

ENHANCING THE CAPACITY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY

SUMMARY REPORT

JUNE 2017 to SEPTEMBER 2025

Prepared by: ETC of PWD (UK Charity No: 1178779)
In partnership with: Gulu Disabled Persons Union (GDPU)
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Executive summary

This report provides an overview of the activities of ETC of PWD since its registration as a UK charity in 2018. The charity's mission is to prevent and relieve poverty among persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Northern Uganda by providing vocational training, education, small business support, and grants that enable sustainable livelihoods.

Key Achievements:

- Supported more than 300 persons with disabilities directly, with thousands reached indirectly through families and communities.
- Delivered vocational training, psychosocial support, and post-training mentoring to improve employability and self-employment.
- Developed innovative programmes such as V Plus, V Plus Plus, and the Viva @ GDPU music initiative, combining skills training with empowerment and advocacy.
- Introduced a revolving loan scheme to help graduates start and sustain enterprises.
- Strengthened GDPU premises with infrastructure improvements (sanitation, security, and training facilities).
- Established a peer mentoring network to provide outreach, advocacy, and safeguarding in local communities.

Looking Forward:

The next phase of ETC of PWD's work focuses on consolidating peer mentorship, expanding community outreach, supporting sustainable youth enterprises, and developing the Viva Wer Waa Music Project. These initiatives will build stronger linkages with government structures, promote advocacy, and empower PWDs to live dignified, independent lives.

The following pages provide detailed information on each project, including objectives, funding, target groups, and outcomes achieved.



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Origins of ETC of PWD

ETC of PWD was registered as a UK charity in June 2018. Its origins were based on the experiences of two of the trustees being part of a large UKAid funded programme to provide vocational training and psychosocial support to 15,400 youths across northern Uganda from 2013 to 2015. This programme was similar to other programmes in that it offered vocational training but unique in that it also focused on psychosocial support and development and involved a period of post training support. The trustees worked closely with one of the delivery partners offering vocational training and support to young persons with disability (PWDs). It was felt by the project team at GDPU and by the trustees that far more could be done to support the young people with disability to benefit from the training and support programme. The Charity was set up to provide just such support.

Purpose as stated in charitable objectives

'The object/purpose of the charity is the prevention or relief of poverty of persons with disability in Northern Uganda.'

This will be done by providing or assisting in the provision of education, training, business support and grants designed to enable individuals to achieve sustainable and self-supporting livelihoods.

Goals

- Support for small businesses set up by persons with disability
- Acquisition of vocational skills by persons with disability to enable them to find employment or set up their own business
- The provision of capacity and financial support to providers of market relevant vocational training for persons with disability
- Development of further initiatives in conjunction with local partners to support overall mission and purposes.
- Development of business hubs comprising people and resources to support business set up by PWD

Operations

Local partners /organisations will provide/facilitate vocational and associated training and post training support to enable persons with disability and their families to develop small businesses or gain employment to achieve sustainable livelihoods.

The charity works with local organisations to develop specific projects and then raise money through donations and apply for funding from grant giving organisations in the in the UK and elsewhere.

The charity has clear and transparent policies and procedures around safeguarding and equality and diversity

Financial transparency when providing grants is required and vigilant financial monitoring and budget checking.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) is signed for every project at the start setting out the expectations and the full financial documentation.

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Key delivery partner in Northern Uganda

Gulu Disabled Persons Union is an umbrella organisation founded by and for people with disabilities (PWDs) in Gulu district. Its mission is to empower PWDs to live dignified lives.

Gulu Disabled Persons Union (GDPU) is an umbrella organization for persons with disabilities. It was founded in 1992 when four disability associations namely; association of the deaf, association of the blind, association of disabled women and landmine survivors came together to establish a single voice for persons with disabilities in the then Gulu district.



