communities may not trust or participate in the model if not properly engaged.	Possible	Major	Major	Community complaints/feedback	Implement a community hotline for anonymous feedback and complaints regarding program operations, structure, targeting, etc.

# Annex 5

## Stories from Uganda

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# Spotlight Story #1

**James & Martin** | Mobility Cart Recipients & Disability Advocates, Soroti



*Journalists by trade, advocates by passion, James (pictured front-right) and Martin (pictured front-left) offer a sobering, yet necessary, look into the realities of persons with disabilities in Uganda and the urgent need for support systems that go beyond promises.*

James, a middle-aged man with a sharp sense of awareness and quiet determination, spoke candidly about his journey navigating inaccessible employment systems and unmet social expectations. Despite holding skills and a strong will to work, he explained that opportunities for PwDs are scarce, and support structures often fall short. “There are some programs that are just by name,” he said, expressing general dissatisfaction with all government disability programs. Even

those designed to support economic inclusion, like small enterprise grants, tend to lack the follow-up, funding, or infrastructure needed for long-term success. The promises written into policy are rarely enforced on the ground.

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*“Some [Government] programs only exist on paper,” James added.*

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Martin, only 23, has become a visible advocate for disability inclusion in Soroti. Like James, he knows that real transformation requires more than good intentions. Martin boldly brought a cooperative of 100 people for the team to interview in Soroti.

Perhaps the most striking moment of the conversation was when James shared,

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*“We wish to commit suicide.” A devastating reflection of how persistent exclusion and stigma affect not just livelihood, but life itself.*

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These words were not said lightly. They reflect a deep and painful sense of being unseen by systems meant to protect and empower. Still, amid the frustration, both men voiced a desire for something different: a model that works, that includes and builds alongside persons with disabilities.

Their stories have profoundly shaped our design of a disability-led social enterprise in partnership with Mobility Worldwide and Pathways to Hope Africa. Through this initiative, we aim to generate jobs for PwDs and caregivers by producing affordable mobility carts made from recycled materials led by those with lived experience every step of the way.

James and Martin reminded us that dignity begins with listening and that the most powerful solutions often come from those who've been ignored the longest.

## Spotlight Story #2

**Ester Kyoziira** | CEO, National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU)



*From losing her sight as a teenager to leading national and international disability rights efforts – Esther Kyoziira reminds us of what it means to lead from lived experience.*

Esther wasn't born with a disability. She lost her sight at age 13 and suddenly found herself navigating a world that was not built for her. Still, she insisted on continuing her education. She had to learn braille to return to school and relied on interpreters to write her exams. Despite these challenges, she completed her Bachelor's degree in Education. But after graduating, she was repeatedly turned away from job opportunities.

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*"For every job I applied for, they told me to go back to where I came from,"  
she shared.*

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Determined to break the cycle of exclusion, Esther secured a sponsorship in the early 2000s to travel to Canada for training in screen reader technology. She returned to Uganda not just with knowledge, but with computers and software, and began training other people with disabilities to use digital tools to reclaim their independence.

This milestone marked the beginning of Esther's advocacy career. She returned to school to earn a Master's degree in Human Rights, then joined NUDIPU as a Human Rights Officer, rising through multiple leadership roles. Later, she worked internationally with the Disability Rights Fund in the United States before returning to Uganda to lead NUDIPU as CEO.

Today, Esther oversees a network of disability advocacy initiatives across Uganda's 146 districts. She has been instrumental in advancing national legislation, community-based savings groups, and disability-inclusive education programs.

Her insights deeply shaped our social enterprise model. In partnership with Mobility Worldwide, Pathways to Hope Africa, and potentially Eco Brixs, we are building a sustainable business that creates jobs for PWDs and caregivers through the production of mobility carts made from recycled materials. These carts will be assembled, distributed, and supported by people with disabilities from collection of recyclable inputs to conducting 2–3-day disability inclusion training as part of each purchase contract.

Her vision aligns powerfully with ours: a circular economy model that doesn't just provide mobility it provides agency, employment, and dignity. The carts will be distributed to schools, rural clinics, and NGOs, but the social change will come from the people delivering the training and leading the work people like Esther and the networks she's built.

Esther's journey from being denied work to building national and global systems of support — underscores what's possible when inclusion is led by those who know exclusion best. She didn't wait to be included. She created her own seat at the table and now, she's building tables for others.

## Spotlight Story #3

**Jean-Paul | Father & Son (Non-Recipient), Soroti**



*Jean-Paul is one of many individuals in Soroti with a severe physical disability awaiting a mobility cart from MWW and PTHA. However, he requires a custom-made device to meet his needs as a quadriplegic. Such a device would not only transform his life, but that of his father.*

Jean-Paul (13) is difficult to spot in a crowd unless he is in his father's arms – where he spends a lot of time due to his limited mobility. Three years ago, when he was 10, Jean-Paul suffered an unknown illness that left him without the use of his arms or legs. As a quadriplegic without access to any assistive technology, he relies on his father to help him get around.

Every day, his father carries him to school or straps him to the back of a motorcycle. Otherwise, Jean-Paul lays on his stomach, looking up at those around him – still with a bright smile on his face.

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*“At school, the teachers are giving him a good report. He is bright. He does very well,” his father says.*

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When asked what his favorite subject is, Jean-Paul says, “Math and English.” However, when asked what he wants to do when he grows up, he says “goat rearing,” as if it’s the only job he has ever considered.

Jean-Paul’s father says they hope he will soon be able to get a mobility device from MWW; however, it will need to be custom-made because he will not be able to operate the traditional hand-crank model alone.

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*When asked how this would change his life, Jean-Paul’s father said, “I will be able to find work again. Maybe in the garden or casual labor.”*

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If Jean-Paul had access to a mobility device, his father would be able to return to the workforce and earn an income for their family. Until then, he remains unemployed due to his caregiving responsibilities.

Because parents and family members of persons with disabilities are often left with little choice but to care for their loved ones 24/7, they too remain excluded from the workforce. Households hosting persons with disabilities in Uganda are 30 percent more likely to live below the poverty line, largely due to the added expense of caring for those with special needs alongside their inability to find work that accommodates their circumstance. Therefore, in order to help lift children with disabilities, like Jean-Paul, out of poverty and ensure they can continue to afford the education they deserve, it is essential for their caregivers to be employed.

Jean-Paul’s story highlights the intergenerational needs and nature of the disability movement in Uganda, whereby solving the problem for one generation alone does not solve the same problem for generations to come. With one of the world’s youngest populations, it is essential for Uganda to invest in the future of its children, including those with disabilities, via inclusive employment opportunities for those who care for them.



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