



Experience by Human Life Defense Department, Rulenge-Ngara Catholic Diocese
In East Africa/Tanzania

Background:

Before 2017, there was no action advocating for the rights of PWDs in Biharamulo District despite clear challenges faced by them. While grants for social groups (women, PWDs and youths) were already enshrined in policies, there was no legal obligation to allocate these resources. Likewise there was no specific allocation to each group, which resulted in women and youth being favoured over PWDs.

The **solution** was to team up with other CSOs and advocate for PWDs with duty bearers and to build their capacity.

Experience description

In 2017, HLDD started an advocacy campaign for the rights of PWDs in Biharamulo District. HLDD made a census to identify the number and kinds of disabilities in the District and raised awareness among right holders and duty bearers. HLDD also analysed the policy issues hindering the effective enjoyment of their rights by PWDs and identified lack of access to loans as a major constraint. There were roundtable discussions with relevant stakeholders and joint lobbying interactions together with other CSOs promoting PWD rights. Jointly, they persuaded the Parliamentary Committee on Social Services to amend the law and establish an obligation to local governments to allocate 2% of their quarterly internal collections specifically to PWDs groups.



Other characteristics



IMPACTS

- Access to finance helped PWDs venture into business
- PWD-friendly renovation of public buildings
- 3 primary schools for children with disabilities
- Increased number of road signs for PWDs



CHALLENGES

- Benefit fraud by people pretending to have disabilities
- Low capacity of PWDs in handling public grants



LESSONS LEARNED

- Unity & Solidarity among CSOs heighten influence in lobbying for policy changes
- Strong community groups are needed for successful lobbying
- Group formation should be supported, not directed top-down