

# DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT SENEGAL



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## About this report

This report was developed by the Global Research and Advocacy Group (GRAG), the International Centre for Evidence in Disability at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, and Mastercard Foundation.

The report aims to inform Mastercard Foundation's disability and inclusion programming and strategy development. It draws on a literature review, as well as key informant interviews with relevant stakeholders, investigating the inclusion of youth with disabilities in education and employment in Senegal. The information in this report will be built on in the next phase of this research project, through in-depth interviews with young men and women with disabilities.

## Contributors



The Global Research and Advocacy Group (GRAG) adopts innovative research, training, and advocacy to advance evidence, programs and policies for women, children and vulnerable populations throughout Sub-Saharan Africa.



The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) is a world-leading centre for research and postgraduate education in public and global health.

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The International Centre for Evidence in Disability (ICED) provides evidence to improve the wellbeing of people with disabilities globally.

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The Mastercard Foundation is one of the largest foundations in the world and has worked to advance financial inclusion and education in Africa and transform education and employment systems for Indigenous youth in Canada, improving the lives of more than 139 million people.

Their *Young Africa Works* strategy seeks to enable 30 million young women and men to secure dignified and fulfilling work by 2030.

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# Disability-Inclusive Education and Employment: Understanding the Context in Senegal

## About Disability

According to the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) people with disabilities include those who have: *“long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”* [1].

Estimates suggest that there are 1 billion people (15%) living with a disability globally [2]. People with disabilities often experience barriers to accessing education and employment and this can lead to an increased risk of poverty [2]. They may also face difficulties being included in other aspects of society [3].

Research in Sub-Saharan Africa shows that with the right support, people with disabilities can achieve economic success. Investing in education and employment for people with disabilities should be part of development efforts, as based on an economic rationale, as well as social justice [4].

## Executive Summary

- Senegalese policies and legislation reflect a promising rights-based policy framework for disability inclusion in education and employment.
- However, there are substantial implementation gaps that contribute to the exclusion of people with disabilities from education and work. Gaps in implementing, coordinating, and monitoring policy contribute to this exclusion.
- Gaps and challenges in both employment and education sectors include poor awareness of disability rights, negative attitudes, stigma, and discrimination at the community, institutional, and structural level, inaccessible infrastructure, and insufficient resources to support inclusion.
- Key challenges in education include lack of training and incentives for teachers, inaccessible school environments, poverty, and lack of digital access.
- Examples of innovative and promising practices in education include financial support schemes, training on inclusive education for teachers, efforts toward improving accessibility in schools, digital skills training, vocational training programmes, and increased representation of positive role models for students with disabilities.
- Key challenges in employment include lack of awareness of disability inclusion amongst employers, a disconnect between skills and market demands, and barriers to accessibility.
- Examples of innovative and promising practices in employment include financial support schemes for employees with disabilities, including a salary support scheme in which the government covers half of an employees' wages, and vocational training programmes.



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# Introduction

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## Disability in Senegal

As of 2021, more than 60% of the population of the 16.9 million people in Senegal were under the age of 25 [5-6]. The 2013 Population and Housing Census estimated that 2.1% of adults in Senegal have a disability. This is likely to be an underestimate, considering the World Report on Disability estimated 15% prevalence [7]. Recent, publicly available data on disability in Senegal are limited. However, available evidence suggests that people with disabilities in Senegal face barriers to education and employment including stigma and discrimination, inaccessible buildings and transport and lack of access to assistive technology [8-16].

## Disability policy context

The integration, and improvement of the living conditions, of people with disabilities in Senegal was the subject of an Inter-Ministerial Council held by the Government in October 2001. This led to the adoption of the National Program for Community-Based Rehabilitation (PNRBC) in 2006, Phase III of which was approved in July 2018. The Government of Senegal ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the Optional Protocol in 2010. Senegalese Parliament legislated on this question further in July 2010, through the *Social Orientation Act No. 2010-15 of July 6, 2010, on the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities*<sup>1</sup>, which aims to ensure the full participation of people with disabilities and their inclusion in Senegalese society.

Despite these efforts, people with disabilities experience barriers to education and employment in Senegal. Evidence suggests that girls and boys with disabilities are less likely to receive a formal education, compared to peers without a disability, with barriers including poverty, inaccessible transport, lack of assistive technology, and inaccessible school environments. Although research is limited, evidence also suggests that unemployment is higher among people with disabilities.

## Employment focus for this research: agriculture and digital

Agriculture is a dominant economic activity in Senegal, accounting for 16.5% of the national GDP, accounting for almost 30% of jobs in 2021 [17]. However, due to several factors including the country's location in the drought-prone Sahel region, Senegal relies heavily on food import. Organisations such as the World Bank have remarked upon the potential for growth in this sector [18]. The digital sector in Senegal is described as a key driver of the national economy, with ambitions to promote its growth from 6% of the GDP to 10% by 2025, creating almost 35,000 jobs in the sector [19]. This is framed by the 'Digital Senegal 2025' Strategy linked to the government's overarching Emergent Senegal Plan, indicating a clear commitment to advancing this sector [20].

Throughout this research project, including the findings of this report, we have sought to focus on disability inclusion in these two key employment sectors, where possible.

<sup>1</sup> The Optional Protocol is an additional agreement to the UNCRPD. It establishes an individual complaints mechanism for disabled people who allege that their rights under the Convention have been denied.



## About this study

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This research aimed to assess the policy landscape relating to inclusion in education and employment for young men and women with disabilities in Senegal aged 15-35, with particular focus on secondary, tertiary, and vocational education, and employment in agriculture and digital sectors. Using the Policy Triangle framework<sup>2</sup>, this study highlights:

- Key policies, programmes, and evidence on situation for people with disabilities
- Key stakeholders and policy processes
- Policy implementation, gaps and challenges, and contextual influences
- Examples of innovation and promising practise to foster greater inclusion

This research involved online document review and 16 key informant interviews (KIIs) with key stakeholders in Senegal. Key informants (KIs) included representatives from organisation of people with disabilities (OPDs), government bodies, education providers, local and international NGOs, and private employers.

Additionally, we included quantitative data comparing education and livelihood indicators for youth with and without disabilities. Data sources included the 2014 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) [21], analysed for this report (for more details see Appendix A), as well as indicators analysed and published by the Disability Data Portal [22] and the ILOSTAT database Disability Labour Market Indicators [23].

