



Uganda National Association of the Deaf - UNAD

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THE INTERNATIONAL WEEK OF DEAF PEOPLE (IWDP) 2025

22nd - 26th September 2025 at Mbarara City - Uganda

Theme: "No Human Rights Without Sign Language Rights."

A Report



GOLDEN *Jubilee*
SINCE 1973

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Photo: Participants begin the deaf week march past from Mbarara City Hall, led by the Police Band.



1.0. INTRODUCTION:

The Uganda National Association of the Deaf (UNAD) successfully celebrated the International Week of Deaf People (IWDP) 2025, held from September 22nd to 26th, 2025, in Mbarara City, Uganda. The event was themed **“No Human Rights Without Sign Language Rights,”** emphasizing the critical role of sign language in ensuring equal access to information, education, and opportunities for deaf individuals.

UNAD, a Not-for-Profit organization established in 1973, led the celebration of the International Week of Deaf People (IWDP) 2025 in Mbarara City, Uganda. With a presence in over 94 districts, UNAD has been advocating for the rights and welfare of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, promoting Ugandan Sign Language, and

providing support services to empower deaf individuals. Uganda has an estimated 1,979,613 persons aged 2 and above with difficulty in hearing, equivalent to a prevalence rate of 4.7 percent (UBOS, 2025).

This report provides a detailed account of the proceedings, highlighting key activities, achievements, challenges, and recommendations from the event. The IWDP 2025 brought together deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, government officials, development partners, and stakeholders to advocate for Ugandan sign language rights and promote inclusion in Uganda.

2.0. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES:

The IWDP is a global celebration held annually during the last week of September each year, established by the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) and the United Nations. The event aims to raise awareness about the rights and needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, promote sign language, and advocate for inclusivity. The 2025 theme, “No Human Rights Without Sign Language Rights,” underscores the critical role of sign language in ensuring equal access to information, education, and opportunities for deaf individuals.

The IWDP celebrations align with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and Uganda’s Development Agenda, including the National Development Plan and Vision 2040. The event brought together deaf communities, organizations, and stakeholders to share experiences and advocate for sign language rights, focusing on key sectors like education, health, and employment.

Mbarara City was chosen as the host city due to its strategic location and potential for impact, with a significant number of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals facing challenges in accessing essential services.

The specific objectives of the IWDP celebrations were:

- i. To increase the participation and inclusion of deaf and hard-of-hearing people in development programs by 30% through targeted advocacy and awareness-raising activities.
- ii. To advocate for a 20% increase in access to and utilization of services that promote dignity and human rights of deaf persons in communities.
- iii. To educate 500 community members and duty bearers about deafness and sign language, promoting inclusive programming and service delivery.
- iv. To provide information on service locations and opportunities to 1,000 deaf individuals, enhancing their access to essential services.
- v. To facilitate direct interaction between 2000 audience members and experts on deafness through media channels, promoting awareness and understanding.
- vi. To intensify calls for legislation to standardize, safeguard, and ensure quality assurance for Ugandan Sign Language, promoting its recognition and use in all spheres of life.

3.0. IWDP 2025 ACTIVITIES:

The IWDP 2025 celebrations featured daily themes and activities highlighting critical aspects of sign language rights and deaf inclusion:

a. Monday, 22 September 2025: Deaf Communities Leading

- Deaf-led alliances and partnerships with governments and organizations are crucial in advancing sign language rights. A one-week Ugandan Sign Language training and sensitization session was conducted for 38 participants, including service providers, deaf and hearing individuals aiming to promote Ugandan Sign Language and enhance communication skills. The sensitization trainings were held at health centers, schools or the deaf and market places. The outcomes from this sensitization included:

- ◆ 38 participants gained basic Ugandan Sign Language skills and deaf culture
- ◆ 20 deaf individuals expressed interest in starting deaf-led community projects
- ◆ Partnerships formed with 3 local organizations for future sign language initiatives

On Monday, a graduation ceremony was held for 33 Deaf individuals who completed vocational skills training in carpentry, knitting, tailoring, and business skills. The ceremony was presided over by the Director of the Uganda Vocational Training Assessment Board (UVTAB).

