

Louvain School of Management

The employment challenges of persons with disabilities in Africa

Author: Léonce Mpawineza
Supervisor: Prof. dr. Eline
Jammaers

Academic year 2022-2023.
Dissertation for the Master of Science in Management.

Executive Summary

Increase in productivity are some of the proven benefits for companies with a diversified workforce. A diverse workforce is a workforce that is composed of people who are different in age, gender, race, ethnic minority and groups like persons with a disability (PWD). As a minority group, PWD have been discriminated against on the global labor market for a long time. According to estimation, Africa is home to some 80 million PWD. This number is expected to increase as the population ages. The majority of PWD are trapped in poverty regardless of their skills because employers are influenced by negative attitudes when making decisions in the process of recruitment. Religious, traditional, and cultural believes inspire a stereotypical way of thinking which dominates in Africans and considers PWD either 'objects of mercy' or 'punishment from gods'. Another spiritually inspired stereotypical belief relates people with Albinism, whose body parts are believed to have healing power.

Also, many African employers are ignorant towards the rights of PWD and can only employ them if they are either family members or if there are incentives offered to them by the government. Many of these employers cannot distinguish capacity from disability and are unknowledgeable about the laws protecting PWD (e.g., employment quotas). Although African governments are the biggest employers of PWD, they too have failed to implement and monitor the rights of PWD as per their constitution.

Some of the barriers to employment faced by PWD in Africa are legislations on disability which lacks enforcement by governments, lack of education, lack of accessibility, poverty, attitude and discrimination. Change of attitudes towards PWD, strict monitoring of the rights of PWD (especially employment quotas), good corporate practices, access to education, replacing begging with an entrepreneurship culture in the community of persons with disability, accessible environments and recruitment agencies for PWD are some of the recommendations that will see an increase in the number of employments for PWD.

Acknowledgement

It is with honor that I take this opportunity to acknowledge all the individuals who played a great role to make this thesis be of success.

First, I would like to thank Professor Dr. Eline JAMMAERS for her dedication and patients as my thesis supervisor. It is with her guidance that I was able to come to conclusions of this master thesis.

Secondly, I thank all the interview participants and Emeritus Professor Christian de Visscher (mentor) who shared their experiences and information and got interested with my thesis topic. Your time is highly appreciated.

Lastly, I thank my family and friends especially my mother Odette KAKUZE who has been by my side in all my academic journey.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	5
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.1 Defining Disability In Africa	7
Models of Disability	8
2.2 Cultural Attitudes And Believes About Disability In Africa	10
2.3 Barriers to The Employment Of PWD In Africa	11
Issues with current disability legislations in Africa	12
Attitudes and discrimination	13
Lack of education for PWD in Africa	16
Lack of accessibility in Africa	18
Poverty as a barrier to employment	19
2.6 Facilitators In Employment Of PWD In Africa	20
Good corporate practices on disability inclusion in Africa	20
Technical and Vocational training (TVT) programs	23
Entrepreneurship as an alternative to employment for PWD	24
Recruitment Agencies of PWD in Africa	24
3. METHODOLOGY	26
3.1 Data Collection And Sampling Method	26
3.2 Data Analysis	31
4. FINDINGS	33
4.1 Disability And Employment In Africa: General Findings From The Interviews	33
Stigma As A Major Barrier Faced By PWD In Africa	33
Discrimination During Hiring Phase	34
Inaccessible Transport Systems And Lack Of Reasonable Accommodations At Workplaces	35
Lack of Law enforcement measures and incentives to employ PWD from the governments	36
Poverty And Unaffordable Assistive Technologies	39
Inaccessible Education And A Need For Skillset Development For PWD In Africa	39
4.2 Disability and Employment In Rwanda: Findings From The Newspaper Analysis	41
Attitude As a Disabling Factor In Rwanda	41
Inaccessible Buildings and Technologies For PWD	43
Legislate Reform and Quota Needs	44
From Begging To Saving And An Entrepreneurial Culture	46
The Role of Education And Skillset Development In Boosting Skillset Development	47
5.CONCLUSION	48
REFERENCES	50
ANNEX	55
Interview guideline	55

1. INTRODUCTION

Diversity at work can boost a company's productivity. This is because people with a different background think in a different way, and this can highly contribute to a company's creativity and innovations. A diverse workforce is a workforce that is composed of people who are different in age, gender, race, ethnic minority and so on. An often-forgotten category of difference, relevant to managers, is the category of disability. Nevertheless, being integrated in employment contexts means a lot to persons with disabilities (PWD) because it boosts their economic and social inclusivity (Wahab & Jaffar, 2018). Persons living with some form of disability account for about 15% of the world population and most of them, around 80%, live in low-income contexts (Abualghaib et al., 2019). According to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank, an approximation of 80 million of PWD live on the continent of Africa (WHO & World Bank, 2011). However, little is known on the economic status of PWD, especially in developing countries (Mitra et al. 2013).

In Botswana for instance, many buildings and transport system are not friendly to PWD (Mukhopadhyay & Moswela, 2019). In Zambia too, several PWD terminate their job contracts because of inaccessible built environment and transport systems (Banda-Chalwe et al,2012). In Rwanda only 10% of the buildings qualify to be accessible to PWD (Njelesani et al., 2018). These issues with accessibility also became clear during the recent Commonwealth Heads Of Government Meeting (CHOGM) which took place in Kigali, Rwanda. One of the invitees to this meeting was a person with disability, who after being trapped in his hotel due to inaccessibility of the meeting environment, raised a complaint to the country's president that he was not able to participate in the event. The only two times he left the hotel was through assistance from the personnel (CHOGM, 2022). Far worse than the issue of inaccessible business environments, the violation and abuse of PWD in Africa can be as serious as being killed. For instance, people with mental illness in Nigeria are killed as part of ritual practices because of certain beliefs (Etiyaibo, 2016) and there are various African countries where Albinos are persecuted (like Malawi, Burundi, Mozambique and South Africa) as there exist big markets for Albino body parts (Pavithra, 2018).

Work is a defining feature for human existence and an important factor that helps PWD experience full participation in the society. PWD have a right to be employed just like any other individual - to maintain a decent life for themselves and their families. When PWD are discriminated against on the labor market, this leads to situation of social injustice. Yet social justice is a necessity for sustainable universal peace according to ILO (ILO, 2015). Article 27 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) makes explicit countries obligation to safeguard their citizens with disabilities' right to work and employment, of their own choosing. It states:

"States Parties recognize the right of PWD to work on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labor market and workenvironment that is open, inclusive and accessible to PWD. States Parties shall safeguard and promote the realization of the right to work, including for those who acquire a disability during the course of employment, by taking appropriate

steps, including through legislation” (UNCRPD, 2006).

Although the majority of the countries on the African continent did ratify the CRPD, few countries are implementing it and monitoring their progress in practice (Mukhopadhyay & Moswela, 2019).

Despite the negative attitudes towards PWD, there is enough evidence to suggest PWD have the capabilities to do what non-disabled persons are able to do. They sometimes even surpass the intellectual capabilities of what PWD can do. Take for instance the example of Dr. Stephen W. Hawking, a world celebrated scientist who brought forward theories of the universe, including discovering the Hawking radiation of the black holes. Dr. Stephen Hawking had a motor neuron disease which made him paralyzed from his early 20s and since only able speak using a speech synthesizer (Loff, 2018). In a United Nation report, he said that his disability in all his adult life did not prevent him from having a prominent career and a happy family life. He considered himself lucky because he had a team which assisted him in his achievements unlike the majority of PWD who are having extreme difficulties to survive, let alone being employed productively (WHO & World bank, 2011). Another prominent example that we could give of “disability not being inability” is the case of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He had an impairment called polio poliomyelitis, yet this did not prevent him from winning the presidency as 32nd president of the United States. He served his terms during the great depression and World War II. He became the longest serving president in American history, with no less than four terms served (Kaschak & Bauman, 2020).

According to the WHO almost everyone is likely to experience some form of disability, temporary or permanent at some point in life. The majority of disabilities is caused by increased human lifespan, or in other words ageing. Especially in countries which have a demography of increased aging populations, disability is likely to increase massively in numbers. Despite the universality of disability, little is written on how marginalized groups of PWD survive economically on the continent of Africa. This research therefor offers an investigation on the employment state of PWD on the continent of Africa, and afterwards zooms in on the case of Rwanda (my own country of birth).

The main questions of my research are:

- i) What are the general barriers to employment for PWD in Africa?*
- ii) How does the newspaper report on PWD’s employment barriers in Rwanda?*

The thesis is structured in 5 parts: Introduction, literature review, method section, the findings section and lastly the conclusions. The literature review part is a focus on qualitative and quantitative research done by various academics on the topic of disability. It will focus on the African region. In the methodology section, I will use qualitative research methods (interviews and newspaper analysis) to collect important information on the research questions. I will analyze and interpret the results of the information collected in the finding section. Finally, I will make conclusions of my research by also mentioning the limitations that I encountered during my research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this literature review section, I try to find out what has already been written about the economic living conditions of PWD on the African continent. The literature review is organized in the following subtopics: (1) definition and models of disability, (2) cultural attitudes and beliefs about disability in African traditions, (3) barriers to employment faced by PWD in Africa, and lastly (4) facilitators to employment faced by PWD in Africa.

2.1 Defining Disability In Africa

The social conditions leading to disability are highest in less developed countries (Swartz & Mercer, 2017). However, causes of disability in Africa differ from one country to another. For example, in Cameroon many cases of disability are due to road accidents and inappropriate healthcare, whereas in Liberia causes of mental disabilities were from effects of war. In Mali, the majority of disabilities are as a result of trauma, polio, leprosy and congenital abnormalities (Jolley et al., 2018) and in a country like Rwanda the genocide of 1994 is the major cause of disability in the country because of the violence that took place. The health services that became dysfunctional during the war period and the genocide side effects continue to affect mentally its citizens today (Njelesani et al., 2018). Even if the incidence of disability is far higher in less developed countries, information on disability remains undocumented here and difficult to source, making the defining of disability in Africa a challenging task (Jolley et al., 2017).

The world is yet to have a universal definition of disability as "disability is complex, dynamic, multidimensional and contested" (WHO & World Bank., 2011, pg. 3). The International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF), which is a framework of the WHO describes disability as outcomes of interactions between health conditions and contextual factors. Health conditions refers to diseases, disorders, and injuries. The contextual factors are in two categories: external environmental factors such as social attitudes and architectural characteristics. The second category is of internal personal factors like age, gender, character, and social background. This model of disability by the ICF is a mix the medical and the social models of disability (WHO, 2002). Moreover, countries also have their own different definitions of disability. A country like Rwanda has the following definition of disability "the state of a person who has lost the capacities that are essential to life or who has deficiencies compared to other persons and as a result does not enjoy equal chances and opportunities" (Njelesani et al., 2018).

Disability is diverse and should not be generalized. Disability can exist in many forms and differ from persons to person. Disability can either be visible or invisible. Many persons today recognize only physical and sensorial impairments as legitimate disability (e.g., a person who is blind or a person using wheelchair). There is often an ignorance towards types of impairment that are less visible in nature like dementia or other forms of invisible body malfunctioning. The level of disadvantage people with impairments suffer can differ with the type of disability one has for example persons with mental health conditions are more disadvantaged than persons with physical conditions. Gender can be another factor for example women with disability are less likely to get married compared to men without disability. It should as well be noted that PWD have different personalities and difference in ethnicity, cultures, sexuality and differ in gender which can lead to very different experiences of even

the same type of disability (WHO & World Bank, 2011).

Models of Disability

Models of disability are important because they highly influence how disabled people are perceived and give an idea how they should conceive themselves. There are many models on disability that have been developed, some time in history while others are recent. Why are disability models important? Disability models serve eight purposes; they provide definition of disability, they provide explanations of causal attribution and responsibility attributions, they are based on (perceived) needs, they guide the formulation and implementation of policy, they are not value neutral, they determine which academic disciplines study and learn about PWD, they shape the self-identity of PWD and they can cause prejudice and discrimination (Retief & Letšosa, 2018).

There are nine popular models of disability that has influence on the perception of disability: The religious model which assumes disability to be an act of God, the medical model which views disability as a form of a disease, the social model which blames the society to disable physical impaired people, the identity model which views disability as an identity, the human right model which views disability as a human right issue, the cultural model which views disability from different type of cultural approached, the economic model which approaches disability from various limitation on the labor and employment capabilities, the charity model which approaches disability from the victimhood of impairments and lastly the limit model which recognizes limitations in human capabilities that should be overcome (Retief & Letšosa, 2018) . In this thesis, we will look at the two dominant and popular models on disability. The two dominant models of disability are the medical model and the social model.

The medical model

The medical model of disability was brought forward by medical professions demonstrating people with disability as people who need clinical diagnosis. According to the model, disability is viewed as a disease and PWD to be individuals with medical needs. There are several arguments and critics against this model, to begin with disability can result from severe diseases or accidents, but it should not be confused to be a disease. While a disease manifests itself with physical symptoms, disability is a totally different concept of the limitation in persons abilities. From PWD point of view it is the society that disables them rather than being mistaken as people suffering from diseases. Another criticism of the medical model is that it is limited to a medical point of view of disability. The medical model ignores other aspects of disability such as the psychological and social aspects. The limited definition of disability by the medical model makes PWD to be viewed as individuals who need to be hospitalized and that they are passive unlike normal people who are active and useful to the society (Brisenden, 1986).

This medical model of disability makes PWD feel rejected and excluded from the society. They are denied rights to participate in social activities and to reap the same rewards as persons without disability. Because of this model PWD had no control of themselves and decisions are made on their behalf. PWD have the right to take risks just like any person without disability and should be considered independent even if they might need support from time to time. It is also wrong to put

them in one category as they have diverse needs and sometimes lack any kind of similarity amongst themselves (Brisenden,1986). The medical model of disability is traditional, and its narrative has formed the foundations of prejudice and discrimination against PWD in the societies they live in (Dirth & Branscombe, 2017).

The social Model

In the social model of disability defines disability is a result of the society which disables persons with impairments. In this model there is a distinction of disability and impairments. Impairments are individual and private while disability is structural and public. The social model of disability was brought forward in the 1970s by the Union of physical impaired Against segregation (UPIAS) in the United Kingdom. It generally came about as a reaction to the medical model and the traditional religious model which portrayed disability as a heavenly punishment which had consequences of segregating PWD. Unlike the medical model which defined disability in terms of individual deficits the social model defines disability as a social creation. According to the model, the difference between the disabled and the non-disabled individuals is that the disabled are an oppressed group that is thought of charity and pity to be the solutions to their problems (shakespeare,2010). Although the social model is one of the most popular and accepted models, it has its strength and weaknesses that we will list down below.

Strength of the Social Model

The social model of disability has three benefits: first as a requirement of an ideology the disability model is easy to understand, memorable and effective. Second, it has been a tool to identify and fight the problems faced by PWD. This is because the social model of disability identifies disability as a result from social oppression, exclusion and not from deficits these persons have. As positive outcomes of this models some governments like the British government came up with disability discrimination act, construction of infrastructures and the transport system that are inclusive. Thirdly, the social model of disability has restored the dignity that PWD deserves. It does not consider them as failures. With this new identity their self-esteem has been reinforced and they can feel confident to participate in social activities when barriers and attitudes which disables them are eliminated (Shakespeare,2010).