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Projects supported by ETC of PWD since 2017
(See individual project sheets for more details)

- 1. Post training support for YDP beneficiaries Oct 2018 to May 2020.**
A pilot phase and 2 further phases supporting people who had established small businesses after the previous UK aid funded programme between 2013 and 2016. It reached 50 people in various sized businesses
- 2. V Plus Jan 2021 to March 2023**– a two-year programme providing 6 months vocational training and 6 months post training support in 2 cohorts to 100 young people with disability. 50 %funded by UKAid Small Charities Grant.
- 3. V Plus Plus May 2023 to April 2024.** A follow up programme for the 115 young people who had received training under the V Plus Programme. This recognised that all small businesses need additional support and those with disability can find it hard due to low self-esteem and prejudice.
- 4. The Revolving Loan.** A fund to provide start up capital to small enterprises at no interest with individual repayment schedules
- 5. Viva@GDPU July 2023 to June 2024.** A music making and production project lasting one year. This consists of 6 months' core training at GDPU and 6 months post training support for xx trainees
- 6. V Plus Plus Extension May 2024 to April 2025.** The project was extended by a year providing further outreach to the communities in northern Uganda further development of the peer mentors and training. the content of the programme was determined by feedback form those who had been involved.
- 7. Viva@GDPU Extension July 2024 to June 2025**
A follow on from Viva@GDPU where 6 new trainees were given production and technical music making skills and trainees from the previous programme were supported.
- 8. Infrastructure improvements to premises**
2021 to 2025 Improvements to the sanitary facilities, safety and the overall appearance of the premises.
- 9. V Plus Empowerment project May 2025 to April2026.**
The peer mentors are now acting as ambassadors and advocates in their communities and developing networks and projects within them. They continue to be trained and supported by the project officers at GDPU. Further skills training in poultry rearing is being provided.
- 10. Viva Wer Waa Project July 2025 to June 2026**
Music for change, following on from Viva@GDPU with an emphasis on production and performance.



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Key ongoing themes

- Focusing on priorities and feedback from those who benefit in developing the programmes through consultation and reflection meetings
- Vocational training and psychosocial support
- Developing a cohort of Peer Mentors
- Music and dance as a way of empowering PWD and making self-sufficient and advocating for those with disability
- Improving facilities at GDPU base to further enhance training and community development activities
- Support to small businesses through mentoring and top up training
- Community outreach
- Support and safeguarding for PWD in the communities
- Linking in partnership with existing local government and charitable organisations

Future plans for ETC, GDPU and the disability community in Gulu and surrounding districts

- To continue the outreach work in the community mainly facilitated by the peer mentors
- To set up the Disability Uganda Music Association
- To develop a funding bid to improve the premises at GDPU to provide a vocational training hub
- To form close link with local government structures and health organisations
- To continue to advocate for those with disabilities
- To support those with disabilities into achieving sustainable livelihoods

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Projects in detail

Project: Post training support Pilot and Phases 1, 2 and 3

[Link to evaluation report](#)

Project Dates 2018 to 2020	People targeted – Groups and individuals who had received vocational training under the Youth Development Programme (YDP) 2013-2015	Funding amount £7,910 36,781,500 UGX
Project outcomes	Built capacity and economic resilience of over 50 PWDs in different business skills initiatives such hair dressing, electronics repairs, mechanics, sweater knitting spread around five (5) different Sub counties in Northern Uganda	
<p>YDP was a vocational skills and enterprise support programme funded by UKAid which ran between 2013 and 2015 across Northern Uganda. It supported a number of providers, including GDPU to train marginalised youth in vocational skills and support them to form enterprises. YDP enterprises had a mixed level of success. Of the GDPU supported enterprises that survived their first two or three years a number were having difficulties or were in need of further support to move to the next level. ETC initially identified four enterprises with which to try out approaches to strengthening these enterprises. These enterprises were all from the first intake of the YDP and were around three years old at time of reporting (they finished the YDP technical training in March 2015. They were provided with business and personal support with mixed results. three of the enterprises improved in terms of income and confidence and one a sweater knitting enterprise had very little success after the first schools' contract, they delivered. The initial pilot project was scaled up for a second phase to support further 8 enterprises.</p>		



