Iganga district pioneers ordinance for PWDs

By Joseph Mazige - March 29, 2017

Iganga has become the first district in Uganda to implement the Local Governments Ordinance, 2013 that ensures that the rights and inclusiveness of Persons with Disabilities are adhered to.

The formulation of the Ordinance, a brainchild of Integrated Disabled Women’s Activities (IDIWA) is supported by Independent Development Fund (IDF), Disability Rights Fund (DRF), Human Rights
The Ordinance emphasizes aspects of health, education, finance, accessibility, production and marketing among many other crucial areas that have for long affected the social and economic empowerment of People with Disabilities.

Speaking at the launch of IDIWA’s Good Governance Project, the Resident District Commissioner Iganga Ms Pulkeria Muhindo hailed the organization (IDIWA) for initiating the ordinance that aims to empower and protect the rights of People with Disabilities.

“We already have a disability policy in place which protects you. Break the stigma and join women groups to benefit from government programmes like the Women Fund and Operation Wealth Creation,” the RDC said.

In 2014, the national population census put Iganga’s population at 53,870 with 12.4 percent of this population is disabled. Muhindo said this was a big number and urged district leaders to support IDIWA in the implementation of the ordinance.

She asked the political and technical leadership in the district to support IDIWA in the ‘immediate implementation of the Ordinance’.

IDIWA is leading a collaborative effort to end discrimination and ensure equal rights to Persons with Disabilities in Busoga sub region.

The Executive Director of IDIWA, Ms Elizabeth Kayanga said at the launch that her organization is leading a collaborative effort to end discrimination and ensure equal rights to Persons with Disabilities in Busoga sub region.

“We influenced the Iganga Local Government, Persons with Disabilities Ordinance, 2013 through an intensive, engaging and consultative process involving all stakeholders, making Iganga the pioneer in legal reform and domestication of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) at the local level in Uganda.

It is important to note that the Ordinance works in synergy with the Constitution of Uganda, Disability Act and other related legal frameworks on disability,” Ms. Kayanga said.
She said that IDIWA worked with Iganga District Local Government to develop the District Policy on Disability, 2013 which provides guidelines for implementation of Ordinance and mainstreaming disability in local government planning and budgeting, to ensure inclusive service delivery.

She underscored the baseline report which presents findings of the survey on implementation of Iganga PWD Ordinance, 2013 and its effect on provision of social services to PWDs in Iganga District.

The Overall rating on key aspects of the baseline indicates that there is partial improvement in access to education and health services among PWDs in Iganga District where IDIWA is working, compared to the situation before the enactment of the Ordinance.

There is gradual improvement on knowledge about the relevance of the PWDs ordinance, which has made some positive contribution in terms of sensitizing the public to support the rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Ms Kayanga observed that there are glaring gaps in the delivery of health services to people with disabilities in Iganga district. There are no sign language interpreters, most health centres still lack adjustable delivery beds, and Sexual Reproductive Health Services generally do not address the unique needs of PWDs.

There is also lack of scholastic materials for Children with Disabilities, specially trained teachers and access facilities, hence perpetuating low retention of learners with disabilities in school.

Joseph Mazige

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