

Without access to sexual and reproductive health, persons with disabilities are at higher risk of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS. Apart from the societal stereotypes, the barriers that persons with disabilities face to accessing sexual and reproductive health services include lack of accessibility of services and information. The need to make HIV and sexual and reproductive health-care facilities and information accessible for persons with disabilities and train HIV and sexual and reproductive health care workers to accommodate persons with disabilities is primordial.

There are the specific articles of UNCRP relating to the rights of persons with disabilities to access health services, including sexual and reproductive health, and rehabilitation services. For the implementation of the CRPD, two concepts are of crucial importance, these being “universal design” and the other “reasonable accommodation”. Since its creation in 2006, UPHLS was concerned with universal design and reasonable accommodation in HIV and other health services provisions to ensure that persons with disabilities are fully mainstreamed in the mentioned services. To this effect, UPHLS has put together a collection of examples of Good Practices on Disability and HIV in Rwanda. For further information please visit UPHLS website: www.uphls.org

Ensure that HIV and sexual and reproductive health services are Accessible to Persons with Disabilities

Access to HIV prevention, care, treatment and support and SRHR services is equally important and in some cases even more important for persons with disabilities compared to their peers without disabilities. The access is compromised by inaccessibility of services and facilities. Hence, the main preoccupation of UPHLS is to advocate for reasonable accommodation in HIV and sexual and reproductive health services provisions. It is in this framework that UPHLS in partnership with its partners set model health centers to accommodate persons with different categories of disabilities.



Accessible HIV Information

Access to HIV information is a serious barrier to persons with disabilities. Lack support for alternative modes of communication, such as sign language, Braille, and simplified easy-to-read and adapted tools. “Reasonable accommodation” includes disability specific material such as: developing or adapting HIV-information to be disability friendly like materials in Braille, large prints, image boxes, audio and visual materials with sign language interpretation, and providing simplified sex and HIV education material for persons with intellectual disabilities.

Training of Health Care Providers and other actors in HIV Response

In order to address attitudinal barriers and limited / lack of knowledge on disability and specific needs, health care providers and other actors in HIV& AIDS and SRHR, UPHLS conduct capacity building workshops, coaching and mentorships. These training are facilitated by persons with disabilities who experience the barriers like working with deaf people while training on basic sign language and blind persons in the session of mobility and orientation.



Sexual and reproductive health and HIV education

Persons with disabilities have often been left out of sexual education and HIV prevention programmes while they are at risk of attracting HIV and other sexual transmitted infections. UPHLS conduct trainings and disability friendly outreach sessions for persons with disabilities to have information on HIV and AIDS and SRHR.