<sup>2</sup> Walt, G. and Gilson, L. *Reforming the health sector in developing countries: the central role of policy analysis*. Health Policy and Planning, 1994. 9(4): p. 353-370.



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# Findings

The findings of the study are organised in four parts: (1) education; (2) employment; (3) social and political context; and (4) opportunities.

## Box 1: Information on the quantitative findings

This report includes disability data from the 2014 Senegal DHS, analysed for this report, as well as indicators analysed and published by the Disability Data Portal and the ILOSTAT database Disability Labour Market Indicators [21-23].

Caution is needed in interpreting and comparing these estimates. Reasons for this:

- Disability is complex to measure and different surveys use different methods. In the 2014 DHS, participants were asked if they have physical, mental, or other condition that limits their daily activities more than expected for people of their age. The 2013 Senegal Housing and population census used the Washington Group short set of questions (WG-SS). The WG-SS are widely recommended for use in national surveys and census [24]. They have the advantage of being relatively simple, rapid and non-stigmatizing, as they don't ask directly about disability.
- Some surveys using the WG-SS estimate a lower than expected disability prevalence compared to the World Report on Disability estimates of 15% all ages and 5% children. The reasons are unclear, but may include: i) WG-SS questions don't ask about mental health (and therefore don't capture all people with disabilities); ii) variation in implementation, such as alterations to wording and/or the meaning of questions intentionally or through translation difficulties; iii) if a statement about disability is included in the survey before asking the Washington Group questions, this may result in under-reporting due to stigma associated with disability.
- The relatively low proportion of youth with disabilities results in small sample sizes for this group, which affects the precision of the estimates. It also means disaggregation of disability data by other important intersectional characteristics (e.g. urban/rural, type of functional limitations) is often not possible.
- There are potential sources of bias, for example: how questions were worded and understood by participants, the extent of interviewer training, the extent that data collection is disability-inclusive (e.g. was there equal opportunity for people with communication difficulties to take part in the survey). These sources of bias can all influence the findings.

The disability estimates presented in this report are therefore subject to error and results may not be directly comparable across different data sources. The disability disaggregated data should be considered as indicators and trends of differences, rather than exact data on inclusion in education and employment.

1 The Washington Group Short Set (WG-SS) asks about level of difficulty ('none', 'some', 'a lot', or 'cannot do') in the following functioning domains: seeing, hearing, walking/climbing stairs, remembering/concentrating, self-care or communicating. Reporting 'a lot of difficulty/cannot do' in at least one domain is commonly used to classify people as having a disability for the purposes of disability statistics and data disaggregation.

## Findings

### Prevalence of disability

According to the 2013 Population and Housing Census, analysed and published by the Disability Data Initiative [25], 0.8% of youth aged 15-29 reported 'a lot of difficulty/cannot do' in at least one functioning domain asked in the WG-SS; the definition commonly used to classify people as having a disability, for the purposes of disability statistics and disaggregation. Overall, 2.7% reported some difficulty or worse with at least one functioning domain. These estimates are broadly in-line with the disability prevalence estimate of 1.5% among 15-35 years from the 2014 Senegal DHS data (analysed for this report).



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# 1. Education

Senegal adopted legislation in 2010 mandating that children with disabilities have the right to free education in mainstream schools as close as possible to their neighbourhoods; however, this policy has yet to be fully and effectively implemented across the country. Formal education in Senegal is organised into four levels: preschool, primary, secondary (academic or technical/vocational), and higher education. Primary schools enrol children aged 7-12 and students complete six levels of education. Those continuing to secondary school can pursue either an academic track or a technical/vocational track. The majority of specialised schools for students with disabilities provide primary education for a wide age range, and are located in or near the capital city of Dakar. Evidence suggests that access to both special education institutions and inclusive mainstream education is severely lacking; however, robust data on education indicators specific to students with disabilities in both specialised schools and mainstream education in Senegal remains limited [26].

## 1.1. Education indicators disaggregated by disability status

Table 1 presents school completion estimates by disability status from the 2013 census [27] and 2014 DHS data [21]. The precise estimates vary, likely due to methodological differences. Further, the DHS estimates should be interpreted with caution due to the small number of people with disabilities included in the analysis (see box 1); for example, it is unlikely there are no children with disabilities who have completed secondary school. However, the trends are consistent in showing that youth with disabilities were less likely to have completed primary school compared to their peers. A similar trend is seen for secondary school, although overall completion levels are low for people with and without disabilities. There is a need for robust up-to-date disability-disaggregated education data Senegal.

Table 1. Primary and Secondary School completion among youth with and without disabilities

	2013 Population Housing Census*		2014 Demographic Health Survey**	
	Youth with disabilities	Youth without disabilities	Youth with disabilities	Youth without disabilities
<b>Completed Primary School</b>				
Total	14%	27%	24%	44%
Males	17%	29%		
Females	12%	25%		
<b>Completed Secondary School</b>				
Total	4%	7%	0%	7%
Males	5%	9%		
Females	2%	5%		

NB: School completion calculated as the proportion aged 3-5 years above the intended age of graduation, who had completed that level (15-17 years for Primary and 21-23 years for Secondary). The 2014 DHS data are not presented for men and women separately due to the small numbers of people with disabilities in the sample. Data Sources: \*Data analysed and published by the Disability Data Portal, \*\*Data analysed for this report.

# Education

## 1.2. Policies and programmes

Table 1. Notable provisions in Senegal policy and legislation related to disability-inclusive education

Notable provisions	Policy/law
People with disabilities have a right to education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitution</li> <li>• Social Framework Act No. 2010-15 (<i>La loi d'orientation sociale pour les personnes handicapées 2010</i>)</li> </ul>
Children and young people with disabilities have the right to free education in a mainstream environment (as much as possible) at an institution close to their home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Framework Act No. 2010-15 (<i>La loi d'orientation sociale pour les personnes handicapées 2010</i>)</li> </ul>
Learning opportunities must accommodate the specific needs of children with disabilities by adapting institutions and training teachers on inclusive education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme to Improve Quality, Equity and Transparency in Education and Training 2018-2030 (Programme d'Amélioration de la Qualité, de l'Équité et de la Transparence du secteur de l'Éducation et de la Formation PAQUET-EF)</li> </ul>
Spots must be reserved for people with disabilities in public vocational training centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Framework Act No. 2010-15 (<i>La loi d'orientation sociale pour les personnes handicapées 2010</i>)</li> </ul>
Vocational training must be available to people with disabilities in mainstream institutions or special institutions specific to impairment type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Framework Act No. 2010-15 (<i>La loi d'orientation sociale pour les personnes handicapées 2010</i>)</li> </ul>

A full list of programmes promoting disability inclusion in education implemented in Senegal within the past five years is provided in Appendix Table A5.

