



## Gulu Deaf Association Members Become Sign Language Trainers

**W**ith support from USAID’s regional Omega Initiative, the Gulu Association of the Deaf in Uganda is training some of its members to teach sign language to deaf persons living in nearby communities. This pilot program is part of the broader initiative of the USAID mission in Uganda to integrate the concerns of people with disabilities into its ongoing activities. In Uganda, 1 in 25 people is disabled, and 15 percent of the disabled are deaf.

The Gulu Association for the Deaf, established in 1996, is a member of the Uganda National Association of the Deaf. Currently the Gulu Association has over 60 members from the deaf community in both rural and urban areas. Many members of the Gulu District association do not have adequate sign language to understand complex messages and the situation in the other areas is even worse. This project, which is funded by USAID’s Leahy War Victims Fund, aims to increase language skills of deaf person in communities that have impacted either directly or indirectly by the ongoing conflict in the northern Uganda region. It was the strong preference of association members



Kim Burns, USAID/Uganda

Members of the sign language class express their satisfaction through their own form of hand clapping.

to focus on training for deaf persons in this first phase of the program. In the future, a second project may be submitted to provide sign language for hearing individuals.

Initially, 50 members of the Gulu Association of the Deaf participated in a training-of-trainers program for sign language instructors. After the training, 23 trainers were selected to continue with the project as sign language trainers in 23 Gulu District sub-counties and other municipalities. They will teach two-month classes for approximately 20 deaf persons per class. It is expected that about 450 deaf persons in the Gulu District will benefit from this pilot training program.



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Sign language student, Adwar Rose, provides information about her living situation in Gulu. Rose has been selected as one of the 23 trainers to train other persons with deafness in Gulu.