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The rebirth and resiliency of the Emuhaya group of people with disabilities

Emuhaya disabilities group was initiated in 1993 with a membership of less than five, all of whom were people with a disability. The group remained unnoticed for many years while trying to mobilize people with disabilities to join hands and fight for their rights. Little was achieved during this time and members remained scattered and hopeless.

However, the year 2006 marked a new beginning for this group. This was the first time the group was introduced to Western Region Christian Community Services (WRCCS) activities. The staff in charge of Emuhaya district began to develop a rapport with the group and individual members. Soon a strong link was established between WRCCS and Emuhaya disabilities group. Immediately hope was restored among the group members, who began attending group meetings and activities regularly and participating in development activities as facilitated by WRCCS.

The group started restructuring and developing strategic plans, outlining their objectives as follows:

- To unite all the people of Emuhaya with disabilities in pursuit of their common goals—uniting abilities to overcome disabilities.
- To advocate for the rights of people with disabilities .
- To facilitate mobility and communication of PWDs in their day-to-day life through soliciting for funds and purchasing for their relevant equipment.
- To encourage and assist member groups to start projects in groups according to the skills they possess and to link up with relevant Kenyan government programs, ministries, and non-government organizations in search of new ideas, skills, and knowledge that will support the group in achieving its objectives .



Members of Emuhaya disabilities group participate in a road show campaign aimed at advocating for the rights of people with disabilities in Emuyaha

through the facilitation of WRCCS. The group took the lead in organizing and spearheading activities of last year's celebrations of the UN day of persons with disabilities. They organized a road show campaign within Luanda market, Kima, and Emuhaya, ending up with a public Baraza (meeting) at the district commissioner's (a Kenyan government administrator) ground at Emuhaya District headquarters. Through poems, songs, and speeches the group influenced the provincial administration and other high ranking government officers to participate in the event.

In his speech, the district commissioner's representative publicly announced that all disabled persons in Emuhaya should be allowed in government offices and other public and private utilities without conditions. "Should you be restricted then report immediately to my office."

Since then the group membership has grown to over 60 with 1,000 associated members. It has continued to establish linkages and sources for both material and financial resources to support the implementation of their activities and project. Last year the group successfully linked up with Handicap International

