

## ► Policy Brief

May 2025

# Mainstreaming disability inclusion in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Africa

### Key points

- In Africa, persons with disabilities are **heavily underrepresented in technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and in the labour force**. Among young persons with disabilities, 52 per cent are not in employment, education, or training (NEET) compared with an average of 27 per cent of those without disabilities. While it is estimated that 10–20 per cent of people in African countries are living with a disability,<sup>1</sup> in the countries analysed, only 2.7 per cent of Africa's labour force (3.1 per cent of the female labour force) identify as disabled.<sup>2</sup> Of those with a vocational education, persons with disabilities account for just 1.6 per cent.
- In skills systems, persons with disabilities often face **systemic barriers to participating in technical vocational education and training**, including inaccessible infrastructure, inadequacy of training materials and learning approaches, lack of capacity on the part of trainers to deal with the special needs of persons with disabilities, social stigma and limited support services. Segregated programmes<sup>3</sup> often fall short in addressing labour market needs, thus widening the employment gap.
- **Most African countries have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)**. However, gaps in implementation persist.
- Several **African countries have made progress on disability inclusion** through implementing the likes of inclusive education policies and programmes that highlight disability-specific measures, or disability inclusion policies featuring specific skills clauses.
- Recommendations to further improve **disability inclusion** point to, among other things, adaptive learning materials and flexible pathways, building the capacity of teachers to follow inclusive training approaches, greater involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities, fostering work-based learning opportunities, increasing recognition of prior learning and strengthening data collection mechanisms to track inclusion milestones over time.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), "[To Improve Disaster Outcomes for Persons with Disabilities in Africa, Disaggregate Data](#)", PreventionWeb, 26 October 2021.

<sup>2</sup> In Africa, 34 countries disaggregate household survey data (2014–24). See ILO, "[Labour Force by Sex and Disability Status](#)", ILOSTAT .StatData Explorer, accessed 25 April 2025.

<sup>3</sup> Programmes exclusively targeting persons with disabilities.

## Disability and TVET in Africa

Across Africa, persons with disabilities often face significant barriers to education and employment.<sup>4</sup> Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which has been ratified by most African countries,<sup>5</sup> says that “States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others”.<sup>6</sup> However, despite international and national legal frameworks, **the implementation of inclusive policies remains inconsistent**. Even where inclusive laws exist, they are often not fully adhered to in practice. Barriers include inadequate funding for adaptive infrastructure, untrained educators, and the persistence of segregated or exclusionary learning environments. Institutional commitment and leadership are decisive for inclusion, and many educators lack the pedagogical tools for effective inclusion in blended or traditional formats.<sup>7</sup> Data from the International Labour Organization (ILO) shows that labour force participation rates of persons with disabilities are consistently lower than those of persons without disabilities. Access to skills training and work opportunities is crucial for fostering social inclusion and enabling persons with disabilities to contribute to economic development.<sup>8</sup>

## The importance of inclusive TVET systems

**Inclusive TVET systems are essential for ensuring that persons with disabilities acquire the skills necessary for decent work and economic independence.** Segregated programmes are common, which tend to offer training that is not aligned to market demands and offer fewer opportunities for inclusion and a successful transition to

work. This limits the employability of persons with disabilities and widens the employment gap between them and those without disabilities.<sup>9</sup>



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Persons with disabilities are often excluded from mainstream training opportunities and TVET pathways. This exclusion is further aggravated by systemic challenges, such as inaccessible infrastructure, limited support services and social stigma.<sup>10,11</sup>

Persons with disabilities are disproportionately represented in the informal economy, where opportunities for decent work are limited. Without access to relevant training in mainstream TVET systems, persons with disabilities are less likely to secure formal employment or to transition out of poverty.<sup>12</sup> According to ILO data, **the share of people in informal employment in Africa is higher among those with disabilities (90.2 per cent) than those without disabilities (80.7 per cent).**

<sup>4</sup> World Bank, [Challenges Facing Persons with Disabilities in Sub-Saharan Africa – in 5 charts](#), accessed 25 April 2025.

<sup>5</sup> [UN Treaty Body Database](#).

<sup>6</sup> [United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities](#), 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Tawanda Chinengundu and Jerald Hondonga, “[Inclusive Education Practices in TVET Institutions in Botswana, South Africa and Thailand: A Systematic Review](#)”, *TVET@Asia*, Issue 23, 22 August 2024.

<sup>8</sup> ILO, [Disability Inclusion in the African Business Community: Latest Trends and Good Practices](#), 2023.

<sup>9</sup> Shimelis Tesemma and Susanna Coetzee, “[Manifestations of Spatial Exclusion and Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Africa](#)”, *Disability & Society*, 38(10) (2023): 1934-1957.

