

# UGANDA

## DIGITAL MONITORING AND EVALUATION PILOT PROJECT



# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the *Digital Monitoring and Evaluation Pilot Project* was to better measure and quantify the impact of wheelchairs and tricycles distributed to beneficiaries in northern Uganda. We also wanted to develop a locally led project whilst compiling feedback to further improve our programmes. This was a partnership project between Walkabout Foundation and Hope Health Action (HHA). Together, we concluded that the following seven themes best reflect the impact of a wheelchair or tricycle on someone's life:



## QUALITY OF LIFE AND WELLBEING

An individual's perception of their position in life in the context of their culture and value systems, and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns.<sup>1</sup> We defined well-being as the positive life outcomes that are meaningful for people, and it indicates they perceive their lives as going well.<sup>2</sup>



## INDEPENDENCE

The ability of a person to make their own choices and carry out daily tasks on their own.



## EDUCATION

The full-time enrolment in primary or secondary school.



## EMPLOYMENT

A person in employment who is engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit.<sup>3</sup>



## REPAIRS

All repairs necessary to the functionality of a wheelchair or tricycle only.



## SOCIAL INCLUSION

The process of improving people's participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged or marginalised. By enhancing opportunities, access to opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect.<sup>4</sup>



## WHEELCHAIR AND TRICYCLE SATISFACTION

The fulfilment of the beneficiaries' needs, wishes, and expectations of their wheelchair or tricycle.

1. World Health Organisation, 2014.  
2. National Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 2018.  
3. International Labour Organisation.  
4. United Nations, 2016.

# CONTEXT

Around 1 billion people live with disabilities around the world, equating to approximately 15% of the global population (WHO, 2011), including 65 million people who need a wheelchair but cannot afford one. In Uganda, it is estimated that **12.4%** of adults and **5.8%** of children live with some form of disability (UBOS, 2019).



In Uganda, people with disabilities often face huge economic, social, political, and environmental challenges. Adults with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed or earn less when employed. Children with disabilities are less likely to attend school. The impact of disability is felt by both the individual and their family as households with a disabled member are more likely to experience material hardship. More specifically, many people with mobility disabilities do not have access to a wheelchair due to its cost and unavailability. Therefore, those who cannot access the appropriate equipment and support can be trapped in a cycle of poverty.

Life can be even more challenging for refugees with mobility disabilities. The need for wheelchairs and tricycles among refugee populations is extraordinarily high. Uganda hosts some of the largest refugee settlements in Africa with 1.5 million refugees (UNHCR, 2021). Most refugees are from South Sudan following the devastating civil war that has displaced 2.2 million South Sudanese people (UNHCR, 2020). As a result, in northwest Uganda, there is a higher prevalence of disability, particularly amputations, because of landmines and explosive devices.

**“Those in the refugee settlements were also geographically remote from many important services, such as inclusive education and rehabilitation centres. The physical layout of refugee settlements and even urban areas presents an obstacle to many refugees with disabilities, affecting their mobility.”**

Disability Status Report Uganda, 2019

Some of the challenges people with disabilities face in refugee settlements are addressed by international policy through the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Charter of Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action. Despite the efforts of the United Nations and Member States to facilitate more inclusive care for those with disabilities, there is still limited support structures and funding. Furthermore, the vast number of refugees have made this work more difficult. Many assistive technology projects are yet to be implemented in most refugee settlements globally, including in northwest Uganda. Hence the work of Walkabout Foundation and Hope Health Action is so important.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In this analysis, we have combined the data for adults and children for the themes of wellbeing, wheelchair and tricycle satisfaction, and repairs, since children and adults did not show any different trends in the data.

## QUALITY OF LIFE AND WELLBEING

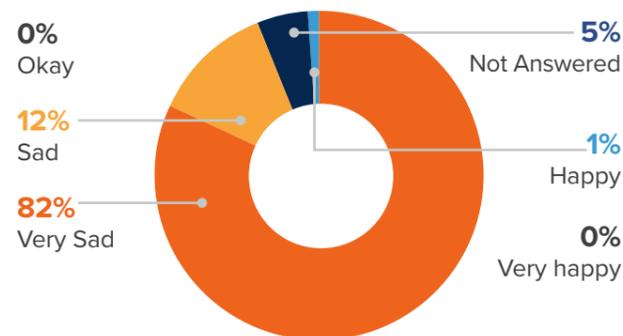
**88%** of adults and **96%** of children said their quality of life had improved since receiving their wheelchair or tricycle. More children said their quality of life had improved, highlighting the importance of early intervention. Furthermore, children were accompanied by caregivers during the survey, extending this quality-of-life perception to the child's circle.

