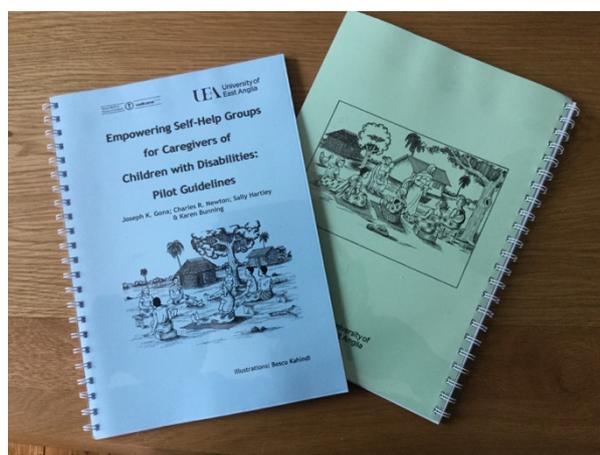


Self-help Groups for Caregivers in Africa

Empowering self-help groups for caregivers of children with disabilities in resource-poor regions of the world

Guidelines

Welcome to our third newsletter about empowering caregivers to run their own self-help groups. If you have been sent some guidelines following the Afri-CAN CBR/CBID conference in Lusaka, Zambia, last year, we still want to hear from you. You can email us what you think of the guidelines and how you are using them. Alternatively, you can fill out the evaluation form we have sent you with this newsletter. We want to hear from you! Your feedback is important to us. Once we have read all your comments, we will revise the guidelines. We will send you copies of the revised guidelines.



Self-Help Group Progression



We've been catching up with some of our groups and looking at how they've grown since we last saw them. One group that we visited have recently created a goal for themselves. They have been saving up their money so they can apply for a bank loan to purchase a tuk-tuk. This will generate substantial income for the group. Within this group we have seen that their livelihood has improved.

Collectively they have bought chairs which are being hired out for community meetings. The sub-location chief is a regular customer. This also results in more awareness of the group in the local community.

Another major impact associated with the self-help group, is that there are many children with disabilities who now attend school. Previously, few children went to school. This has a very positive impact on the quality of life of the children and the caregivers.

Challenges & Solutions

As we can see there have been some positive outcomes recently. However, we also need to share some of the challenges that are being faced by some of the groups. Some of these challenges cannot be helped. Weather for example has caused some issues for crops. One group had prepared their land for growing watermelons. The watermelons flowered and promised a good crop for the group's income generation activity. Sadly for them, unexpected rains and floods came and the majority of these crops were ruined. Those of the crops that remained were stolen by local youths. The group are now farming land in a more secure place.



One of our other groups experienced fraudulent activity from the group treasurer, who withdrew the group's savings from their bank account. After much discussion and facilitation the group decided to start afresh, and not chase the stolen money. Instead, they have closed the bank account and have saved more funds to open another bank account. For

now they are focusing on the harvest of their large cassava crop, and plan to use the profits from that as a basis to build the group back up again. The major problem for this group was a lack of education amongst the members. We are helping the group to look for a co-ordinator who can help them with managing and recording their activities.

Another challenge that some of our groups face, is security and theft. One group running a food and drink outlet from a mud and thatch building was broken into by local drug users. Kitchen equipment and food were stolen. The group have made plans to build a more secure building.



Newsletters

If you would like to receive further updates about the work on self-help groups, please let us know. The next newsletter will come out in May 2020. If you have any comments please e-mail us at:

Karen Bunning: k.bunning@uea.ac.uk

Joseph K. Gona: jgonabilahi@gmail.com



Follow us on Twitter: @SeekWalezi

Website: <https://www.uea.ac.uk/health-sciences/research/making-a-difference/self-help-groups-in-rural-kenya-seek->