The event was attended by about 250 people, including community members, parents, and stakeholders. The graduation marked a significant milestone for the trainees, equipping them with practical skills to enhance their economic opportunities and contribute to their communities.



Photo: Some of the UNAD Vocational graduands at the ceremony.

The Director of UVTAB highlighted the importance of vocational training in empowering individuals and promoting economic development. The graduates were encouraged to utilize their skills to improve their livelihoods and support their families.

The ceremony celebrated the achievements of the graduates, recognizing their hard work and dedication to acquiring valuable skills. It also provided an opportunity for stakeholders to witness the impact of vocational training on the community.

The event showcased the commitment of UNAD, UVTAB and partners to promoting vocational skills development and empowering individuals in Uganda.

b. Tuesday, 23 September 2025 (International Day of Sign Languages): No Human Rights Without Sign Language Rights -

Sign language rights are fundamental to deaf people's human rights. A media press conference was held at National Media Center, where Government, UNAD representatives and development partners discussed the importance of sign language and inclusive development. The Minister of State for Disability Affairs, Hon. Asamo Hellen Grace, delivered a statement highlighting the government's commitment to promoting deaf individuals' rights. In a press statement released on September 22nd, 2025, UNAD called

on the government to prioritize the enactment of a National Sign Language (UgSL) Law to promote, protect, and respect the rights of deaf and hard-of-hearing persons in Uganda. The statement highlighted the urgent need for a comprehensive UgSL Law that recognizes Ugandan Sign Language as an official language and as a vital means of communication for the deaf community. The outcomes from this activity included:

- ◆ 8 media houses covered deaf people's issues and Sign Language rights in their news broadcasts reaching an estimated 50,000 viewers/listeners.
- ◆ Government officials committed to include sign language interpreters in public service and future public events.
- ◆ Over 2000 people reached through social media campaigns on deafness and sign language rights



c. **Wednesday, 24 September 2025: Multilingual Education for Deaf Learners** - Inclusive, multilingual education environments are essential for deaf learners. Community education and sensitization activities targeted 500 learners in schools across the country, community members and duty bearers, promoting awareness about deafness and sign language in education. Two radio and Television talk shows on TV West and Mbarara radio West discussed the challenges experienced by deaf people in education importance of sign language and challenges faced by deaf individuals.

The Outcomes were:

- ◆ 500 participants attended sensitization events and reported increased awareness on deaf education
- ◆ 3 schools expressed interest in adopting inclusive education practices for deaf learners
- ◆ Radio and TV talk shows reached an estimated 50,000 viewers/listeners



Photos: Honourable Minister of State for Disability presents IWDP statement at National Media Center



Photo: UNAD Executive Director signs presenting a Statement at National Media Center



Photo: Chief guest inspecting exhibition stalls at the IWDP.



Photo: Blood donation and health check during Deaf week climax.

d. Thursday, 25 September 2025: Deaf Rights in Crises

- Deaf communities must have access to information in sign language during emergencies like disasters, conflicts, or health crises. A public lecture on “**Unlocking Opportunities for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing People in Uganda: The Role of Sign Language Rights**” brought together stakeholders to discuss the critical role of sign language rights in promoting inclusion and empowerment of deaf people, especially in crisis situations. The lecture featured expert speakers from UNAD, government agencies, and development partners, and included panel discussions and interactive sessions. Key points from the lecture included:

- ◆ Deaf people in Uganda face heightened risks in crises due to lack of accessible information in sign language.
- ◆ Challenges faced by deaf individuals in accessing government programs and services, including lack of access to information and sign language interpretation, are exacerbated during disasters or emergencies.
- ◆ Strategies for improving access to education, healthcare, and employment for deaf individuals, including sign language interpretation, accessible infrastructure, and awareness-raising, are critical in crisis response.



Photo: Winners of the 2025 Deaf Week cup being presented their trophy and awards by the Chief Guest.

A football match between Bright Stars Deaf FC, winners of the National Deaf Challenge Cup 2025, and Mbarara University Football Team (comprising hearing students) was held at Mbarara University Sports Grounds. Bright Stars Deaf FC won the match, showcasing the skills and talents of deaf footballers and promoting sports inclusion between deaf and hearing communities.

