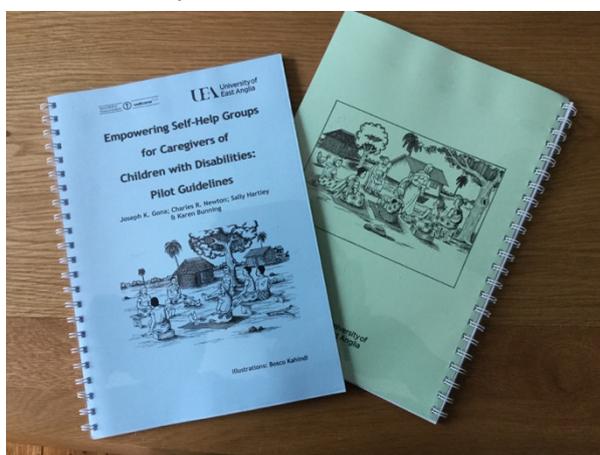


## Self-help Groups for Caregivers in Africa

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

### Guidelines

Welcome to our first newsletter about empowering caregivers to run their own self-help groups. At the Afri-CAN CBR/CBID conference in Lusaka, Zambia, many of you filled in a form to express your interest in trying out the guidelines. You also told us your ideas for trying out the guidelines where you are based. You have received e-copies and/or hard copies of the guidelines. We want to hear how you have used the guidelines and what your experiences have been. We will send you a form to fill in as part of our evaluation. Then we will be able to make changes so that the guidelines can be launched for use by others. 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.



### Micro-finance for livelihood projects

Meanwhile in Kenya, our 11 self-help groups are still progressing. They are all carrying out projects to bring financial benefits to the group. This is supported by a small micro-finance scheme where the groups can apply for funds to help them



in their work. Some have used the money to lease some land for farming, others have purchased food stuffs such as rice, maize flour and cooking oil from a whole seller for reselling at profit. We recently visited two of our groups who look set to have very good harvests of watermelons and cassava. The projects bring the caregivers together to work for a common goal -

improving their income. It also means that friendships develop and support networks grow.

## Challenges

Our self-help groups have encountered many challenges along the way and we thought it might be good to share some of these. We have observed that our strongest groups have at least 1 caregiver who has attained an education at secondary level. This assists the group in recording the notes of their meetings, organising the agenda, coming up with ideas for livelihood projects and planning their work. The groups that have struggled are the ones where there is not a strong leader. We provide monitoring visits for all the groups every month, so they can get access to advice. However, without a strong leader the groups experience difficulties.



## New Ideas

Our groups have been working together for around 3 years now. They have good ideas and their lives are improving slowly. We arranged some visits between the groups so they could share their ideas and learn from each other. Transport was organised so two groups could meet at any one time. They discussed their projects and shared their experiences of being part of a self-help group. Two of our groups have decided to do business with each other as a direct result of their meeting. They agreed to exchange commodities. For example, one group sends coconuts to another group who in turn supplies them with vegetables.

## 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 December 2019. If you have any comments please e-mail us at:

Karen Bunning: [k.bunning@uea.ac.uk](mailto:k.bunning@uea.ac.uk)

Joseph K. Gona: [jgonabilahi@gmail.com](mailto:jgonabilahi@gmail.com)



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