Grantee Name(s): *Steven Chinembiri*
Project Title: Empower Able 2.0: Expanding Inclusive Climate & Health Action for Deaf Youth

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1. Project Delivery

Progress Against Self-Defined Success Metrics
Complete the table below to summarise progress against the success metrics you defined at the start of your project.

Metric / Target	Progress
Number of visually engaging training modules, including videos with sign language interpretation, infographics, and interactive exercises in PowerPoint format.	6 fully developed and designed PowerPoint slides which make up the Climate & Health Research Action Toolkit
Number of deaf youths trained and engaged in climate and health research.	8 deaf young people trained in Research over a 2 day workshop.
Establishment of the Deaf Youth Climate & Health Club	1 Deaf youth climate and health club established.

Adjustments to Original Plan
If you made any adjustments from your original proposal, briefly explain what you changed and why.
- The initial plan was to develop and refine 6 PowerPoint presentations (4 completed from prior grant) plus 2 additional slides from the PE Leadership slides. After consultation with the Dalberg Programmes team, there was an agreement that I would replace the proposed PE slides with less complex alternatives to ensure accessibility and engagement, while still drawing on key PE insights where relevant. This decision was prompted by (i) The complexity of PE Leadership content language not easily translatable to sign language (ii) the unavailability of PE leadership experts for voice over (iii) intellectual property restrictions on some of the content, among other issues.
- Instead of working with Nzeve Deaf Centre as planned, I ended up working with the National Association of the Deaf in Lesotho. This decision was prompted by the unavailability of Nzeve deaf centre and my personal deployment to the Kingdom of Lesotho on assignment. This, however, does not have any impact on the quality of the assignment.

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2. Successes Enablers & Challenges

Success Enablers
What were the key factors—internal or external—that helped you deliver your project effectively and on time?
- Partnership with the National Association of the deaf - Collaborating closely with the National Association of the Deaf provided essential credibility, networks, and contextual guidance. Their involvement helped ensure the project remained culturally appropriate and responsive to the real needs of deaf youth. They also supported participant mobilization, provided feedback on accessibility standards, and served as an advisory resource during toolkit development and

workshop planning. Their institutional support significantly enhanced the project's legitimacy and reach.

- 1-1 meeting with Dalberg and the other grant awardees - Regular check-ins and strategic one-on-one meetings with the Dalberg team created a strong accountability mechanism and provided technical clarity. These sessions allowed for real-time problem-solving, alignment on deliverables, and guidance on content priorities such as which additional modules to include in the toolkit. Dalberg's openness to adaptation and their constructive feedback helped maintain momentum and ensured that output was aligned with both quality expectations and the overall vision of the Momentum Grant.
- Zeal and willingness of deaf young people to learn - The commitment, energy, and enthusiasm of the deaf youth participants were a driving force behind the project's success. Their eagerness to engage, contribute feedback, and take ownership especially during the formation of the Deaf Youth Climate & Health Club was both inspiring and instrumental. This intrinsic motivation fueled active participation during the workshop, deepened peer learning, and ensured sustainability by empowering the youth to take on leadership roles within the club and in their communities. Their passion reinforced the project's relevance and underscored the importance of creating inclusive spaces where deaf youth can thrive.

Challenges
- Sign-Language Vocabulary Gaps which poses a risk of misinterpretation in training materials. Another external challenge was the limited availability of standardized sign language for technical research climate and health terms, which required extra time for interpretation and consensus building
- Sign language is not universal - Different regions and communities use distinct sign languages, which posed a challenge when creating training materials intended for broader use. This required careful coordination with local interpreters to ensure that signs used in the toolkit were appropriate, understandable, and culturally relevant for the specific deaf youth audience, while also considering how the materials might be adapted for other contexts in the future. The sign language interpreter used a blend of both international and local sign language.
- One major challenge was ensuring real-time coordination between interpreters, graphic designers, and mentors, particularly when finalizing materials with tight deadlines. Aligning everyone's availability and maintaining consistent communication required more time and flexibility than anticipated. Despite these constraints, adaptability, community support, and iterative planning allowed us to stay on course and deliver all intended outcomes.

3. Collaborations & Partnerships

Complete the table below to summarise collaborations you explored during the grant period. Focus on what worked well, what was challenging, and whether you plan to continue the collaboration.

Partner (Type)	Nature of Collaboration	What Worked Well	Challenges	Plans for Future

National Association of the Deaf	Supported with sign language interpretation for the slide decks and during the training. Also supported with designing the feedback tool.	Provided expertise in disability inclusive training and sign language interpretation.	Limitations in scope of agreement. Collaboration has the potential to go bigger and better.	Not continuing at this time

4. Impact & Growth

Project Impact
What short-term outcomes or milestones were you most proud of achieving during the grant period? How did this project move you closer to your longer-term vision or mission?

One of the most meaningful milestones achieved was the successful development and delivery of the Inclusive Research Action Toolkit, complete with six accessible modules tailored for deaf youth. Equally significant was conducting a two-day practical workshop that not only built the confidence and skills of 8 deaf youth but also marked a shift from passive inclusion to active leadership in climate and health advocacy. The establishment of the Deaf Youth Climate & Health Club was a proud moment proof of concept that deaf youth can organize, lead, and sustain peer-driven climate initiatives. These outcomes directly advanced my long-term vision of a world where deaf young people are equipped and empowered to lead inclusive climate and health action. It demonstrated that with the right tools and support, youth with disabilities can shape research, drive advocacy, and influence systems change.

Learning & Growth
What new skills, capabilities, or approaches did you or your team develop? How has this project influenced your capacity to pursue future opportunities?

Through this project, I enhanced my technical capacity in inclusive content creation learning to integrate sign language videos, infographics, and visual cues into accessible training materials. I also refined my participatory facilitation skills, especially in designing and delivering inclusive workshops that accommodate diverse learning needs, such as emoji-based feedback tools and simplified language formats. Additionally, I strengthened my project management and collaborative leadership skills by coordinating with interpreters, designers, and youth participants. These capabilities have significantly expanded my readiness to scale this model, pursue larger grants, and enter into strategic partnerships that prioritize disability-inclusive research. The clear documentation of results and feedback also positioned me well to demonstrate impact to future donors and partners.

5. New Opportunities & Visibility

- **Follow-on funding:** *Have you applied for or received any new funding related to this work?* - I have not yet secured additional funding, but I am actively exploring opportunities with disability-inclusive tech grants to address gaps in sign-language resources for research and climate/health terms.
- **Funding plans:** *Are you preparing other applications (to Wellcome or others)?* – Not yet, now that this has been completed I will start exploring additional opportunities.

- ***Visibility or profile:*** *Did this project help raise your profile or influence?* – Besides the engagement with National Association of the deaf there is no action that has managed to raise my profile because the products were not yet complete. This can be explored and monitored post grant.
- ***External recognition:*** *Has your work been cited, shared, or published by others?* – Not yet.