We measured respondents' well-being by using a "Smiley Face" scale to assess their overall mood before and after receiving their wheelchair or tricycle. While this does not provide a detailed perspective of every respondent's mental health state, it indicates changes in mood.

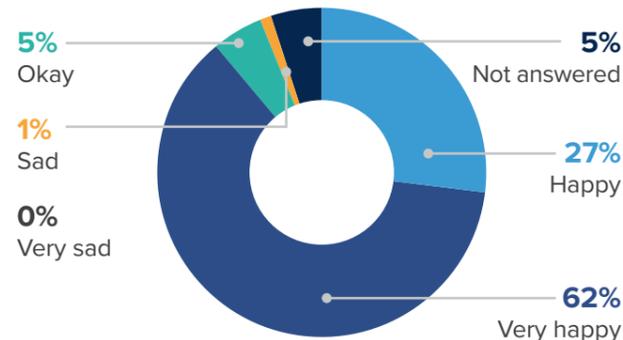


We found that prior to receiving a wheelchair or tricycle **82%** of respondents felt very sad, but afterward, **62%** of respondents felt very happy and **27%** felt happy, demonstrating a direct positive impact of gaining mobility. However, there are limitations to the data, as it only measures the respondent's mood and feeling at one point in time and we would like to develop more detailed information on their longer term mental health state.

### HOW DID YOU FEEL BEFORE GETTING YOUR WHEELCHAIR?



### HOW DID YOU FEEL AFTER GETTING YOUR WHEELCHAIR?



## SOCIAL INCLUSION

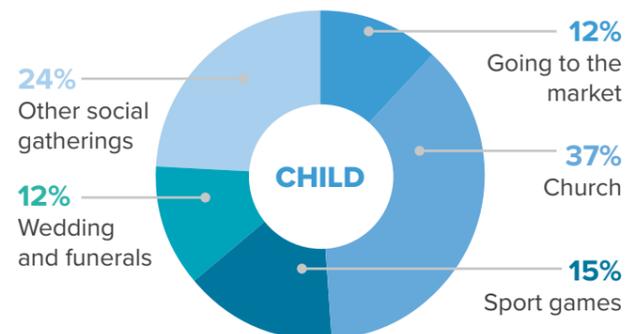
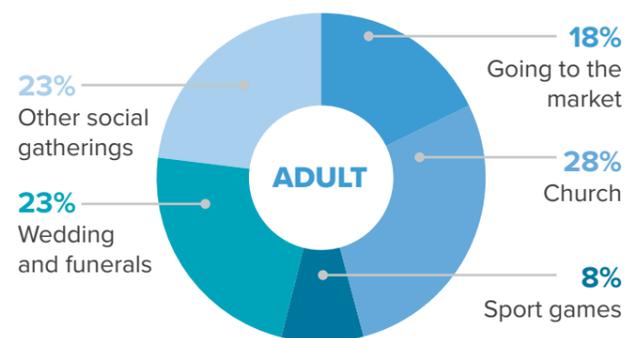
In Uganda, people with mobility disabilities are sometimes associated with curses or black magic. Many families or caretakers will hide someone with disabilities at home due to the stigma and discrimination they face.

When a person does not have a wheelchair or tricycle, their only way to get around is by crawling or being carried. A wheelchair or tricycle can help by destigmatising disability, as some people can move

independently, with dignity, and participate in activities as a visible member of the community and become a more active member of society.

We found that **89%** of adults and **93%** of children felt that they are more included in the community after receiving their wheelchair or tricycle. On average, **61%** of adults and **53%** of children participate in the community activities that were included in the survey, namely going to the market, church, sports games, weddings/funerals, and social gatherings. For our next survey, we will increase the number of community activities to capture a more accurate picture of social inclusion. These types of community activities require one to be mobile to attend, therefore reflect the independence and mobility an assistive device can bring to someone.

### WHAT COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN?



“Because [I] can do anything without support.”