Later in the evening, the movie premiere of “SPEAK” was held. Produced by KPM Entertainment Studio, the film amplifies Deaf voices in Ugandan cinema and tells the story inspired by the resilience of the Deaf community. The film features Deaf actors cast through an inclusive process with Sikia Café Jinja and has achieved six nominations at the Uganda Film Festival and selection at the Kaduna International Film Festival in Nigeria.



Photo: Attendees during the public lecture

A FILM BY SSEBATA PAUL

SELIN AUDO MICHAEL WAIWUYO Sr. ACHAN KEYSHIA ANKUNDA DORECK

MUSENZE MOSEB

DEAF AWARENESS WEEK

DAW

SCREENING

MBARARA CITY

26TH SEP 2025

SPEAK

TIME: 6 PM | VENUE: TO BE COMMUNICATED SOON

TICKETS: 5,000/= EARLY BIRD | 10,000/= AT THE GATE



UGANDA COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

- a. **Friday, 26 September 2025: Recognition of National Sign Language** - Legal recognition of national sign languages is essential to uphold deaf people's rights. This was the climax of the celebrations in Uganda. Various speeches were given and explained in the following sections:

4.0. HIGHLIGHTS FROM UNAD CHAIRPERSON'S SPEECH

The Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Uganda National Association of the Deaf (UNAD), delivered a speech at the climax of the International Week of Deaf People 2025 at Mbarara City Independence Park on 26th September 2025. In the speech, the Chairperson highlighted key issues affecting deaf individuals in Uganda and called for action to promote sign language rights and inclusion.

He mentioned that UNAD is a national umbrella organization that brings together deaf individuals and advocates for their rights, promoting Uganda Sign Language (UgSL) as a key part of deaf culture and identity. The International Week of Deaf People 2025 theme, "No Human Rights Without Sign Language Rights", underscores the critical role of sign language in ensuring deaf individuals' access to education, healthcare, and social opportunities. Deaf individuals in Uganda face significant challenges in these areas due to communication barriers and lack of recognition of UgSL. UNAD acknowledges progress made in deaf empowerment, including government grants supporting deaf individuals and efforts to include UgSL in education. However, there's a pressing

need for a comprehensive Ugandan Sign Language Law to standardize, promote, and regulate UgSL.

The Chairperson expressed appreciation for the government's efforts to promote disability inclusion, including providing special grants for deaf people and working to include UgSL in the education curriculum. UNAD also appreciates organizations and stakeholders promoting deaf inclusion, providing sign language training, and improving accessibility. The Chairperson thanked sponsors and funders of the International Week of Deaf People celebrations for their support. Progress made includes initiatives like inclusion of UgSL in education and government grants empowering deaf individuals, as well as placement of sign language interpreters in some settings to improve access to services.

He however shared that Deaf individuals in Uganda continue to face significant challenges, including limited access to quality education and healthcare due to communication barriers. Social exclusion is common, with deaf individuals often facing hurdles in accessing social and economic

opportunities. Additionally, the integrity of UgSL is at risk due to lack of standardization and protection, threatening the cultural identity and linguistic rights of the deaf community.

He called upon the Government of Uganda to enact a comprehensive Ugandan Sign Language Law establishing a Uganda Sign Language Board, promoting UgSL

in education and services. He asked stakeholders to support sign language training for service providers, promote deaf inclusion, and advocate for equal access to opportunities for deaf individuals. He reiterated that UNAD will continue advocating for sign language rights, promoting UgSL, and addressing barriers in education, healthcare, and social inclusion for deaf individuals.



Photo: UNAD's Board of Directors at the IWDP 2025.

5.0. MESSAGE BY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

UNFPA Uganda delivered a message on behalf of development partners at the event, expressing honor at being part of the International Week of Deaf People 2025 celebrations in Mbarara City, Uganda. They commended UNAD for organizing the event under the theme “No Human Rights Without Sign Language Rights”.

UNFPA acknowledged the progress Uganda has made in promoting deaf empowerment, including government initiatives to support deaf individuals and promote Uganda Sign Language (UgSL) in education and health. However, they highlighted significant challenges deaf individuals face in accessing education, healthcare, and social opportunities, particularly sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The development partners expressed concern about protecting UgSL to preserve deaf individuals’ cultural identity and linguistic rights. They reaffirmed commitment to supporting the government of Uganda and UNAD in promoting sign language rights and deaf inclusion.

