

# COVID-19 PANDEMIC, LOCKDOWN, RESTRICTIONS AND DISABILITY IN AFRICA

[Dr. Arlette Simo Fotso](#),

CEPED, Institut de recherche pour le  
développement (IRD), Paris

International Union for the Scientific Study  
of Population (IUSSP) Webinar series  
*September 1<sup>st</sup> 2020*



source: [Mdogo](#)



Centre Population  
et Développement



# PLAN

1. Introduction and Background on disability
2. COVID-19 and health of people with disabilities
3. Education of children with disabilities in time of COVID-19
4. The effect of COVID-19 on employment and living condition of people with disabilities
5. Conclusion



# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND ON DISABILITY

# DISABILITY: SOME FIGURES

- According to WHO and WB over a billion people (or about 15% of the world's population) were estimated to be living with disability (WHO & World Bank, 2011)
- Developing countries are hit hardest, with 80% of the global total of people with disabilities (ILO, 2007).
- Africa displays the highest percentage of children 0–14 years and adults 15–59 years with disability across all regions ( 6% and 19% of the population respectively ) (WHO & World Bank, 2011)



# POORER LEVELS OF HEALTH AND LOWER ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE BEFORE COVID-19

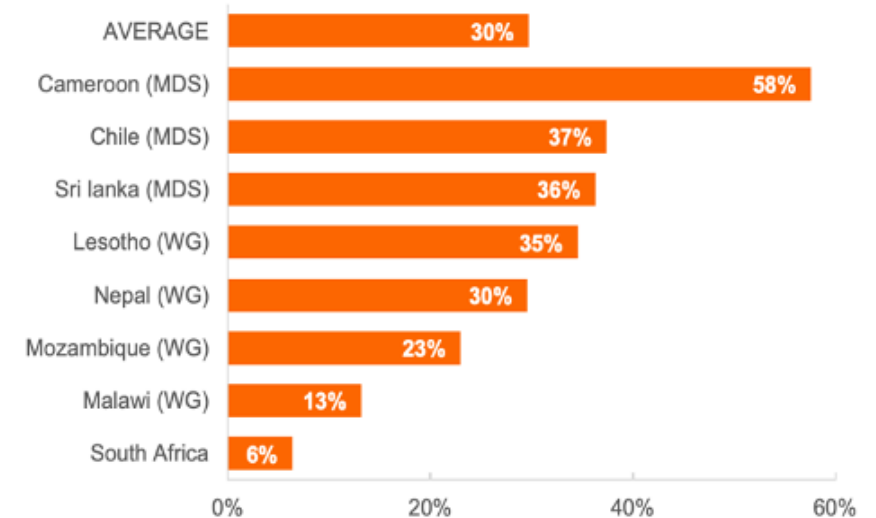
## ■ People with disabilities experience poorer health because

- Primary health condition : bipolar disorder, glaucoma, Down syndrome etc.
- Secondary conditions and Co-morbid conditions : pressure ulcers, pain, urinary tract infections, diabetes and depression
- Increased rates of health risk behaviours : engaged in smoking, alcohol consumption, recreational drug use, and a lack of exercise
- Greater risk of being exposed to violence and unintentional injury

## ■ In addition to general health care needs like other people, they have special healthcare needs:

- In LIC 23% disabled people sought inpatient care for only 14% of non-disabled peers (WHO & World Bank, 2011)
- And higher unmet health needs : 7% for people with

In many African countries people with disabilities report that health-care facilities are hindering or not accessible



Source: UN (2018)

# WORSE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOME EVEN BEFORE THE PANDEMIC

- Studies show that education deficit due to disability is greater than that due to gender, urbanisation and economic status (Filmer, 2008)
- For example the Out of School Rate (OSR) gap in Nigeria, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Malawi, Uganda and South Africa, were estimated at 50%, 40, 30%, 30%, 8% and 4%, respectively (Mizunoya et al 2018)
- Even for those in school, it has been shown that they have a lower school progression in Cameroun (simo et al 2018)