Respondent

“The wheelchair helped her in her daily movement, especially in school.”

Respondent

## INDEPENDENCE

Mobility is fundamental to one's independence. People who are unable to afford or access a wheelchair or tricycle are often dependent on others for 24-hour care. A wheelchair or tricycle allows a person to move independently. Furthermore, allows caregivers to have more opportunities to work, socialise and carry out day-to-day activities.

Overall, **64%** of adults said they were to some degree more independent because of their wheelchair or tricycle. For children, **50%** said they were slightly more independent, **25%** said they were more independent and **7%** said they were significantly more independent because of their wheelchair, which means in total **82%** of children said they felt somehow more independent. The higher satisfaction most likely reflects the extension of the benefit to a child's caregiver.

“Because he is able to move alone around the community without the help of a caregiver.”

Respondent

“I used to not go anywhere after the accident but now I can visit neighbours, health centre and church with the help of my tricycle.”

Respondent

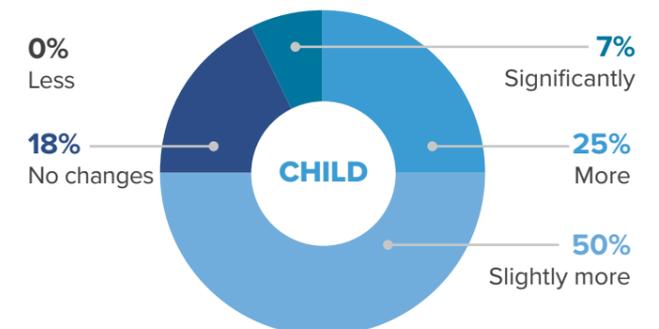
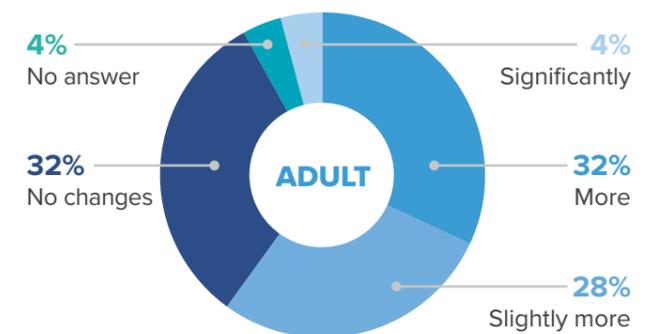
“The wheelchair helped me as the caregiver to push her and also do family activities easily.”

Respondent

**32%** of adults said there was no change. **18%** of children said there was no change to their independence. This is likely a result of wheelchairs or tricycles breaking and needing repairs. For example, we found that **268** needed repairs.

Furthermore, in the cases where children cannot self-propel or the wheelchair or tricycle has broken, the parent or caregiver can still feel the child is dependent on them for their mobility.

### ARE YOU MORE INDEPENDENT BECAUSE OF YOUR WHEELCHAIR?



## MICHAEL'S STORY

Meet Michael who is 39 years old photographed here with his wife Beatrice.

They fled from the civil war in South Sudan in 2016. They are now settled in BidiBidi refugee settlement with their six children. As a child, Michael suffered from polio, which left him unable to walk and attend school. In 2020, Michael received his first-ever tricycle which changed his life! He now feels more included in the community, can independently travel and is able to work to support his family!

## EMPLOYMENT

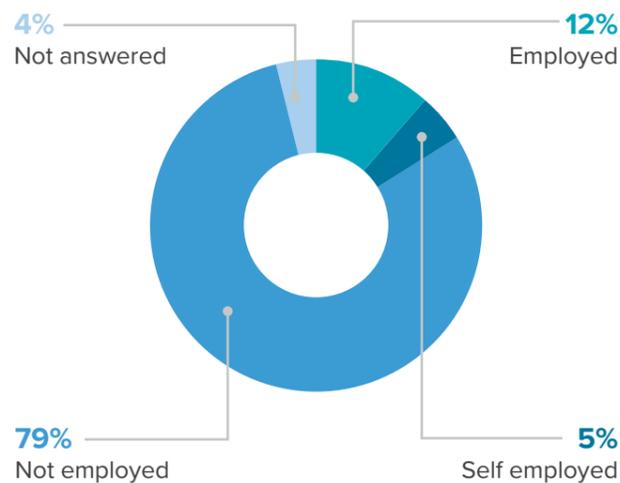
Employment rates for people with disabilities across the globe are still low. The employment statistics in refugee settlements and underdeveloped areas of Uganda tend to be lower due to limited opportunities, lack of infrastructure and resources, and many people having unstable immigration statuses.