UNFPA called on stakeholders to promote sign language training for service providers and ensure equal access to opportunities for deaf individuals, aiming to create a more inclusive society where deaf individuals can fully participate and realize their human rights.



Photo: Ms. Shakira Nabakooza of UNFPA giving a message.

6.0. STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE MINISTER OF STATE FOR DISABILITY AFFAIRS – GUEST OF HONOUR

The Minister of State for Disability Affairs, Hon. Asamo Hellen Grace, emphasized the government’s commitment to promoting sign language rights and inclusion of deaf individuals in Uganda. Key highlights from her statement include:

- ◆ **Sign language rights are human rights:** The theme “No Human Rights without Sign Language Rights” highlights the critical role of sign language in ensuring equal access to information, education, and opportunities for deaf individuals.
- ◆ **Government achievements:** The minister mentioned that the recognition of Uganda Sign Language as an official language is key to realizing Uganda’s Vision 2040 and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The National Special Grant for Persons with Disabilities and the Parish Development Model (PDM) allocated 10% for persons with disabilities, including deaf persons. The Ministry further Initiated a Regulatory Impact Assessment to develop standards for safeguarding Ugandan Sign Language.
- ◆ **Challenges:** Limited access to information and sign language interpretation for deaf individuals in government programs and services. The minister highlighted the need for increased support for sign language interpreters in public service and inclusive education. She further mentioned that Uganda has over 1,979,613 persons aged 2 and above with difficulty in hearing (4.7% prevalence rate), showing an increase from 2014 statistics.
- ◆ **Call to action:** The minister called on stakeholders to support sign language interpreters, promote inclusive education, and increase access to government programs for deaf persons.
- ◆ **Government commitment:** The government is committed to addressing concerns and needs of deaf individuals, ensuring inclusion in socio-economic development processes.



Photo: Hon. Minister Hellen Grace Asamo (Center) arriving at the venue accompanied by the Chairperson parliamentary Forum on Disability (right) and Executive Director UNAD (left)

Based on the Ministers statement, UNAD should (recommendations):

- i. **Continue advocacy for sign language rights:** Push for recognition of Ugandan Sign Language as an official language in Uganda.
- ii. **Support standardization of Ugandan Sign Language:** Collaborate with the government on the Regulatory Impact Assessment and development of standards for safeguarding Ugandan Sign Language.
- iii. **Promote deaf education and access to services:** Work with government agencies to implement inclusive education strategies and increase access to health, education, and employment services for deaf individuals.
- iv. **Empower deaf communities:** Continue showcasing deaf talents and promoting community engagement and inclusion through various events.

7.0. SPEECH BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL - CHIEF GUEST:

The Attorney General, Hon. Kiryowa Kiwanuka, represented by the Solicitor General, hon Pius Perry Biribonwa delivered a keynote speech at the climax of the IWDP celebrations, emphasizing the importance of sign language in promoting inclusivity and accessibility for deaf individuals. He highlighted the government's commitment to promoting the rights of deaf individuals and ensuring equal access to services, affirming that "No Human Rights Without Sign Language Rights" is a fundamental legal and moral truth.

He mentioned that Sign language is the gateway to accessing education, healthcare, justice, and other essential services for deaf people. The government recognizes Ugandan Sign Language as crucial for deaf individuals' participation in society and is working to standardize it through a Regulatory Impact Assessment being undertaken by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

The Attorney General highlighted several government initiatives promoting inclusivity for deaf individuals. These include efforts to promote sign language in education, with over 70 primary school units and special schools using Ugandan Sign Language, and initiatives to increase access to university education for deaf

students through affirmative action. The Uganda Police has taken steps to include sign language interpreters in media briefings, marking progress in promoting accessibility.

