

APT works to reduce poverty in Africa and Asia by increasing opportunities for employment and income generation, through the development of micro/small enterprises. This includes livelihoods generated from agricultural activity.

We aim to bridge the gap between the most vulnerable producers — and a wider range of customers. We support the development of linkages between producers and with others, and provide specific expertise on accessing mainstream markets.

Targeted beneficiaries include those:

- with disabilities
- affected by HIV/AIDS
- rebuilding lives following conflict or other disasters
- facing harsh conditions in their environment (such as pastoral or slum areas).

An important feature of our work is the strength of our partnerships with local organisations. Building capacity to sustain the work, whether as NGOs or within the private sector, is incorporated as a key element of our work.

Countries include: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Sri Lanka

How can the most vulnerable access markets?

There has been considerable debate about how poor people can most effectively participate in markets. If markets exclude poor and vulnerable men and women then such people are also excluded from participating in economic activity (whether as farmers, small business owners, employees or consumers). They are then excluded from the benefits of supplementary (or a basic) income, further increasing division and inequality, and continue to face decreasing spirals of poverty.

APT aims to promote the participation of poor and vulnerable people, who may be marginalised in different ways, in productive economic activity. In this issue we have highlighted programmes which address the needs of people who face considerable discrimination and stigma, and related to this, often internalised oppression, low self esteem, physical and social isolation and extreme asset poverty: the examples in this bulletin are People with Disabilities (PWD) and those affected by HIV/AIDS. We also work with people facing other forms of isolation, such as those living in slum or pastoralist areas.

People with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to severe levels of poverty in developing countries. They face huge stigma, including from their own families and communities, and remain dependant and with little means for their survival.

A 3 year project of the National Union of Disabled People of Uganda (NUDIPU) and APT Enterprise Development, set out to tackle the link between disability and poverty in Northern Uganda - an extraordinarily poor region of a poor nation. Its purpose was to improve access to appropriate training and support services that can enable PWD to enter mainstream employment, or to start and grow their own small businesses. Its approach focussed on accessing EBT (Enterprise Based Training) - apprenticeships - with the benefit that this involves greater visible inclusion in communities compared to Vocational Training Centres. The work begged the question: What can be done to economically empower disabled people so they have equally rich opportunities to acquire marketable skills and find employment as their non-disabled peers? More specifically, what do emerging *market development approaches* to improving business services and making markets work for the poor, have to offer in this particular economic empowerment process?

A large number of host trainers took on PWD as apprentices, and although only a small number had completed their training by the end of the project period, among these were some exceptionally powerful cases of individual success demonstrating that disabled people can, in the right circumstances, use enterprise-based training and support to find employment or establish their own businesses, with dramatic impact on their lives. Individual returns to investment in training for disabled people can potentially be very high, despite the different facets of discrimination which they face.



This work laid out the vicious circles behind the economic empowerment of people with disabilities in Uganda (given diagrammatically overleaf) and provided us with some initial learning points. These included some success factors in completing training and finding employment (in order of importance):

- Support from the wider community
- Attitude and Skills of Trainer
- Previous Links to Training Provider
- Workplace Accessibility
- Material Support from Family
- Motivation/Drive