# LOWER ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT PRIOR COVID-19

- Persons with disabilities have also been shown to have Lower access to labor market
- For example in Malawi, Zambia and South Africa, the employment rate gap between overall population and disabled people is 4%, 11% and 29% (WHO & World Bank, 2011)
- Employment situation and the sets of conditions mentioned previously make people with disabilities more likely to be exposed to poverty, even though evidence are less conclusive
- For example households with disabilities in Malawi and Namibia appeared to have lower incomes while in Sierra Leone, Zambia, and Zimbabwe do not they do not. In South Africa, households with a disabled member in the Eastern Cape Province had higher income than households without a disabled member. (WHO & World Bank, 2011)
- But they have higher levels of multidimensional poverty and deprivation (Pinilla-Roncancio, 2020)
- Social isolation of people with disabilities restricts their access to social networks. (WHO & World Bank, 2011)

## Employment gap (ND-D)

4%

Malawi



11%

Zambia



29%

South Africa



# THIS PRESENTATION AIMS

- What is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdown and restrictions for disabled people?
  - Health
  - Education
  - Employment
- There are good reasons to believe that the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions which followed have exacerbated the gap between the general population and people living with disabilities

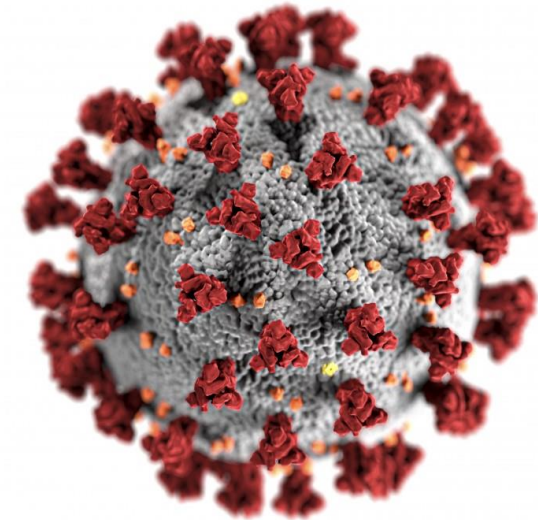




# IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HEALTH OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

# PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY MIGHT BE AT GREATER RISK OF CONTRACTING AND DEVELOPING SEVERE FORM OF COVID-19 (WHO, 2020)

- People with disabilities may be at greater risk of contracting COVID-19 because of:
  - Barriers to implementing basic hygiene measures, such as hand-washing
  - Difficulty in maintaining social distancing
  - The need to touch things to obtain information from the environment or for physical support
  - Barriers to accessing public health information
- They are more likely to develop severe COVID-19 illness due to
  - preexisting condition
  - Their age: disability is more prevalent among older persons (16.4% among 14–59 vs 59% among 60 years + in Africa, (WHO & World Bank, 2011))
  - Barrier to access health care
  - Discrimination
- COVID-19 can impact the general health of disabled people because of the disruption of health service caused by the pandemic
- Evidence of increased violence against women during the lockdown, it is likely that the same would be observed for people with disabilities



# ACCESS TO PROTECTION GEARS, HEALTHCARE AND HEALTH INFORMATION DURING THE PANDEMIC HAS BEEN LIMITED FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

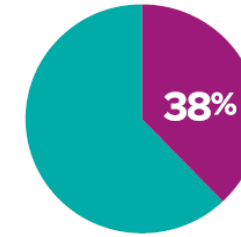
- A study in Kenya (Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu areas ) shows that (Innovation to inclusion, 2020) :

- 38% people with disabilities reported not having access to all the necessary personal protective equipment
- 45% mentioned disruptions to vital support required to live safely and independently
- 39% reported experiencing disability discrimination, with exclusion from vital services

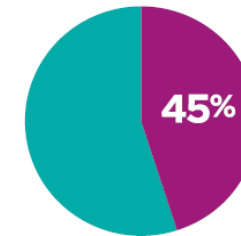
- In another non-representative studies in 36 countries (AfriCan, 2020),
  - 19% of people said they missed essential medical treatment due to the lockdown in their local areas.
  - 7% said that persons with disabilities lost their loved ones and caretakers.
  - 4% indicated that Persons with Disabilities were directly infected by the virus.



