

Theory of Change



AbleChildAfrica

Working with disabled children and young people in Africa

Our Vision: A world in which all disabled children are fully included as equal members of society and are able to achieve their full potential.

Our Mission: To promote the realisation of equal rights for disabled children and their families in Africa and to facilitate their meaningful inclusion in all aspects of life.





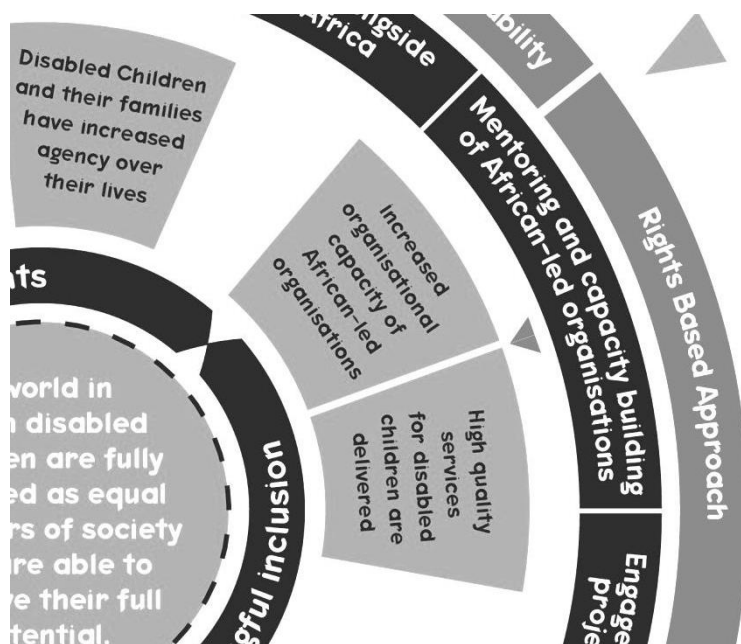
AbleChildAfrica's Theory of Change (ToC) articulates the change we want to see in the world, sets out the path we will take to effect that change, and clarifies our assumptions or evidence which underlies our chosen strategies.

Importantly, we hope it gives you a feel for what we believe and stand for, not just what we do.

The Change We Want to See in the World

Our strategy document clearly lays out our vision and mission, these are the big picture changes we want to see in the world.

We actively work to *achieve* our mission; this goal is the benchmark we use to measure our progress and impact. Conversely, our aim is to *contribute to* our vision; we believe this is the shared responsibility of all individuals and organisations. Within our ToC then, our **line of accountability**¹ falls between our mission and our vision.