<sup>10</sup> Human Rights Watch, [Complicit in Exclusion: South Africa's Failure to Guarantee an Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities](#), 2015.

<sup>11</sup> Tesemma and Coetzee, 2023.

<sup>12</sup> Human Rights Watch, 2015.

## Barriers to participation

The barriers to inclusion in training systems are multifaceted. In many cases, **physical infrastructure** is not designed to accommodate persons with disabilities, with facilities lacking ramps, accessible classrooms, or appropriate **learning materials**. Moreover, **teachers and trainers** are often not equipped to support students with disabilities, owing either to a lack of training or inadequate resources. **Social attitudes** towards disability further exacerbate exclusion, with **misconceptions and stigma** discouraging trainers from finding adapted and suitable solutions for inclusion and employers from hiring persons with disabilities or engaging them in training.<sup>13,14</sup>



Welding skills training in Kenya under PROSPECTS © ILO

## Data on disability inclusion

One critical issue is the **lack of reliable data** on the participation of persons with disabilities in mainstream formal or non-formal education programmes. An ILO study on disability inclusion in TVET systems in Africa<sup>15</sup> highlights significant gaps in statistical and administrative data on persons with disabilities at national level. Many countries

lack current data on enrolment, completion rates, and the characteristics of learners and training centres. This absence of data makes it challenging to measure progress in implementing inclusive policies, or to evaluate their impact and effectiveness.

With the aim of closing some of these gaps, the **ILOSTAT database now captures disability labour market indicators (DLMI) from approximately 100 countries, including 37 in Africa**. This data, derived from labour force surveys and population censuses, offers critical insight into the employment, unemployment, working time and earnings of persons with and without disabilities. To provide a robust foundation for evidence-based policy-making, this data should be accompanied by an understanding of the barriers and facilitators influencing labour market outcomes. The following analysis draws from the latest harmonized ILO data set and highlights key trends based on available statistics across several African countries.

**Youth NEET rates among persons with and without disabilities vary considerably across different countries in Africa** (Figure 1). Among persons with disabilities, youth NEET rates are highest in Senegal (78 per cent) and lowest in Kenya (12.4 per cent). Among persons without disabilities, they are highest in Sudan (46.2 per cent) and lowest in Togo (11.1 per cent).

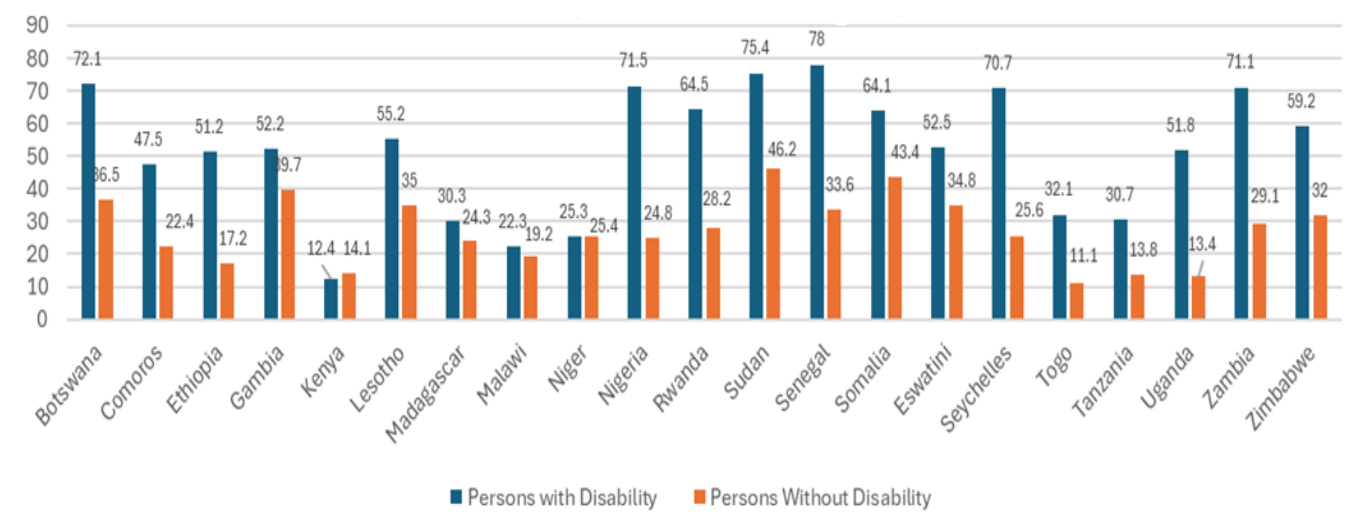
The figure shows that in all but one country (Kenya), the rate of youth NEET is higher among people with disabilities than those without. Overall, across all the African countries analysed, **51.9 per cent of young people with disabilities are NEET compared with an average of 27.1 per cent of young people without disabilities**.

