



Inclusive Entrepreneurship for Persons with Disabilities in DR Congo



Evaluation Report

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ACRONYMS

CRPD	: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DRC	: Democratic Republic of Congo
EG	: Echoing Green
FC	: Field Coordinator
IC	: Internship Coordinator
ICT	: Information and Communications Technology
IT	: Information Technology
KFF	: Kadiwaku Family Foundation
LLC	: Limited Liability Company
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization
NRC	: Non-Registered Company
PLC	: Public Limited Company
PM	: Project Manager
PWDs	: People with Disabilities
RCCM	: Registre du Commerce et du Crédit Mobilier
SDDS	: Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth Strategy
SISG	: Strategy on Inclusive and Sustainable Growth
SJSC	: Simplified Joint Stock Company
TEC	: Training and Events Coordinator
TS	: Technical Support
UNCRPD	: United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
USADF	: United States African Development Foundation
VC	: Volunteer Coordinator

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project background

Poverty is widespread and unchecked across the 26 provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Despite being the second-largest country in Africa, with an approximate area of 2.3 million square kilometers (890,000 sq. mi), and being endowed with rich natural resources, the DRC is the second-poorest country in the world. More than 80% of Congolese people live on less than \$1.25 a day, defined as the threshold for extreme poverty.

In the context of people with disabilities (PWDs), no official reliable data on disability exist in DRC. Based on studies in sample districts, the Congolese health ministry estimates a prevalence of around 15 percent or around 13 million persons. Traditionally, PWDs belong to the most marginalized groups in society, and are more likely to be unemployed compared to their counterparts without disabilities.

Project objective and scope

This project is designed with the purpose of supporting self-employment and entrepreneurship of persons with disabilities by providing micro-entrepreneurship development services. This is achieved by improving their entrepreneurship and management skills and by providing them with business support alongside the financial award to launch or expand their income-generating activities (small businesses).

In June 2018, KFF was awarded a prize money from the United States African Development Foundation, an agency of United States Echoing Government, via Echoing Green (EG) Global Fellowship to implement this project and extend it to seven provinces throughout the country.

Project beneficiaries

The project supported 650 PWDs who belong to the most marginalized groups in society and who are more likely to be unemployed and other 209 young people who are head of household with a person with a disability and/or who are providing employment opportunities to people with disabilities.

The selection of beneficiaries was a three-stage process. Stage one required Field Coordinators to facilitate identification of 2010 qualified and highly motivated candidates through one-on-one consultation and trust-building activities [pre-screening] (36 % females). In stage two, the Field Coordinators selected 859 candidates who demonstrated strong interest during the pre-screening period for the entrepreneurship training program (66 % females). In stage three, 645 program graduates were selected for pre-creation stage to receive customized support (72 % females). In stage four, 502 entrepreneurs were selected to receive post-creation support (64 % females).

Theory of change

The theory change follows four steps with subsequent expected impacts as follows: (i) the selected participants attend our training program at our training centers, (ii) the participants have improved the knowledge of good small business management and they develop a business plan; (iii) The best business plans are selected to receive a customized business support; (iv) participants establish a business, and apply improved managerial practices and attitudes toward business, (v) businesses expand and begin to contribute to self-employment.

Project immediate results and indicators achieved

The following are some of the indicators that are achieved by the project:

- 859 direct beneficiaries successfully completed the entrepreneurship training of which 75% were youths with disabilities (650 PWDs);
- 645 youth entrepreneurs attended our networking and skill-building events of which 50% youth with disabilities (326 PWDs);
- 654 young entrepreneurs who received pre-creation support and the percentage of disabled entrepreneurs: 55% (360 PWDs);
- 502 young entrepreneurs who received post creation support and the percentage of disabled entrepreneurs: 69% (360 PWDs).

The above indicators were supported by intermediate result indicators:

- 2010 beneficiaries participated in pre-screening phase;
- 859 selected beneficiaries for entrepreneurship training have completed their business plans;
- 803 Participants rated the quality of the training package as useful or very useful.

Social and economic impact of project deliverables

The project enabled 360 PWDs to become entrepreneurs and 12 PWDs to secure sustainable employments. A major effort through the project's life span was the creation of an ecosystem of disabled entrepreneurs in DRC and informal alumni networks who might become employers and mentors to their former peers and the organization maintains a database containing detailed information for all beneficiaries. In addition, the project improved the literacy skills of PWDs who were not educated or dropped out schools by establishing adult literacy classes, and the digital skills by teaching them how to use common Microsoft programs, financial management software and web search engines for their jobs and businesses. Moreover, the project created an inclusive and supportive workplace and create job opportunities for young people with disabilities by advocating and training employers as well as PWDs to acquire the workplace behavior and meet the market demand.

Project sustainability

There are three factors that helped project to achieve its sustainability: (i) partnership with other organizations including CBOs, NGOs, DPOs and local government officials, (ii) informal alumni networks and (iii) volunteer engagement.

The KFF strengthened its existing and established new partnerships with a wide array of institutions to sustain and extend the program. The partnership with East Eagle Foundation, which played a key role in identifying and building the capacity of fifteen volunteers and young with disabilities through its network of disability right activists. KFF concluded a MoU with International Foundation for Social Innovation and Inclusive Entrepreneurship to provide young people with disabilities with digital skills. Finally, KFF has been working also with the PayAfrica Foundation to organized financial education workshops to help beneficiaries understand the basic of financial literacy which include how to budget, track spending, properly pay off debt and the requirements and process to follow to apply for a loan at microfinance institutions and banks. Thanks to this partnership, PAF helped 70 entrepreneurs to become mobile money agents.

Cross-cutting issues

Although entrepreneurial approach seems to be a solution to eradicate poverty and improve the living conditions of marginalized groups in DRC, PWDs face a range of challenges when it comes to business creation, including physical and communication barriers, negative perceptions of people with disabilities, and other factors that lead to discrimination against people with disabilities. That is why the organization took the necessary measures to maximize the project inclusivity- all the activities within the framework of the project have integrated the "inclusion" dimension which means the project activities showed the capacities to allow everyone (women and men) with specific impairment to access training regardless of someone's ability and to be supported; The trainings/events were combined with sign language to allow the hard of hearing and deaf people to access them and KFF helped those in need to obtain the mobility aid including wheelchairs, leg-braces and other devices that PWDs rely upon.

In order to promote equal access for young women and young men to entrepreneurship, the organization implemented measures to reduce obstacles that could affect the access of women and men to the project activities-the obstacles could be, but not limited to, heavy domestic burdens, risks of violence or sexual abuse on the way to the training center, socio-cultural barriers, etc. the following are specific efforts and strategies that the organization put in place to remove these barriers to entrepreneurship:

- For disabled women who have children, the organization has made available volunteers to take care of their children during the training or events and it provides intimate hygiene products that girls and women rely on;
- Teachers and staff of training centers were trained on gender-based violence and have basic psychological support tools;

- Training schedules took into account the distance of beneficiaries to prevent them from arriving late in their homes so that they are exposed to the risk of sexual or physical violence on the way home.

