

AT2030
Case Study

Vicki's Story: Rising up to life.

Prepared by
Humanity & Inclusion

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Impact Stories

About AT2030

AT2030 tests 'what works' to improve access to life-changing Assistive Technology (AT) for all; investing £20m over 5 years to support solutions to scale. Led by Global Disability Innovation Hub and funded by UK aid, AT2030 will reach 9 million directly and 6 million more indirectly, driving a lifetime of potential. AT2030 is operational in 31 countries globally.

About Humanity & Inclusion

Humanity & Inclusion (HI) is an independent charity working in situations of poverty and exclusion, conflict and disaster. We work tirelessly alongside people with disabilities and vulnerable people to help meet their basic needs, improve their living conditions and promote respect for their dignity and fundamental rights.

In Uganda, HI operates in 13 districts and 8 refugee settlements. HI in Uganda is implementing a range of projects including functional rehabilitation, mental health and psycho-social support, inclusive health, inclusive education and livelihoods targeting refugee populations and Uganda communities. HI works in the Omugo refugee settlement in Arua District to deliver orthosis to refugees with disability with the 3D Printing through Emergency Tele Rehabilitation Access (3D PETRA) project.

HI was awarded a European Innovation Council Horizon Prize of one million euros in September 2020 for our ground-breaking work using technology and telemedicine for physical rehabilitation.

Transforming Lives through Innovative AT

Life in a refugee settlement can be so difficult and challenging. You can imagine how it is like to trek so many kilometres fleeing a conflict from your home country. You can also now imagine the challenges Persons with Disabilities go through 365 days a year. This is twice the suffering experienced by other people, in terms of accessing services, information, the discrimination that comes from being different. With the advent of the global pandemic, the impact been even devastating. Amidst these challenges, Persons Living with Disabilities in refugee settlements have not been left behind. With the innovative technologies and rehabilitation services offered by Humanity & Inclusion, so many lives of Persons Living with Disabilities have been greatly transformed.

Vicky's Story

6-year-old Vicky, a resident of Rhino-camp refugee settlement is the second-born in an extended family of eleven. Together with her family members, she fled South Sudan in 2016, when she was only 2 years due to the war.

Vicky's mother narrates her ordeal, "I had a normal pregnancy, did not attend any prenatal visit up to the 9 months. However, labour pain was not normal it was prolonged for two days (more than 48 hours) which was very worrying, efforts to access any health facility was futile due to the conflicts and instabilities at that moment". She continued, "I gave birth from home and my baby did not cry or make any sound at birth. I could not breastfeed for two weeks."

Vicky was taken to the nearby clinic for medical check-up and no diagnosis was made. Other community members termed Vicky's condition as a *misfortune* and a *cursed child* which was heart-breaking and saddening. Vicky's parents continued monitoring her condition. Six months later they realized she could not support herself to sit, crawl and stand on her own with support from any surface due to weakness on her neck and trunk. She was not able to babble, talk and make sounds appropriate to children of her age. This was so distressing, the mother continued and explained, "I barely had time to do my daily house chores, visit friends, go for church services and community meetings because she is heavy to carry along and we cannot afford transport fares using motorbikes commonly known as Boda-boda to reach places."



Vicky, a 6-year-old South Sudanese refugee, living in Rhino Camp, a refugee settlement, in Ofua, Uganda.

The AT2030 HI impact on his life

Vick was identified by HI community-based volunteers in October 2020 and became a beneficiary for the 3D PETRA project financed by AT2030. She was assessed from HI Fixed Point by contracted Consultant and HI Field Staff through Tele-Rehabilitation/Tele-Medicine and her eligibility was determined. She qualified and was recommended for a special Cerebral palsy seat which would help support her trunk thus enabling her sit comfortably for a longer time. Measurements were done by the team and in January 2021, the seat was provided to help improve her condition and make it easy for her to sit for a longer time.

The HI Team consisting of physiotherapists and psychosocial workers conducted follow up session to continuously offer physiotherapy exercises, psychoeducation



Figure 1: Vicky undergoing physiotherapy sessions at the HI rehabilitation centre.

sessions to ensure special seat is appropriate to her size.

Vicky's Improvement

Vicky's mother and the community were excited and happy seeing her daughter sit happily in the special seat. She noticed a positive change and improvement in her life as narrated, "My daughter is able to sit for a longer time comfortably, control her head,

neck and trunk, plays and moves hands. The special seat has provided good posture for me during feeding; the soft padding has prevented pressure sores even when she wets/soils unlike before when she would be laid on the mat and develops sores often".

Vicky's mother further said that her quality of life has improved in that she can conformably do house chores with ease while other children come to play around and sing for her. The interaction with other children has improved on her tactile skills. Her ability to hear sounds especially her



Figure 2 Vicky undergoing physiotherapy sessions at the HI rehabilitation centre.

name called out and responds by turning her neck around. She mentioned that, “together with my family members we were psych educated about cerebral palsy and the possible ways on how to manage by HI Staff”. We have coped with the situation and very happy for the intervention Humanity and Inclusion has provided to my daughter. “If I sit down and look at the seat provided by HI to my daughter and how her condition has improved, I feel so happy because no organisation has come to help my child, I have always struggled alone, may God bless HI staff and the organization” as she concludes.