# Education

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## 1.2. Policies and programmes (cont.)

According to KIs, the strength of the Social Framework Act No. 2010-15 (*La loi d'orientation sociale pour les personnes handicapées 2010*), which was modelled on the CRPD, is in that it supports the work of a number of disability-related initiatives. However, whilst policies state this support, implementation was said to be lacking in the context of education. For example, the Ministry of Education has a focal point assigned to promote inclusive education, but some KIs regard this as insufficient, remarking upon the need to train people to be effective in such a role. Similarly, despite some notable efforts in involving people with disabilities in raising disability awareness among government personnel, inclusive decision-making processes need to be strengthened. The Ministry of Education was criticised for lacking in coherence and synergy linking policy objectives, actions, and budget allocation to support inclusive education. While 25% of Senegal's budget is allocated to general education, there is no available data on the amount allocated specifically to inclusive education. Thus, KIs called for strengthened disability awareness, improved training within ministries, and trained government personnel to coordinate, shape, and drive implementation of inclusive education policies.

Some KIs also described a lack of political will to support education for learners with disabilities. Notably, there have been efforts from associations of students with disabilities at universities to form a collective that would work together to advocate for improved implementation of inclusive education policies. The collective has not yet been hugely impactful, but there are efforts to reignite action and progress.

The general perception seemed to be that children with physical disabilities were better supported in the education system than children with intellectual disabilities. Physical accessibility was said to be easiest for providers to understand and to implement. Children with sensory, intellectual, and psychosocial disabilities were reportedly left behind, because of the perception that support was more difficult to provide.

KIs also reported that many students with disabilities ask for help with computer training and other digital skills training, as they recognise the value for employment. However, the extent to which they receive this is unclear. Evidence suggests that some of the reasons students with disabilities do not attend or complete school include (1) refusal to accept children with disabilities by the school; (2) poor health of the child; (3) lack of school readiness; (4) refusal by the family to enrol the child; (5) no available school nearby; and (6) unwillingness by teachers to accept children with disabilities into their classrooms [26]. Some of these barriers were confirmed by KIs as implementation gaps and challenges.

# Education

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## 1.3. Implementation gaps and challenges

Despite policies and progress being made, interviews with key informants highlighted a number of factors that hinder disability inclusion in education, including challenges in implementing policies.

### i) Lack of training and incentives for teachers

A key barrier to implementing inclusive education was the lack of teacher-training curricula. It was reported that teachers do not have the skills or confidence to support children with disabilities in their classrooms and many schools do not have the resources to provide this capacity development themselves.

Further, there are a limited number of staff currently trained in special education for children with disabilities, both to provide support in specialised schools and support teachers in mainstream institutions. Specialised schools in Senegal are typically meant to provide education in addition to skills training, therapy, and rehabilitation. The literature suggests that specialised schools are chronically understaffed, and these goals rarely met [26]. KIs also highlighted that teachers were not provided many incentives to move into special education, the key issue being that salaries are typically lower in education, particularly in public schools, than in other sectors.

### ii) Inaccessible school environments

Mainstream education infrastructure is reportedly often inaccessible to children with disabilities. According to one KI, organisations sometimes install ramps, without due consideration to other accessibility issues inside the building. There was also a stark lack of alternative and accessible learning materials for disabled students, such as materials in braille for blind students.

### iii) Poverty

Socio-economic challenges and poverty were reported as key challenges in the effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives. The majority of specialised schools are located in urban areas, making it difficult for students from rural areas to afford the cost of travel. Even with subsidised school fees for institutions providing inclusive education, the financial burden of other costs (such as accessible transport) can prove too expensive. KIs described young disabled people often resort to begging to support families and due to the lack of finances for their education.

*“There are young people who want to join [OPD name removed] but it is this problem of means that demotivates them. Even when you call young people to training, the minimum is to reimburse them for transport. It is a kind of subsidy. Young people want to come but do not always have the means to pay for their transport.”* (Representative from an OPD)

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As summarised by one KI, these inter-linked issues all contribute to young people with disabilities being left behind:

*“Making inclusion a reality is a real challenge because until then, we have specialised schools that are there. And our classical [mainstream] schools are still struggling. There are the difficulties associated with teacher training. This question cannot be addressed if teachers do not have the minimum tools to accommodate children [with disabilities]. A challenge [is also] from the infrastructural point of view, from the institutional point of view, socio-economic, and therefore, also political.”* (Representative from education sector)

### iv) Lack of access to digital tools and training

Despite initiatives from organisations (such as the French Embassy) facilitating digital access within schools, there is no evidence that disability inclusion has been considered, highlighting an urgent need to improve this access to learners with disabilities. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, remote learning in schools were not accessible for learners who were blind. One KI suggested advocating the ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty as a way forward:

*“This treaty was intended to provide people with disabilities with access to books. Today there are a lot of books, but in any library in Senegal, if you enter and you are a blind person you have no resources that allow you to read a book. Unless you have a friend reading it, to save it, and give it to you. I have a colleague, a partner who wanted to do his doctoral thesis, but so far he can't do it because he doesn't have access to the book... So this Marrakesh Treaty is a clause that is included in the laws that requires publishers to give free access to disabled people to read books.”* (Representative from an INGO)

### v) Lack of assistive technology and inclusive materials

Exclusion from mainstream school environments was said to be associated with a lack of assistive technology and materials needed to support reasonable accommodations, such as braille materials, screen readers and wheelchairs. Assistive technologies are often expensive and cannot be sustainably used by education providers unless they are provided a continuous source of funding to maintain supply. Local manufacturing is largely unavailable and there is need to import in assistive products, increasing costs. No national programmes or funding were reported to be available to provide assistive technology to youth with disabilities. Some NGOs provide assistive products to individuals, when funding and stock are available.



# Education

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## 1.4. Examples of innovative and promising practices

### Student support

The Association of Students with Disabilities at Université Cheikh Anta Diop (*L'Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar, UCAD*) provide support to approximately 250 students with disabilities. The support includes helping them pay registration fees, obtaining assistive devices, supporting with housing, and providing employment skills training. Graduates of the university are able to join a similar association of graduate students with disabilities, to then receive support after graduation. The Association, however, faces difficulties recruiting members, which may be related to disability-related stigma. The Association runs activities to develop the self-esteem of students with disabilities and makes active efforts to demonstrate the benefits of joining.