Project management

The Inclusive Entrepreneurship for Persons with Disabilities in DR Congo project staff structure reflects the desire to keep the program team modest, yet highly functional, and optimize us existing resources to ensure a sustainable program. The team includes six key personnel: Project Manager (PM), First Assistant PM in charge of Administration and Finances (APM), Second Assistant PM in charge of main office (OC), Technical Support (TS) seven field Coordinators (FC), Training and Event Coordinator, Internship Coordinator (IC) , Volunteer Coordinator (VC) and Volunteers.

Financial means

The overall project budget \$US 127,050.00 of which 91,500 came from the USADF/EG. The remaining amount represents contribution from other funders, including Humanity and Inclusion (formerly: Handicap International), PayAfrica Foundation and individual donors, and KFF program revenue.

Conclusion

This evaluation was conducted for evaluating the project intitled “Inclusive Entrepreneurship for Persons with Disabilities in DR Congo”. Which aims at supporting self-employment among disadvantaged youth, especially individuals with disabilities, by providing micro-entrepreneurship development services in selected provinces across DR Congo.

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the economic and social impact of project deliverables, identify points of strengths and weaknesses of the project and recommend alternatives. The evaluation also understood how the three cross-cutting issues (inclusion, gender and sustainability) were integrated into all stages of project and it is committed to promoting equality and participation in all activities. From this viewpoint, based on the information collected and meetings held with team and some beneficiaries during the process evaluation, we can infer that the project is having high positive impact on the lives of young people with disabilities in DRC and the project team can identify important aspects of this project that are of value.

The project enabled young people with disabilities to receive business support and tools they needed to develop a sense of autonomy. This was achieved through training, networking, internship and customized business support. Thus, they are ready to participate in the job market either as entrepreneurs (small business owner) or employees. A major effort through the project’s life span was the creation of an ecosystem of disabled entrepreneurs in DRC and informal alumni

networks across the country who might become employers and mentors to their former peers and the organization maintains a database containing detailed information for all beneficiaries, which can be used as a reference in future projects. In addition, the project was able to improve the literacy skills of young people with disabilities who are not educated or dropped out schools by establishing adult literacy classes, and the digital skills by teaching them how to use common Microsoft programs, financial management software and web search engines. Moreover, the project was able to create an inclusive and supportive workplace and create job opportunities for young people with disabilities by advocating and training employers as well as young people with disabilities to acquire the workplace behavior and meet the market demand.

The implementation of this project with such a big magnitude proved to be difficult and challenging as it had to deal with a big number of issues and challenges-Logistical and mobility challenge. Although KFF helped some young people to obtain mobility aid and orthopedic equipment, many young people with disabilities weren't able to attend the in-person activities because they lacked mobility and the transport has been a major obstacle especially for those who live in rural areas. An online platform could help them access the services. Unfortunately, the platform is running with internet which is not so widely available to everyone in DRC. This has limited access and not have as much impact or scalability as intended. In addition, the huge concern was that the outcome of training required each beneficiary to have access to funding for starting or boosting their businesses and this will continue to be a huge challenge unless KFF partners with potential donors and funding agencies including USADF and EG to support financially the project beneficiaries. On the project management's side – Despite the voluntary commitment of members, the lack of regular wages/pay decrease their motivation to work. KFF must define a business model that will allow it to become financially independent and diversify its sources of funding.

Recommendations

Considering the evaluation results, the following recommendations were proposed for the future projects:

- Some beneficiaries did not move to next stage of training program because they lacked the means to attend the in-person training. Many of them needed assistive devices or mobility aids, sign language and braille, etc. In order to address this challenge, KFF should develop a Mobile App that can work offline and contains online library of business educational articles and podcasts to help the disabled community to learn how to start and manage small businesses in their native languages and regardless of someone's ability to walk;
- At the business creation stage, young people with disabilities faced challenges when it came to financing – of 360 who succeeded as entrepreneurs, only 12% were able to raise the needed funding to launch their small businesses. Although the project was based on non-financial support, it might be useful in future designs to network with financial institutions that would accept to provide youth with credit at attainable rates or submit an

unsolicited proposal to USADF and Echoing Green to provide financial support to beneficiaries. This can be in form of a local competition to identify or boost sustainable and scalable business ideas;

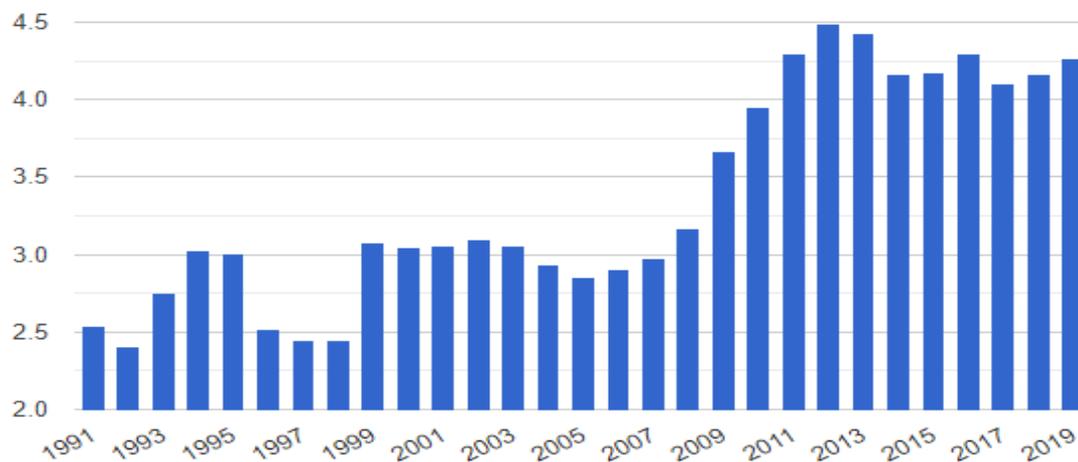
- The young beneficiaries who were graduated but did not run their businesses quickly forget some of what they have learned. It's important to set up a follow-up program to reinforce the skills they were taught. The organization should also extend its internship program to help them get some experience and workplace behavior;
- Although the training program and materials took into account the educational background of PWD initially targeted by the project, this was another reality during the training delivery. Some beneficiaries expressed their concerns regarding the training language. The mismatch between the level of the training curricula and the education background of the beneficiaries was an issue. The curricula were developed in French and not all beneficiaries spoke French. In order to help overcome this challenge, it's suggested that the organization develop the training materials in Congolese native languages including lingala, Shawili, Kikongo and Tshiluba;
- A large majority of members who work for the project are volunteers. It is necessary to mobilize financial resources to enable these members to receive their salaries regularly. This will increase their commitment to the project and allow young people with disabilities who need support during the training sessions not to have problems in the future.