Weakness of the Social Model

Among the strong criticism of the social model are that it ignores the fact that PWD have impairments. The model constructs disability as a social construction yet some form of disabilities needs medical attentions if not some form of disabilities can lead to premature death. Another criticism is on the point of gender. The social model limits itself on the discrimination faced by the disabled community but does not get deeper to the discrimination encountered by women who are disabled because of their sex. The disability model was found by a group which is considered to be narrow and exclusive. It was made up white men who most of them had only spinal cord injuries. The group was limited, and it did not consider diversity in disability for example persons who had mental disabilities (Shakespeare,2010).

2.2 Cultural Attitudes And Beliefs About Disability In Africa

In African contexts, many specific beliefs and attitudes about disability are specific to the context and have a persisting character. For instance, beliefs about albinism are very context-sensitive here. Albinism is a skin disorder whereby the skin is not able to produce melanin which is responsible for our skin pigmentation. Persons with albinism are vulnerable to some environment conditions especially the sun and they have a weak eye sightedness. While it is the case some people in African communities especially in countries like Tanzania, Burundi, Mozambique still dwells on superstitions that body parts of albinos can cure HIV and AIDS when you have sex with an albino, brings wealth, power and sexual conquest. In some communities like Tanzania, they are called ghosts. Mothers of children with Albinos are accused of infidelities and sometimes abandoned by their spouses, others are seen as abnormal for giving birth to albinos and in some worse case scenarios the whole family could live in exclusivity for having an albino child. Body parts of albinos are considered as a market by witch doctors and could sell as high as \$ 75,000 for the whole body and \$ 2000 for a leg. Between 2000 and 2016 some 75 albinos were reported killed in Tanzania (Pavithra,2018). Another target group of PWD facing killings and rape is of persons with mental illness (Etieyibo & Omiegbe,2016). In West Africa persons with mental illness are killed and used for traditional rituals. In some traditions there are beliefs that this type of persons is born with unclean hands while in others believe that having intimacy with them brings wealth and prolonged life. This have made women with mental disability become victims of abductions and rape.

Cultural and Religious beliefs of PWD differs from community to community and from country to country within Africa. In Nigeria for example children born with disability were perceived as punishment from God for reasons like disobedience to the gods, unapproved marriages from society elders, incest, misdeeds from previous life, ancestral violation of social norms and so on. The Ashanti tribe of Ghana when children were born with special needs were considered as animal like and would be abandoned by the riverbanks and Children born with six fingers were also killed upon birth. In Kenya and Zimbabwe when a child was born with disability it was viewed as a curse to the family and the disabled child was seen as a humiliation (Nyangweso,2018). Different African tribes have names for PWD which could be humiliating, taking an example of Kinyarwanda who call persons who can speak and hear as 'Ibaragi' which can mean stupid.

Although many cultures treated PWD with stigmatization, there are other cultures which had a positive view of PWD. Taking example are Ga from Ghana who treated persons with feeble minds with awe and viewed them with great respect for they believed they were incarnation of a deity. In Benin PWD were believed to be protected by supernatural power while the Chaga people from the East Africa were believed to be pacifiers of the evil spirits (Nyangweso,2018). Also the Turkana people of Kenya believed children born with disability to be blessings from God and if they were not taken care of then god would revenge with death in the family (Mac-Donald & Butera,2012).

African cultures have traditionally been characterized by many myths surrounding the existence of PWD. In the Yoruba people of Nigeria had a myth that disability is a result of drunkenness from the creator. Obatala one of the deities in the Yoruba and who is perceived to be a son of the supreme God was given the responsibility to create man out of clay. Obatala did as he was told but there are times

that he could drink some palm wine and get drunk. It is of this reason some people were created with impairments and deformities like being crippled, blind and deaf (Nyangweso,2018). Although many African communities relied on myths to understand disabilities which were misleading, in recent years traditional believes about PWD has changed due to formal education and Christianity (Setume,2016).

2.3 Barriers to The Employment Of PWD In Africa

Statistical estimations of PWD who are in employment differ from one country to another and differ in various research. There exists a large difference in percentage between the number of persons without disability who are employed as compared to those with disability. When you go deeper into the statistics, the number of females with disability who are employed is also lower to the number of males with disability who are employed. There is also a difference in pay whereby PWD earn a salary which is lower to their colleagues without disability. The study also shows that women have the lowest salaries also when compared to males who have disability. Although the percentage in the unemployment rate of females with disability is highest as compared to the male group, a study carried out in Ghana showed that women spend less time as unemployed compared to their male counterparts because they easily accept to work in vulnerable sectors like in grocery stores, cooks and making decorations. The major employer of PWD is the government, followed by the private sector. The rest of the PWD who are considered to be employed are self-employed. In the three groups of employment, the self- employed were the ones who showed satisfaction of working conditions because they had more freedom however, they live in poverty because they earned too little (less than a dollar per day). For the ones working for the government complained on the lack of reasonable accommodations while the ones in the private sector complained of discrimination due to negative perception about their abilities at work. Although someone would think that the percentage gap in employment between PWD, person without disability and the females counterparts with disability to be caused by lack of work competences, the opinion from person with disability is sexism and discrimination (Naami,2015).

There are similarities and differences given by different literatures on barriers encountered by PWD on labor market in Africa. Stigma and discrimination, lack of infrastructure facilities, lack of transport facilities and lack of adequate information communication technologies were identified by (Mukhopadhyay & moswela,2019) as barriers in Botswana. Type of disability, hindrances to participate in major life activities such as education, environmental factors such as attitudes, legislations, services and systems and personal factors such as job-related skills were identified as barriers to employment encountered by PWD living in low- and middle-income countries (Morwane et al., 2021). The (WHO,2011) classifies barriers to work and employment into four broad categories: lack of access to public goods like education and trainings, lack of physical access to office premises and to job interview; the second category are barriers associated with misconceptions about PWD able to perform certain work by employers; the third category is on discrimination encountered by PWD during job search; The forth category is on legislatives which seems to over protect PWD on the labor market. These regulations are viewed by employers as cost in the hiring and maintaining PWD in their enterprises. The following barriers were also reflected in a study carried out in Botswana: stigmatization and discrimination, lack of infrastructural facilities, lack of transport facilities and unavailability of appropriate information and communication technology. The researchers considered

the above barriers to be almost similar in the Sub-Sahara region and similar in the Southern part of Africa as they were in Botswana (Mukhopadhyay & Moswela, 2019).

Issues with current disability legislations in Africa

Although PWD are included in the general human rights, PWD needs protection and consideration of rights because their basic rights are violated in an inaccessible society (Fernandez et al.2017). One important instrument for additional protection is the United Nations' CRPD. And over half of African countries now have national disability policies. The UN-CRPD is a human right instrument which ensures that PWD benefits of all human rights and fundamental freedom. The convention helps the United Nations to change peoples' attitude of perceiving PWD as objects of charity and instead respect them as subjects with rights as well as persons who should be active members of the society. It was adopted in 2006 whereby almost all United Nations member countries have ratified the convention. The UNCRPD is made up of broad categories of rights and which gives directions of how this human right applies to PWD (United Nations, 2006). Countries that are yet to ratify to UN CRPD are either in conflicts or have a weak or an absent government. The human rights instruments and institutions in Africa meant to protect PWD already existed prior to the UN CRPD but they stand criticism because they either lacked clarity, details, influence, or international human right standards. That is why the UN CRPD has been recommended for adoption in these countries. In 2016 research was done to find out which African countries had ratified the UN CRPD, and which African countries had national disability acts. The result was that out of 55 countries that research was done on, 44 countries had ratified the act and 35 had a national policy on disability.

Article 27 of the UNCRPD is on work and employment of PWD. Countries which ratified the UNCRPD agreed to recognize the right to work of PWD including those persons who acquired disability during their career. Among the measures that are agreed upon in articles 27 of the UNCRPD by the countries that ratify the convention are; to prohibit any form of discrimination towards PWD on matters regarding employment, ensures that PWD are able to practice trade unions on an equal level as others, promote career advancement and employment opportunities for PWD, promote opportunities of entrepreneurship and self-employments for PWD, employ PWD in the public and private sectors including making policies like affirmative action programs to promote this measures, ensures that reasonable accommodations are provided for PWD in the work place and to promote vocational and rehabilitation programs. The state parties should ensure that all citizens including PWD are protected from any form of slavery (United Nations, 2006).

Apart from the UN CRPD majority of African countries also have legislations on disability as we had seen it earlier. These legislations however exist on paper because they lack implementation. The main reason being those African countries lack sufficient funds to finance their policies. However, there are a few case scenarios where some legislations have been implemented for example the disability act in Sierra Leone of 2011. This act meant to prioritize the employment of PWD in government sector. As a result, the police force of the country has started recruiting PWD to work in their communication centers

(Jolley et.al, 2017).

In Botswana, discrimination against PWD is systematic because educational programs are not yet inclusive. For example, persons with visual impairment are not considered when it comes to online classes. PWD are as well denied admission in some programs as one of the participants in the study shared his own experience that he was refused admission in a certain program because he was a wheelchair user (Mukhopadhyay & Moswela, 2019). When it comes to infrastructures, they are not accessible by PWD in Botswana especially bank building. The transport system is as well not accessible to the PWD, out of 30 participants in the interview the research, 17 had never accessed public transport search as trains and buses. The majority of PWD in Botswana depend on private forms of transport and for the ones who are not able to afford this form of transport have to depend on the ones who are willing to help them. As a consequence, PWD miss out many opportunities including job interviews and getting late to work because they have to rely on the schedules of others. Again, out of the 30 participants in the interview, 27 have no technology gadgets because they cannot afford them. Most PWD in Botswana live in poverty and cannot afford modern technology tools which can help them access to important information like job advertisements. Also, with the information available to the public is in discriminative forms. Those persons with vision impairments have to rely on radios since the written communications do not come out with braille formats and the deaf have to look for written messages because the local television stations do not use sign languages. Despite majority of the 30 participants in the study having college diplomas, only 9 had a form of employment. PWD in Botswana cannot live a quality life because they are denied the fundamental right of being employed and they face barrier in the society they live in on a daily basis. The ones who find employment are usually in the informal sector whereby they do not have stable sources of income (Mukhopadhyay & Moswela, 2019).

Labour laws which prevent dismissal of individuals because of illness have been put in place by many nations but in a country like Ghana who has this labour law does not put it in practice but only exist on paper. A number of persons with bipolar diseases have their contract of work terminated in an illegal way simply because the employer found out that an employee had the disease or when employee forgets to take medicine and gets the effects of the disease at work (Ocran, 2019). There is misconception about mental disabilities in a country like Ghana whereby many people including employers view a bipolar disease to be caused by abuse of drugs like cannabis or from a forest dwelling spirit called "mmotia ". It is also difficult for employees to seek justice in case of incidents like this because of the type of contracts they sign which do not have terms and conditions that protects them (Read et.al, 2020).

Attitudes and discrimination

The social belief that persons without disability perform better than PWD have been one of the major hindrances of PWD to get employment or get promotions in case they are already employed (WHO, 2011). Because of this stereo type thinking or prejudice, the abilities of PWD has always been questioned once they are on the labor market. Traditions, customs, and other forms of superstitious

believes reinforces the negative perceptions of PWD on the labor markets. They are either approached by employers with sympathy instead of respect or as objects of mercy from influence they get from the Bible and the Quran or seen as humans who have been cursed by gods as per influence of traditional beliefs (Naami et al.,2012). In Kenya, the work environment for the disabled is termed as hostile by one disabled person (Opini,2010). He gives an example of when he was laughed at when he demanded an equal salary pay as other school principal. Rights for the disabled are seen as a favor in this country and that PWD should be grateful for the little they are already receiving.

Employers attitude towards PWD is important because it influences recruitment decisions and management of PWD incase, they are hired (Morwane et al.,2021). The study show that negative attitudes from employers was one of the major factors reported to hinder individuals with disability from participating in employment. There is a lack of trust by employers that PWD can be productive as other employees without disabilities.

A skill set to manage employees with disability is also mentioned in other studies as lacking by many employers. Ignorance on accommodating work environment to fit PWD needs is another barrier which affect the performance of PWD. Lack of knowledge from government officials on the needs of PWD is another major setback to employment of PWD. Most government official think that accessibility to infrastructures to be the only challenge faced by PWD.

"The biggest problem is communication, and information; you see and the change of attitudes, it's not only making buildings accessible" (Naami et al.,2012, p.196-197).

In Zimbabwe, not all co-workers are comfortable working with PWD (Mapuranga & Mutswanga, 2014). Some co- workers assume disability to be a contagious disease while others assume PWD to be fragile and would always be in need of assistance to reach their level best in performance. Some employers in this country would not hire PWD because they assume that they would scare customers away from businesses.

The attitude faced by PWD both at work and sometimes in families affects them negatively because it lowers their self-esteem (Morwane et al.,2021). The lack of self-confidence in PWD develops fear of competing with persons who are not disabled because they view themselves as incapable. This leads to some of them even opting to begging than participating in productive economic activities because of the attitude they are faced with when looking for job opportunities (Naami et al.,2012). It also leads to PWD being excluded from social networks which connects persons to employment opportunities (WHO,2011).

In research carried on a group of women with disability in Ghana (Naami et al.,2012) showed that PWD can also be blamed on the lack of employment. There are already existing employment opportunities created for them but PWD are not applying mainly because they lack awareness of the existing opportunities for them. Some of these opportunities are as friendly and doesn't require any educational expertise and physical strength, yet there are few PWD who are aware of these opportunities. An example given of lack of awareness of already existing opportunities for PWD in Ghana and have not been taken advantage of, is that it was only 10% of women with physical disability

who had applied for loans developed for PWD by the time the research was being done. PWD sometimes don't recognize their capabilities and they choose unskilled work over skilled work because they are ignorant of their potentials.

The main cause of discrimination towards PWD is attitude (WHO,2011; Mapuranga & Mutswanga,2014). As we had seen earlier negative attitude is the stereo type thinking and lack of support towards PWD. This negative attitude mainly results from lack of knowledge on how employees are to interact with PWD (Maja et al.,2011). Many employers have for long misunderstood PWD and view them as persons with poor health who will always be on sick leaves and who cannot perform to full capacity. It is with this type of stereo type thinking and misinformation about disability which leads them to deny employment opportunities to PWD. The level of discrimination towards PWD also varies from individual to another with persons with mental health being the most discriminated individuals. In terms of gender women with physical disability are more discriminated than their male counterparts.

Discrimination of PWD gets little attention as compared to the fight against race, religion, and gender discrimination in South Africa (Marumoagae,2012). Despite the government putting up measures such as the employment Equity act to combat discrimination of PWD on the labor market, the fight is yet to be won. Barrier to employment of PWD in South Africa is not only limited to lack of economic resources to provide reasonable accommodations by employers but it extends to discrimination from negative attitudes and ignorance towards PWD. Companies that hire PWD gets various benefits including a diversified team and competences possesses by PWD however, many employers are not yet aware on the importance and the positive outcomes of employing PWD. In South Africa employers do not comply with the government requirement that at least 2% of their workforce is disabled, leaving millions of talented disabled workers outside the labor market. Businesses, too, miss out by having a less diverse employee base and not representing their entire customer community. It is not only in South Africa because statistics show it is wise in Nigeria and Kenya (Toesland,2017).