We found that **79%** of respondents were unemployed, **12%** were employed, **5%** were self-employed and **4%** did not answer. **45%** of respondents had worked in the past, in comparison

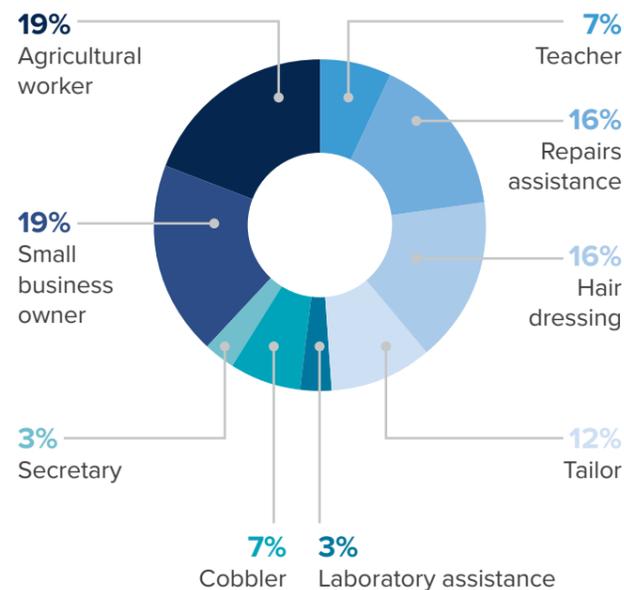
to the current **79%** unemployment rate. Many recipients are also South Sudanese and therefore potentially ineligible to work due to their lack of legal paperwork for employment. Despite a **79%** unemployment rate, **41%** of our respondents still said that their work opportunities had increased because of their wheelchair or tricycle.

**55%** of respondents said their wheelchair or tricycle did not increase their work opportunities, possibly attributed to lack of education, support at home, accessible job vacancies, persisting stigma, or poor infrastructure. Despite these challenges, those who were employed were in a variety of jobs.

### ADULT – EMPLOYMENT



### TYPES OF JOBS



## EDUCATION

Today, Uganda is on track towards achieving education for all, with a net enrolment rate of **93%** boys and **96%** girls. However, the education enrolment rate for refugee children in Uganda is much lower at only **57%**.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the enrolment of children with disabilities is even lower, with only **9%** of children with disabilities attending school.<sup>6</sup> Such obstacles could include inaccessible buildings or children with additional learning/developmental disabilities requiring specialised education, which is often limited in this region.

“Because she is non-verbal and has a hearing impairment there was no special school for her in our community.”

Respondent

**25%** of children from our survey are currently in school when compared to the national average of **9%** of children with disabilities, it indicates how a wheelchair or tricycle can improve the chances of a child with disabilities attending school. Also, **41%** of children and caregivers said that the wheelchair increased their ability to go to school. Similarly, to our employment findings, we found there are still other barriers preventing children from accessing school.

“The wheelchair helped her to go to school and for sitting in the class.”

Respondent

“Moving to school became much simpler not like before the time when we had no wheelchair.”

Respondent

5. Save the Children, 2019.  
6. National Plan for Children with Disabilities, 2016.

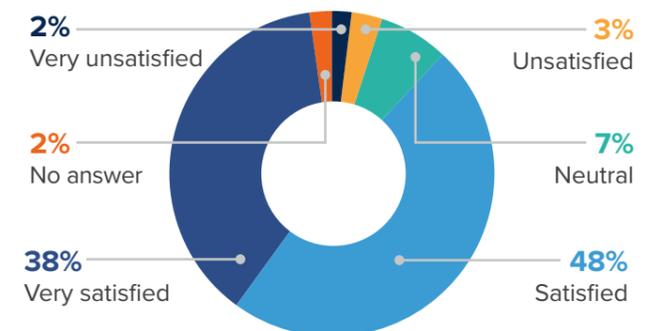
## WHEELCHAIR AND TRICYCLE SATISFACTION

Overall, **86%** of respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied with their wheelchair or tricycle.