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Project: V Plus

[Link to evaluation report](#)

Project Dates Jan 2021 to March 2023	People targeted – Young persons with disability in Northern Uganda min 50% female	Funding amount £57,988 (UGX 266,218,000, UGX= Ugandan shillings) with ETC providing £29,170 and UK Aid Direct £28,818.
Project outcomes	<p>Vocational training and post training support for 115 young people</p> <p>Capacity development for 32 Staff, Board members and small business owners</p> <p>Secondary/indirect beneficiaries 260 family members of trainees</p> <p>Improved security and sanitation facilities at GDPU training centre</p>	
<p>A two-year training and employment/business support programme for young persons with disabilities in northern Uganda. It aimed to increase the economic opportunities for 100 young people by providing two 6-month programmes of vocational training, education and other support followed by post training support to help graduates secure sustainable employment or self-employment. The context of this initiative included high levels of poverty, a high percentage of people with disabilities in the local population, negative societal attitudes to young people with disabilities and the lasting effects of the violent upheavals in the region which ended less than 20 years ago. Many of the trainees had received little or no formal education. Five vocational skill areas were offered during the first 6-month training programme: sweater knitting, hairdressing, design and decoration, motor vehicle repair and maintenance and electronics. An additional sixth skill area of tailoring was offered on the second 6-month programme. The vocational training was combined with all-important 'Plus's elements of literacy, numeracy and financial literacy; work experience; psychosocial support and cultural and community activity such as traditional dance and music, debates and meetings with other successful young people. Attention to safeguarding was a central element of VPlus. All these elements were fundamental to success because they built confidence and self-esteem.</p> <p>This training was supplemented by follow-up support to the 115 young persons who graduated and have been working on establishing a business or finding a job to earn income.</p> <p>As of March 2023, at least 107 of the VPlus graduates (93%) had secured employment or were establishing a business that was earning income and at least 94 (82%) graduates had increased the income they earned before they started on the project.</p>		



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Project: V Plus Plus

Link to evaluation report All the highlights of the VPlusPlus project can be found in the [blog here](#) and, of course, in the [Final Report here](#).

Project Dates April 2023 to March 2024	People targeted – Graduates from the V Plus training programme (115) and their families and communities	Funding amount £6313 29,360,000 UGX
Project outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide mentoring support to former V Plus trainees and their familiesDeliver tailored top up training to support trainees in their businesses and activitiesDevelop peer support systems for former trainees	
<p>This project consolidated the activities and learning from the previous programme (V Plus) by offering additional support to the 115 young people with disability and their families who participated in the UK grant funded vocational plus programme. This project would enable them to continue to develop based on the activities of the previous programme. Much of this support was provided in the outlying regions of Northern Uganda where the young people live extending as far south as Lira and 129 Kms away from Gulu and north as far as Kitum (77 kilometres away). The contents of the V++ programme were developed in consultation with beneficiaries through follow-up visits and reflection meetings.</p> <p>This included tailor-made training in liquid soap manufacturing, other diversification training, apprenticeships, and training in literacy and numeracy, communication and marketing skills, and financial record keeping. Many beneficiaries were linked up with other economic opportunities.</p> <p>One of the most important and impactful developments during the project has been setting up of a peer mentoring network, A group called the Peer Mentors was established. Their role was to mentor fellow persons with disabilities within their communities and districts. These peer mentors played a vital role in mobilization and support, specifically in areas such as employment opportunities, advocacy, safeguarding, profiling, and referrals to essential services.</p> <p>Safeguarding and gender-based violence training have all been provided by the project officers often with significant support and facilitation by the young people themselves.</p> <p>There has been a focus on the importance of involving parents and relatives in supporting and being involved with their young people's progress and activities. Project officers supported or intervened when family relationships were going through a difficult patch and safeguarding issues were one of the key areas of focus.</p> <p>The one-year V++ programme reinforced the importance of 'plus's elements in training to improve young persons with disabilities ability to increase their income and become financially self-supporting.</p>		