Employers are to be educated on the differences between incapability and disability. There is no relationship in these words because incapacity can be caused by lack of knowledge or skills to perform a certain task and it does not necessarily mean that PWD does not possess desirable skills. Reasonable accommodations should as well be provided in the workplaceso that PWD are efficient and enjoy their jobs to the maximum after hiring PWD. In Ghana PWD are facing discrimination as well and they are considered as the most abused marginal group in the country (Ocran,2019). In this country, traditional beliefs dominate the weak legal structures put in place to protect PWD from being excluded from social activities. Although the country has ratified it's membership of the UN-CRPD it is criticized on the implementation and the regulation of these acts. The rights of PWD are abused to an extent PWD have to give bribes to get justice where it is due.

[Stigmatization of persons with mental disabilities](#)

The United Nations says that it is a Tripple win (the employer, the society and the person with disability) when a person with disability is employed, but how comes then it's only 1% of the persons with mental disability who are employed on the Kenyan labour market compared to 73% employment of the general public with no disability? The response to the above question is that there is an

assumption on both Kenya and on a global level that persons with mental disability are not productive, that they are violent and that they might not be liked by their colleagues and businesses clients. The conditions brought forward by Kenyan employers on hiring persons with mental disability were that the person with mental disability possessed the skills required to carry out the type of work that is being recruited for, second was that familiarity with the person with mental disability was equally important. The research showed that there are employers who hire persons with mental disability on the basis that they are family members or relatives. The third reason was on the basis of sympathy or for some enterprises to fulfil their corporate social responsibilities. Lastly was on the incentives the government was willing to offer the enterprises if they employed persons with mental disability. Employers considered government incentives to be a big boost to promote the employment of PWD because they will have a cover in case they face losses (Ebuenyi et.al, 2019).

The facilitators of employment of persons with psychiatric disability can be classified in four categories: the biological factors, psychological factors, interpersonal factors and contextual factors. The biological factors refer to stable mental health. A number of persons with psychiatric disability do not have access to treatment and regular monitoring on their mental health which makes their illness unstable. This condition of unstable mental illness does not make persons with psychiatric person fit for work environment. There is a study in Nigeria which showed that 72% employees prefer to work with persons with physical conditions rather than mental conditions and 73% showed that they do not prefer to share office space with persons with mental illness. Having stability in mental illness could be a solution to this problem. Psychological factors like absence of fear of symptoms is important for persons with psychiatric disability to look for work. Interpersonal factors are important because they boost the self-esteem of persons with psychiatric disability. When persons with psychiatric are appreciated they become motivated to look and retain their work. Social stigma and discrimination have been found to affect confidence of persons with psychiatric disability and this hinders them to look for work because they feel to be unwanted. Lastly contextual factors which refers to things like availability of reasonable accommodations at workplace, available of credit facilities to persons with psychiatric disability who are entrepreneurs is important because it makes them adopt and compete on the labour market. Employment of persons with psychiatric disability is estimated to be 40% lower than persons with physical disability. Globally, they make between 30-45% of Persons with disability and the statistics are much higher in low- and middle-income countries according to the OECD. This is a reason the matter of persons with psychiatric disability should be taken seriously (Ebuenyi et.al, 2018).

Lack of education for PWD in Africa

Why is education important? With enough evidence available it has been mentioned that higher education can produce both public and private benefits. The private benefits for individuals are well established, and include better employment prospects, higher salaries, and a greater ability to save and invest. These benefits may result in better health and improved quality of life (Bloom et al, 2006).

Article 24 of the UNCRPD

"States Parties recognize the right of PWD to education. With a view to realizing this right

without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning” (UNCRPD,2006).

In research which takes a focus on the UNCRPD on the African continent shows that there is a lack of policy implementation of the UNCRPD when it comes to inclusive education.

"When you mention of African countries like Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, Senegal, Ghana, Malawi, Uganda and Tanzania, issues of students with disabilities tend to attract a low profile” (Chataika et al.,2012, p.388).

More emphasis are given on issues like gender equality, school uniforms and school subsidies. However, there are African countries which have shown the will but nevertheless some of them are faced with challenges. Examples are countries like Lesotho that lack resources like trained teachers, Zimbabwe whose teachers move to foreign countries after training to look for greener pastures and South Africa which inherited an education system divided on race because of apartheid.

Perceptions of disability in Africa differ from country to country and from region to region. In a study conducted by (Jolley et al. 2017) in five west African countries: Cameroon, Mali, Senegal, Liberia and Sierra Leone on education and social inclusion of people with disability showed that in some schools in Cameroon some teachers were more positive and willing to support students with special education needs while others were less positive to support this student. Another survey in rural projects in Senegal showed that local project staff identified PWD closely to the charity model and were not aware of the other models of disability.

Only 4% of children with disability got enrolled in primary and secondary school in the year 2015 in Ethiopia, although the number has increased recently. It is also mentioned that Senegal has an estimation of 50% of PWD not attending school despite its highest funding in education ranking in African countries. The author also mentions South Africa to have issues on inclusive education for disabled persons, being the leading economy on the continent (Siska et al.,2019). In Rwanda it is only 10 % of children with disability that are enrolled in school (Njelesani et al.,2018). These statistics gives us an idea of PWD that have access to education in Africa.

All countries in the west African region have ratified the convention to children right. Countries like Sierra Leone, Liberia and Mali made it compulsory for all children between 6 and 16 years old. All children with disabilities are to attend mainstream education. However, in reality there is a big gap between policy formation and policy implementation. The research suggests that it might be due to lack of enough resources for the governments to push for implementation of these policies (Jolley et al.,2017). In Rwanda some schools are still afraid of children with disability, there are scenarios whereby children with epilepsy have been sent home because of fear that they would spread it to other children. The problem of children with disability is not priorities in this country with the reason that there is not enough funds and the second reason being that the schools do not have staff specialized or trained on the issue (Njelesani et al.,2018).

Being blind is a pure disadvantage in Zimbabwe a recount by a blind man (Nyangweso, 2018). There are hardly any schools for disabled children. He says that the government doesn't invest in facilities

for disabled. The disabled get challenges in accessing public amenities, education, information, public gathering and so on. Realizing your dreams in Harare if you are disabled is close to impossible. He goes on and says that most children who are disabled are put on the streets by their family and dressed in dirty clothes for arm begging. Only a few who are lucky are the ones who will make it in children's homes that cater for the disabled.

Lack of accessibility in Africa

Up to date, many buildings are not accessible, and the transport system is yet to be friendly to PWD in Botswana (Mukhopadhyay & Moswela, 2019). Transport is essential for PWD to access employment and to participate in daily life activities. Because public transport is still difficult to access, individuals with disabilities depend on private transport and cars from their family members because the majority are poor to afford their own. Lack of accessible independent travel creates social exclusion for individuals with disability. Calls for interviews are sometimes turned down during periods of job search because of inaccessibility. Not all PWD can afford taxis from home to offices where interviews are scheduled. Promoting accessible infrastructures and friendly transport systems would improve PWD in participating in different economic and social activities. Almost all African countries have ratified article 9 of the UNCRPD but most of them are yet to implement them. Article 9 of the UNCRPD is on accessibility and it states:

"To enable PWD to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to PWD access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility" (UNCRPD, 2006, p.8).

Consequences of failure to address the inaccessibility problem in a study of living conditions in Zambia (Banda-Chalwe et al, 2012) ,57.2% out of the participants had never been employed while 27% had terminated employment partly due to inaccessible built environments, inaccessible transport services and the discriminatory attitude of society including government. Of the many countries in Africa only South Africa is seen to have prioritized the need for universal accessibility. Countries like Kenya, Togo, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Senegal leave the disabled people to be managed by non-governmental organizations and churches. Unfortunately, Non- governmental Organizations have limited capacities to provide adequate facilities and services to PWD.

A large part of roads in Rwanda is not friendly to PWD, almost all the health facilities catering for PWD in the country are located in the capital city Kigali which makes it difficult for PWD living in the countryside to access them and only 10% of the public buildings in the country can be qualified as accessible to PWD (Njelesani et al., 2018). In Abuja, Nigeria urban planners and architects are inconsiderate to PWD. The city is like a death trap for PWD and considers more African cities to be

even worse than Abuja. "Concrete barricades, exposed manholes, and other physical barriers make daily commutes an arduous endeavor for even the able-bodied; let alone people with disabilities" (Agbor, Jr., 2017). He criticizes architectures in Africa because they don't appreciate the importance of accessible designs and it is because it is rarely taught in design schools. Public car parks with no disabled space and if it happens to be there is no one to enforce them, large percentage of ATM in African cities are inaccessible to the disabled, most bathrooms are not configured to accommodate the physically challenged, most public spaces don't have clear floor for wheelchair or walking stick maneuvering.

Working space can be disabling too. Many companies have office space whose architecture is meant for able bodied individuals. PWD finds it difficult to maximize their productivity because of disabling working space. A person with hearing impairment will always find it difficult to follow a meeting held in big rooms and with big tables between his colleagues, He will sometimes be obliged to record the meetings and refollow them up at his convenient time. This office spaces which are disabling also diminishes social inclusions for example when cafeterias are at a distance from the desks of persons who have disability, they will sometimes reserve their energy at their desks instead of going to take coffee breaks with fellow colleagues. These spaces may also force PWD to be dependent to their fellow colleagues especially when it comes to matters which are intimate for example, when in order to access the bathroom, someone needs to use the stairs and there are no lifts in the building. There are also other PWD who fear office space for their safety because they are not adopted to the type of disability they have. For example, lifts which closes at a fast pace, some type of office doors in which persons using wheelchairs get trapped in, screens with color contrasts that are not compatible with enlargement software for persons who have sight impairment and so on (Jammaers et al., 2020).

Poverty as a barrier to employment

Extreme poverty and hunger eradication were the first among the eight goals set by the United Nations Millennium development goals in year 2000. Beyond the amount of money or the number of possessions one has at their disposal, poverty can be addressed through access to education, to employment, to health care and to other basic services that are a part of one's basic human and social rights (Loeb et al., 2008). In a paper 'disability and poverty: two related conditions', highlights that people with disability are usually marginalized from socially and economically and that their families are considered to be the poor of poorest. Because of these reasons, these families are excluded from basic services like health, education and employment opportunities. In a paper 'Poverty and disability in Eastern and Western Cape Provinces, South Africa' the authors appreciate the fact there is lack of data on the living conditions of PWD especially the ones living in extreme poverty. South Africa is one of the very few known African countries in Africa that has disability grants of estimated \$ 110 to \$ 215 per month. The allocation of the grants depends on the duration that the disability is expected to last. The author terms the act as something unique on the African, (Loeb et al., 2008) continent because it doesn't exist in other countries on the continent (Pinilla-Roncancio, 2015).

In another article 'disability and poverty in developing countries: a multidimensional studies', the

authors show of an existence of a link between poverty and disability. Quoting from different sources, it is evidence that poverty could lead to disability because of poor health. Example is that there is evidence that malnutrition leads to disability. "Other possible pathways include diseases whose incidence and prevalence are strongly associated with poverty, lack of inadequate public health interventions (e.g., immunization), poor living conditions (e.g., lack of safe water), environmental exposures (e.g., unsafe work environments), and injuries" (Mitra et al.2012). In reverse, disability also leads to poverty. Increased expenditure related to disability, adverse effectson education like preventing school attendance which has impacts on human capital accumulations and later on limited employment opportunities.

2.6 Facilitators In Employment Of PWD In Africa

In this part, I first discuss the good practices employers can implement to support the inclusion of PWD, then I list the networks for businesses and disability, as well as federations, that exist in Africa.

Good corporate practices on disability inclusion in Africa

Multinationals, small and medium enterprises based in Africa have started initiatives of good corporate practices on disability. During an online conference, hosted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2022, company leaders discussed what they did to foster inclusion in the African subsidiary of their company. These initiatives are either self-initiated or initiatives which resulted after campaigns from activists like "The Sight Savers". In what follows I will give a couple of examples, as mentioned during the webinar.

The African offices of BNP Paribas Fortis bank have started the process of recruiting talents from communities of PWD. They now regularly make communications both internally and externally on the importance of recruiting PWD. The Ugandan Breweries is another company which has taken the initiative to hire PWD, after being mobilised by "The Sight Savers"-organisation in the country. It has set up an employment quota of 2.4 % for PWD and will start handing out internship opportunities to PWD who are still in schools. In Ivory coast, Iccor hotel, a hotel chain frequently organizes job dating for PWD who are interested in working in the hospitality industry, as one of the staff in the human resources department is a PWD. Another outstanding company is the Signs Media in Kenya which makes digital applications to aid in communication for persons with visual and hearing impairments. 60% of the employees of Signs media are PWD (ILO, 2022).

The Standard Chartered Bank is building an inclusive culture which should make it the best bank to work in Kenya. It has provided reasonable accommodations for its employees who have disabilities, for example, it has provided screen readers for the visual impaired staff. The ATM machines for the banks are voice abled and the building have been made accessible to persons with all sorts of disability. The working hours have also been made flexible to accommodate persons with special needs. For L'Oreal in South-Africa, they have dedicated a part of their investment to make their workplace physically and emotionally safe to both persons with visible and invisible disabilities, in addition to their good corporate

practices (ILO webinar, 2022).

In the year 2015 Africa Disability Forum (ADF) was established as a membership organization for organizations of PWD in Africa. During the meeting the Council approved for ADF membership of 8 Continental DPOs, 4 Sub-Regional DPO Federations and 34 National DPO Federations (International disability Alliance). The four subregional DPO Federations are summarized in the table 1 below:

Table 1. Description of four sub-regional DPO federations

Sub-regional DPO	Description
Southern Africa federation of the disabled (SAFOD)	Ten countries in the Southern part of Africa have formed a federation made up of Organizations of PWD called SAFOD (Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled). The member countries are Malawi, Botswana, South Africa, Eswatini, Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Lesotho. The main objective of SAFOD is capacity building for their national affiliates so that they can advocate for the rights of PWD in line with the United Nations conventions for PWD. One of their eight flagship programs from SAFOD website is on economic empowerment and entrepreneurship. Under this program SAFOD seeks to actively influence strategies on economic empowerment of PWD through initiatives that support inclusive national policies, legislative, poverty reduction strategies and other related national development plans and programs. SAFOD says that PWD in SDAC face challenges of owning assets such as land and accessing credits. Of the ones who have been employed can be counted among the working poor. They have low pay, work in bad conditions and risk not getting pensions and health benefits (SAFOD,2022).
Central Africa Federation of the disabled (CAFOD)	Countries in the central region of Africa (Chad, Central Africa republic, Saotome and Principe, Gabon, Congo-Brazaville, Burundi, Rwanda, Gabon, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola and Equitorial Guinea) are connected by the economic community of central states (eccas). The Union was formed in 1983 with the objectives to of boosting peace and economic prosperity of the member states, (eccas,n.d). Although it is inactive, the union has been inactive for several years after its formation mainly because of lack of financial contribution of members fees and conflicts between member countries. In particular the war in the Republic of Congo where Rwanda and Congo were involved, (AU, n.d).It is indicated by the African disability forum (ADF) that member countries of central Africa have a one federation for PWD, but I was not able to find their website or an article written on their behalf. However, almost all member countries do have Disabled peoples' organizations (DPOs) on a national level which have active websites.

