

Executive Summary

People with physical disabilities (PWD) are generally excluded, marginalized and discriminated in all works of life. Even though the government has devised policies to ensure they have equal treatment. They lack access to many areas where they can participate and contribute meaningfully to society. Although policies exist, the question of access to skills development opportunities remains a concern because implementation has not been a success. Central to the study are these two concepts, which are physical disability and access. Accessing skills development opportunities are amongst a number of challenges facing people with physical disabilities. Provided this perceived constrained access, an argument could be made that PWD are at the risk of being affected by unemployment. Disability on its own is an addition to the lack of skills and a negative economic climate. As a result, people with physical disabilities could not fully contribute to the mainstream economy.

The objective of the study was to identify challenges PWD face in accessing skills development opportunities and to reflect on the Health and Welfare SETA's (HWSETA's) interventions. It is critical that the HWSETA, as an organization reflects on its own programmes. The study was conducted using a mixed method approach, with an application of both the qualitative and quantitative tools. Data collection was done through in-depth semi-structured telephonic interviews. It was also imperative to compile semi-structured questionnaires given the number of participants recruited for the study. Data analysis was done through content analysis and statistical presentation of findings.

The study confirms that some PWD do not have equal access to education and employment opportunities as a result of lack of skills. They do not receive the disability-related services that they require; hence they experience exclusion from everyday life activities. The study also points to the gaps and deficiencies in the management of policy concerning physical disability. Amongst the identified deficiencies is the faulty conception, communication, and monitoring of policy for effective implementation.

The study recommends more engagement with educational institutions, corporate world and members of society to ensure that reasonable level of awareness on disability is created. The study proposes various ways through which people with disabilities can be pulled into the

economic mainstream and labour market. These ways include; incentives, upskilling and re-skilling them through learnerships, internships, work integrated learning etc. In addition to advocacy for adding more financial resources, there is a great need for a thorough skills audit for people with disabilities. It should be on the basis of such a study that specific vocational training programmes should be implemented to empower people with disabilities. In this way, their skills will be aligned to the needs of the labour market. Mainly for the HWSETA, there is a need for organizational profiling to trace performance against set targets. Thus, recruitment and training of disabled people must be a priority and integral part of the broader training and development of staff.