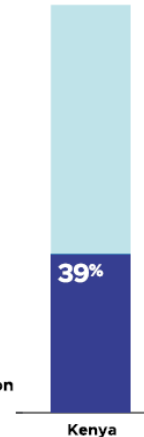
Kenya



Kenya



reported experience of disability discrimination



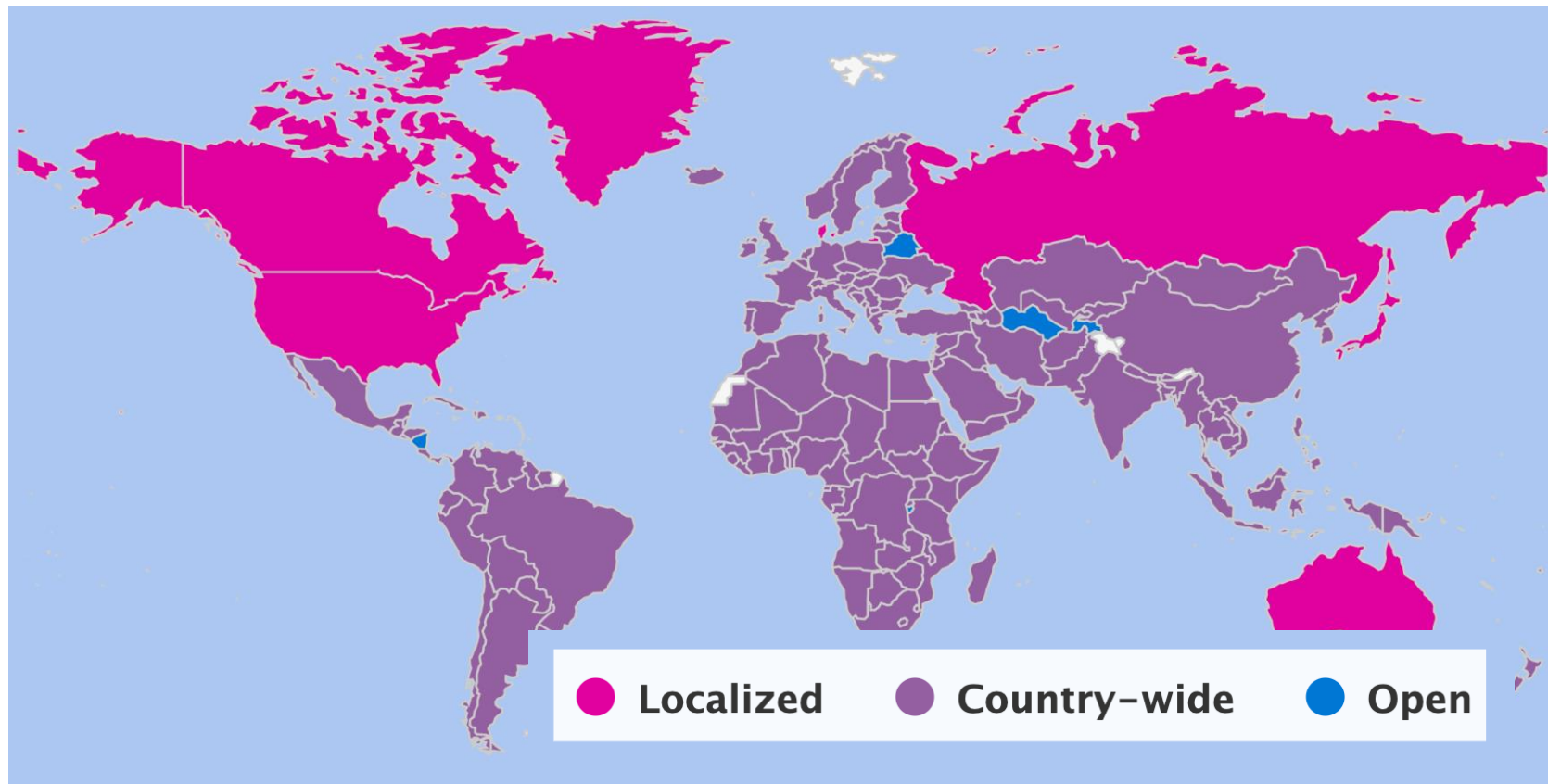
Kenya

Source : Innovation to inclusion, 2020



# IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

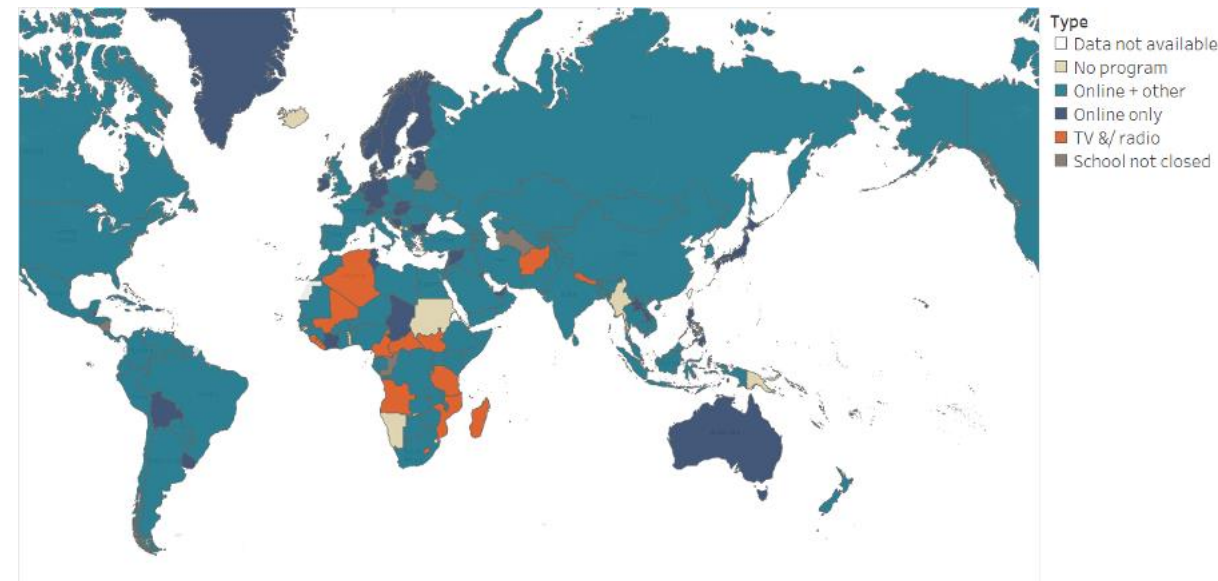
# ALMOST ALL AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAVE IMPOSED COUNTRYWIDE SCHOOLS CLOSURES



SOURCE: UNESCO

# SOME DISTANCE PROGRAMS WERE PUT IN PLACE IN MOST COUNTRIES BUT...

- But children with disabilities are particularly hard to reach through distance programs because:
  - Children with disabilities are among those most dependent on face-to-face services
  - A program fitted for children with all type of disabilities is almost impossible
  - Or simply because not enough stress is put on inclusiveness dimension when programs are put in place
- A survey by the Center for Global development shows that of the 10 countries who have expanded their programming to be inclusive to students with disabilities only one is located in Africa (Algeria) (CGD, 2020)
- No clear data yet to assess how much children with disabilities have been impacted by the pandemic



Source : Carvalho and Hares (2020)

