BRIDGE CRPD-SDGs First Module Uganda
Testimonies

Mr Martin Babu, CRPD Committee member
“I am happy with the way that the Bridge process has been designed because it helps the trainees or the participants in the workshop to understand how to link the SDGs to the CRPD.”

Ms Robinah ALAMBUYA, WNUSP, Co-facilitator Bridge Uganda
“Bridge has widened my appreciation of the diversity of people with disabilities. I have been able to meet and interact with people that I have never met, even at national level. All along, most of the time people have been speaking on the issue of their own constituency. I have learned that it is all of us.

I am a teacher by profession and Bridge has helped me in inclusive facilitation so preparing inclusive class. I have enjoyed the week. When I came, I was very exhausted, but I became energised along the way.

The first days you are a bit careful, because you don’t know who is who and you are not sure how others are perceiving you, but afterwards I felt included, I felt free, you can say anything, anytime”. Robina started ‘Triumph’ Uganda Mental Health Support and Recovery Program, created to celebrate overcoming challenges. She wants to ensure that people who have experienced mental health issues, recover and can meaningfully participate to the communities.

Mr David NANGOSI, National Union of Disabled Persons (NUDIPU)
“I work for NUDIPU. I am a lawyer by training, so for four years I’ve been offering legal aid services to persons with disabilities here in Uganda. Currently, I’m working on a project for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); in this project, we are aiming at enhancing the participation of persons with disabilities in the implementation of agenda 2030, and we have been training persons with disabilities on the SDGs. Also, we have been training district officials on inclusive planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation using gender and equity certificate.

The Bridge CRPD-SDGs training is very important to me. I have learnt a lot and a lot is ahead of me to share with others. You see, in the law
school most of these concepts were not shared with us; there was just a course on human rights and, in the introduction, we were taught about the UN CRPD. It was upon me, after law school, to interest myself in the UN CRPD. So, in my work, from time to time, dealing with persons with disabilities, it has been my effort to learn about the CRPD. This was not conclusive.

I was interested to get a practical understanding of the CRPD and the Bridge training has helped me to comprehend the principles, give me a wider understanding of the rights of persons with disabilities and how to use the CRPD to ensure that persons with disabilities are included in society. For me, apart from my usual work that I do on access to justice and the SDGs, I am interested in writing, popularising the legal aid needs of persons with disabilities. I have been publishing articles, news articles in Ugandan dailies about the challenges faced by persons with disabilities, the critical issues. I will be writing an article about the Bridge training. I’m also going to interest myself in my work interventions on the SDGs to find the nexus between the CRPD and the SDGs. Very few people know that the SDGs can be interpreted through the lens of the CRPD. In this training, I have appreciated this concept. In my work interventions, the two are not going to be separated and I will conduct trainings for other people on the same.

Before this training, I didn’t know about vitiligo and I didn’t know that there are different types of deafblindness and I have appreciated people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. This Bridge training has really enabled me to understand these categories of disability. I tell you, I am not the same.

I must say I have been included. I have enjoyed this training. The reason I’ve enjoyed this, I have got the knowledge, I have got the wisdom. Without knowledge, without information it is very difficult to take a step ahead, but with the knowledge I have acquired it is now upon me to take a step ahead and I’m very positive of taking a step ahead.”

**Mr Ronald KASULE, Buganda Disabled Union**

I represent persons with disabilities in the local government in Uganda. I’m also head of programmes for Uganda Disabled Union. I studied community development and mastered in economics International development. In those programs, the missing link was the CRPD. So, I could not know how to relate and focus when the law talks about the components of disability. I’ve been trying my best but as an advocate I lacked enough material to convince different government constituents. So, this training has been full of knowledge for me as I have always looked out for opportunities where I could increase my advocacy background. I have really enjoyed.

I have been included, both in the accommodation where we stay and in the training. I’m not so fast in writing but all the training materials have been submitted to me and I’m looking forward to reading them.

Growing up as a person with disability I promised myself I would advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities. I’ve particularly appreciated the methodologies that the Bridge training gives. Personally, I’ve been trained to cofacilitate community development but prior to this I had challenges of how I would bring other disabilities on-board because we don’t cover how to facilitate inclusive training. But this has been an opportunity for me.
I’ve enjoyed so much. My hope, since I’ve done International development is to feel utilised and work at the international level and this training gives me the legal perspective into the equation so I think this is going to boost my opportunities to work at international level.

Mary Clare NAKIGOZI, Vitiligo Association of Uganda

I’m from the Vitiligo Association of Uganda. I have been discriminated in the home and in the workplace so I decided to advocate for the rights of persons with vitiligo. I have an association of women in the media who have helped me to speak out against this discrimination. We are trained to teach people what vitiligo is, how it comes about. We have done so well and the response has been so good and we were looking forward to taking it to another level.

This week has been so great. I’ve been able to learn so much because I didn’t know much about the CRPD and SDGs but with this week I’ve been taken through, I’ve have participated, I have asked questions and I have learned and all that I’m willing to put into practice because disability is not inability.

And here at Bridge we have been able to interact with people with different types of disability, we’ve learned how to appreciate each other, we have learned from each other. I’m going to use this information when writing proposals, because when I’ve been doing this I’ve missed out the CRPD and it is a burning issue. This has been a learning experience.

I have felt totally included this week; I haven’t been left out because every question, every participation, every involvement was with everyone. Nobody was left behind and I’m so proud to say that even that question was raised when we were in the meeting and everyone said that it’s been inclusive.

When people get a chance to interact with me, they learned what vitiligo is.

Christine KIRUNGI, Uganda National Association of Cerebral Palsy

I am Executive director of Uganda National Association of Cerebral Palsy. I have acquired more knowledge to use those articles because they are weapons. Sometimes you have a complaint but you have no clear laws or articles to refer to. I would have been making ‘naked statements’ like ‘we have a right to education’ or ‘we have a right to inherited properties’ but we were not relating it to anything. Yes, I’ve heard of CRPD, and SDGs, but I didn’t know that it’s our Bible to back us up.

In this training, I have learned that we have to know the articles in the CRPD. We are forming parents’ groups, parents of children with Cerebral Palsy and we are asking the authorities, saying these are also people with disabilities and they have a right to benefit from the government programs but we have not been able to say that ‘Uganda has ratified this and this’. I’m very sure after here we shall be able to do this.
Faridah NABULYA, Uganda National Association of Hard of Hearing

I work with parents of deaf children to ensure that the children can go to school, and do similar with parents of children with Down syndrome.

I have also advocated for my own rights. I supervise children with disabilities when they are doing their exams but I was never paid for this like others doing similar work, so I advocated for my right to be paid and now I am included. Until now I have been doing this just because I know it is right. I did not know in-depth and did not know about the CRPD. I feel very, very happy with the Bridge training. I am learning many, many new things. I have been using just my basic knowledge, just being creative where I see discrimination but during this Bridge training I feel I’m achieving a lot of skills on how to advocate for my rights.

In the future, I want to be an advocate and train other people with disabilities about their rights. Many do not know. But they are responsible to fight for themselves, to voice their issues. I know my human rights which means I’m free to speak my rights. So now, if I feel I want something I seriously advocate for it until I get it. If you don’t give it to me then you have to give me an explanation why you are denying me.