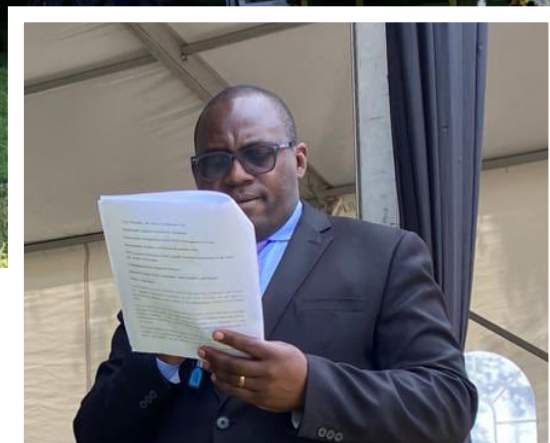
Despite progress, challenges persist. Deaf individuals face barriers in accessing justice, education, and healthcare due to limited sign language interpretation in government services, courts, and healthcare facilities. There is a need for more sign language interpreters and training for public officials to improve communication and accessibility.

The Attorney General reaffirmed the government's commitment to promoting sign language rights and inclusivity, aligning with Uganda's Vision 2040 and international obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). He urged stakeholders to join efforts in promoting sign language rights, inclusivity, and accessibility in all sectors, ensuring deaf individuals can fully participate in society.

Given the Attorney General's emphasis on legal frameworks, access to justice, and promoting sign language rights, UNAD should consider:



Photo: Government Solicitor General, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs giving his speech as Chief Guest.



- i. Continue advocacy for sign language recognition: Push for explicit recognition of Ugandan Sign Language as an official language.
- ii. Engage with judiciary and law enforcement: Work with the Attorney General’s office to promote awareness and training on sign language rights among judicial officers and law enforcement agencies, ensuring deaf individuals’ access to justice.
- iii. Support sign language in legal contexts: Advocate for increased use of sign language interpreters in courts and legal proceedings to ensure deaf individuals’ rights are protected.
- iv. Promote sign language in public services: Collaborate with government agencies to improve accessibility of public services (like healthcare, education) through sign language interpretation and deaf-friendly communication.
- v. Leverage international frameworks: Use the CRPD and other international instruments highlighted by the Attorney General to advocate for stronger sign language rights and protections for deaf individuals in Uganda.

8.0. SUMMARY OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FROM THE IWDP 2025:

The Deaf Week 2025 celebrations yielded significant outcomes that underscore the progress and commitment to deaf inclusion in Uganda:

i. Increased awareness and understanding of deaf issues

The week-long celebrations raised awareness about deaf people's issues and promoted a better understanding of the needs and rights of deaf individuals among stakeholders, policymakers, and the general public. Key outcomes include:

- ✓ Over 5000 stakeholders, including policymakers, service providers, and community leaders, participated in Deaf Week events, games, workshops, and campaigns.
- ✓ A 30 minutes prime-time TV segment on NTV Uganda featured Deaf advocates discussing challenges and solutions, reaching an estimated 200,000 viewers.
- ✓ Social media engagement and website updates (<https://unadeaf.or.ug/IWDP2025/>) saw a 200% increase in interactions compared to 2024, with influential voices amplifying deaf-related content.

- ✓ The Ministry of Health commenced sensitization activities at selected regional health centers focusing on Deaf awareness and inclusion.

ii. Improved access to services and opportunities for deaf individuals

Deaf individuals in Uganda experienced improved access to essential services and opportunities, including education, healthcare, and employment, thanks to partnerships and initiatives launched during Deaf Week. Notable achievements include:

- ✓ **Education:** UNAD partnered with the Ministry of Education, National Curriculum Development Center, and Kyambogo University on a pilot project translating selected textbooks into Ugandan Sign Language (UgSL) for primary schools and developing UgSL vocabularies. This initiative will impact hundreds of deaf learners, enhancing their access to inclusive education. Additionally, the Board and management of Mbale Secondary School of the Deaf were restructured to address concerns raised by the deaf community, ensuring a more conducive learning environment for deaf students.

✓ **Healthcare:** UNAD partnered with the Ministry of Health to conduct deaf awareness and sign language sensitization training at selected regional health centers, enhancing accessibility for deaf patients. The health centers are also planning to recruit full-time Ugandan Sign Language Interpreters to improve communication. Additionally, UNAD collaborated with the Uganda AIDS Commission and CEBTRAN Uganda to disseminate a translated version of the National HIV/AIDS Policy, aiming to reduce HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination. Plans are underway to develop accessible HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria content, ensuring inclusive healthcare services for deaf people.