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Project : Revolving Loan

Project Dates From March 2023	People targeted – All people with disability who have taken part in vocational training	Funding amount £1612 7,500,000 UGX		
Project outcomes	To improve financial resilience of start-up businesses			
<p>The charity has been offering revolving interest free loans from a fund to help graduates buy equipment to set up their businesses. There was a slow take up of the loan and some graduates have been finding it hard to make the repayments. Typically, a loan is made to provide equipment such as a knitting machine to a maximum of 300,000 UGX. The eligibility criteria for the loan have evolved and there is now a requirement for a parent to cosign the loan agreement and for them to be 50 % match funding from the loan recipient. The revolving loan support has been a vital business-boosting mechanism, continuously circulating among Vplus Project beneficiaries. With a success rate of approximately 65%, the initiative has empowered entrepreneurs and strengthened economic resilience. Of the 14 beneficiaries who received the loan, 9 businesses are thriving, while 5 have shifted their business focus an encouraging evolution in this completed venture.</p> <p>This revolving loan is uniquely designed to support businesses at their start-up stage. It carries a 0% interest rate, ensuring accessibility for emerging entrepreneurs. To promote accountability, a late repayment fee of 10,000/= has been introduced for any loan defaults. Eligibility criteria require businesses to have operated for at least three months, and the loan is strictly designated for business supplies, ensuring sustainability and growth.</p>				
				

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Project: Viva @ GDPU

The team are already producing stunning videos, try their You Tube channel:
www.youtube.com/@VivaLaVisastudioUganda/videos

Project Dates July 2023 to June 2024	People targeted – Nine trainees (7 male and 2 female)	Funding amount £5,907 27,472,000 UGX
Project outcomes	To develop and enhance the musical skills of young people with disability and to advocate for social change by is defined as a project using music for social change aimed at talent development	

Sponsored by Viva la Visa, visa specialists for the entertainment industry, Viva@GDPU is a music making and production project lasting one year. This consists of 6 months' core training at GDPU and 6 months post training support.

Activities during the one-year project: -

- A complete music studio was created at GDPU for the disability community of northern Uganda to advocate for inclusion and rights of PWDs through the power of music.
- A total of 9 musicians successfully completed an 8 months training on music recording and were able to record very good music
- Music produced at the studio are being aired on radio studio stations within Northern Uganda for example at Mega F, Speak FM and Favor FM.
- Beneficiaries of the Viva project are being recognized by the community for example they were hosted in three different radio stations, Mega FM, Speak FM and Favor FM.
- Beneficiaries were trained with skills of playing local instruments like piano, xylophone, keyboard, flutes and production skills.
- The music studio has open up to the community at a very low cost to record a complete traditional music song, basically a song is recorded at a cost of 300,000/= but at Viva, we give it at a cost of 80,000/= per song.
- The voice of the voiceless has been amplified through the music studio this is because youth with disabilities are able to record songs for free and all those songs are to aimed at changing the community attitudes towards

Summary The students have gone through 6 months intensive training on music production and vocal training, they have produced a total of over 30 songs and 1 video dedicated to the donor of the Viva la visa studio and ETC of PWD UK.