1. INTRODUCTION

1. 1. Project background

Poverty is widespread and unchecked across the 26 provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Despite being the second-largest country in Africa, with an approximate area of 2.3 million square kilometres (890,000 sq mi), and being endowed with rich natural resources, the DRC is the second-poorest country in the world. More than 80% of Congolese people live on less than \$1.25 a day, defined as the threshold for extreme poverty.

Figure 1: Democratic Republic of the Congo - Unemployment rate



Source: The World Bank

In DR Congo, between 7 and 10 million young people integrate, each year, the labor market, and this market does not grow quite quickly to welcome them. Barely 5% find employment corresponding to their abilities and skills, and many continue to suffer because in some cases, wages are extremely low. Among them, there are more and more young people educated in business centers, and their number, between 1999 and 2011, has more than tripled, from 1.6 million to 4.9 million. They will practically be doubled in 2020, or 9.6 million unemployed young people in the Congo¹.

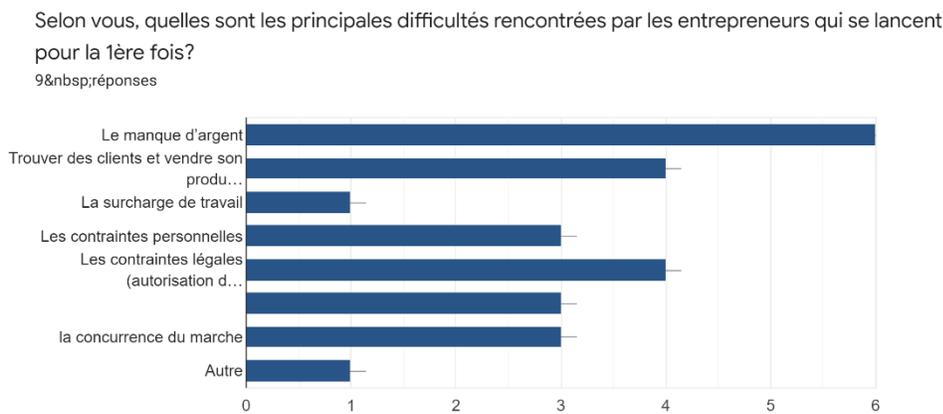
The entrepreneurship option represents one of the most effective ways to eradicate poverty, fight against unemployment and improve the living conditions and wellbeing of people. However, in developing countries, especially DRC, businesses are directly or indirectly affected by the environment no matter how big or how small the business is because of the technologies, facilities and expertise involved. For example, most small businesses and startups have difficulties getting business spaces, suitable technologies and facilities, electricity and more and this affects

¹<http://drcvision.com/2013/09/07/unemployment-among-young-people-in-dr-congo-a-study-reveals-that-barely-5-find-employment-corresponding-to-their-abilities/>

productivity. In addition, small business owners face a range of challenges to successfully launch and grow their businesses. Challenges include, but not limited to, access to capital or seed funding, the marketplace, business opportunities.

In the context of people with disabilities (PWDs), no official reliable data on disability exist in DRC. Based on studies in sample districts, the Congolese health ministry estimates a prevalence of around 15 percent or around 13 million persons. Traditionally, PWDs belong to the most marginalized groups in society, and are more likely to be unemployed compared to their counterparts without disabilities. Despite the will of the new president, which is reflected in the creation of a ministry in charge of disabled people and the involvement of certain organizations for promoting the rights of people with disabilities, it is regrettable to note that after four years of the ratification of the CRPD, important country development programs such as the DRC Strategy on Inclusive and Sustainable Growth (SISG) DC 2035, the government's priority action plan 2017-2021 and the National Inclusive Finance strategy do not take into account the needs of people with disabilities. Thus, the majority of people with disabilities turn to begging or they may rely on family support or social services because they have no other options open to them. In addition, PWDs face challenges such as harassment, communication barriers and negative perceptions of PWDs which further impedes their chances to become entrepreneur or secure a sustain employment.

Figure 2: Breakdown of challenges faced by entrepreneurs²



The chart above shows what entrepreneurs consider to be challenges when it comes to business creation in local context of DRC. The question -“What are the main challenges faced by young people who want to launch a small business for the first time?”-was asked to the attendees of 2020 KFF Conference for Inclusive Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation in DR Congo that was organized in Kinshasa from 27 to 31 January 2020. The respondents were given option to choose more than one response. Responses included: lack of seed funding (66,7%), market (44%),

² Report of 2020 Kadiwaku Family Foundation conference for inclusive entrepreneurship and social innovation in DR Congo

overwork (11%), personal constraints (33%), legal constraints (44%), competition (33%) and other (11%). The responders were given option to choose more than one response.

1.2 Project objectives and scope

The **‘Inclusive Entrepreneurship for Persons with Disabilities in DR Congo’** is a two-year USADF funded initiative via EG Global Fellowship that aims at supporting the self-employment and entrepreneurship for PWDs by providing micro-entrepreneurship development services in DR Congo.

The project targets the young people with disabilities, especially girls and women with disabilities who are amongst the most marginalized of all, and who face additional challenges that further impedes their abilities to become entrepreneur as women and also disabled.

The project covers 4 components:

1. **Entrepreneurship training:** the program focus on how young people with disabilities can create job opportunities for themselves and others through entrepreneurship. It increases the participant’s understanding of creative processes and ultimately enhance their complex problem-solving skills and provides the necessary skills to initiate businesses, make healthy and productive life choices and reinforce professional skills in the workplace. It also helps them sustain and grow their businesses.
2. **Workplace:** the organization offers coworking membership which includes access to collaborative workspace, conference space and internet access to accommodate PWDs who need a quiet and secure place to develop their startup ideas and bring them market.
3. **Informal alumni Network:** the organization has created informal alumni networks across the country that hold regular meetings (on monthly basis) and hosts an annual gathering (on the occasion of international day for people with disabilities) to help its community connect with each other and receive first-hand business empowerment information and technical insights from business experts.
4. **Business support:** the organization’s experts work with entrepreneurs on one-on-one session to help them refine their business model and we provide them with customized business support which includes fundraising resources and connection with microfinance institutions for loans acquisition.

The following are some of the indicators that are used to determine whether the project has achieved its objectives:

- The number of direct project beneficiaries who successfully completed entrepreneurship

- training and the percentage of beneficiaries living with disabilities;
- The number of direct project beneficiaries who used our collaborative workspace, conference space and internet access and the percentage of beneficiaries living with disabilities;
- The number of direct beneficiaries who attended our meetings and annual gatherings and percentage of beneficiaries living with disabilities;
- The number of direct beneficiaries who received post creation support and the percentage of beneficiaries living with disabilities.