<sup>13</sup> ILO, [Making TVET and Skills Systems Inclusive of Persons with Disabilities](#), 2017.

<sup>14</sup> ILO, [Guide on Making TVET and Skills Development Inclusive for All](#), 2020.

<sup>15</sup> ILO, [Mapping of Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Africa](#) (unpublished).

► **Figure 1. Share of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) in Africa by disability status and country (in %, latest year available)**



Source: ILO, “[Share of Youth not in Employment, Education or Training \(NEET\) by Sex and Disability Status](#)”, ILOSTAT data explorer, 2021, accessed 25 April 2025.

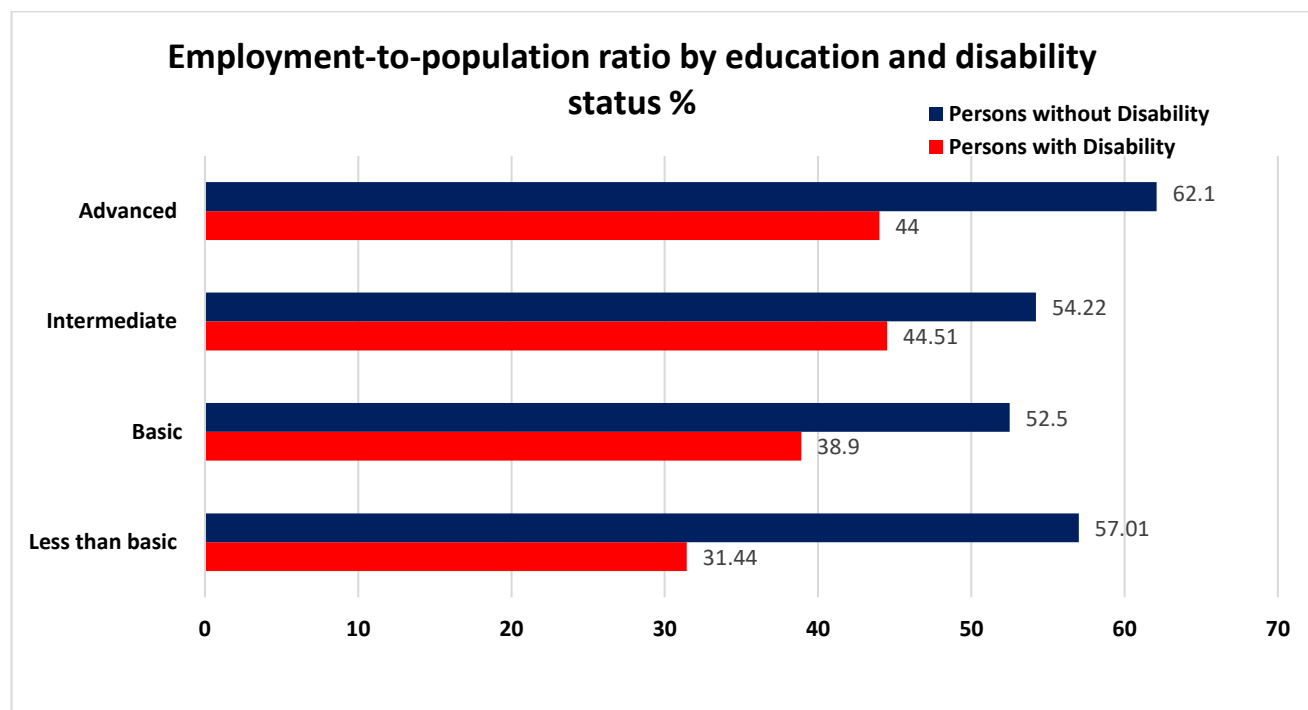
**Figure 2 highlights significant disparities in employment rates between persons with and without disabilities across education levels.** Among those with less than basic education, only 31.4 per cent of persons with disabilities were employed, compared with 57 per cent of those without disabilities, underscoring the persistent barriers faced by persons with disabilities in accessing employment opportunities.

Among individuals without disabilities who had basic education, on average, 52.6 per cent were employed, whereas among those with disabilities, the average employment rate stood at 38.9 per cent.

As individuals attained intermediate levels of education, the observed average employment-to-population ratio for people with disabilities increased to 44.5 per cent, whereas for those without disabilities, it was 54.2 per cent.

Even at the advanced education level, however, there was a significant imbalance between persons with disabilities and those without. The latter had a 62.1 per cent chance of being in employment if they acquired advanced education, while the former had a 44 per cent chance – a gap of 18 per cent.