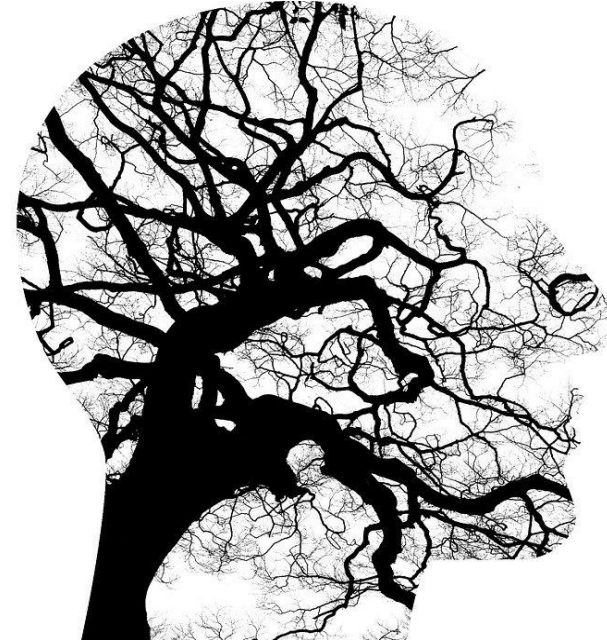


# IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



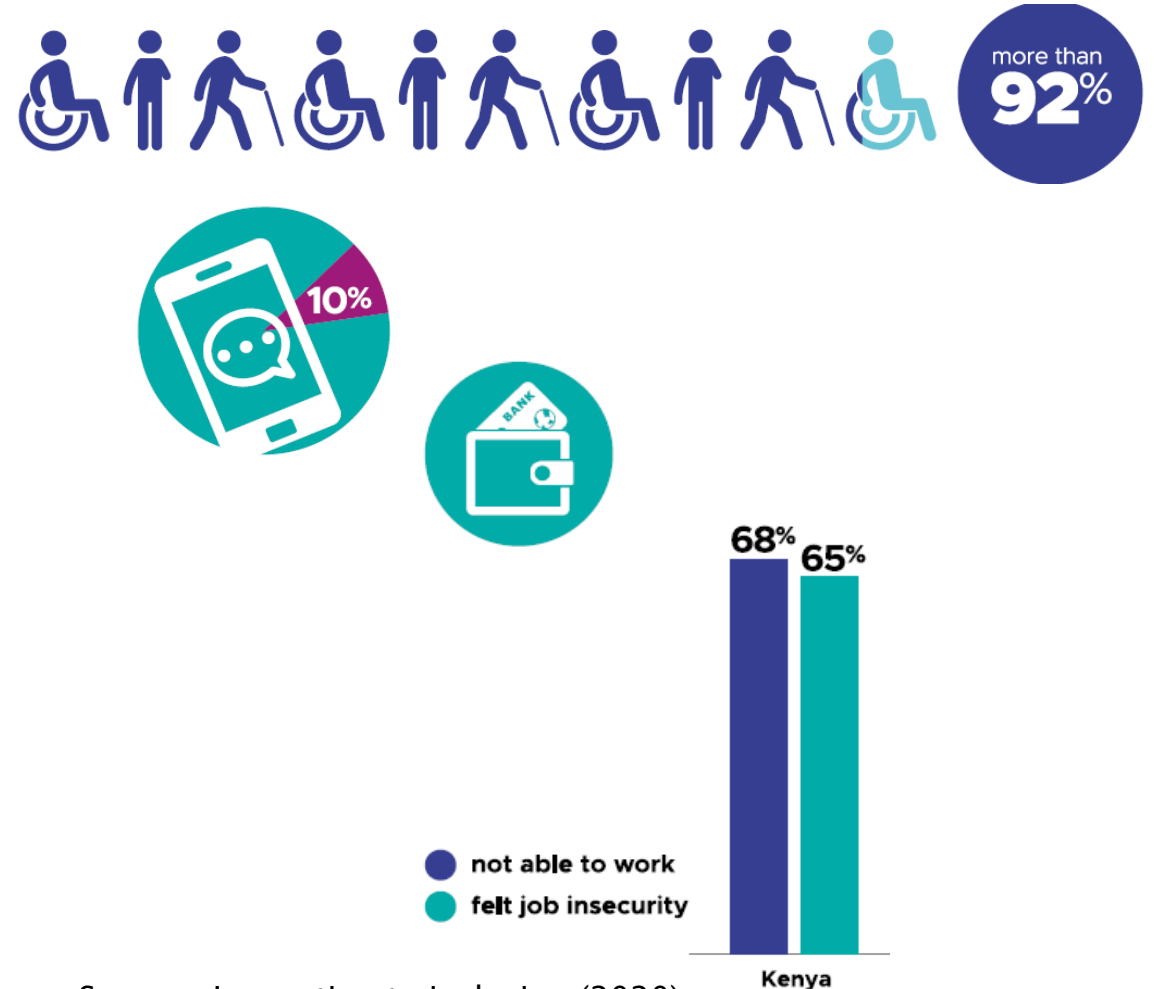
# DISABLED PEOPLE LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN HIT HARDER BY THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF COVID AND RESTRICTIVE MEASURES