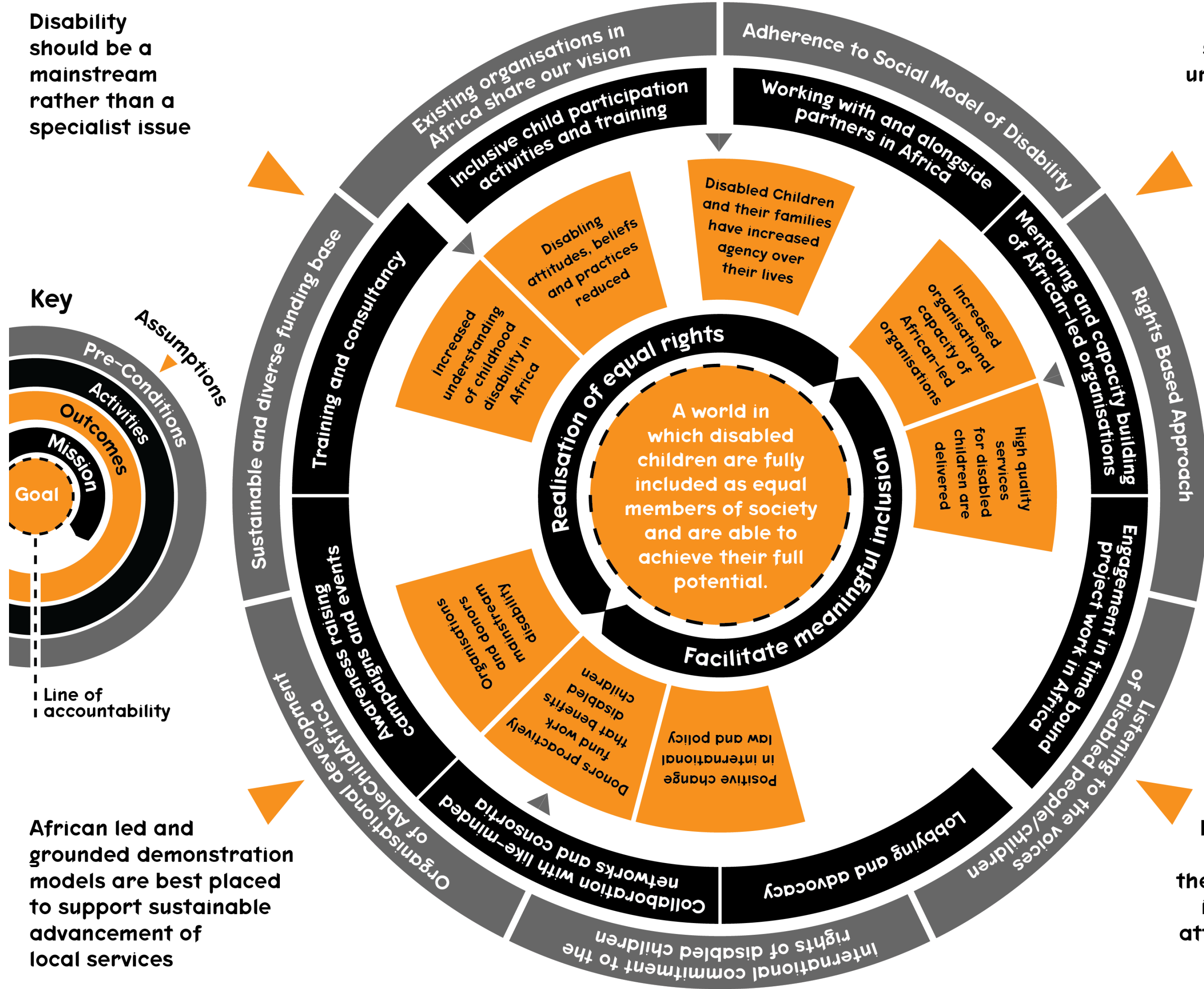


The Wheel of Change

The ‘wheel of change’ is as a visual representation of our belief that improving the lives of disabled children is a complex cyclical process whereby each and every activity we engage in contributes to every result we aim to achieve, albeit some more directly than others. We also believe that the necessary preconditions for success encompass all of our work. Finally, we believe there is a feedback loop within our strategy such that, the more progress we make towards our strategic objectives, the higher the likelihood that the preconditions for success will be met.

Disability should be a mainstream rather than a specialist issue

Quality and success depends on understanding that is grounded in the local context



African led and grounded demonstration models are best placed to support sustainable advancement of local services

Disabled Children in Africa are some of the most marginalised in the world, yet the attention they receive is relatively low

Evidence: What do we Know?

We know the need is great: 15% of the world's population is living with a disability; there are approximately 52 million disabled children in Africa; reliable statistics are sparse and the true number of children and families affected by childhood disability in Africa are likely to be much greater. **This is one reason why AbleChildAfrica focuses exclusively on disabled children in Africa.**

We know commitment by donors is proportionately very low; less than 1% of all international aid funding is directed to projects addressing disability. Many donors do not require applicants to consider or monitor the impact of their project on disabled people or children. **This is why AbleChildAfrica plans to lobby donors to both direct funds towards disability projects as well as require disability mainstreaming across all their grant streams.**

We know disability remains a specialist issue with development agencies and donors alike. It is not uncommon to hear major international organisations proclaim 'we do not address disability, it is too difficult and not a priority for us at the moment.' **This is why AbleChildAfrica seeks to influence large mainstream organisations to include disabled children in their existing work streams.** We believe this is relatively simple to do and has the potential to positively impact upon the lives of many more children than we can reach alone.

We know disabled children are often excluded from development initiatives, even amongst already marginalised groups- for example progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals is laudable in many countries but reports clearly indicate that disabled people, particularly children, are one of the groups who have not fully benefited from this progress and have been left furthest left behind. It is important that international aid and development efforts both address disability and also actively seek to ensure efforts do not inadvertently increase existing disparities. **This is another key reason why AbleChildAfrica focuses exclusively on improving the lives of disabled children in Africa.**



Assumptions: What do we Believe?

We believe in the social model of disability, which states that disability arises when an individual's impairment¹ is compounded by societal barriers that prohibit that individual from fully participating in society. Societal barriers such as inaccessible buildings, non-supportive legislation or discriminatory attitudes can combine in any combination with an individual's impairment to prevent them from participating equally in everyday activities alongside their families and peers. **This belief informs our selection of Partners and projects; we aim to have an impact upon all facets of disability within Africa by working with and through local organisations and to have an additional independent impact on breaking down institutional and attitudinal barriers at regional and international levels.**

¹ Understood as intrinsic to the individual such as intellectual or learning challenges and/or changes in bodily form/structure (loss of limb, difficulty with one or more sense such as hearing or vision, etc.). The official definition most widely used and provided by the World Health Organisation is "any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function".

We believe quality and success depends on being grounded in the local context. Attitudes and beliefs surrounding childhood disability, as well as local policies, programmes and resources differ across each country we work in. **This is one reason why we support Africa-led development, work alongside local organisations and do not have our own staff or offices in Africa.**

We believe the sustainability of our projects is improved when they build local capacity such that Governments, NGOs and individuals are better placed to take charge of their own initiatives and lives. **This is another reason why we support Africa-led development, work alongside local organisations and do not have our own staff or offices in Africa.**

We believe we can have an increased impact by leveraging the collective voices and resources of like-minded organisations. **This is why we collaborate with relevant organisations, network and consortia.**

We believe that disabled children have a right to be included in decisions which affect their lives. We believe that disabled children and their families can be powerful agents of change when given the opportunity. **This is why we are so committed to child participation that is inclusive of disabled children.**

We believe our approaches offer value for money to our donors. By training and influencing larger organisations with a wider reach to mainstream disability across their projects, we offer a cost-effective way of reaching large numbers of children and families with minimal effort and expense. In addition, working with and through local organisations both supports African-led development and simultaneously keeps our costs down by not having our own teams and offices across Africa.



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