The above indicators are supported by intermediate result indicators:

- Direct project beneficiaries participating in pre-screening phase;
- Direct project beneficiaries who complete a business plan;
- Participants who rate the quality of the training package as useful or very useful.

The project will be implemented in 12 cities across DRC. The table below shows the number of beneficiaries initially targeted by the project and approved by USADF/EG.

Table 1: Breakdown of beneficiaries initially targeted

Cities	Number of beneficiaries	%
Goma	25	4
Kinshasa	375	56
Lubumbashi	25	4
Kisangani	25	4
Bukavu	25	4
Kalemie	25	4
Kinzau (Boma)	25	4
Kindu	25	4
Mbuji-Mayi	25	4
Kananga	25	4
Kikwit	25	4
Mbandaka	25	4
Total	650	100%

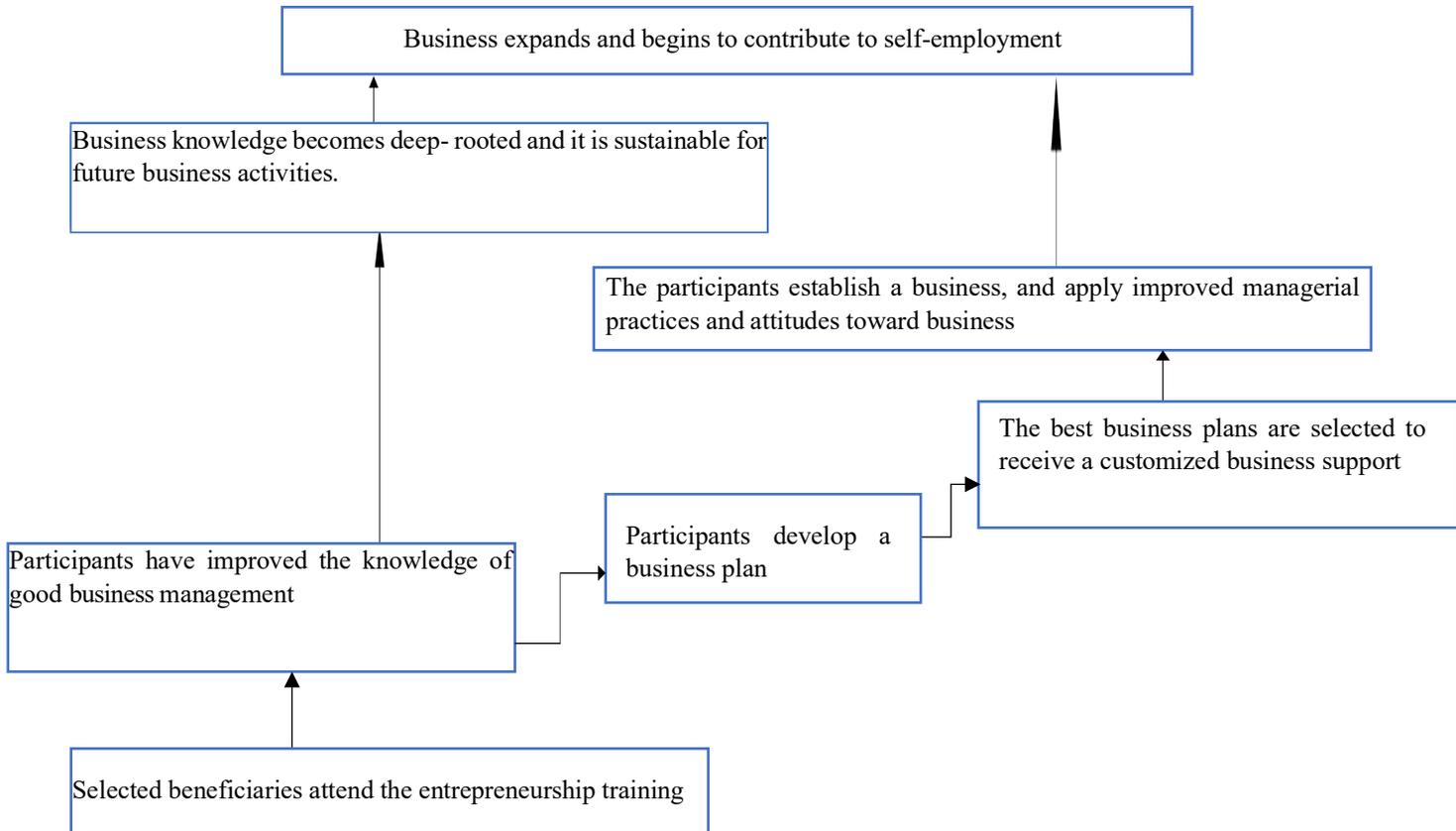
1. 3. Theory of change

The theory of change follows five steps with subsequent expected impacts as follows:

- (i) The selected participants attend our training program at our training centers;
- (ii) The participants have improved the knowledge of good small business management and they develop a business plan;
- (iii) The best business plans are selected to receive a customized business support;
- (iv) The participants establish a business, and apply improved managerial practices and attitudes toward business;

- (v) Businesses expand and begins to contribute to self-employment.

Figure 3: Theory of change:



2. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

This evaluation had two main objectives:

- To assess the economic and social impact of project deliverables: we seek to assess the impact or changes that have occurred within beneficiary and their households or the community;
- To identify organization's strength and weakness to implement the project: We seek to analyze the process of implementation, identify important lessons to be learnt and make recommendations for the implementation of future projects

Also, the evaluation seeks to understand:

- Inclusivity: we seek to verify that project activities are accessible and inclusive to everyone, whether disabled or not;

- Gender considerations: we seek to identify the additional challenges to female self-employment.
- Sustainability: verify how KFF is ensuring the project sustainability and verify that project beneficiaries will be able to ensure the continuation of any positive project effects beyond the USADF and Echoing Green financial supports;

3. EVALUATION APPROACH

The evaluation used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods which includes questionnaires, interviews, desk reviews, observations and focus groups.

3. 1. Questionnaires

We developed a questionnaire that consisted of 14 questions. It covered various area-training, market analysis, community perceptions, current business environment. The beneficiaries used WhatsApp-based platform and online survey (google form) to send their responses. We received 79 responses: 58 PWDs and 21 non-PWDs

Table 2: Breakdown of questionnaire responders (beneficiaries)

Cities	Number of responders	PWDs	Non-PWDs	Means used to respond
Goma	7	5	2	WhatsApp:0
				Google form:7
Kinshasa	28	22	6	WhatsApp:22
				Google form: 6
Lubumbashi	19	9	10	WhatsApp:13
				Google form: 6
Kisangani	2	2	0	WhatsApp:2
				Google form: 0
Bukavu	5	5	0	WhatsApp: 5
				Google form:0
Kalemie	9	6	3	WhatsApp: 9
				Google form:0
Kinza (Boma)	9	9	0	WhatsApp:4
				Google form: 5

3. 2. Interviews

We conducted phone and face-to-face interviews in seven cities and the interviewers reached the beneficiaries in their places of work or homes. The questionnaire was administered to 85 beneficiaries: 75 PWDs and 10 non-PWDs.