<p>West Africa Federation of PWD (WAFOD)</p>	<p>The West African Federation for persons for the disabled (WAFOD) was recently created to act as an umbrella for the organizations of the disabled for the West African countries. You can tell that it is recent because it has yet to have a presence on the internet but its activities can be seen through publications of other organizations. Example the vice president of WAFOD called for the implementation of disability law during a media briefing of ECOWAS (Economic community of West African states) on the international day of the disabled (Inclusive news network, 2021). ECOWAS a political and economic union of 15 countries. The community unveiled that it is to conduct a study in the region on inclusion of PWD in their society. ECOWAS also disclosed that it is going to include PWD in all its strata of the society (Olugbode, 2021).</p>
<p>Eastern Africa Federation of the disabled (EAFOD)</p>	<p>On a national level all partners of the East African community have policies measures on mainstream concern on disability. On a regional level, in the treaty signed by member countries, there is article 120 C which recognizes the social welfare of marginalized groups including the importance of empowering PWD (East African community). In February 2010, Kenya inaugurated the African Rehabilitation Institute which is an African Union specialized Agency for Disability prevention and Research in the Continent – the East African Region Office serves 12 countries that include; Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, Djibouti, Ethiopia, the Comoros, Somalia, Seychelles and Eritrea. The office provides a unified approach to issues of disabilities in all aspects such as the exchange of information, organizing for products in the field of rehabilitation, disability prevention and the analysis of national policies and laws for PWD (East African Community, 2012).</p>

National business and disability networks are organisations made up of businesses with the aim of promoting an inclusive employment corporate culture in the private sector. There are currently 5 national businesses and disability Networks in Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria and Uganda) all at national levels. They are at different maturity levels and majority are yet to be autonomous because they rely heavily on support from the NGOs. Services and products which benefit private companies who are members of these National business and disability networks are; trainings on inclusion, disability audits, assessing if business premises are accessible, events and workshops and so on (ILO, 2022).

The Nigerian National business and disability Network has been working to promote an inclusive business disability culture whereby the talent outreach, recruitment, talent acquisition should be all disability inclusive. Promotion of provision of flexible and reasonable accommodations, external and internal communication of disability inclusive policies and practices, accessible information and communication technology and many other business practices. In terms of membership 70% are from the private sector, 20% organizations or PWD and 10% development partners, and international NGO. Some of the Networks corporate members include multinationals like the British American Tobacco, Chevron Dina's mobile unit, Unilever, MTN, standard chartered amongst a wide range of others. Major benefits for these

members of being part of the Nigerian National business and disability network is reputation gain, increased retention of talents and increase in revenue from new talent acquisition from the PWD community. The Major draw backs faced by the network is negative attitudes encountered when mobilising new members from the private sector because stigma on disability dominates the society (ILO, 2022).

Technical and Vocational training (TVT) programs

Technical and vocational education trainings are among the few programs accepted and supported by governments and the UNCRPD to boost employment of PWD. However, these programmes are being shown by research that they are discriminative to persons with mental disabilities because they lack programs that suits them. 7% makes up the total of the number students with mental disabilities enrolled in these programmes, which is a very small percentage. Debates are yet to come to a conclusion in some countries whether mental illness are a form of disability or not, difficulties to distinguish between mental health and intellectual disabilities, with some organisations deciding to use global definitions of disability while others use local definitions (Ebuenyi et al., 2018).

There are numerous reasons why persons with mental disability are not being enrolled in technical and vocational training programmes in East Africa. For simplicity they are classified in two categories: cultural and structural reasons. From a cultural perspective there are many people who considers persons with mental disabilities to be violent, others have assumptions that persons with mental disability learn at a very slow pace and that they cannot keep up with their classmates. It is of the two mentioned reasons some would justify why persons with mental disabilities are segregated and sent to special schools. Employers are another category of persons with negative attitudes towards persons with mental disability, they assume that persons with mental disability are not productive, and they do not understand that persons with mental disability could be trained and be employed afterwards. Likewise, parents act as barriers to their children on being enrolled in technical and vocational educational and training programs. Parents with children who suffer from mental disabilities prevent their children from leaving their homes and interacting in the community, giving excuses of protecting them. Such parents live in ignorance and are not aware that they are denying their children their rights (Ebuenyi et al., 2018).

Some structural examples why persons with mental disability have been hindered from being enrolled into technical and vocational educational institutions are the fact that many technical and vocational training centres are not yet considering mental illness to be a form of disability act as a barrier for persons with mental disabilities from being enrolled in this type of special schools just like any other person with disability; some prerequisite like primary education certificate to get admission in technical and vocational education training institutions eliminates persons with mental disability since majority are denied a chance to join formal education from the beginning; Teachers lack special trainings on how to educate persons with mental disability and the programs available in vocational schools have not been adopted to fit persons with mental disability (Ebuenyi et al., 2018).

Of the many proposals brought forward to solve cultural and structural barriers of persons with mental

disability from benefiting from vocational schools are making programs in vocational schools flexible to fit persons with mental disability, equipping teachers with knowledge on how to educate persons with mental disabilities, career guidance's should be provided to persons with mental disability so that they can select professions they can endure, parents should play a big role in fighting for the rights and on monitoring on the progress of their children, persons with mental disability should as well be empowered so that they can be able to confront the negative attitudes they face in the society and lastly the government should be strict on monitoring policies and laws set to protect PWD (Ebuenyi et al., 2018).

Entrepreneurship as an alternative to employment for PWD

Entrepreneurship which has been one of the alternative fallbacks for PWD who have not been able to get employed or to maintain their employment due to negative perceptions from the employers or discrimination that they face in the work environment also has flaws: health challenges, lack of business knowledge, lack of capital, discrimination from financial institutions and suppliers are some of the major barriers PWD are facing in the entrepreneurship world (Jammaers & Zanoni, 2020). Lack of customers and access to startup capital are the major challenges faced by PWD in South Africa. PWD in South Africa are in poor paying jobs if they are lucky enough to get employed thus hindering them to raise savings to start businesses or to have collaterals like houses needed by banks in order to qualify for loans (Maziriri et al., 2016).

In a survey conducted in Rwanda and Kenya of business run by PWD had the following conclusions: The role of small businesses in the wellbeing of PWD, their families and communities cannot be overemphasized. These small businesses can be described as survivalist enterprises. They operate in the informal sector of the economy, mainly undertaken by unemployed persons. The income generated is very low, providing the minimum means to keep the unemployed and their families alive. Little capital is invested, there are not many assets. The main limitations are the lack of a support network that can help to mentor and nurture small business owners and correct negative institutional behaviors that make their business risky and not easy to predict (light for the world, 2015).

Recruitment Agencies of PWD in Africa

There are multiple international NGOs for PWD already present on the continent of Africa. Some of these international organizations working on the continent to help Africans with disability are: Able childcare, Inclusion International-Africa, Disability Africa, Africa disability Alliance, The International Council for the Education of People with Visual Impairments. These international organizations for PWD have missions which differ from each other, but majority mainly focus on children. Local Organizations for the disabled such as DPOs (Disabled Peoples Organizations) have also been able to organize themselves from regional to continental level like ADF (Africa disability forum) in order to have a bigger voice.

Despite these positive advancements of presence of NGOs of Persons of disability on the continent, we are yet to find a number of NGO's that specializes on employment of disabled people. It is only South

Africa that shows presence of recruitment agencies of PWD when you search on the internet. Some of these recruitment agencies of PWD that have top rankings are Clockwork recruitment, Disability Employment, Bradshaw le Roux, DWDE and Frogg recruitment. The idea of recruitment agencies of PWD could be borrowed by other African countries from South Africa to see if the number of unemployed PWD could reduce or see if the government could achieve the set target for employment of PWD on national levels. In a blog from the official website of DWDE 'your disability employment partner awareness campaign', CEO Ms. Undere Deglon says the following:

"Based on years of experience and lessons from other countries, we have developed a model to source, develop and place unemployed PWD into entry-level positions for the first time in their lives". DWDE a recruitment agency for PWD have set itself a target of employment of 1200 PWD in an open labor market. DWDE can source and train candidates for any type of entry-level position. These include call Centre agents, cashiers, shop assistants, customer service agents, packers, cleaners, hotel and kitchen staff and can help companies to meet their employment equity target of 2% (South Africa employment target for PWD) of their workforce comprising PWD. Shuaib Chalklen a UN special rapporteur who is supporting the campaign being carried out by DWDE of inclusive employment and because that it helps the government meet the 2% set target of PWD says that "Employment of people with disabilities is a key indicator of the successful integration of people with disabilities in society," (Undere).

Some of the PWD are as well taking initiatives to solve the problem of unemployment in their community (Hodal,2016). Frederick Ouko a Kenyan man who had no luck getting a job because of using a wheelchair, started an online platform that matches job seekers who have a form of disability to employers who have the obligations to hire them. Kenyan government has set an employment quota of 5% for public institutions and big enterprises. The website is called Riziki source and had already helped 10 PWD to get hired in 2016 when the Guardian paper wrote of his story.

3. METHODOLOGY

An estimated 80 million of PWD reside on the African continent (WHO, 2011) yet little is known about their living conditions especially on the labor market. My research tries to come up with this information by answering the following questions:

- (1) *What are the general barriers to employment for PWD in Africa?*
- (2) *How does the newspaper report on PWD's employment barriers in Rwanda?*

3.1 Data Collection And Sampling Method

There are three broad ways that can be used in the qualitative method to collect data in scientific research: through observations, through interviews and through extracting information from already existing written or audio and visual records (Pathak et al., 2013). I use a mixed, qualitative research method approach for this study to obtain information drawing both on primary (self-gathered) and secondary (existing) data.

On the one hand, by conducting individual **interviews** from participants in different parts of Africa on the one hand, I try to answer question one ("*What are the general barriers to employment for PWD in Africa?*"). The logic on why I chose to use the interview process is the nature of my research which tries to explore the experience faced by PWD on the labour market. The use of interview method to conduct research whose objectives are to explore participants experiences and believes have is highly recommended from different literatures. Semi-structured interviews are also recommended because they are more flexible than structured interviews (Alsaawi, 2014). The interviews were conducted through the help of a semi-structured interview guideline (interview guideline used is in the annex). Five of the seven interviews were conducted by use of video calls, using internet applications such as skype and google meet. Of the remaining two, one was conducted via an audio call using WhatsApp, while the other one was a face-to-face interview. It is advisable to record the interview due to the huge amount of information that can be collected in an interview and the limited memory of the interviewer (Alsaawi, 2014). All interviews were conducted during daytime at the convenience of the respondents. Some preferred weekdays while others preferred weekends when they were less busy. On average the interviews lasted between forty-five minutes and one hour and a half. The delays in the interviews were mostly caused by technical problems that resulted from poor internet connections from time to time. Data collection during individual interviews was conducted using audio recording. Later, the audio was transcribed to facilitate easy data analysis. Anonymity for individuals and research sites should be an ethical standard practice for educational research (Walford, 2005). To keep anonymity in our work we gave pseudo names to our respondents. I used popular African names from the regions participants come from as pseudo names in reporting findings of this research.

Participants come from six different African countries: Rwanda, Nigeria, South Africa, Malawi, Tanzania, and Botswana. All the participants had either a form of disability or worked in organizations of PWD. To find participants for the interviews I searched for organizations of PWD on the internet, and I contacted them via email addresses which I got from their websites on the internet and organized phone call conversations. However, there are some who turned me down by not following up the agreements to

participate in the interview. The below table (2) shows an overview of the seven participants who agreed to be interviewed. It is in 2020 that I conducted these interviews during the COVID 19 pandemic. The two criteria that I used while selecting participants were to have a sample composed of a gender balance and participants with different African nationalities in order to have different views from different parts of the continent. All participants could communicate in English apart from one who is a native Rwandese speaker.

Table 2. Overview of interview participants

PSEUDO NAMES	COUNTRY	GENDER	EMPLOYED	DISABLED
Rukundo	Rwanda	Male	No	Yes
Amani	Rwanda	Female	PHD	Yes
Furaha	Tanzania	Male	Yes	Yes
Rafiki	Malawi	Female	Yes	No
Malaika	Botswana	Male	No	Yes
Brenda	South Africa	Female	Yes	No
Davido	Nigeria	Male	Yes	Yes

On the other hand, I use the method of **newspaper article analysis**, to answer the second research question (*"How does the newspaper report on PWD's employment barriers in Rwanda?"*). I collected secondary data from digital archives of a Rwandese popular newspaper "The New Times". The reason to why I only decided to focus on newspaper reporting in Rwanda is that Rwanda has been criticised with freedom of expression (Human Rights Watch, 2022) and that PWD would not be comfortable to criticise their government to an individual they are not familiar to. The newspaper articles were searched through consulting the digital archives of the newspapers available at *newtimes.co.rw* and typing in the following search terms '*disability and employment*' and '*jobs for the disabled*'. All the articles retrieved are between year 2022 to year 2008. This resulted in 88 articles. In table 3, you can find the list of articles with titles and date of publication.

Table 3, list of articles with titles and date of publication

Number	Title	Date
1	Five challenges that persons with disabilities need addressed	December 08, 2022
2	A call to action as Rwandans marks international day for disability	December 03, 2022
3	Miss Rwanda contestants on using leadership skills to empower youth with disabilities	September 21, 2022
4	How Pinduoduo a Chinese e-commerce is changing lives of farmers	August 25, 2022
5	Rwandan cinematographer nominated for international film festival	August 16, 2022
6	Push for funds to create jobs for persons with disability	May 16, 2022
7	From Rwf 50 to Rwf 660 M savings: journey of people with disability	April 04, 2022
8	Disability and the workplace: Why inclusion matters	March 22, 2022
9	Rwandan looks for new effort to support persons with disability	March 06, 2022
10	Rwandan legislator roots for rights of persons with disabilities, revives push for regional law	March 03, 2022
11	A new smart white cane made in Rwanda	December 29, 2021
12	Visually impaired try their hand at offering massage therapy	December 20, 2021
13	10 highlights from the 2019-20 demographic and healthy survey.	December 15, 2021
14	Rwandan duo target Miss and Mr. international deaf crown	October 19, 2021
15	Mushrooms growing turns around Kigali's disabled persons livelihood	August 16, 2021
16	Habimana targets top prize at Australian's film festival	August 12, 2021
17	New inclusion policy of person with disability is an opportunity for all of us	August 02, 2021
18	How Rutsiro deaf farming is banking in pig farming and sign languages	April 05, 2021
19	Young innovator: why strengthening digital coding is key	December 22, 2020
20	Over 1200 living with disability to benefit from new skilling project	December 03, 2020
21	The impact of covid-19 on women living with disabilities	December 03, 2020
22	Digital access: urgent need to include persons with disability	October 03, 2020
23	Mime restaurant: Rwanda's only disability facility set to open	February 04, 2020
24	Human Rights Day	December 11, 2019
25	Call for job quota for persons living with disability	December 09, 2019