Across all education levels there remains a significant gap in employment rates between these two groups

► **Figure 2. Employment-to-population ratio by education and disability status (in %)**

Source: ILO, [“Employment-to-Population Ratio by Sex, Education and Disability Status \(%\) Database”](#), ILOSTAT data explorer, 2019-2023, obtained from 21 African countries where data was available, accessed 12 January 2025.

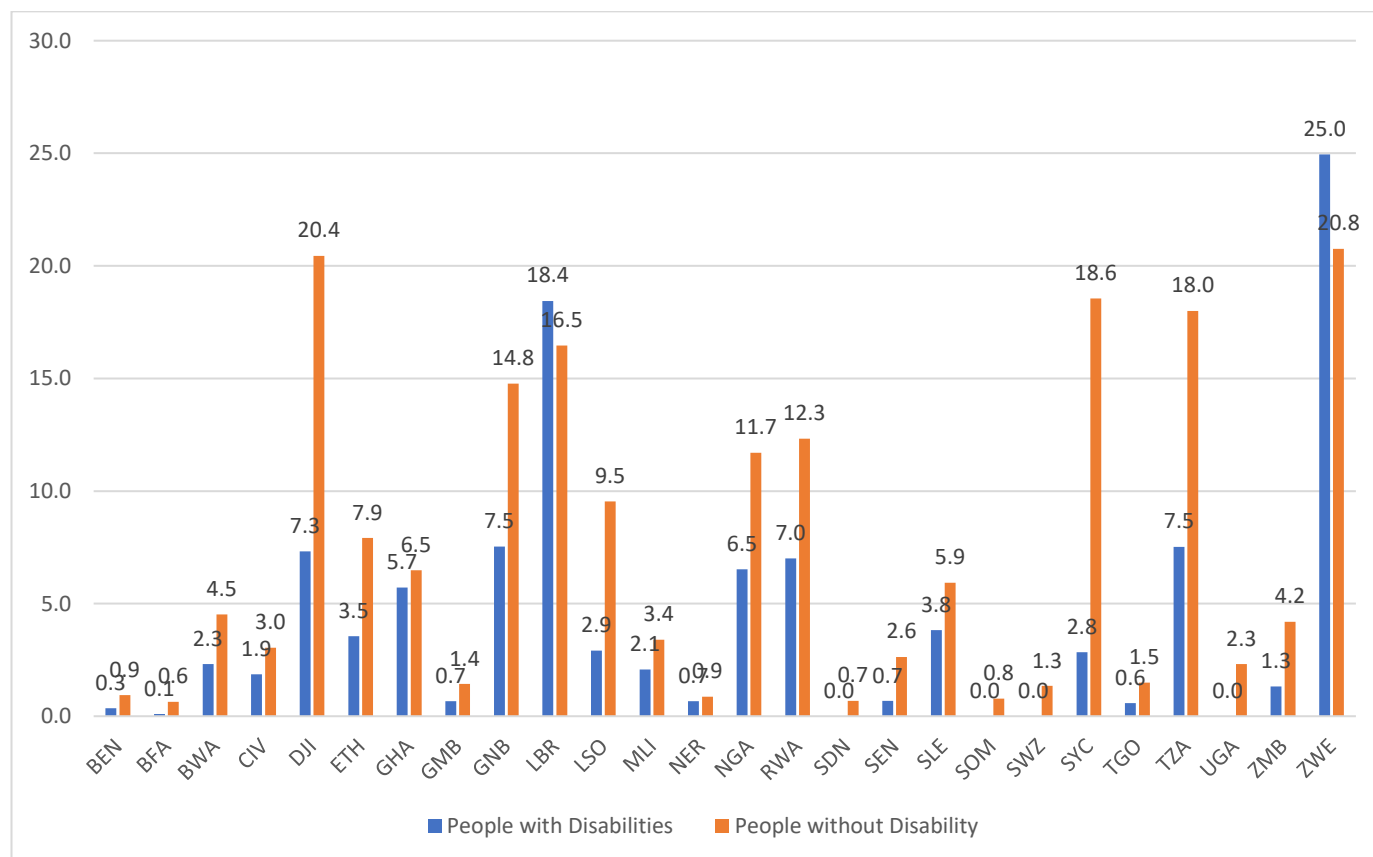
**Figure 3 highlights the disparity in TVET attendance between individuals with and without disabilities across various African countries.** In the vast majority of the countries represented, TVET attendance rates were considerably lower among persons with disabilities than those without disabilities. Two countries stand out: in Zimbabwe (ZWE) and Liberia (LBR), persons with disabilities had higher rates of TVET attendance, indicating a focus on disability inclusion in TVET in those countries.