The lower satisfaction rates were related to repairs needed. The wheelchairs donated by Walkabout Foundation are manufactured to cope with rough terrains. Every recipient is trained on how to use and take care of their wheelchair or tricycle, the average lifespan of a wheelchair and tricycle is still about 5 years if this guidance is followed.

Our findings therefore highlight the importance of repairs as a part of wheelchair and tricycle follow-up programmes to ensure that they last for as long as possible. It also emphasises the critical need for user training on how to maintain and possibly fix basic problems themselves.

### HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR SATISFACTION WITH YOUR WHEELCHAIR OR TRICYCLE?



## GEORGE'S STORY

Meet George, he is 27 years old and from South Sudan. George fled South Sudan with his wife Elena. Today, they live in Palorinya refugee settlement.

In South Sudan, George achieved a diploma in clinical medicine at the Kajo-Keji Health Training Institute. When George arrived in Uganda he was struggling to get around on his own. In 2018, he received his first-ever tricycle which helped him to get a job as a Clinical Officer in Palorinya!



## MARIA'S STORY

Meet Maria, who is 18 years old and fled South Sudan in 2016. She now lives in BidiBidi refugee settlement with her family.

As a young child, Maria had polio which left her unable to walk. When Maria and her family fled to Uganda, she told us how her parents carried her on their backs for 100 km from Lainya in South Sudan to the Ugandan border!

Maria never had a wheelchair before and so she was sadly unable to attend school. In 2020, she received her first-ever wheelchair and now attends school. Also, having a wheelchair means Maria can move independently and help her family with domestic tasks.

# THE SURVEY

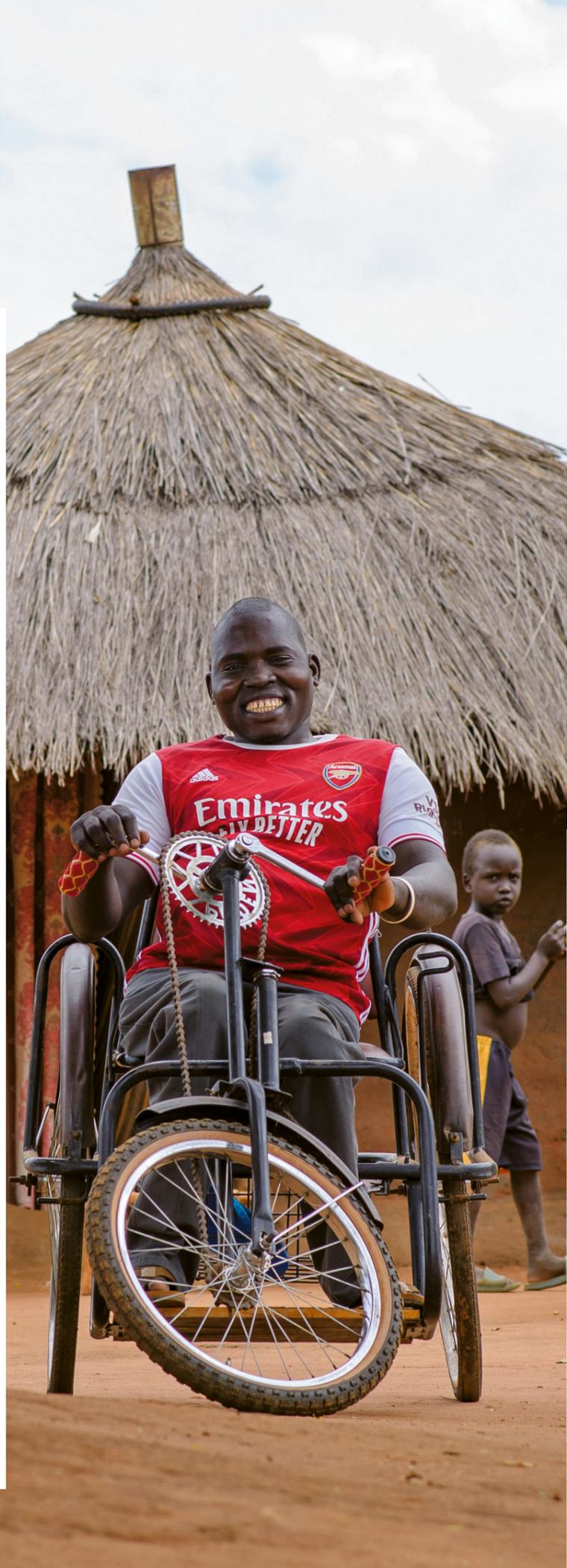
Our survey followed up with people with mobility disabilities who received a Walkabout Foundation wheelchair or tricycle in either November 2017, November 2018, or February 2020. Our total recipient list for this project was 389 people, of which the local team collected a total of 267 responses (a 68% response rate).