### Training on inclusive education

The Senegalese Federation of Associations of Persons with Disabilities (*Fédération Sénégalaise des Associations de Personnes Handicapées, FSAPH*) runs inclusive education projects in Dakar, Ziguinchor, Kaolack, Kaffrine, and Louga where they have provided training to teachers, accessible materials to disabled students, and worked with schools on improving infrastructure accessibility. Having demonstrated the success of this programme, the Federation is now advocating to the Ministry of Education to scale it to a national level.

Humanity & Inclusion have developed a similar project for deaf children in schools, with activities including training teachers and providing accessible spaces. Using this project as a model, they are currently advocating with the Ministry of Education to scale up. Humanity & Inclusion have also developed a manual on 'positive education,' which has been validated by the Ministry of Education. The aim is to have new teachers receive training with this tool.

The Coalition of Organisations in Synergy for the Defense of Public Education (*La Coalition des Organisations en Synergie Pour la Défense de l'Éducation Publique, COSYDEP*), a national coalition for advocacy on education, have developed guidance on inclusive education for teachers. They set up Inclusive Education Clubs in some schools, and established task forces to intervene at the field level to support strategic activities where necessary. They have also worked with schools to improve accessibility, trained school inspectors on disability, and equipped teachers with inclusive education 'kits' that include teaching materials.

Sightsavers also provides technical and financial support on inclusive education, working with the Ministry of National Education as an implementing partner. For example, they have worked together to develop guides and training resources on disability inclusion for teachers and inspector, training about 50 teachers as part of a pilot study. They also support and train local authorities to strengthen disability inclusion in municipal development plans and budgets, including on education.

### Digital skills-training

The National Institute of Education and Training of Young People with Blindness (*Institut National d'Éducation et de Formation des Jeunes Aveugles, INEFJA*), based in Thies City, is working with the World Intellectual Property Organisation and the Estel Foundation to provide training in computer science for students. The partners are paying for a blind trainer's salary and accommodation needs.

## Education

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### Role models

The National Institute of Education and Training of Young People with Blindness (*Institut National d'Education et de Formation des Jeunes Aveugles*, INEFJA) are hiring five blind teachers for their school this year, and the vocational training centre already has three blind trainers on staff. These individuals have completed vocational training at the Institute and are now trainers themselves, as well as positive role models for students.

*"They are [role] models, they are references that always help us to show our students here that they have to succeed, they can succeed because also visual impairment must not be an obstacle to their success."* (Representative from education sector)

### Vocational training

The Estel Centre in Dakar provides programmes centred on empowerment, autonomy, social inclusion, and professional integration for young people with intellectual disabilities and cerebral palsy. They run vocational training (e.g. market gardening, ceramics, screen printing, cooking, sports) as well as wider wellbeing activities (e.g. relaxation and massage) and supporting digital training.



Source: Flickr/GPE/Sarah Beeching

## 2. Employment

### 2.1. Employment and technology indicators disaggregated by disability status

Table 3 presents work indicators in Senegal disaggregated by disability status from published data sources (2013 Population and Housing census analysed for the Disability Data Portal [21-22] and the ILOSTAT database on Disability Labour Market Indicators [23]). Exact estimates vary, likely related to date and methods of data collection, but they show broadly similar trends that people with disabilities are less likely to be working and that youth specifically are more likely to be not in education, employment, or training (NEET). Data from the ILO suggest that vast majority of people with and without disabilities work in informal sectors, though for people with disabilities this is slightly higher, and their average monthly earnings are lower.

Table 3. Other published national data on work disaggregated by disability status

	People with disabilities	People without disabilities
Proportion of 15-24 years Not in Education, Employment or Training <sup>1</sup>	57%	41%
MALES: Proportion of 15-24 years Not in Education, Employment or Training <sup>1</sup>	48%	25%
FEMALES: Proportion of 15-24 years not in Education, Employment or Training <sup>1</sup>	68%	56%
Inactivity rate <sup>2</sup>	83%	49%
Share employed with less than basic education <sup>2</sup>	79%	61%
Share employed in informal employment <sup>2</sup>	93%	90%
Share of youth (15-29 years) not in employment, education or training <sup>2</sup>	78%	33%
Monthly earnings for persons with disabilities (as % of earnings for persons without) <sup>2</sup>	92%	

<sup>1</sup>Estimates from the 2013 Population and Housing Census, analysed for the Disability Data Portal [22]; <sup>2</sup>Estimates from the ILOSTAT database and Disability Labour Market Indicators (DLMI), with 2019 as reference year [23].

# Employment

## 2.2. Policies and programmes

Table 3. Notable provisions in Senegal policy and legislation related to disability-inclusive employment

Notable provisions	Policy/law
People with disabilities have a right to employment, with equal opportunities to access employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Framework Act No. 2010-15 (<i>La loi d'orientation sociale pour les personnes handicapées 2010</i>)</li> </ul>
Workplaces must be accessible for people with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Framework Act No. 2010-15 (<i>La loi d'orientation sociale pour les personnes handicapées 2010</i>)</li> </ul>
At least 15% of jobs in private and public sector must be reserved for people with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Framework Act No. 2010-15 (<i>La loi d'orientation sociale pour les personnes handicapées 2010</i>)</li> <li>• Labour code 1997</li> </ul>
A national database shall be developed to promote inclusive employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Employment Policy</li> </ul>
Job retention of youth and people with disabilities may be facilitated by co-financing 50% of salaries, according to mechanism agreed by the government and private employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L'Etat s'engage dans la Convention Nationale États-Employeursprivés pour la promotion de l'emploi</li> </ul>

A list of programmes promoting disability inclusion in employment implemented in Senegal within the past 5 years is provided in the Appendices.

## Employment

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There are a number of provisions related to improving disability-inclusive employment, including a 15% employment quota and mechanisms to co-finance 50% of salaries for people with disabilities in partnership with private employers. However, KIs reported that the implementation of these disability-related employment policies and laws is weak. Strategies for implementation is lacking, and dissemination of policy is limited, meaning that many government officials do not know their obligations and what is required. KIs described the need for better collaboration between ministries to implement policies, as each ministry's efforts are often siloed, despite there being a lot of crossover in need and objectives. Further, accountability structures are lacking to aid implementation. For example, no institution is in charge of ensuring the 15% employment quota is met, and this level of quota appears unrealistic. Moreover, many of the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for policy implementation are generalised, without a specific focus on disability, which impedes disability inclusion across Senegal.