- As shown previously persons with disabilities are less likely than others to be employed and when they are employed, they were **more likely to work in the informal sector** (OHCHR, 2020) characterised by lower/no access to social insurance based on employment
- This means that in the context of COVID-19 especially during the lockdown they were more likely to **lose their job and/or to be unable to conduct their economic activities**, hence to lose their source of income.
- COVID-19 restrictive measures may have indirectly affected persons with disabilities by **preventing family bread-winners from working**, thus to earn income
- The loss of income represents a disproportionate burden on persons with disabilities, as **they face in general extra costs related to disability** (accessible housing and equipment, assistive devices, specific goods and services, etc), pulling them more rapidly into poverty (OHCHR, 2020)



## SOME FIGURES IN KENYA

- **more than 92% of Kenyan with disabilities** said their daily lives had been affected by COVID-19
- **10%** were most concerned about lack of access to assistive technology and flexible working opportunities
- **68%** of persons with disabilities reported not being able to work,
- while **65%** felt insecurity in their current jobs.



Source : Innovation to inclusion (2020)

# A NON-REPRESENTATIVE SURVEY IN 36 AFRICAN COUNTRIES SHOWED THAT (AfriCAN, 2020)

- 49% said that Persons with Disabilities ran out of food and other household essentials due to a lockdown in their local areas.
- 18% mentioned that person with disability lost work and income for them and their families.





# CONCLUSION

# MORE DATA AND EVIDENCE NEEDED

- The few existing evidences show that **disabled people have been impacted hardly by the COVID-19 pandemic and restriction** which followed
- However, the studies used surveys that are **not representative** of the country population,
- None of the study found **include both disabled and non-disable people** for a comparison
- Projects around **COVID-19 tends to be disability blind**, but we know that disabled people face additional challenges and solution for the general population may not work for them.
- An important step for disability inclusive COVID-19 responses is to have **good measurements**.



source: [Mdogo](#)

# THANK YOU

CONTACT: Arlette Simo  
Fotso,  
[simofotsoarlette\(art\)yahoo.fr](mailto:simofotsoarlette(art)yahoo.fr)