Table 3: Breakdown of interview responders

Cities	Number of responders	PWDs	Non-PWDs	Means used the interview
Goma	2	2	0	Phone: 2
				Face to face: 0
Kinshasa	34	32	2	Phone: 15
				Face to face: 19
Lubumbashi	19	13	6	Phone: 6
				Face to face: 13
Kisangani	4	4	0	Phone: 0
				Face to face: 4
Bukavu	7	7	0	Phone: 0
				Face to face: 7
Kalemie	3	3	0	Phone: 0
				Face to face: 3
Kinza (Boma)	16	14	2	Phone: 5
				Face to face: 11

3. 3. Desk reviews

The consultant studied some important documents related to the project to understand how the project was conducted. The documents reviewed included:

- Organizational annual reports;
- Quarterly reports that were submitted to Echoing Green and USADF;
- The grant agreements with donors (Echoing Green, USADF and Handicap International);
- Reports of KFF annual conferences;
- Minutes of monthly meeting;
- Timesheets;
- Project chart;
- Client tracking spreadsheets and books;
- Training reports (including pre and post training surveys).

3. 4. Observation

The interviewers were requested to comment on what they have observed and learnt during the face to face interviews. The purpose was to identify what the project beneficiaries think and do by viewing their actions as they exhibit their behaviors in various situations and activities. The data collector took notes, pictures and made short videos using the phones.

3. 5. Focus group

We conducted some focus group to gather data which helped fill some of the information gaps that the team faced when analyzing the initial data. Details of these focus groups are provided in the table below:

Table 4: Breakdown of focus group attendees

	Beneficiaries	KFF Staff	Community members	Government members	Others	Total focus group attendees/city
Goma	8	3	1	0	0	12
Kinshasa	21	6	19	1	6	53
Lubumbashi	21	3	12	2	2	42
Kisangani	16	2	4	1	0	23
Bukavu	12	4	2	0	0	18
Kalemie	3	3	12	1	9	28
Kinzau (Boma)	17	3	2	3	1	26

4. FINDINGS

The following sections present the research findings:

4. 1. Project immediate results and indicators achieved

The project had several indicators to capture the extent by which it achieved its expected results:

- 859 direct beneficiaries successfully completed the entrepreneurship training of which 75% were youths with disabilities (650 PWDs);
- 645 youth entrepreneurs attended our networking and skill-building events of which 50% youth with disabilities (326 PWDs);

- 654 young entrepreneurs who received pre-creation support and the percentage of disabled entrepreneurs: 55% (360 PWDs);
- 502 young entrepreneurs who received post creation support and the percentage of disabled entrepreneurs: 69% (360 PWDs).

The above indicators were supported by intermediate result indicators:

- 2010 beneficiaries participated in pre-screening phase;
- 859 selected beneficiaries for entrepreneurship training have completed their business plans;
- 803 Participants rated the quality of the training package as useful or very useful.

Table 5: Breakdown of beneficiaries reached:

Cities	Number of beneficiaries			
	Training	Workplaces	Events	Business support
Goma	25	25	25	25
Kinshasa	435	308	346	308
Lubumbashi	174	25	174	25
Kisangani	25	69	25	69
Bukavu	25	25	25	25
Kalemie	25	25	25	25
Kinzau (Boma)	25	25	25	25

Currently, the project is implemented in seven cities (representing seven provinces/regions) throughout the country. The table above shows the number of beneficiaries reached by city and component.

4. 2. Project beneficiaries

a. Profile

In order to be eligible for the program, the beneficiary should at least have completed the primary education. In DRC, PWDs face multiple barriers to accessing education. More recent surveys suggest that 33% of PWDs have not attended school and 45% are illiterate. The training program and materials were developed based on national and international curricula and took into account this reality as the training tool kits developers knew that education background could be a challenge for young people with disabilities.

The profile of direct beneficiaries targeted by project is described as follows:

- ⇒ 85% of beneficiaries live in urban settings (61% of males, 74% of females);
- ⇒ The average age of beneficiaries was of 22 years;
- ⇒ 19% of beneficiaries are heads of households (7% of them being female);

⇒ 100% of beneficiaries completed primary education-39% of them reached high school (72% of males and 28% of females).

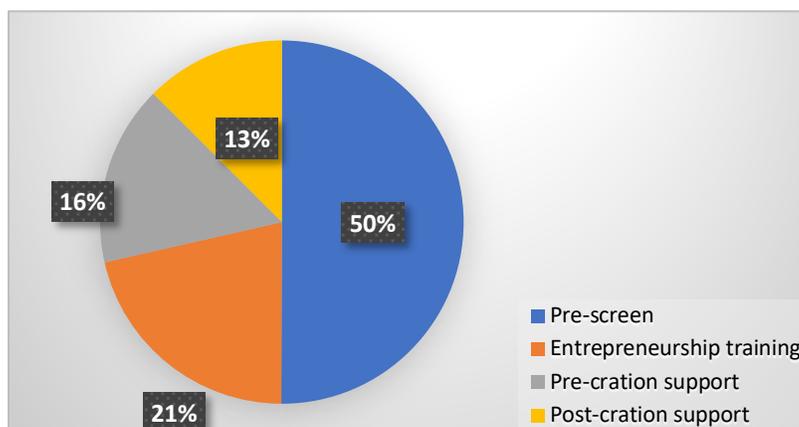
b. Selection and participation

The project supported 650 PWDs who belong to the most marginalized groups in society and who are more likely to be unemployed and other 209 young people who are head of household with a person with a disability and/or who are providing employment opportunities to people with disabilities.

The selection of beneficiaries was a three-stage process. Stage one required Field Coordinators to facilitate identification of 2010 qualified and highly motivated candidates through one-on-one consultation and trust-building activities [pre-screening] (36 % females). In stage two, the Field Coordinators selected 859 candidates who demonstrated strong interest during the pre-screening period for the entrepreneurship training program (66 % females). In stage three, 645 program graduates were selected for pre-creation stage to receive customized support (72 % females). In stage four, 502 entrepreneurs were selected to receive post-creation support (64 % females).

Additionally, the Training and Events Coordinator was responsible for registering the events and annual conference attendees. Attendance was open to members of KFF Community as well as those who were not members. The attendees either used online resources such as (google form), over the phone, or onsite the first day of the event.

