



Evaluation summary

From participation to leadership: OPDs driving change in Kenya

EVALUATION SUMMARY OF THE OPD LEAD PROJECT –
PHASE 1 (APRIL 2023 – AUGUST 2024)



Above: Robust financial systems are helping OPDs build lasting impact and independence.

For many years, Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs) in Kenya had limited influence over decisions that affected their lives. To change this, CBM Global launched the OPD Leadership, Engagement and Development (LEAD) project in April 2023.

The project works with 11 OPDs across eight counties to strengthen their governance, leadership, and financial systems. It supports OPDs to implement their own projects and amplifies their voices in both county and national decision-making processes.

Ultimately, the OPD LEAD project aims to ensure OPDs are not just participants - but leaders of inclusive change within their communities.

Front: A member of a women's OPD sewing clothes as part of a business launched with support from the OPD LEAD project—advancing skills, income, and inclusion.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Project period: April 2023 – August 2024 (Phase 1)

Location: Kwale, Kilifi, Meru, Tharaka Nithi, Samburu, Baringo, Kisumu, Kakamega

Partners: 11 OPDs

Funder: CBM Australia

Implementer: Kenya Country Team and OPDs

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

OPDs grew stronger

Most OPDs improved their governance and management systems. Groups introduced clearer leadership structures, financial accountability, and proper record keeping. For example, Madongoni Disabled Group established an events business and set up a Paybill system, boosting income and transparency.

OPDs demonstrated stronger advocacy success

OPDs influenced county budgets and policies:

- Kakamega County doubled its health budget and allocated funds for assistive devices, inclusive sports, and economic empowerment of people with disabilities.
- Ilchamus Disability Network ensured bursaries include children with disabilities.

OPDs built economic independence

Several OPDs launched successful businesses. Re-Ci Malindi formed a Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisation (SACCO) that united 23 OPDs and raised KES 246,000 (AUD 2,890) in capital. Dreamers Disabled Group expanded its poultry business with support from the World Food Programme.



Empowered through the OPD LEAD project, this peanut spread business reflects inclusive economic opportunity and the growing capacity of OPDs.

Before and after at a glance

10 of 11 OPDs grew their membership

9 OPDs now have offices and equipment

7 OPDs secured external funding

225 people received assistive devices

Assistive devices and services

225 people (114 men, 111 women) received assistive devices such as wheelchairs, and crutches. Two children underwent corrective surgeries—one of who was able to attend school for the first time.

Counties now invite OPDs to advise on accessibility, and sign language interpretation is provided at all public events.



One of 225 individuals whose lives were transformed through access to assistive devices, unlocking dignity, mobility, and opportunity.



An OPD member stands proudly outside her auto shop—one of many small businesses sparked by the project's support.

VOICES FROM OPD MEMBERS



“Reporting and having a procurement committee has helped us get funding from other organisations, because we are more organised.”

– Treasurer, Ilchamus Disability Network

“We are now consulted to advise on accessibility of venues for public events. We see sign language interpretation at all county events.”

– OPD Member, Kakamega

“The templates were simple and helped us manage our projects. We now feel ownership over our activities.”

– OPD Member

CHALLENGES

- Uneven progress across OPDs: some organisations struggled with leadership wrangles and governance gaps.
- Sustainability is still uncertain: many OPDs rely heavily on external funding.
- Budgets underestimated: costs related to inclusion, such as reasonable accommodation and assistive devices, were often underestimated.
- Limited knowledge on psychosocial disabilities: this restricted opportunities for full inclusion.
- Inconsistent follow-up on trainings: areas such as mental health, safeguarding lacked consistency in follow up support, leaving gaps in practice.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Autonomy with support works best – OPDs thrive when they lead, with tailored technical support.
- Simplified tools increase ownership – templates and clear processes helped OPDs succeed.
- Partnerships matter – links with county governments and service providers increased recognition and opened funding opportunities.
- Inclusion must be broad – beyond physical disability to include psychosocial and intellectual disabilities.
- Sustainability needs planning early – groups need diverse income and stronger long-term strategies.

WHAT NEXT?

Phase 2 will build on the achievements of Phase 1, with deeper, more intensive support.

- In-depth support: Three OPDs from phase 1 will be supported through close mentoring and resources to strengthen their governance, sustainability, and advocacy.
- Other OPDs: The remaining OPDs from phase 1 will be linked to regional hubs, partners, and funding opportunities. They will continue to receive technical support and follow-up.
- Overall approach: The focus will be on sustainability-scaling successful models and strengthening inclusion-while keeping the wider OPD network engaged.

The OPD LEAD project has transformed OPDs in Kenya from participants to into confident leaders, advocates, and service providers. The next phase will consolidate these gains and help drive lasting change for disability inclusion.



The OPD LEAD project is helping OPDs and people with disabilities access tools like assistive devices to lead change and build inclusive communities.



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