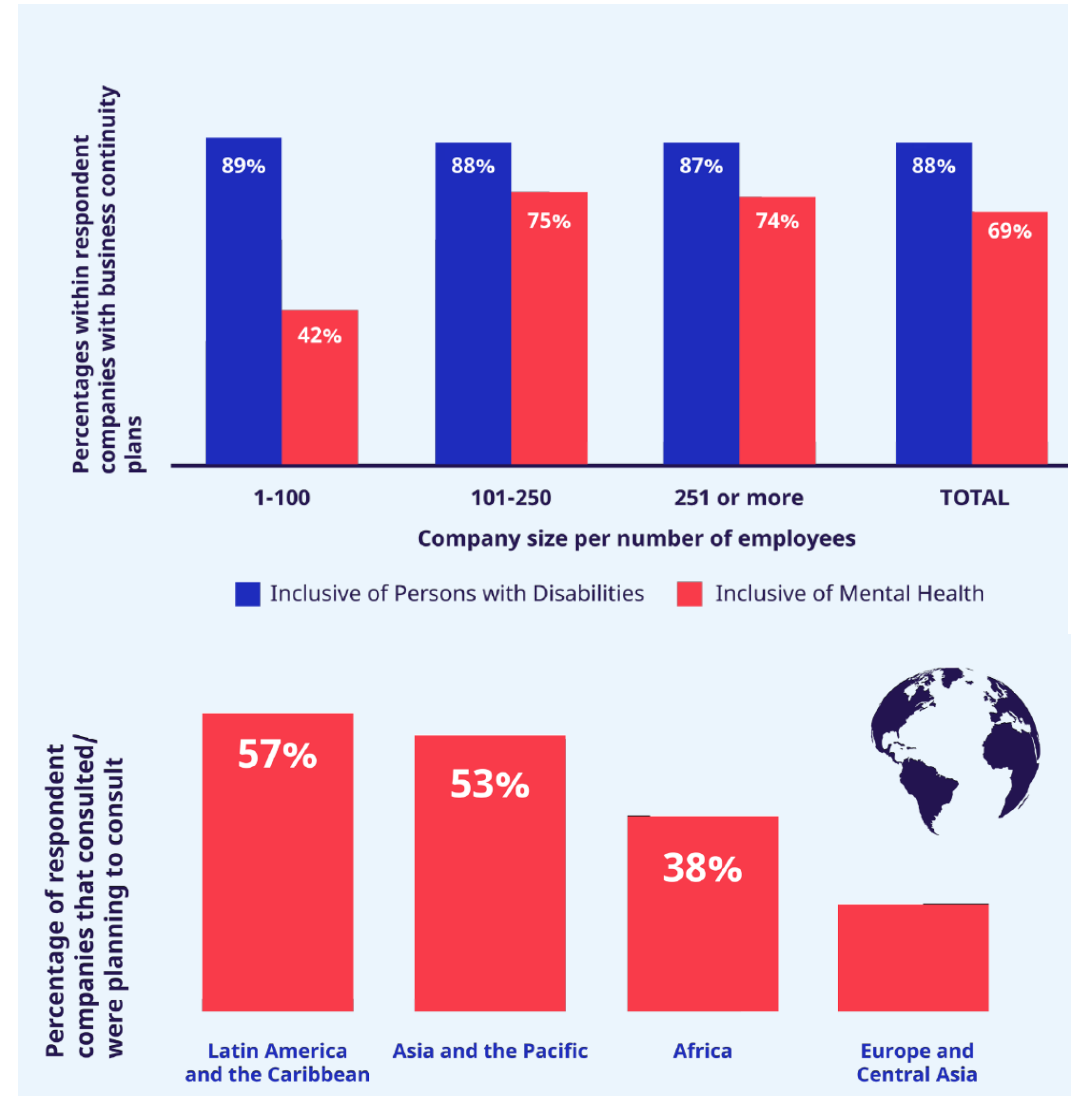
# REFERENCES

- AfriCan (2020) Report on the Impact of COVID-19 on Persons with Disabilities in Africa  
[file:///C:/Users/Arlette%20Simo%20Fotso/Downloads/Report\\_on\\_the\\_Impact\\_of\\_COVID\\_19\\_on\\_Persons\\_with\\_Disabilities\\_in\\_Africa.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Arlette%20Simo%20Fotso/Downloads/Report_on_the_Impact_of_COVID_19_on_Persons_with_Disabilities_in_Africa.pdf)
- Carvaldo and Hares (2020) Six Ways COVID-19 Will Shape the Future of Education. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/six-ways-covid-19-will-shape-future-education>
- CGD, 2020, COVID education policy tracking <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ndHgP53atJ5J-EtxgWcpSfYG8LdzHpUsnb6mWybErYg/edit#gid=0>
- Filmer, D. (2008). Disability, poverty, and schooling in developing countries: Results from 14 household surveys. *The World Bank Economic Review*, 22(1), 141-163. <https://doi.org/10.1093/wber/lhm021>
- ILO, 2007, *L'égalité au Travail: Relever les Défis*. Conférence Internationale du Travail, 21.
- ILO (2020), Disability inclusion in company responses to COVID-19: Results of a survey among National Business and Disability Networks and their members. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---ifp\\_skills/documents/publication/wcms\\_750505.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_750505.pdf)
- Innovation to inclusion (2020) Impact of COVID19 on the lives of people with disabilities: Insight and stories from Bangladesh and Kenya.  
[file:///C:/Users/Arlette%20Simo%20Fotso/Downloads/Impact%20of%20Covid\\_Bangladesh\\_Kenya.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Arlette%20Simo%20Fotso/Downloads/Impact%20of%20Covid_Bangladesh_Kenya.pdf)
- Kingsley Ighobor, 2020, **COVID-19: People with disabilities facing tougher times**. <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/coronavirus/april-2020-special-edition-covid-19/covid-19-people-disabilities-facing-tough-times>
- Mizunoya, Suguru, Sophie Mitra, and Izumi Yamasaki. 'Disability and School Attendance in 15 Low- and Middle-Income Countries'. *World Development* 104 (1 April 2018): 388-403. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2017.12.001>
