

Disability Under Siege Seminar - Partnering with DPOs: 1A Socioeconomic wellbeing and human rights-related experiences of people with disabilities in Covid-19 times in South Africa - An online survey

2 March 2022

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Funded by UKRI Newton Agile Fund
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Background

Key Question

- **What is the evolving impact of the pandemic and mitigation measures on persons with disabilities in South Africa?**

Focus

- on social , psychological, economic impacts, perceptions of support and re vaccines, and future recommendations, especially re government role
- > to inform improved framework for inclusive emergency/humanitarian response

Approach

- Participants recruited through NCPD networks – aimed for 4000
Final number 1857 valid responses
- Survey open for 2 months.
- 119 items. Mostly quantitative, some open text
- Administered virtually with reimbursement

Respondent Demographics

Gender M 64% F 36%,
age mainly 18-64,
race 83% black,
type of impairment – a spread – slightly more physical impairment ,
76% saw their impairment as very or somewhat disabling,
education level mainly matric or above, ,
wealth 60% live in backyard shack or township house,
70% monthly income < R 5000,
marital status 61% single

Sample is overwhelmingly concentrated in Guateng province 63%

Key findings

Key concerns – 93% concerned re personal finances

78% more concerned than pre COVID, 44% same as before, 49% got worse

37% Working, 35 % unemployed.

Economic situation seen as worst aspect by 43%

Emotional experiences Stressed 60%, depressed 54%, scared 52%, bored 44%, frustrated/irritable 43% , lonely 42%, sad 41%

Perceived likelihood of personal social situation worsening 41% like/very likely

Government responses perceived not to be sufficiently disability aware

- Information often inaccessible 60% said had difficulty
- Grants and food parcels insufficient
- PPE – sanitizer and soap insufficient
- Existing energy and water challenges have increased
- Transportation a problem
- Awareness of gov assistance – 38%
- Vaccines – 78% said would definitely get vaccine if had opportunity

Reflections on the findings

Expect some disruption during a national disaster

Little recognition of special needs of people with disabilities

Service catch-up in terms of persons with disabilities is slow

Many are reliant on non-state service providers

interventions unfocused or insufficient

Gov need to improve their disaster framework to make it more disability aware and inclusive - urgently

What have we learnt?

Working in partnerships with OPDs

- Having the national organisation for people with disabilities (OPD) as a partner (NCPD) gave us various advantages both in recruiting participants and being rigorous in thinking about accessibility issues in the survey and in dissemination
- The HSRC experienced the rewards of working first-hand with people with disabilities in the research process, increasing their networks of people with diverse disabilities and very different experiences, inputs and attitudes. Some of the members of the HSRC team are researchers with disabilities and this project enabled a good insight into studying and working with people from a marginalised group of which we are members.
- It is also rewarding to have increased in disability studies networks and researchers, including researchers with disabilities across the globe and in South

More learning points – things to do

- While digital technology is often relied upon heavily in the pandemic not all people are likely to be tech savvy and supplementary approaches should be budgeted for -e.g. when working with the blind
- Ask about and plan for people's accessibility needs well in advance of any activity.
- Be aware that not everybody will be able to use online platforms for surveys.
- Make sure there is a budget line for accessibility needs.
- Run accessibility checks on any documents, posters, PowerPoint slides etc.
- Assume that there will be a need for adapted communication modes (e.g. visual information, sign language, captioning) even if these have not been requested by individuals.
- Highlight inclusive practice at the beginning of events to alert everyone to the need for vigilance on this.
- Check regularly with participants that the format and pace are okay.
- Model in our behaviour a positive, appreciative and affirming attitude to all (e.g. by allowing time for responses, accepting unusual responses, taking all contributions seriously, etc.).
- ~~Think about ways to include all partners in analysis – remotely – its tricky! Time !~~