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Project: V Plus Plus Extension Project

Project Dates May 2024 to April 2025	People targeted – Former trainees of the V Plus programme plus their families (115)	Funding amount £10,529 48,960,000UGX
Project outcomes Xx people reached through community training sessions	Engaged 500 young disabled persons in business, financial, literacy, numeracy, vocational and life-skills training Reached 300 people through workshops and training Created a network of 12 peer mentors who connected with over 1,000 young disabled persons across Gulu and surrounding areas.	
The VPlus Plus Extension Project has significantly highlighted the progress made in the lives of our beneficiaries. For the first time, we have seen peer mentors actively and successfully engaging in their roles within the community. The project has provided GDPU with valuable data on disability in these communities, fostered linkages, initiated community awareness and advocacy efforts, and established effective referral pathways for community members.		
<p>The design of VPlus Plus, especially the tailor-made training component, was determined through reflection meetings of VPlus beneficiaries, some smaller in more outlying areas. This included training in record keeping, marketing and business planning, literacy, liquid soap manufacturing, social and life skills, safeguarding (e.g. preventing gender-based violence) and disability awareness sessions for the wider community. Safeguarding was central to VPlus Plus, allowing, with the help of peer mentors, the tackling of 15 safeguarding issues during the year.</p> <p>Reflection meetings were a source of information on challenges and successes. Data collected at the large reflection meeting suggested that attendees had earned an average of UGX 295,000 in the last 3 months (ranging from UGX 20,000 to 3,500,000) and had managed to save UGX 41million (average of UGX 800,000 per attendee, ranging from UGX 3,000 to 17,800,000).</p>		



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Viva Extension Project

Project Dates July 2022 to June 2025	People targeted – 6 young people for a total of 12 months	Funding amount £6500 29,500,000 UGX		
Project outcomes	Promote local content of students Improved well-being and integration of youth with disabilities into music arena			
<p>The previous project (Viva at GDU) was extended for a further year in July 2024 where a total of 6 music artist was supported in a 12 months training in music production and recording. The studio's main goal is to promote the local content especially the use of local instruments that brings the uniqueness of the Ugandan traditional sounds and music to the whole world to enjoy. A total of over 40 songs and 13 (thirteen) videos with one documentary on the impact of the Viva la visa studio to our beneficiaries.</p> <p>Through this grant support we have witnessed a great change in the social wellbeing and integration of youth with disabilities, the studio has enabled youth to advocate for change through music, and seek employment through composing traditional marriage and praise songs for example: - Gospel songs, Iakubukubu songs (Luo traditional songs) and Luo tunes to the community.</p> <p>Most of the songs composed are in local language (Luo) which is widely understood by a population of over 30 million (Acholi, Langi, Alur, Luo of Sudan, Japadola, and Jaluo of Kenya). Most of the produced songs are educative songs tailored to the youth and the community on good morals, negative attitudes of the community towards disability and education, and social wellbeing of persons with disabilities in the different communities.</p>				

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Project: Premises improvement and infrastructure

Project Dates since 2019	People targeted – The users of the GDPU premises and the wider community	Funding amount: £1700 7,905,000UGX
Project outcomes	Improved access, safety, hygiene and spaces for the trainees at GDPU and other users in the community	
<p>Sanitation – Cleaning out the cess pit under the toilet block</p> <p>Security – Enhancing and repairing the perimeter fencing where necessary and building a hut at the entrance for a security guard</p> <p>Exterior decoration to the main block – Repainting the main premises to improve the visual appeal of the organisation</p> <p>Kitchen- Moving the kitchen from an outside area roofed with a tarpaulin and with an open fire to an inside area with a concrete floor and energy saving stoves</p> <p>The sales container -Providing a container as a sales room for a group of former trainees to sell their handicrafts and other goods made by former trainees.</p>		