*“The problem is operationalisation, because there are only some implementing decrees that are elaborated, but therefore there is a lack of strategies, concretisations behind announcements of the law. That’s it, that’s it. I think that the law defines things of article, but that is very general and so at the level of the different ministries there are not all the measures that are taken to make it operational.”* (Representative from an INGO)

As a result, employers are unsure how to implement disability-inclusive employment practices. The State will cover 50% of the salary for employees with disabilities, but many companies and employers do not know this, and are thus not taking advantage of these incentives for disability-inclusive employment. Notably, employers who have received training on disability-inclusive employment reported numerous positive experiences and recommended all employers be given such instruction.

*“And on the examples, the [company in the agricultural sector], just like the [company in the infrastructure and construction sector], told us that people with hearing impairments are the best employees they have had. And they do want, not only to recruit more people with hearing impairments, but with other impairments. Because the people who have been in their system have convinced them.”* (Representative from an INGO)



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# Employment

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KIs noted that there has been little done to promote disability inclusion in agriculture, either by programme implementers or government. The Ministry of Agriculture did approach Senegalese Federation of Associations of Disabled People (FSAPH) to put them in touch with youth disabilities for an agriculture project, but this has not yet started, likely because of COVID-19. Youth with disabilities have themselves approached the Federation with ideas for funding, clearly indicating interest, yet there is still little activity in this area.

There has, however, been increased funding and investment in digital activities for youth with disabilities. The Federation has been training people with disabilities in this area. Much of this attention is the result of people with disabilities' desire to gain skills that will help them enter the job market, and digital skills were noted to increase access to opportunities. However, laws and policies do not always account for this increased interest in digital skills or the rate at which technology changes. There is a need for more training opportunities and greater availability of equipment that will help people with disabilities engage in the digital space, including accessible computer technologies. Similarly, training in self-entrepreneurship has become an increased area of focus for some organisations.

## 2.3. Implementation gaps and challenges

Analysis of the data highlighted several gaps and challenges in implementing policies and programmes on disability inclusion in employment.

### i) Lack of awareness of disability inclusion amongst employers

Employers expressed limited skills, knowledge, and confidence in how to promote disability inclusion in the workplace. We were told that many employers are unaware of disability policies and how to meet the 15% quota. Few employers have disability-targeted policies or strategies. Further, employers who do recruit people with disabilities will often look to hire employees with a physical impairment, whom they see as more straightforward to work with. There is a clear need for increased training for employers on disability-inclusive employment practices.

*"I've rarely seen a person with disabilities come in for an interview with us. So, I figure either they haven't been selected, in which case you have to look for the loophole, or they don't dare to come in and apply for a job. I think that within the companies we should have a better visibility, a good training on this aspect, to determine how to call upon this kind of candidates, how to make them feel comfortable during the interview, how to make them feel confident." (Representative from private sector)*

### ii) Disconnect between skills and market demands

People with disabilities have not had the opportunities to learn skills that increase employability. Aside from education barriers, we were told that in the general population and job market, a number of youth gain certifications and qualifications from vocational centres that are not recognised or valued in the employment market. Digital skills were reported as an opportunity to provide youth with disabilities the tools with which to enter the job market, yet opportunities for digital skills development remain scarce.

# Employment

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## iii) Access barriers

According to KIs, discriminatory practices in the workplace can present a barrier for people with disabilities in accessing and retaining jobs. There are also issues with the accessibility of buildings and transport barriers. The Equal Opportunities Card (described in detail below), should provide transport for people with disabilities, but according to one KI, this programme was only reaching a small proportion of those people with disabilities in the country.

## 2.4. Examples of innovative and promising practices

### Financial support

The National Institute of Education and Training of Young People with Blindness (*Institut National d'Education et de Formation des Jeunes Aveugles*, INEFJA) has an association for former residents of the Institute. This association recently donated funds to support eight women with disabilities graduating from the Institute to set up their own small business, along with training and guidance on how to do this.

### Government salary support

The government has a programme in place to cover half of the wages of employed people with disabilities. The amount available for this is finite, but was increased recently from 1 to 15 billion Fr. (approximately 2.2 million USD). There are currently an estimated 12,800 people benefitting from this scheme, although the target is 20,000. As noted, many employees are unaware of this policy, and therefore, do not take advantage of it.

### Vocational training and employment

The Colmbin Pottery workshop trains and employs people with disabilities to work with ceramics. The workshop mainly targets people who are Deaf and hard of hearing, people with Down Syndrome, and other intellectual impairments. Participants receive 40% of profits from any product they make that is sold, and receive other various support such as housing and food. They are also engaged in teaching pottery in schools. Unfortunately, demand is greater than they can accommodate due to funding limitations. The organisation is largely self-financed (80%) through selling products and running classes in schools, with no state funding. They also have some links with United Nations Human Rights local office and the Dutch Embassy. In relation to agriculture, they are starting a project to make pots for growing and storing fruits and vegetables.

*"I empower them, I bring them to the schools where they teach. Communication passes between them and the students. Students want to discover them. They collaborate with the disabled and communicate in sign language." (Representative from an NGO)*

Other promising projects include a recent initiative funded by the World Bank, which includes a loan until 2024, which targets 8,000 craftsmen and 32,000 apprentices across 14 regions of Senegal. People with disabilities are being specifically targeted for this project to increase employment opportunities. The World Bank also funds social safety net programmes, including a cash transfer scheme for vulnerable populations, in which people with disabilities are included. This is managed by the Ministry of Community Development.



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### 3. Social and political context

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The data highlighted several contextual factors that frame access to education and work for young persons with disabilities in Senegal.

#### i) Equal Opportunities Card

There is an Equal Opportunities Card (EOC) defined as a “social protection system that provides beneficiaries with benefits in the areas of health, education, training, transportation, and income security” [28]. This card was instituted by Article 3 of the Social Orientation Act (2010-15) and regulated by Decree 2012-1038 of October 2, 2012. The National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) aims to scale-up the CEC programme to reach at least 90% of eligible individuals by 2025. The International Labour Organisation carried out a comprehensive study of the programme in 2020, identifying the primary shortcomings and implementation issues. These included a lack of institutional coordination, insufficient and unstable resources, weakness of effective coverage, and ineffective or unreliable benefits [28].