✓ **Employment:** UNAD's Deaf Week exhibition and job fair successfully connected deaf jobseekers with potential employers and service providers, bridging the gap between talent and opportunity. As a result, 6 deaf individuals secured confirmed placements, marking a significant step towards economic empowerment. Moreover, numerous other jobseekers expressed interest in future openings, establishing valuable connections with organizations committed to diversity and inclusion.

This initiative underscored the potential of deaf individuals in the workforce, paving the way for more inclusive hiring practices.

✓ More service providers are increasingly hiring sign language interpreters during events of national importance, consulting with UNAD on the sign language interpretation services.

iii. Strengthened partnerships for deaf inclusion

Deaf Week 2025 fostered stronger partnerships between UNAD, government agencies, development partners, and other stakeholders, paving the way for more inclusive and accessible programs and services. Key partnerships include:

✓ UNAD signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with four organizations interested in advancing Ugandan Sign Language and making their products and services inclusive.

✓ UNAD has been approached to submit fundable project proposals aimed at digitalizing Ugandan Sign Language and facilitating economic empowerment for deaf people.

iv. Enhanced capacity of deaf individuals to advocate for their rights

Deaf Week 2025 empowered deaf individuals to become more effective advocates for their rights, with training, networking opportunities, and platforms to share their experiences and ideas. Highlights include:

- ✓ 350 deaf leaders from all regions of Uganda attended a public lecture and “Leadership Bootcamp” focused on policy engagement and digital advocacy.

- ✓ Deaf youth participated in a hackathon, pitching tech and health solutions for accessibility (2 projects were shortlisted for seed funding).
- ✓ The #IWDP25 Uganda campaign amplified stories of deaf Ugandans on social media, with the hashtag used 1,700+ times.
- ✓ UNAD plans to launch a new strategic plan highlighting lessons from the Deaf Week and inform strategies for the next five years.



Photo: URA officials exhibit and deliver tax administration sensitization during the IWDP

Emerging Opportunities & Next Steps

The momentum generated by Deaf Week 2025 is expected to lead to further breakthroughs in promoting deaf inclusion and accessibility in Uganda. Some emerging opportunities and next steps include:

- ✓ The government is considering adopting UgSL as an official language in digital spaces – a breakthrough sparked by Deaf Week lobbying.
- ✓ The Regulatory Impact Assessment for Ugandan Sign Language regulation is nearing completion, with a technical working group formed to finalize the report. This milestone will inform UNAD’s next advocacy efforts, pushing for policy changes that promote UgSL recognition and accessibility.
- ✓ Leveraging technological advancements, UNAD is partnering with tech service providers to co-create initiatives and solutions enhancing access for deaf people, bridging gaps in communication, education, and economic opportunities.
- ✓ UNAD plans to launch a Deaf Entrepreneurship Program in 2026 Q4, targeting 100 deaf youth, with a focus on empowering women and promoting economic independence.
- ✓ Advocacy and lobbying is underway to expand UNAD’s vocational training and resource center, alongside establishing a sign language hub promoting UgSL research, training, and cultural exchange.
- ✓ The Ministry of Health is promoting Deaf awareness and inclusion in regional health centers, ensuring more accessible healthcare services for deaf individuals.

9.0. ONGOING ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED DURING DEAF WEEK:

While Deaf Week 2025 celebrated progress in deaf inclusion, it also underscored persistent challenges facing the deaf community in Uganda. These include:

- ◆ High dropout rates among Deaf learners, with only 10% of deaf children completing primary education – an issue Deaf Week sought to address through advocacy for inclusive education and UgSL promotion.
- ◆ Inadequate sign language services in the justice system, limiting access to justice for deaf individuals – a gap highlighted during discussions on deaf rights and accessibility.
- ◆ Unemployment and limited job opportunities for deaf individuals, with an estimated 80% of deaf individuals unemployed – Deaf Week’s exhibition, public lecture and entrepreneurship initiatives aimed to tackle this.
- ◆ Limited access to sign language interpretation services in public and private institutions and events, hindering equal access – an issue amplified through Deaf Week awareness campaigns.
- ◆ Lack of quality assurance for sign language interpretation, particularly on broadcast media, leading to inconsistent and sometimes inaccurate information – a concern raised by deaf viewers and advocates.
- ◆ Funding constraints were a significant challenge during Deaf Week, as unexpected heavy attendance strained available resources and logistics, highlighting the need for more sustainable funding models for deaf-led initiatives.