In all the 26 countries in the sample, persons with disabilities never accounted for more than 8 per cent of all people who ever attended TVET (in ZWE), with their average participation rate being less than 1.6 per cent. This is despite the fact that the share of people with disabilities in Africa is commonly estimated to be 10–20 per cent of the population.<sup>16</sup>

This disparity underscores the pressing need for targeted interventions to improve access to TVET for individuals with disabilities.

<sup>16</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), [“To Improve Disaster Outcomes for Persons with Disabilities in Africa, Disaggregate Data”](#), PreventionWeb, 26 October 2021.

► **Figure 3. Share of the population who attended technical vocational education and training (TVET) by disability status (in %)**



Source: ILOSTAT.

## Approaches to disability inclusion in TVET in Africa

### Laws and policies – best practices

Inclusive policies and laws are paramount to achieving the fundamental rights of persons with disabilities to equality and non-discrimination that are often enshrined in a country's constitution. There are several possible policy approaches in working towards disability-inclusive skills systems:

- disability inclusion policies including skills clauses;
- skills policies including disability inclusion clauses;
- skills and disability inclusion policies.

### Disability inclusion policy including skills clauses

[Ethiopia's National Action Plan on Disability \(2012–2021\)](#)

Ethiopia's National Action Plan on Disability provides a comprehensive framework that addresses both disability and skills development. It emphasizes the need to offer persons with disabilities rehabilitation services, equal educational opportunities, skills training and employment. The policy focuses on incorporating persons with disabilities into the workforce by promoting skills training alongside other essential services. The inclusion of vocational training highlights the recognition that persons with disabilities require specialized support to access skills needed for the labour market. However, the policy also notes the gap between the legislative framework and its real-world implementation, particularly concerning difficulties in accessing the TVET system. The National Action Plan lists 13 objectives, including to: provide the best education and vocational skills training; create opportunities for work and employment; provide social protection for the poor, marginalized and vulnerable sectors of society; promote and raise awareness of a non-disabling society; provide community-based rehabilitation,



specialized medical rehabilitation services and technical aids; support accessible living and transport in the community; promote full participation and equality for women with disabilities; and foster leadership by people with disabilities and their organizations. In Ethiopia's schools, students with and without disabilities learn in the same classrooms.



Certification programmes in tailoring and beauty salon management under PROSPECTS © ILO

## Skills policy including disability inclusion provisions

### Malawi's Technical, Entrepreneurial, and Vocational Education and Training Policy (2013)

Malawi's Technical, Entrepreneurial, and Vocational Education and Training (TEVET) Policy (2013) incorporates specific measures to enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities. The policy ensures that vocational education centres are accessible and can accommodate learners with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities. It mandates the training of TVET instructors to be able handle diverse learning needs and encourages the development of assistive technologies for learners with disabilities.

While the TEVET policy is progressive in addressing the needs of persons with disabilities, implementation challenges include a lack of funding, insufficiently trained instructors and limited outreach to rural communities. Nonetheless, the policy represents a significant step towards bridging the gap between skills development and disability inclusion in Malawi.

## Skills and disability inclusion policy

### Tanzania's National Strategy for Inclusive Education (2018–2021)

Tanzania's National Strategy for Inclusive Education provides a comprehensive approach to addressing skills development and disability inclusion, building on the achievements of the previous 2009–2017 strategy and a strong foundation of disability inclusion policies implemented since the 1980s. It focuses on equitable access to education for all learners, particularly children with disabilities, by addressing barriers such as inaccessible infrastructure and long distances to schools through initiatives like satellite centres and inclusive school mapping. The strategy emphasizes strengthening teacher training to ensure educators are equipped with the skills to support learners with diverse needs, including through pre-service and in-service programmes. It also seeks to create inclusive learning environments by adapting infrastructure, providing assistive devices and expanding teaching resources tailored for students with special needs. Vocational training and life-skills development are integral to the strategy, aiming to enhance employability and integration into the workforce for persons with disabilities. Additionally, the strategy highlights the role of community mobilization in fostering awareness and support for inclusive education. Despite resource constraints and implementation gaps, the strategy provides a robust framework to advance inclusive education and promote equitable skills development across Tanzania.

The data analysis conducted for this brief revealed a comparatively lower youth NEET rate in Tanzania for persons with disabilities compared with many other African countries, which may be due to Tanzania's effective and sustained long-term strategy on inclusive education.

## The role of organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs)

**Organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs)** play a crucial role in advocating for the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities in education, training and employment. These organizations not only represent the collective voice of individuals with disabilities but also **actively participate in policy-making and service provision, especially in low- and middle-income countries.**



Workshop at the Dar es Salaam Regional Vocational Training and Services Centre © ILO

OPDs help bridge the gap between persons with disabilities and essential services, such as technical and vocational education, skills training and job opportunities, ensuring that they have a say in the decisions that affect their lives.