Evidence from the KIs identified a number of issues with the EOC process, such as a low level of awareness about the programme among service providers and people with disabilities. KIs also reported that the Equal Opportunities Card does not serve people with disabilities well.

*“The Equal Opportunities Card also exists but does not serve us much, especially at the level of hospitals. The card should at least make it easier for us to access care as a person with a disability. It was said that the card would also allow us to access transport for free, but so far nothing. There are also many shortcomings. The privileges of the card must be strengthened. We are also told about an Equal Opportunities Card with a scholarship, but the scholarship does not even allow us to treat ourselves or our children.”* (Representative from an OPD)

Although the card is meant to improve access to many different services, many are not in effect. Healthcare and rehabilitation services, including assistive technology, is reported as being reasonably ineffective. We were told that 8,000 assistive devices have been distributed free of charge since 2012 as part of the scheme. Transport has been partially effective, with only 633 people with disabilities benefitting. Education services through the card scheme are not enforced.

Only about 63,000 cards have been issued (though some sources such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights report 50,000 [29]), which is a low proportion of the expected total number of people with disabilities in the country. To receive a card, people with disabilities need to have a certificate of disability that can be issued only by a State-appointed doctor. This process is challenging to many who cannot access the health appointment, due to financial and environmental barriers. Humanity & Inclusion aim to guide people through this process, including providing transport and financial support for medical consultations.

We were told that there are efforts across government ministries to improve and expand the scheme from 2022-2026.

## Social and political context

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### ii) Stigma and discrimination

Negative attitudes towards disability are still common. Disability is often perceived as a curse, for example. This prejudice means that the expectations of people with disabilities are low, and parents commonly hide their children away from society, not allowing them to leave home. Further, some parents do not take their child to school, as they do not believe they can achieve academically. Some OPDs support parents get their child to school, and by helping them understand their children's potential for success in school.

Positive perceptions of disability are reportedly becoming more common, thanks to community awareness campaigns. OPDs reported that many more people look to join their organisations than was the case in the past.

There is a continued need for community awareness activities, including at the State and institutional level, to improve perceptions of people with disabilities taking part in education and employment. Sightsavers has trained journalists on the importance of appropriate language to challenge negative stereotypes, and to help improve community awareness and attitudes. There is also a need to build the confidence and self-esteem of some people with disabilities, who have been negatively impacted by stigma and discrimination.

*“Now the challenge is to continue to advocate at the State level, at the institutional level so that they too change their perception. Because there is also small reluctance at the institutional level. And it is this reluctance and perhaps the ignorance of some of these institutions also that lead to blockages both in education and employment, for example. Often we are faced with situations where the disabled person can pass an exam or a competition and at the interview as soon as we realise that he is disabled, immediately we dismiss him because of his disability. This, too, is a certain perception of institutions [regarding] disabilities.” (Representative from an OPD)*

Within awareness-raising efforts, there were calls to consider gender disparities and the intersection of disability and gender issues.

*“It's about gender-disability. It is a connection that we want to make more and more, the intersectionality between gender and disability, and several factors of discrimination. And so in these questions of social representation, we do not talk about disabled people as a homogeneous group that is all in a block [...] And also for the government, for disabled parents, when there is a disabled child, it is always the mother who is targeted, who is discriminated against, we think that she has made a mistake.” (Representative from an INGO)*

## Social and political context

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### iii) Limited disability data

Many KIs highlighted the limited data on disability in Senegal, which hampers disability inclusion programming. There is reliance on the National Census and World Report on Disability, which are outdated and, in the case of the Census, may rely on poor data collection methods. KIs called for better quality data, disaggregated by age, disability type, location, etc.

*“Can’t make a change if you don’t have evidence...look at the National Report of Education Statistics that comes out every year, I think that the issue of disability is not sufficiently informed.”* (Representative from an NGO)

The Senegalese Federation of Associations of Persons with Disabilities (*Fédération Sénégalaise des Associations de Personnes Handicapées, FSAPH*) are working with member organisations to maintain better records of their members, in order to help with the dearth of disability information. Some KIs suggested the Equal Opportunities Card could be a mechanism through which to collect better data, but the card scheme needs to be improved and more widely implemented for this to be realised. Sightsavers are also working with the Ministry of Education to strengthen disability data on education. A review of disability indicators and inclusive data collection tools is currently underway. Monitoring and evaluation are central to all efforts, so that interventions are evidence-based. Lastly, disability-related questions are included in Senegal’s labour force surveys, but a thorough situation analysis and more robust disability-disaggregated data is needed to better understand the experiences of people with disabilities across the country.

### iv) Lack of funding for disability initiatives

Financial constraints were said to impede the progress of disability inclusion in Senegal. Some KIs said that there was a lack of transparency in the use of national funding. In recent years, the State has reduced subsidies to NGOs that promoted disability inclusion. Limited funding has stopped programmes from being started or continuing, negatively impacting intended beneficiaries.



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## 4. Opportunities

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Key informant data indicated opportunities for strategic partnerships and improving capacity to promote disability inclusion in Senegal.