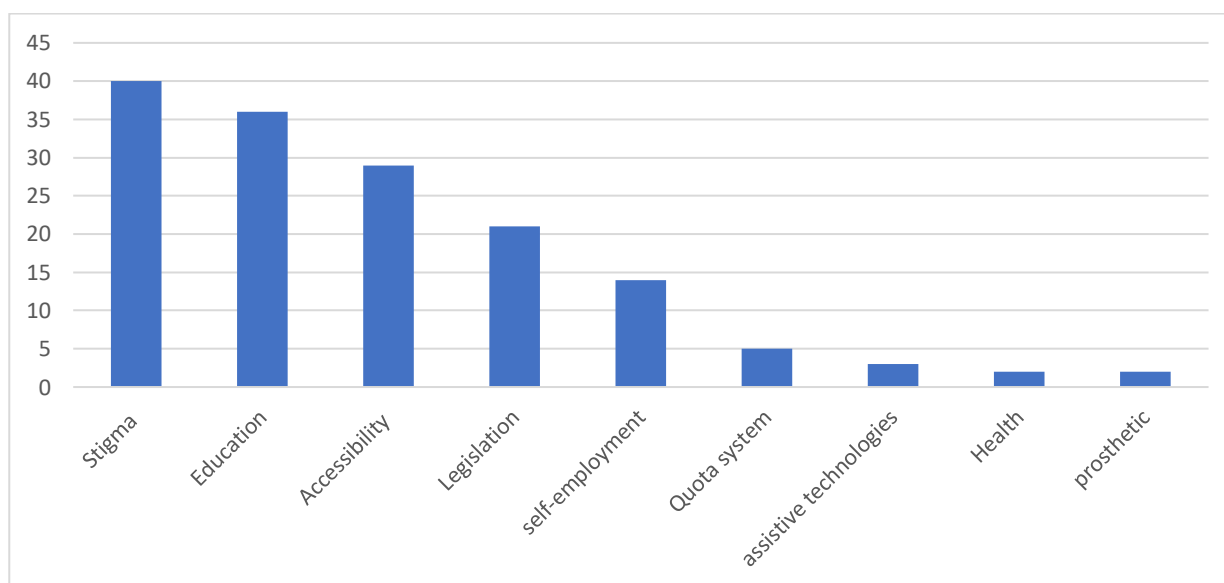
26	Disability didn't deter Mutembereza from pursuing his entrepreneurship dream	November 20, 2019
27	Talking through art: empowering women with disability	October 09, 2019
28	Govt to introduce a local sign language dictionary	August 10, 2019
29	Pwds push for accessible public buildings	August 02, 2019
30	Chinese adopt sign language to treat deaf, mute patients	March 21, 2019
31	Albinism: a woman's plight	January 16, 2019
32	Govt to create 2000 jobs for disabled people	November 27, 2018
33	Respecting Pwd not a favour, but an obligation -NCPD	November 27, 2018
34	Social security for all should be a priority – ilo official	November 26, 2018
35	Uwezo changing lives for persons with disabilities	October 13, 2018
36	Disabled people outline expectations as they pick representatives to house	September 03, 2018
37	Facebook signs new deal to end ad discrimination on its platform	July 27, 2018
38	A disabled child is not a curse-Kaboneka	June 27, 2018
39	National council of persons with disability (NCPD) hails government to boost employment	June 17, 2018
40	Tuyishimire on life struggle as a dwarf	January 10, 2018
41	When welfare sabotages lives	December 28, 2017
42	How massage therapy is changing lives of the visually impaired persons	December 23, 2017
43	How are beauty queens fairing with Imihigo	October 05, 2017
44	Counting what counts in development	September 14, 2017
45	Leaving no one behind: was this a campaign slogan or RPF's integral policies?	August 09, 2017
46	Rwandan film makers nominated for global film award	July 27, 2017
47	Decent work or indecent politics	January 26, 2017
48	Changing schools: things you should know before taking the decision	January 03, 2017
49	BDF extends financial access to the disabled through sacco	December 08, 2016
50	Speed up process of insurance for disability aids, plwd tells govt	December 06, 2016
51	The evolving independent economy	November 10, 2016
52	African countries to adopt youth connect initiatives	September 28, 2016
53	EAC councils for people with disability to seek closer cooperation	August 10, 2016
54	Know your rights: special care for persons with disability	April 26, 2016
55	Addressing disability through film	March 12, 2016
56	EAC should consult PLWDs on policy plans	March 10, 2016
57	EAC states seeks common strategy to support persons with disability	March 10, 2016
58	First lady tasks youth to inspire Rwandans vision	December 12, 2015

59	Rwanda to observe world's disability day	December 02, 2015
60	More clarity needed on unemployment figures	July 31, 2015
61	Special needs education: more schools jobs needed	November 18, 2014
62	A dutch cure for the dutch disease	January 17, 2014
63	Move to promote sign language a step in the right direction	December 31, 2013
64	Police, medics to learn the sign language	December 29, 2013
65	200 street beggars train in life skills	September 09, 2013
66	Magical tricycle turns around fortune for Rubavu disabled	August 19, 2013
67	At last, the planning phase is done, Edprs 2 is finally endorsed	May 19, 2013
68	Handling people with special needs	March 26, 2013
69	Employing Plwds remains a special challenge	February 04, 2013
70	New program to fight stigma of Plws	December 12, 2012
71	Focus on NGOs: voluntary service over sees: Impacting lives through voluntarism	October 09, 2012
72	Visually impaired decry stigma	September 18, 2012
73	National census targets 390,000 families a day	August 17, 2012
74	Disabled ex- combatants to get Rwf 60M facility	April 10, 2012
75	Respect the rights of persons with disabilities	March 21, 2012
76	Disabled decry lack of job opportunities	March 20, 2012
77	The paradox of ability	January 07, 2012
78	Towards EDPRS ideals: community development, social protection, empowering communities and transforming lives	October 15, 2011
79	Adequate midwifery could save 3.6 million lives, report says	June 22, 2011
80	Stakeholders discuss right of people with mental disabilities	June 05, 2011
81	People with disability fight for their rights and dignity	May 08, 2010
82	Seek insurance before it is too late	April 24, 2010
83	Fibromyalgia: a treatable problem	December 26, 2009
84	EDPRS: Rwanda's need for social security sector	November 08, 2009
85	EDPRS: Convergence of the national social security programme	May 17, 2009
86	EDPRS: mainstreaming gender with health, education, and security sectors	February 22, 2009
87	EDPRS: Rwanda making strides in human resource development	December 07, 2008
88	Focusing on the rights of those with disabilities	July 27, 2008

Table 4. Account of theme development on the barriers of employment of PWD in Rwanda in The new times articles

Themes	Frequency
1. Attitude / discrimination /Stigma / misconception	40
2. Education / skillset development	36
3. Accessibility (Buildings, sign language, Finance).	29
4. Legislation / Policy / Law	21
5. Self-employment / entrepreneurship	14
6. Quota system	5
7. Assistive technologies	3
8. Health	2
9. Prosthetic	2

Figure 1. A bar chat representation of developed themes on employment barriers of PWD in Rwanda from The new times.



3.2 Data Analysis

I used a thematic content analysis method to analyse the qualitative data, both for interviews and for newspaper analysis. I chose the thematic content analysis because it is considered to be the most foundational of qualitative analytical procedures and in some ways informs all qualitative methods (Anderson, 2007). There are mainly four steps followed during data analysis: immersion in the data, coding of the data, creating categories and then identifying the themes (Green et al., 2007).

The findings of the data analysis are organised in two sections whereby each section reports the findings of each research question. Table 4 offers an overview of the themes for each section.

Table 5. Overview of the coded themes

Themes coded based on the interviews for Africa in general	Themes coded based on the newspaper analysis for the case of Rwanda
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Attitude as a major barrier faced by PWD in Africa 2) Discrimination during hiring phase. 3) Inaccessible transport system and lack of reasonable accommodations within workplaces. 4) Lack of law enforcement measures and government incentives. 5) Poverty and unaffordable assistive technologies. 6) Lack of access to education and a need of skillset development for PWD. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Stigma as a disabling factor in Rwanda 2) Inaccessible buildings and technologies for PWD 3) Legislate reform and quota needs 4) From begging to saving and an entrepreneurial culture 5) The role of education and skillset development in boosting employment.

4. FINDINGS

The analysis of the findings is organized in two big sections. In the first section (4.1 Disability and employment in Africa), I answer the first research question: *“What is the state of PWD on the African labor markets?”*. Based on interviews conducted with experts across Africa, I discover the following themes: (1) Attitude as a major barrier faced by PWD (2) Discrimination during hiring phase; (3) Inaccessible transport system and lack of reasonable accommodations within workplaces, (4) Lack of law enforcement measures and government incentives, (5) Poverty and unaffordable assistive technologies, and finally (6) Lack of access to education and a need of skillset development for PWD.

In the second section of the findings (4.2 Disability and employment in Rwanda), I answer the second research question: *“What meaning is given to disability in Rwanda and how is employment discussed in relation to PWD in the newspaper?”* through an analysis of newspaper article, published in The New Times, between 2008-2022. The themes that came out of the thematic analysis of these newspaper were the following: (1) A need for legislation reforms and quota for PWD (2) A shift from begging to an entrepreneurial culture, (3) Inaccessible environment for PWD, (4) The role of education and skillset development in boosting employment, and lastly (5) The need to fight social stigma against PWD in Rwanda.

4.1 Disability And Employment In Africa: General Findings From The Interviews

Stigma As A Major Barrier Faced By PWD In Africa

Social stigma exists on the African continent as a barrier to development to many social groups, one of the social groups which has been victimized by this social disaster is the community of PWD. Judgments towards PWD is often done based on stereotype thinking or are influenced by cultural beliefs from African traditions if not ancient religious believes. One of the interview participants shared his story of how he was refused into an interview room and treated as a beggar when he attended an interview which he had been invited to until he had to explain himself to the receptionist. These paints a picture of some heart-breaking experiences PWD goes through before they land themselves a job. They are viewed as objects of mercy as another interview participant puts it.

“Before I got my first job, there was a company that had scheduled an interview with me. I remember very well that it was on a Wednesday, when I got there the receptionist had refused to let me into the interview. She told me that the day was not a beggar’s day and that I should come on another day. I had to insist that she confirm with her boss, and she finally let me in. People should not judge others by their cover. Unfortunately, I did not get the job there”
(Furaha, program manager who uses a wheelchair, Tanzania).

"There is a behavior barrier between PWD and the society. Many people still see PWD as objects of mercy. My schooling was not easy at all because People have a mentality that disabled people are objects of mercy, but because of courage I made it "(Davido, digital content manager with a disability, Nigeria).

"Another problem is with people's attitude, people who think that disabled people are not able (Amani, PHD with a disability, Rwanda)".

The prejudice of many employers is that PWD are not capable of doing what persons without disability can do, regardless of them having the same competences and diplomas.

"From my experience it shows that the main problem is that employers don't trust that PWD can do the work done by normal people. Some are even turned down to do an interview when the employers realize that the job seeker is a PWD. We find a number of PWD with good diplomas and good education who can't find a job because of this reason" (Furaha, program manager who uses a wheelchair, Tanzania).

Change of attitude and getting rid of misconceptions about disability could be of great importance. It could reduce the rate of discrimination PWD get on the job markets from their colleagues and employers. This is very possible through continued advocacy and education programs which could be initiated by responsible parties.

"There should be a change of mindset. Advocacy and education should be continued on the subject especially to employers" (Davido, content manager with disability, Nigeria).

Discrimination During Hiring Phase

Problem of accessibility does not just end at the education level. The level of job search is also difficult. It is a level where a number of PWD are eliminated despite having accumulated the competencies and skill set required by various employers. As one of the participants says that the majority of PWD miss out on job opportunities after finishing school because they don't get a chance to get to the interview phase.

"What I can add is that PWD don't just miss out on job opportunities because they failed the interview, the majority of them don't even get a chance to get there to the interview stage. The system eliminates them right at the beginning of schooling". (Amani, PHD with a disability, Rwanda).

The recruitment process is not inclusive at all. Job advertisements made on newspapers do not consider persons who are blind and it's very hard to find job offers which are written in braille. Majority of them live in poverty and cannot afford assistive technologies to help them follow up on job offers. Another challenge or ignorance that exists in the recruitment phase is the interview stage. Human resources are

not trained to communicate to Persons with disabilities search as the death or the blind. This is another cause of elimination of PWD from the job market as said by the participants.

"All the levels of employment for people with disabilities are difficult. It is hard for blind people to read employment opportunities because all the job advertisements are not braille and most of them do not have assistive technologies to read the communications. The interview stage, it is very difficult for the human resources to communicate with people who are deaf and in case of employment, the problem of accessibility and accommodation arises" (Amani, PHD with a disability, Rwanda).

Another common *indirect type* of discrimination is of employers putting job requirements which PWD cannot fulfill despite having competences for the job offer. This is one of the examples we got from the interviews.

"Some companies are still discriminating against PWD, and they do it in a discreet way. They may put a criterion like having a driving permit as a condition to apply. This criterion indirectly eliminates PWD (Brenda, Social assistant, South Africa)".

Discrimination from employment opportunities makes person with disability live with difficulties in life and get trapped in poverty that are difficult to come out from because, they cannot get sources of revenues. PWD who lack education suffer more than PWD who have at least some competences as one of the interview participants expresses.

"Imagine a person like me who has competence and experience and yet cannot be hired, you can as well imagine for yourself what people without competences go through. I want to tell you the truth, earlier I said that 90% are not employed in the statistics that I had mentioned. Well, 80% of this live-in poverty, they live in very low social economies". (Rafiki, Volunteer at a PWD Organization, Botswana).

[Inaccessible Transport Systems And Lack Of Reasonable Accommodations At Workplaces](#)

The lucky few who get job opportunities still experience difficulties in their work environment including other forms of discriminations like in transport prices. Accessing the work site for PWD is a challenge, the public transport is not inclusive and does not have places for wheelchair users. Many with this type of disability will opt for private transport which is expensive and cannot be affordable by all. Some taxi drivers also refuse to transport them as we have heard from one of the participants.

Accessing the workplace is still a big problem for PWD. Sometimes employers demand me to give them about 10 PWD for a traineeship program but a number of these PWD cannot afford the taxi fee to get to the site. Some taxis don't even transport them or even charge them double

the price. Others are not able to attend interviews because of this problem. I find COVID 19 to have at least provided a solution to this problem. Working at a distance and using applications like teams. (Brenda, Social assistant, South Africa).

Employers do not respect universal accommodations and miss out on simple aspects like having fire alarms which have light signals for deaf employees. Infrastructures with no lifts or pavements for wheelchair users are common in Africa. Companies should put in effort and provide accommodations for PWD.

Companies employing PWD should provide them with accessibility and universal accommodations. Example when you have a deaf employee, the fire alarm in the building should not only be composed of the bell but should have the light signals (Amani, Social assistant, South Africa).

The public transport systems in Africa are yet to be inclusive. Many PWD prefer using private modes of transport which are expensive to get to work interviews because they don't have alternatives. One of the participants shared his experience in the job search as follows.

The biggest problem I had was transportation. Lagos is a populous city, and the transport out there is not friendly to PWD (Davido, content manager with disability, Nigeria).

The employers are also not cooperative enough. They don't provide allowances to their employees who are struggling to access work sites. PWD tend to pay much on transport and don't find it fair to get the same salaries as persons who have no disabilities and who can use public transport which is cheaper.

People with disabilities should not be given an equal amount of transport as ordinary people. This is not fair because disabled people tend to spend more on transport than other people. (Amani, PHD with a disability, Rwanda).

[Lack of Law enforcement measures and incentives to employ PWD from the governments](#)

Laws and rights on disability already exist in almost all African countries' constitutions but the main problem remains the aspect of implementation and monitoring as most of the participants have expressed. The enforcement of the law is poor in African countries and because of this reason some could as well consider them as non-existing.

"Second is the enforcement of the law and monitoring. Without law enforcement, it means that laws are only pieces of papers (Amani, PHD with a disability, Rwanda). "

"For the government, they should ensure that laws of inclusivity of people with disability are enforced, and they should monitor that the laws were enforced (Furaha, program manager who uses a wheelchair, Tanzania)."

Another criticism brought forward on the existing laws on disability in some parts of Africa is that they are not comprehensive. They are not detailed as other laws are, they don't say what punishments and penalties should be given to citizens (employers) who will not adhere to them.