Moreover, OPDs are instrumental in fostering public awareness about the challenges and discrimination faced by persons with disabilities in the workforce. Through advocacy efforts, they work to remove barriers, promote equal opportunities, and support the implementation of reasonable accommodations in education, training and employment. **By engaging with employers, workers, governments, and relevant national and international organizations, OPDs push for inclusive policies that ensure that technical and vocational institutions are disability-friendly, and that enhance access to work-based learning and decent jobs.** These efforts contribute significantly to breaking the cycle of poverty and marginalization that many persons with disabilities face.

In Southern Africa, OPDs have been instrumental in promoting inclusion through their active participation in a project funded by the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) and implemented by the ILO and UNESCO (see box on the next page). Notably, they contributed to the design and pilot

implementation of the Stigma and Discrimination Audit Tool in Namibia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. This tool assesses barriers within TVET institutions and workplaces, focusing on stigma, accessibility and discriminatory practices. By incorporating their lived experiences, OPDs ensured the tool's relevance and effectiveness, providing actionable recommendations to foster inclusivity. This initiative underscores the critical role of OPDs in shaping inclusive policies and practices that promote equal opportunities, access to education and decent work for persons with disabilities.<sup>17</sup>

## Implementation of policies: country-level achievements

### Tanzania

Tanzania has demonstrated significant commitment to fostering inclusivity in skills development and employment, particularly for persons with disabilities. The 2022 National and Population Census indicates that the population of people with disabilities increased from 9.3 per cent in 2012 to 11.2 per cent in 2022.

A cornerstone of Tanzania's inclusive efforts is the Recognition of Prior Learning Assessment (RPLA) programme, launched in 2014 by the ILO in collaboration with the Government of Tanzania, the Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) and social partners. This initiative provides individuals – regardless of whether their skills were gained formally, non-formally or informally – with an opportunity to have their competencies assessed and certified. RPLA is particularly effective for marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities, helping them transition from informal work to formal employment and improving their access to decent job opportunities. With technical assistance from the ILO, VETA developed robust assessment tools and trained more than 550 assessors across Tanzania, ensuring high-quality evaluations and expanding RPLA's reach.<sup>18</sup>

- The programme's evolution included the following strategic milestones:<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> UNESCO, UNPRPD & ILO, 2024. [Namibia](#) summary findings report. [Zimbabwe](#) summary findings report. [Mozambique](#) summary findings report. *Identifying & Addressing Stigma and Discriminatory practices and patterns towards learners and workers with disabilities public TVETs*. UNESCO, Zimbabwe.

<sup>18</sup> ILO, 2023.

<sup>19</sup> ILO, 2023.



- **2015:** certification expanded to five occupations in four regions
- **2017:** more than 3,600 candidates, including persons with disabilities, assessed and certified
- **2025:** more than 23,000 candidates, including persons with disabilities, assessed and certified in more than 15 occupations; around 7,000 candidates assessed yearly supported by government funds.<sup>20</sup>

For persons with disabilities, RPLA offers a pathway to inclusion in the labour market, addressing systemic barriers and promoting economic participation. As Tanzania continues to implement initiatives like RPLA, it sets a strong example of how targeted strategies can empower marginalized populations, fostering resilience and inclusivity in vocational education and training systems.<sup>21</sup>

### Ending stigma and discrimination – breaking the cycle of poverty and marginalization of persons with disabilities in Southern Africa

- The programme, implemented since April 2021 in Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, aims to combat stigma and discrimination against persons with disabilities in TVET institutions and workplaces. It is funded by the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) and implemented by UNESCO and the ILO.
- The programme seeks to foster disability inclusion in TVET and employment, aligning with Article 24 (Education) and Article 27 (Employment) of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).
- In Namibia, despite existing legislation, such as the Affirmative Action (Employment) Act, many persons with disabilities remain marginalized in the workforce. The programme in Namibia works to bridge these gaps by developing tools to monitor inclusion, such as disability inclusion scorecards and participatory audits, to ensure that both TVET institutions and workplaces adopt more inclusive practices.

- In Tanzania, the programme works closely with government ministries, employers' associations, workers' groups and OPDs to ensure that TVET institutions and workplaces are inclusive. By addressing deep-rooted stigma and providing guidelines on reasonable accommodation, the programme promotes the full participation of persons with disabilities in education and employment.
- In Mozambique, the programme addresses critical issues such as the lack of inclusive educational materials – for example, those using Braille and sign language – as well as insufficient teacher training to support learners with disabilities in TVET institutions. The programme advocates for more inclusive curricula and better support systems.
- In Zimbabwe, the programme has introduced a Disability Audit Tool to assess and address the barriers faced by persons with disabilities in TVET institutions. This tool helps track instances of discrimination and evaluates the accessibility of facilities, infrastructure and teaching methods for learners with disabilities. By identifying gaps, the programme collaborates with local institutions to implement changes that ensure more inclusive environments.