Figure: 4 Beneficiaries selection process



4. 3. Training delivery

The initial target of the project was to train 650 young people with disabilities. However, the KFF extended the training to other marginalized groups and members of disability community who

expressed their interested (e.g. parents of children with disabilities, young women), who run small businesses that provide employment opportunities to young people with disabilities or their family members) in two cities: Kinshasa and Lubumbashi. Because of opening the gate for others to come in, the program, registered more people (859) than originally expected. was slightly exceeded (reaching 859).

KFF organized a series of training of trainers for the Field Coordinators and other staffs. Then the trained Field Coordinators/staffs were responsible for delivering the training in their respective cities.

The project also intended to reach at least 26 potential employers across DR Congo on how to accommodate an employee with disability or with specific needs, and how to support diversity and anti-discrimination in the workplace. Instead, 51 were successfully trained. 97% of trained employees rated the quality of training as very useful while 72% of trained employers are using our guidelines to accommodate an employee with disabilities and other marginalized groups in the workplace. KFF understood that this training was valuable because some employers expressed their intention to hire some young people with disabilities or host them as interns in order to help them gain some experiences and workplace discipline.

Most of the young people with disabilities who attended the entrepreneurship trainings view it as being very beneficial. Less than 10% of respondents claim that there were no benefits from the project.

4. 4. Gender considerations

Often, entrepreneurship activities target 50% of men - 50% of women. This distinction does not necessarily respond to the consideration of the gender issue according to the demography of the community. In order to promote equal access for young women and young men to entrepreneurship, the organization implemented measures to reduce obstacles that could affect the access of women and men to the project activities-the obstacles could be, but not limited to, heavy domestic burdens, risks of violence or sexual abuse on the way to the training center, socio-cultural barriers, etc. the following are specific efforts and strategies that the organization put in place to remove these barriers to entrepreneurship:

- For disabled women who have children, the organization has made available volunteers to take care of their children during the training;
- The toilets are separate from men and women and are in a safe location;
- Teachers and staff of training centers are trained on gender-based violence and have basic psychological support tools;

- training schedules take into account the distance of beneficiaries to prevent them from arriving late in their homes so that they are exposed to the risk of sexual or physical violence on the way home;
- the organization provides intimate hygiene products that girls and women rely on.

4. 5. Project inclusivity and inclusion

Although entrepreneurial approach seems to be a solution to eradicate poverty and improve the living conditions of marginalized groups in DRC, PWDs face a range of challenges when it comes to business creation, including physical and communication barriers, negative perceptions of people with disabilities, and other factors that lead to discrimination against people with disabilities. That is why the organization took the necessary measures to maximize the project inclusivity- all the activities within the framework of the project have integrated the "inclusion" dimension which means the project activities showed the capacities to allow everyone (women and men) with specific impairment to access training regardless of someone's ability and to be supported; The trainings/events were combined with sign language to allow the hard of hearing and deaf people to access them and KFF helped those in need to obtain the mobility aid including wheelchairs, leg-braces and other devices that PWDs rely upon.

4. 6. Economic and social impact of project deliverables

The project enabled 360 PWDs to become entrepreneurs and 12 PWDs to secure sustainable employments. A major effort through the project's life span was the creation of an ecosystem of disabled entrepreneurs in DRC and informal alumni networks who might become employers and mentors to their former peers and the organization maintains a database containing detailed information for all beneficiaries. In addition, the project improved the literacy skills of PWDs who were not educated or dropped out schools by establishing adult literacy classes, and the digital skills by teaching them how to use common Microsoft programs, financial management software and web search engines for their jobs and businesses. Moreover, the project created an inclusive and supportive workplace and create job opportunities for young people with disabilities by advocating and training employers as well as PWDs to acquire the workplace behavior and meet the market demand.

a. Job creation

Of the 502 young entrepreneurs who received post creation support, 360 have are succeeding as entrepreneurs, 12 secured sustainable employment, 76 failed in becoming neither entrepreneur nor employee and 54 dropout (70% of dropouts launched their business but they couldn't sustain them).

b. Types and industry/sector of job created

According to the DRC National Investment Promotion Agency³, we classified the types of business that are created by young entrepreneurs into 12 industries/sectors:

Table 6: Industry of job created by entrepreneurs

Industry	Number	%
Agriculture	25	7
Computer/IT	86	24
Education	4	1
Electronics	12	3
Fashion	55	15
Finance	70	19
Food	6	2
Health	3	1
ICT and Telecommunication	63	17
Manufacturing	2	1
Tourism	2	1
Other	32	9

c. Legal forms of job created

- 208 of young entrepreneurs work informally;
- 142 of young entrepreneurs are sole proprietors;
- 4 of young entrepreneurs run commercial companies (for-profit);
- 3 of young entrepreneurs run their business like nonprofits;

Informal entrepreneurs are those who run businesses but did not registered their them and do not pay corporate income tax. Some of them are using KFF facilities as part of workplace membership and others are running online (home-based businesses), small famers and street vendors.

Sole proprietorship. A sole proprietorship is a business that is owned and operated by an individual. It is the simplest and most com mon structure chosen by local entrepreneur who want to start a small business in DRC. There is not quite distinction between the commercial company and sole proprietorship, the owner who is entitled to all profits and are responsible for all your business's debts, losses and liabilities.

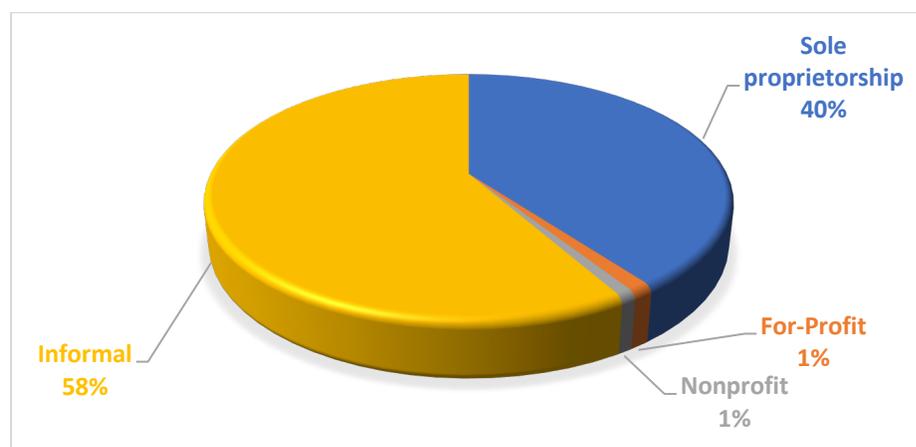
Commercial companies known as for-profit-it must be registered with the Trade Register (RCCM). The commercial companies recognized by the Commercial Companies Uniform Act are: (i)