"The existing laws are not comprehensive; they are not inclusive. These laws should also be well detailed and defined on the part of inclusivity. This will help people to understand the laws. Example laws on gender should give detailed explanations of what is gender equality and what it means to violate these laws. Most of our laws are not well defined (Amani, PHD with a disability, Rwanda). "

Campaigns are as well needed to educate employers on the existence of disability laws. One of the participants who was part of a team conducting a study of PWD on the labor markets of Tanzania shares thus that good laws do exist, but most employers have no knowledge of them. Lack of knowledge of laws and rights of PWD could as well be resulting from lack of enforcements made by the government.

"When I started working for CCBRT we did a survey on 125 private companies in Dar es Salaam if they knew of the law. Majority of them had no knowledge of the law and we found out that only 0.7% of the employees had disabilities. This is an indication that we have good law, but it is not being adhered to. They lack the aspect of enforcement" (Furaha, program manager who uses a wheelchair, Tanzania).

Employers should be educated on the rights and laws on inclusivity which exist in their countries. Change of mentality is required from employers to start seeing PWD as potential employees and as costs to their companies.

"We still need to make awareness to the employers on the capabilities and the potentials of PWD to work so that they recognize it. They should also know the legal requirements and that they should comply with it. They should not see people with disability as costs to the companies but rather as an obligation that all marginalized people have the right to work" (Amani, PHD with a disability, Rwanda).

Also, PWD themselves need to be educated on rights and laws that protects them as some of the participant's stress.

"To the people with disabilities, they should know their rights to work and be proactive. They should know the laws and rights that protect them and whom to hold accountable" (Furaha, program manager who uses a wheelchair, Tanzania).

The above point could be true because as one of the participants mentioned earlier that despite the school having infrastructure that is not inclusive, he never asked for modification since he did not know his rights. This could be the case to many persons living with disability.

"I had the chance to go to private schools which are better off than public schools. There was no inclusivity on infrastructures at my school, but I would say that I was also naive for not knowing my rights. Maybe I could have made some demands about it "(Davido, content manager with disability, Nigeria).

There is progress which has been made on the aspects of laws and rights of PWD. However, gaps which need to be bridged still exist and may differ from country to country. Taking Tanzania as an example, they have good laws for PWD but yet they don't have parliament representatives for this community.

"The system has not given us representatives, if a person with disability wants to get to parliament, he has to register himself for election just like anyone else". (Furaha, program manager who uses a wheelchair, Tanzania).

PWD should be included in all areas of management committees to present their interests. This way ignorance on the topic would be reduced.

"PWD should be included in the boards of decision makers. they understand better the problems that affect them. Most decisions are made even without consulting PWD" (Amani, PHD with a disability, Rwanda).

There is a big number of companies who don't employ PWD because they are afraid of costs that might be associated with these jobs, for example provision of the necessary accommodations. Government interventions through financial incentives could be offered to employers in the form of tax incentives, supporting workplace modification to help employers to manage additional costs of hiring PWD etc.

"Again, they should create environments that attract employers to hire people with disabilities. For example, they could provide subsidies, exempt taxes or provide facilities to companies hiring people with disabilities. They should cater to the problem of accessibility to the workplace. These would make companies stop seeing PWD as costs" (Furaha, program manager who uses a wheelchair, Tanzania).

This would motivate employers to be considerate in employing PWD and calculate the employment as a benefit instead of a cost. Governments are not doing as much as they are required to and private companies are neither going to find incentives to hire PWD if governments do not participate.

"When we ask employers, the answer is that hiring a PWD will require special accommodations for that individual. The government is not supporting us on the issue and the companies are not ready to take up these costs. If governments would give tax exemption to companies which employ PWD I think it would help" (Furaha, program manager who uses a wheelchair, Tanzania).

Poverty And Unaffordable Assistive Technologies

Scientists have already developed numerous technologies that can assist PWD to navigate through their daily lives. However very few are able to afford them because of poverty and of these technologies being expensive. Simple government intervention such as tax exemption on these gadgets is called upon.

"I went to a regular school from primary up to university. At primary I was staying at home and my parents bought me a three-wheel chair, you can imagine for the ones whose parents can't afford it "(Furaha, program manager who uses a wheelchair, Tanzania).

"The policy makers should also be made aware of these technologies so that they exempt customs and taxes on them. If people with disabilities can afford these gadgets, then they will have a chance to transform their lives" (Malaika, project manager in SFOD, Botswana).

Not all are able to afford school fees and the ones who go to school cannot afford assistive technologies to keep up with the school programs which are not adopted to them.

"Most of these children can't afford assistive devices, how many families in Rwanda can afford Rwf 300,000 per year to get their children in rehabilitation centers? I was lucky my parents could afford rehabilitation centers and to buy me assistive devices." But the majority of the families cannot do so (Amani, PHD with a disability, Rwanda).

Inaccessible Education And A Need For Skillset Development For PWD In Africa

The school fees for rehabilitation centers are too expensive for PWD coming from an ordinary family in developing countries to afford. Participants who had a form of disability considered themselves lucky for having come from families that are well off. Because of poverty which prevents them the opportunity of being educated is the same reason that majority of them don't know their rights and are taken advantage of.

"According to the UN statistics, people with disabilities are among the poorest and for these reasons the least educated. This is the reason the majority of them don't know of their rights.

For this reason, some employers take advantage of them” (Malaika, project manager in SFOD, Botswana).

Most of the schools in Africa are not friendly to PWD, they lack the necessary infrastructures needed by PWD to navigate in school environments. Public schools are worse off than private schools but private schools are way much more expensive in Africa. Only a few of the many can afford them. People with disabilities who get a chance to go to private schools consider themselves to be lucky. This is what our participants had to say.

“I had the chance to go to private schools which are better off than public schools. There was no inclusivity on infrastructures at my school, but I would say that I was also naive for not knowing my rights. Maybe I could have made some demands about it” (Davido, content manager with disability, Nigeria).

Much ignorance about requirements in infrastructure for PWD also exists in the administration of these schools. Despite the schools showing the will to accommodate PWD like having parking reserved for PWD, they miss out on many aspects that are important for PWD, for example lack braille languages on signals.

“Generally, most of the schools are not friendly to PWD. Once a school has a reserved space for PWD or modified infrastructures, they think that they are disability friendly. They forget that braille and sign languages are equally important” (Davido, content manager with disability, Nigeria).

Specialized job training, individually tailored supervision, transportation, assistive technology and employment coaching enable PWD to learn and perform better in their jobs. Supported employment can integrate people with disabilities into the competitive labor market. Setting up recruitment agencies specialized for PWD could do a tremendous job as South Africa has started doing. Recruitment agencies can help PWD to develop skills, search for jobs, develop interview skills and identify companies that already are open to employing PWD. As per the interviews, we found out that some PWD have competencies but lack the skills to present them. Addressing this problem could have positive outcomes.

“Another problem is that PWD lacks skills to look for jobs, examples, skills to do interviews, skills to write CV etc. This is caused by the way they are molded up.” (Furaha, program manager who uses a wheelchair, Tanzania).

Vocational schools for PWD are a necessity just as there are vocational schools for persons without disabilities. These are useful for persons who did not get the chance to complete normal school programs. They could as well help persons who get disabilities at a later age in life and need to adapt to the new way of living. The technical training gives skill sets that are on demand on the job market and help them to secure employment as well as possibilities of becoming entrepreneurs.

"Advocacy is needed for the youth who did not attend or finish schools. We need programs that can teach us technical skills. There is a need for vocational schools. This training can help us to get jobs or to create our own (Rukundo, Jobless, lost one leg in an accident, Rwanda).

Organizations of PWD representing the interests of PWD in Africa do exist but are yet to be considered efficient. Of the few reasons given of their lack of efficiency are lack of qualified PWD to run them,

"Like I told you earlier, DPOs are fully run by PWD, this is a challenge because the majority of them lack quality education. This might be the main reason DPOs are not efficient when it comes to fighting for their rights or making the government accountable" (Malaika, project manager in SFOD, Botswana).

4.2 Disability and Employment In Rwanda: Findings From The Newspaper Analysis

In this section, I zoom in on the case of Rwanda. Rwanda, although celebrating the International Day of PWD (December 3) and although having ratified the UN CRPPD, suffers from an extremely low employment rate for PWD (only 1.2% of PWD are employed) (Dushimimana, 2018, November 27). Although progress to make the country become inclusive to PWD is being noted, there are some challenges which should be addressed for PWD to be fully integrated in the country eco-system.

I use the methodology of news paper article analysis to further investigate the issues in this country and answer the second research question: *"What meaning is given to disability in Rwanda and how is employment discussed in relation to PWD in the newspaper?"*. Specifically I based my analysis on articles published about the topic of "disability and employment", in the period of 2008-2022, in one popular English Rwandan newspaper named "The New Times Rwanda".

The themes that came out of the thematic analysis of these newspaper were the following: (1) Attitude as a disabling factor in Rwanda, (2) Inaccessible building and technologies for PWD, (3) Legislate reform and quota needs, (4) From begging to saving and an entrepreneurial culture (5) The role of education and skillset development in boosting employment. I discuss these themes in what follows.

Attitude As a Disabling Factor In Rwanda.

A first theme that came out of the Rwandan "The New Times"-newspaper article analysis, was the theme of attitude as a disability factor in Rwanda. Just like in many countries of Africa whereby stereotype thinking dominates the way PWD are perceived, is the same as in Rwanda whereby culture still influences on how Rwandans perceive and treat PWD. Many people in Rwanda perceives PWD to be useless and dependent, they are classified in their own category regardless their ethnicity group or gender, and their

disabilities are generalized. A PWD of visual impairment is automatically generalized to be blind, deaf and the same time lame (of mental disability). Women who are PWD are worse of when it comes to stigmatization and some who have mental disabilities do get sexually abused and are not considered to be fertile by the community. These type of cultural believes in the society are some of the major root causes of PWD being limited on the Rwandan job market. Consider the following newspaper fragment as exemplary to this issue:

"What is it that you do when you come across someone impaired? Let me guess, before you look at their chest to see if they have breasts or not or even their skin color so you can categorize them, your eyes go straight to the wheelchair or to the disabled part of their body" (The New Times, 2012, January 07).

There is stigma towards PWD in the society of Rwanda, when Madam Mukankuranga, 45 years of age now, lost her right arm in a car accident, she was left by her husband and family and friends started to take distance from her because she was seen as a burden. As a strategy to avoid prejudice from the society, she adopted a Muslim dressing style as a way to hide her disability. She later in life ventured into entrepreneurship in selling secondhand clothes in Nyabugogo market, although she had developed a source of revenue, landlords turned her down when they discovered her disability and thought that she was not going to be capable to pay her rent, finding a house was a big challenge for her. She explains the struggles in the following fragment:

"At times I have to send someone, or go there when I have covered my body, so that they can't tell that I don't have an arm. We face so many challenges, but stigma has always been too much to handle," (The New Times, 2019, October 09).

An officer at the United Nations development program (UNDP) in Rwanda, stresses on the fact that negative attitude in the Rwanda society is a disabling factor faced by PWDs. She mentions that it is almost impossible for a deaf person to become a doctor in this country because one of the reasons being that majority of Rwandans mindset don't believe that a deaf person can be a doctor, the second reason being lack of sign languages in the Rwandan medical education system. She also criticized on how the society sees persons with albinism as less intelligent than the non-albinism because when put to sit in front rows of their classrooms and when notes given to them are printed in larger fonts, their performances improve and can compete with their fellow students. She considers this type of mindset to be contributing to the already existing disabling factors in the society:

"Consider the situation of a deaf person dreaming to become a medical doctor; she/he cannot succeed without the use of sign language in medical school. The person may also miss this opportunity due to the widespread belief that deaf people cannot be doctors. She/he will be disabled by the attitude of others, or by societal barriers, not by her/his impairment or difference", (The New Times, 2021, August 02).

Persons with albinism faces rejections in different aspects of life, in schooling to family in laws and in seeking employment, because of social stigma. Irakoze, a 65-year-old woman with albinism, gives a

testimony of how she once dropped out of primary school because of being bullied on her of albinism but got back after encouragement from the family. She also mentions of how it was difficult for her, spending 3 years, to get a job regardless her master's degree in business administration because companies are afraid of hiring persons with albinism in Rwanda. Many PWD in Rwanda live in poverty because of dropping out in school caused by bullying and vision impairments, they also find it hard to engage in activities like farming because majority cannot afford sunscreens because of being vulnerable to skin cancer, (The New Times,2019, January 16). Persons with Dwarfism are another group of PWD facing harassment because of stigmatism in the Rwanda society. They are insulted and made fun of from time they children and continues to the time they are grownups because of they are small in size. They also complain of discriminations in the job market. They say it's very hard for them to pass interviews because they have been labelled 'less able'. Consider the following fragment:

"If one passes exams and goes to the interview level, they are asked questions which undermine them. They are asked how they will be punctual as they don't have speed in walking, how they will sit, and other ridiculous questions just to show them that they don't fit in at the workplace," (The new times,2018, January 10).

The social stigma towards PWD in Rwanda is to an extent of some parents hiding their children from the public, something the ministry of local government and social affairs discourages, (The New Times,2016, March 10).

[Inaccessible Buildings and Technologies For PWD](#)

A second theme that came out of the Rwandan "The New Times"-newspaper article analysis, was the theme of inaccessible buildings and technologies for PWD. There is need for an investment in modifying the environment in Rwanda to adapt to the needs of PWD. Public buildings in the country are not considerate to PWD. Also digital technologies like financial applications and communication tools are not inclusive and do not have in mind that PWD also do make financial transactions. Progress has been noted in some areas of accessibility, especially in PWD accessing financing for their own businesses, however a lot of effort is needed for Rwanda to be at the required international level. Below, we take a look at some of the information on accessibility from The New Times newspaper.

PWD in Rwanda, and in the whole of East African community at large, lack access to digital technologies. Most electronic gadgets like computers and mobile phones exclude PWD. As a result, PWD in the country do not have access to modern means of communication. PWD also face exclusion on digital applications, platforms used for banking, education, and remote working. These kind of exclusivity limits their capabilities and sources of information. Other challenges faced by PWD in the country is unavailable assistive technologies and devices for PWD, and telecommunication companies that do not provide information that are in formats that are inclusive to PWD. Consider the following fragment that sums up this issue:

"Aside from gaps in service delivery and prejudice and stigma they suffer, barriers to full social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities include non-adapted means of

communication and unavailability of assistive devices and technologies”, (The New Times, 2020, October 03).

Although there is a slight progress in making public buildings in Rwanda accessible to PWD, much work is yet to be done. Some of the noted positive progress are: introduction of government regulations on accessibility of public buildings in Rwanda, issue of building permits after checking if the building designs meets the required regulation before they are constructed, introduction of penalties of 50€ up to 5000€ to persons who do not abide by the regulations (the penalty depends on the size of the building) and the dismissing of the government officers who do not monitor this regulations. Accessibility of public buildings in Rwanda is very low, including government buildings. PWD find it very hard to move around in these buildings. Most of the buildings which are termed as “disability friendly” are only accessible physically but miss out braille signages visual alarms to persons who have visual and hearing impairments. Laws on disability are often neglected by institutions which have the responsibility to implement them, for example is the Rwanda Housing Authority (RHA) which is responsible for building regulation in the country was not accessible to PWD by the time this article was written in 2019. Consider the following newspaper fragment as exemplary to this issue:

“We feel that the government needs to take the lead in implementation. A number of its buildings do not facilitate people with disabilities and even when we inspect some private buildings, we are always challenged by the same issue,” (The New times, 2019, August 02).