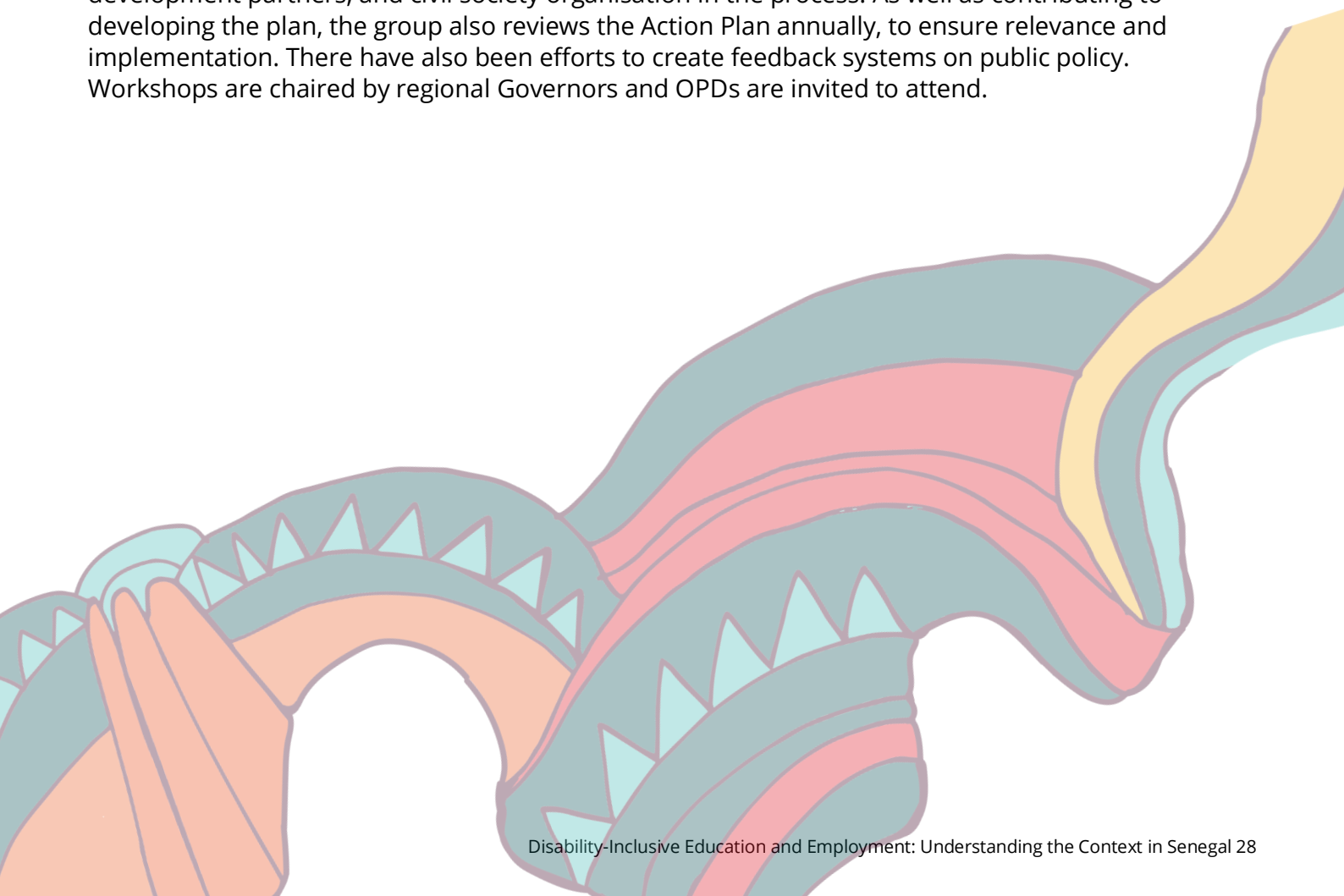
Throughout the interviews, KIs called for education and employment institutions to work with people with disabilities, disability experts, and OPDs to inform policy and programming. Various KIs called for private sector companies to partner with OPDs in order to learn about disability-inclusive employment practices.

FSAPH have been running a project from 2017 to 2023 to promote this participation. They have been building citizenship, awareness, self-esteem, and community engagement amongst people with disabilities, reaching about 60,000 throughout the project. They have also trained government ministries, civil society organisations, and other key stakeholders on disability-rights issues. Within this project, they advocated for a modification of the electoral code, to increase awareness amongst people with disabilities so that they can be involved in citizenship activities. There are now many people with disabilities elected as municipal councillors, and mayors.

Humanity & Inclusion have a pool of disability experts (e.g. rehabilitation specialists, accessibility experts, and others) to develop accessible building plans that Humanity & Inclusion then build. They are also working to get people with disabilities involved in major governance bodies, and they have been training civil society on advocacy techniques to improve disability advocacy efforts across the country.

Some KIs noted that there are several national and international organisations working in areas relating to disability inclusion, especially in education, and that there is opportunity for more synergy and shared learning between them.

OPDs have, in recent years, been involved in the policy development process and KIs called for this to continue. The National Action Plan on Disability 2017-2021 was reported to have involved OPDs, development partners, and civil society organisation in the process. As well as contributing to developing the plan, the group also reviews the Action Plan annually, to ensure relevance and implementation. There have also been efforts to create feedback systems on public policy. Workshops are chaired by regional Governors and OPDs are invited to attend.





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## Programme and policy recommendations

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This section outlines key recommendations to strengthen the inclusion of people with disabilities in education and employment. Focus is given to policy, programming, and opportunities for future research.

### For policy developers

- Provide clarity on the roles and responsibilities with regards to making reasonable accommodations. Be clear who is responsible to fund and action certain activities to improve accessibility in education and employment.
- Partner with OPDs to train government staff on disability-inclusive practices and continue this collaboration throughout policy development, implementation, and evaluation.
- Develop funding streams to make mainstream school environments accessible. This includes adapting infrastructure and providing accessible materials. Invest in teacher training on disability and inclusive education, including within teacher training curricula.
- Train and develop individuals (or teams) as focal points in government agencies, to be responsible for prioritising, developing, and coordinating disability inclusion in their Ministry, committee, or department.

### For programmes and policy implementers

- Provide training for employers on disability-inclusive employment and investigate establishing a network of employers interested in disability inclusion, who can learn from and support one another.
- Scale-up successful education programmes listed in this report that have highlighted the benefit of teacher training and improved accessibility for inclusive education.
- Develop opportunities for digital skills training that improves employability of youth with disabilities. On completion of these training opportunities, provide appropriate accredited certification.
- In collaboration with government entities, conduct wide-scale awareness raising activities, to improve understanding of disability and move to rights-based models. Radio, TV, social media, WhatsApp; various avenues can be effective.
- Prioritise disability inclusion in existing efforts toward increasing digital access.

# Programme and policy recommendations

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## For researchers

### 1. Explore lived experiences of youth with disabilities

- From the perspective of youth with disabilities, investigate the challenges, enablers, agency and aspirations relating to education and work in Senegal. Specifically:
  - Experiences in skills training, mentorship and other support to encourage readiness and participation in education and employment
  - Access to assistive technology and digital skills as enablers to education and work
  - Participation across the agricultural value chain
  - Transition from secondary to tertiary education
  - Specific individual, institution and system level challenges faced by girls/women with disabilities and youth with intellectual disabilities in accessing and progressing through education
  - Experiences of participation in the development of programmes and policies

### 2. Explore experience and perspectives of education providers

- Explore perspectives and provisions on disability inclusion among teachers and management in mainstream secondary and tertiary education
- Assess extent and nature of training on disability inclusion within teacher training curriculum and continuing professional development

### 3. Evaluate the impact of interventions and programmes

- There is a need for evidence on 'what works' for strengthening livelihoods, education inclusion and to improve attitudes and reduce stigma towards disability
- Interventions aimed at changing negative attitudes and stigma at the family/caregiver level should be explored, tested, and evaluated
- Rigorous evaluations on the impact of programmes and interventions in these areas are needed. This report has highlighted various programmes being implemented in Senegal. Priority interventions/programmes to evaluate should be determined collaboratively with OPDs, NGOs, and policymakers. Evaluations should assess outcomes as well as processes, to understand mechanisms and specific components that lead to change.

