

## Establishing Occupational Therapy Services in Uganda

### Disability

It is estimated that about 4% of the Ugandan population, approximately 800,000 people, are disabled. People living with disabilities are among the most excluded members of Ugandan society.

### Pre-Service Training and Occupational Therapy District Support

In the 1990s, a programme was established in Uganda focusing on developing a new profession - occupational therapy (OT). The Ministry of Health initially sought support for the training of OTs within the newly established Occupational Therapy Training School at Mulago Hospital, the National Teaching Hospital. Four health trainers were involved in developing the school.

After the graduation of the first Ugandan trained OTs in 1997, the Ministry of Health asked Skillshare International to assist them in developing the clinical and health management skills of newly qualified OTs and to help them set-up OT services throughout Uganda in consultation with stakeholders and disability organisations. As well as providing one-to-one support to OTs, 5 health trainers placed with the Ministry have also been involved in supporting the ability of the fledgling OT association (UAOT) to develop the profession and support its OT members on the ground through regional meetings looking at issues of service provision and clinical matters.



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### Project aims

1. Skillshare International will continue the support to the Occupational Therapy District Support programme in Uganda to further the development of the profession of Occupational Therapy and to 'embed' OT services as a regular part of the provision of the health service throughout the whole of Uganda. This will be done through the provision of both a Skillshare International health trainer and the recruitment of a Ugandan OT support officer to the Disability Desk of the Ministry of Health.
2. In addition, learning from the programme will be used to support the development of the Tanzanian Occupational Therapists Association (TOTA) including the setting up of OT district services in Tanzania. Through sharing best practice between the two countries, a well-embedded OT service will be established in the region.