Persons with dwarfism are among the groups of PWD who fall victim to inaccessible buildings in the country are and who lack advocacy on this problem. They complain of public buildings with bathrooms which are not considerate to them, ATM machines at the banks which are placed way up high for them to reach and black boards in school rooms which are also higher for them to reach during class activities. Consider the following newspaper fragment as exemplary to this issue:

“Others can’t find services they need because of their physical disabilities, for example in banks, little people can’t reach the tellers because they are high and there are no other options for them. This is the same challenge faced with people with physical impairment,” (The New times, 2018, January 10).

Legislate Reform and Quota Needs

A Third theme that came out of the Rwandan “The New Times”-newspaper article analysis, was the theme of legislation reform and quota needs. According to the Rwandan “Ministry of Public Service, Skills Development and Labour”, PWD are discriminated against on-the-job market regardless of having the same qualifications as the non-disabled job applicants (The New Times, 2008). Rwanda is a country devoted to protecting all its population, including PWD, from any form of discrimination, as Article 18 on the Disabled Rights is related to employment and prohibits any form of discrimination towards PWD on the labor market. Despite the presence of this law, social stigma towards PWD in Rwanda is present

and PWD are facing rejections and are called diminishing names (like "ikimuga", "igikumba", "ikigoryi") which degrades their self-esteem. Consider the following newspaper fragment as exemplary to this issue:

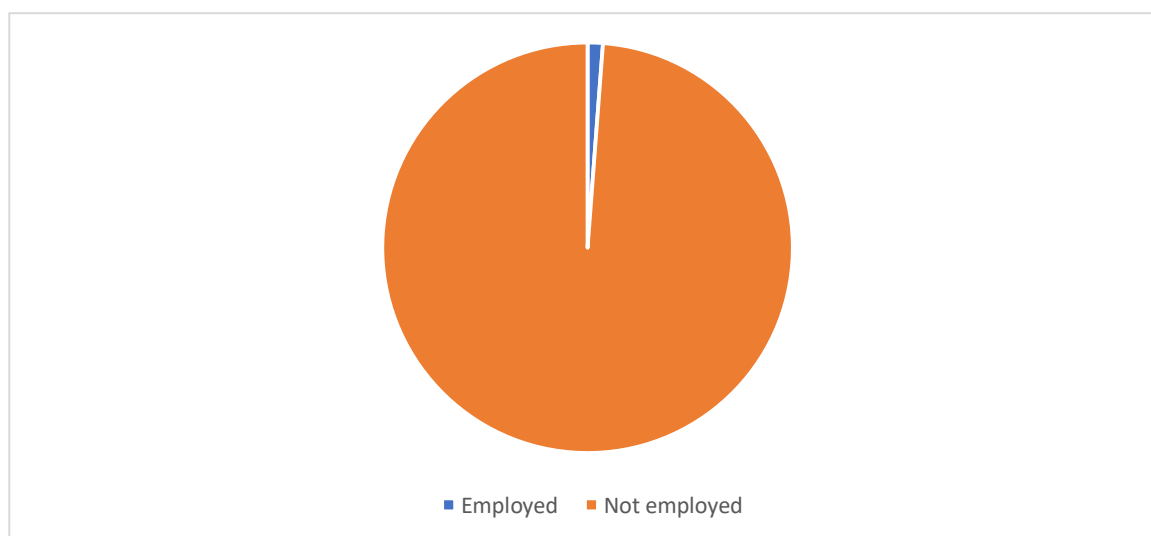
"I was also a victim of the abusive names, we have the right to good, sounding and meaningful names, people should stop calling us such names," (The new times,2008, July 17).

Mukeshimana, a university graduate from the University of Rwanda, who is visually impaired stresses on the need to revise laws for PWD. She shares her experience on how she is given a paper and a pen when she attends written exams for job recruitments, "There is lack of provision of reasonable accommodations for PWD in recruitment processes in Rwanda making almost impossible for PWD to pass exam interviews"she says. Most employers do not abide with the existing laws which forbids the discrimination of PWD on the Rwandan job market hence forth the need of employment quotas of PWD which does not exists in Rwanda, and which can reduce the number of many unemployed qualified candidates. Consider the following newspaper fragment as exemplary to this issue:

"There is a pressing need for the Government to put in place a 'quota system' whereby employers should be required to dedicate at least 5 per cent of positions to persons living with disability", (The new times, 2019, December 09).

Rwanda is among the few countries in the world which have yet to implement employment quotas for its PWD. Activists are putting on pressure to the government to put up a law of 5% quota on the employment of PWD in the country. The law is yet to be passed but if it does it would reduce the high number of unemployed PWDs in the country. The unemployment rate of PWD is very high, only 1.2% of 154,000 who have qualification are employed. Rwanda has an estimated population of 446,453 PWD in the country (The New Times, 2019, December 09).

Figure (2) A graph representation of PWD workforce who are employed vs unemployed



Statistics source: New times Rwanda (2019).

From Begging To Saving And An Entrepreneurial Culture

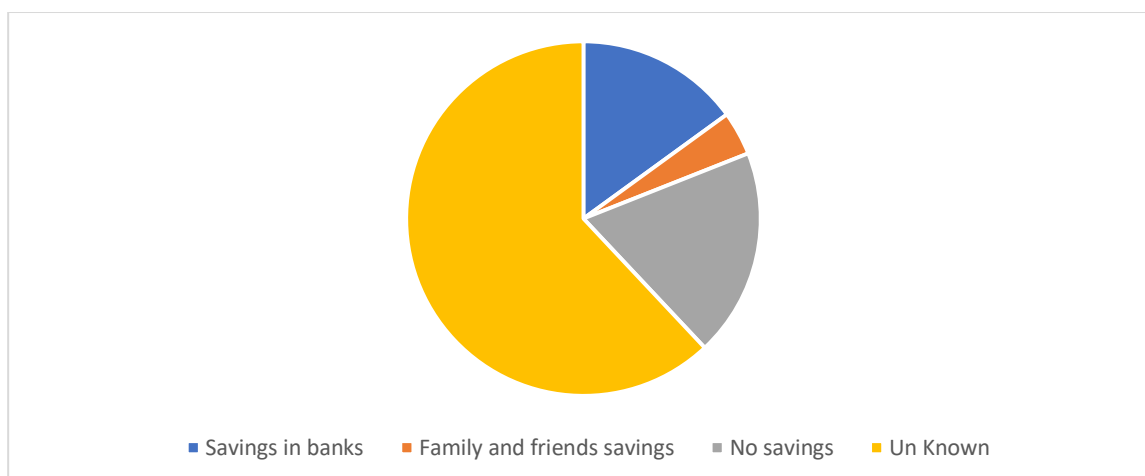
A fourth theme that came out of the Rwandan “The New Times”-newspaper article analysis, was the theme of from begging to saving and an entrepreneurial culture. PWD in Rwanda have started to beat the odds of surviving on begging by engaging in entrepreneurship through loans and saving groups. A woman by the name of Nyirabumba from Rusizi, which is a district from the Western province of Rwanda, shares her story on how she started her entrepreneurial journey by saving Rwf 50 (5€) per week to now being a small-scale farmer with two cows and four milk goats. She emphasized herself-development to have resulted from joining and getting a micro loan from a saving group in which she now contributes Rwf 500 (50€) per week. Begging is prohibited in saving groups and members who are caught are fined to prevent them from tarnishing the image of PWD. Consider the following newspaper fragment as exemplary to this issue:

“I urge people with disabilities who are begging to stop the vice. It distorts our image, yet we are able to work and generate income. Through saving small amount of money, they can grow,”
The New Times,2022, April 04.

Saving groups is one of the many tools that is helping PWDs to be financially independent. They are empowering PWD by lending to them and helping them to escape poverty traps. Nyirabumba is now able to afford school fees for his child education and Mukantangara has been able to modernise his banana plantation, while Nyiramisago has been able to pay for piping clean water to her home. There are 50,708 PWDs gathered in 1,721 saving groups, they have an accumulated Rwf 659.1 million (Euros 0.6 million). From a Finscope report, 15% of PWDs have savings in banks, 4% with family while, 19% have no savings. Consider the following newspaper fragment as exemplary to this issue:

“I would get a loan from the savings group and buy small livestock. Currently I have two cows, four goats including modern goats that provide milk. I paid school fees for my child’s high school, and I have a target to also pay university tuition fees,” *The New Times,2022, April 04.*

Figure (3) A graph representation of saving channels of PWD in Rwanda



Source: Finscope thematic report 2022.

Initiatives to make PWD access finance is recommendable in Rwanda. PWD are able to access financing for their business projects in Umurenge Saccos in all parts of the country through an initiative by the BDF (Business Development Fund) and the National Council of PWD (NCPD). Once a PWD has a viable business plan, he is provided with a funding of Rwf 500,000 (500€) while co-operatives receive Rwf 2,000,000 (2000€) of which half is a grant and he is to reimburse the remaining half in instalments. These types of loans issued by BDF to PWD does not require collaterals, which is an advantage over loans from commercial banks. While this is the case, only a few numbers of PWD have applied for this type of loan, as illustrated in the following fragment:

"We have so far received only four applications with 150 projects of PWDs. Considering that we have more than 400 Umurenge Saccos across the country we think this is a small number of applicants and we call upon others to submit their requests as well," (The New Times, 2016, December 08).

The Role of Education And Skillset Development In Boosting Skillset Development.

A fifth and last theme that came out of the Rwandan "The New Times"-newspaper article analysis, was the theme of the role of education and skillset development in boosting skillset development. There is a high rate of unemployment in the community of PWD in Rwanda and, the major reason being that PWD are excluded from accessing education when they are still young. Illiteracy in adults with PWDs is a hindrance to motivation of PWD joining technical and vocational educational training institutions (TVET) according to the "Rwanda Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning". They recommend that youth who have a form of disability should not miss out on school, otherwise they might lockout their chances of joining TVET later in life. The ministry of finance and economic planning believes that increased access to TVET by PWD can help them generate their own jobs and lighten the burden of accessing finance. Activists from civil society organizations have recommended efforts to include and increase the number of PWD in TVET so that they can increase their chances of being employed or in becoming entrepreneurs. Consider the following newspaper fragment as exemplary to this issue:

"Lack of education prevents disabled people from getting jobs. By equipping them with TVET skills, they can create jobs. We have to include disabled young children in education so as to avoid adult illiteracy among people with disabilities since it is the main challenge hampering their efforts to study TVET," (The New Times, 2019, December 9).

5. CONCLUSION

The findings of my research indicate that PWD in Africa are generally face six different barriers to getting employment. A first important barrier is the negative attitude towards PWD which is still the dominant mindset among Africans, including employers. These attitudes make them blind towards PWD's capabilities and consider them as 'objects of mercy' despite their professional competences. Because of these social stigmas, PWD are faced with direct and indirect discrimination during the job searching periods. A given example during the interviews were inaccessible job advertisements (e.g. no Braille versions available) and application processes (e.g. lack of sign language skills within the HR department). For the few who did get hired, many challenges persist. For instance, the barrier of inaccessible work environments and lack of transport allowances since most public transport systems in Africa exclude PWD. This makes it costly for PWD to perform their duties at work. A fourth barrier is the lack of enforcement of the already existing disability laws in African states. More than a half of countries in Africa already have ratified the UNCRPD, which discourages any kind of discrimination on labor market. But these existing laws have been violated and have been considered a decoration as said by my Nigerian interview participants. The fifth challenge is the poverty trap that many PWD fall into. Many PWD cannot afford essential assistive technologies from childhood like wheelchairs which makes them miss out many opportunities in life. The last challenge was the lack of skills that are on demand on the employment market.

As the second part of the analysis showed, there can be slight differences in challenges faced by PWD in African countries. In a country like Rwanda, the employment of PWD is not supported by a quota system yet, which is however the case in other countries like South Africa and Kenya that have already implemented a 2% and a 5% quota duty. Employment quotas help boost the number of marginalized groups into employment while they face discrimination. A culture of entrepreneurship and of joining saving groups, in the community of PWD in Rwanda has started to form, as an alternative source of revenue for the unemployed, replacing a culture of begging. The government has also been noted to ease PWD to qualify and access loans in the country. Similarities in challenges faced by PWD in accessing employments in Rwanda with other African states also exists; inaccessible environment to PWD, a need of skillset development for a big number of the uneducated PWD in the country and a need to fight social stigma against PWD in the country.

From the findings of this research, I recommend African governments to take responsibility in their duties of enforcing laws and regulations and in particular the one on disability. Almost all African countries have laws protecting PWD but lack a system that ensures that they are implemented, or penalties set to enterprises to punish companies that do not abide by the law. If countries with already existing employment quotas start enforcing the law, it will be a big achievement on the continent and will already be a big foundation on addressing other challenges faced by PWD. For countries like Rwanda which has delayed passing a bill on employment quotas for PWD, continued advocacy is needed until the bill is passed. Facilitators of employment of PWD as we saw in the literature review, I do recommend good corporate practices from companies. Corporates in Africa should challenge themselves on starting initiatives of setting up internal employment quotas for PWD. This would benefit them as there is immense talent in the PWD community. Continued mobilization of corporates to join national business and

disability networks and spreading this type of networks to many African countries is highly recommendable as from the ILO webinar. Companies which have joined this type of networks have benefited a lot on education and audit on disability inclusion. Accessible education can help a big number of PWD develop skillsets that makes them employable or take up entrepreneurship as an alternative source of livelihood when employment fails. Lastly is a recommendation to all African governments to set up a budget for PWD who lives in extreme poverty as it is the case to many.

A few of the limitations that I encountered doing this thesis is of little literature availability on disability in Africa especially the one that focuses on employment. The second challenge is the problem of Covid 19, the project was initiated in 2019 at the beginning of covid lockdown period which made me cancel the African field trip to cover the empirical part and did it online which was a challenge to get interview participants, this limited me to use a small number of interview participants. My recommendation to the next person who will be interested to work on the subject is that he should focus on one cultural or economic regional block of Africa at a time because African is large and very diverse.

