



ISSUES FACING WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES ACROSS VARIOUS AFRICAN COUNTRIES

INCLUSION AFRICA MEMBERS LEARNING SERIES

Inclusion Africa Members Quarterly Meeting

February 27, 2024

The meeting notes from the Q1 2024 Quarterly Africa Members Meeting focused on the issues facing women and girls with intellectual disabilities across various African countries. Key challenges highlighted included:

- 1 Sexual Harassment and Abuse:** Participants from multiple countries (e.g., Uganda, Kenya, and Rwanda) noted the prevalence of sexual harassment, abuse, and limited autonomy over reproductive rights. In some areas, women and girls with intellectual disabilities face forced sterilization or birth control.
- 2 Financial Independence and Employment:** Several members pointed out barriers to financial independence, limited access to vocational training, and high unemployment rates among women with disabilities (e.g., Benin and Mauritius). Societal perceptions of women with disabilities also reduce their opportunities for leadership.
- 3 Access to Education and Support:** Many regions, such as Burundi and Rwanda, reported restricted access to education and family or community support for women and girls with intellectual disabilities. These restrictions often stem from societal stigmas that devalue their abilities and rights.
- 4 Inheritance and Land Rights:** In places like Zambia, the right to inherit property or own land is denied to women with intellectual disabilities.
- 5 Humanitarian and Post-Conflict Situations:** In conflict-affected areas (e.g., DRC), women and girls with disabilities face increased vulnerability to sexual violence and exclusion from decision-making processes.

The meeting also covered advocacy efforts, which include awareness-raising campaigns, involvement with policymakers, and collaborations with women's organizations and other movements. Participants emphasized the importance of integrating gender issues into their projects, empowering women with intellectual disabilities through self-advocacy, and forming networks to support rights initiatives and best practices exchange.