³ <https://investindrc.cd/en/#>

Limited Liability Company (LLC), [Société à responsabilité limitée, SARL], a company in which the partners are liable for the company debts only to the extent of their respective contributions, and the rights of the partners are represented by the number of shares held by the partner in the company, (ii) Public Limited Company (PLC), [Société anonyme, SA], a company in which the shareholders are liable for the company debts to the extent of their contributions and shareholders' rights are represented by the shares. The main difference between a limited liability company and a public liability company is that the public liability company may make calls for capital to the public, (iii) Simplified Joint Stock Company (SJSC) [Société par Actions simplifiées], SAS): This form of company [SAS] offers far more flexibility to the shareholders and managers than the public limited company, which was the most commonly used vehicle for the implementation of foreign investments in Africa until now, (iv) Non-Registered Company (NRC), [Société en participation]: Article 114 of the Revised Commercial Companies Uniform Act states that partners may agree to not register a company. The non-registered company (which can be a joint venture) has no legal personality and is not subject to registration with the RCCM, (v) and Branch: which is a commercial or industrial establishment or services belonging to a company or individual which acquires a certain autonomy of management. The branch may be established by a company or a natural person.⁴

Some entrepreneurs like to run their businesses like nonprofit to gain market respect, donor confidence, and public support. In order to run a nonprofit, known as NGO, first registering itself at commune level where the central office is located. Second, it goes to register at the level of the sector ministry. Third, it goes to the Ministry of Justice to obtain the legal personality by decree of the Minister but as the procedure is long, it begins by giving an acknowledgement of receipt called F.92.

Figure 5: Breakdown of legal forms of job created



⁴ <http://guichetunique.cd/?menu=nos-services>

4. 7. Project sustainability

The following factors helped the project to achieve sustainability:

Volunteer engagement: Volunteers helped to cut the salary costs of KFF and this enabled the project to continue because the funds were spent on the main activities and not expenses. KFF makes sure that beneficiaries and involved institutions are able to ensure the continuation of any positive project effects beyond this project.

Informal alumni network: The Founder of KFF, Mr. John Ntonta, a Global Echoing Green Fellow, a Disability Rights Advocate and a Social Entrepreneur, works alongside other business experts and Consultants to provide Executive staff with strategic support and capacity building and they work closely with them to design, implement and evaluate the project activities in the field and contribute to creating an informal alumni network who eventually will become employers and/or mentors to their former peers. As of January 2020, KFF established seven alumni networks that represent seven provinces where the organization is active.

Partnership: The KFF strove to establish and strengthen existing partnerships with a wide array of institutions. We have established a partnership with East Eagle Foundation, which played a key role in identifying and building the capacity of fifteen volunteers through its network of disability right activists. The International NGO Handicap International also partnered with KFF through the project to reach thirty beneficiaries in the municipality of Kinsenso in Kinshasa. KFF concluded a MoU with PayAfrica Foundation to provide beneficiaries with financial literacy and to build a network of mobile money agents in seven cities throughout the country where KFF is currently active- Finally, KFF worked also with the Finca to organize financial education workshops in the city of Lubumbashi to help beneficiaries understand the basic of financial literacy which included how to budget, track spending, properly pay off debt and the requirements and process to follow to apply for a loan at Finca International.

4. 8. Project resources

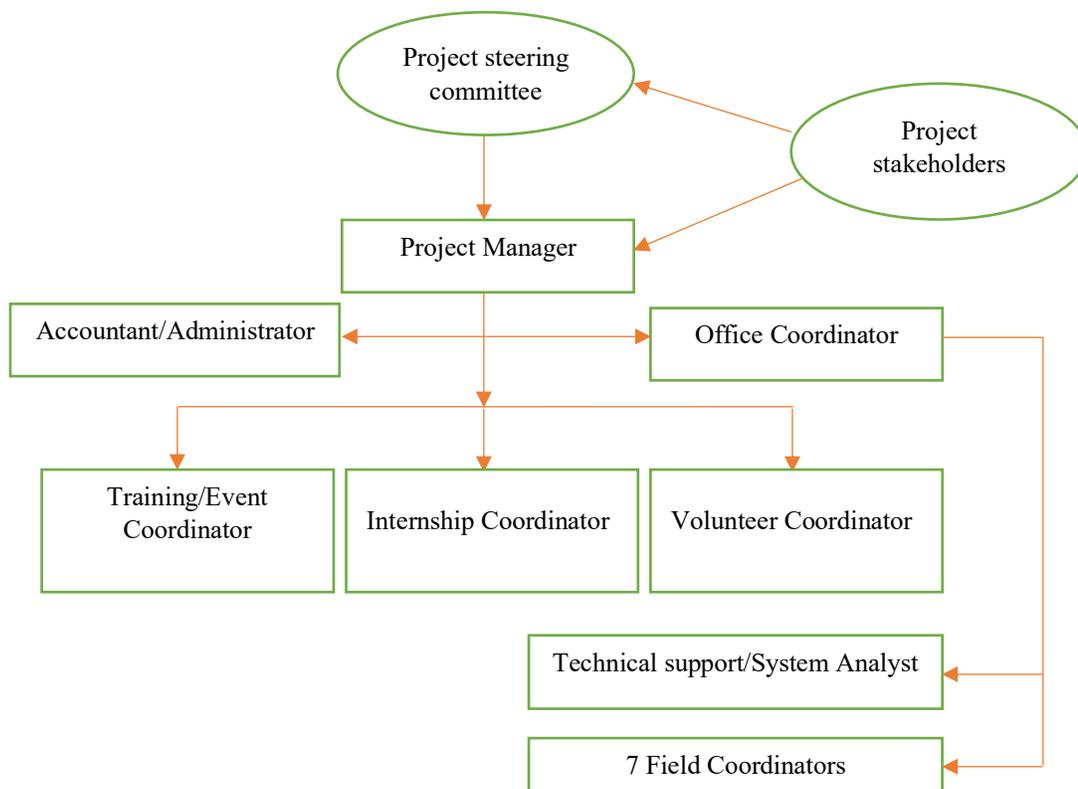
a. Human resources

KFF is one of the organizations composed mainly of people living with disabilities who are engaged in promoting the rights of their peers in the DR Congo. KFF's team leader by John K. Ntonta, a 2018 Echoing Green Global Fellow, a disability rights advocate and social entrepreneur, believes in a new way of thinking and undertaking tasks. This passion is seen in his effort to register the entity. Also, a team of fellow disabled people join in and contribute time, effort and energy to support their fellows in the same state, which is very unusual, uncommon and rare. These facts make KFF a different entity and position it strategically as the entity that will alleviate the disabled people from poverty and also link them to various platforms where they can access the resources they need to promote their self-determined goals and wellbeing.

