

Do not marginalise PWDs

The Equal Opportunities Commission joined other Ugandans to commemorate the International Disabilities Day in Kamwenge District on December 3. Persons with disabilities are among the constituents of the EOC that is often subjected to discrimination and marginalisation.

The Commission is happy to note that the government in concerted effort with other stakeholders have created an enabling environment and programmes to benefit PWDs. In particular, the EOC has made outstanding achievements in the equalisation of opportunities for PWDs.

Among others, through hearing and settling complaints relating to discrimination and marginalisation, sensitisation of the populace on the rights of persons with disabilities and acceptance, auditing public and private institutions for accessibility and participation of persons with disabilities, accessing plans and budgets of sectors to ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities.

The study conducted by the Commission on the state of equal opportunities in Uganda revealed the following: PWDs continue to be marginalised and



experience tremendous barriers in accessing social services, including health, education, employment, and are increasingly more vulnerable to disease and poverty. For example, the education sector is still grappling with the challenge of inclusion of students with special needs.

The infrastructure in many schools is not adapted to meet the needs of these students. Devices for such students are also expensive, making it difficult for many of them to access them. Majority of the human resource in the sector do not have the relevant skills to handle

students with disability which makes it extremely difficult for them to be fully included (NDP II, 2015/16-2019/2020).

According to the study, it was observed that even with relevant qualifications persons with disabilities still fail to access employment despite holding relevant qualifications for the available jobs.

This is a reflection of the national trend, where persons with disabilities are majorly self-employed and find themselves resigned to such activities as tailoring, carpentry, shoe shining and retail trade.

A number of recommendations to elevate the livelihoods of PWDs were made to various stakeholders. The Commission envisages that when all challenges highlighted in the report are addressed, PWDs will be able to live in a sustainable society. EOC remains committed to working with all stakeholders to enhance social justice and ensure equal opportunities for all persons.

Sylvia Muwebwa Ntambi, chairperson of EOC