REFERENCES

- Abualghaib, O., Groce, N., Simeu, N., Carew, M. T., & Mont, D. (2019). Making visible the invisible: Why disability-disaggregated data is vital to "leave no-one behind." *In Sustainability* (Vol. 11, Issue 11). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11113091>
- Agbo, M.J. (2017). How African cities are failing people with disabilities: And what architects can do about it. *Arch Daily*. <https://www.archdaily.com/886204/how-african-cities-are-failing-people-with-disabilities-and-what-architects-can-do-about-it>
- Alsaawi, A. (2014). A CRITICAL REVIEW OF QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS. *In European journal of business and social Sciences* (Vol.3, Issue 4). <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2819536>URL:<http://www.ejbss.com/recent.aspx><https://ssrn.com/abstract=2819536>Electroniccopyavailableat:<http://ssrn.com/abstract=2819536>URL:<http://www.ejbss.com/recent.aspx>
- Banda-Chalwe, M., Nitz, J. C., & de Jonge, D. (2012). Globalizing accessibility: drawing on the experiences of developed countries to enable the participation of disabled people in Zambia. *Disability and society* (Vol.27, Issue 7). <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2012.692024>
- Bishumba, N. (2019, August 02). Pwds push for accessible public buildings. *The New times*. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/168442/News/pwds-push-for-accessible-public-buildings>
- Bloom, D. E., Canning, D., Chan, K., & Luca, D. L. (2014). Higher Education and Economic Growth in Africa. *International Journal of African higher Education*,1. <https://doi.org/10.6017/ijahe.v1i1.5643>
- Brisenden, S. (2007). Independent Living and the Medical Model of Disability. *Disability, handicap & society*. Vol.1, Issue 2).<https://doi.org/10.1080/02674648666780171>
- Chataika, T., Mckenzie, J. A., Swart, E., & Lyner-Cleophas, M. (2012). Access to education in Africa: Responding to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. *Disability and Society*, 27(3), 385–398. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2012.654989>
- CHOGM. (2022-25-June).*CHOGM 2022 Concluding press Conference* (Video). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tv5qnxFoFYo&ab_channel=CHOGM2022
- Dirth, T. P., & Branscombe, N. R. (2017). Disability Models Affect Disability Policy Support through Awareness of Structural Discrimination. *Journal of Social Issues*, 73(2), 413–442. <https://doi.org/10.1111/JOSI.12224>
- Dushimimana, M. (2018, November 27). Respecting PWD not a favour but an obligation-NCPD . *The New times*.. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/161314/News/featured-respecting-pwd-rights-not-a-favour-but-an-obligation-a-ncpd>
- East African Community. (2012). EAC Policy On Persons with Disabilities: *EAC SECRETARIAT (2012)*. Retrieved from <http://shivyawata.or.tz/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/EAC-DISABILITY-POLICY.pdf>
- Ebuenyi, I. D., Guxens, M., Ombati, E., Bunders-Aelen, J. F. G., & Regeer, B. J. (2019). Employability of Persons with Mental Disability: Understanding Lived Experiences in Kenya. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 10, 539. <https://doi.org/10.3389/FPSYT.2019.00539>
- Ebuenyi, I. D., Syurina, E. v., Bunders, J. F. G., & Regeer, B. J. (2018). Barriers to and facilitators of employment for people with psychiatric disabilities in Africa: a scoping review.*Global health action*, Vol.11, Issue 1. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16549716.2018.1463658>
- Eide, A. H., Loeb, M. E., Nhiwatiwa, S., Munthali, A., Ngulube, T. J., & van Rooy, G. (2011). Living conditions among people with disabilities in developing countries. *Disability and Poverty*, 55–70. <https://doi.org/10.1332/POLICYPRESS/9781847428851.003.0004>

- Etieyibo, E., & Omiegbe, O. (2016). Religion, culture, and discrimination against persons with disabilities in Nigeria. *African Journal of disability*, 5(1),6. <https://doi.org/10.4102/AJOD.V5I1.192>
- Fernandez, E.L., Rutka, L.& Aldersey, H. (2017). Exploring Disability Policy in Africa: An Online Search for National Disability Policies and UNCRPD Ratification. *Review of disability studies*. Vol.13, Issue 1. <https://www.rdsjournal.org/index.php/journal/article/view/605/1747>
- Govender, P., Maja, P.,Sing, D.& Steyn,A.(2011). Employing people with disabilities in South Africa. South Africa. *South African Journal of Occupation therapy*. 41,24-32. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237188507_Employing_people_with_disabilities_in_South_Africa
- Green, J., Willis, K., Hughes, E., Small, R., Welch, N., Gibbs, L., & Daly, J. (2007). Generating best evidence from qualitative research: The role of data analysis. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 31(6), 545–550. <https://doi.org/10.1111/J.1753-6405.2007.00141.X>
- Hodal, K. (2016). Kenyan creativity broadens employment horizons for disabled people | Global development: *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/dec/25/kenya-creativity-broadens-employment-horizons-disabled-people-africa-prize-for-engineering>
- International Labor Organization. (2015). *Decent work for persons with disabilities: promoting rights in the global development agenda*. Third edition https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_430935.pdf
- International Labor Organization. (2022, October 26). *Business opportunities in Africa: Inclusion of talent with disabilities* (video). YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ec-eaGRcjRA&t=17s&ab_channel=InternationalLabourOrganization
- Jammaers, E., Zanoni, P., & Hardonk, S. (2016). Constructing positive identities in ableist workplaces: Disabled employees' discursive practices engaging with the discourse of lower productivity. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726715612901>
- Jolley, E., Lynch, P., Virendrakumar, B., Rowe, S., & Schmidt, E. (2017). Education and social inclusion of people with disabilities in five countries in West Africa: a literature review. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2017.1353649>
- Kaschak, J. C., & Bauman, D. (2020). Teaching Disability History: The Case of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. *The social* <https://doi.org/10.1080/00377996.2020.1757599>
- Light for the world. (2015). *Small businesses set up and run by persons with disabilities: An insight into their profile and factors influencing their performance*. https://lab.light-for-the-world.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/LFTW_Bankable_FINAL-ELECT.pdf
- Loff, S. (2018). *NASA Remembers Dr. Stephen Hawking*. <http://www.nasa.gov/feature/nasa-remembers-dr-stephen-hawking>
- Mac-Donald, S.A., Butera, G. (2014). Cultural Beliefs and Attitudes about Disability in East Africa. *Review of disability studies*. Vol.8, no.1. <https://www.rdsjournal.org/index.php/journal/article/view/110/367>
- Mapuranga, B., & Mutswanga, P. (2014). *The Attitudes of Employers and Co-Workers towards the Employment of Persons with Disabilities in Zimbabwe*.
- Marumoagae, M. (2012), Disability Discrimination and the Right of Disabled Persons to Access the Labour Market: *African Journals online: SSRN*. (n.d.). Retrieved https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2045471
- Maziriri, E. T., Madinga, W., & Lose, T. (2017). Entrepreneurial Barriers that are Confronted by Entrepreneurs Living with Physical Disabilities: A Thematic Analysis. *Journal of Economics and Behavioral Studies*, 9(1(J)), 27–45. [https://doi.org/10.22610/jeps.v9i1\(J\).1555](https://doi.org/10.22610/jeps.v9i1(J).1555)

- Mbabazi, D. (2019, January 16). Albinism: A woman's plight. *The new times*.
<https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/163073/Lifestyle/albinism-a-woman-as-plight>
- Mbabazi, D. (2019, October 09). Talking through art: empowering women living with disability. *The new times*.
<https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/170296/Lifestyle/talking-through-art-empowering-women-living-with-disability>
- Mitra, S. (2013). Disability and Poverty in Developing Countries: A Multidimensional Study. *World Development*.
https://www.academia.edu/14538384/Disability_and_Poverty_in_Developing_Countries_A_Multidimensional_Study
- Morwane, R. E., Dada, S., & Bornman, J. (2021). Barriers to and facilitators of employment of persons with disabilities in low- and middle-income countries: A scoping review. *African Journal of Disability*, 10(0), 12. <https://doi.org/10.4102/AJOD.V10I0.833>
- Mukhopadhyay, S., & Moswela, E. (2020). Disability Rights in Botswana: Perspectives of Individuals with Disabilities. *Journal of policy disability studies*, 31(1), 46-56.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1044207319871745>
- Mwaura, G. (2020, October, 03). Digital access: Urgent need to include persons with disability. *The New times*.
<https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/180426/Opinions/digital-access-urgent-need-to-include-persons-with-disability>
- Naami, A. (2015). Disability, gender, and employment relationships in Africa: The case of Ghana. *African Journal of Disability*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.4102/AJOD.V4I1.95>
- Naami, A., Hayashi, R., Liese, H. (2012). The unemployment of women with physical disabilities in Ghana: Issues and recommendations Using. *Disability and Society* Volume 27, 2012 - Issue 2.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2011.644930>
- Njelesani, J., Hashemi, G., Cameron, C., Cameron, D., Richard, D., & Parnes, P. (2018). From the day they are born: A qualitative study exploring violence against children with disabilities in West Africa. *BMC Public Health*, 18(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/S12889-018-5057-X>
- Njelesani, J., Siegel, J., & Ullrich, E. (2018). Realization of the rights of persons with disabilities in Rwanda. *PloS One*, 13(5). <https://doi.org/10.1371/JOURNAL.PONE.0196347>
- Nkurunziza, M. (2019, December 09). Call for job quotas for persons living with disability. *The new times*.
<https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/171873/News/call-for-jobs-quota-for-persons-living-with-disability>
- Nkurunziza, M. (2019, December 09). Call for jobs quotas for persons living with disability. *The New times*.
<https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/171873/News/call-for-jobs-quota-for-persons-living-with-disability>
- Nkurunziza, M. (2022, April 04). From Rwf 50 to Rwf 660M Savings: Journey of persons with disability. *The New times*.
<https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/194740/News/from-rwf50-to-rwf660m-savings-journey-of-people-with-disabilities>
- Nyangweso, M. (2018) Disability in Africa: A Cultural/Religious Perspective. *Research gate*.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325642373_Disability_in_Africa_A_CulturalReligious_Perspective
- Ocran, J. (2019). Exposing the protected: Ghana's disability laws and the rights of disabled people. *Disability and Society*, Vol.34 issue 4 <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2018.1556491>
- Olugbode, M. (2021). ECOWAS to Formulate Regional Action Plan on Disability. *This day live*.
<https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/03/21/ecowas-to-formulate-regional-action-plan-on-disability/>
- Opini, B. M. (2010). A review of the participation of disabled persons in the labour force: The Kenyan context. *Disability and Society*, 25(3), 271-287. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687591003701181>

- Pathak, V., Jena, B., & Kalra, S. (2013). Qualitative research. *Perspectives in Clinical Research*, 4(3), 192. <https://doi.org/10.4103/2229-3485.115389>
- Pavithra, R. (2017). Ending albino persecution in Africa: Governments, UN and human rights groups Step up advocacy to enlighten communities. *Africa Renewal*. <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2017-march-2018/ending-albino-persecution-africa>
- Pinilla-Roncancio, M. (2015). Disability and poverty: two related conditions. A review of the literature. *Revista de La Facultad de Medicina*, 63(3), 113–123. <https://doi.org/10.15446/REVFACMED.V63N3SUP.50132>
- Read, U.M., Sakyi, L. & Abbey, W. (2020). Exploring the Potential of a Rights-Based Approach to Work and Social Inclusion for People with Lived Experience of Mental Illness in Ghana. *Health and Human Rights Journal*. Volume 22/1, June 2020, pp 91 – 104. <https://www.hhrjournal.org/2020/06/exploring-the-potential-of-a-rights-based-approach-to-work-and-social-inclusion-for-people-with-lived-experience-of-mental-illness-in-ghana/>
- Retief, M., & Letšosa, R. (2018). Models of disability: A brief overview. *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, 74(1), 8. <https://doi.org/10.4102/HTS.V74I1.4738>
- Setume, S. D. (2016). Myths and beliefs about disabilities: Implications for educators and counselors. *Journal of Disability and Religion*, 20(1), 62–76. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23312521.2016.1152938>
- Shakespeare, T., Watson, N. (2002). The social model of disability: an outdated ideology? *Research in Social science and disability*. Volume 2, pp. 9–28 (2002).
- Šiška, J., Bekele, Y., Beadle-Brown, J., & Záhořík, J. (2020). Role of resource centres in facilitating inclusive education: experience from Ethiopia. *Disability and Society*, 35(5), 811–830. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2019.1649120>
- Steukers, G. (2021, August 02). New policy on inclusion of persons with disability is an opportunity for all of us. *The newtimes*. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/188187/Opinions/new-policy-on-inclusion-of-persons-with-disabilities-is-an-opportunity-for-all-of-us>
- Swartz, L., & Marchetti-Mercer, M. (2017). Disabling Africa: the power of depiction and the benefits of discomfort. *https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2017.1400240*, 33(3), 482–486. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2017.1400240>
- The Safod Blog. (n.d). *Unlocking an Inclusive Society for Persons with Disabilities in Southern Africa*. Retrieved from <https://safod.wordpress.com/>
- Times reporter (2008, July 27). Focusing on the rights of those with disabilities. *The New times*. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/10097/focusing-on-the-rights-of-those-with-disabilities>
- Times reporter (2012, January 07). The paradox of ability. *The new times*. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/65940/the-paradox-of-ability>
- Times reporter (2012, March 20). Disabled decry lack of job opportunities. *The New times*. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/69849/National/disabled-decry-lack-of-job-opportunities>
- Times reporter (2016, December 08). BDF extends financial access to the disabled through sacco. *The New times*. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/136051/News/bdf-extends-financial-access-to-the-disabled-through-saccos>
- Times reporter (2018, January 10). Tuyishimire on the life struggle as a dwarf. *The New times*. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/147786/News/tuyishimire-on-life-struggles-as-a-dwarf>
- Times reporter. (2016, March 10). EAC states seek common strategy to support persons with disability. *The New times*. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/127905/News/eac-states-seek-common-strategies-to-support-persons-with-disability>

- Toesland, F. (2017). Embracing the disabled workforce in Africa. *African Business*. <https://african.business/2017/02/economy/embracing-disabled-workforce-africa/>
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Disability. (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) | United Nations Enable*. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>
- van Laer, K., Jammaers, E., & Hoeven, W. (2020). Disabling organizational spaces: Exploring the processes through which spatial environments disable employees with impairments. *https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508419894698*, 29(6), 1018–1035.
- Wahab, H. A., Jaafar, H. J., Wahab, H. A., & Jaafar, H. J. (2018). Workplace Diversity: How Does Malaysian Law Promote People with Disability? In *International Journal of Law, Government and Communication* (Vol. 3, Issue 9). www.ijgc.com
- Walford, G. (2005). Research ethical guidelines and anonymity. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 28(1), 83–93. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01406720500036786>
- World Health Organization. (n.d). *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)*. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/standards/classifications/international-classification-of-functioning-disability-and-health>
- World Health Organization & World Bank. (2011). World report on disability 2011. World Health Organization. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/44575>
- World Report)2022). Rwanda. *Human Rights Watch*. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/rwanda>

ANNEX

Interview guideline

Dear my name is Leonce and I a student in the Master ... at UCLouvain, a Belgian university. The research that you are now part of has the purpose of getting to know the barriers and good practices in the employment of people with disabilities. Before we start, I would like to emphasize that the conversation is anonymous and will of course not be shared with your employer and colleagues. It is therefore very important that you tell in all openness what comes to mind. The conversation will be recorded and then transcribed. Only myself and my thesis promotor, Prof. Dr. JAMMAERS, will have access to this information. Do you have any questions for me about the research, the interview, ... before we start that you would like to ask? This interview will take about 1 hour .../

1. Can you first briefly tell me something about yourself (about the nature of your impairment and how it was acquired, about the daily effects your impairment has on your life, about your family situation, etc.)?
2. Can you tell something about your study trajectory
3. And what you did afterwards?
4. Did you use any services of the Government (public employment service) to help you find a job during your career? What have they done for you? Have you used other resources?
5. What could have been done for you to make your job search easier?
6. How did your recruitment/hiring in this company?
7. What exactly is the content of your job, what do you do on an everyday day?
8. Are you satisfied with the accessibility of your workplace? (The building, the meeting rooms, the way to work)
9. Do you use certain 'reasonable adjustments'? (Working hours reduction, time-out days, special equipment, closed workplace ...)
10. What adjustments have been made for you? Have you been able to decide for yourself or was that decided for you by someone else (the HR manager, the supervisor...)?
11. How did the request for reasonable accommodations go?
12. Do you have legislations on disability in your country?
13. How many parliament representatives for PWD do you have in your country?
14. What recommendations would you give to the government in your country on disability topics?