The Inclusive Entrepreneurship for Persons with Disabilities in DR Congo project staff structure

reflects the desire to keep the program team modest, yet highly functional, and optimize us existing resources to ensure a sustainable program. The team includes six key personnel: Project Manager (PM), First Assistant PM in charge of Administration and Finances (APM), Second Assistant PM in charge of main office (OC), Technical Support (TS) and seven field Coordinators (FC), Training and Event Coordinator (TEC), Internship Coordinator (IC) and Volunteer Coordinator (VC)

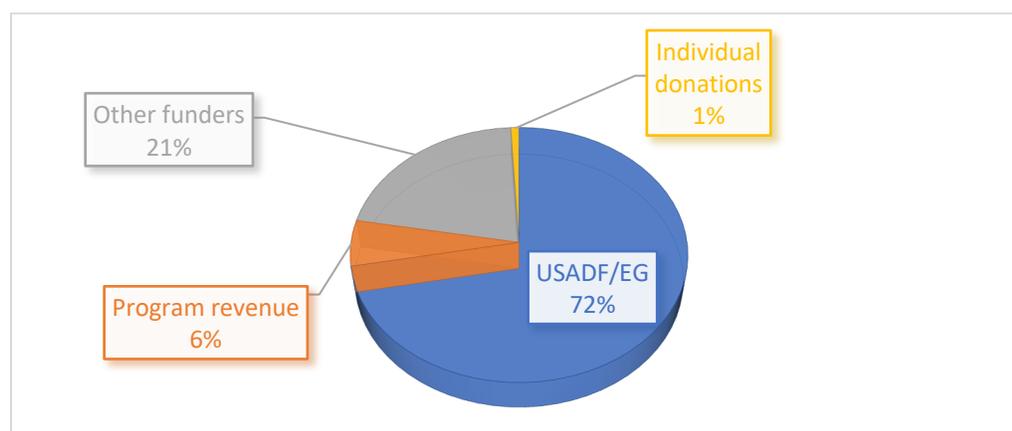
Figure 6: Project chart



b. Financial resources

The overall project budget \$US 127,050.00 of which 91,500 came from the USADF. In June 2018, KFF was awarded a prize money from the USADF, an agency of United States Echoing Government, via **Echoing Green (EG)** Global Fellowship. KFF use this funding to implement this project for a period of two years. The remaining amount represents contribution from other funders, including Fairfield County Community Foundation, Humanity and Inclusion (formerly: Handicap International), PayAfrica Foundation (funding received via Association Congolaise des Entrepreneurs Sociaux) and from individual donors from Congolese Community of Connecticut and Congolese disability community. In addition, KFF activities were generating incomes.

Figure 7: Breakdown of funding sources



CONCLUSION

This evaluation was conducted for evaluating the project intitled “Inclusive Entrepreneurship for Persons with Disabilities in DR Congo”. Which aims at supporting self-employment among disadvantaged youth, especially individuals with disabilities, by providing micro-entrepreneurship development services in selected provinces across DR Congo.

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the economic and social impact of project deliverables, identify points of strengths and weaknesses of the project and recommend alternatives. The evaluation also understood how the three cross-cutting issues (inclusion, gender and sustainability) were integrated into all stages of project and it is committed to promoting equality and participation in all activities. From this viewpoint, based on the information collected and meetings held with team and some beneficiaries during the process evaluation, we can infer that the project is having high positive impact on the lives of young people with disabilities in DRC and the project team can identify important aspects of this project that are of value.

The project enabled young people with disabilities to receive business support and tools they needed to develop a sense of autonomy. This was achieved through training, networking, internship and customized business support. Thus, they are ready to participate in the job market either as entrepreneurs (small business owner) or employees. A major effort through the project’s life span was the creation of an ecosystem of disabled entrepreneurs in DRC and informal alumni networks across the country who might become employers and mentors to their former peers and the organization maintains a database containing detailed information for all beneficiaries, which can be used as a reference in future projects. In addition, the project was able to improve the literacy skills of young people with disabilities who are not educated or dropped out schools by establishing adult literacy classes, and the digital skills by teaching them how to use common Microsoft programs, financial management software and web search engines. Moreover, the

project was able to create an inclusive and supportive workplace and create job opportunities for young people with disabilities by advocating and training employers as well as young people with disabilities to acquire the workplace behavior and meet the market demand.

The implementation of this project with such a big magnitude proved to be difficult and challenging as it had to deal with a big number of issues and challenges-Logistical and mobility challenge. Although KFF helped some young people to obtain mobility aid and orthopedic equipment, many young people with disabilities weren't able to attend the in-person activities because they lacked mobility and the transport has been a major obstacle especially for those who live in rural areas. An online platform could help them access the services. Unfortunately, the platform is running with internet which is not so widely available to everyone in DRC. This has limited access and not have as much impact or scalability as intended. In addition, the huge concern was that the outcome of training required each beneficiary to have access to funding for starting or boosting their businesses and this will continue to be a huge challenge unless KFF partners with potential donors and funding agencies including USADF and EG to support financially the project beneficiaries. On the project management's side – Despite the voluntary commitment of members, the lack of regular wages/pay decrease their motivation to work. KFF must define a business model that will allow it to become financially independent and diversify its sources of funding.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the evaluation results, the following recommendations were proposed for the future projects:

- Some beneficiaries did not move to next stage of training program because they lacked the means to attend the onsite training. Many of them needed assistive devices or mobility aids, sign language and braille, etc. In order to address this challenge, KFF should develop a Mobile App that can work offline and contains online library of business educational articles and podcasts to help the disabled community to learn how to start and manage small businesses in their native languages.
- At the business creation stage, young people with disabilities faced challenges when it came to financing – of 360 who succeeded as entrepreneurs, only 12% were able to raise the needed funding to launch their small businesses. Although the project was based on non-financial support, it might be useful in future designs to network with financial institutions that would accept to provide youth with credit at attainable rates or submit an unsolicited proposal to USADF and Echoing Green to provide financial support to beneficiaries. This can be in form of a local competition to identify or boost sustainable and scalable business ideas.

- The young beneficiaries who were graduated but did not run their businesses quickly forget some of what they have learned. It's important to set up a follow-up program to reinforce the skills they were taught. The organization should also extend its internship program to help them get some experience and workplace behavior.
- Although the training program and materials took into account the educational background of PWD initially targeted by the project, this was another reality during the training delivery. Some beneficiaries expressed their concerns regarding the training language. The mismatch between the level of the training curricula and the education background of the beneficiaries was an issue. The curricula were developed in French and not all beneficiaries spoke French. In order to help overcome this challenge, it's suggested that the organization develop the training materials in Congolese native languages including lingala, Shawili, Kikongo and Tshiluba.
- A large majority of members who work for the project are volunteers. It is necessary to mobilize financial resources to enable these members to receive their salaries regularly. This will increase their commitment to the project and allow young people with disabilities who need support during the training sessions not to have problems in the future.