

Amy Gillespie

Final Report on AP Fellowship with GDPU

My work with the Gulu Disabled Person's Union has come to a close this week and we accomplished a great deal even though we were faced with numerous challenges. I've summarized what I was able to accomplish with them over the 10 weeks as well as the next steps.

- **Follow up with pilot project at Tochi school**

In the summer of 2015, the Advocacy Project and GDPU worked together to install an accessible latrine in Tochi Primary school while providing de-sensitization training to teachers and students to assist with creating an inclusive environment. My first priority during my fellowship was to monitor the progress of the pilot project and learn from what has worked and what has not.

- The Head Teacher reported that the drop out rate of students has decreased and that students with disabilities have been transferring from other districts in order to enroll in Tochi. The teachers report an improvement in the environment and that bullying has decreased.
- Several students with disabilities report it is easier to focus on learning and they no longer have anxiety about using the bathroom. They also report that they no longer experience bullying. Students without disabilities report that their understanding of bullying and hygiene has increased
- Tochi has 6 new teachers that started since last summer and the GDPU conducted a follow up inclusion training in August so that the new teachers could have an improved understanding on disabilities and how to create an inclusive environment.

- **Assessments of Primary Schools in the Municipality**

The program Coordinator, Ojok Patrick and I visited 5 Primary schools in the Gulu Municipality, including Layibi Primary school, which was the intended school to implement the toilet.

- At Layibi we found that there was only one student with a physical disability, which was important however we wanted to determine the best use of funds. If we were to build the accessible toilet we would not have enough money to create a fully accessible environment because multiple ramps would be needed due to the layout of the school. We determined that the timing was not appropriate to take on a large project with the limited funding that was available at a school where the population of children with physical disabilities was low.
- The Other 4 schools in the Municipality had recently received accessible latrines and were not in need of new structures, however they expressed a desire for inclusion training for teachers

- **Assessment of Rural Primary Schools**
Patrick and I decided to shift focus towards Rural Primary schools because we thought their needs might be greater than those in the Municipality. We conducted an accessibility assessment of 10 rural Primary Schools (report attached) and found that none of them met standards for an accessible environment and could benefit from improved structures
- **Long Term Plan**
Although time and funding limited the work that GDPU and AP were able to do around building a latrine over the summer we worked together to create a long term plan for the next 2.5 years that would support the needs of rural primary schools
 - We determined that we would choosing 2 priority schools out of the to implement the toilet in upcoming years with the assistance of an AP fellow as well as conducting inclusion training for teachers and students. The other 8 schools would receive inclusion training from GDPU
 - In order to continue to assist the rural primary schools and continue to advocate for inclusive environments, the plan would involve a great deal of advocacy at local, district and national level with the ministry of education as well as government officials to advocate for an ordinance that would require the government to help schools meet accessibility standards
- **Teacher Trainings**
In order to better understand the impact of providing teacher trainings without the additional implementation of an accessible structure, the GDPU staff conducted teacher trainings around inclusion for teachers at 2 of the schools that we visited that already had accessible structures. Surveys were given to measure understanding and follow up will be conducted as part of the long term plan.
- **Building Partnerships**
In addition to working on building relationships with schools and community members in the school districts, the GDPU is looking to find organizations with similar goals in order to continue to improve and expand upon projects.
 - This final week il have been n Kampala and met with an organization called Youth with Physical Disability Development Forum (YPDDF) who have the same goals of creating inclusive and accessible environments in schools. They are based in Kampala and are interested in expanding their programs and collaborating with the GDPU
 - The GDPU and AP are working on refining a proposal of our long term plan and finding an appropriate organization to submit it to in order to receive funding and move forward.