There were 193 full responses from adults and 68 full responses from children (with their caregiver's input and presence). There were 6 partial responses from adults.

This is the first data collection project of its kind undertaken by Walkabout Foundation and Hope Health Action. Whilst it was successful, there were some challenges identified. Firstly, we did not have baseline data to benchmark against the data we collected. Secondly, we achieved a 68% response rate, with 32% of beneficiaries remaining unreachable. Finally, we found 68.9% of wheelchairs and tricycles needed repairs, which showed the importance of consistent follow-up and providing a local and accessible repairs service.

We co-designed the survey with the local team, and developed questions that would best measure impact, programme effectiveness, and address any service gaps. Together, we ensured that the survey was easily translatable, not too intrusive, and did not cause offence. We used a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions that were collected using a digital app with an offline function so it could be used in the field.

Our quantitative questions were either a 'Yes' or 'No' response, multiple-choice, or a smiley face scale. This allowed us to collect clear data on the direct impact of the recipients' wheelchair or tricycle. The qualitative questions were subsequently based on the quantitative questions, this was primarily used to gain better context and reasoning behind respondents' answers.



## LOCATIONS

We collected data in 5 locations across the northwest of Uganda:

Palorinya, Moyo, Adjumani, Mijale and the largest refugee settlement in Africa BidiBidi.

DEMOCRATIC  
REPUBLIC OF  
CONGO

RWANDA

SOUTH SUDAN

MIJALE

MOYO

ADJUMANI

BIDIBIDI

PALORINYA

UGANDA

KENYA

TANZANIA

## THE HHA LOCAL TEAM

**KENYI  
CLEMENT**  
Wheelchair  
Technician



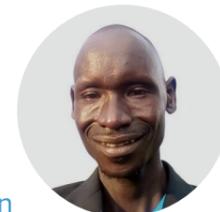
Clement is from Kajo Keji in South Sudan, and came to Uganda after fleeing the civil war in South Sudan in 2016. He has a Diploma in Theology. In 2019, with the support of Walkabout Foundation and Hope Health Action (HHA), he was trained to WHO Wheelchair Service Basic and Intermediate standards. Since 2020, he led the HHA Community-Based Rehabilitation team. Clement worked as a full-time employee at the HHA and SwissLimbs New Hope BidiBidi Rehabilitation Centre and managed the wheelchair distributions. Since the completion of this project, Clement has returned to South Sudan with his family.

**PITA KADIJAH  
ABBIBU  
(AGNES)**  
Wheelchair  
Technician



Agnes is from Kajo Keji in South Sudan, and lives in Palorinya refugee settlement with her family, since fleeing the civil war in South Sudan. Agnes attended Juba University and taught primary school in South Sudan. Once settled in Uganda, she became a part of the HHA team, with the support of Walkabout Foundation and HHA, Agnes was trained to WHO Wheelchair Service Basic and Intermediate standards. Agnes is now a full-time employee at the HHA and SwissLimbs New Hope BidiBidi Rehabilitation Centre, managing wheelchair distributions.

**MOSES  
MOGGA  
JOHN**  
Community  
Based  
Rehabilitation  
Officer



Moses is from South Sudan, he fled due to the civil war, and now lives in Palorinya refugee settlement. He has previously worked on projects for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and he is skilled in bicycle and wheelchair repairs. Now he is a valued member of the HHA Community Based Rehabilitation team.

# PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

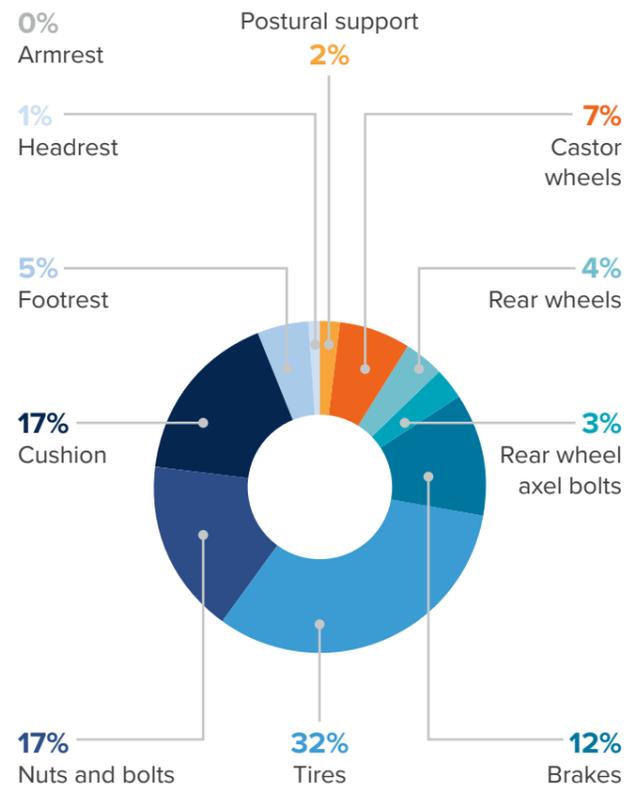
In 2023, we will start again the digital monitoring and evaluation programme in Uganda. Eventually, the digitalised data collection will also become a core competency of all Walkabout Foundation's wheelchair programmes across the world. To better support children with disabilities, we aim to identify local schools that can accommodate these children for us to refer our beneficiaries. To increase the employment levels, social inclusion, and independence of people with disabilities, HHA's and SwissLimbs *New Hope Rehabilitation Centre* will provide more mobility devices and rehabilitation services, through their Community Based Rehabilitation programmes. Also, raising awareness and destigmatising disability through workshops, conferences, and community education.

Since collecting the data for this project, we have completed **171** repairs identified. We will continue the partnership between Walkabout Foundation and HHA in northwest Uganda and together we aim to continue to provide a consistent, holistic high-quality service that is data driven and evidence based.

## REPAIRS

We found that **268** needed repairs. The local team have locally sourced the majority of spare parts, however we still imported some spare parts from our international suppliers, particularly castor wheels. Last year we have completed **171** repairs and we will complete the remaining repairs for recipients who are still reachable in the first half of 2023.

### REPAIRS NEEDED ON THE WHEELCHAIRS AND TRIKES



# CONCLUSIONS & LEARNINGS

From our findings, we know that wheelchairs and tricycles do improve the lives of people with mobility disabilities despite the several challenges these people face. Overall, the wheelchairs and tricycles donated by Walkabout Foundation have made a significant positive impact on each beneficiary's life. We found that 90% of the beneficiaries said their quality of life had somehow improved. Also, over a third of the beneficiaries saw an improved ability to work or get an education.

It is evident that to increase the inclusion of people with mobility disabilities within education, employment, and the community, wheelchairs, and tricycles are a fundamental starting point. However, additional support is needed to achieve full inclusion. Together with our partners, we aim to engage more with local organisations, schools, and local community leaders to work to raise better awareness of the challenges of people with disabilities. We hope to encourage the development of disability-inclusive spaces like wheelchair-accessible school buildings and community-based rehabilitation services. Thus, wheelchairs and tricycles should be part of a broader delivery of care to people with mobility disabilities to have the greatest impact.

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## NORA'S STORY



Nora, is a 65-year-old woman who lives with her daughter Sophie. Nora and Sophie had to flee their home in South Sudan and are living as refugees in Palorinya.

Despite these struggles Nora is determined and happy, especially after receiving her wheelchair! The tires, tubes and brakes needed repairing, so she was finding it more difficult to move around. Once her wheelchair was fixed, everything became a lot easier for Nora and her daughter who helps to look after her. Her mobility has improved and she does not need to be lifted as much.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Both Walkabout Foundation and Hope Health Action have over 12 years of experience in supporting people with mobility disabilities. The two organisations co-designed this project to provide better follow-up to our beneficiaries who received Walkabout Foundation wheelchairs or tricycles in 2017, 2018, and 2020. This pilot project was funded and coordinated by Walkabout Foundation while Hope Health Action recruited the local team to collect the data and managed the project in Uganda.



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