<sup>20</sup> Figures provided by the Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA), Tanzania.

<sup>21</sup> ILO, 2023.

## Kenya

Over the years, Kenya has implemented several key policies aimed at promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities in vocational training and employment. The Persons with Disabilities Act of 2003 was one of the foundational efforts, mandating that 5 per cent of jobs in both the public and private sectors be reserved for persons with disabilities. Kenya's commitment to inclusive TVET is reflected in its National Skills Development Policy of 2023, which emphasizes the importance of ensuring equitable access and inclusive learning environments for people with disabilities.<sup>22</sup> Recognizing the unique barriers faced by this group, the policy outlines specific measures to enhance their participation in skills development.

One key initiative is the strengthening of Educational Assessment and Resource Centres (EARCs), which play a crucial role in the early identification of and support for learners with special needs. By improving these centres, the government aims to ensure that learners with disabilities are provided with the appropriate resources and guidance to succeed in vocational training. In 2024, the ILO supported the Kenya School of TVET in updating a module on equity and inclusion in the TVET teacher training curricula, in order to raise trainers' awareness and equip them with skills and approaches to facilitate inclusion of disabled learners in TVET.

Additionally, publicly funded vocational and technical training programmes are operational, providing support for people with disabilities to access skills development opportunities.<sup>23</sup> The Kenya Business and Disability Network (KBDN) and the Sightsavers' IT Bridge Academy, hosted by the National Industry Training Authority (NITA), are providing inclusive curricula and training, and have created a pool of young IT-skilled job-seekers with disabilities through the Academy.<sup>24</sup> These steps reflect Kenya's ongoing efforts to translate policy commitments into tangible actions that enhance access to training and work opportunities for this population.



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## Malawi

Malawi has made significant efforts over the years to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in education and employment, starting with the Handicapped Persons Act of 1971. This Act established the Malawi Council for the Handicapped (MACOHA), responsible for overseeing rehabilitation services and administering vocational and special training centres for disabled persons. The Council's mandate includes providing education sponsorship and vocational training to persons with disabilities to foster their economic empowerment.

In more recent years, Malawi has updated its legislative framework with the Persons with Disabilities Bill of 2019. The Bill explicitly mentions education and training for people with disabilities, including the requirement that educational institutions provide inclusive education and ensure access at all levels. It also emphasizes access to vocational, technical and continuing training, and guidance programmes. Specifically, the Bill mandates that at least 10 per cent of financial assistance for education be allocated to students with disabilities, which is crucial in promoting their participation in vocational and technical education.

<sup>22</sup> Kenya, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, [National Skills Development Policy](#), 2023.

<sup>23</sup> Shaffa Hameed, Lopita Huq, David JN Musendo, Lena Morgon Banks, Joyce Olenja and Tom Shakespeare, ["I Don't Know Whether it's Priority,](#)

[or Capacity, or Both": Implementation Gaps in Employment Policies Targeting People with Disabilities in Kenya and Bangladesh](#)", *Disabilities*, 4(4) (2024): 781–800.

<sup>24</sup> ILO, ["Upskilling for Increased Possibilities for Disability Inclusion"](#), ILO Global Business and Disability Network, 24 February 2025.

Malawi has made commendable efforts in promoting skills development and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. MACOHA oversees two key vocational training centres: the Kamuzu Vocational Rehabilitation and Training Centre (KVRTC) and the Lilongwe Vocational Training Centre (LVTC). Established in 1983 and 1989, respectively, these centres provide vocational assessment and skills training to persons with disabilities, equipping them for self-employment and integration into the labour market. The centres offer a wide range of courses, including metalwork, tailoring, agriculture and secretarial studies. In addition to centre-based training, MACOHA facilitates community-based skills training, using professional local artisans to extend vocational opportunities to rural areas. Placement services complement these training efforts by raising employers' awareness of the capabilities of persons with disabilities and monitoring their workplace performance.<sup>25</sup> These initiatives are pivotal in empowering persons with disabilities and fostering their economic independence and transitions to formality.

## Bridging gaps, building futures: next steps for disability inclusion in Africa's TVET systems

To foster full inclusion of persons with disabilities in TVET systems across Africa, it is essential to address both the systemic barriers and attitudinal challenges that limit access and participation. Despite existing legal frameworks and international conventions, significant gaps remain in the practical implementation of inclusive policies.