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New projects for 25/26

Project: V Plus Empowerment Project

Link to evaluation report

Project Dates May 2025 to April 2026	People targeted – 12 youth peer mentors 130 youth with disabilities the wider community through awareness raising and knowledge sessions	Funding amount £11,552 53,720,000 UGX
Project outcomes	Increased advocacy and empowerment for the community of those with disability and their families. Signposting for improved outcomes and sustainability	
<p>The V Plus Empowerment project builds on the work of the previous projects . The key aims are :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To strengthen the capacity of peer mentors to better support their peers with disabilities from their communities.• To build capacity of youth business enterprises through tailor made support and financial support (revolving loan).• To profile and identify persons with disabilities within their communities so that they can be supported through different partners.• To offer reflection meeting as a point for learning and experience sharing among the youth.• To create a strong linkage between the youth and communities they come from through youth-to-youth engagement meeting, youth to community engagement through dialogue, and youth leader's engagements.• To create a strong linkage between the local government leaders and NGO to better support the youth.• To improve on the moral behaviours of youth through the different life skills training. <p>It is early days in this project but already the level of activity is significant engaging with many members of the community with disability and introducing the concept of personal development planning to people to enable them to visualise and work towards achieving their life goals something that many have not done before.</p>		



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Project: Viva Wer Waa Music Project

Project Dates July 2025 to June 2026	People targeted 4 new trainees for 6 months course Former trainees of the project Other members of the community who want to use the recording facilities	Funding amount £8396 37,780,000 UGX
Project outcomes	Formation of Ugandan Association for Artist with Disabilities Empower trainees and former trainees and develop their profile Make music studio self-funding	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new phase of the project seeks to identify a music promoter whose responsibilities is to promote, market and link our artist to opportunities that facilitates their growth and development in music. The empowerment phase of the Viva project seeks to offer post training support for the youth who have graduated from the first two cohort of the Viva training project The project seeks to empower and develop the leadership structures of the Uganda association for artist with disabilities, to enable her growth and development. Enrol 4 new trainees with disabilities for 6 months training in production, music recording and composing skills and 6-month post training support will offer. Disseminate the music and songs composed by the trainees through social media / YouTube /live streaming in accordance with regulations and safeguarding best practice The new project seeks to offer Outreach music shows in rural communities: presenting and performing music produced by the musicians at market days and other public events. The project will provide basic literacy for artist to be able to write and record their songs. Develop the profile of the artist at the studio to the general public through a functional website for the music program. Develop the sustainability of the music studio by promoting it to members of the community as a chargeable service. Give opportunities for people with disabilities to bring out their talents and be publicly visible and change people's perceptions through music. 		



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Projects summary table

Project Title	Dates	Funding	Target Group	Key Outcomes
Post Training Support (Pilot + Phases 1–3)	2018–2020	£7,910	50 PWDs (small businesses)	Strengthened 4–8 enterprises; improved income and resilience
V Plus	Jan 2021–Mar 2023	£57,988 (UGX 266m)	115 PWDs (≥50% female)	93% employed/self-employed; improved facilities at GDPU
V Plus Plus	Apr 2023–Mar 2024	£6,313 (UGX 29.36m)	115 V Plus graduates + families	Peer mentoring network; diversification training; family involvement
Revolving Loan	From Mar 2023	£1,612 (UGX 7.5m)	PWD graduates of vocational training	65% success rate; supported 14 enterprises
Viva @ GDPU	Jul 2023–Jun 2024	£5,907 (UGX 27.47m)	9 trainees	Studio established; >30 songs, 1 video; community recognition
V Plus Plus Extension	May 2024–Apr 2025	£10,529 (UGX 48.96m)	115 former trainees + families	500 engaged; 12 peer mentors; 15 safeguarding issues addressed
Viva Extension Project	Jul 2024–Jun 2025	£6,500 (UGX 29.5m)	6 trainees	>40 songs, 13 videos; social integration & advocacy
Premises Improvement	2019–2025	£1,700	GDPU trainees & community	Improved sanitation, security, kitchen & sales container
V Plus Empowerment Project	May 2025–Apr 2026	£11,552 (UGX 53.72m)	12 peer mentors; 130 PWD youth	Youth-to-community engagement; personal planning
Viva Wer Waa Music Project	Jul 2025–Jun 2026	£8,396 (UGX 37.78m)	4 new trainees + alumni	Formed Ugandan Association for Artists with Disabilities; outreach shows.

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