Deaf Week 2025 sought to raise awareness of these issues and mobilize stakeholders to drive solutions.

10.0. CONCLUSION

The International Week of Deaf People (IWDP) 2025 celebrations in Uganda marked a significant milestone in promoting deaf inclusion and highlighting the importance of Ugandan Sign Language (USL) in ensuring equal access to information, education, and opportunities for deaf individuals. The event, themed “No Human Rights Without Sign Language Rights,” brought together stakeholders, policymakers, and the deaf community to advocate for sign language rights and promote inclusivity. Through various activities, including workshops, media engagements, and cultural events, IWDP 2025 successfully raised awareness about deaf issues, showcased deaf talent, and amplified calls for greater accessibility

and inclusion in all spheres of Ugandan society.

To build on this momentum, UNAD plans to establish a follow-up committee tasked with monitoring progress, supporting stakeholders, and ensuring the sustainability of IWDP outcomes. This committee will work closely with government agencies, development partners, and deaf organizations to advance sign language rights and promote inclusive policies. The outcomes of IWDP 2025, including strengthened partnerships and increased awareness, are expected to drive continued advocacy for deaf inclusion in Uganda, contributing to a more accessible and equitable society for deaf individuals.



11.0. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the generous sponsors and partners who made Deaf Week 2025 a resounding success. Your unwavering support and commitment to deaf inclusion have enabled us to host an impactful event that promotes the rights and empowerment of deaf individuals in Uganda.

We sincerely thank:

- ◆ The Attorney General, Hon. Kiryowa Kiwanuka, and the Solicitor General, Hon. Pius Perry Biribonwa for gracing the occasion and underscoring the government's commitment to deaf rights.
- ◆ The Minister of State for Disability, Hon. Asamo Hellen Grace, for her unwavering support and advocacy for deaf inclusion.
- ◆ The Chairperson of the Parliamentary Forum on Disability, Hon. Alex Ndeezi for deaf week support and championing deaf issues in Parliament.
- ◆ Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, particularly the Department of Disability and Elderly, for policy guidance and resources and the GROW project.
- ◆ Mbarara City Authorities including the Local Government and City Association of the Deaf for hosting us.
- ◆ Bank of Uganda and Uganda Revenue Authority for their financial support.
- ◆ UNFPA Uganda, CBM Uganda and the Norwegian Association of the Disabled for financial and technical support.
- ◆ GFA and GIZ for expert visibility.
- ◆ Sherina's New Hope for Children with Disability Ministry and Smiley Signs and Talk for their financial contributions.
- ◆ KPM Entertainment for producing and screening the impactful film "SPEAK".
- ◆ NUDIPIU, NAPADEC, SDU, Deaf Sign Alliance, UDFA and Ntungamo District Association for their solidarity, financial support and mobilizing participants including people with disability and parents of deaf children.
- ◆ CEBTRAN Uganda for mobilizing deaf volunteers supporting the various deaf week activities

Your contributions have made a tangible difference in the lives of deaf Ugandans. We look forward to continued collaboration, driving towards a more inclusive society where deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals can fully participate and realize their human rights. Together, we can make this vision a reality.

For more on Deaf Week 2025, visit: <https://unadeaf.or.ug/IWDP2025/>





Uganda National Association of the Deaf



THANK YOU!

For joining us at the

IWDP

International Week of Deaf People

2025

NO HUMAN RIGHTS WITHOUT SIGNING LANGUAGE RIGHTS

OUR PARTNERS

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development | Mbarara City | Mbarara City Association of the Deaf | SHERINAH's New HOPE for Children with Disability Ministry | The United Nations Population Fund |
| Christian Blind Mission | National Association of Parents of Deaf Children | KPM Entertainment Foundation | Bank of Uganda | Smiley, Signs & Talks |
| CENTRE FOR SIGN LANGUAGE-BIBLE TRANSLATION NETWORK | Support Disabled Uganda | The Norwegian Association of Disabled | National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda | Uganda Revenue Authority |
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