### 4. Strengthen disability data

- Collect more robust data including on education and employment disaggregated by disability status

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## Appendix A: Methodology

This report forms part of a multi-country study, investigating disability-inclusive education and employment across seven countries in Sub-Saharan Africa; Ghana, Senegal, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya. This report drew from three main sources of data. First, a rapid on-line literature review was undertaken to identify relevant policies and programmes regarding disability and inclusion of youth with disabilities in education and employment in Senegal.

### Qualitative data collection

Next, in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with seventeen key informants to gain insights into the process, context and actors involved in selected policies and programmes as well as identify challenges, gaps, opportunities, and examples of best practice in relation to education and employment for young people with disabilities. In Senegal the research had a particular focus on the sectors of Agriculture and displaced populations selected in discussion with MasterCard Foundation.

Relevant key informants were identified through the document review and input from local partners, as well as through snowball sampling. Appendix Table 1 below provides a breakdown of participant characteristics.

Table A1. Sample of Key Informants

Key informant type	n
Government	5
Organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs)	3
NGOs	2
INGOs	2
Education providers	2
Employers	2
Total	16

Interviews were conducted in French and Wolof by two members of the study team at GRAG during May-June 2022. Topic guides for the interviews were developed in discussion with the wider project team, MasterCard Foundation and two Advisory groups comprising youth with disabilities based in Uganda and in Ghana. Prior to data collection, researchers participated in training workshops (jointly with other country teams) covering ethical protocols, interview techniques, maintaining data quality, and in-depth discussion of topic guides. These were pilot-tested, and researchers participated in feedback workshops after conducting at least one pilot interview.

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine as well as the National Ethics Committee at the Ministry of Health and Social Action, in Senegal. All participants were provided with study information, and informed consent obtained (either written/signed or verbal recording) prior to the interview.

Interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. Interviews were conducted face-to-face [4] or via phone/zoom [14] as convenient for the participant. All interviews [or edit as needed] were audio-recorded where consent was given. Interviews were transcribed into French for analysis. Researchers participated in an analysis workshop (jointly with other country teams) to discuss approach to coding and analysis.

A coding scheme and codebook was developed based on study objectives and emerging themes. Transcripts were coded manually using word document and analysed thematically.

## Appendix C: Table of disability inclusion programmes

Table A5: Disability inclusion programmes related to education and employment

Programme	Implementers & Funders	Category and type of work	Region	Further details
Sightsavers	Funder/ Implementer	Employment and Inclusive Education	Dakar, Diourbel, Fatick, Kaolack, Kaffrine, Kédougou, Louga, Sédhiou, Tambacounda, Ziguinchor	Sightsavers / Rapport complémentaire au rapport initial du Sénégal sur la mise en œuvre de la convention relative aux droits des personnes handicapées- FSAPH (2019)
Humanity & Inclusion	Funder/ Implementer	Inclusive Education	Ziguinchor	Humanity & Inclusion / Rapport complémentaire au rapport initial du Sénégal sur la mise en œuvre de la convention relative aux droits des personnes handicapées- FSAPH (2019)
United Nations	Funder	Socio Professional Inclusion	Members	<a href="#">Financing for Disability-Inclusive Development   United Nations Enable</a>
COSYDEP	Implementer	Inclusive Education	Nationwide	Links: <a href="https://ms-my.facebook.com/COSYDEPsenegal2019/photos/a.1665008173723938/3248859495338790">https://ms-my.facebook.com/COSYDEPsenegal2019/photos/a.1665008173723938/3248859495338790</a> <a href="http://archives.aps.sn/article/85842?lightbox[width]=75p&amp;lightbox[height]=90p">http://archives.aps.sn/article/85842?lightbox[width]=75p&amp;lightbox[height]=90p</a> <a href="https://educationoutloud.org/fr/project/la-gouvernance-inclusive-du-systeme-educatif-en-situation-de-crise">https://educationoutloud.org/fr/project/la-gouvernance-inclusive-du-systeme-educatif-en-situation-de-crise</a>
<a href="#">Fédération Sénégalaise des Associations de Personnes Handicapées (FSAPH)</a>	Implementer	Education Socioprofessional Inclusion	Nationwide	Rapport complémentaire au rapport initial du Sénégal sur la mise en œuvre de la convention relative aux droits des personnes handicapées- FSAPH (2019)
Free	Funder/ Implementer	Education inclusive	Zone Nord (Saint-Louis)	
SONATEL	Funder	Education Socioprofessional Inclusion	Nationwide	<a href="#">RSE • Site Institutionnel du Groupe Sonatel</a> <a href="#">Fondation Sonatel : Une fondation au service des populations</a>
Association Colombins	Implementer	Vocational Training- Potery	Dakar	<a href="https://www.awalebiz.com/awalebizblog-fr/colombins-a-dakar-senegal/">https://www.awalebiz.com/awalebizblog-fr/colombins-a-dakar-senegal/</a>
Centre Estel	Implementer	Education including digital	Dakar	<a href="https://www.helloasso.com/associations/estel-france-senegal">https://www.helloasso.com/associations/estel-france-senegal</a>
Centre Verbo Tonal	Implementer	Education Socioprofessional Inclusion		<a href="#">Centre Verbo-tonal CVT - Accueil   Facebook</a>
Talibou Dabo Center	Implementer			<a href="https://taliboudabo.sn/">https://taliboudabo.sn/</a>
Association of Disabled Students of UCAD	Implementer	Higher Education	Dakar	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/login/?next=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FAEH-Association-des-Etudiants-Handicap%25C3%25A9s-de-IUCAD-735059643557">https://www.facebook.com/login/?next=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FAEH-Association-des-Etudiants-Handicap%25C3%25A9s-de-IUCAD-735059643557</a>



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