### Key priorities for action

1. **Create accessible and supportive learning environments:** flexible admission criteria, affording persons with disabilities reasonable accommodation, and advocacy to change stereotypes and attitudes are all key. In addition, institutions must ensure that their learning environments do not pose barriers to access for persons with disabilities and that adaptive learning materials and physical and technological aids are
2. **Enhance teacher training and capacity:** teachers and trainers play a crucial role in supporting learners with disabilities. Capacity-building efforts should include awareness-raising programmes to break stereotypes and foster positive attitudes towards disability. Additionally, training should focus on equipping educators with the skills, knowledge and disability etiquette needed to create inclusive learning environments. Ensuring that teacher training programmes prioritize disability inclusion will significantly improve outcomes for learners with disabilities, promoting a more supportive and respectful training experience.
3. **Expand data collection and monitoring:** improved data collection is essential to understand the participation of persons with disabilities in TVET and the labour market. Governments should focus on disaggregating administrative data, such as enrolment and completion rates in TVET programmes, regularly conduct tracer studies and consistently incorporate disability-specific questions in labour force surveys, following the [Washington Group question sets](#).<sup>26</sup>
4. **Involve OPDs in social dialogue, policy-making and implementation:** OPDs are critical partners in advocating for disability inclusion in skills development and employment. These organizations should be actively engaged in the design and implementation of TVET and employment policies to ensure that the needs and perspectives of persons with disabilities are fully addressed. Inclusive policies are more likely to succeed when OPDs play an integral role in the process.
5. **Strengthen RPL and flexible training pathways:** ensuring that persons with disabilities have equitable access to skills development opportunities is essential for fostering economic participation and facilitating their transition to formal employment. Recognition of prior learning and more flexible learning pathways can

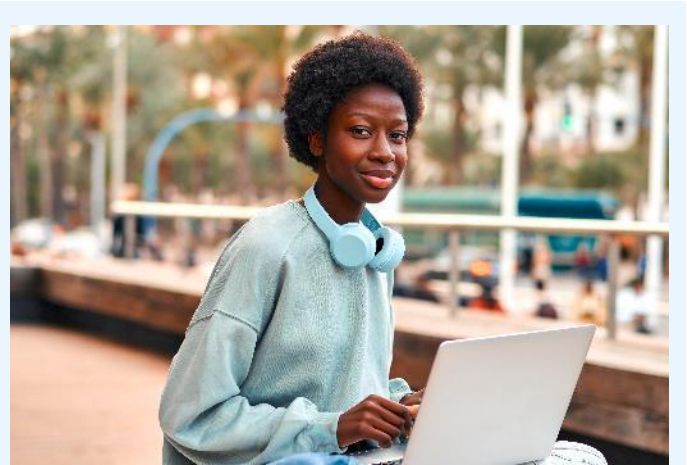
readily available to learners with disabilities, when needed. Efforts to upgrade facilities and implement accessible technologies are more likely to succeed when combined with awareness campaigns to educate communities and stakeholders about the rights and capabilities of persons with disabilities, fostering a supportive environment for their inclusion.

<sup>25</sup> See the website of the [Malawi Council for the Handicapped](#).

<sup>26</sup> See also ILO, [LFS Add-On Module on Functional Difficulties and Barriers to Employment](#). *LFS Integration Guide* (v1), July 2020.

provide persons with disabilities with the qualifications needed to access formal training programmes and employment opportunities. By focusing on skills development for those in the informal economy, these initiatives aim to empower individuals to move towards greater economic stability and inclusion in the formal labour market.

6. **Increase work-based learning opportunities in partnership with employers:** work-based learning (WBL) and quality apprenticeships (as outlined by the [ILO Quality Apprenticeships Recommendation, 2023 \(No. 208\)](#)) equip individuals, including persons with disabilities, with practical skills for smoother transitions into employment. To provide WBL opportunities to people with disabilities, employers should be made aware of inclusive hiring, workplace adaptations, legal responsibilities and the business benefits of diversity. Collaboration with training institutions and disability organizations is key in this endeavour.
7. To **expose persons with disabilities to workplace realities**, initiatives such as job shadowing, internships, pre-employment training, mentorship and access to assistive resources should be implemented. These efforts ensure accessible, inclusive work environments and strengthen partnerships between employers and training institutions to bridge the gap between education and employment.<sup>27</sup>



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To ensure disability-inclusive TVET and skills development, these measures should be implemented in partnership with governments, training institutions, employers, workers and OPDs. By addressing both structural and social barriers, Africa can create more equitable pathways for persons with disabilities to gain the skills needed for meaningful and decent employment. For people with disabilities working in the informal economy, skilling, upskilling and recognition of prior learning can also improve avenues for them to transition to formality.

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<sup>27</sup> See also resources of the [Global Business and Disability Network](#).