- Pinilla-Roncancio, Mónica, Islay Mactaggart, Hannah Kuper, Carlos Dionicio, Jonathan Naber, G. V. S. Murthy, and Sarah Polack. 'Multidimensional Poverty and Disability: A Case Control Study in India, Cameroon, and Guatemala'. *SSM – Population Health* 11 (1 August 2020): 100591. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2020.100591> .
- Simo Fotso, A., Solaz, A., Diene, M., & Nanfosso, R. T. (2018). Human capital accumulation of children in Cameroon: Does disability really matter? *Education Economics*, 26(3), 305-320. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09645292.2017.1421619>
- UNHR (2020) COVID-19 AND THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: GUIDANCE. [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Disability/COVID-19\\_and\\_The\\_Rights\\_of\\_Persons\\_with\\_Disabilities.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Disability/COVID-19_and_The_Rights_of_Persons_with_Disabilities.pdf)
- United Nations (2018) Disability and Development Report.
- WHO, & World Bank. (2011). *World report on disability: Main report* (No. 62783; pp. 1-349). The World Bank & World Health Organisation.



# A SURVEY OF COMPANY MEMBERS OF NATIONAL BUSINESS AND DISABILITY NETWORK CONDUCTED BY ILO SHOWS THAT

- 88% of enterprises who reported that they had a business continuity plan for COVID-19 said it was inclusive of persons with disabilities
- But very few among these companies, especially in Africa (38%) consulted/were planning to consult with organization of people with disability about the plan
- This goes against the need expressed by people with disability to be consulted for solutions regarding their situation: “nothing for us without us”



# SOME ACTION HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON DISABLED PEOPLE IN AFRICA

(Kingsley Ighobor, 2020)

- For example:
  - In Sierra Leone government has provided \$25 and half a bag of rice for each person with disability.
  - Ethiopia plans to make communication materials accessible to those with hearing, seeing and learning difficulties, as well as to those with mental illness.
  - South Africa made provision of million \$10.6 million to assist small, medium and micro enterprises in the hospitality and tourism sector, with priority given to people with disabilities and women.
  - In Nigeria, Christian Blind Mission, a development organisation, is helping with sign language interpretation of COVID-19 message
- But a lot needs to be done still

